COVID-19 PANDEMIC

UA President visits the Gila River Indian Community and OEM

GRIC and the UA begin partnership to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Dr. Robbins “impressed” with GRIC’s response

Kyle Knox
Gila River Indian News

On Tuesday, June 16, University of Arizona (UA) President Dr. Robert C. Robbins visited the Gila River Indian Community and toured the Office of Emergency Management’s location in the Lone Butte Business Park in Chandler. The visit marks the start of a partnership between the Community and the UA through an epidemiological agreement that will assist in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis, Lt. Gov. Robert Stone, and Bruce Harvey, Public Health Emergancy Preparedness Coordinator with the Office of Emergency Management, hosted President Robbins and his staff at the Office of Emergency Management. They presented the COVID-19 Unified Command Task Force Center and members that comprise the task force. Gila River Health Care, Gila River Police Department, Communications & Public Affairs Office and the Tribal Health Department were present among others.

Opening the presentation, Gov. Lewis outlined the Community’s actions as the threat of COVID-19 worsened.

“In January, one month after COVID-19 was discovered, I established the COVID-19 Unified Command Task Force early on because I knew this could besomething we would have to deal with at some point,” said Gov. Lewis.

The Community established a response while waiting for stimulus funding set aside for tribes through the CARES Act. According to reports, on Tuesday, June 14, a federal judge ordered the U.S. Treasury Department to re-lease the full amount to tribes.

“COVID-19 has forced all tribal governments across the country to see where our strengths and weaknesses are,” said Gov. Lewis.

Robbins said he was “incredibly impressed,” from his visit.

“I have to give Gov. Lewis incredible credit for having the vision to implement an incident command center early on, while we only did that a few months ago at the [University of Arizona],” said Robbins.

The partnership between the UA and GRIC began early on with conversations between Robbins and Gov. Lewis. Robbins said that they realized quickly that they, too, couldn’t afford to wait for the state or federal government to assist the university.

Robbins said that, “We needed to have control over our own destiny, so we began developing our own anti-body testing, began manufacturing our own test kits for nasal swabs, and we were able to send some of those to the Navajo Nation and local hospitals in the southern Arizona region.”

The visit was designed to give Robbins an understanding of GRIC’s approach and where the UA’s assistance is most needed. The UA is working with the Tribal Health Department to provide technical assistance and guidance to the Community in the areas of data collection, reporting, and contact tracing. Additionally, the UA will also offer best practices and support for their work with the first responders, Gila River Health Care, and Community members.

2020 Census is very important for the Gila River Indian Community

Emma Hughes
Gila River Indian News

The United States conducts a census count of everyone living in the country every decade as mandated by the U.S. Constitution. The data collected helps to determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives and is to determine the number of federal funds they receive. This information is also used to determine the amount of funding tribal nations and communities receive as well.

This year, the U.S. Census Bureau will be collecting information on 330 million individuals and 140 million estimated households, according to the Census website. For tribal communities, this task can be particularly challenging, due to rural locations and mixed households.

In the 2010 Census, American Indians living on reservations were under-counted by nearly 5%. Under counting impacts crucial services and programs for tribes like education, public safety, health care and more. Many tribes have now partnered with the U.S. Census Bureau to ensure a more accurate count of their tribal and community members. The information will help determine the number of federal funds tribes receive in order to best meet the needs of its members and community.

The 2020 Census count is currently underway and it is important for individuals to make sure they are counted and provide accurate information about their families and household residence. To assist with the 2020 Census, the Community launched the “We Count” campaign to encourage participation in the Census. Post cards were sent out to Community members reminding them about the 2020 Census. It is important for members to respond in order to ensure an accurate count. Those who received the questionnaire can now respond online, by phone or by mail. One person from each household should complete the Census questionnaire.

When filling out the Census form, it is important for Community members to identify their tribe as “Gila River Indian Community” when filling out the race question. For any assistance filling out the questionnaire, you can go online to 2020census.gov or by calling toll-free: 800-923-8282.

