GRIC distributes groceries to Districts in Community-wide food distribution

**COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**GRIC distributes groceries to Districts in Community-wide food distribution**

Christopher Lomahquahu
Gila River Indian News

As a result of the surge to grocery stores to stock-up on food and supplies during COVID-19 pandemic, the Gila River Indian Community established food distribution pick-ups across the reservation through coordination with the Office of Emergency Management, Community Services Department, Gila River Hotels & Casinos and other entities. Staff from the PRIDE Group boxed the items at OEM, which were distributed in each of the Community’s seven districts from March 27-29 and two locations for urban members in Casa Grande and Phoenix.

“"In the midst of this crisis, our Casino, Community employees and volunteers came together at a moments notice to provide food for our people,” said Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis. He thanked the departments, districts and volunteers has been helpful in organizing the pick-ups.

Those who waited at their district were thankful for the assistance. “It’s hard to get flour and beans, the main essentials that [we] need,” said Sabrina Antone, District 5 resident. “Thanks to the district, they’re helping [us] out, but with that, we have to do our portions (regarding food).”

“When you look at the stores, they’ve been cleared out, it’s very frustrating for those left with little options for food,” said District 4 Council Representative Pamela Johnson. She and other District 4 council representatives, assisted district workers, during the food distribution.

She thinks about the members in her district and across the Community, especially the elders, who are not able to leave their home to get food. “Our drivers are taking the food to [the elders], and we hope to get to all of the households,” said Johnson.

“It is very important the we provide [these] necessities to our Community members,” said District 1 Council Representative Arzlie Hogg. “It’s unfortunate some of them aren’t able to make it to the store. There’s chaos with people trying to get the basic essentials.”

“I think it’s pretty good the Community is doing [this], it’s the first time we are going through something like this, but [we] are okay, we’re going to make it,” said District 3 member Richard Pedro.

Others do their best to adjust to the recent rise in COVID-19 restrictions while trying to put food on the table.

“We usually go out in the Community doing stuff, so now we have to stay inside,” said Tiffany Ahmsaty, District 3 member. She added, safeguarding against COVID-19 is important, because her mother is on dialysis, which requires them to be extra careful in sanitizing everything around the house.

“It’s really good. I’m glad they’re doing something to help its Community members out, because it’s hard to get the things you need in stores,” said Ahmsaty.

“It’s vital, in the grocery stores there’s very little, it scare in there,” said Erma Antone District 3 Coordinator. “We’ve dealt with disasters like fires, floods, [this] is definitely a learning experience for [us] and the Community.”

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**Boxes prepared for distribution to Community members. Emma Hughes/GRIN**

**Milk and eggs were given to GRIC members in District 3 on Friday, March 27. Emma Hughes/GRIN**

**Volunteers in District 5 deliver boxes to families in line. Christopher Lomahquahu/GRIN**

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Gila River Indian News
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THANK YOU FOR CELEBRATING WITH US!
Gardening and getting outdoors during the pandemic

Time in a garden is a productive activity for families. Kyle Knox/GRIN

Kyle Knox
Gila River Indian News

Though it’s not spring break, the world and Community is mostly confined to our homes and taking advantage of outdoor needs seems like an applicable activity. Around the Community, many are outside clearing weeds from 2019, pruning trees, or preparing or planning new home gardens. The low desert environment we live in means warmer temperatures are here, and now is the best time to try out your green thumb. Like tending to cattle, gardening and agriculture is a science. Understanding temperature, irrigation, and soil composition factor heavily into gardening as well, but shouldn’t be daunting enough to shy anyone away. The Community has resources to assist green thumbs and beginners alike.

Understanding the climate will help you decide what to plant as there are excellent beginner cultivation methods. One component to consider is soil, which shouldn’t be an issue. One component to consider is soil, which will also play into the space consideration. Unfortunately, our local land isn’t the best for plants but can manage and it can be very rewarding. Lastly, whether you are a seasoned or novice gardener you can find local support by reaching out to David Van Druft at the Gila River Health Care’s Life Center. His program can provide some advice to support your efforts. He can be reached by email at dvandruft@grhc.org or by calling his office at (520) 562-3321.

