



MESCALERO *Apache* TRIBE

P.O. Box 227
101 Central Avenue

Mescalero, New Mexico 88340

Office: (575) 464-4494
Fax: (575) 464-9191

March 20, 2020

Dear Tribal Members:

I write today to provide very important information relating to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Late yesterday, at the request of the Tribal Council, I proclaimed a state of emergency on the Reservation. We must take this matter seriously given the rising number of cases in New Mexico and across the United States. We must make sure we do everything we can to stop the spread of COVID-19 and prepare for possible cases in the future.

For this reason, today all non-essential Tribal employees were released from work for a two (2) week period. These employees will continue to be paid. While the Tribe is closed for the most part, essential public services will continue to be provided to the community. Please see the following information relating to essential services:

- Tribal Housing will receive rent payments by mail only. Automatic wage deductions will continue. All requests for work orders should be made to 464-9235. Housing will only address work orders relating to fires, water or gas leaks, and electrical or sewer problems. Rent will continue to accrue but no evictions will take place during the state of emergency
- The Elderly Center will continue to deliver meals to the elderly. Please call the Elderly Center to arrange for the delivery of meals. The Elderly Center itself will be closed to the public.
- The Mescalero Care Center will remain open but is not accepting new patients. Visitors are still prohibited.
- Four Directions Treatment & Recovery Center will remain open but is not accepting new patients and is limiting public access.
- Daycare (both sites) will be open only to the children of essential staff.
- MATI will continue to provide phone and internet services. In addition, MATI will not discontinue services if you fall behind on payments during this state of emergency.
- The Tribal Store will be open to Tribal members and affiliates. The Tribal Store has been directed to order necessary items like flour, potatoes, beans, bottled water, and toilet paper.

- The Tribal Courts will continue to hear emergency or serious cases only. The Courts have restrictions on access.
- Mescalero Gas Company, Conservation Law Enforcement, Fire & Rescue, CHR, Early Childhood, Social Services VAWA, Tribal Maintenance, and Tribal Roads and Utilities will continue to provide services. Please call these Departments; their offices are not open to the public.
- Boys & Girls Club will be closed to the public.
- Tribal Offices are closed. This includes the Activity Hall, swimming pool, gymnasium, etc. You will not be able to enter the building. Please call the Tribe or the respective Department if you have any questions or need services.
- Otero County Electric Cooperative will be closed to the public but will not discontinue services for failure to make payment during the state of emergency.

Please check the Tribe's website and Facebook page for additional and updated information.

Rest assured that the Tribe is working very closely with the New Mexico Congressional Delegation in Washington, D.C., the Governor's Office, Indian Health Services, Bureau of Indian Affairs and our other state and federal partners to monitor COVID-19, mobilize resources and request funding to help the Tribe in this state of emergency. We are monitoring information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization constantly. I will continue to update you in writing by mail and through other means as much as possible as the situation progresses. We are doing everything we can.

The Tribe asks that you do your part to help your community. The best way to do this is to stay home – especially if you are sick. Limit family gatherings to less than five (5) people. Do not leave the Reservation unless it is absolutely necessary. If you had a student return from college or boarding school, then this student should self-isolate for at least fourteen (14) days. Wash your hands and use hand sanitizer. Limit use of on-line streaming services (like Netflix) in order to keep communication lines open in the case of emergencies. Do not hoard essential supplies. Above all, please do not panic. There are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 on the Reservation. I know that there are rumors that say otherwise. Do not believe these rumors. The Tribe will make a formal announcement if this situation changes. Right now, the Tribe has not implemented formal restrictions on the general public (like implementing a strict curfew or a "shelter in place" directive). I hope that you will voluntarily comply with the social distancing measures recommended. Together we can slow the spread of COVID-19.

Thank you for your understanding. My prayers to you and your family during this time.

Sincerely,



Gabe Aguilar
President