



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Nov. 17, 2006

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Navajo Division of Public Safety Director Samson Cowboy honored as 'Professional of the Year 2006' by NNALEA

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. – The Navajo Nation's public safety director has been honored as the 2006 "Professional of the Year" by the National Native American Law Enforcement Association.

Samson Cowboy, director of the Navajo Nation Division of Public Safety, received the award here Wednesday at the 14th annual NNALEA awards banquet.

Mr. Cowboy was recognized for outstanding professional leadership, greatly improving the emergency services of the Navajo Nation, enforcing partnerships through tribal, state and federal initiatives, and for spearheading the regional Homeland Security initiative.

"Here's my Homeland Security right here," Mr. Cowboy said, referring to his wife and daughter who appeared with him to accept the award. "It's a tough position that I have taken. You leave your family behind sometimes. You leave your home and you start working."

He said that besides his family, he could not accept such an award on his own behalf alone because of the supportive professional staff that assists him. He introduced his administrative assistant, Char Jim.

A major theme of the conference was the proliferation of methamphetamine throughout the nation and increasingly seen in native communities.

Earlier at the conference, Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., presented a keynote address, telling the

several hundred Native American police officers that their communities are safer because of their presence.



Navajo Nation Public Safety Division Director Samson Cowboy is presented with the National Native American Law Enforcement Association 2006 "Public Safety Professional of the Year" Award at its 14th annual conference in Albuquerque. Appearing with him is his wife Leatrice and his daughter Leatrice.

"Because you are out there, our communities are safer and our children and grandchildren have the opportunity to live normal lives," he said.

He also thanked the officers for protecting freedom at home while American forces fight to protect freedom and their native cultures in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“The war that we’re fighting is a big war and we need to be working together,” he said. “Working together, we have a chance.”

He challenged the group by asking, “How can we do better? Are we winning the war? Are we winning or are we losing?”

Meth is stealing the lives of children and the elderly alike, he said. On the Navajo Nation, a grandmother has been arrested for selling it.

He called on the group to begin to share information with each other and various agencies.

“The quicker we do it, the quicker we start winning this war,” he said. “We are all in it together. We need to make effective war.”

The culprits are not necessarily the human beings involved, he said, but the monsters of greed and violence that devours them and perpetuates the crimes.

Scott Burns, deputy director of state and local affairs for the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, echoed President Shirley’s comments, saying, “We are at war.”

He noted that of the 19.1 million drug users in the United States only 1.5 use methamphetamine but that because of its extreme addictiveness and resultant violence and crime it produces, it has become the greatest concern of law enforcement.

“It destroys the user, it destroys the family, it destroys the communities,” he said.

Among the other 2006 NNALEA awards presented was:

- The Unity Award to the Cocopah Tribe for outstanding leadership by a tribal government in establishing cooperative partnerships on the national, state, regional or local level.



Director Samson Cowboy and Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., are among the keynote speakers to be presented with Pendleton robes at the 14th annual NNALEA conference. Also appearing, from left to right, is Daryll Davis, BIA Director Pat Ragsdale, John Burns, Michael J. Sullivan, Carl Peed, N.M. U.S. Attorney David Iglesias, Police Chief Ray Schultz, and N.M. Indian Affairs Secretary Bennie Shendo.

- The Strength Award to the Fort Peck Tribes of Assiniboine and Sioux for outstanding major criminal investigation by a tribal department.
- The Dedicated Service to Indian Country Award, presented posthumously to the family of Anthony “Hoss” Silva.
- The Courage Award, presented to the family of the late Derrick Brun, school security guard at the Red Lake High School who died in the line of duty on March 21, 2005.
- The Courage Award for outstanding acts of bravery in the line of duty to four Red Lake Police Dept. officers responding to the tragedy at Red Lake High School. They are Investigator Clifford Martell, Conservation Officers Sgt. Patrick Graves, Cpl. Tyson Nelson and Geoffrey Pierre.
- The Chief of Police of the Year Award to Pleasant Point Police Dept. Chief Joseph Barnes.

The National Native American Law Enforcement Association is a non-profit organization founded in 1993. Its mission is to promote and foster mutual cooperation between Native law enforcement officers, agents, personnel, agencies, tribes, industry and the public.

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