

COVID-19 K'wen Update

Friday, May 1, 2020

Groceries at your door

Elders in the tribe's five-county service area are getting a little emergency preparedness help. Thanks to some federal grant money, each Elder will receive 14 shelf-stable packaged meals. The foods were selected for their shelf life rather than their gourmet appeal: SpaghettiOs and the like.

Staff members Roni Jackson and Lori Austin started delivering boxes on the Kilkich Reservation today. They'll visit other Elders over the next couple of weeks.

In case you're wondering, the food deliveries have nothing to do with COVID-19. The timing is purely coincidental.

Also, although the meals are intended for emergencies, Elders are welcome to eat them whenever they choose.

More about Elder meals

In case you missed it in Wednesday's K'wen Update, here's a link to information for Elders about frozen meals and grocery shopping trips. [Click here](#)

Oregon report

- Oregon Gov. Kate Brown announced today that the state will expanding COVID-19 testing. She also gave more details on how the state will trace exposures. [See details here.](#)
- Oregon has tallied 133 new cases of COVID-19 since Wednesday's K'wen Update, raising the total to 2,579.
- Four more patients died in that time, bringing Oregon's death toll to 105.

Close to home

- At last report, 21 cases of COVID-19 had been confirmed at the Shutter Creek Correctional Institution in northern Coos County. Those 21 include six inmates who have been released from custody.
- Transit buses in Coos County are parked until Monday. The local transportation district temporarily shut down after learning that a passenger had been exposed to an infected Shutter Creek employee. The buses have been sanitized, and drivers are under orders to self-isolate at home.
- Coos Bay has canceled its traditional July 4 activities in Mingus Park. No live music, no fishing derby, no 5k run. But at least the annual fireworks display is still on the schedule.

Facts about coronavirus

By now you've heard a ton of information about COVID-19. But a refresher on the basics never hurts. [Click here.](#)

Tips for staying healthy

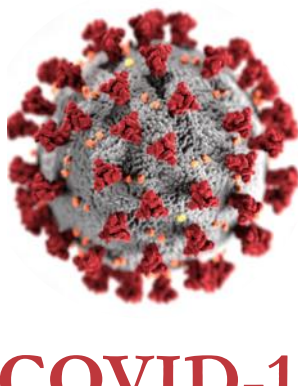
You can take simple steps to help ward off infection. [Click here.](#)

Keeping you informed

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Prefer to get your tribal COVID-19 news on your phone? Text CITCOVID to 888777, and we'll get you set up.



COVID-19 K'wen Update

Monday, May 4, 2020

Oregon report

- Coos County today recorded its first case of COVID-19 not related to the Shutter Creek Correctional Institution. The patient is a woman over the age of 60, with no known connection to Shutter Creek.
- At last count, 25 cases of the disease have been confirmed among inmates and employees of Shutter Creek.
- In the Coquille Tribe's five-county service area, Coos County has reported six new cases since Friday, and Lane County has reported five.
- Oregon now has seen 2,759 confirmed or presumptive cases of the coronavirus. (A presumptive case is someone who has had close contact with a confirmed case and is showing symptoms, but who has not had a positive test.)
- **Happier news:** No new deaths from COVID-19 were reported in Oregon today, for the second day in a row. (But five were reported on Saturday, bringing the state's death count to 109.)
- **Also positive:** The number of Oregonians hospitalized with coronavirus hit a new low over the weekend: just 92 active hospitalizations. That's down more than 40 percent since early April. [Details](#)

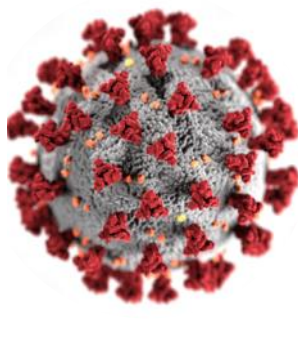
Keep your family safe

- Slowing the spread of COVID-19 is the job of every person — not just the government. Physical distancing is one of the best ways to do it. [Details](#)
- Who should be tested for COVID-19? Where do you go for testing? What's the test like? [Answers](#)

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COVID-19 K'wen Update

Wednesday, May 6, 2020

Reopening The Mill?

As state and local leaders talk about reopening Oregon, the Coquille Tribal Council and the CEDCO team are likewise working on a plan to reopen The Mill. They're carefully watching the progress of the pandemic, and they're evaluating steps taken by other tribes and government entities.

No formal decision has been made about the date, but we hope to have more news soon.

You can join Thursday's meeting

The Tribal Council will meet at 1 p.m. PDT Thursday. Any tribal member is welcome to attend via Zoom. Here's how:

- Go to [Zoom.us](https://zoom.us)
- Click "Join a meeting"
- Type in this meeting ID: 892-0126-0635
- And this password: 985491

Or: Use your phone to call one of these toll-free lines:

- (346) 248-7799
- (408) 638-0968
- (669) 900-6833
- (253) 215-8782

If you have any questions, please feel free to call our receptionist at (541) 756-0904.

Please mute your microphone except when you are speaking to the council.

Elders grocery shopping

Here are the details on May's shopping trips for Elders:

Lane County

- Safeway, 1891 Pioneer Parkway E., Springfield
- Tuesday, May 12, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Douglas County

- Safeway, 1539 N.E. Stephens St., Roseburg
- Wednesday, May 13, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Curry County

- McKay's Market, 29656 Ellensburg Ave, Gold Beach
- Friday, May 15, 10:30 a.m. to noon

Jackson County (pickup)

- Coquille Tribal Office, 2355 S. Pacific Highway, Medford
- Frozen and shelf-stable meal pickup
- May 14, noon to 2 p.m.

We don't want to miss you! If you plan to attend, please contact Lori Austin. (For Jackson County, contact Jon Ivy.)

Lori Austin: (541) 217-9897 or loriaustin@coquilletribe.org

Jon Ivy: (541) 297-8554 or jonivy@coquilletribe.org

Oregon report

- Oregon has begun releasing COVID-19 infections by ZIP code. [Interactive map](#)
- Oregon reported 157 more confirmed or presumptive cases of COVID-19 since our Monday report. The total is now 2,916.
- The state also reported six more deaths, raising the count to 115.
- More than 70 percent of the COVID-19 cases in Oregon's prison system are at the Shutter Creek Correctional Institution near Coos Bay. [Details](#)
- **A happy story**: The first Oregon resident to test positive for coronavirus has been discharged from the hospital after two months of treatment. [Details](#)

Sisterhood gathers tonight

The Wawa Sisterhood, a digital gathering place for women, will meet on Zoom at 7 tonight: <https://zoom.us/j/95943580920> It's for women who are tribal members, tribal family members, tribal employees or Kilkich residents.

