



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 19, 2012

MEDIA CONTACTS
Jerome Clark | 928.637.5603
Carmenlita Chief | 928.255.3428
nlnb.communications@gmail.com

Law and Order Committee meet with Oglala Sioux Tribe representatives, shares information on Diné public safety and criminal justice systems

WINDOW ROCK – The 22nd Navajo Nation Council’s Law and Order Committee met with two members of the Oglala Sioux’s Law and Order Committee on Monday to share information on the way tribal criminal justice and public safety systems are organized and operate on the Navajo Nation.

This was the Oglala Sioux Tribe’s second visit with the Navajo committee.

Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Cornfields, Ganado, Jeddito, Kin Dah Łichíí, Steamboat) welcomed the Oglala Sioux delegation back to Navajoland.

“I’m hoping that your visit is one that is going to be meaningful, and that you will take back information that will help you as well,” stated Delegate Shepherd.

Approximately one year ago, the Oglala Sioux Tribe delegation traveled to Window Rock to discuss with members of the Navajo LOC how the northern tribal nation could improve public safety, law enforcement, and juLOCdicial tribal court systems for their communities in South Dakota.

“We got a lot of ideas from you last time, and we sure benefitted,” said Donn Fire Thunder, who is the council representative for the La Creek District of the Oglala Sioux Tribe.

Shortly after their first visit with the Navajo LOC, James “Toby” Big Boy, chairman of the Oglala Sioux Tribe’s Law and Order Committee, said his committee returned with ideas sparked by their dialogue with the Navajo LOC and immediately implement changes within their own council structure.

Some of the “major changes” Big Boy mentioned included the creation of a Speaker of Council position, much like the position held by Navajo Nation Speaker Johnny Naize.

In Monday morning’s discussion, the LOC organized presentations for Big Boy and Fire Thunder, along with Oglala Sioux Tribe attorney Jennifer Baker.

Among the topics discussed were the Tribal Law and Order Act, the benefits of enhancing the Navajo criminal code provisions, and how the nation is addressing the shortage of jail space through the expansion of corrections facilities on the Navajo Nation.

Delegate Shepherd credited the achievements stemming from efforts by public safety and judicial departments under their oversight to the improvement of communications between the Nation and federal entities such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Earlier that morning, Chairman Big Boy listened to a report that was considered by the Navajo LOC in which an internal compliance auditor with the Navajo judicial branch talked about his plans to improve collection procedures of court fines and fees.

Big Boy was impressed with how the Navajo Nation was working to improve this system because collection of fines and fees is a problematic issue for the Oglala Sioux Tribe.

“We appreciate the time you have taken to better your nation and better provide for your people,” said Delegate Shepherd.

As First Nations, we should all be working together to strengthen our sovereignty and protect our peoples through these efforts.”

###