

Navajo Police to receive new police vehicles

Written by gallupsun
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PHOENIX — The Navajo Police are going to receive 70 new vehicles in the next 18 months.

The Office of the President and Vice President Chief of Staff Patrick Sandoval and Navajo Nation Director of Public Safety recently inspected the first 22 police vehicles that are being prepared for delivery to the Navajo Nation.

“They’re beautiful and almost ready to get here,” Sandoval said. “The vehicles that are about to be replaced have more than 220,000 miles. We generally have to replace them at a higher mileage because of the supply and shipping bottleneck that was created by the pandemic.”

Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren said besides recruitment and retention of newly trained and experienced police officers, giving them the best equipment to perform in the remotest, most isolated, and difficult environments in the country has to be a priority.

“Becoming a police officer is not an easy thing, especially here,” he said. “They are our frontline warriors, protectors, often the first medical aid and counselor to the people who call them. At a minimum they need a safe, functional, fully equipped unit to respond, and we’re getting those for them.”

Deputy Chief of Police of Auxiliary Services Leonard Redhorse said NPD has not deployed brand new vehicles besides those purchased before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We have not received a brand new delivery of field vehicles since about 2021,” he said. “Those are the vehicles that are provided to police officers on the frontline. Through the work of Chief of Staff Sandoval and Division Director Anderson, we were able to make an additional 13 vehicle purchases.”

The new vehicles are SUVs with high-tech equipment inside and out. That includes superior, brighter emergency lighting for drivers to better see police officers making traffic stops, better illumination sets as their incident lights, and upgraded hotspot technology so officers can file

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reports from the field and access the National Crime databases to decrease time traveling to and spent at district offices.

“This is to promote the idea that a police officer’s primary office environment is in the field,” Redhorse said. “In addition to that, we also want to ensure that the vehicle we’re providing to the officers is a safe vehicle so there are several safety features.”

He said the vehicles are coming from dealers in both Chandler, Arizona and Albuquerque because of supply, parts, and shipping delays in the aftermath of the pandemic.

“We were working with a vendor to add push bars to those vehicles,” Redhorse said. “That is proactive to mitigate long-term impacts on our fleet. Whenever our vehicles have impacted either livestock or wildlife, those vehicles are out of commission at a body shop anywhere from 6 to 18 months. Adding push bars will significantly reduce that time.”

Even with these vehicles on the way, Redhorse said NPD is preparing the financial requests for larger bulk purchases.

“The vehicles that are locked in right now, that’s going to be the first preliminary group that comes out. The unfortunate thing is when it comes to police vehicles, you’re only so lucky as to what the manufacturing bottleneck can give you. So we have to order them in waves,” he said.

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