



Spilyay Tymo

Coyote News, est. 1976

January 13, 2021 - Vol. 46, No. 1

Wiyak'ik'ila - Winter - Anm

PO Box 489
Warm Springs, OR 97761

ECR WSS
Postal Patron

U.S. Postage
PRSR STD
Warm Springs, OR 97761

Jet crash in Mutton Mountains

A small private business jet crashed last weekend in the Mutton Mountains on the reservation. The pilot of the Cessna Citation jet and the one passenger on board were killed. This kind of plane can carry up to 11 passengers.

Warm Springs Dispatch at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, January 9 received notification from air traffic controllers in Seattle, said William Elliott, Warm Springs Public Safety general manager.

The Federal Aviation Administration controllers said they had lost communication with the Cessna an hour before, while the plane was near Pine Grove, just north of the reservation. An alert notice went out a short time later.

U.S. Air Force military and Oregon State Police flyovers confirmed the plane had crashed in the Mutton Mountains

See **PLANE CRASH** on 8

509-J planning for in-person classes

Students in the Jefferson County School District 509-J may return to in-person classes in February. With input from families and students, school officials are working out details this month, with resolution of some issues pending as the conditions develop.

This week the district is contacting families about their thoughts on the question. As a survey of the district, a question to the students and families is whether the individual families would like their students to return to classes in-person, safely; or continue with a virtual option.

The results of the questions will guide the allocation of the teachers and staff, buses and other resources, said Ken Parshall, school district superintendent. "We need the information as to student numbers on-site, and the numbers on-line," Mr. Parshall said.

Gov. Kate Brown in late December announced a prior-



At the Warm Springs Academy (still closed to the general public) front office staff Lana Leonard and Wanda Calica.

ity for agencies and districts of returning students to in-person classes. Gov. Brown said this should be done safely for students, teachers and staff, while pursuing the overall goals of reducing the spread of Covid 19 and returning to school.

Meanwhile, the Oregon Department of Education will issue new guidance for returning to school on January 19. In planning and preparing for students to return to class, "We can't wait for

January 19," Mr. Parshall said. So the district this week is seeking input regarding families who are interested in having students in class, versus those who wish to continue online.

The current teaching method is Comprehensive Distance Learning with the emphasis being online learning from home. This would change sometime in the next semester, which starts February 1. The new method would involve the face-to-face classroom learning for students who return; and some form

of online and home learning for students and families who choose this option.

"We know face-to-face learning is best," Parshall said. Going to school also has the important social aspects of students being among their peers.

Since the beginning of this school year, the district has focused on providing teachers and staff the resources to meet students' needs under the Covid-19 guidelines, while giving the students and families resources to stay engaged as the coursework has progressed.

Many students have stayed engaged with their classes and school work; however, and understandably, there are cases where some disengagement happens. This then creates the challenge of catching up sometime later on the work. Clearly, a safe return to classes would be welcome for students, families, teachers and staff. (See *Madras High School message to students and families* on page 2.)

Covid, vaccine updates

The Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center has administered all 400 Covid-19 vaccines the clinic received in its December 23 delivery. More vaccines were expected soon, as the program continues on the reservation.

Following IHS and CDC guidelines, the clinic is giving the vaccination to individuals 75 years and older; and the front-line essential workers of the tribes and clinic. For information on scheduling a Covid-19 vaccine, call 541-553-2610.

Meanwhile since the start of the pandemic in March, the Clinic has conducted close to 7,000 tests among the tribal community. Of the tests, a total of 6,338 have come back negative; while there have been

617 positive results. Including positive tests from other facilities, the total number of positive cases is at 692 among the tribal community; and there have been 18 deaths due to Covid 19. Two of the deaths happened this month.

Last week there were 13 new positive results for the reservation. As of early this week, there were five members in the hospital due to the virus (see page 3 for recent data).

The St. Charles Health System hospitals' Intensive Care Units were at 87.5 percent occupancy. St. Charles hospitals' Critical Care was at 93.3 percent capacity.

