



Community update

The tribes and the covid Response Team remind the community that the covid virus remains a serious health risk in the community, as is true across the country. An increase in the number of cases happened over the past several weeks—as happened elsewhere as well—largely because of recent covid variants. As of last week, there were 13 known positive covid cases in the community, an increase from the spring which at one point saw zero local cases before the increase began.

There was one person from the community in the hospital as of last week because of the virus.

As a reminder, the vaccines and boosters remain the best defense against serious illness. Also: Masking and distancing requirements remain in place while people are in tribal public buildings.

Man facing charges following fair incident

This week, Rafael Gomez, age 29, is accused of stealing a firearm and pointing it at several people on Friday, July 22 by the Jefferson County Fair.

County prosecutors say Gomez has a 2019 car theft conviction from San Diego County.

He now faces an attempted murder charge, according to court records; plus five counts of unlawful use of a weapon.

In addition, he is facing possible charges of felon in possession of a firearm and theft.

Gomez was booked this past Sunday into the Jefferson County Jail without bond, with arraignment on Monday of this week.

The District Attorney's Office says his case will be presented to the grand jury this week. More information is not yet available, and will be released following the completion of a use-of-force investigation.

The incident shut the highway down near Fairgrounds Road late Friday afternoon and evening.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office says law enforcement responded to a report of a man at the fairgrounds with a long rifle at about 5 p.m. on Friday. The man reportedly ran to a nearby business, where the suspect was shot by law enforcement when he tried to get inside while still armed.

Jefferson County deputies and Madras Police were involved in the case, although no details have been released about who fired on the suspect. An incident like this, involving use of possible deadly force by officers of a relatively small law enforcement agency, requires the officers involved be put on administrative leave pending an independent review by an outside agency.

Getting ready for first Ranch Rodeo

The first task in hosting a rodeo in Warm Springs is renovating the grounds, because for more than three years now there has been no rodeo in Warm Springs. There was the Pi-Ume-Sha Rodeo in June of 2019, then all of the powwow events including rodeo were cancelled through this summer. And as a consequence, the rodeo grounds fell into disuse.

A first project was cutting down and getting rid of all the weeds that had been growing for years. "That alone took two weeks," Kecia Florendo, of the Warm Springs Ranch Rodeo Club, was saying the other day.

Kecia, her family and oth-

ers with the rodeo club are among the volunteers who are now bringing the grounds back to life.

Kecia's parents are JE Florendo and Alfredine Smith. They all were at the grounds last week with summer youth from the Community Action Team and Natural Resources. With the weeds mostly gone the group was painting the railings, panels and livestock chutes, which now are especially colorful.

Mr. Florendo is a wild horse racer; and for rodeos he and his family, with the Suppah family provide the stock. They've been to several rodeos this summer, including the Jefferson County Fair Rodeo last weekend. And they're getting ready for the first Open Warm



JE and Kecia Florendo with Arema White of Natural Resources.

Springs Ranch Rodeo, coming Saturday, September 3.

They're doing all of this non-profit and out of pocket. "We're trying to bring something to the

community," JE says. "Not much has happened here since the pandemic. This is something to look forward to."

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The St. Charles System of Inclusion and Experience

Inclusion and diversity are high priorities of the St. Charles Health System, both for staff and the community members they serve. "The work has been going on for years, on multiple levels of the St. Charles organization," says Dr. Shilo Shaw Tippet. Especially now, in her role as the St. Charles Health System Manager of Caregiver Inclusion and Experience, "I see how much we truly care," Dr. Tippet says.

In part, you see the inclusivity of St. Charles with the doctor herself—a PhD-level Native American woman now managing the St. Charles Caregiver Inclusion and Experience program. In the role she works to promote justice and equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging for the 4,600 employees of the health system and the communities they serve.

The position is a fairly new one. St. Charles developed it toward the end of the last year. And Dr. Tippet was a natural for the role, based on her extensive background in the field as described more below. One aspect of the job is recruiting and helping ensure the staff are doing well, in terms of work experience. For instance, in recent



Courtesy St. Charles

At the Oklahoma State University Distinguished Alumnus Award ceremony earlier this year, with parents Mavis and Nat Shaw, Shilo with her daughter Columbia in the black vest, son Camon in front, and daughter Cadence to her left.

years an issue has been avoiding job burnout among caregivers, well-documented in the health professions.

Because of Covid-19, many people adjusted by working more at home. "Obviously that's not possible with health care workers," Dr. Tippet says. In response, "We're working to enhance the experience of our caregivers so they want to work here long-term."

Another aspect of her job is con-

tinuing the spirit of inclusion and diversity in the care system. "Our dedication is to serving all people of the community equally and equitably," the doctor says. "And our goal is moving forward with that."

Recent success in the approach is evident in the nationwide survey The Lown Institute Hospitals Index of Social Responsibility, "measuring racial inclusivity, avoidance of overuse, and pay equity." Of all hospitals surveyed across the U.S.,

St. Charles Madras was second best, just behind the hospital in Belle Glade, Florida.

Career path

Dr. Tippet grew up in Warm Springs. Her parents are Nat and Mavis Shaw. Her youth on the reservation, and then in Terrebonne was like that of friends and relatives: School, berry picking in the summer, digging roots. And as a teenager she worked at the Early Childhood Education Center.

After high school Dr. Tippet went to Mt. Hood Community College, then transferred to the University of Oregon, earning her Psychology degree. This led to an education opportunity at Oklahoma State University, the Native Americans in Psychology program, her inspiration to pursue a career in Psychology.

At Oklahoma State she completed the Masters-Doctorate program, graduating in 2006 from the university Clinical Psychology PhD program. After this she interned at the Seattle Veterans Administration Medical Center, and did her post-doctoral fellowship in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder at the VA Puget Medical Center.

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Courtesy photo

Bailey Reese, age 10, showed a white pig at the 2022 Jefferson County Fair, taking the First-Place Blue Ribbon. Congratulations, Bailey!



D. McMechan/Spilyay

Showing from Warm Springs at the fair were Bailey Reese, Keira Saldana, Arellie Scott, Arellia Scott and Hayden Heath (from left).



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