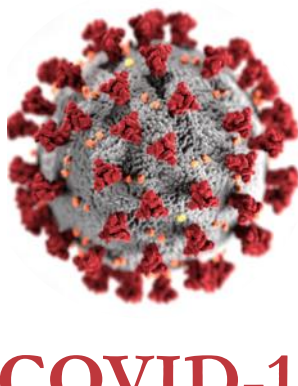
Useful tips for your family

- Guidance for cleaning and disinfecting as America reopens: [Click here](#)
- Quarantine cooking: Convenient meals with canned and frozen foods: [Click here](#)

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COVID-19 K'wen Update

Friday, May 8, 2020

Rebuilding our financial health

- The Tribal Council has approved a careful reopening of The Mill Casino-Hotel & RV Park.
- The council also sadly eliminated some 2020 program expenditures, in response to revenue losses related to COVID-19.
- Read the details in Chairman Brenda Meade's May newsletter column. [Newsletter](#)

Oregon reports

- Gov. Kate Brown announced new details Thursday on plans to reopen Oregon.
 - [Press Release](#)
 - [KGW8 \(Portland\)](#)
 - [OregonLive](#)
 - [KTVZ \(Bend\)](#)
- Oregon has reported another 152 cases of COVID-19 since our Wednesday update. The total to date is 3,068.
- In that same two-day period, Oregon reported 9 more deaths, bringing the state's death toll to 124.
- In the Coquille Tribe's service area, Coos County has 29 cases, Curry has four, Douglas 24, Jackson 49, and Lane 59. Lane County has recorded two deaths.
- To find more resources about COVID-19 in Oregon, visit the Safe+Strong website [here](#).

See you at the park

Coos County parks have reopened, just in time for a somewhat sunny weekend. Enjoy, but stay safe. Relaxing the rules doesn't mean the virus is taking a holiday.

'Charlie Learns About Coronavirus'

This online storybook can help explain the pandemic to children. [Read the story](#)

Will warm weather help?

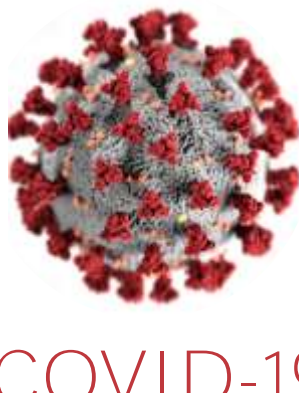
Although you can catch a cold or the flu in the summer, those viruses are mostly winter warriors. So what about COVID-19?

So far, nobody knows whether warm weather will stop the spread of the coronavirus. Scientists have much more to learn about this new ailment. [More about the disease](#)

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COVID-19 K'wen Update

Monday, May 11, 2020

Council sadly cuts programs

For those who didn't see it Friday, here's some important news about tribal programs:

Because of lost casino revenue, the Tribal Council last week regretfully approved additional reductions in discretionary spending. The affected programs are:

- Chief Tony Tanner Scholarship
- Adult Merit Scholarship
- Wendy Matheny Youth Merit Scholarship
- College internships
- College computers
- Tutoring
- Kindergarten Readiness
- Adult Education and Enrichment Program
- General Welfare Home Repair Program
- Firewood Purchase Reimbursement
- Stocking fish into Tarheel Reservoir for fishing derby
- Native American Fashion Show
- Youth Leadership Retreat and Government to Government Summit
- All travel for tribal boards and committees

These programs will be suspended as of Friday, May 15. Members have until July 17 to turn in receipts for expenses under the Adult Education and Enrichment, home repair, firewood purchase, kindergarten, college computers, tutoring, and adult and youth merit programs, but only if those expenses were approved and incurred by May 15.

For more information about these cuts, please see Chairman Brenda Meade's message in the May edition of The K'wen.

Oregon report

- As of Monday afternoon, 24 Oregon counties reportedly had applied to reopen, including all five counties in the Coquille Tribe's five-county service area. (Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson and Lane)

You can read the plans from most of the counties [here](#). Coos County's plan is not available.

- Oregon has reported six more deaths due to COVID-19 since Friday. That raises the state's death toll to 130.
- In that same period, the state added 218 confirmed or presumed cases of the disease, raising the state's total to 3,286.
- Coos County and Lane County each gained one additional case over the weekend. That brings Coos County to 30 cases and Lane County to 60. At least 28 of Coos County's cases are related to the Shutter Creek Correctional Institution.
- Due to health and safety hazards, the Oregon Department of Forestry has temporarily closed all dispersed camping on Oregon state forests. [Details](#)

Q&A on COVID-19 cleanliness

Q: Should I use soap and water or a hand sanitizer to protect against COVID-19?

A: Handwashing is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your family from getting sick. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.

If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.

Q: What cleaning products should I use to protect against COVID-19?

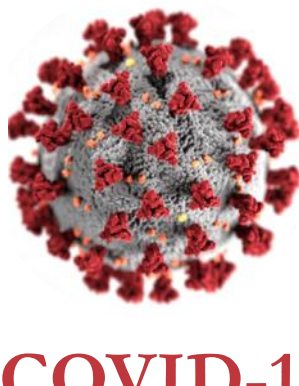
A: Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets and sinks. If surfaces are dirty, clean them using detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

To disinfect, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants will work. See CDC's recommendations for household cleaning and disinfection [here](#).

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COVID-19 K'wen Update

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

We'll get together in June — apart

In the midst of the pandemic, Coquille Tribal members can celebrate Restoration online. [Details](#)

Oregon report

- Doctors in Portland have identified Oregon's first case of pediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome. [Read more.](#)
- Oregon has reported 130 new cases of COVID-19 and four new deaths since our Monday report. That brings the totals to 3,416 cases and 134 deaths.
- In the Coquille Tribe's five-county service area, one of the new cases was in Coos County, and one was in Jackson County.
- The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has distributed 12 more rapid testing instruments to healthcare providers around the state. One went to Bay Area Hospital in Coos Bay, and another went to Douglas County's Mercy Medical Center. (Curry General Hospital previously received one.)

The machines will significantly improve testing capacity by returning results in about 15 minutes.

- How long does it take to recover from coronavirus? For the Oregonian newspaper's report, [click here.](#)
- OHA released its weekly COVID-19 report on Tuesday. [Read it here.](#)

Come join the 'wawa' wingding

The Wawa Sisterhood (a digital gathering of women) will meet on Zoom at 7 tonight. Tribal family members, tribal employees and Kilkich residents are welcome to join the fun. Please bring your baby picture and high school graduation picture to share with the group. [Click here to join the party.](#)

Some useful tips

Our friends at the Community Health Center want to share some important reminders about keeping healthy:

[Staying safe](#)

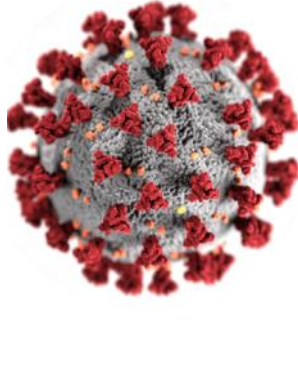
[Running essential errands safely](#)

[Supporting your mental health](#)

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COVID-19

K'wen Update

May 15, 2020

Suited to serve

Check out the stylish and safety-oriented new duds they're wearing at the Community Health Center. Details [here](#).

