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THE NAVAJO NATION

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Navajo Nation Police arrest three meth dealers in Dilkon

Family of three includes 81-year-old grandmother, mother, daughter

DILKON, Ariz. – Navajo Nation police officers executed a federal arrest warrant today and took a Navajo grandmother, her daughter and granddaughter into custody for dealing methamphetamine in this small, remote community.



Senior Criminal Investigator Brad Jones escorts 81-year-old Effie Nezzie into a police vehicle after her arrest Tuesday for selling methamphetamine. Ms. Nezzie was transported to Flagstaff for a court appearance.

Police arrested Effie Nezzie, 81, reputed to be a Navajo traditional diagnostician known as a hand trembler, her daughter Marjorie Conley, 63, and her granddaughter, Frederica “Bubba” Conley, 39, at their home one mile from the Basha’s shopping center here. Also at home at the time was the one-year-old infant daughter of Frederica Conley. Her five-year-old son was at his Navajo Headstart program.

The three were transported to Flagstaff for their initial court appearance. Navajo police said the family had been dealing for the past three years and residents had recently complained about their activities again. During a recent search of the family residence, methamphetamine and marijuana was found. At that time, Ms. Nezzie reportedly acknowledged dealing for about a year.

Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., expressed surprise, shock and sadness at news of the arrest.

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“As Navajos, we look up to our elders for all of our teachings, and it’s wrong for her to be doing this,” he said. “Our elders have always given us good teachings so that we can maintain what we have and what we’re losing. Who knows how many families these people have harmed?”

Patrick Sandoval, chief of staff in the Office of the President and Vice President, said these arrests will reflect badly on the Navajo Nation but that the Navajo Division of Public Safety is serious about investigating and arresting anyone selling “this poison to our children.”

“It knocks the wind out of people to realize this is occurring,” Mr. Sandoval said. “We look to grandmas for advice, teachings, not to come to them for dealing drugs.”



“This is a very bad example, and this shows what meth can do,” he added. “As Navajo people, we look up to the elders for leadership, for guidance. They’re patriarchs. The mere fact that this is not the first time she’s been caught doing this and her disrespect for the law, her involvement in the distribution, and the kids that she’s hurting shows she doesn’t care about that.”

The home where the women were arrested is situated in such a way as to provide an excellent view of the highway and people approaching.



“You can see people come from a long way,” said Senior Criminal Investigator Walter Bighorse, who supervised the arrest. “It doesn’t help to have vehicles that are all white,” he said in reference to Navajo tribal vehicles.

He said the Criminal Investigation Section of Navajo police continue to have a need for long-range surveillance equipment in order to collect evidence and arrest other known dealers.

Police say it appears as if older people, aged 25 years and up, are the predominant meth users in the Dilkon area. But children as young as eight years old reportedly have used it.

39-year-old Frederica Conley, her mother Marjorie Conley and her grandmother Effie Nezzie are taken into custody on a federal warrant for selling methamphetamine in Dilkon.

police did this,” Officer Bighorse said. “We are serious about attacking those dealing controlled substances.”

“I want these people out here to know that the Navajo Nation

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