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New Covid-19 Protocols

Tribal Council last week approved new covid safety protocols, based on the recommendation of the Covid-19 Response Team.

The new protocols become effective Monday, June 7.

The recommendation and Council resolution align with the state and Centers for Disease Control guidelines, and the reservation Covid-19 data. Provisions of the new protocols include:

- Fully vaccinated individuals will no longer need to wear a mask indoors in public places where the vaccination status of all individuals is checked.

- Your card or a picture of your card will need to be shown to enter tribal buildings. If proof cannot be provided, masks needs to be worn.

Masks will be required in areas where people are not asked about their vaccination status.

- Masks are no longer required for people who are outdoors, though masking is still encouraged, especially in crowded places and for people who are unvaccinated.

- It is managers and supervisors' roles to provide a protective work environment, this includes more stricter rules according to job duties.

- Continue with 100 percent workforce with tribal offices.

- Each building will be required to submit a plan to their general manager or director with how they will slowly return back to opening buildings.

Hours open to the public needs to be posted.

- Temperature taken daily and logs needs to be kept on file in case there is an exposure in the building so contact tracers can access if necessary.

- Buildings no longer will be closed when there is an exposure. Each case will be reviewed and evaluated separately and sections will be sanitized.

- Those who use tribal vehicles as part of their job and have passengers need to wear masks at all time.

- If any tribal employee travels out of state and they have no covid symptoms, they can report to work, but if they had not been vaccinated they are required to take a Covid-19 test within four days upon their return with documentation that they are negative.

Some of the other recent Covid-19 news:

Last Friday, May 28, IHS and the tribes' Covid Response Team reported there were eight active cases of the disease on the reservation; and 12 close contacts receiving daily monitoring.

You can call to schedule a vaccination at the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center at 541-553-2131.

Anyone 12 and older who is Indian Health Service eligible, or who lives or works in Warm Springs can be vaccinated.

Class of 2021 graduation Saturday

The Madras High School graduation is coming up this Saturday, June 5 at the football stadium. The day will begin with the Bridges Graduation at 9 a.m. at the stadium, followed by the other MHS Seniors Graduation at 11:30 a.m.

Some other graduation activities coming up this week for the seniors include the Senior Awards and Scholarship Ceremony, and the Walk the Halls visit to the Warm Springs Academy and other schools of the district. (See pages 4 and 5 of this publication for more on the MHS Class of 2021.)

Details on some of the graduation events coming up this week and weekend at the high school:

This Thursday, June 3, seniors must report to the high

school by 7:45 a.m. for line-up instructions. The Senior Awards and Scholarship Ceremony starts at 10 a.m. at the Performing Arts Center. Seniors will be wearing their cap and gowns for this event—cap and gowns only, please, no stoles, cords or tassels.

The Senior Awards and Scholarship Ceremony is mandatory for seniors wanting to walk at the graduation ceremony. The Thursday ceremony is not open to family and friends, due to covid restrictions.

Walk the Halls: Directly following the Senior Awards and Scholarship Ceremony, seniors will have the opportunity to visit previous 509-J schools to Walk the Halls in celebration of your success with former teachers, staff and students.

This Friday, June 4 is Gradua-

tion Practice. This event is mandatory for seniors wanting to walk at the Graduation Ceremony. Seniors must report to the high school by 8 a.m. for graduation practice.

Students, Please do not wear your cap and gown to practice. It's recommended that you bring sunglasses, baseball caps and sunscreen, as this event will be outside most of the day.

The **Graduation Barbecue** for Seniors will follow directly after graduation practice. Due to covid restrictions, this event is only open to seniors.

Graduation: Saturday, June 5. Bridges at 9 a.m. MHS Seniors Graduation Ceremony at 11:30 a.m. at the Madras High School Stadium. Additional Graduation Day information:

Seniors must have approval



from the principal prior to decorating your caps in any way. Students who do not get the appropriate approval prior to the ceremony will not be allowed to walk during the graduation ceremony.

