



NAVAJO NATION HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

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NAVAJO HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICIALS MET OFFICIALS ABOUT REPEATED NAVAJO ALCOHOL ABUSE OFFENDERS

ST. MICHAELS, Ariz.—The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission met with Grants' Municipal Judge and community officials for the second time about alcohol abuse in Grants, N.M., on January 21, 2011 at the New Mexico State University campus. The first meeting was last November.

NNHRC received a letter from Honorable Elise A. Larsen, the municipal judge for the City of Grants, on October 5, 2010 that stated, "I have observed that one of the primary problems has been the relationship between substance abuse and the repeat criminal offenders in my Court." Also, stated that she is writing all interested parties including the community Crime Stoppers organization in hopes to discuss various issues to reconcile her concerns.

"We needed straight talk. We needed to know who Judge Larsen was referring to as repeat offenders from an empirical point of view," said Leonard Gorman, the executive director for NNHRC.

Judge Larsen finally explained that 8 of the 10 repeated offenders are Navajo.

"The Commission needs facts and information if there's an issue to address," said Gorman. Participants were not being clear who the repeat offenders were which is not conducive to formulate strategies.

During the meeting, Judge Randolph Marshall Collins of Acoma Pueblo said substance abuse is high in Cibola County.

Gorman believes Cibola County officials and other responsible agencies should be required to attend meetings to implement solutions aimed at regulating alcohol sales and its limitations in Cibola County with new a binding Memorandum of Agreement in addition to the current unbinding MOA to improve race relations.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2011 at Conference Room 3 at NMSU in Grants, N.M.

“There were good points made from the groups, said Gorman and continued, “We’ve created a good dialogue based on facts to find a resolution. There is plenty of time and opportunities on the table.”

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