



24th Navajo Nation Council

Office of the Speaker

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Navajo Department of Aging and Long Term Care Services Receives New Vans

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Seniors across the Navajo Nation will have safer and more comfortable transportation options after today's commissioning of new vans for the Navajo Nation Department of Aging and Long Term Care Services (DALTCS).

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty (Beclabito, Cove, Gadi'i'áhi/To'Koi, Red Valley, Tooh Haltsooi, Toadlena/Two Grey Hills, Tsé ahnóoz't'l'i), who sponsored the legislation that funded the new vans, made the following statement following today's events.

"The Navajo Nation Council's goal is to expand services to our elders, including elders who have mobility challenges and need additional adaptive support devices to access food and other critical services. Leadership recognizes more funding is needed to stabilize our senior programming."

Overall, 36 new vans and food delivery vehicles have been procured and will be delivered to the department. They will be distributed across the five agency operations of DALTCS according to the age, mileage, and safety concerns of existing vehicles.

The vans come in three different passenger configurations, supporting 10, 12, or 15 seniors, and have substantial trunk storage space for canes, walkers and wheelchairs. Additionally, the vans have removable seats that allow drivers to tailor the seating configuration to the needs of the senior clients.

The vehicles were procured with funding appropriated from the Undesignated Unreserved Fund Balance through legislation CAP-30-18, which appropriated approximately \$2.9 million for a larger set of senior services, including food purchases and an elder needs assessment.

Council Delegate Nathaniel Brown (Chilchinbeto, Dennehotso, Kayenta), a co-sponsor of CAP-30-18, also proposed submitting funding proposals to the states of Arizona and Utah to mirror the successful funding and programs in New Mexico. He also issued his support for stabilizing the funding needed to ensure DALTCS is able to replace unsafe, older high-mileage vans on a yearly basis.

"The vans have mileage parameters. We need to acquire funds and set up a mechanism to ensure we can replace the vans after they reach their mileage limits," Delegate Crotty explained to the assembled staff and leadership.

Delegate Crotty also noted that New Mexico Governor Michele Lujan Grisham (D) promised to keep every senior center open in New Mexico.

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