Oregon report

- Oregon has reported 125 new cases of COVID-19 and three new deaths since our Wednesday report. That brings the totals to 3,541 cases and 137 deaths.
- Revised modeling from the Institute for Disease Modeling, prepared for OHA, shows that measures taken by Oregonians have lowered transmission rates, with the number of new cases appearing to be at a steady, low number, rather than declining. Read the report [here](#).

Counties reopening

All five counties in the Coquille Tribe's service area have been approved for phase 1 reopening by the governor. Counties will need to stay in phase 1 for three weeks before being approved for phase 2.

- Restaurants and bars can reopen for sit-down service if they maintain six feet of distance between customers and groups. Employees must wear face masks.
- Salons and other "personal services" can also reopen, but only if they screen clients. Appointments only.
- Shops can open but must follow social distancing rules.
- Gyms can open with social distancing rules.
- Up to 25 people can gather, but traveling between towns/cities is discouraged.
- Childcare and summer vacation program restrictions are lifted.

State parks are open — mostly

Many state parks are now open for day use only, with some restrictions. Check the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department [website](#) for details about which parks are open and to review any restrictions before you go.

Heat and cool your home, cheaper

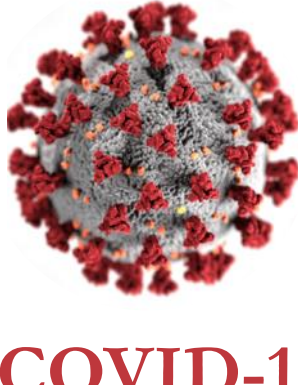
You can save energy, save money and stay comfortable with Energize South Coast. This is a limited-time opportunity for Coos County residents and businesses to install a ductless heat pump at a discounted rate.

To qualify for the discounted rate, attend a free online workshop and learn more. For more information visit energizesouthcoast.org or click [here](#).

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COVID-19 K'wen Update

May 18, 2020

Unwelcome visitors

The Indians of the Oregon Coast have bitter experience with foreign-born epidemics. A retired history teacher from Coos Bay explores this tragic legacy in a local newspaper article. [Read the story](#)

Oregon report

- A Baker County judge has invalidated all of Gov. Kate Brown's executive orders under the COVID-19 state of emergency. Brown says she'll appeal. [Details](#)
- One person in Oregon died of COVID-19 over the weekend, bringing the state's death toll to 138. Since Friday, 146 more cases of the disease were reported in the state. That raises the Oregon tally to 3,687 confirmed or presumed cases.
- Here are the numbers of reported cases in the five counties in the Coquille Tribe's service area: Coos 30; Curry 4; Douglas 25; Jackson 51; Lane 65, with two deaths.
- If you're heading to a recreation site or a U-pick farm, Oregon has advice. [Details](#)

Natives suffer in the Southwest

America's highest per capita rate of coronavirus infection isn't in a big city. It's in the Navajo Nation of Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. [Details](#)

Your check may be slow

With staffing reduced during the pandemic, the Coquille Tribe's Accounting office has cut back to one check run per week. All checks are printed on Thursdays and mailed on Fridays.

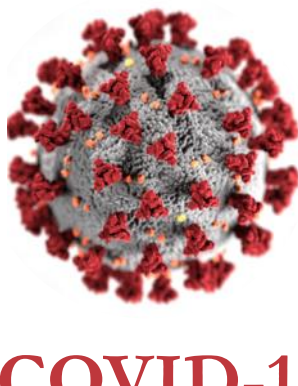
For a check to be cut on a Thursday, the request should get to Accounting by the [previous Friday](#). Other tribal offices are also operating with reduced staff. So check requests requiring multiple approvals may take longer to be processed and sent to Accounting.

Thanks for your patience!

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COVID-19 K'wen Update

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

Oregon report

- Oregon recorded 124 more cases of coronavirus since our Monday report, along with six deaths. That brings the totals to 3,801 confirmed or presumed cases and 144 deaths.
- In the Coquille Tribe's five-county service area, health authorities in Curry, Jackson and Lane counties reported one additional case each. Coos and Douglas counties had no new cases.
- We told you on Monday that a Baker County judge had blocked Gov. Kate Brown's stay-at-home orders. Since then the Oregon Supreme Court put the judge's ruling on hold, pending appeal. So Brown's orders are still in place.

Native health video

Here's an inspiring video with a Native American perspective on COVID-19: [Click or tap](#)

Wawa sisters gather tonight

All women in the tribal community (members, spouses, employees and Kilkich residents) are invited to join the Wawa Sisterhood's Zoom meeting at 7 tonight.

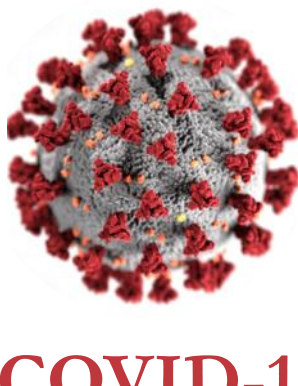
The sisterhood aims to be an inclusive place where all women can share and learn from one another. A recent bingo event attracted many Tribal Elders.

- Tonight's Zoom chat can be accessed at <https://zoom.us/j/95943580920>.
- You also can join the sisterhood's Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/238389427242754/> for check-ins, good conversation and laughs to share.
- Watch for news about future safe-distance in-person gatherings.

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COVID-19 K'wen Update

Friday, May 22, 2020

Oregon report

- Oregon recorded 63 new cases of coronavirus and three more deaths since our Wednesday update. The new totals are 3,864 known cases and 147 deaths.
- Coos County reported its 31st case. It's just the second local case not connected with the Shutter Creek Correctional Institution. According to a local news report, officials say it's an unusual case: The patient started showing COVID-19 symptoms almost two months ago but has no symptoms now.

Zoom to a transportation meeting

The Coquille Indian Tribe Transportation Committee will meet via Zoom at 2 p.m. Thursday, May 28. Topics will include:

- Volunteer driver program and training
- Transportation during the transition to reopening
- The future of tribal transportation after COVID-19

The meeting is open to the public. Mobility Program Coordinator Lauren Morris can provide Zoom login information or answer other questions. Reach her at laurenmorris@coquilletribe.org or (514) 888-9494, ext. 2251.

Stay safe during the reopening

Lots of businesses and public places are reopening, but that doesn't mean the COVID-19 threat is gone. For helpful reminders about keeping the virus at bay, [click or tap here](#).

