

Tri-Valley Conference play for MHS

The Madras White Buffalos athletics teams are competing in the Tri-Valley Conference—a decision that was not easy this year.

School officials and athletics coaches, as they planned for student athletics this month and into the spring, at first thought to limit travel as much as possible, and compete on a regional level.

The region, though, was not completely on board with this approach; and other schools in the region were planning to play in their own leagues.

Madras High School leaders were concerned that if the school did not commit to their own league—the Tri-Valley Conference—the school would have ended up with a lack of contests and viable competitions.

“We know how important competing is to all our programs,” said Mark Stewart, Madras High School vice principal and interim athletics

director. “And given the conditions locally we felt it best for athletic programs to compete in the Tri-Valley Conference.”

This decision was not made lightly, and all other avenues were explored to limit travel. At the end of the day, however, the school saw that if the Buffalos were going to have competition, the decision was for league play.

“We are excited to compete in the TVC, as it will bring some ‘normalcy’ to the school year,” Mr. Stewart said. “And we think this is something we are all looking forward to.”

Fall sports scheduled—now underway at the high school—are football, volleyball and soccer. Here are some competitions that are coming up:

Volleyball (JV starts at 4:30, varsity at 6 p.m.)—Tuesday, March



2: Molalla at Madras. March 4: Madras at Molalla. March 9: Madras at Estacada.

Football (varsity at 7 p.m.)—Friday, February 26: Madras at the LaPine Jamboree. March 5: Molalla at Madras. March 12: Madras at Estacada.

Boys soccer (JV at 4 p.m., subject to change based on official availability)—March 2: Molalla at Madras. March 4: Madras at Molalla. March 9: Madras at Estacada.

Girls soccer (JV/V start at 4 p.m. subject to change based on official availability)—March 2: Madras at Molalla. March 4: Molalla at Madras. March 9: Estacada at Madras.

(Note: Cross Country schedule was not yet available at press time).

IHS covid testing across Indian Country

Across Indian Country in February, another 180,873 tests came back positive for Covid-19, among testing conducted by the Indian Health Service.

Since last March, IHS has conducted 1.97 million Covid-19 tests.

Based on the data, the highest rates have been in three IHS ser-

vice areas:

The Navajo Area at 16.9 percent positive. The Phoenix Area at 14.6 percent. And the Oklahoma City Area at 13.5 percent.

Based on weekly averages, three areas have shown the highest recent increase in positive testing. They are the three regions

listed above: The Navajo area, Oklahoma City Area, and the Phoenix Area. Overall, 9.9 percent of IHS tests have been positive since the onset of the pandemic. Meanwhile, the 7-day average has dropped off after increasing during the holiday season. It now stands at 9.1 percent.

Study: Native people more willing to be vaccinated

Native Americans are more willing than the general population to be vaccinated against the coronavirus, primarily out of responsibility to their communities, according to a new report by the Urban Indian Health Institute.

The institute studied national data regarding American Indian peoples’ knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about the Covid-19 vaccine.

The study surveyed American Indians and Alaska Natives across 46 states—representing 318 different tribal affiliations—to gather information ranging from individuals’ willingness to receive a Covid-19 vaccine to the hurdles they face in accessing healthcare and resources.

“This data will be important to all organizations conducting Covid-19 vaccine education efforts,” said Abigail Echo-Hawk, director of the Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI).

“Native communities have unique challenges and needs that usually are not considered in public health campaigns.”

American Indian people continue to be disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The covid incidence and mortality rates

are 3.5 and 1.8 times that of non-Hispanic Whites, respectively.

While there has been worry about vaccine participation in Native communities, 75 percent of study participants claimed they would be willing to receive a vaccine.

That is higher than the national average, according to an Ipsos survey from October 2020, which indicates that 64 percent of the U.S. general population was willing to receive a vaccine.

“Willingness to receive a vaccine and hesitancy are not mutually exclusive,” said Ms. Echo-Hawk.

“Fear and distrust of government and medical systems still exists in our community, which are hurdles that we have to overcome.”

Echo-Hawk hopes the report can start to create a better understanding of the unique perspectives of Native people.

“The data indicates that most Native people willing to be vaccinated feel it is their responsibility for the health of their community,” Echo-Hawk said. “This shows what motivates our community when it comes to decision-making.”

Report key findings:

Seventy-five of participants were willing to receive a Covid-19 vaccine.

Seventy-four percent of participants claimed that getting vaccinated is their responsibility to their community.

Seventy-two percent of participants wanted evidence that the vaccine is safe right now and in the long term. Thirty-nine percent of all participants reported difficulty traveling to their clinic for an appointment.

Two-thirds of participants willing to get vaccinated were confident that Covid-19 vaccines were adequately tested for safety and effectiveness among Native people.

Seventy-five percent of participants willing to get vaccinated had concerns about potential side effects. Twenty-five percent of participants were unwilling to receive a Covid-19 vaccine.

Ninety percent of participants unwilling to get vaccinated recognized Covid-19 as a serious disease. Eight-nine percent of participants unwilling to get vaccinated had concerns about potential side effects.

Fund to help family whose home burned

Earlier this month, a fire destroyed the home of residents in the Sidwalter Flats neighborhood of the reservation. Most fortunately, the residents were not harmed.

Fire crews say the home was in the 84 hundred blocks of the B166 Road. The family pet ferret died in the fire, according to the report.

The official cause was under investigation, though a

resident’s daughter-in-law told fire officials a burning log had rolled out of a wood stove and touched it off.

A relative has set up a GoFundMe account. The family, who lost everything, includes children ages 5 and 9, plus adults ages 22, 40, 66 and 77.

You can contact Mary Davis, homeowner, if you are interested in helping.



A Valentines Day selfie special from Travis Bobb.

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Suspects arrested in death last August near Madras

A homicide near Madras last August has led to the arrest of three residents of the reservation.

Charges against the three suspects include second-degree murder, robbery, conspiracy and unauthorized use of a motor vehicle.

The alleged incident involves a deceased Redmond man, Brian Jones, 51, whose body was found in August of 2020 near Highway 26 northwest of Madras. Around the time police also located his vehicle on the reservation.

Arrested last month on the felony warrants were Salvador Robinson, 27, Theresa Winishut, 27, and Stephanie Belgard, 37. They were being held without bail in the Jefferson County Jail.



Jeff. Co. Sheriff's Office

Charged with second-degree murder, robbery and other alleged crimes are Salvador Robinson, Stephanie Belgard and Theresa Winishut.

Last August, the body of Mr. Jones was found by a passing motorist off Northwest Danube Drive, about seven miles northwest of Madras.

After the initial investigation, Jefferson County Sheriff Jim Adkins asked the public for help in solving the case.

Information released to the public were the make of the vehicle, a silver 2005 Toyota Corolla;

and a store security video.

This led to development of a theory of the crime, including suspects.

More recent DNA analysis by the state police Forensics Lab and Medical Examiner’s Office then resulted in the arrests of the three suspects.

The Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office wishes to thank the Warm Springs Police Department—“critical in helping locate and arrest” the three suspects, Sheriff Adkins said.

The Major Crimes Team, the Oregon State Police Forensics Lab, the State Medical Examiner’s Office and the Jefferson County District Attorney’s office were also of great help, Adkins said.



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