



## President Shelly issues executive order for E-911 services



*Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly signs the executive order to move the E-911 initiative forward. (Photo by Rick Abasta)*

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—On Aug. 8, President Shelly issued an executive order providing the backbone for enhanced 911 services throughout the Navajo Nation.

The organizational basis for the services was from a recent Navajo Nation Telecommunications Regulatory Commission report and from recommendations by the Navajo Division of Public Safety Tiger Team.

The executive order emphasizes

collaboration, which will involve tribal divisions, departments and programs working in cooperation with commercial partners.

President Shelly's support and advocacy for the E-911 improvements are finally coming to fruition.

"The safety of the Navajo people and everyone living on the Nation is of utmost importance to us. Having access to an effective emergency communication system is the right of every

person on the Nation, no one should worry that their call will go unanswered," he said.

Joining the effort for E-911 services across the Nation is Frontier Communications.

"As the primary provider for communication services for the Nation, Frontier is pleased to be part of the 911 effort," said Joe Hausner, general manager of Frontier Communications.

He said the necessary infrastructure is in place to ensure that people living on the Nation will be able to access 911 services on demand.

Another commercial partner is 4QTRS, which has been involved with the E-911 initiative since the start.

Teresa Richardson is director of sales and marketing for 4QTRS and said, "Everyone at 4QTRS is pleased to be an integral part of improving Navajo access to emergency services and we look forward to being a partner in enhancing the quality of life for those on the Nation."

The NDPS 911 Tiger Team was created and tasked to plan, design, implement and manage all aspects of the E-911 program. Over the past four months the team has developed operational parameters.

Three main tasks were identified for the initial phase of the project: evaluation of the existing 911 capabilities and services to the Nation; creation of a service plan based upon the findings, including the technical capabilities of commercial carriers; and selection of a E-911 system.

The aforementioned service plan is scheduled for completion

by Sept. 21.

John Billison, director of NDPS, said the issues with the current E-911 system reflect the lack of access for a viable public safety communication system.

"Residents and visitors of the Nation deserve access that is intuitive, effective and provides direct contact with first responders whose job is to protect them," he said.

Ivan Tsosie is the chief of police and is working closely with Billison for administering all aspects of public safety for the E-911 program.

NNTRC is the regulatory arm and will monitor all aspects associated with the program.

Public safety statistics report that 175,000 people reside in the Navajo Nation who may at any given be in need of emergency services. Sixty percent of homes lack landlines and 53 percent of the Nation has wireless coverage.

The need to improve the existing public safety communications system is evident. Within the next 45 days, NDPS will provide progress reports on the E-911.

The biggest stumbling block for the E-911 endeavor has been the lack of Public Safety Answering Points on the Nation.

The Tiger Team is looking at establishing PSAPs and extending services to Ramah, Zuni Pueblo, Hopi Tribe and White Mesa Paiute in Utah.

Billison said reaching out to these neighboring communities would address a shared responsibility of public safety and emergency response needed on all Indian nations.

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