Community members have also been encouraged to apply to work with the 2020 Census in the collection process as a “Census taker,” who typically goes door-to-door in the Community to ensure people have responded and accurately filled out their Census questionnaires.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some changes have been made and Census workers will now be required to wear masks, gloves and carry hand sanitizer. Census workers can be recognized by Census ID badges and will now only drop off questionnaire packets at each household. They will not knock on doors or have any interaction with anyone in the household.

It is important to take a proactive approach to participating in the 2020 Census, important funding and resources for the Community will depend on an accurate count.
HEALTH ALERT
NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

UPCOMING DISTRICT TESTING DATES:
NOTE: Schedule is subject to change.
Dist. 2 ... Monday, June 22 - Tuesday, June 23
Dist. 7 ... Thursday, June 25 - Friday, June 26

For general info about the Coronavirus, go to GRHC.org/Coronavirus
GRHC CORONAVIRUS HOTLINE (520) 550-6079

SCHOOL & SPORTS PHYSICALS

Taking appointments
6/15 - 8/28
To schedule an appointment, please call
HHKMH 520-562-3321 ext. 1495, or for
KHC 520-550-6060.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION
SPECIAL ELECTION - NOVEMBER 3, 2020

By Community Council resolution, GRIC has requested a special election to be held in conjunction with the General Election on Nov. 3, 2020

ARTICLE III: Membership
ARTICLE XI: Districts
ARTICLE XV: Powers of the Gila River Indian Community Council

Tribal Elections Program
520-562-9735

Communications & Public Affairs Office
520-562-9715
Gila River Indian News
June 19, 2020

Published letters or columns do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Editor or Gila River Indian Community. LETTERS POLICY: GRIN welcomes letters and columns from readers. Letters should be limited to 200 words or less, be in good taste, and not be libelous or slanderous. Published letters or columns should be signed with the writer’s true name, address and telephone number in the event GRIN may need to contact the writer. Only the name of the writer will be printed in the newspaper. Letters or columns without a complete signature, name, address or phone number will not be acceptable to GRIN for publication. GRIN reserves the right to edit submitted materials for content and length.

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Gila River Indian Community
NO INCIDENTS INVOLVING PART ONE CRIME

District Three – (Sacaton Flats)

THEFT – 200601-02533 Officers were dispatched to the area in reference to a theft of a bike. It was reported that a group of boys were walking down the street when one of the boys ran into the neighbor’s yard and grabbed the bike riding it into the desert area. The victim was directed to report the bike as stolen; a 20 inch BMX style Mongose with a black frame, pink wheels and white lettering on the frame. The officer searched the surrounding areas with negative results.

Status: Closed pending suspect identification

THEFT – 200606-02587 Officers were dispatched to the area in reference to an unknown place. The suspect left in a vehicle with a group of juveniles who fell out of their pocket. The mother did wish to aid in prosecution on behalf of the victim. The items were not located where the victim stated they were dropped. The victim did not return to for the items in fear of being jumped. The suspects were not identified.

Status: Closed pending suspect identification

THEFT – 200605-02627 – CAD – The victim reported that the suspect took a cell phone without permission while at their residence. The suspect was not identified and the victims were not located where the items were dropped. The victim did not identify the suspects.

Status: Closed pending suspect identification

THEFT – 200606-02650 Officers were dispatched to the area in reference to a theft of a cell phone. Investigation revealed the victim left the cell phone by the slot machine they were playing and walked away from the machine. A short time later the victim realized the phone was not in their possession; the phone was not located at the machine. Video surveillance was reviewed; the suspect was not identified. The phone was entered into NCIC as stolen.

Status: Closed pending suspect identification

THEFT – 200606-02649 Officers were dispatched to the area in reference to a theft of a cell phone. Investigation revealed the victim left the cell phone by the slot machine they were playing and walked away from the machine. Video surveillance was reviewed; the suspect was not identified. The suspects were not located where the items were dropped. The victim did not return to for the items in fear of being jumped. The suspects were not identified.

