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PRESIDENT BEGAYE APPLAUDS THE ALERT SYSTEM TASK FORCE FOR FAST TRACKING DEVELOPMENT OF NOTIFICATION SYSTEM

WINDOW ROCK, ARIZ-Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye applauded the Alert System Task Force for moving quickly in developing a 911 system, an Amber Alert notification system and an overall emergency alert system for the Navajo Nation.

“This coming Friday our task force will receive equipment that will assist them in training and implementing an Amber Alert system here on the Nation,” President Begaye said.

The training for all districts will begin on Monday, May 23.

“By next week we will have trained individuals who will be able to access to these emergency service systems,” he said.

The Alert System Task Force met today, May 18, to address logistical concerns in developing an emergency notification system on the Navajo Nation.

The Task Force is made up of members of the Division of Public Safety, the Department of Emergency Management, the Division of Natural Resources and the Navajo Telecommunications Regulatory Commission

Developing this type of system from the ground up is task that requires the consideration of departmental and infrastructural resources and capabilities.

“This isn’t a two department initiative. It’s a Navajo Nation wide initiative,” said Theresa Hopkins, Executive Director of the Navajo Telecommunications Regulatory Commission. “We will continue to expand our reach to include other pertinent departments.”

The primary focus of the Task Force is to develop the ability to send out notifications regionally while working with all telecommunication carriers and communication services.

“We need to invest our efforts into developing this regional alert system. Today we identified issues that will become part of our plan. We currently organizing our departments and resources to strategize this notification system,” said Jesse Delmar, Director of the Division of Public Safety.

On a national scale, the Task Force is looking to develop agreements with national broadcast services to distribute these notices.

Harland Cleveland, Emergency Services Coordinator with Emergency Management, said the Task Force is applying for certification to be a part of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS).

“The federal government utilizes this alert system. Through IPAWS the Nation would be able to activate alert disseminators like the Emergency Alert System, the Wireless Alert System and tap into the NOAA Weather Radio System among other systems,” he said.

The Task Force is currently working through drafting an Emergency Notification Policy and User Agreement as a part of the notification system.

“The Task Force has been mandated to have a system in place within 60 days,” said Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye. “They have committed to the schedule of meeting weekly and judging by this morning’s meeting, they are on track in getting the system developed.”

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