As of early this week, there were 20 persons with active Covid-19 on the reservation receiving daily monitoring by Tribal and IHS staff. In addition, 11 close contact individuals were receiving daily moni-

toring by Tribal and IHS staff.

And this week Tribal Council returned the workforce back to 100 percent. Workplace buildings are still closed to the public. Everyone entering a building needs to have a temperature check. Masks and social distancing of 6

feet are required. Employees should disinfect work places several times a day; and flexible work schedules are encouraged.

About the vaccination

The Covid-19 Nurses line is 541-553-5512. The Clinic recep-

tion is 541-553-1196.

As total positive Covid-19 testing among the membership is now at close to 700, health officials share the following:

Should people who have recovered from Covid-19 get vaccinated?

Answer: Re-infection is possible with Covid-19. So even if you have already had the virus and recovered, you may still be advised to get a Covid-19 vaccine.

According to the guidelines, vaccination should be offered to persons regardless of a history of Covid-19 infection, with or without symptoms: Natural immunity, gained from having the infection, varies from person to person. It is still unknown how long natural immunity lasts, though some evidence already indicates that it is not for an extensive period of time.



At the clinic Gwen Leutwiler, contract employee of the Confederated Tribes, just receives her Covid-19 vaccine from CDR Amy Whisler.

Water systems upgrades funded for this year

This year will see some significant water infrastructure improvements on the reservation. Toward this goal Tribal Council last month approved contracts to assist in the funding of the improvements. The work will be on the Agency drinking water systems.

Last summer Oregon lawmakers—led by Rep. Daniel Bonham, R-The Dalles, and state Sen. Lynn Findley, R-Vale—approved \$3.58 million for improvements to the reservation water system. This was through the state legislative Emergency Board.

At the time of the allocation, the tribes had been under a boil water

notice. The notice began June 25, finally ending in late August 2020.

During those months the tribes were experiencing a Covid-19 infection rate 16 times the state average: Clearly, covid safety measures—frequent hand-washing and remaining at home, for instance—were interrupted by the water situation. Not to mention the hardship of having to boil all domestic water before use. And some households for a time had no water at all.

The state funding contracts approved last month by Tribal Council—totaling \$1.01 million—are through the Oregon Business Development Department, as pro-

vided in last year's state legislative Emergency Board allocation. The specific funding sources are the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN), and the Small and Disadvantaged Communities Drinking Water Program Match. According to the contract 'Project Description':

"The project consists of planning, designing, engineering and procurement of equipment to implement improvements to the Dry Creek Water Treatment Plant's monitoring, instrumentation, control, automation and reporting, and community telemetry system." Specific spending allocations in the con-

tracts include \$400,000 for construction, \$239,000 for procurement of equipment, \$161,000 for planning, \$155,000 for design and engineering.

There is a Covid-19 aspect to how last year's \$3.58 million Emergency Board allocation came about. The year before, in 2019, the state legislature earmarked \$7.8 million in state lottery dollars for reservation water projects. The following spring the pandemic arrived, and the state lottery—with the closure establishments with lottery machines, for instance—saw nowhere near its usual revenue, and the \$7.8 million became untenable.

Last summer Rep. Bonham and Sen. Findley, whose constituency includes the reservation, sponsored the \$3.58 million. The tribes' Utilities general manager Travis Wells had written a letter of explanation to the lawmakers. With a list of critical water projects for the tribes, Mr. Wells wrote, "These are projects that need to be completed to ensure our communities receive a basic need for clean potable water."

To the legislative Emergency Board, Sen. Findley wrote: "Few state priorities could be more important than providing drinkable water and working sewers."

WATER continues on page 8



Frosty's Frozen Seats

WIN \$50 Bonus Play on Thursdays, & up to \$600 CASH on the weekends!

Today could be **YOUR** Lucky Day!

IndianHeadCasino.com • 541-460-7777 • US-26, Warm Springs, OR 97761

See calendar for dates. See Players' Club for details.

