



## THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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# Navajo Nation First Lady Vikki Shirley to co-chair newly-formed Arizona Meth Project Advisory Board

**WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.** – Navajo Nation First Lady Vikki Shirley has been asked by Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard to co-chair the newly-organized Arizona Meth Project.

The Project is modeled after the highly-successful Montana Meth Project, which was implemented in August 2005 and received national media attention for its graphic depictions of the effects of using methamphetamine.

“As First Lady of the Navajo Nation and as a leader committed to improving the lives of Arizona’s children, you would be a strong influence on raising awareness of the dangers of methamphetamine use in Arizona and reducing its abuse,” Mr. Goddard wrote to Mrs. Shirley on May 4. “Methamphetamine use in Arizona is taking a terrible toll on our youth and having a grave impact on law enforcement and our judicial system. A comprehensive approach to addressing the problem of meth abuse is needed that includes prevention/education, interdiction and treatment.”

Mrs. Shirley would join Mr. Goddard and Maricopa County Supervisor Don Stapley as co-chairs of the Project.

“I’m honored to be asked to be part of the Arizona Meth Project, but it’s a dubious honor for us all,” Mrs. Shirley said. “It’s a sad statement about our society, even here on the Navajo Nation, that an organization like the Arizona Meth Project is necessary to protect our children and families from the ravages of this hideous drug. I’ll do my best to promote awareness of this danger, and work to make the Project as successful in Arizona as it is in Montana.”

Mrs. Shirley currently is the chairperson of the Navajo Nation DUI Task Force and president of the Navajo Chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving.



*Navajo Nation First Lady Vikki Shirley and Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard*

Among the initiatives of The Office of Navajo Nation First Lady are programs to promote awareness of the dangers of drunk driving, underage drinking, and domestic violence.

The Arizona Meth Project will combine research-based public service messaging directed to youth and featuring young characters, Mr. Goddard said. Through an affiliation agreement with Maricopa County, the founder of the Montana Meth Project, Thomas Siebel, is making the multi-million dollar campaign used in Montana available to Arizona, he said.

On Wednesday, May 9, Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano’s Methamphetamine Task Force issued “*A Plan For Action: Addressing the Methamphetamine Crisis in Arizona.*”

The Governor said the plan provides a framework for policy makers, substance abuse specialists, law enforcement and community members to work together to fight this destructive drug.

The Task Force identified 10 action steps to eradicate meth use in Arizona and build safe, healthy communities throughout the state including:

- Increasing the number of drug courts in Arizona.
- Engaging specialists on helping schools increase their prevention efforts.
- Reducing trafficking, particularly of the precursor chemicals used to make meth.
- Expanding treatment and making it accessible statewide.
- Increasing efforts to shut down and clean up meth labs that are toxic dump sites in our neighborhoods.

She said she has already taken a number of steps to address many of the action items in the report, such as:

- Calling on Homeland Security Secretary Chertoff to take special action to intervene in precursor chemical shipments that originate in China and move legally into Mexico where they are converted to meth.
- Forming the Arizona Substance Abuse Partnership.
- Funding 22 meth coalitions around the state representing each county as well as many of our tribal communities.

- Asking for additional funding for meth-specific treatment for inmates in the Governor's budget proposal.

- Applying for a \$7 million federal grant to expand treatment services and enhance drug courts statewide through the Governor's Division for Substance Abuse Policy.

- Releasing the annual report on statewide substance abuse rates next month.

Mr. Goddard said the Arizona Meth Project has raised \$5.3 million fund the campaign in the first year. Support comes from state funds allowed to Arizona counties through HB 2554, private funds, \$2.5 million from the Maricopa County General Fund and the attorney General's Office.

According to the 2006 Arizona Youth Survey, 4.3 percent of Arizona youth ages 13-to-17 have tried meth – double the national average. The Arizona Meth Project campaign will target youth, young adults and their parents. Its results will be measured for outcomes.

To see the ads, visit the Arizona Meth Project website at [www.arizonamethproject.org](http://www.arizonamethproject.org). For more information, contact the Office of the First Lady at 928-871-7919 or Charolette James with the Navajo Nation Ft. Defiance Meth Task Force at 928-729-4470 or by e-mail at [charjames1215@yahoo.com](mailto:charjames1215@yahoo.com).

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