



# Spilyay Tymoo

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## Extension of shutdown, change to retirement fund policy

Tribal Council took two key actions regarding the immediate work future of most tribal employees. Council extended the organization shut-down stay-at-home administrative leave policy for an additional two weeks, through May 8. Council also added a coronavirus relief provision to the employee 401-k plan.

The 401-k plan addition gives employees, who experience financial hardship because of the pandemic, a means to access their retirement account funds without the immediate 10-percent early withdrawal tax penalty. The amount

withdrawn will be subject to taxation, to be spread over a three-year period.

The change to the 401-K policy came on the recommendation of the tribal Pension Committee, as presented by Catherine Langford, committee attorney.

The Council vote to add the coronavirus hardship provision to the retirement fund policy, like the vote on the extension of administrative leave, was unanimous.

The change to retirement fund access, and waiver of the 10-percent penalty and tax deferral,

would be in effect through December 31. The change is called a 'coronavirus-related distribution,' or CRD; and is part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Stability—Cares—Act.

Interpretation and application of the CRD policy to the retirement fund access is flexible. An employee would not necessarily have to have Covid-19, for instance. The employee may be having trouble with day-care, making it impossible to go to work, as an example.

Ms. Langford emphasized that employees need to realize the se-

riousness of accessing retirement savings, including the tax consequence. The current economic situation has also reduced retirement accounts

At this point no tribal employee has requested access to retirement funding due to the coronavirus, said Cheryl Tom, Human Resources director. She said an employee could expect to receive a check within about a week of putting in the request.

In a separate action Tribal Council voted to extend the administrative leave of "non-essential" tribal employees through May 8.

The Council members also agreed to meet again soon to consider a course following the extended two-week shut-down.

Before the vote on Tuesday, Council heard three options regarding the immediate future for the organization.

One option was to open the offices and return to work next week. This was against the recommendation of the tribes' Covid-19 team, and health experts' advice regarding the ongoing state of the pandemic.

See TRIBES on 5

## Added safety measures at High Lookee Lodge

Residents at long term care facilities are among the highest at risk from the coronavirus. In the starkest of terms, the long-term care residents are the most likely to die from the coronavirus, given their advanced age and the prevalence of other health conditions, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, these facilities are among the hardest hit: In Oregon half of all deaths from the virus have happened among residents of long-term care facilities. Clearly, extreme precaution is required to protect our most vulnerable, and those who care for them.

The staff at High Lookee Lodge take all measures to best ensure the safety of the 16 residents and 15 staff, 24 hours seven days a week. Yet there is an issue being addressed in these extraordinary times:

High Lookee Lodge is closed to the general public. Staff only, with the exception of medical providers and necessary delivery workers—fol-

lowing all proper precautions—are allowed in the building.

At the same time High Lookee Lodge is a fully licensed assisted living facility, meaning the residents themselves are allowed to come and go as they wish. In a vehicle family or friends can pull up in front of High Lookee, pick up a resident, go for a drive, stop by a residence or store; and then return to the lodge.

Obviously this poses a very real and life-threatening risk to the individual, to the other residents, and to the staff. "This is a challenge," said Jolene Greene, director of High Lookee Lodge. "Please realize these actions affect many people, not just yourselves."

All in this together means we consider and look out for one another, Ms. Greene said. Ignoring social distancing, then returning to the lodge hold the potential for the most dire of consequences, all very avoidable, she said.

During these weeks of quarantine and staying at home, we are kept physically away from friends and family. Nevertheless this is the approach the experts say will most quickly end the pandemic. While in



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related news from the lodge:

High Lookee is coordinating with the Warm Springs Indian Health Services clinic to obtain the

necessary personal protection equipment, the masks and gowns needed by the health workers and care givers.

## Covid-19 community update

**Important:** Anyone who attended the Salmon Feast in Celilo may have been exposed to the Covid-19 virus.

If you attended the feast, please call Community Health Nursing at 541-553-2460. Please stay home until Sunday, April 26, regardless if you do not show symptoms or test negative.

Monitor yourself for symptoms: Cough, fever and shortness of breath. If you develop symptoms, please call the clinic to make a plan of care.

This emphasizes the importance for everyone in the community to monitor themselves for symptoms of cough, fever and shortness of breath. If you develop symptoms, call the clinic at 541-553-5512 to speak to a nurse to develop a plan of care.

It is also important to stay home. Do not visit others. Only leave for necessities such as grocery shopping and medical appointments. Wear a mask when you leave the house. Only have one person do the shopping—Don't take others with you.

Do not have visitors in your house. Do not invite others from far away to come to Warm Springs—especially if they live in an area with high Covid-19 cases such as Washington and California.

Everyone, please be respectful of the community and stay home. Staying home today ensures that we will be able to see each other for many days to come. Remember, You do not know who anyone has been in contact with.

The clinic's after hours nurse triage hotline is 541-553-5512. Regular hours, 541-553-1196.

Face masks should be cleaned daily or when dirty. Wash using soap and warm water. Using a washing machine, hand wash or a dishwasher are all equally good options. Use a dryer or air-dry until completely dry.

~ Message from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs ~

## Time to submit census information extended

The 2020 Census is under way on the reservation and among tribal members. Because of the coronavirus and stay-at-home requirements, the time to submit your census information is extended from the previous end date of July to October 31.

The easiest way to complete the 2020 Census during the Covid-19 pandemic is to do it online at my2020census.gov

If you don't have the ability to do the census online, you can do the questionnaire by phone. Call 844-330-2020. They will begin by asking you for your census identification number. (You may be on hold for a while, so please be patient.)

Because the letters with the ID number were only mailed to people who get their mail at a street address, most people in Warm Springs do not have the census ID number: On the phone, just say you don't have one.

They ask for your street address, if you rent or own your home, your sex, age and date of birth, your heritage and race.

They will also ask about who was living in your home on April 1; how they are related to you, their age and so on. For Native American households it's best to have the census completed by someone who is Native American. Tribal members and descendants should fill in 'Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

Oregon.'

Whether you do the 2020 census online or by phone, the Warm Springs Complete Count Committee asks that you take the time to submit your information, if you haven't already done so.

The complete count committee had many activities planned for the 2020 U.S. Census. Public events and gatherings are now postponed because of social distancing restrictions and the stay-at-home health conditions.

"Most important is our safety, and we must continue to practice social distancing," said Caroline Cruz, general manager of Health and Human Services, and committee chairwoman.

*Listen to KWSO 91.9 for further details in the upcoming weeks.*

Census data directly impacts how the federal government allocates more than \$675 billion every year for programs and services vital for tribal communities.

These include Medicaid and Medicare, social services, housing, public safety, veterans services, emergency preparedness, education, school lunches and more.

Tribal members and reservations have historically been under-counted in the census, resulting in unfair and disproportionate funding allocation.



**FRIDAY 4/24 from 2-5PM**

**PANTRY STAPLES AT COST**

**3.5 lbs Pinto beans, 5 lbs Rice, 3 lbs Macaroni, 2 lbs Flour & 4 lbs Sugar**

**OPEN TO PUBLIC**

located at **The Warm Springs Community Center**





