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Law and Order Committee approves fund expenditure plan for fire safety services at Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort

WINDOW ROCK – On Monday, the Law and Order Committee approved a fund expenditure plan to allow the Navajo Nation Department of Fire and Rescue Services to provide fire, rescue, and pre-hospital care services at the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort.

Legislation sponsor, LOC vice chair Council Delegate Alton Joe Shepherd (Jeddito, Cornfields, Ganado, Kin Dah Lichii, Steamboat), said the NNFRS has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Navajo Nation Gaming Enterprise to provide safety services to the casino.

According to the MOA, the NNGE will deposit approximately \$6,000 on a monthly basis into an account established by the Office of the Controller, totaling approximately \$75,000 annually.

“The NNFRS is in need of resources for personnel, trainings, and updated fire safety equipment,” said Delegate Shepherd. “I am asking for the support of the [LOC] committee to approve this fund expenditure plan to meet the needs of the NNFRS.”

Navajo Nation Fire Department fire chief Larry Chee said that the NNFRS is also seeking external funding through grants and federal funding for fire safety programs.

“We are going after outside funding to aid us at the Twin Arrows Casino, and our ultimate goal is to have a new public safety [substation] constructed on site,” said Chee.

Speaking in support of the fund expenditure plan, LOC member Council Delegate Elmer Begay (Dilkon, Greasewood Springs, Indian Wells, Teesto, Whitecone) urged the NNFRS to seek additional funding for the general operations of the substation, and said it is important to educate the public regarding fire safety.

“After the fire station is in full operation, maybe the NNFRS can also provide fire safety training to the Navajo people at the Southwest Navajo Nation Fair, or even at other fairs throughout the Nation. We don’t have to limit it to just fairs, but as a regular training when the public requests for it,” added Delegate Begay.

The MOA will remain in effect as long as the NNGE conducts gaming at the site or until either party provides written notice of their intent to terminate the agreement.

At the end of the discussion, LOC members commended the NNFRS and fire chief for their continued advocacy of fire safety at the Twin Arrows Navajo Casino Resort, and stressed the importance of ensuring public safety at the highest level at the casino location, as well as the surrounding Navajo communities.

LOC members voted 3-0 to approve Legislation No. 0033-14.

The legislation now moves forward to the Budget and Finance Committee, who also serves as the final authority for the bill.

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