Status: Closed pending suspect identification

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Status: Closed pending suspect identification
In O’otham there are different verb phrases used for personal grooming to express the meaning of “wash”, “bathe” or “clean.” For example, one phrase that is often requested of family members during these times, is “Ha vapkuñ heg e eñga.” “Wash your hands!” Most verbs in O’otham have a singular (vakuañ) and plural (vakuañ) form that match the number of items that undergo the action and in this case, both hands are being requested to be washed.

The verb (action word) vapkuñ can be used when washing different types of items like individual parts of the body, household items, and even vehicles. When you request a family member to wash something you use either the phrase Vakuañ heg(e) or Ha vapkuñ heg(e) and add the item that you are requesting to be washed at the end. The choice of either phrase depends on whether the item that is being washed is singular (one item) or plural (more than one item). If the item is associated intimately with the person (either is part of their body or belongs to them) you use the word e before naming the item. For example, if you wanted to request your kid to wash their face you would say “Vakuañ heg e wiyosha.” Vakuañ heg(e) is very useful to know is kekchuth or vapchvi. Vapchvi means to take a bath or shower. This verb is different than vakuañ because vapchvi implies that you are getting fully immersed in water like when you take a bath in a bathtub, or stand under the shower. When you request your kid to go take a bath you can say “Him k e vapchvi.” Vapchvi now becomes vapchvi because your kid is expected to actively bathe while in the tub or under the shower. To use this phrase to request a family member to wash or bathe another person or animal you would say “Vachviñ heg _______.” Once again the difference between the two phrases depends on whether the item is singular or plural. So for example, if you want to request your kid to give the family dog a bath you can say “Vachviñ heg goks” and in this case (e) is not used since the dog belongs to everyone in the family. This is also true for other items shared by the immediate family. Now, if you wanted to request your teenager to give their younger siblings a bath you can say “Ha vapchviñ heg e eñga.” This is because the first word Ha, which is used to indicate the action is happening on a plural item, is not needed as the verb vapkuñ is already in its plural form.

If the item is singular or associated intimately with the person (either is part of their body or belongs to them) you use the word e before naming the item. For example, if you wanted to request your kid to brush their teeth you can use the word e before naming the item. In some instances, the singular verb vapkuñ is used on plural items such as the request “Vakuañ heg e mo’o.” “Wash your hair.” Remember that some O’otham words like mo’o and m’u always remain in their plural forms. Sometimes, fluent speakers prefer to leave out the first word Ha when stating plural requests and simply shorten the phrase to “Vakuañ heg e elga.” This is because the first word Ha, which is used to indicate the action is happening on a plural item, is not needed as the verb vapkuñ is already in its plural form.

A similar action word that is used for personal grooming is the O’otham verb vakuchi. Vachvi means to take a bath or shower. This verb is different than vakuañ because vakuchi implies that you are getting fully immersed in water like when you take a bath in a bathtub, or stand under the shower. When you request your kid to go take a bath you can say “Him k e vachviñ.” Vachvi now becomes vachvi because your kid is expected to actively bathe while in the tub or under the shower. When you request a family member to wash or bathe another person or animal you would say “Vachviñ heg _______.” or “Ha vachviñ heg e _______.”

Vakuañ, Vachvi, and Kekchuth, Verbs in O’otham

Match the O’otham “washing/cleaning” word with its picture!

Kekchuth heg e thartham!

Vakuañ heg e mo’o!

Vachviñ heg e eñga!

Kekchuth heg ki!

Vakuañ heg e wiyosha!

Vachviñ heg goks!

Kekchuth heg ki:!

Ha vapkuñ heg huasa’a!

Ha vapkuñ heg kuañ:e’a!

Vakuañ heg kulaah!

Vachviñ heg eelga!

Vakuañ heg e eñga!

Talk with Elders and fluent speakers in your village and find out how they use the verbs vakuan, vachvi and kekchuth. Some phrases might be slightly different between villages. This month’s word match will test your knowledge on the phrases just mentioned. We encourage you to speak O’otham in your everyday lives.
Akimel O’odham/Pee Posh Youth Council prepares for virtual July conference

An annual gathering of youth from across the Gila River Indian Community will go virtual out of safety concerns during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 32nd Annual Gila River Youth Conference, hosted by the Akimel O’odham/Pee Posh Youth Council, will go virtual this year with the theme, “Resilience of the River People,” on July 18-19.

