

Letters to the editor

Birth

ArVonius Daniel Smith

ArVonius Ke-Shone Smith and Shannon Rae Wilson of Warm Springs are pleased to announce the birth of their son ArVonius Daniel Smith, born on May 8, 2020.

ArVonius joins brother Osius, 3; and sister Jennius, 2.

Grandparents on the father's side are Chris Webb and Jennifer Smith.

Grandparents on the mother's side are Jeannie Brisbois and Sherman Wilson.

From CRITFC

The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission would like to thank you for your understanding and patience as we all work to respond to the constantly evolving Covid-19 pandemic. While our first priority is the safety of our employees and the tribal communities we serve, we are firmly committed to fulfilling our mission and responsibilities to our member tribes with the least amount of disruption possible.

We have particularly focused on being able to safely continue our public health and safety responsibilities that our CRITFC Enforcement and Fishing Site Maintenance teams provide.

All our offices are now closed to all visitors, with only limited access by essential staff to maintain critical functions and operations. All other employees are under mandatory telework. Many are working flexible hours to balance their family and personal needs resulting from this unprecedented situation. Reach out to them as you normally would, but please be patient if response time is delayed.

You can help us navigate these extraordinary circumstances in several ways:

- Please send requests or other communications to us electronically as you would normally. You can find employee emails and office phone numbers in CRITFC's online staff directory (critfc.org). Some staff are forwarding their office phones or leaving alternate contact numbers in their outgoing voicemail message or at the end of their emails.
- With this limited capacity, we are prioritizing our resources at this time. Please advise us as to the urgency

and significance of your requests and specify any important timeframes or deadlines so that we can do our best to respond accordingly.

- All CRITFC travel has been halted. We will be conducting the monthly Commission meetings by teleconference for the duration of this situation. All in-person meetings will be by teleconference or phone or postponed.

We are committed to upholding our mission amidst the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and to continuing the important work we have underway with our many partners.

We are confident that we can do so through continued communications, coordination, and collaboration with you and others.

Please stay healthy, safe, and in touch.

Jaime Pinkham, CRIFC executive director

Home gardens

Interest in home gardening has skyrocketed during the Covid-19 pandemic. In response, the Food Hero team at Oregon State University Extension Service is offering a unique opportunity to grow vegetables and fruits at home.

Anyone can join using their own seeds, but the first 3,000 who sign up will be mailed a free packet of vegetable and fruit seeds with four varieties like tomatoes, carrots, melons, strawberries and herbs.

Register for the challenge on the website or on the Food Hero Facebook page, where anyone can view weekly Facebook Live gardening segments Tuesdays at noon. Questions will be answered by AmeriCorps volunteer Halie Cousineau, a seasoned gardener who has starred in 12 gardening videos that are posted on the website.

With thanks and appreciation



Courtesy Louie Pitt/CTS Governmental Affairs

The Warm Springs Clinic staff has been hard at work for months now, helping the community to keep the Covid-19 at bay here on the reservation.

The National Guard fly over in May, community appreciation and lunch for the healthcare workers was a wonderful expression of thanks and appreciation for the tireless working being done during this Covid-19

pandemic. Tribal Council members, the Secretary-Treasurer and several general managers pitched in to provide the healthcare workers with lunch.

Pizza, soda and cake were served, with all the precautions of social distancing, good hand hygiene and face covering required.

The Warm Springs Clinic staff

Employment numbers show impact on Central Oregon

With the release last week of the official April 2020 employment and unemployment estimates, we get our first glimpse of the substantial impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the local economy.

Monthly employment losses were unprecedented, with the share of jobs lost in Central Oregon higher than the state.

For some context: These employment and unemployment estimates are a reflection of the labor market in mid-April, as the Covid-19 shut-down was a month under way.

Based on trends in unemployment insurance claim filings, job losses continued through the remainder of April and into May.

Despite the dramatic rise in the unemployment rate, the Oregon Employment Department has said we have not reached the peak. Expect the unemployment situation to continue to worsen when the May figures are released on June 23.

As of the most recent employment release date, May 27, the April seasonally adjusted unemployment rates are not available for counties, due to processing delays caused by large increases in unemployment.

Seasonally adjusted unemployment rates are not being used for this release: In shot, these numbers reflect April's increase in un-

employment related to the Covid-19 pandemic. (Seasonally adjusted unemployment rates for April will be available at a later date.)

Jefferson County: The non-seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 14.3 percent in April, up from 5.4 percent in March.

Jefferson County's rate was notably lower than either Deschutes or Crook counties, and more consistent with what we saw nationally—14.4 percent.

In Jefferson County the number of unemployed workers rose to 1,409, up from 532 in March.

Job losses in Jefferson County businesses were more consistent with the rest of Central Oregon with employment down 13 percent from March—a loss of 840 jobs.

As with most counties the largest losses were in leisure and hospitality—down by 240 jobs.

There were also notable losses in local government,

as well as manufacturing.

Crook County: The non-seasonally adjusted unemployment rate rose to 18.6 percent in April, up from 5.7 percent in March. The rate was the fifth highest of Oregon's 36 counties.

The number of unemployed workers skyrocketed to 1,811, an increase of 230 percent from March.

Deschutes County: The non-seasonally ad-

justed unemployment rate rose to 18.2 percent in April, a dramatic rise from 4.0 percent in March. The unemployment rate in April represents the highest rate in the series going back to 1990.

The April unemployment rate was the highest of Oregon's metropolitan areas. There were around 17,550 unemployed workers in April, up from only 3,800 in March. Deschutes County shed 13,260 total nonfarm jobs in April, down 15.4 percent from March.

Storm a-brewin'



Edward Heath

Edward Heath caught this image of the weekend storm that blew through Central Oregon.

Census statement on 2020 operations on reservations

The U.S. Census Bureau is committed to a complete and accurate count of the American Indian population, wherever they live.

The population is diverse and geographically dispersed across the country.

While most do not live on designated tribal lands or reservations, those who do are among groups historically undercounted in the census.

For years, the Census Bureau has been working closely with tribal governments to change this—and make sure everyone counts in the 2020 Census.

As part of this effort, census takers are set to go household to household and drop

off census materials at front doors in tribal communities.

This operation, dubbed *Update Leave*, promises to up the count by allowing us to confirm each household's physical location and provide a special Census ID number in materials tied to that location. Due to Covid-19, we delayed *Update Leave* to protect the health and safety of our staff and tribal communities.

We made the move knowing we could still achieve a complete and accurate count—and are working closely with tribal leaders to determine the right time to resume this important operation.

Currently, we are doing a phased re-opening in areas where it is safe to do so.

We understand there are many questions about how to participate in the 2020 Census. The *Update Leave* operation generally affects rural households that use post office boxes to receive regular mail or lack traditional mailing addresses.

Most urban households use physical street addresses for mail delivery, so we mailed invitations and reminders with instructions on how to respond to the census.

As a result, many Native people who live outside designated tribal lands have al-

ready received census invitations with a Census ID linked to their specific address. Using a Census ID when completing the census helps us get an accurate count and avoids the need for follow-up by a census worker to confirm household information.

We continue to encourage any household with a Census ID to respond online at 2020census.gov, by phone or by mail and look forward to being back in tribal communities when it is safe to do so. We are committed to working together to shape our future.

U.S. Census Bureau

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