



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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Navajo Vice President Ben Shelly visits Forest Lake Tuesday to assess conditions as EOC launches 'Operation Grey Mud'

FOREST LAKE, Ariz. – Navajo Nation Vice President Ben Shelly visited the Forest Lake area Monday and Tuesday to assess road conditions and establish an Incident Command Post at the Forest Lake Chapter House.

“The health and welfare of the area’s residents are important, especially for the kids and elders that are stranded,” the Vice President said. “Road and health conditions are important areas we need to focus on.”

Within the past few weeks, melting snow and warmer weather have created huge difficulties for families living off paved roads in remote areas. Extreme muddy conditions have caused the Pinon Unified School District to cancel many of its bus routes. Many of the area’s 1,320 students are still unable to attend school.

On Tuesday, Vice President Shelly met with Peabody Western Coal Co. officials to discuss the use of Peabody Coal’s “red dog” gravel for temporary emergency road repairs. Peabody agreed to temporarily provide “red dog”

gravel to meet the emergency needs of the local community.

The Navajo Nation Division of Health’s Bio-Terrorism Program also began “Operation Grey Mud.” The program is coordinating with Community Health Representatives, Navajo Nation Law Enforcement Officers, Pinon Unified School District, and Navajo County officials to conduct and complete an emergency needs assessment.

Five assessment teams will evaluate conditions in the Forest Lake, Black Mesa, Kits’iili, Hard Rock, and Pinon Chapters. Assessments teams will identify roads needing improvement and complete health welfare checks. Once an assessment is completed, the Incident Command Post will coordinate to identify needed resources.

For more information, please contact Selena Manychildren, Public Information Officer, at the Forest Lake Chapter House, (928) 677-3252/3347.

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