

**THE SHOSHONE-PAIUTE TRIBES
OF THE DUCK VALLEY INDIAN RESERVATION**

P.O. Box 219 Owyhee, NV 89832

(208) 759-3100

www.shopaitribes.org



July 7, 2020

Dear Tribal Membership and Duck Valley Community,


Many new and different demands have been placed on all of us as individuals, families, our Sho-Pai Tribal Government, and our Tribal Nation all in efforts to keep our community members healthy and safe during these challenging times. The Tribal Business Council, management team and essential staff who serve in various roles, have been meeting regularly, planning and taking many actions to protect all members of our community. Despite all of the extra demands related to keeping our community safe, it has been a priority for me to communicate with community members as often and in as many ways possible. When we are facing such challenging times, it is important and necessary to provide accurate and up-to-date communication, because our tribal members, need to know what your tribal leadership is doing to protect, promote and support the best interests of the Shoshone Paiute Tribes. In that effort, I continue to set aside time to provide accurate and regular information. Below is a summary and status update of work completed by our respective teams:

- ✓ The Tribal Council enacted an Emergency Declaration and Stay Home - Stay Safe and Curfew Order and placed all but critical essential staff on administrative leave to prevent possible spread of the coronavirus. Some staff have been returned to full or part-time status to address pressing governmental and community services. These actions were based on guidance from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Indian Health Services and regional health districts.
- ✓ Our own Owyhee Community Health Facility (OCHF) staff has organized and obtained all necessary information and guidance protocols, along with equipment and supplies to care for individuals who possibly have COVID-19. Protocols implemented at OCHF include restructured patient care to screen, test and care for individuals with possible COVID-19 separately from other patients. These systems of care have been established to protect all patients and to provide quality patient care, while at the same time, protecting our doctors, nurses and other staff from potentially contracting the virus.
- ✓ We have set our Tribal Emergency Response team in action. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been established at the Human Development Center and has been assisting individuals and families with food distribution, obtaining necessary household supplies and providing assistance with meal distribution to homebound elders. (For example: families quarantined at home to prevent possible spread of the Coronavirus.) The EOC has prepared emergency action plans, coordinated with regional health districts, purchased and received donations of food, household items and personal protective equipment (PPE) and has distributed items for those in need.
- ✓ We have hired and trained staff for the EOC to do temperature checks for community members, employees and contractor employees, because a fever is one of the first signs of COVID-19. EOC staff have also been trained in tracing contact between individuals who may have been exposed to the virus; this tracing and quarantining is critical to preventing possible spread of the virus.
- ✓ We successfully applied for and have received more than \$14,000,000 in CARES Act funding. The CARES Act funds have been deposited in a new, designated bank account to ensure that all allowable expenditures and use are accounted for, as required under the CARES Act law. If the funds are not used properly based on COVID-19 impacts as specified in that law, they will have to be returned to the federal government.

- ✓ We created an Emergency Family Assistance Grant Program to support tribal members who have been directly affected by COVID-19, for lost income, additional expenses or both. The grants require an application with detail and as much documentation as possible. This approach is required under the allowable use of CARES Act funds. We have assigned staff working full-time to administer the grants, including assisting applicants to complete the applications to receive those funds. At this point, three batches of checks have been mailed and more will follow on a bi-weekly basis.
- ✓ Our Tribal Information Technology (IT) staff are working with Century Link to expand bandwidth to the Reservation so that we are able to do more on the Internet, such as distance learning for our students and telemedicine for patients so that they can get medical attention without having to come into the clinic, that way preventing possible spread of the virus. IT is also working on getting another Internet provider through a grant so that all students can have Internet access to lessons and their teachers.
- ✓ A team consisting of the Tribal Council, key management leadership, EOC, BIA law enforcement, the schools and other representatives are meeting weekly in the Tribal Council Chambers to plan and monitor all of our actions and teamwork to protect and keep our people safe. The Council Chambers are set up for social distancing and teleconferencing capabilities to adhere to Center for Disease Control and our own guidelines to prevent the possibility of spreading the virus.
- ✓ The Tribes have contracted with Antoinette Cavanaugh to coordinate and project manage all of our CARES Act funding, so that we use it cost-effectively and in accordance with the law, requirements and guidelines from the federal government. Mrs. Cavanaugh, along with leadership and the staff's collective assistance, has successfully developed an efficient process system for the Emergency Family Assistance Grant Program applications. Also, you may recall, the Tribal Council, management leadership team and community members submitted suggestions for best use of the CARES Act funds. And, Antoinette has compiled a list of those suggestions and we are setting priorities with project plans to use CARES Act funds, as allowed under the law, to meet immediate needs to address COVID-19 care, prevention and impacts, as well as, in ways that will also serve the best interest of the Tribes into the future.
- ✓ The Shoshone Paiute Tribes are currently looking into options to offer better communication and transparency options for the membership, such as, video/recording options for regular and special council meetings. We hope to have these services available to the membership soon and will keep you updated VIA email notice through Owyhee Radio's email and broadcasting systems and through the Shoshone Paiute Tribes' Facebook Page.

I, along with our team, will continue to make communication a priority while doing all of the above in order to keep our membership and community informed. I want you to know that as your Tribal Chairman, I care deeply about how the threat of this pandemic has collectively affected us. I know the Tribal Council has worked diligently to establish systems to protect and support our people to get through this challenging time so that we remain strong and healthy as a sovereign nation. By caring for each other, working with and trusting each other, we will get through this. We will continue to work in the best interest of our tribal membership while also considering the well-being of all and building opportunities for future generations of the Shoshone Paiute People.

Sincerely,



Colin L. Thomas
Tribal Chairman