



25th Navajo Nation Council

25TH NAVAJO NATION COUNCIL OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER

MEDIA CONTACT:

nnlb.communications@gmail.com

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25th Navajo Nation Council continues offering support for missing and murdered Diné relatives



Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty chairs the Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives Task Force for the 25th Navajo Nation Council.

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz., – The 25th Navajo Nation Council’s Missing and Murdered Diné Relatives (MMDR) Task Force, chaired by Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, recently convened to address pressing issues related to missing and murdered Diné people. The discussion highlighted the need for greater collective action, cultural sensitivity, and strong community involvement.

The agenda included a comprehensive report from DNA Legal Services and the introduction of newly appointed Task Force representatives, Janet and Van Gerry.

The Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Coalition provided updates on upcoming events, advocacy training, and mutual aid initiatives for affected families.

Discussions also focused on the challenges in manpower and coordination for search and rescue operations, with recommendations for drone funding and community training. The committee is actively seeking additional community representatives, particularly from urban areas and the LGBTQI community, to bring diverse perspectives to the task force.

Chair Crotty underscored the importance of data collection and analysis, interagency

collaboration, and the integration of Navajo cultural values and legal frameworks.

“When we identify an area of concern, then we’ll identify the challenge, and then how are we going to address the challenge, and who’s responsible, and then how are we going to move that forward?” said Chair Crotty.

The strategies aim to work toward justice and healing for affected families. Proposals were made to enhance search and rescue efforts, improve community responses, and involve a broader range of perspectives in addressing these critical issues.

The report from DNA Legal Services highlighted the vital role of legal support for families of missing and murdered individuals. DNA provides free legal aid, including services in family law, consumer rights, and employment assistance in the Navajo Nation. The presentation included an overview of their services and highlighted the development of a victims’ rights advocacy practice, including creating fact sheets on guardianship processes to support affected families.

The Department of Emergency Management outlined their plans for using drones in search and rescue operations, stressing the need for increased manpower and funding. Discussions are ongoing regarding the potential merger of the sexual assault and domestic violence prevention task forces or the creation of separate but coordinated task forces, to streamline efforts and enhance resource coordination.

The Task Force also highlighted the Missing Persons Toolkit, which is designed to help families and communities navigate the complexities surrounding missing and murdered Indigenous relatives. This comprehensive resource includes guidelines on legal rights, search and rescue procedures, community response plans, and support services.

Efforts to identify additional community representatives for the task force and to explore funding for legal support pilot programs will continue. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 25, starting at 8:30 a.m. and will be conducted in a hybrid format, allowing both in-person and Zoom participation.

This meeting reaffirmed the MMDR task force’s commitment to a collaborative and comprehensive response, integrating legal, community, and public safety efforts to support families affected by domestic violence and missing relatives. The continued integration of data and trends is crucial in improving prevention and response strategies.

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