

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | October 5, 2021

NDHP and MHA Nation Sign Mutual Aid Agreement

NARRATIVE: On Monday, Oct. 4, 2021 an agreement was signed between the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation (MHA Nation) and the North Dakota Highway Patrol. This agreement will enhance law enforcement in the areas of emergency calls, requests for mutual aid and other law enforcement functions on the Fort Berthold Reservation. The agreement does not expand arrest authority. It does provide a legal means for officers to intervene during certain situations, regardless if the individual is a tribal member at Fort Berthold until local law enforcement is available.

MHA Nation chairman Mark Fox stated, "The bottom line is safer communities on the reservation." He noted that combined law enforcement resources will make it a lot easier to get things done in order to combat illegal drugs, violence, and traffic crashes on the nearly one-million-acre reservation.

In his remarks, Governor Doug Burgum recalled hearing about the jurisdictional issues when he and Lt. Gov. Brent Sanford first took office in 2016 and began meeting with tribal leaders. "Our top priority and our most sacred responsibility in government is and should always be the safety of our citizens." He went on to say, "This agreement today extends that care and concern to enhance the safety of our citizens, strengthening our state-tribal relationship and also our county-tribal relationships with that mutual understanding. ... Thanks to this agreement, the future looks brighter and safer. This is absolutely a step forward for the counties, for the state and for the tribe, and we're deeply grateful to everybody who made it possible."

Initial meetings focused on history, relationships, and the status of law enforcement services for those living on or traveling at MHA Nation. Initial discussions led to two legislative

changes: HB 1234 during the 2019 Legislative Session and HB 1126 during the 2021 session. After passage of both of the North Dakota laws, the MHA Judiciary Committee began work on a resolution to enter an agreement with the North Dakota Highway Patrol. The resolution, sponsored by Councilwoman and Judiciary Chair Judy Brugh, was passed by the MHA Tribal Business Council in July 2021. An extensive legal review was completed in August 2021 by the North Dakota Attorney General's Office and MHA Nation's legal counsel.

NDHP Colonel Brandon Solberg commented the historic agreement ...“may have taken time to work out, but the commitment and dedication of all involved parties will truly enhance the safety of all of our citizens.”

The agreement was signed by MHA Chairman Mark Fox, Governor Doug Burgum, Colonel Brandon Solberg, and TAT Police Chief Marty Foote and takes effect immediately.



MHA Nation Chairman Mark Fox, left; and Governor Doug Burgum, sign the mutual aid agreement while NDHP Colonel Brandon Solberg and TAT Police Chief Marty Foote look on.



Pictured l-r: MHA Nation Councilwoman Judy Brugh; MHA Nation Chairman Mark Fox; Governor Doug Burgum; NDHP Colonel Brandon Solberg; and TAT Police Chief Marty Foote.

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