

## **Operation White Tornado hits Navajo County May 19, 2010**

Last year, Navajo County volunteer emergency responders from all over the county came together to train with a mock disaster designed to show how the various groups integrate together. This year the groups took a different approach. This time around the groups themselves integrated with each other and moved from station to station to not only learn about what each group did, but also from each other.

Over 70 participants converged at the Northern Arizona Training Center in Taylor on May 15, including CERT teams from all over the county, the Navajo County Sheriff CERT team, the Sheriff Auxiliary Volunteers, Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services, the Civil Air Patrol, and members of the Taylor, Snowflake, and Heber-Overgaard Fire Departments.

"This year we have done a CERT rodeo. We have mixed the groups up this year so that they can plan and learn about what each other do," explained Catrina Roe, representative from Navajo County Emergency Management. "This program is designed to help the volunteers of Navajo County prepare for any disaster that might come up."

The incident commander of the event was Snowflake Fire Chief Pat Hancock, who explained that it is the job of incident command to ensure that information is available to each group, such as how the weather is affecting the event. Executive director and PIO Larry Dunagan stated that the event had gone well.

"There are volunteers in Navajo County that volunteer to help in all first responder agencies and situations," he stated. "They give their time and train without pay. There are groups that give their time to get ready and be prepared for any situation." He went on to explain that this was an opportunity for the groups to learn what the other groups do, from security to communications.

"It's a chance to talk to each other and be exposed to all of the other teams."