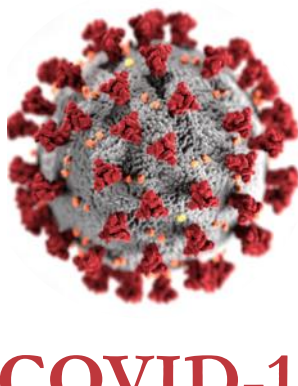
COVID-19 reminders for diabetics

High blood sugars affect the immune system. So people with diabetes need to be extra careful during the pandemic. For details, [click or tap here](#).

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COVID-19 K'wen Update

Thursday, May 28, 2020

COVID-19 relief money arrives

The CARES Act, which Congress passed to help Americans get through the pandemic, includes money for Indian tribes. The Coquille Tribe is figuring out how we'll use our share.

The money comes with many strings attached. It's dedicated to preparing for, preventing and responding to the financial impact of COVID-19. We also have to follow the Coquille Tribal Constitution and our General Welfare Ordinance.

Today the Tribal Council assigned Executive Director Mark Johnston and Chief Financial Officer Mark Gagnon to draft a policy for using the money on behalf of the tribe and its members. The council hopes to approve the policy next week.

One way or another, the money will be used to help tribal families. Watch for news next week.

Faster testing

The tribe's Community Health Center has acquired a rapid testing device for COVID-19. It can return test results in about 15 minutes on-site, rather than waiting days for results from an outside lab. [Learn more](#)

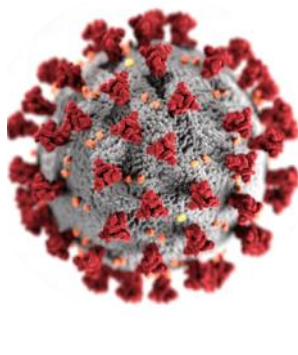
Oregon report

Oregon officials have reported 119 new cases of coronavirus and three deaths since our Wednesday report. Those numbers raise the state's cumulative totals to 4,086 cases and 151 deaths.

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COVID-19 K'wen Update

Friday, May 29, 2020

Food boxes, rain or shine

Whatever the weather, the food box distribution will take place from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Saturday at the Community Plankhouse. It's for the whole tribal community: tribal families, Kilkich residents, Head Start families and tribal employees. [Details here](#)

And masks, too

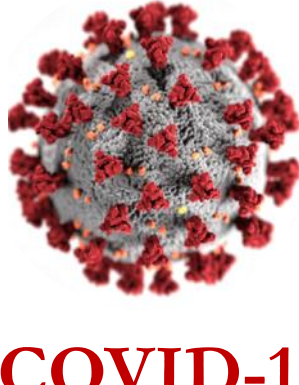
Breaking news: Along with the food boxes, the tribe will hand out supplies of KN95 face masks to help you and your family stay safe. First come, first served.

If you can't attend on Saturday, masks will be available next week. Watch the K'wen Update for details.

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COVID-19

K'wen Update

June 1, 2020

We still have dairy boxes

Saturday's food distribution ended with leftover boxes of dairy products. The boxes contain milk, yogurt and sliced cheese.

If you want a box, Nichole Howe will be at the Community Plankhouse Kitchen from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 2. The remaining boxes will be distributed first come, first served until they are gone.

Tribal Council special meeting

The Tribal Council will meet at 3 p.m. Wednesday (June 3) to approve the Coronavirus Emergency Relief Program and Policy. The new program and policy will deal with how the tribe uses its share of CARES Act funding.

You can join the meeting via Zoom. To get the password, please call Executive Management Coordinator Kay Collins at (541) 756-0904, ext. 1242.

Feeling a little lonely?

In the age of COVID-19, many Elders may feel isolated.

[Here's help.](#)

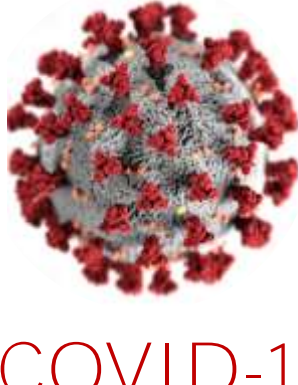
Remember to immunize

There's no vaccine yet for COVID-19. But immunization can protect your children from 14 other serious diseases. [Learn more.](#)

Keeping you informed

Have questions about coping with the coronavirus? Need help from your tribe?

- You can post questions and comments on the K'wen 'inish-ha Facebook Group (KFG).
- Or email your questions to our staff: [Email us](#)
- Watch MyTribe and the K'wen 'inish-ha Facebook Group for coronavirus updates each Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoon.
- Prefer to get your tribal COVID-19 news on your phone? Text CITCOVID to 888777, and we'll get you set up.



COVID-19 K'wen Update

Wednesday, June 3, 2020

A little help in troubled times

Many Coquille Tribal households are struggling with financial concerns due to COVID-19. Your Tribal Council is grateful for an opportunity to help.

The tribe recently received \$6.4 million for COVID-19 relief, and today the Tribal Council voted unanimously to distribute \$2,000 to every adult member. The parents of every tribal youth under age 18 will receive \$1,000.

“We know there’s a need out there for our members, and we need to act fast,” said Chairman Brenda Meade.

Congress appropriated the CARES Act money to help Americans who are suffering economic hardships because of COVID-19. We know many tribal members are in that group — struggling with unemployment, housing, health care, child care and more.

So the council instructed Executive Director Mark Johnston to make a plan for distributing this money as quickly as possible.

We’ll have more details in the June edition of The K’wen.

How to get your money

The last thing we want is to send your money to the wrong place. So please contact Tribal Member Services Coordinator Jon Ivy right away. We need to be sure he has your correct address.

Even if you think we have your address, please contact Jon to make sure.

We need your current postal address. Or, if you’ve been receiving payments from the tribe through direct deposit, please verify that we have your up-to-date account information.

Please email Jon at jonivy@coquilletribe.org. (Or, if that’s not practical, call him at (541) 756-0904, ext.1217.)

Do it right away!

Why am I sneezing?

Is it COVID 19? Or is it just allergies? [In this video](#), a doctor shares ways to figure it out.

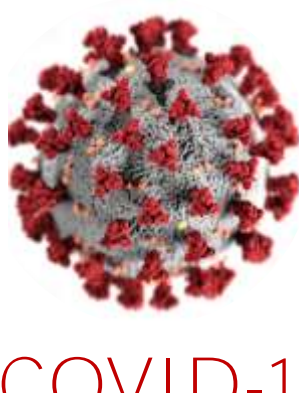
Feeling down? Anxious?

Coos Health and Wellness has mental health services available. [Learn more here.](#)

Keeping you informed

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COVID-19 K'wen Update

Thursday, June 4, 2020

More about our CARES Act money

Details are still being worked out on distributing money under the tribe's Coronavirus Emergency Relief Program. We don't know everything yet, but we have some updated information.

