

FEMA, Cherokee Nation Sign Historic Agreement that Will Help Disaster Survivors

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WASHINGTON -- Leaders of FEMA and the Cherokee Nation signed an agreement on Jan. 15 that will enable the Tribal Nation to deploy in support of FEMA's operations during disasters, the first such agreement ever signed.

The Intergovernmental Service Agreement (IGSA) is a formal, binding contract. Under the agreement, FEMA's Supplemental Response Team (SRT) program is able to deploy to the Cherokee Nation's Incident Management Team, giving it the opportunity to integrate with federal response. The partnership will also create new opportunities for tribal emergency managers to increase their capacity and capabilities to respond on the federal level, which allows them to bring those skills back to their own communities.

The agreement was signed by Justin Knighten, FEMA Associate Administrator for the Office of External Affairs and Chuck Hoskin, Jr., Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation.

"This intergovernmental agreement with the Cherokee Nation's embodies the spirit of 'Gadugi,' or 'everyone helping each other,'" said Deanne Criswell, FEMA Administrator. "I am so grateful for the Cherokee Nation's partnership and I am confident that this agreement will improve our ability to reach and support survivors during disaster response."

"This agreement is a testament to the strength and expertise of the Cherokee Nation Emergency Management team," said Hoskin, Jr. "Through this collaborative effort, we are stepping up to meet the challenges of an increasingly unpredictable world. By bringing together resources and leveraging the skills of our Incident Management Teams, we're not only fulfilling our responsibility to protect our communities but also contributing to the broader mission of saving lives and restoring hope across the country."



The Supplemental Response Team program's mission is to expand FEMA's ability to respond to disasters by mobilizing our country's best while building the capability and capacity of state, local, Tribal Nation and territorial incident management teams.

FEMA currently works with two other SRTs, New York and New Jersey. However, those two teams are activated through mission assignments. New Jersey plans to also sign a more formal IGSA with FEMA in the near future, along with other teams across the country.