Sunflowers are great to bring in pollinators like bees and butterflies. Kyle Knox/GRIN

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Gila River Police Department Incident Logs

GILA RIVER

AKIMEL O'ODHAM

POLICE

Gila River Police Department
Incident Log
March 22 - 28, 2020

Something to be told or talked about

By Billy Allen

This COVID-19 has been all of our parts of our history. As this is being written, GRIC and the two counties bordering our reservation have confirmed cases. Please heed all the advice given about how to protect you and your family.

In the book The Pinna-Maricopa by Henry F. Dobyns, he notes that 150 years ago, O’odham/ Piaapah populations were decreasing due to war, starvation, and disease. I may be an elder, but I can be a warrior against COVID-19 and stay social distant on my couch watching TV — especially old westerns. This is one keli O’odham who doesn’t want history to repeat itself. Too much TV isn’t good for me, so I roamed the Internet looking at past Aprils to see what events had taken place in Arizona, and this article shares a few with you.

On April 6, 1967, TV filming sets were completed at Old Tucson for a new western series “The High Chaparral.” Some buildings were added to the movie set and set buildings put up in 1940 for the Columbia Pictures movie “Arizona.” Local Tohono O’odham were hired to help build historically accurate adobe and wood structures. Older GRIC- sters can recognize west erns filmed there: Gunfight at the O.K. Corral, Rio Bra vo, El Dorado, and Tombstone are a few. In the west erns some of the extras in the background were Toho no O’odham. Imagine that some of the extras in the background were Tohono O’odham. From the Arizona Historical Society and Southern Pacific Railroad erected a stone marker over the graves of Union soldiers who died in the skirmish with Confeder ate forces at Picacho Pass on April 15, 1928. The mil itary drama which led to the Picacho Pass battle began in Yahki at Ammi White’s house/flour mill/store earlier between March 9 – 11, 1852. Most O’odham and Piaapah spoke Spanish as a second language, so White’s House became known as “La Blanca.”

On April 18, 1924 the Chiricahua National Mon ument was established. The Chiricahua National Monument has a sordid history in regards to Natives. Some of the interesting information is taken from their Monument site. In the mid-1800s, Cochise was the leader of the Chiricahua Apache who consid ered the Chiricahua Mountains as his home/land. Cochise operated from this unconquerable mountain that became known as the Cochise Stronghold. On December 18, 1872, General O.O. How ard and Tom Jeffords approached the Stronghold to talk peace. Out of these talks, Cochise procured a reservation for his pueblo which included much of modern day Cochise Coun ty in southeast Arizona. Cochise died in 1874, which left the Chiricahua without a strong central leader. The U.S. government took advantage resulting in the relocation of the Chiricahua to San Carlos. On May 3, 1876, the commissioner of Indian Affairs ordered the Chiricahua reservation closed. Another old TV series, “Broken Arrow” and “Cochise” as one of the main characters. This show lives on YouTube!

On April 25, 1854, the Gadsden Purchase was ratified and signed by the President Franklin Pierce and became effective on June 30, 1854. A boundary survey team was deployed to lay a new southern border between the U.S. and Mexico. All O’odham and Piaapah who lived south of the Gila river did not want to become Mexican nationals until June 25, 1856. A couple of days later, six headmen of the O’odham and Piaapah com panied Headman Azul and two Tohono O’odham headmen to San Xavier and Tucson to meet with Major Emory, who was in charge of the bound ary survey. The O’odham wanted to know if “if their rights and titles to the land” would be honored by the U.S. considered citizens Na tives Major Emory said the U.S. would honor Mexican customs.

In less than 20 years, we were surrounded with towns — like an epidemic. The Arizona Historical Journal, 2016.


“NOTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT” COMMUNICATION SITE AND BLUEBIRD ROADS

The Natural Resources Standing Council ("NRSC") will be considering the Environmental Assessment Form from the Gila River Telecommunica tions, Inc. regarding a communication site and bluebird roads at their regular meeting on May 12, 2020 at 9:00 a.m., located at the Community Council Secretary’s Office. A copy of the EA/SHAPE and its entirety is available for review at all District Service Centers and the Com munity Council Secretary’s Office. If you are interested in providing comments or attending the scheduled HRES meeting. You may also contact your Council representative at the following numbers: 562-9720. Written comments may be emailed to Cassandra Wallace at cassandra.wallace@gric.gov or mailed to Office of the General Coun sel, P.O. Box 87, Sacaton, AZ 85147, Attn: Cassandra Wallace.
District 7 members lineup for food pick up

Kyle Knox
Gila River Indian News

The Gila River Indian Community continued its proactive measures to ensure the well being of members since dealing with the oncoming COVID-19 Pandemic. Over the last two weeks, food and household items were distributed to Community members and urban members. These have helped families, especially dealing with the lack of food and crucial household necessities like toilet paper.

On March 27, 28 and 29, the Community distributed thousands of food boxes to Community members. Surrounding pick up sites were also available for urban members. Half of the boxes arrived in Districts 1, 2, 7, and two off Community areas for urban members on Saturday March 28 and on Sunday, March 29, the remaining boxes were distributed to Districts 3, 4, 5, and 6.

This weekend was the third distribution that was in coordination with the Office of Emergency Management, Executive Office, and Gila River Hotels & Casinos. Foods included rice, macaroni, flour, bread, beans, potatoes, fruit, oatmeal, and oatmeal small provisions.

District 7 Council Representative Devin Redbird said,  “it took 40 members from OEM to pack the boxes over two days, and the Community is grateful for the work they’ve done to make this possible.” He mentioned that OEM worked around-the-clock to ensure the boxes were prepped correctly, and they had a smooth method of transporting and distributing the items throughout the Community.

Cars and trucks filled with families had to wait but were thankful for everything provided. Service center staff loaded everything for everyone that minimized the person to person contact, ensuring everyone’s safety.

“No one saw this coming, but it’s our job to help those, especially those who can’t help themselves, at this scale. But seeing the smiling faces of our Community members is what makes the tireless work worth it,” said Redbird.

More distributions will occur for the Community where they will provide more water and toilet paper. Additionally, they will include meat products, keeping in mind those on dietary restrictions that require protein.

Districts service centers open with limited staff, GRPD high visibility patrols still in place

Emma Hughes
Gila River Indian News

Community Services Department continues preventative measures and practicing social distancing to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. District service centers remain open but with limited staff. Services still available are burial assistance and emergency work orders i.e. water line breaks, water heaters, A/C unit repair, sewer issues, and wind leaks. All HEAP applications for electrical payments for Community members will be processed internally during the pandemic. CSD has stated that there will be no disconnections for electricity during this time.

The Gila River Police Department has closed their lobby to the public until further notice. They continue to encourage everyone to limit the information shared on social media regarding what supplies they do or do not have at home. High visibility patrols are still in place to help maintain order and ensure the safety of the public in concentrated housing areas. Sex offenders are still expected to complete their 90-day registrations under the Title & Section 8 of the GRIC Code & SORNA, for more information on this you can contact Detective E. Poolaw at (520) 562-7105.

Complete guide at www.grbc.tv/schedule

GRBC TV GUIDE

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www.grbc.tv
Community members finding ways to cope during COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many states across the U.S. have issued stay home orders, including Arizona, which Gov. Doug Ducey announced on Monday, March 31. GRIC Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis also announced that the Community will consider a similar order for the Community. It is strongly encouraged to stay home to prevent the spread of the virus.

The pandemic has brought about many changes and staying home can be difficult for some. Every day we hear new and constantly changing information which can be hard and overwhelming to keep up with. Fear and anxiety about the disease can cause stress in adults and children. Some of that stress can include fear and worry for your own health and your loved ones, changes in sleeping or eating, difficulty sleeping or concentrating, worsening chronic health problems, and/or an increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. All of which can impact both your mental and physical health.

There are many things you can do to help cope and adapt to these sudden lifestyle changes in a healthy way. Taking breaks from the news and social media, limiting your exposure to negative information may help to ease some of your anxiety. Make time to unwind, relax, do activities you enjoy or try new things. Some ideas can include learning a new skill or craft, writing or journaling, dusting off your old musical instrument and reconnecting with your creative side will help with stress. Take the time to get household chores done that you may have been putting off, do some organizing, rearranging your environment will create a sense of control and change. With limited food resources, you might want to work on your cooking skills, find old recipes and try some traditional ways of preparing food from basic ingredients. Taking a break from junk food will also help to improve your mental state.

