



“We hope we will not be bothered with it much longer”

Responding to the 1918 flu pandemic in the Siletz community

By Peter Hatch, Cultural Resources Technician/Historical Research

Note: I do not know what will be happening by the time you read this. Personally, drawing inspiration from the strength and resilience of our ancestors helps reassure me, as I hope this story will

help you. Our friend Steve Wyatt, recently retired from the Lincoln County Historical Society, found the first old Lincoln County Leader article on this topic and was kind enough to pass it on, so special thanks goes to him.

The end of 1918 brought a lot of hopeful news to Siletz. The Great War (World War I) had just ended, so the parents of surviving Siletz soldiers anxiously awaited their boys as they made their slow way home on troop ships and trains.

Per capita payments, proceeds from the sale of some tracts of reservation land, were about to clear government red tape – offering struggling Tribal families much-needed relief. At the same moment though, our little community was staring down the barrel of a worldwide crisis, one that would cause even more suffering and death than the Great War - the “Spanish flu.”

It didn’t come from Spain. Some scientists think it started in China; others suggest Kansas. Wherever it started, this

new flu strain spread unchecked and had severe new symptoms, killing perhaps 2-3% of patients, about 10 times the rate of regular seasonal flu.

In three waves between April 1918 and July 1919 it leapt around the world and brought havoc to every continent. All told, the disease killed perhaps 675,000 Americans and at least 40 million people around the world. As it staggered East

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Courtesy photo from Coquille Thompson: Athabaskan Witness by Lionel Youst

Agnes Newberry Thompson, a nurse during the flu pandemic of 1918

Tribe’s COVID-19 Response

The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians is heeding recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and multiple state and federal agencies. Beginning March 17, 2020, until further notice, the Siletz Tribe continues to provide essential services through alternate means and has closed all government offices to walk-in clients.

Tribal members and clients can access essential services via the telephone, email or regular mail. Non-essential services, meetings and appointments are being rescheduled for a later date.

The Siletz Community Health Clinic is open for critical services, but ill patients are asked to call the clinic to enable medical staff to triage patients prior to being seen. Patients can call the clinic at 541-444-1030 or 800-648-0449. All non-critical care through the clinic is being rescheduled.

Chinook Winds Casino Resort (CWCR) has closed its doors for two weeks. During this time, staff will conduct a deep clean in preparation for its reopening. For more information about Chinook Winds Casino Resort, please check the casino’s website at chinookwindscasino.com for updated details.

The Siletz Tribal Council, Tribal administration, CWCR staff, Siletz Tribal Gaming Commission, Siletz Tribal Business Corporation and all our Tribal offices throughout the state encourage everyone to stay home if possible, practice social distancing, assist one another as needed during these unprecedented times and stay safe.

Tribe announces new acting general manager

Longtime General Manager Brenda Bremner is no longer with the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. Brenda first started working for the Siletz Tribe in 1993 and had served as the general manager since 1999. Brenda has been involved in many aspects of Tribal government, economic development and numerous boards and committees representing the Tribe. The Siletz Tribe wishes her well in her future endeavors.

In order to provide for continuity of government services, Tina Retasket, assistant general manager, has been appointed acting general manager. She can be reached at 541-444-2532 or 800-922-1399.

Ready to fill out your Census form? Online or on paper – it’s time to be counted

Two hundred thirty years in the making, the 2020 Census survey is here. Beginning March 12, the Census Bureau mailed invitations to go online to fill out the survey. Less than 5% of people will receive a paper form.

Five hundred nine households in the Siletz Reservation area have their mail sent to a P.O. Box. They will NOT receive the invitation. But it’s critical that they complete the survey.

The Siletz Complete Count Committee will mail invitations to them asking them to go online and complete the survey. The committee is unable to send out official paper survey forms.

Every 10 years, the Census Bureau conducts a count of everyone living in the U.S. The results of the survey are used to assign the number of members of the

House of Representatives and, of increasing importance; the results are used to determine which programs are to receive federal money.

Oregon will get an additional representative if everyone gets counted. That means more political power in Washington, D.C.

Head Start and schools, roads and transit, WIC, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and SNAP, school lunch programs, libraries, foster care and treatment programs all receive federal funding based on the number of people the Census has counted.



If a school child doesn’t get counted, there won’t be enough money provided for school lunches. The same is true for the other programs.

The count won’t be corrected until the next survey – 10 years from now!

There are programs for American Indians that use the Census count. American Indians were undercounted by 5% in the 2010 survey. That is a critical loss to funding for needed programs that can be fixed if everyone gets counted this time.

Your personal census data is safe and secure. By law, it cannot be shared with

any other federal or state agency. There are harsh penalties for violations, up to \$250,000 and five years in jail.

The requirement to complete the forms online might cause difficulties for some. Call 844-330-2020 (toll free) for help with filling out your Census form by phone.

Planned kickoff events on April 1 have been postponed. Be alert for new online event(s) through the Tribe’s Facebook pages. Prizes and gifts will be available for those who complete the survey.

For those people who don’t respond, Census Bureau workers eventually will come to your door asking you to complete the form. Let’s avoid that!

If you have any questions about the 2020 Census, call 844-330-2020.