As we said yesterday ...

As we reported on Wednesday, the tribe recently received \$6.4 million for COVID-19 relief. The Tribal Council voted to distribute \$2,000 to every adult member and \$1,000 to the parents of every tribal youth under age 18.

Turning 18?

We now have a clarified definition of "adult." It's any member who will turn 18 on or before Dec. 31, 2020. So any member born before Jan. 1, 2003, will qualify for \$2,000.

For members who turn 18 this year, the money will come directly to the member, not to the member's parents.

Please email — don't phone

As we said Wednesday, we want to be sure your money goes to the right place. So please email Tribal Member Services Coordinator Jon Ivy right away at jonivy@coquilletribe.org.

THANK YOU to those who already have emailed Jon.

If emailing just won't do, you can call Jon at (541) 756-0904, ext. 1217. But Jon really hopes you'll email him instead.

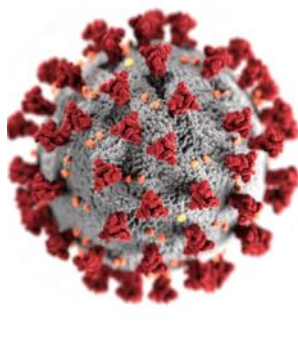
More to come

We received some other questions about the program. We'll share the answers as soon as we know.

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COVID-19 K'wen Update

Monday, June 8, 2020

We're glad about grads

A June 19 graduation parade at Kilkich will honor Head Start students and graduating Coquille Tribal seniors.

The 11 a.m. parade will begin and end at the Community Plankhouse. A route map will be sent out within the next week.

Graduates and other participants are encouraged to decorate their cars and create congratulatory banners and decorations. Kilkich residents are encouraged to stand on the curb or their doorsteps.

Due to COVID-19 health guidelines, we strongly recommend that participants and spectators remain 6 feet apart at all times. For the same reason, we suggest that no candy be handed out.

The parade is sponsored by the Culture, Education and Learning Services Department. For more information, contact

- Head Start Director Kristina Simpson at (541) 217-1836 or kristinasimpson@coquilletribe.org
- Youth Opportunities Coordinator Laura Angulo at (541) 888-7737, ext. 2233, or lauraangulo@coquilletribe.org.

Oregon report

- Bad Newport news: Pacific Seafood disclosed Sunday that 124 of its employees and local contractors have tested positive for coronavirus. It's Oregon's second-largest workplace outbreak to date. (The penitentiary in Salem is No. 1.) [Details](#)
- Oregon is up to 4,922 positive and presumptive cases. Today was Oregon's second consecutive day of significant increases.
- On the positive side, a previous report of a coronavirus case in Coos County has been reversed. The patient reportedly had a fever but tested negative. [Details](#)

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CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY RELIEF PROGRAM A GENERAL WELFARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

June 15, 2020

1. Purpose and Intent

The purpose of the Coronavirus Emergency Relief Program (CERP) is to provide financial assistance for members of the Coquille Indian Tribe (Tribe) who have been and continue to be impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency (COVID-19).

It is the intent of the Tribe that the CERP is an allowable use and otherwise meets all requirements of funds provided by the U.S. Treasury through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, and that the CERP benefit qualifies as an Indian General Welfare Benefit and is thus excludable from federal income tax per 26 U.S.C. § 139E as further addressed in CITC 163 – *General Welfare Ordinance*.

2. Background

The Preamble to the Tribal Constitution declares that the Tribe is dedicated to, among other things, the promotion of social and economic welfare of Coquille Indians, the enhancement of our common resources, and the maintenance of peace and order.

The Tribal Council enumerated the Core Values of the Tribe on May 4, 2017:

As a sovereign nation we dedicate ourselves to:

1. Promoting the health and well-being of Tribal members and our community
2. Providing equitable opportunities, experiences and services to all Tribal members
3. Taking care of our old people
4. Educating our children
5. Practicing the culture and traditions of potlatch
6. Considering the impacts to our people, land, water, air and all living things
7. Practicing responsible stewardship of Tribal resources

Coquille People Prior to COVID-19

For millennia the Coquille Indian Tribe has lived in what is now southwest Oregon. From a population base estimated to exceed 10,000 people prior to European settlement in the Americas, the Tribal population dwindled to approximately 200 individuals by the middle of the 19th century. This drastic population decline was primarily attributable to an influx of diseases carried by trade goods of European and American products as well as direct conflicts with non-Native people.

The discovery of gold in the 1850s brought with it a great migration of Anglo-Americans to the area. To facilitate settlement in the west, the Federal government instituted a number of policies focused on removing and assimilating the native inhabitants. Through policies of allotment, removal, assimilation, and ultimately termination – the Coquille Indian Tribe was systematically separated from the resources and infrastructure necessary to provide for the health and wellbeing of their Tribal members. One result of these now-repudiated policies is the displacement of Coquille Tribal members across a broader landscape, both within and beyond the Tribe's Congressionally-established five county service area.

After its federal recognition was restored in 1989, the modern Coquille Indian Tribe assumed the responsibility to govern its people, but was provided few resources to rebuild the cultural, social, wellness, and economic infrastructure of the Tribe. In so many immeasurable ways, the historical trauma of termination continues to affect the Coquille Indian Tribe today and 30 years after restoration, the Tribe continues to address the legacy of the destructive policies of the past. Through all of this, the Tribe has still invested its limited resources in systematically developing and deploying a wide range of programmatic offerings designed to serve Tribal members no matter where they live, including healthcare, education and cultural-based prevention programs, housing and self-sufficiency programs,

elder care enrichment and support programs, vocational training and placement, and natural resources management.

Sadly, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic many of the essential programs and services that the Tribe has fought so hard to build over the last 30 years, to support Tribal families, have been reduced or completely eliminated. Simultaneously, the COVID-19 pandemic – both the health emergency and the resulting economic emergency – has created great need for all tribal members.

Overall Health and Wellness of the Coquille Indian Tribe

Tribal members are economically, medically and socially vulnerable. Data from the Tribe’s Purchased and Referred Care (PRC) program show that 35% of the Tribal Membership living in the Tribe’s Congressionally-established five county service delivery area (representing more than 60% of the total Tribal population) are financially impoverished and eligible for Medicaid. Another 45% of the remaining 65% living in the five-county service delivery area do not have insurance and rely solely on PRC for healthcare benefits.

The fact that 35% of Tribal members living in the five-county service delivery area are eligible for Medicaid is significant because it is nearly twice the national average, and studies indicate Medicaid eligible patients also struggle to afford many other life necessities that most people take for granted. Access to transportation, education, childcare, employment, and even food are common struggles for most Medicaid enrollees.

In fact, Medicaid beneficiaries struggle to afford healthy food options and surveys indicate that 1/3 purchase less healthy food because of financial issues. Even if these individuals are able to purchase some food, 28% purchase less food than they need and 43% often skip at least one meal a day.

