



News Release

National American Indian Housing Council
April 12, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kim Hayes, 202-454-0931 or khayes@naihc.net
Jane DeMarines, 202-454-0911 or jdemarines@naihc.net

NAIHC Methamphetamine Prevention & Detection Training Praised During Senate Hearing on Meth Abuse in Indian Country

Washington, DC—April 12, 2006—Over a year ago the National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC) took a major step in addressing the growing epidemic of Methamphetamine abuse in Indian Country with prevention and detection training. NAIHC is still the only Native organization offering this training in Indian Country, and on April 5 the organization was praised for its work at the first Senate Committee on Indian Affairs hearing on Meth, which was called by Sen. John McCain (R-AZ).

In testimony National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) First Vice President Jefferson Keel praised NAIHC's efforts in this area and called for maintained funding of NAIHC's programs. NAIHC is requesting \$5 million for training and technical assistance, which will include Meth courses. NAIHC collaborated with NCAI on their testimony for the hearing, which noted that after participating in NAIHC Meth training in Juneau, Alaska, a maintenance man working in a hotel recognized the existence of a Meth lab, based on what he had just learned, and contacted authorities.

“As Vice-President Keel said in his testimony, many of our tribal Housing Authorities recognized the problem of Meth labs long before anyone else,” said NAIHC Chairman Chester Carl. “As such, NAIHC responded and took the lead in developing and providing extensive training on both the identification of and safety concerns surrounding Meth labs.”

NAIHC Expands Training to Meet Demand

What started as a small one-time training elicited such demand that in the last year alone NAIHC has provided **49 different training sessions** to more than **2700 people**. Responding to the flood of requests NAIHC expanded its training, launching a new Crime Prevention and Safety Program and hiring a full-time staff person, former police officer **Jay Barton**, to manage this program. This program entails training and the development of additional new courses designed to help tribes and their tribally designated housing entities (TDHEs) deal with the growing meth problem in Indian housing. NAIHC is also now working with a Native-owned Hazmat company to provide training to certify tribes themselves for clean-up so they can provide the services in-house.

Physical and Emotional Toll Great

Physical symptoms of Meth use can include accelerated heartbeat, elevated blood pressure and irreversible damage to blood vessels in the brain, respiratory disorders, loss of appetite and sweating. Prolonged Meth abuse can cause paranoia, hallucinations, and delusions of parasites or insects on the skin which cause the user to aggressively scratch and pick at their own skin, producing horrific sores. According to the Indian Health Service, Meth use has grown steadily since 2000, and 1.7% of the Indian population was using Meth in 2004.

“The effects of Meth on the Indian communities go beyond the physical effects on the user, but are also hurting the people around them,” said NAIHC Executive Director **Gary Gordon**. “According to tribal leaders testifying at the Senate hearing, Meth addiction is causing a rise in homicides, aggravated assaults, rape, child abuse and neglect, and other crimes.”

####

*NAIHC assists tribes and tribal housing entities in reaching their self-determined goals of providing culturally relevant, decent, safe, sanitary, and quality affordable housing for Native people in Indian communities and Alaska Native villages.
NAIHC...A Tradition of Native American Housing www.naihc.net*