



# From the Office of the Chairman

THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE COLVILLE RESERVATION

## **CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): Let's take care of each other and our loved ones**

The next few months will be challenging on multiple levels, in ways we can't yet imagine. The Coronavirus has been declared a Pandemic here in the United States. Tribal Council will be making difficult decisions that are beyond our control. We need to base these decisions on sound information and in the best interest of our Tribe. However, the emotional consequences of our people who will suffer cannot be taken lightly. Nor can the emotional consequences of people who fall into high risk categories such as the Elderly and those with existing conditions whose lives are threatened cannot be underestimated. With so many business and corporate closures, it is inevitable that at some point our workforce will be reduced. Federal and State funding will be impacted and staff could face layoffs and some services discontinued. In light of this uncertainty, please make wise financial decisions and travel to metropolitan areas only when absolutely necessary. Read the facts about COVID-19 and learn about this disease from reputable sources like: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The World Health Organization (WHO), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the Global Center for Health Security. Please take care of yourself and your family.

Most importantly, don't contribute to societal panic - remain calm and stay cautious. Do your best to react logically to the situation at hand, and refrain from panic-buying weeks' worth of groceries or spreading information online that hasn't been verified. It's understandable to feel anxious, fearful and worry about what the outcome of this virus could be. Know we are all in this together and will see our way through this. Be creative, offer solutions, and take a positive leadership role. Show our young people how to survive during adverse times.

### *Colville Confederated Governmental Departments/Programs:*

The Colville Business Council implemented a partial shutdown of Tribal government effective immediately until April 1, 2020 to halt the spread of the COVID-19 virus. More information will be shared as this develops. The Colville Business Council is working closely with the Executive Director and Division Managers to determine the essential functions of their operations that may not stop during this critical period of time needed to suspend operations due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Division Managers have identified the essential positions that are responsible for performing critical functions and provided this information to Council for review and for further guidance. Essential positions will remain at their normal duty station. Approved leave, flexible work schedules and teleworking will be offered to non-essential employees and employees who need to be away from work because of their minor children. Division Managers were also tasked to work with employees who fall into a vulnerable category and provide and offer them teleworking and possibly leave from work.

Tribal Council, the Executive Director, and Division Directors will collaboratively identify essential positions and functions to determine what can be suspended for an extended period that is not detrimental to tribal operations. If a confirmed case of COVID-19 is reported, essential functions will continue and off-site locations will be considered temporarily until work spaces are safe to occupy.

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**RODNEY CAWSTON | CHAIRMAN**

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