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# SMOKE SIGNALS

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AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION OF THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF GRAND RONDE · SMOKE SIGNALS.ORG

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## STATE OF EMERGENCY



Photo by Timothy J. Gonzalez

**Spirit Mountain Casino closed to the public on Thursday, March 19. Preliminary estimates project having the casino and its approximately 1,100 employees being idle at least until Thursday, April 9, in an effort to help stifle the spread of the coronavirus in Oregon.**

### Spirit Mountain Casino extends closure by a week

By Dean Rhodes

*Smoke Signals editor*

**S**pirit Mountain Casino will not be re-opening on Thursday, April 2. After a meeting between the Grand Ronde Tribal Council and Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. Board of Directors on Wednesday, March 25, it has been decided to keep the casino closed until at least Thursday, April 9.

“This closure is a precautionary measure to help protect the Tribal community, staff and guests as the COVID-19 outbreak escalates throughout the state, region and country,” says a press release jointly issued by Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy and Spirit Mountain Casino General Manager Stan Dillon on Thursday, March 26. “The Tribe’s and casino’s first priority is the health and safety of everyone that comes to Spirit Mountain Casino. The casino management and Grand Ronde Tribal Council will continue to monitor the situation and will revisit this decision on regular basis.”

In an unprecedented move, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde announced an initial two-week closure of its primary economic engine, Spirit Mountain Casino, beginning at 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, March 18, to help combat spread of the coronavirus in Oregon.

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## Tribal Council prepares for pandemic’s financial effects

By Dean Rhodes

*Smoke Signals editor*

**I**n the shadow of the novel coronavirus outbreak, Tribal Council met early on Wednesday, March 18, at 10 a.m. after advising the membership to not attend in person and to watch the proceedings via the live stream feed on the Tribal website, [www.grandronde.org](http://www.grandronde.org).

Keeping attendance small was a continued effort to stem the spread of the virus, called COVID-19. Tribal Council members sat six feet apart with empty seats between them to model social distancing and Tribal Council Chairwoman



Cheryle A. Kennedy asked meeting attendees to do the same.

Two late items added to the Tuesday, March 17, Legislative Action Committee agenda in-

involved preparing the Tribe for possible financial contingencies as the pandemic evolves.

Tribal Council approved suspending all loan payments, including principal and interest, to the Tribe from Spirit Mountain Gaming Inc. because of possible negative effects to the casino’s cash flow.

Tribal Council also approved using up to \$20 million from its line of credit to maintain account liquidity.

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