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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

President Begaye, Vice President Nez immediately respond to Tohajiilee emergency



President Russell Begaye quickly responded to a declaration of emergency issued by Tohajiilee Chapter due to lack of water services for 90 housing units at an NHA subdivision on May 15. He will be visiting the chapter on May 17 to ensure their concerns are alleviated until the water well is repaired. (Photo by Rick Abasta)

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz.—Shortly before 6 p.m. on May 15, the Tohajiilee Chapter issued a declaration of emergency due to lack of water for 90 housing units operated by Navajo Housing Authority.

Chapter president Raymond Secatero stated, “The community

of Tohajiilee is declaring a state of emergency for the 90 homes that were impacted.”

President Russell Begaye responded immediately and instructed Office of the President and Vice President staff to work with NHA and the Navajo Nation Department of

Emergency Management to address the crisis.

“We have our emergency personnel assisting with the water crisis. The Department of Emergency Management has been contacted and we have water delivered in the morning,” said President Begaye.

“We encourage residents to use caution and remain safe during this emergency. The situation is being addressed,” he said.

Vice President Jonathan Nez agreed and said residents must take a proactive role in addressing the situation.

Vice President Nez said, “We encourage residents to check on each other. In an emergency like this, we must execute and recognize self-sufficiency and self-reliance.”

The immediate response to the emergency has ensured that residents will have water before noon on Sat.

Priscilla Tsinigine, housing director for the NHA Tohajiilee housing management office, said water well number 5 was not working and that it

would take a few days for repairs by the Tohajiilee Water Department.

“In coordination with the Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management and Indian Health Services, we have located water truck,” Tsinigine said.

In the meantime, NHA has setup 24 portable toilets at the housing subdivision for residents.

Rose Whitehair, director of NNDEM, said, “Navajo Tribal Utility Authority will be sending out a water tanker in the morning, although east Tohajiilee is not within in their jurisdiction.”

“We are thankful for the cooperation of all who responded,” she added.

President Begaye commended the participating agencies for the swift response and assured residents that water is on the way.

The NHA housing management office anticipates repair of the water well to be completed in a few days.