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Community vaccine update

In partnership, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and Indian Health Service are among the models of how best to protect a community against the Covid-19. As Dr. Bud Beamer, Public Health Officer for Jefferson County, recently commented, "With the vaccine, mandatory masking and extensive testing, the Confederated Tribes and IHS have proven that these measures work."

The Indian Health Service and tribes are now beginning a next important phase in the strategy against community spread of the virus: Indian Health Service and the tribes are now working on the rollout of booster shots against covid.

This is a locally coordinated response to recent federal government approval of a third, or booster covid shot for individuals, said Hyllis Dauphinais, chief executive officer of Warm Springs IHS.

Following the Centers for Disease Control guidelines, some of the booster vaccines have now been administered to community members who are immuno-compromised.

Next month the booster should become available to more people.

This rollout could follow the model established during the initial phase of the vaccination, Mr. Dauphinais said: This would mean starting with more elderly individuals, and others who are especially vulnerable to the disease.

At this time, September 20 is a target date for greater availability of the booster shot.

In the meantime, Warm Springs IHS and Community Health are developing a list of people to contact and inform of the availability. "We're ramping up for the third dose," Mr. Dauphinais said, "as the September 20 date approaches." The reason for this, he says, is clear:

"Our mandate from Tribal Council is to save lives. That is the number one goal, as we put this plan in place."

Full approval

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration this week granted full approval to the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for people age 16 and older. This is the first coronavirus vaccine fully approved by the FDA, and is expected to open the door to more vaccine mandates. The Department of Defense, and the New York City School District are recent notable examples of groups that are now mandating the vaccine for employees.

Tribal situation

Like all other areas, the reservation has seen a recent increase in Covid-19 cases, as the delta variant continues to spread.

As of Tuesday of this week, there were 17 people in the community with the disease; plus 35 close contacts receiving daily monitoring.

In victory over the Huntington scandal

The Treaty of 1855, signed on June 25 of that year, has always been the only recognized and enforceable treaty between the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and the United States. And the treaty clearly recognizes the tribal members' rights to off-reservation hunting, fishing and gathering at all usual and accustomed places on the vast Ceded Lands.

Shortly after the signing of the treaty, Indian people fishing along the Columbia River and other areas of the Ceded Lands—as they had done from time immemorial—became a source jealousy and irritation to settlers of the region. The settlers brought their grievance to then-superintendent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs for Oregon, J.W. Perit Huntington.

In response, Huntington was able to obtain a 'supplemental treaty.' This document, from 1865, purported to relinquish off-reservation rights recognized



by the 1855 Treaty; and to confine Indians to the reservation without written BIA permission to leave.

From its inception, the 1865 document has been viewed as a fraud: Neither party to the Treaty of 1855—the tribes or the United States—has ever viewed the Huntington scandal as legal. And yet over the decades it remained 'on the books.'

Finally, last year the federal gov-

ernment officially nullified the Huntington document. Former Congressman Greg Walden introduced the nullification legislation in 2019. U.S. Senators Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden sponsored the bill in the Senate, with support of Gov. Kate Brown. And it passed in October 2020, signed by then-Pres. Trump.

Last week the Tribal Council and staff hosted a gathering to officially mark the nullification. On hand for



Mitchell Lira photos/KWSO

U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley meets with Tribal Council office manager Doris Miller (left). The medallion (above) commemorates the nullification of the Huntington document.

the event, Sen. Merkley explained that he first learned of the tribes' treaty history 20 or so years ago, when Governmental Affairs director Louie Pitt invited him to Pi-Ume-Sha. And since that time, the senator has always been in support of the Huntington nullification. Senator Wyden, Gov. Brown and others also sent the tribes their best wishes on the occasion (see page 4 for the governor's comments).

Tribal water legislation making progress

Funding for tribal reservation water infrastructure is part of the \$1 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The U.S. Senate this month passed the Infrastructure and Jobs Act on a bi-partisan vote. The bill is now at the House of Representatives.

The law would include the Western Tribal Water Infrastructure Act of 2021, with its funding at \$250 million. Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley introduced the Tribal Water Infrastructure Act in 2019, and it passed last year.

The Tribal Infrastructure Act also has strong bi-partisan support; and its inclusion in the overall Infrastructure and Jobs Act brings it closer to becoming law.

In 2019, when Sens. Wyden and Merkley introduced the Tribal Water Infrastructure Act, they cited the condition of the Warm Springs water system as an example of the problems tribes experience as reservation domestic water systems are increasingly old and unreliable. Tribal Council Chairman Raymond Tsumpti Sr. gave testimony before the lawmakers in favor of that legislation.

Then last year came the coronavirus pandemic, and another prolonged water outage on the reservation. Sen. Merkley, chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee, said at the time: "The crisis on the Warm Springs Reservation is a powerful example of how the coronavirus crisis made existing water infrastructure challenges even more serious."

This month 19 Senate Republicans joined the 50 Democrats in passing the \$1 trillion Infrastructure and Jobs Act. The House for now continues to work through its process, before the bill would go

to Pres. Biden for signing. Some other regional items in the infrastructure bill that Merkley and Wyden helped secure:

- \$162 million for Klamath habitat restoration. That area, including Klamath tribal land and resources, is experiencing environmental consequences of extreme drought.

- \$6 billion for wildfire risk mitigation and forest health treatments, including an additional \$100 million for the Collaborative Forestry Landscape Restoration Program.

— Dave McMechan

Academy would see new classrooms with district bond

Voters of the Jefferson County School District 509-J will see a \$24 million bond measure on the November 2021 ballot. The bond would address health, safety and security matters in all of the district's schools.

If it passes, the bond would

fund the construction of six new early learning classrooms at the Warm Springs Academy. Madras High School work would include a new roof and insulation; upgrades to the Career and Technical Education area; heating, cooling and ventilation improvements; a new

soccer concession and restroom area, and facility and field lights.

The other schools in the district would also see improvements. Full details are available at the school district bond website. You can find the site at:

509jschoolbond.org

The school district has not passed a bond measure since 2012. That bond paid for half of the construction of the Warm Springs Academy, as the tribes funded the other half. The 2012 measure also funded the Madras Performing Arts Center at the high school.



Mitchell Lira photos/KWSO

Mt. Hood Meadows and the Confederated Tribes last week hosted a Huckleberry Gathering Day for the tribes; and there were many berries out this year. Among those who made the trip, Mary McNevin, Riyah Stacona and Janice Smith (left); and Joni Wallulatum (above).



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