

Tribe moving forward with online services

By Danielle Frost

Smoke Signals staff writer

In an effort to continue serving the Tribal membership safely during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Tribe is moving many of its services online or over the phone.

"We have been tracking COVID-19 since December and working closely with local, state and national officials in responding," General Manager David Fullerton said. "We've established a helpline for resources not related to health concerns and are continuing to prepare as this event unfolds."

Since the first case of coronavirus was reported in Oregon in late February, everything regarding "normal" has shifted.

Gov. Kate Brown has issued multiple executive orders that included closing schools until April 28, limiting in-person work to essential services, suspending routine medical and dental appointments, and ordering all Oregonians to stay home unless absolutely necessary to leave.

Tribal leaders detailed the Tribe's response to the pandemic during a Facebook Live event held on Wednesday, March 25, that included Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy, Fullerton, Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez and Health Services Executive Director Kelly Rowe. More than 240 people attended remotely, Hernandez said.

"I'm pleased to be able to talk



Smoke Signals screen captures

From left, Grand Ronde General Manager David Fullerton, Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy and Health Services Executive Director Kelly Rowe participated in a Facebook Live outreach event to the Tribal membership on Wednesday, March 25, to discuss the Tribe's response to the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. The social media event attracted an online audience of more than 240 people, Tribal Council Chief of Staff Stacia Hernandez said.

For a full list of updated remote services, visit www.grandronde.org/services/health-wellness/covid-19-preparedness/

to you about this pandemic that is covering the world," Kennedy said. "We are hopeful that soon we will overcome this disease. Three years ago, we set up an Emergency Management Team and one of the drills we did was a pandemic. From that moment until today, we have been practicing, so we are well positioned to address this. ... As we move forward, I have great faith in our Tribe and who we are."

Services that will be offered remotely include Head Start virtual lessons, replacing home visits with phone calls, online GED tutoring, Youth Education tutoring, a Cultural Education YouTube channel,

Alcoholics Anonymous remote support, free mail delivery and local delivery for Grand Ronde Pharmacy prescriptions, Chachalu AV Club online and Chinuk Immersion Program remote access.

For non-health related concerns or information on community resources, call 503-879-HELP. The line is staffed from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday.

"The biggest part of combating this virus is prevention," Rowe said. "Keep washing your hands, using hand sanitizer and stay home if you are sick. Also, please call your health care provider before coming to the clinic. This is to protect staff so we can provide services."

Fullerton said that during the COVID-19 outbreak, Tribal Housing will be implementing a rent relief policy so that families that have had their employment affected will not be evicted for failure to pay rent on time.

Additionally, the Tribe is working on setting up a donation drop-off area for items such as diapers, toilet paper, paper towels, rubber gloves and cleaning supplies. Those who want to donate are asked to call the helpline.

To help ease the financial burden on employees who must stay home, the Tribe authorized an additional

120 hours of paid time off. In the event that the 120 hours are depleted and the Tribe has not yet resumed regular operation, Fullerton said the intent is to continue to take care of employees.

"We want to ease our employees' fears," he said. "We have around 450 and now it's down to 50 to 75 people on site. Our intent is to have another plan on the table if needed."

In response to a question, Kennedy said the closure of Spirit Mountain Casino probably will affect future per capita payments for Tribal members. She said it would be untrue to say it wouldn't, but that "we're all in this together" in making sacrifices to stem the spread of the virus.

Kennedy closed the Facebook Live meeting by thanking staff members for their hard work during the pandemic and offering practical advice to viewers.

"Soap is like a miracle for this disease," she said. "Wash your hands more than you ever have before and don't touch your face."

The Tribe will hold a second Facebook Live event at 11 a.m. Wednesday, April 1, that will feature Kennedy and Spirit Mountain Casino General Manager Stan Dillon. ■



COMMITTEE AND SPECIAL EVENT BOARD VACANCIES

The following Committees and Special Event Boards have vacant positions.

Housing Grievance Board – 1 vacancy

TERO Commission – 1 vacancy

Please send completed applications to
Stacia Hernandez, 9615 Grand Ronde Road,
Grand Ronde, OR 97347

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



Sheridan, SW Polk and West Valley Fire Districts are recruiting volunteers for fire response, emergency medical response, and support functions. Please see our websites for volunteer applications and instructions.

sheridanfd.org – swpolkfd.org – westvalleyfd.org

T-SHIRT DESIGN CONTEST

SHOW US YOUR CREATIVITY

WINNER WILL RECEIVE A \$50 GIFT CARD, A T-SHIRT & A HOODIE WITH THEIR DESIGN ON IT!



Accepting Submissions Until...

April 3rd

Submit a drawing or sketch of what you feel best represents Wellness Warriors.

Submit your design to Youth Empowerment and Prevention: angey.rideout@grandronde.org

Questions call Angey 503.879.4533

The winning design will be printed on all the T-shirts that will be given out at the Mental Health Awareness Walk on May 16th.