“We decided to keep it virtual out of everybody’s safety, but at the same time we wanted to uplift and motivate the young people,” said Michael Preston, Youth Coordinator. He said everything will be streamlined either through Zoom or WebEx (two video on-line conference platforms), including airing live on the Gila River Broadcast Corporation.

He said the theme of the conference is reflective of how GRIC youth have coped with the recent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and what they are doing for their family. Preston said the recent pandemic has been quite an adjustment for everyone, but most of all the youth.

“We want them to share how they have adjusted to life, what they have been physically and mentally doing to manage their self-wellness,” said Preston. AOPPYC conference will stream from GRIC headquarters with staff, conference co-chairs/advisory board members and technicians to manage the whole process in “digital rooms.”

Topics covered in the conference will be reflective on resiliency, mental wellness, the revitalization of Indigenous foods, among several others that will be presented during the virtual conference.

The topics are designed to relate to the youth and the skills needed to overcome hardship.

The format of the virtual conference will include prerecorded and live sessions, interactive segments, while streaming online. All participants will need to register online through a link to a form on mygriliver.com as well as the youth council’s Facebook page. Registration is free.

Preston said, even though everything will be streamed online, “We are looking at ways to provide incentives to the GRIC youth, including some kits to help them interact with the activities.”

The extent of going virtual, includes conducting the annual voting by causatives from each district to be an AOPPYC member representative.

How can youth connect?

“We have been trying to do this an effective way,” said Preston, who noted that being tested for COVID-19 will prevent you from unknowingly spreading the virus to others during the voting process. Preston said they will continue to look at creative ways to motivate the youth, especially those that can magnify when they are stimulated.

For parents and guardians they want to inform of using those smart phones to participate in the virtual conference, encouraging parents to have their children go to view sessions on.

“The youth council took it on, almost starting from scratch by adapting activities that we have done in the past to make it enjoyable, while inspiring them,” said Preston. He said they will continue to look at creative ways to motivate the youth, especially those that can magnify when they are stimulated.

For more information about natural gas safety, visit gricsafety.org or call 877-860-6020.

Photograph from 2019 of the annual youth conference hosted by the Akimel O’odham/Pee Posh Youth Council. Kyle Knox/GRIN

Call 811
Before you dig

ONE SIMPLE CALL TO 811 GETS UNDERGROUND UTILITY-OWNED LINES MARKED FOR FREE.

Whether you’re a homeowner or professional excavator, every digging job requires a call — even small projects — so be sure to:

• Call 811 at least two working days before starting any digging project
• Wait for the site to be marked
• Respect the marks
• Dig with care

GET TESTED - KEEP YOUR Family Safe

Although you may experience minor discomfort during the nasal swab, please consider that being tested for COVID-19 will prevent you from unknowingly spreading the virus to your loved ones.

It takes 3-5 days to get results. During that time we ask that you follow the guidelines below:

Who should get tested

• All Community members and those residing within the boundaries of the GRIC.

Get your home ready

• Consider members of the household that may be at greater risk such as older adults and people with severe chronic illnesses.
• Choose a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

Everyday prevention actions:

Stay home and speak to your healthcare provider if you develop fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately.

In adults, emergency warning signs include:

• Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
• Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
• New confusion or inability to arouse
• Blush lips or face
• Fever, cough, Sore Throat

Take additional precautions for those at highest risk, particularly older adults and those who have severe underlying health conditions.

Stay at home and away from crowds if you or a family member are an older adult or have underlying health issues.