These statistics indicate that native people experience more barriers to healthcare, a greater incidence of chronic disease or disabling conditions, and higher mortality than the general population.

In addition, Coos County has one of the highest rates of COVID-19 caused unemployment in the State of Oregon¹. Moreover, the two business categories experiencing the highest levels of unemployment insurance claims are “Accommodation and Food Services” and “Arts, Entertainment and Recreation” both of which include the Coquille Tribe’s primary source of employment and revenue, the Mill Casino/Hotel.²

Moreover, the Oregon Department of Employment shows that unemployment insurance claimants of Native American origin comprise only 1% of the workforce, but 2% of unemployment insurance claims. Coos County tribal employment experienced a 32% drop between April 2019 and April 2020, compared to an average of 14% elsewhere in Coos County, and approximately 14.5% statewide.³

Summary Timeline of the Tribe’s Response to the Impacts of COVID-19

- On May 17, 2017, the Tribal Council adopted Resolution CY17054, which approved the Tribal Emergency Operations Plan, which authorizes the Tribe to declare a state of emergency when a threat is imminent.
- As authorized by the Emergency Operations Plan, on March 18, 2020 the Chair of the Tribe declared a state of emergency related to COVID-19. In issuing this declaration, the Chair noted that COVID-19 threatens the health and wellness of all Tribal members living and traveling in all parts of the US and the world, and that all Tribal members were experiencing increasing

¹ <https://www.qualityinfo.org/-/who-are-the-covid-19-unemployed-in-oregon-?inheritRedirect=true&redirect=%2Fed>

² Ibid

³ <https://www.qualityinfo.org/ed-ceest/?at=1&t1=4104000011~0~0~00000000~2020~or>
<https://www.qualityinfo.org/ed-ceest/?at=1&t1=4101000000~0~0~00000000~2020~or>

disruption in their daily lives. The declaration also directed the Tribal government and all corporate affiliates of the Tribe to take necessary steps to protect life.

- On March 18, in response to COVID-19, the Tribe made the responsible and appropriate choice to declare an emergency. The Mill Casino/Hotel was closed for approximately two months, which resulted in employment losses to Tribal members and many others. Moreover, the workload of Tribal government staff substantially increased and needed to adapt to comply with the Tribe's emergency operation plan. These consequences resulted in reduced time available for tribal member services. The Tribe also decided it was necessary to stop altogether some of the Tribe's cultural and other significant programs that relied upon in-person activities, meetings, gatherings and events.
- On March 19, 2020 the Tribal Council ratified the Chair's declaration, noting in Resolution CY20035 that COVID-19 poses an imminent threat to our most vulnerable tribal populations and that multiple native and non-native nations, and the State of Oregon, have similarly declared emergencies as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Among other legislation designed to help respond to COVID-19, the CARES Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020. Key provisions of the law as they pertain to the CERP:
 - Economic Impact Payments were authorized of up to \$1,200 per adult and \$500 per child, with decreased eligibility for those with income above specified limits. These payments were made without requiring recipients to demonstrate need.
 - Established the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CFR) to provide payments to State, Local and Tribal governments navigating the impact of COVID-19.
- On May 7, as a result of the closure of the Mill Casino and an expectation for significantly reduced revenues for the foreseeable future, the Tribal Council passed resolution CY20048, which adopted a restated budget for 2020 with significant reductions and elimination of many programs, services and benefits for Tribal members that were key to the Tribe's Core Values.

Indian General Welfare Benefit

In 2014 Congress passed the Tribal General Welfare Exclusion Act (the "2014 Act"), which, among other things, created a new section of the Internal Revenue Code and created significant flexibility for tribes to approve and implement qualifying general welfare programs. Benefits received under such a qualifying program are excluded from gross income for federal income tax purposes. The new section, in part, provides:

INDIAN GENERAL WELFARE BENEFIT.—For purposes of this section, the term 'Indian general welfare benefit' includes any payment made or services provided to or on behalf of a member of an Indian tribe (or any spouse or dependent of such a member) pursuant to an Indian tribal government program, but only if—

- (1) the program is administered under specified guidelines and does not discriminate in favor of members of the governing body of the tribe, and
- (2) the benefits provided under such program— "(A) are available to any tribal member who meets such guidelines, "(B) are for the promotion of general welfare, "(C) are not lavish or extravagant, and "(D) are not compensation for services.

The 2014 Act also provides a statutory basis for resolving ambiguities in the text quoted above:

STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.—Ambiguities in section 139E of such Code, as added by this Act, shall be resolved in favor of Indian tribal governments and deference shall be given to Indian tribal governments for the programs administered and authorized by the tribe to benefit the general welfare of the tribal community.

3. Determination of Need

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has both significantly reduced the Tribe's revenue sources and increased the administrative and programmatic workload. It has simultaneously increased Tribal member need. As a consequence, the Tribe lacks the resources to perform a detailed, individualized and case-plan driving approach to providing relief. The Tribe has developed this CERP based on an assessment of its administrative feasibility in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Tribe interprets "administrative

feasibility” to include consideration of several factors, not all of which are enumerated here, but some of which include:

1. The lack of resources for the Tribe to measure several factors, including the shifting family dynamics of tribal members, the location of tribal member households, available and unavailable tribal member household data, the multitude of possible impacts of COVID-19 to Tribal members education, housing, health care, employment and transportation needs.
2. The need for the Tribe to triage services.
3. The financial position of the Tribe.
4. The challenge of providing services to a geographically-distributed membership.
5. The lack of a meaningful tribal tax base.
6. The Tribe’s continuing need to provide a wide variety of services unrelated to COVID-19.
7. Office closures and social distancing mandated by COVID-19
8. The lack of access to Internet and broadband services for some tribal member households

As summarized in the brief timeline presented previously, the unprecedented and extraordinary COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant negative impact upon the Tribal government’s ability to provide benefits and services that are integral to the Tribe’s Core Values, and Tribal members residing in communities in the US and all over the world have also experienced additional significant negative impacts, including:

- Unemployment and/or loss of income;
- Significant reductions in the value of retirement accounts that are critical sources of income for Elders and those nearing retirement;
- Reduced access to critical physical and mental health care service that are necessary to enhance and prolong life;
- Lack of childcare and education resources as schools have closed and moved to online education models that are inadequate for parents, especially working parents, in numerous ways;
- Physical distancing guidelines that prevent Elders and others at high risk of infection from performing the basic tasks of independent living, such as grocery shopping and traveling locally and regionally for necessary medical appointments; and
- Physical distancing guidelines that prevent Tribal members from traveling and significantly reduce their ability to participate in Tribal gatherings that are essential to the continuation of the Tribe’s culture and its self-governance and self-determination.

