Navajo Nation responds to communities impacted by heavy rainfall and flooding


SHEEPSPRINGS, N.M. – On Wednesday, Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez and Navajo Nation Division of Transportation Director Garret Silversmith visited Sheepsprings, N.M., which was one of several communities on the Navajo Nation that was impacted by heavy rainfall that led to flooding in some areas on Tuesday evening.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, Sheepsprings Chapter President Brian T. Yazzie, and Vice President Louise Charley provided updates and heard from local residents about the conditions of roadways and residences. Under the Navajo Department of Health, three Community Health Representatives were visiting the homes of elderly and high-risk residents to
ensure they have food, water, medication, and other essential items to last until the muddy condition subside.

Firefighters from the Navajo Nation’s Ojo Amarillo Fire Department were also visiting homes and delivering bottled water and food items to families. NDOT Director Silversmith said that road crews are assessing the damage to roadways and prioritizing roads that are heavily used and those that lead to the homes of elderly and disabled residents. The crews will be able to do more repairs once the heavy mud begins to dry. NTUA utility workers were also in the area providing assistance to families that lost power or water to their homes.

“The weather forecasts indicate more rainfall on the Navajo Nation this week, so we continue to urge everyone to be prepared, plan ahead, and not to enter flooded areas by foot or vehicle. Today, we spoke to one family that said they refrained from entering flooded areas even though they saw their vehicles floating away because they knew their lives meant more and that the vehicles could be replaced. We have many men and women on the ground checking on families and helping to mitigate the situations. We are grateful to all of the Sheepsprings Chapter officials, residents, and Delegate Crotty for working together and being proactive,” said President Nez.

The Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management was also responding to other calls for assistance in other communities including Chilchinbeto, Ariz., where an elderly couple was stranded due to flooding and impassable roads.

On Aug. 1, the Commission declared a state of emergency due to flooding caused by the recent monsoon rains. The declaration allows local chapters to access additional resources to help mitigate the impacts of heavy rainfall. Emergency Management strongly recommends that all Navajo Nation entities implement their emergency response plans and funding.

Weather warnings remain in effect for the Navajo Nation this week due to periods of intense rainfall. If chapters need assistance with response efforts, please email the Navajo Nation Division of Community Development at MonsoonRelief@NavajoChapters.org. The point of contact for the Sheepsprings Chapter is Andrius Begay who can be reached by phone at (505) 732-5408.

“The blessings of rain come with challenges, but we have many people who are coming together to assist one another. Our emergency response personnel continue to urge our Navajo citizens to stay safe and to be alert. Every household should have an emergency preparedness kit that includes water, food, medication, radio, flashlight, batteries, first aid kit, whistle, pet supplies, and important documents. By taking the time to prepare an emergency kit, you will be better prepared in emergency situations,” stated Vice President Myron Lizer.

The Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President, Navajo Division of Transportation, and Navajo Nation Department of Emergency Management will continue coordinating with county officials, chapter officials, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and state emergency officials to provide additional resources and updates. Weather-related information is available through the National Weather Service website at: https://www.weather.gov/.

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