Although we are required to practice social distancing, there are still many ways you can stay connected with one another through a simple phone call, text, email or social media. Not just through friends and family but throughout the Community as well. Gila River Wellness Center has taken the approach of utilizing social media to provide videos of home workouts, fitness challenges, and even trivia to stay connected and interact with the Community. The internet is filled with many resources that will help you learn and stay active and informed.
Death is not the end
it is reaching the river
and reclaiming it.

It is becoming the river.
This is the Law of the River.

I have reached my river now
and I have reclaimed it for all eternity.

I am the river now
and the river is me.
This is The Law of the River.

But my journey to the river was always for you
and I reclaimed it just for you.

And when you reach your river
you will find me there waiting for you.

And together we will become the river
and the river will be all of us together.

This is the Law of the River.

I have lived the Law of the River
with the river as my guide.

I am the river now
and the river is me.

This is The Law of the River.

by willardene lewis
GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY PROVIDE DIRECT RELIEF PAYMENTS TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Communication & Public Affairs
Gila River Indian Community
Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis approved the Gila River Indian Community Council has approved the creation, approved to a Coronavirus relief fund, using surplus funds from Community accounts, to provide the Community government with the ability to take action quickly to meet the needs of the Community and its members. The first approved expenditure from the COVID-19 Emergency Fund will be a direct payment to all community members 18 years of age and older. A payment of $500. Funds are also set aside to provide funding for Community members, both on and off the Gila River Indian Reservation.

Gov. Lewis explained, “This payment is to assist our Community members in meeting the unexpected needs you are now all confronting and ensure that you are able to focus on your health and not your finances.” The COVID-19 Emergency Fund was approved by the Community Council at a Special Meeting on March 24. The Council also approved amendments to an interim employee leave policy extending leave benefits for COVID-19 related issues, approved a teleworking policy, and a resolution allowing the Community Council and its Standing Committees to meet remotely if necessary during this time.

The Community government has also been very active in meeting the essential needs of Community members, including deliveries of food, water and essential items. While the Community government is closed, certain departments and programs will continue to provide essential services and functions to the Community, and all public safety departments will remain fully operational. The COVID-19 Emergency payment will be paid on Friday, April 3, 2020. Members will receive the funds in the same payment method they currently receive via Per Capita disbursements.

GILA RIVER HOTELS & CASINOS - WILD HORSE PASS, LONE BUTTE AND VEE QUIVA EXTENDS CORONAVIRUS CLOSURE UNTIL APRIL 30

Gila River stands together with its employees, offering continued paid leave and benefits during closure.

Teaya Vicente
Gila River Hotels & Casinos


The voluntary short-term closure, originally scheduled to end on Wednesday, April 1, 2020, has been extended until Thursday, April 30, 2020, at the direction of the Gila River Hotels & Casinos has made a strong commitment to ensure every team member will continue to be paid and receive benefits through April 30, 2020.

“As a gaming and hospitality leader in Arizona, we look forward to reopening our doors and providing the ultimate entertainment experience for our guests in the Valley,” said Kenneth Manuel, Chief Executive Officer for Gila River Hotels & Casinos.

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$2 trillion relief bill will aid American economy during coronavirus outbreak

Christopher Lomahquahu
Gila River Indian News

A stimulus bill was reached and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic to aid in relief of millions of Americans across the nation. Members of the Senate, Congress and the White House are doing their part to help mitigate the spread of the coronavirus at this time. We are all stronger together and will continue to support our team members and community during these unprecedented times.

Gila River Hotels & Casinos will continue to monitor this situation closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Arizona Department for Health and Human Services (AZDHS).

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Christopher Lomahquahu
Gila River Indian News

A stimulus bill was reached and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic to aid in relief of millions of Americans across the nation. Members of the Senate, Congress and the White House are doing their part to help mitigate the spread of the coronavirus at this time. We are all stronger together and will continue to support our team members and community during these unprecedented times.

