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November - Anaku Ipach'aanxa Yaamash

Covid-19 measures

The tribal organization is on a 50-percent workforce reduction through December 2. General managers are deciding as to the 50-percent workforce personnel for each area.

This week's Tribal Council action comes on the recommendation of the tribal Covid-19 Response Team; as the reservation this week has seen a significant spike in positive cases.

The state of Oregon, meanwhile, is on 'freeze' with many business closures and safety restrictions. The tribal and state restrictions are both in effect through December 2.

Before the Covid-19 spike this week, the reservation last week saw 28 new cases for a then-total of 39 active cases. The positivity rate was 13.8 percent, before adding this week's cases. And there were many close-contact tracings, monitored by Public Health.

Total cases of Covid-19 on the reservation identified since the pandemic began in March is more than 430. Over that time, IHS and Health and Wellness have conducted more than 4,430 tests for Covid-19.

Since March, 47 people of the reservation have been hospitalized due to Covid-19. Forty-six people have been discharged from the hospital, as of late last week.

Ten tribal members of the reservation have died from the virus.

Solar solution to water, development

The Confederated Tribes, the Warm Springs Economic Development Corporation and private donors are making it possible to partner with Source Global, a public benefit corporation, to deploy sustainable solutions to the tribe's longstanding water crisis.

Over the past two weeks, Source Global has hired 14 members of the Warm Spring community to begin installing the first phase of a 'Source Field' in Warm Springs.

A Source Field is made up of a large array of Source hydropanels that harness the power of the sun to create clean water out of the vast amount of moisture in the atmosphere. From there, the system enhances the water with minerals and provides water to a filling station where residents can get the equivalent of high-end bottled water free of charge and free of single-use plastic waste.

Once installed to full capacity next spring, the Field will be able to make a significant contribution to the community's need for clean drinking water. The economic development arm of the Confederated Tribes, the Warm Springs Economic



Courtesy Ben Bisland/WSED

A SOURCE technician joins Warm Springs Construction at the panel field by the industrial park.

Development Corporation is leading the project.

"For years, our community has endured shortages and poor water quality, and at times we haven't had the drinking water to meet our basic needs," said Jim Souers, chief executive officer of Warm Springs Economic Development. "Now we're creating our own sustainable source of drinking water, using nothing but the earth's renewable resources: Sunlight and air."

Many in the Warm Springs community have been relying on bottled water to meet their drinking

water needs. Source and Warm Springs Economic Development estimate that in the next year alone, the initial Source Field will sustainably create enough drinking water to offset up to three quarters of a million plastic bottles. Over its lifetime, the Source Field built to full capacity can save tens of millions of single-use plastic bottle waste from going into landfills.

As part of the project, reusable, two-and-a-half-gallon containers will be provided free to the community to be used at the filling station with UV technology

sterilizing the containers as they are filled. The project could be operational by the end of the year.

To support homes that have ongoing water quality issues, the Tribal Council also allocated Covid-19 funding to provide up to 50 Source residential systems to homes with a two hydropanel system. The system will provide a separate water faucet in the house, and it will not be connected to the current water plumbing—thus providing an independent drinking water supply to the home.

See **WATER PANELS** on 3



Mitchell Lire/KWSO photos

The Confederated Tribes, veterans and families, and the American Legion Auxiliary No. 48 hosted the 2020 Veterans Day Parade, November 11 (see more on page 2).



Supreme Court case and the ACA in Indian Country

In 2014 the Affordable Care Act opened up expanded Medicaid for all people of a certain income level. Before the ACA, Medicaid coverage was mostly limited to low-income children and pregnant women, the disabled and the elderly.

Expanded Medicaid has allowed for greater health insurance coverage among the tribal membership. Close to three-quarters of the Confederated Tribes members now have insurance coverage under Medicaid Expansion.

Before the Affordable Care Act and Expanded Medicaid coverage, the tribal Managed Care program had to cover much more of the medical costs of the members. This would lead to shortfalls, and some rationing of non-essential health services, especially during the later times of the year.

Without Medicaid Expansion, there is the possibility that Managed Care could go into limited services as happened in the early 2000s.

With the coronavirus prevalent, if Medicaid Expansion didn't exist, Managed Care's funding would be depleted exponentially, jeopardizing the health services of our community.

Clearly, the ACA has improved

health care among the membership. In short: The ACA Medicaid Expansion led to coverage gains among American Indians, and increased revenue to IHS- and tribally-operated facilities.

And for these reasons the recent U.S. Supreme Court case involving the ACA has been of great interest to tribes. The Supreme Court heard arguments in the case earlier this month. One option for the court could be to overturn the ACA as unconstitutional.

There was some good news following the oral arguments, because court observers said the justices appeared to reject the idea that the entire ACA should be thrown out.

Those in particular who appeared to reject the challenge to the law were Chief Justice John Roberts, who voted to uphold the ACA in 2012; and Justice Brett Kavanaugh. They suggested that it was not the place of the Supreme Court to invalidate the entire law.

This was the third time since 2014 that the Supreme Court has heard a significant challenge to the Affordable Care Act. Regarding this most recent case, U.S. Senator Tom Udall of New Mexico, vice chair of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, commented:

Please see **ACA** on 4

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