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Community update

The contagion rate of Covid-19 on the reservation has seen great improvement recently, with just one new positive test result in more than a week.

Since the pandemic began in March, the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center has conducted 4,044 total, with 3,687 negative test and zero pending, as of Tuesday this week. There are five close-contact monitoring cases going one.

Since March there have 386 total positive cases among the membership, and nine deaths. In a related matter:

The Health and Wellness Center reports that 100 percent of federal employees on the reservation have received the seasonal flu vaccine. Meanwhile, close to 18 percent of the community has received the vaccine.

The turnout for the Halloween event at the Community Center appeared to have gone very well. The people were following safety guidelines with masks, distancing and families visiting booths one at a time, said Caroline Cruz, general manager of Health and Human Services.

Following the recommendation of the Covid-19 Response Team, Tribal Council decided the usual district and general council budget meetings cannot happen this year.

The 2021 tribal budget information is being provided to the membership through the mail and the tribal portal.

Twenty-Seventh Member Art Show

Treasures of the Tribal Member Art Show are now on display in the Changing Exhibits Gallery of the Museum at Warm Springs. This year the Judges Choice Awards went to Reina Estimo for her beaded medallion (far right), and Brutis Baez for his mixed media creation (right).

Edward Heath won Honorable Mention (see page 10), as did Pat Courtney Gold and Marjorie Kalama. All of these items and many more will be on display through early January. Stop by the museum Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Health safety measures are practiced.



Old Skool Bear in the New School World, multi media art by Brutis Baez - Judges Choice Award - Contemporary. And at right: *Grandma is always with you*, beaded medallion by Reina Estimo - Judges Choice Award - Traditional.



Detail from *Water is Life*, beaded belt by Marjorie Kalama - Honorable Mention Award (above). And at left: *Timestamp*, woven basket by Pat Courtney Gold - Honorable Mention Award.

Water system will be a focus in 2021

With so much else going on it may be easy to forget the critical domestic water situation on the reservation, in particular the entire Agency area where most of the tribal population lives. Some good news is that many people, within the tribes and from outside, are working to resolve this pending matter.

The federal and state governments recognize the need and obligation. And the same is true in the charitable private sector: The Chúush Fund—project of the MRG Foundation—is a great example.

Through this fund the MRG Foundation accepts donations on behalf the tribes, then contributes 100 percent directly to the tribes for immediate work on the water system. This ongoing partnership began last year following the 76-day Agency water crisis.

At the time the people at the MRG Foundation heard about this, and worked with Tribal Council and management in establishing the Chúush Fund. Through this effort half a million dollars has gone to the tribes for water work.

Se-ah-dom Edmo is the executive director of the MRG Foundation. She met last week by teleconference for a Chúush Fund update with tribal leaders, and the Warm

Springs Community Action.

Travis Wells, general manager of tribal Utilities, explained that the tribes are looking toward some large scale repair work next summer. Anticipated cost may be somewhere between \$3.5- to \$4 million, Mr. Wells said. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency can mandate improvements to the water system, he said, while leaving the mandates unfunded. The tribes make the upgrades within the limit of available funding.

Very briefly, the problem is that the Agency water distribution system, installed by the BIA, dates back to the 1930s. And the treatment plant is 40-plus years old, and beyond its projected useful life. Addressing all aspects of the water system will be in the range of many millions, or tens of millions of dollars. "And we want to thank all who are contributing," said Mr. Wells.

Marissa Ahern is the project manager of the Warm Springs Community Action Team Commissary Project. This will be a small business development project, creating local jobs and promoting economic development of the reservation. This could be a new precedent on the reservation, something to build on for years and generations. "The lack of infrastructure

makes it difficult," Ms. Ahern said. Reliable water will be especially essential for success, she said. For more on the Community Action Team Commissary Project, see the upcoming website, expected to launch on November 10: warmspringscommissary.org

Alyssa Macy is the chief executive officer of the Washington Environmental Council and Washington Conservation Voters. She was the tribes' chief operations officer

last year during the 2019 water crisis. It is hard to imagine any other community in the United States going 76 days without drinking water, and without some kind of national response. "If it were anywhere else," Ms. Macy said, "What would have happened?"

Some hope for a remedy comes from people like those at the MRG Foundation, she said.



1865 document is no more

The 'treaty of 1865' document is officially a thing of the past, now just a relique of an attempted fraud upon the Confederated Tribes.

Earlier this year Congress passed "A law to nullify the supplemental treaty between the United States of America and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of Indians of Middle Oregon, concluded on November 15, 1865."

Then last month—on Tuesday October 20—this legislation became law.

Official nullification had been a goal of Tribal Council and leadership for decades. The 1865 document was never enforced or recognized by the tribes or federal government. Nor has the state relied on its provisions, which appeared to relinquish tribal Ceded Lands off-reservation hunting, fishing and gathering rights.

In 1865 there was no compensation to the tribes in exchange for the alleged transaction; and the few signatures on the document were suspect.

The recent law disavowing this document reinforces tribal sovereignty, and the government-to-government agreement of the Treaty of 1855.



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