

# ~ 2020 Review ~ (Continued)

**March, 2020 -** *The Warm Springs Academy and the other schools are closed at least through April, maybe longer. The Community Wellness Center is closed to the public. Children are home with parents and guardians. The casino is closed. Many restaurants and other businesses are closed. The tribal organization is implementing a shut-down.*

To the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs tribal membership,

The Warm Springs Tribal Council per motion declares a State of Emergency:

“Warm Springs Tribal Council is responsible for the Health and Welfare of our people and promotes our general welfare. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs in partnership with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service declares a State of Emergency as a proactive measure to ensure access to resources in addressing Covid-19 coronavirus.”

With the concerns of the coronavirus (Covid-19) increasing in our community, as well as across the nation, the tribal government is working closely with the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center to evaluate and ensure the health and safety of our community.

In early March, at the time of the tribal Declaration of Emergency: There were no confirmed or presumptive cases of the COVID-19 on the reservation, as of today. The Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center meanwhile has activated their Incident Command Center.

This is to help the community receive the best quality of care, and be able to service the community in an effective and efficient manner. They are having all patients come through the main entrance for triage screening. Elsewhere, in March environmental news:

There are five separate irrigation districts in the upper Deschutes River basin, the North Unit and the Central Oregon dis-

tricts being the biggest.

For 70 years the districts have competed for river water, which they would then distribute to the farm operations and irrigators throughout the region.

The practice so far has been to store water in reservoirs during the cool months of winter, and then release large quantities of water within a relatively short period of time, during the summer months. This has led to serious degradation of tributaries of the Upper Deschutes.

The scenario is now in the process of changing, as the irrigation districts would face perilous legal and financial consequences, were the practice to continue. The districts are now forced to cooperate, and develop a management approach that considers a much wider range of elements.

This is clearly a matter of great significance to the Confederated Tribes, a large and senior water right holder in the basin. The tribes are also working, at great expense and effort, to restore fish runs in the upper reaches.

Community policing is a partnership: Law enforcement is a part

of the community.

The officers know the people, the neighborhoods, the customs. The officer response to crime, or potential crime is thereby informed, much more effective and long term. The philosophy of community policing is the priority of Warm Springs Police Chief William Elliott.

To the department Chief Elliott brings years of experience, from the region and around the world. He was among the forces in Afghanistan, during Operation Enduring Freedom, the War on Terrorism.

His work at the Department of State took him to the territory of the West Bank and Jordan, and Beirut, Lebanon.

Stateside in law enforcement, after military service, Chief Elliott worked with the U.S. Border Patrol, Klamath County, and as Public Safety Director of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Indian Reservation. In the 1980s he worked with Warm Springs Police as a Special Agent of the BIA. Chief Elliott grew up in California. He is an enrolled member of the Kiowa, Native people of the Great Plains.

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At the Agency Longhouse in mid March, tribal elder George Aguilar opens the 2020 Census Count for the tribes, and for the state of Oregon.

Households of the reservation in March began submitting their 2020 census information online. At the Census Kick-Off event at the Agency Longhouse, some tribal members used the computers that were made available by Health and Human Services.

As soon as feasible, making more computers available, and providing any needed assistance with the submission, is part of the outreach of the Warm Springs Complete Count Committee. The enumerators of the 2020 census are planning to bring the submission information door-to-door on the reservation. For caution, this will be done by leaving the information at the front door.

## Development at the Dips

(Continued from page 1)

### What is the purpose of the FEMA trailers, and why do we call them FEMA Trailers?

The FEMA trailers were secured by the WS Housing Authority from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) several years ago and sold several of them locally. They have seven left, four 2-bedrooms and three 1-bedrooms, and they are currently located at the rodeo grounds

The seven trailers became known as “the FEMA Trailers”. One of the funding sources applied by the H&HS general manager approved the use of Housing Cares Act funds to purchase the trailers to use for quarantine.

The H&HS general manager proposed this to the Covid-19 Team and Tribal Council and gained support.

The purpose would be for quarantining those needing a place to stay.

When COVID-19 is no longer a threat the homes would be used as a homeless shelter and for a 90-day transitional home for those returning back from treatment. This places populations near services provided by H&HS.

### Why do we need a quarantine site?

Many of our homes have multiple families living in one household. When the household has been exposed to Covid-19 they pass the virus from one person to the other.

The data we collect shows that the majority of our positive cases is within households. We can prevent the spread to others within a household from happening if we can separate those who have the virus from others who do not.

Especially when we want to protect our Elders, those with underlying conditions, and those who are pregnant.

There is no place within many homes to protect them due to lack of space. We have an obligation to protect the community. We have lost several members already due to this virus. At the time of this article we have had more than 500 positive cases since the pandemic began.

### So the FEMA Trailers Quarantine Project will not only be used for those who have the virus?

That is true, the trailers would house those who need to be quarantined because they have the virus or they do not have the virus but need a safe place to be away from the virus within the household.

### Who authorized this?

The Covid-19 Team presented this Quarantine Project to the Tribal Council, a resolution was passed, and this project was put on the fast track to get the project going.

The original site was on Kalama street near the Health and Wellness

Center.

The Warm Springs Housing Authority had not received approval for the Dips at this time and wanted to join the H&HS at this site to keep cost down since we would be targeting the same population once the virus crises ends.

Once the Dips was approved Warm Springs Housing invited the H&HS to join them at the Dips.

This occurred in September, the funds were approved by Tribal Council, a contract was granted with Ventures and work began with the Quarantine Project with a goal to have the FEMA trailers ready by the end of December.

### Can others catch the virus from the quarantine trailers? The FEMA trailers will be across the street from the trailer

courts, the winds come down the dips and then to the trailer courts. What is the probability of catching the virus?

The virus is spread by droplets, once in the air it drops downward.

There is no evidence that the viral particles can go through walls or glass, and with the distance of the trailers, traveling across the street is highly improbable.

The virus needs a host to stay alive; the further away the virus is from a host the more likely it will die off.

This is the main reason why we practice social distancing, wearing masks and using sanitizers to prevent the virus entering our bodies.

Those who will be housed at the Quarantine FEMA trailers will not all have the virus. We will house those needing to be quarantined, so some will not have the virus but cannot stay at their homes when others in their household or positive and they have no place to go.

Why was there not community input to the site?

Once the new site at the Dips became available we moved forward with that site. There was no intentions to leave the community out but we did and we apologize for that.

Questions? Contact **Caroline M. Cruz**, Health and Human Services General Manager at 541-615-0140.

Or email [caroline.cruz@wstribes.org](mailto:caroline.cruz@wstribes.org)

**Note:** Please continue to wear your masks, social distance a minimum of six feet when you are out, use sanitizers, have sanitizers available in your vehicle(s), your homes, workspace and make it a habit to use.

If you need masks or sanitizers they are available at Emergency Management or the Family Resource Center.

Be safe!

**Opportunity Foundation of Central Oregon**

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