• Make sure you have access to several weeks of medications and supplies
• Practice good hygiene
• Drink plenty of water and get plenty of rest

For more information about instant gas safety visit swgaz.com/safety or call 877-860-6020

GILA RIVER TESTING BLITZ
COV I D - 19 TESTING INFORMATION

For information on COVID-19 testing at the Gila River Indian Community, visit www.gricsafety.org.
COMMUNITY COUNCIL ACTION SHEETS

Courtesy of the Community Council Secretary’s Office • June 6, 2020

ACTION SHEET
Community Council; P.O. Box 2138; Sacaton, Arizona 85147; Phone (520) 562-9720; Fax (520) 562-9729

CALL TO ORDER
The First Regular Monthly Meeting of the Community Council held Wednesday, June 6, 2020, in the Community Council Chambers at the Governor’s Center in Sacaton, Arizona was called to order by Governor Stephen R. Lewis at 9:21 a.m.

INVOCATION
Provided by Councilwoman Janice Stewart

ROLL CALL
Sign-in Sheet Circulated
Executives Present:
Governor Stephen R. Lewis
Lt. Governor Robert Stone
Council Members Present:
D1-Joey Whitman, Arzie Hogg; D2-Carol Schurz; D3-Avery White, Rodney Jackson; D4-Monica Antone, Jennifer Allison, Delmar Jones, Regina Antone-Smith (10:23); D5-James De La Rosa (10:23), Marlin Dixon, Franklin Pablo, Sr., Thomas White; D6-Anthony Villareal, Sr., Charles Goldtooth, Terrance Evans; D7-Devin Redbird
Council Members Absent:

PRESENTATIONS/INTRODUCTIONS
FOR A 10-MINUTE BREAK. THE MEETING RE-
CONVENED AT 2:21 P.M. WITH LT. GOVER-

REPORTS #1 AND #5; ACCEPT AND APPROVE NEW BUSINESS #1 AND #2 ON THE CONSENT
AGENDA

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO ACCEPT RE-
PORTS #1 AND #5; ACCEPT AND APPROVE NEW BUSINESS #1 AND #2 ON THE CONSENT
AGENDA

SWEARING-IN CEREMONY FOR NEWLY ELECTED, RE-ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS, AND NEWLY ELECTED CHIEF JUDGE
District 1 – Joey Whitman
District 3 – Rodney Jackson
District 4 – Jennifer Allison
District 4 – Regina Antone-Smith
District 5 – Marlin Dixon
District 6 – Terrance B. Evans
Chief Judge – Joseph Manuel

GOVERNOR STEPHEN R. LEWIS EXPRESSED WORDS OF APPRECIATION AND LUCK TO OUTGOING COUNCILWOMAN JANICE STEWART AND OUTGOING COUNCILWOMAN PAMELA JOHNSON. JUDGE KAMI HART PRO-
VISED THE OATH OF OFFICE TO EACH OF THE NEWLY ELECTED AND RE-ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS, AS WELL AS, NEWLY ELECTED CHIEF JUDGE.

[GOVERNOR STEPHEN R. LEWIS CALLED FOR A 1-HOUR LUNCH BREAK. THE MEETING RE-
CONVENED AT 2:21 P.M. WITH LT. GOVER-
NOR CHAIRING THE MEETING.]

RESOLUTIONS
1. A Resolution Approving The Amended And Re-
stated Master Lease Between The Gila River Indian Community And The Gila River Sand & Gravel Corporation (NRSC forwards to Council with recommendation for approval; EDSC concurs)
Presenter: Elizabeth Antone
APPROVED
2. A Resolution Extending The Deadline For The Crime Task Force To Develop And Present Its Plan To The Community Council (LSC forwards to Council with recommendation for approval)
Presenter: Michael Carter
APPROVED
3. A Resolution Approving A Mutual Aid Agreement Between The Gila River Indian Community And The City Of Avondale For Emergency Police Services (LSC forwards to Council with recommendation for approval)
Presenter: William Morago
APPROVED
4. A Resolution Approving A Mutual Aid Agreement Between The Gila River Indian Community And The City Of Maricopa For Emergency Police Services (LSC forwards to Council with recommendation for approval)
Presenter: William Morago
APPROVED
5. A Resolution Approving A Mutual Aid Agreement Between The Gila River Indian Community And The City Of Casa Grande For Emergency Police Services (LSC forwards to Council with recommendation for approval)
Presenter: William Morago
APPROVED
6. A Resolution Approving A Mutual Aid Agreement Between The Gila River Indian Community And The Town Of Gilbert For Emergency Police Services (LSC forwards to Council with recommendation for approval)
Presenter: William Morago
APPROVED