Combining the nightmare of COVID-19 with all of the demographic data, historical trauma of termination and significantly higher risk due to chronic disease conditions, a verifiable need for assistance exists.

Considering what is administratively feasible for the Tribe as previously discussed, and following the generally noted impacts above, the Tribe considered the following factors to quantify the necessity and level of need amongst Tribal members and their families with respect to responding to the impacts of COVID-19:

- As a direct result of COVID-19, the Tribal Council has revised its budgets, which has resulted in reductions to direct benefits and services provided to Tribal members that are of a basic and critical nature. Thus, the Tribal Council expects that Tribal members will continue to incur these costs even in the absence of support from the Tribe.
 - Adult benefits – at least **\$3,600 annually**, including:
 - \$1,400 – Annual benefit that provides for education and enrichment opportunities not connected to higher education
 - \$1,200 – Funds to purchase laptop computers needed by higher education students for being successful in their studies
 - \$1,000 – Supplemental higher education scholarships for those with exceptional merit and/or need
 - Child benefits – at least **\$1,900 annually**, including:

- \$1,400 – Annual benefit that provides for education and enrichment opportunities connected with school enrollment and other education opportunities
 - \$500 – Supplemental scholarship for those with exceptional merit and/or need for youth education and enrichment opportunities
 - Tribal family benefits (Adult and Child) – **at least \$6,250 annually**, including:
 - \$3,000 – Summer youth employment program providing basic job skills training for teenagers and internship opportunities for higher education students to support them in transitioning into the workforce with relevant job experience
 - \$2,300 – Family Camp, a 5-day cultural gathering for Tribal families
 - \$400 – Benefit to assist with the cost of pre-kindergarten education for Tribal children
 - \$350 – Overnight cultural summer camp program that provided cultural education for campers as well as leadership and basic job skills training for counselors, in addition to relief from childcare expenses for parents
 - \$200 – Tutoring program to ensure that children have sufficient help with learning disabilities and other challenges that have historically limited access and success at all levels of formal education.
 - Other benefits – No annual limits, expressed as overall reductions, including:
 - **\$40,000** – Elimination of after-school and summer childcare programs
 - **\$30,000** – Significant reduction to funding for career and technical education programs for those not pursuing a higher education degree.
 - **\$15,000** – Elimination of competitive higher education scholarships
- As a direct result of COVID-19, the Tribe has elected to conduct all governmental and corporate meetings virtually, which requires Tribal members to have a minimum level of hardware and broadband connectivity services. The Tribe is also engaged in telemedicine services to reduce the chances of infection. These changes require Tribal members to have adequate access to technology infrastructure. There are approximately 750 Tribal member households which may require new/upgraded laptop computers and related equipment normally costing approximately \$1,200, and monthly access to broadband connectivity at an estimated cost of \$700 through the end of 2020 for a total of approximately **\$1,900 per Tribal member household**.

4. Definitions

The following definitions are relevant for the CERP:

- Tribal Adult: a member of the Coquille Indian Tribe who will be age 18 or older as of December 31, 2020 and who is enrolled as of the Enrollment Deadline.
- Tribal Child: a member of the Coquille Indian Tribe who will be under 18 years of age as of December 31, 2020 and who is enrolled as of the Enrollment Deadline.
- Tribal Widow/Widower: a surviving legal spouse of a deceased Tribal Adult.
- Enrollment Deadline: the last scheduled Tribal Council meeting prior to the expiration of the program as discussed in Section 13 of this program guideline. As currently scheduled, this date is December 10, 2020.

5. Eligibility

To receive CERP benefits, a recipient shall be a Tribal Adult, parent or legal guardian of a Tribal Child, or a Tribal Widow/Widower.

In the case of a Tribal Adult or Tribal Child, enrollment in the Coquille Indian Tribe must be approved by the Tribal Council and otherwise completed by the Enrollment Deadline in order to receive a benefit under the CERP before the program expires as described in Section 13.

In the case of a Tribal Widow/Widower, the Tribal Adult to whom such person was legally married must not have received a CERP benefit as a Tribal Adult, and the Tribal Widow/Widower must not have legally remarried another spouse at the time of receiving a CERP benefit.

No person shall receive a CERP benefit under more than one of the Eligibility criteria.

The Tribal Enrollment Officer shall have the authority to determine eligibility for CERP benefits. To receive CERP benefits, Tribal Adults and the parents and legal guardians of Tribal Children must furnish the Tribal Enrollment Officer with current and accurate addresses or other information necessary for the distribution of benefits. The Tribe will distribute benefits described above on a continuous basis so that all such benefits will be distributed to current addresses of record by December 30, 2020.

6. Benefit

The CERP is a discretionary benefit program authorized by the Tribal Council and subject to Tribal Council appropriations. The authorization of this program does not create any liability on the part of the Tribe for any future benefit, nor shall any member have a vested right in future benefits. The Tribal Council reserves the right to alter or eliminate the CERP benefits at any time and for any reason.

Based upon the rationale previously presented of what is administratively feasible for the Tribe to assess the needs of Tribal members and their families impacted by COVID-19, and considering the availability of funds to provide benefits, and the needs that have arisen due to the impact of COVID-19, CERP benefits shall be distributed as expeditiously as possible in the following amounts:

- a. \$2,000 to every Tribal Adult;
- b. \$1,000 for every Tribal Child payable to the Tribal Child's parent or legal guardian; and
- c. \$2,000 to every Tribal Widow/Widower.

The benefits under the CERP are offered equally to all Tribal members because of the documented widespread impact on all Tribal members. Further, the Tribe believes that offering equal benefits is the most administratively feasible method given the urgency of the support required. Although the Tribe is offering the benefit equally to all members, each Tribal member has the option to request a lesser amount or decline the payment.

7. Waiver of Benefit

Receipt and/or retention of any benefit under this program is voluntary, such that those persons not wishing to receive a benefit or who have not been impacted by COVID-19 as described in this program guideline may decline the full benefit or any portion thereof. Parents or legal guardians may decline the benefit on behalf of their Tribal Child(ren). Recipients wishing to decline or return to the Tribe all or a portion of the benefit should contact the Tribal Enrollment Officer, provided that CERP benefits may not be returned to the Tribe after December 10, 2020.

