

Telecom, Public Safety implement ham radio system

Over the past 10 years, the Warm Springs Public Safety Branch and emergency response manager Dan Martinez have been working to fund and build out the public safety radio network on the reservation.

This is critical for the protection of the people and visitors on the reservation, enabling two-way, inter-operable communications for first-responders.

The team has built new towers, shared with the Warm Springs Telecom, to place the necessary equipment.

They have purchased new repeaters, hand-helds, and mobile equipment, meeting the new federal standards.

These upgrades ensure inter-operable communications between the various Warm Springs departments, including police and fire, and outside agencies.

The team secured the purchase of new dispatch consoles and software, and created a new inter-operable microwave link with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department.

All of these initiatives enhance the protection and safety of the people on the reservation.



WARM SPRINGS TELECOM

Ham radio

An exciting new step to further increase public safety has now been achieved with a recent grant to purchase and install new 'ham radio' equipment.

In times of emergency, when normal public safety communications are not available, ham radio systems—also referred to as amateur radio—are an alternative that may be used for this purpose.

In fact, current FCC rules—gov-

erning public safety requirements—state that “amateur stations and operators are allowed to assist and support public safety communications in times of emergency.”

Warm Springs received a state grant to purchase ham radio equipment.

A ham radio repeater was installed on Eagle Butte last year. Josh Richesin, manager of engineering and operations for Warm Springs Telecom, assisted in the

installation.

The tribes and Warm Springs Telecom developed a plan that calls for the Telecom to serve as the back-up communication site and secondary command post for disaster preparedness and communications.

“In the last few months, I have challenged the state to recognize our tribes as a ham radio communications hub that can provide coverage within our boundaries and beyond,” said Dan Martinez.

“With that said, we are finally receiving the grants dollars to support our objective and improve ham operators’ communications... These ham operators will function as part of our public safety public safety network.”

Dan was asked why—with all the improvements that the tribes have made in recent years with its public safety radio network—this ham radio network is important to the tribes.

“It is imperative as a tribal nation,” Mr. Martinez said, “that we assure communication with our outside resources in the event our police channels or communications should be compromised, or should shut down due to a disaster such as

an earthquake, mudslides or flood.”

Josh Richesin has been a ham radio operator for the past 10 years. He has been assigned as the ham radio contact person.

“With the rivers, canyons and mountains on the reservation, we are bound to have critical incidents,” Josh was saying recently.

“And if we have a disaster, the ham radio network is a critical back-up system. And it's often the first one to be back in service.”

Amateur radio service operators must be licensed users who operate radio communications as a hobby or a voluntary service, running within amateur radio frequencies allocated by the FCC.

Anyone interested in becoming an amateur ham radio operator is required to pass an FCC licensing exam to prove that the individual possesses the operational and technical qualifications required. This guarantees that all operators have the skills to perform the services that maybe required during an emergency.

If you are interested in training to become a licensed operator, information will be made available to the community soon.

Rare outage in January at Telecom

Snow, icy roads, and closed schools and administrative offices are facts of life in the winter here on the Warm Springs Reservation.

We have lived with these wintry conditions forever.

Now comes one new problem that these winter conditions can cause here in Warm Springs.

Snowy winter weather can also impact our new tribal telecom company, Warm Springs Telecom.

Snow came to Warm Springs on January 5, and unfortunately it created a large outage for the Telecom.

Snow blocked the roads, and a downed tree brought down the telephone lines, preventing access to the towers to fix our service. Telecom phone and internet service was lost for about an hour and a half.

As soon as our remote monitoring equipment detected a power outage on the network, the dedicated Telecom staff jumped into

action. They attempted to get to the two sites as soon as possible—one above the Pelton Dam, and a second outage at Eagle Butte.

When an outage like this occurs, a power surge trips the breakers, and a person has to get to the site to reset them. Unfortunately, the heavy snow and the tree in the road made getting to these sites difficult.

Thankfully, with the help of the Warm Springs Construction Department, these problems were resolved in a timely manner.

An hour and a half may seem like a very long time. But in fact—with Construction removing the tree and clearing the road to the Pelton Dam—the two tribally owned companies worked together quickly to solve this problem.

Thank you to the Construction crew for their quick action to solve the problem for the Telecom.

This is the first winter since the

Telecom began that such a problem has occurred: The network was engineered to the highest standards to prevent outages such as this.

However, nature is often more powerful than man-made telecom networks. And while no one can guarantee that such situations won't happen again, the Telecom has since bought a snow mobile to enable the company to reach the remote towers in case of future problems.

The Warm Springs Telecom apologizes for the inconvenience this incident caused our customers.

With our new snowmobile, we hope that this will not create similar service interruptions in the future.

We are committed to providing the best service to our Warm Springs families, businesses and friends. Sincerely,

The Warm Springs Telecom staff

Heart Smart Dinner Feb. 24 at the longhouse

The Model Diabetes Program has set the date for the Annual Heart Smart Dinner for Wednesday, February 24. The dinner will be at the Agency Longhouse from 4 to 7 p.m.

There will be a healthy salmon dinner. The drummers will bless this event. We will find something fun to do with attendees, and there will be a raffle, gifts for children, and a mini health fair from 4 to 5.

We are inviting all staff, family and friends to join us for this fun event... the more the merrier. My friend, former co-worker and now mayor of Madras Royce Embanks Jr. will be a guest at Heart Smart.

If you would like to set up a table at the health fair, call Jeri Kollen at 541-553-6289. Or email:

jeri.kollen@ihs.gov

You can also call Loraine at 541-553-6292.

I will be asking for volunteers and any donations for the raffle and gifts. I will be happy to pick up items or you can drop off at the Community Health window at the Health and Wellness Center.

If you have any questions about Heart Smart, give me a call at 541-553-6290.

This event is sponsored by the Model Diabetes Program, Health and Wellness Center, Warm Springs Senior Center and The Diabetes Prevention Program.

Thank you. We look forward to seeing your smiling faces.

Kat Spaulding, Heart Smart Dinner coordinator.

Drama Club performing 'Robin Hood' at Performing Arts Center

The Madras High School Drama Club will present *Robin of the Hood: Wanted Dead or Alive* at the Performing Arts Center.

There will be 7 p.m. shows on Friday, Feb. 12, and Saturday, Feb.

13. A 2 p.m. matinee will be on Sunday, Feb. 14.

Tickets are \$7 for adults, and \$4 for students. Children under 5 are free. Look for pre-sale tickets priced at \$5 for adults and \$3 for

students.

You can purchase tickets from any Drama Club, or from Misty Adams, high school bookkeeper.

All Jefferson County students in grades 4 through 12 are invited to enter the **Second Annual Eagle Watch Art Contest**. The deadline is February 15 at 3 p.m. Enter artwork that shows your love for birds of prey. Students can submit artwork to their school, or the Cove State Park office. For more information, call Clay Penhollow at 541-553-2001.

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