

NPD holds first community listening session

Written by Staff Reports

Friday, 07 December 2018 09:11



Public voices concerns about lack of officers and response time

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WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – The Navajo Police Department heard from the community Dec. 1, during the first of several listening sessions scheduled by the Office of Chief of Police.

The sessions were open to the public with the intent to provide the people an opportunity to ask questions and voice their concerns to their Navajo Police Department Chief of Police and the district command staff.

The purpose of the sessions, according to Chief of Police Phillip Francisco, is to provide a platform for the public to give their comments and to hear what NPD is doing to address their concerns.

The listening session is the first of its kind for the department and has been one of Francisco's priorities.

As part of his efforts to improve Navajo Police Department, Francisco said he would like the data collected to be used to improve the future of the Navajo Police Department and to become a department that is responsive, reliable and trustworthy.

"We are currently working on doing an overall assessment of the department and a part of that evaluation comes from the people we serve," Francisco said. "We need to hear from the public, the good and the bad in order to become a better department."

Those in attendance had an opportunity to meet and speak directly to their district leadership and voice their concerns, which varied in spectrum. Francisco and his command staff addressed the concerns during the second half of the public discussion.

One prevalent question was the lack of officers and response time, which Francisco addressed by introducing the public to the current Navajo Police Academy recruits.

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To address the shortage of patrol officers, Francisco and the police academy leadership prioritized the reestablishment of the Navajo Police Academy early this year, a major accomplishment since the closure of the Toney Navajo Police Academy in 2013.

Because of the Navajo police academy, NPD welcomed 12 new officers in June. Today, there are 19 police recruits who are halfway through their academy training in Chinle, Ariz.

“The Navajo police recruits were invited to participate in the session to hear from the people in their communities and to know what they expect from their NPD officers,” Francisco said.

The lack of officers is a contributing factor to the response time. NPD oversees seven police districts across the Navajo Nation, a land area estimated at 27,000 square miles.

The community listening sessions were also an effort to address the lack of communication between the public and their law enforcement department.

To improve external communication, the department hired a public information officer to oversee community relation efforts and improve community outreach initiative.

NPD is also working to establish an online complaint and commendation form that can be accessible to the public.

Francisco said the department’s making progress and is looking toward the future.

“I want to thank my command leadership and all the support staff who work collectively to reach our department goals and vision,” Francisco said.

Navajo Police Department cancelled a listening session in Indian Wells and Cameron, Ariz.

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Dec. 2 due to weather and road conditions and will reschedule a future visit.

This is the first series of listening sessions to be held on the Navajo Nation and additional dates and locations will be scheduled early next year.

The next listening sessions are scheduled for Dec. 8 in Kayenta, Ariz. and Shiprock, N.M.

The listening sessions will be live-streamed on the police department's Facebook page for those unable to attend the sessions in person.

Staff Reports