8. Non-taxable Assistance under the General Welfare Exclusion

The Tribal Council has determined that CERP benefits qualify as Indian General Welfare Benefits under CITC 163 and Section 139E of the Internal Revenue Code based on the following analysis:

- a. The CERP will be administered under the specific guidelines outlined in this program description, which do not discriminate in favor of the Tribal Council.
- b. The CERP is available to any individual who satisfies the requirements of this program description, including meeting the requirements included in Section 4 and providing necessary information described within Section 5 of this program description.
- c. The CERP is for the promotion of the general welfare, based upon:
 - i. Based on the guidance of many public health entities, the Tribe will be unable to host many of the gatherings, meetings, events and activities that are vital to the preservation of its culture and its self-governance and self-determination; the CERP can be used by qualified recipients to assist with acquiring the technology and services necessary for virtual participation of the Tribe's cultural and governmental meetings, which the Tribe considers to be a vital Community Need as defined in CITC 163. The Tribe considers such participation so important to the self-determination, culture and traditions of the Tribe

- that the Tribal Council considers benefits under the CERP vital and necessary, regardless of individual income or wealth.
- ii. Many of the programs, services and benefits that were significantly reduced or eliminated in the restated budget adopted by the Tribal Council were for benefits and services that were Qualifying Safe Harbor benefits or were otherwise qualified as Indian General Welfare Benefits under CITC 163, including many reductions to Education and related benefits. The Tribe expects that qualified recipients will use the CERP to reimburse costs for benefits similar to those that were previously provided by other Tribal funding sources, and that the change in funding source for those benefits and services (from being previously funded with distributions from the Mill Casino that are now considered unlikely to be realized) should not have bearing on the determination or cause the previous determination of those benefits as qualifying as Indian General Welfare Benefits under CITC 163 to change.
 - iii. COVID-19 has created significant impacts to the health and well-being of almost all people, and these impacts are even greater for Native Americans and Tribal members based on the historic policies of the U.S. Federal Government that have been systematically designed and implemented to reduce access to key resources promised to and needed by Tribal members to address healthcare, education, and other agreed rights and benefits. COVID-19 has caused widespread reductions to income and wealth, access to basic healthcare and education services, and access to childcare at significantly enhanced levels so that parents may continue working. This combination of exigent circumstances (those already existing that were exacerbated by COVID-19) qualify as other qualifying assistance programs under the Safe Harbor provisions of CITC 163.
 - d. The CERP is in no way compensation for services.
 - e. The CERP is neither lavish nor extravagant under the facts and circumstances, which includes consideration of the greater challenges that Native Americans and members of the Tribe face compared to many other Americans in the broad areas of healthcare, education, and employment.

Based on its designation as an Indian General Welfare Benefit, the CERP benefit is not to be included in the recipient's federal taxable income and the Tribe will not report the benefit to the Internal Revenue Service. The Tribe assumes no liability for the proper reporting of taxable income and calculation of tax liability on any person's tax return of any kind. The Tribe advises CERP recipients to consult a tax professional regarding the tax impact of receiving this benefit.

9. Limited Use

CERP benefits are intended to help recipients address the impacts of COVID-19 on items including culture, employment, healthcare, education, housing, childcare, nutrition, and personal safety. This list of possible impacts is illustrative only and not intended to be an exhaustive list. Recipients may have experienced other impacts related to COVID-19 not described here.

10. Benefits not to Reduce Other Resources

The Tribe does not intend for any benefits paid under this program to offset, reduce or otherwise interfere with any other resources or benefits to which a recipient may otherwise be entitled. Other entities, however, could consider CERP benefits in determining eligibility for programs they administer. As necessary, recipients may inform such entities that CERP benefits are a nontaxable Indian General Welfare Benefit that is required under federal law to be excluded from gross income.

11. Source of Funds

The CARES Act provides tribes with funding to prevent, prepare for, and respond to Coronavirus. The Tribal Council authorizes allocating a portion of Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF) it has received under the CARES Act for CERP benefits. The Tribal Council has determined in its reasonable judgment that CERP benefits are an allowable use of the CRF because the benefits are a necessary expenditure in response to COVID-19 and the benefits comply with the CARES Act and associated guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Treasury as of the date the CERP was established.

Specifically, on May 28, 2020, the U.S. Treasury Department issued and updated guidance document that specifically related to answer questions from State, Local, and Tribal Governments related to the use of the portion of the CARES Act funds administered by the US Treasury as follows:

Question – *May recipients use Fund payments to provide emergency financial assistance to individuals and families directly impacted by a loss of income due to the COVID-19 public health emergency?*

Response – *Yes, if a government determines such assistance to be a necessary expenditure. Such assistance could include, for example, a program to assist individuals with payment of overdue rent or mortgage payments to avoid eviction or foreclosure or unforeseen financial costs for funerals and other emergency individual needs. Such assistance should be structured in a manner to ensure as much as possible, within the realm of what is administratively feasible, that such assistance is necessary.*

As discussed in Section 2 and Section 7 of this program description, the Tribe considers the CERP benefit to be necessary to assist Tribal members and other persons with responding to COVID-19, both with respect to assisting with issues arising due to reduced income, including benefits previously provided by the Tribe under CITC 163 that were significantly reduced or eliminated, and to assist with participation in the cultural and governmental meetings and processes of the Tribe that must be held virtually in response to COVID-19. Participation in government and cultural meetings and events is of the utmost importance to the Tribe to preserve and strengthen its culture and self-determination and self-governance.

As also previously discussed in Section 2, the Tribe's administrative capacity has been significantly reduced as a result of COVID-19; much of the Tribe's internal processes were either manual and/or paper-based, requiring a high degree of employee work based in one of the Tribe's administrative offices, or based on non-integrated and non-reconciled systems of information.

12. Administration & Communication

The Executive Director shall have the authority to deploy Tribal resources, establish systems, and develop processes necessary to efficiently and effectively implement and administer this policy. Such authority shall include ensuring that information about the CERP is effectively communicated to all Tribal members. All CERP benefits will be distributed via check or directly deposited into a recipient's bank account following the normal process the Tribe uses for providing benefits.

The Tribal Enrollment Officer will be responsible for determining eligibility for the benefit, determining the persons to be included and the calculation of the benefit amount, and providing the address or banking information where each benefit should be directed.

Based upon information provided by the Tribal Enrollment Officer, the Accounting Office will recalculate the benefit to verify its accuracy. Once the accuracy of the calculation is verified, the Accounting Office will proceed with processing the benefit as directed by the Tribal Enrollment Officer.

All CERP benefits will be accompanied by a summary explanation of these program guidelines, and a voucher detailing the persons used to determine the benefit. The summary will also include further information regarding how a person may exercise their rights to waive the benefit under Section 7, as well as information on how the benefit may be interpreted by other entities and appropriate responses to potential inquiries from other entities with respect to eligibility for other benefits and services provided by those entities.

13. Complaints and Disputes

All complaints and disputes related to this policy regarding eligibility, amounts and payments of benefits, or other matters shall be resolved by the Executive Director.

14. Amendments

The Executive Director has authority to amend or modify the CERP, as needed. Amendments shall be promptly provided to the Tribal Council and posted to MyTribe.

15. Expiration

This CERP shall expire on December 23, 2020. At that time there CERP program shall terminate and no eligibility determinations or payments will be made.

Adopted as of the date written above,



Mark Johnston, Executive Director
Coquille Indian Tribe