Graduation tickets for each Madras High School senior will be given out after graduation practice on June 4. Handicapped seating is available upon request. Please contact Cassie Piercy at 541-475-7265 ext. 2316; or option 3, by this Thursday, June 3 to guarantee reserved seating.

New home loan program for membership

The Warm Springs Community Action Team and Tribal Council this week announced a new home loan program for tribal members. The HUD-184 Native American Home Loan Program is for any member of a federally recognized tribe, to be used on or off the reservation.

Applicants can build a home, purchase a home, purchase and rehabilitate a home, rehabilitate your current home, or refinance.

The Action Team and Council have been working on this project for about three years, said Dustin Seyler, Small Business Program manager with WSCAT.

During that time, in order to meet the program standards, Tribal Council had to update some of the reservation housing policies, based on WSCAT recommendations and tribal attorney counsel. The changes were in regard to certain tribal lease provisions, and any potential foreclosure

• In a few months we should start seeing new home building on the reservation...'

Dustin Seyler, WSCAT

situation, for example. Then last year the pandemic also slowed the process, plus the new administration in January brought some changes to HUD.

The HUD-184 Home Loan Program is now available. In fact, 13 families are already working with on financing through the program. In a few months, "We should start seeing new home building on the reservation," Mr. Seyler said.

There are many benefits to members participating in the program. These include:

- A low down payment requirement of 2.25 percent on loans over \$50,000.
- An interest rate based on the current market rate, as opposed to the applicant's credit score.
- A large list of lenders available to provide the loan.

- An upfront one-time loan guarantee fee of 1.5 percent and annual mortgage insurance.

- Protection from predatory lending,

- Access to knowledgeable staff in the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Native American Program (ONAP) to help navigate the special circumstances of home ownership on reservations.

In the event of foreclosure, homes purchased through HUD-184 on the reservation cannot be sold to anyone outside of the tribe.

HUD-184 program managers recommend that applicants enroll in first-time homebuyer classes and receive financial counseling. The Warm Springs Community Action Team offers both of these for free, plus offers individual development accounts—IDAs—in which applicants can save \$1,200 over thirteen months and receive \$6,000 in matching funds—a five-to-one match rate—totaling \$7,200 that can be used for a down payment, building, purchasing or renovating a home.

The ONAP, which is responsible for administering the HUD-184 program, released a statement forecasting they would reach \$1 billion in loan guarantees by the end of this federal fiscal year, September 30, 2021. The office recommends applicants get their applications approved before then, or risk not getting approved until next year.

The Community Action Team has already identified and begun connecting Warm Springs community members with approved lenders, and is happy to provide community members with access to these lenders.

To inquire about HUD-184, or the Action Team's other programs, please call 541-553-3148. Or email Dustin Seyler:

dustin@wscat.org
Other contacts are:
Leah Guliasi at:
leah@wscat.org
And Nettie Dickson at:
nettie@wscat.org

OR-93 GPS collar has gone silent

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife reported recently that the GPS tracking collar on the wolf OR-93 had gone silent. OR-93, originally from the White River wolf pack on the Warm Springs Reservation, for a time became one of the more well-known wild animals in the West.

OR-93 was born on the reservation about three years ago. The animal was among the first of the litter born to a pair of wolves that had traveled, possibly from Idaho, to the reservation. The tribes' Branch of Natural Resources first spot-



Austin Smith Jr./CTWSBNR

Wolf OR-93 on the reservation after receiving the GPS collar.

ted the wolf pair, and then the pups in 2018, said Austin Smith Jr., BNR wildlife biologist. Natural Resources was able to put a GPS collar on OR-93. Then last year the wolf left the reservation, making its way south.

As it traveled in search of a female to start its own pack, the animal crossed major highways, making its way almost as far as Yosemite.

Its progress was tracked by wildlife agencies and various media, including The San Francisco *Chronicle*. This was the first time in more than 100 years that a wolf had been spotted in the Yosemite region.

Then last month the GPS stopped pinging. The cause for this is not yet known. OR-93 may still be alive, though its collar may not be functioning, Mr. Smith said.



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