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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 15, 2011

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Operation Breathe Safe for Administration Building One

Window Rock, Ariz. — The Navajo Nation Incident Management team addressed the protocol for decontamination of Navajo Nation Administration Building #1, also known as Operation Breathe Safe.

“We need to protect the health and safety of all employees and the general public,” said Wilfred Keeto, Incident Commander. “We need to maintain continuity of essential services to the Navajo Nation government and partners.”

Friday, September 16, phase one of Operation Breathe Safe will begin. This phase is reserved for retraction of critical and sensitive documents and essential small items like laptops. The next step will be to address the servers, and large equipment. A team of 50 people who will be tutored on how to properly wear the Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to re-enter and retrieve important documents and necessary equipment from Admin 1.

This team of 50 will be working everyday for approximately three days. Finance, insurance services, personnel, design & engineering, office of auditor general, office of management & budget, and division of general services each have a list of important items to be retrieved by the team. Documents will be scanned and then destroyed.

Designated personnel will be accompanying IMT to ensure items retrieved are what the programs want. The items will be hand carried to the entry area of the clean room that will be located inside Admin. 1. In the contained clean room, which will be located inside Admin. 1, all materials will be decontaminated prior to removal from Admin. 1. After items are cleaned, they will be returned to designated areas of each program.

This entire procedure will be tracked to ensure that the processes are completed accurately. A perimeter is set around the building to restrict entrance.

Mark Grant, Controller for the Office of the Controller, presented updates to the Navajo Nation Budget and Finance Committee and verbalized the need for funding to assist with the costs of Operation Breathe Safe. The results of funding request will be determined at a later date.

The report on the contamination assessment is due to be delivered by Environmental Consultant Inc. on September 16. This will begin the next process.

A contractor will be hired to assess and resolve any potential structural issues. According to Julius Elwood, Safety Officer of the IMT team, this remediation process will take two weeks or longer.

Employees of Amin 1 are encouraged to see a physician if they feel they may have been exposed to the contamination and are advised not to enter closed perimeters due to possible exposure.

Government and public services are continuing, but at different locations. All phone numbers are identical to the original phone listings.

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