Gila River Hotels & Casinos will continue to monitor this situation closely with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Arizona Department for Health and Human Services (AZDHS).
COMMUNITY COUNCIL ACTION SHEETS
Courtesy of the Community Council Secretary’s Office • March 18, 2020

ACTION SHEET
Community Council; P.O. Box 2138; Sacaton, Arizona 85147; Phone (520) 562-9720, Fax (520) 562-9729
CALL TO ORDER
The Second Regular Monthly Meeting of the Community Council held Wednesday, March 18, 2020, in the Community Council Chambers at the Governance Center in Sacaton, Arizona was called to order by Governor Stephen R. Lewis at 9:14 a.m.

INVOCATION
Provided by Councilwoman Janice Stewart

ROLL CALL
Sign-in Sheet Circulated
Executive Officers Present: Governor Stephen R. Lewis
Lt. Governor Robert Stone
Council Members Present: D1-Joey Whitman, Azrie Hogg; D2-Carol Schurz; D3-Avery White, Rodney Jackson; D4-Monica Antone (9:24), Jennifer Allison, Delmar Jones, Pamela John-son, D5-Janice Stewart, Marlin Dixon, Franklin Pablo, Sr., Thomas White; D6-Anthony Villareal, Sr., Charles Goldtooth
Council Members Absent: D6-Terrance Evans; D7-Devin Redbird

PRESENTATIONS/INTRODUCTIONS
1. A Resolution Granting Additional Permanent Irrigation Easement To The United States Of America For Use At The Lone Butte Trade Center 3 LLC For Use At The Lone Butte Trade Center 3 Smoke Shop And Convenience Store, Located In The Lone Butte Development Park At The Intersection Of Sundust Road And Nelson Road (G&MSC forwards to Council on March 18, 2020 with recommendation for approval and a presentation be provided to District 4 prior to the Council Meeting) Presenters: David Montiel, Vernin Kewenvoyouma, Ronald Rosier

APPROVED

NEW BUSINESS
1. WHPDA Quarterly Report (EDSC forwards to the Council) Presenters: David White, Management Team, WHP-DA Board of Directors

TABLED AT APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ORDINANCES
1. Amendments To The Constitution (LSC forwards to Council under Unfinished Business with a recommendation to approve the ballot language) Presenters: Javier Ramos & CPAO

MOTION MADE AND SECOND to approve the ballot language

NEW BUSINESS
1. WHPDA Quarterly Report (EDSC forwards to the Regular Council Meeting of March 18, 2020 with a recommendation for a Special Council Meeting with Wild Horse Pass Development) Presenters: David White, Management Team, WHP-DA Board of Directors

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$265/mo.
2016 Nissan Rogue SL

$199/mo.
2016 Honda Accord

$15,999
2016 Kia Optima

$175/mo.
2018 Nissan Versa

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It is important to know that the risk of contracting COVID-19 is low. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends taking preventive measures.

**HEALTH ALERT**

**NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

Message to Our Elders:
Elders are at higher risk of contracting COVID-19; as a result, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that you Stay Home as much as possible and practice Social Distancing.

WHY DO I NEED TO STAY HOME WHEN I’M NOT SICK?
You may be ok now, but it takes 3-10 days to show signs of a COVID-19 infection. Additionally, many people do not show symptoms and could pose a threat to the elderly and immune-compromised. Those individuals are at higher risk of catching COVID-19. To help slow the spread, the CDC and GRHC strongly recommend that everyone do their part to protect the most vulnerable members of our Community by practicing Social Distancing.

WHAT IS SOCIAL DISTANCING?
Social Distancing means avoiding large crowds and staying at home as much as possible.

HOW DO I PREPARE?
Make sure you have access to several weeks of medications and supplies in case you need to stay home for prolonged periods of time.

**PREVENTIVE MEASURES:**
- Stay home if possible
- Wash your hands thoroughly and often
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick (6 feet, which is about two arm lengths)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with dirty hands
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces

**WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF COVID-19?**
Important: If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your provider right away! Emergency warning signs include:
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion or inability to arouse
- Bluish lips or face

For general info about Coronavirus, go to GRHC.org/Coronavirus

**GRHC CORONAVIRUS HOTLINE**
(520) 550-6079