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November - Anaku Ipach'aanxa Yaamash

Community update

On Monday of this week, the Indian Health Service reported 12 new cases of Covid-19, from 70 tests conducted on Friday.

There were 29 people with reported active covid on the reservation, and 55 close contacts receiving daily monitoring.

As of Monday, IHS had conducted 15,910 covid tests. Of the total, 1,063 have come back positive.

An additional 151 positive tests of tribal members have come from outside facilities, for a total of 1,214 cases of Covid-19 among the tribal community since the pandemic began. Anyone who wants a Covid-19 test can go to the front gate at the clinic and get tested.

Vaccinations

If you haven't already been vaccinated, please get the vaccine: Vaccines are saving lives and they are keeping people out of the hospital.

Vaccinations are the primary way to bring the covid pandemic under control.

Warm Springs IHS has given 3,009 primary doses of the covid vaccine. IHS has given another 2,544 secondary doses. People who qualify are now receiving their third, or booster dose.

Nineteen young people of the community, between the ages of 5-11, have received the covid vaccine.

Vaccinations for young people are based on recommendations by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Western States Scientific Safety Review Workgroup.

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

Precautions

Community members are asked to please use all covid precautions, as approved by Tribal Council upon recommendation of the Response Team:

Wear a face mask and maintaining distance from anyone you do not live with. Understandably, this is especially challenging to use those protocols when interacting with family and friends.

If you have covid symptoms, or if you have tested positive:

Stay home and avoid others. Don't go to the grocery store, the casino, the longhouse or work.

Do not go to sporting events or school activities, birthday parties or meetings. Stay away from celebrations, funerals and any public areas.

Hospitalizations

St. Charles Health Systems hospitals are at 86.7 percent occupancy.

The St. Charles intensive care unit is at 75 percent occupancy.

There are 48 St. Charles patients with covid 19, and nine people are in the ICU with covid.

(Covid case demographics for the tribal community are on page 3 of this publication.)

New infrastructure law to help with water system

The \$1.2 trillion federal infrastructure law, approved this week, includes funding for tribal water systems.

The law includes \$1 billion specifically for Oregon. And of that amount, \$250 million is targeted for drinking water improvements for tribal communities of the state.

The Oregon federal legislative delegation sponsored this

aspect of the legislation, in large part because of the situation on the Warm Springs Reservation, though other tribal communities are in similar circumstances.

Last summer especially, as Covid-19 was still a new and less understood illness, the tribes faced a prolonged water crisis. There was a boil-water requirement for several months, and some instances of no water at all for a

number of residents. This past summer saw another boil-water situation, though not as prolonged.

Some of the infrastructure funding will be used for near-term projects. Larger needs, such as a new treatment plant to replace the current one, will take some years to complete. Still, with funding in place there is the real chance that some solution is at hand.

Passage of the bill now allows

Utilities and Council to plan for an overhaul that may eventually cost tens of millions of dollars.

Another aspect of the infrastructure law is \$65 billion that will go toward connecting rural parts of the country to broadband internet: \$100 million is for Oregon's rural communities, like the reservation. This too has become a priority since covid began, as schools have developed more online learning options.

District bond will add new Academy classrooms

The Warm Springs Academy will have new classrooms following the recent passage of a school district 509-J bond measure.

Of the total \$24 million in the bond, \$4 million goes to projects at the Academy. Along with the six new early learning classrooms, the bond will also fund a new key-access, safety control system at the Academy.

At the various schools of the district, the bond will address health, safety and security matters.

At the Bridges High School, \$935,000 goes to four new classrooms, gym floor improvements and new flooring on the lower level.

Madras High School work will include a new roof and insulation; upgrades to the Career



Students at the Warm Springs Academy, during Spirit Week.

Photos courtesy Lucinda Heath/W.S. Academy

and Technical Education area; heating, cooling and ventilation improvements; a new soccer concession and restroom area, and facility and field

lights.

This is the first school district bond measure since 2012. That bond paid for half of the con-

struction of the Warm Springs Academy, as the tribes funded the other half.

See **ACADEMY** on 2

Extra help with EMS at W.S. Fire and Safety

As some of you may have noticed, there are some new faces in town. Warm Springs Fire and Safety has been experiencing an all time low in staffing.

We reached out to FEMA—the Federal Emergency Management Agency—for help, and were able to get a group of contracted emergency medical technicians, EMTs, and paramedics from Favorite Healthcare Staffing.

They are a wonderful group of people who are well trained and professional and are here to do whatever we need. This help is, however, temporary. We have them until November 22 with a possibility of an extension. An extension for some of the Favorite staff could be into January.

We are working to get some permanent people hired, but it is tough right now.

And keep in mind, only a few of the temporary people have any fire training. So we need to be extra careful and strict on preventing fires. It's getting cold now and I know all those wood stoves, space heaters and furnaces are firing up.

Please make sure your chimneys are cleaned and that



The Favorite Healthcare staff at the Warm Springs Fire and Safety Agency.

D.McMechan/Spilyay

were keeping things away from those heat sources.

We have done our best to try to orientate the new Favorite Healthcare staff, but keep in mind only one of the 12 has ever been to Oregon. We have people from Florida, Tennessee, Texas, and Georgia to name a few.

I am asking that the community welcome these medics and be patient with them while they are learning our culture and our res-

ervation.

There are several factors that created this dilemma, one being an overall shortage in healthcare workers.

Covid also put a halt to several programs around the nation, making it difficult for students to complete their training.

Hospitals were put on lockdown, making it impossible for students to get the clinical time that's required. Also, over-

all numbers for these programs were reduced in both 2020 and 2021.

On the other hand, covid created many other jobs, because other ambulance and health care companies were getting busier. These other jobs were paying outrageous wages, and some offered signing bonuses that we could not compete with.

Karla Tias, Warm Springs Fire and Safety.

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