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Navajo President Shelly Delivers Long Anticipated FEMA Reimbursement Checks

EASTERN NAVAJO AGENCY, N.M. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly delivered reimbursement checks from the Federal Emergency Management Agency for Navajo chapters from disasters stemming from as far back as 2005.



Throughout two days, Navajo President Ben Shelly hand delivered FEMA reimbursement checks to 12 different New Mexico chapters including Casamero Lake Chapter (above). Casamero Lake Chapter received a check of about \$9,800.

“Our chapters have been waiting years to be reimbursed for money they spent for emergencies since 2005. I am happy to report that we have completed a task that has been plaguing the Navajo Nation for years,” President Shelly said.

President Shelly personally delivered checks to 12 chapters in Navajo Eastern Agency last Friday and on Monday. Chapters in other agencies received hand delivered checks by Navajo Department of Emergency Management staff.

The reimbursement checks varied in amount depending upon the amount of money chapters spent during the emergencies from 2005 through 2010. At least \$2.6 million is being reimbursed to chapters and the Navajo Nation government.

Operations Hashtlish, Monsoon and Snowfall are all part of the reimbursements of emergency spending, along with emergency spending from monsoonal floods of 2006.

In total, the Navajo Nation had 846 disaster projects that were reimbursed up to 75 percent of the total costs.



President Shelly handed a check worth about \$11,700 to Iyanbito Chapter Friday afternoon.

“I know this has been a long time in the making. I am pleased that our Department of Emergency Management was able to move forward and help chapters receive their money,” President Shelly said.

Navajo Department of Emergency Management Director Rose Whitehair said the oldest projects are being reimbursed first, then other larger then smaller projects is expected to be reimbursed.



President Shelly handed a check worth about \$31,000 to Manuelito Chapter.

“We have many checks for many chapters and we have been coordinating with all of them to disburse their checks,” Whitehair said.

The Navajo Department of Emergency Management received and coordinated help with FEMA personnel and volunteers earlier this year, which helped chapters and Navajo DEM complete

necessary paperwork to complete reimbursement applications.

“We are thankful for all the hard work FEMA and FEMA Corps did for us in the past few months. They have been very helpful and provided great insight,” Whitehair said.

She added though that the money that is being reimbursed from FEMA must be used to certain projects.

For some chapter workers, the reimbursements are recognition of keeping sound chapter financial records and allocating funds to their specific purpose.

“Some chapters have been waiting eight years,” said Michelle Bitsie, account maintenance specialist for Tsayatoh Chapter. She also worked for Coyote Canyon Chapter.

President Shelly handed out checks to Tsayatoh, Manuelito, Red Rock, Churchrock, Iyanbito, Mariano Lake, Pinedale, Smith Lake, Thoreau, Casamero Lake, Crownpoint and Becenti Chapters.

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