ORDINANCES
UNFINISHED BUSINESS
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO ENTER EX-
ECUTIVE SESSION
1. Community Treasurer Appointment
Presenters: Community Council

ITEM DISCUSSED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION
[GOVERNOR STEPHEN R. LEWIS RETURNED TO MEETING DURING EXECUTIVE SESSION AND BEGAN CHAIRING THE MEETING.]
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO EXIT EXECU-
TIVE SESSION

MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT ROBERT KELLER
2. Community Council Secretary Appointment
Presenters: Community Council
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO APPOINT SHANNON WHITE
3. Government & Management Standing Commit-
tee Appointment - (2) Council Seats
Presenters: Community Council
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO CERTIFY ARZIE HOGG AND AVERY WHITE
4. Natural Resources Standing Committee Appointment – (2) Council Seats
Presenters: Community Council
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO CERTIFY MARLIN DIXON AND RODNEY JACKSON
5. Health & Social Standing Committee Appointment – (2) Council Seats
Presenters: Community Council
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO CERTIFY REGINA ANTOINE-SMITH AND JOEY WHITMAN
6. Legislative Standing Committee Appointments – (2) Council Seats
Presenters: Community Council
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO CERTIFY AVERY WHITE AND REGINA ANTOINE-SMITH
7. Education Standing Committee Appointments – (3) Council Seats
Presenters: Community Council
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO CERTIFY KAMAL SHARMA AND DELAJIDE BAYE
8. Community Council Treasury Appointment – (3) Council Seats
Presenters: Community Council
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO CERTIFY MARLIN DIXON
Presenters: Community Council
MOTION MADE AND SECOND TO CERTIFY SHERWOOD JOHNSON

ACTION SHEETS Continued on Page 8
Gov. Lewis addresses combating COVID-19 in June 12 video update

Christopher Lomahquahu
Gila River Indian News

Gila River Indian Community Gov. Stephen Roe Lewis addressed growing number of COVID-19 cases during a video message on June 12.

"Gila River Health Care has been engaged in a testing blitz across the Community and is a key to our success in combating this pandemic. Think of this as your responsibility as a Community member," said Gov. Lewis, who stressed the importance of getting tested for Coronavirus Disease 2019.

He said it is clear this virus will be with us for an extended period of time and needs further testing, which has seen a spike across the state of Arizona in cases of COVID-19 and positive test results in the Community.

At the time of Gov. Lewis’ video update, there were 16,012 tests performed, of those 72 were positive in the Community and 24 of Community members living off the reservation, which includes two deaths related to COVID-19.

Lewis said they have been working with Steward Healthcare to test for Community members and their families living off the Community. He said the rise in positive cases is attributed to the increased testing, but it is also important not to let our guard down. As a result of the increased cases of COVID-19 across the state, he said the reopening of Community departments, has been extended to July 6 to ensure a proper plan is in place for tribal employees.

"I am also establishing a task force to develop the safest opening plan for our government employees to return to a safe environment when they return to work," said Lewis. He added, the Community has included the advice of health experts to see how the Community can address the pandemic in a “rapidly changing” situation.

"This is a fluid situation and we will continue to rely on medical experts and their knowledge to make the best decision for the overall health and safety of our community," said Lewis.

He said, with the recent developments within the state of Arizona around COVID-19, he will assess how the Gila River Gaming Enterprises has taken measures to safeguard their employees and patrons, from COVID-19.

"We are feeling our way for an uncharted territory, we can only be guided by the data and science available, this will be a continuous process for us because this is an unrelenting pandemic," said Lewis. Lewis also extend his condolences to the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community leadership and members and family, who recorded their first death related to COVID-19. He concluded his video update assuring, that more updates will continue as they become available and encouraged Community members to wear face masks.
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