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Community update

The Warm Springs Covid-19 Response Team and Tribal Council would like to thank everyone in the community who has been vaccinated against Covid-19; and those who continue to practice the safety measures that are helping the tribes meet the challenge of the virus.

A recent update indicated no known active cases on the reservation; though some positive cases were reported among members living off the reservation.

The Response Team report from earlier this week said no one of the tribal community was hospitalized with covid.

Still, the virus poses a most serious threat: Prevalence of the highly contagious variants has required the Response Team and Tribal Council to adopt new guidelines for all tribal buildings (see article below right).

Health statistics show that Covid-19 was the leading cause of death on the reservation in 2020. Since last March, the virus has led to the loss of 25 tribal members, the data shows.

If you would like to be tested for Covid-19, check in at the front gate at the Warm Springs Health and Wellness Center, and they will direct you where to go.

You can call to schedule a vaccination anytime at the Health and Wellness Center, 541-553-2131. Anyone 12 and older who is IHS eligible, or who lives or works on the reservation, and their family members can be vaccinated. Vaccinations remain the primary way to bring covid under control.

Celebrate at Casino

Indian Head Casino this weekend will host the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration of the casino opening. The schedule this Saturday, August 14 is as follows:

Saturday, August 14: 2 p.m. Opening Prayer and Welcome.

2:30: Gifts and cake.

2:30-5:30: Bingo for all ages.

2:30-6:30: Family friendly events—including a Bouncy House, Water Slide and Velcro Wall.

2:30-8: DJ Music.

2-8 p.m.: Community food and craft vendor booths (applications available at the Players' Club, IHC social media; or: indianheadgaming.com of events is as follows:

This Friday, August 13, from 6-11 p.m. will be the \$25,000 Weekend Drawings.

Saturday, will also have the \$25,000 Weekend Drawings. And the Slot Tournament is on Sunday, August 15 from 2-4 p.m.

Indian Head Casino opened in 1995 at Kah-Nee-Ta. The casino relocated to its current Highway 26 location in February of 2012. Indian Head now employs between 165 and 185 people.

School year to begin with mask requirement

As the new school year begins in September, masks will be required for students, teachers and anyone else inside of a school building.

This will apply at all schools of the Jefferson County 509-J district, including the Warm Springs Academy.

As partners at the Academy, the school district left the mask-mandate decision to the tribes. Based on updated covid safety guidelines of Tribal Council, regarding masking in all tribal buildings, the mandate applies at the Academy.

Tribal Health and Human Services general manager Caroline Cruz, Covid Response Team member, presented the tribal covid protocol to the

school board this week.

"The tribe has not reached the 70 percent vaccination rate for those 12 and older, leaving children under 12 more vulnerable, especially with the more serious variants," Ms. Cruz said.

The new tribal safety protocol, regarding masking and other measures, took effect this week. Part of the protocol states clearly: "Masks are now required for all to wear inside public buildings."

The mask mandate for the high school and other schools of the district comes from Gov. Kate Brown, the Oregon Health Authority and the state Department of Education.

Changes in the masking situation have developed quickly, over the past few weeks. The emergence of the highly contagious delta variant, and other variants,

are factors; plus vaccination hesitancy.

Earlier this summer, Gov. Brown was considering leaving the masking question up to the individual school districts. This was in keeping with the guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Then the delta variant led to covid surges and hospitalizations in many states, including Oregon. And younger people were becoming sick with the virus.

The Centers for Disease Control then issued new guidance: "The CDC now recommends that all students and staff should wear masks inside schools, regardless of whether he or she is vaccinated."

Gov. Brown then directed the Health Authority and Education Department to develop the new statewide policy. This

month the Health Authority issued the new guidance, called the Resiliency Framework, "requiring face coverings in all indoor school settings, both public and private, for all individuals 2 years and older, including all students, staff, contractors, volunteers and visitors."

The school district is responding, "planning to hold full-time, in-person instruction five days a week for the upcoming school year," said 509-J superintendent Jay Mathisen. "We know this is when kids flourish most. Let's stick together in these challenging times."

Ms. Mathisen says he continues to advocate for local control on the masking question, while preparing to meet the latest state mandate.

— Dave McMechan

The Eugene Cougar Greene American Legion Family #48 and the Confederated Tribes hosted the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Parade, Saturday, August 7, honoring the men and women who served in the Armed Forces during the years 1955-1975. There was a great turnout for the parade, as the annual event was welcomed back again following a one-year delay.



Dave McMechan photos/Spilyay

Tribes revise Covid-19 safety measures

Following recent developments in meeting the ongoing challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic, the tribes' Response Team recommended new safety measures. Tribal Council then approved the recommendation.

Effective immediately, the protocol applies to all tribal buildings, enterprises and the community. Factors leading to the enhanced safety measures are concern about the low overall vaccination rate, especially for young people; and the strength of current Covid-19 variants.

"The variant strains are stronger than what we were experiencing a year ago," the Response Team notes. "The variants are spreading faster and are more contagious."

The team adds: "There have been recent local break through cases, also occurring worldwide,

that are concerning.

The tribe has not reached 70-percent vaccination rate for those 12 and older, leaving children under 12 more vulnerable, especially with the more serious variants.

The draft Annual Health Report shows Covid-19 was the leading cause of death for 2020.

This requires us to increase our prevention efforts and make some serious decisions to keep our community safe per Tribal Council resolution No. 12,697.

Revised protocols

• Effective immediately, on a daily basis random testing will be conducted.

Human Resource will submit names to general managers, directors and supervisors, who will contact the employee. The employee is then referred to IHS for ran-

dom testing. This is for all employees, vaccinated and non-vaccinated. The Covid-19 Response Team will work with IHS staff to set up a system for how to schedule.

• Vaccinated employees must produce a copy of their vaccination, and general managers and directors must keep a copy on file.

General managers, directors and supervisors must keep a list of those not vaccinated and provide a list to Human Resources.

• Nonvaccinated employees will be required to take a Covid-19 test weekly with documentation proving they are covid free.

If the employee gets fully vaccinated, then he or she needs to give a copy of proof to his or her general manager or director. The employee will then be placed on the random tested list.

• Masks are now required for

all to wear inside public buildings.

• If a person is at his or her own workspace, he or she does not need to wear a mask; however, if others enter and six-foot distance cannot be maintained, a mask is required.

• Temperatures needs to be taken when entering any building, and a daily log kept on file so contact tracers can access if necessary.

• Community events need to be approved by the Covid-19 Response Team.

Masks are required for inside events, and social distancing is recommended.

If the event is held outside, social distancing is recommended and those more vulnerable or with underlying conditions should wear masks.

See COVID SAFETY on 2



\$2,500 SLOT TOURNAMENT

Sunday August 15th, 2PM

\$20 unlimited buy-ins



Today could be YOUR Lucky Day!

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See Players' Club for details.



