



MESKWAKI NATION

The Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa

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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Distribution:

March 17, 2020

Meskwaki Settlement, Tama, Iowa - Out of an abundance of caution for our community members and employees, Tribal Council has approved the closure of Tribal Operations beginning on Wednesday, March 18th. The closure will remain in effect until March 27th as of now and be re-evaluated on Wednesday, March 25th to determine if closure should be extended. For the benefit of the community, the Meskwaki Health Clinic, Behavioral Health (MADAC and CHR Program), Pharmacy, and the Meskwaki Travel Plaza will remain open.

Judith Bender, Tribal Council Chairwoman stated, "To minimize exposure to infected individuals, it is up to every single community member to do their part. Profound and significant steps have been made to limit the spread of the coronavirus in our community. Stay home and stay safe."

Meskwaki Bingo Casino Hotel:

Additional efforts to slow the spread of the infection of the COVID-19 virus began to go into effect including the closure of the Meskwaki Bingo Casino Hotel which closed for business on Tuesday, March 17th at 12 AM. The casino will re-open on April 14th.

Meskwaki Settlement School:

Starting Thursday, March 19th the Meskwaki Settlement School including offices will be closed until at least April 13th. However, the elementary and middle/high schools will be open this Wednesday, March 16th from 2-6pm to allow students to retrieve essential items (like medication, laptops, etc.). If you need to get your child's medication, an authorized adult MUST sign for it. It cannot be given to children. We are in the process of sanitizing our buildings, so access should be quick and targeted to retrieve only the items you need. Communication regarding academic support will be sent home from the school later today. Families may utilize the email directory located on the school's webpage to connect with staff during the closing.

Staff Compensation:

During the temporary closure, all employees will be compensated with base pay rates and benefits. Staff are implored to stay at home, practice social distancing, and avoid social gatherings of groups of more than 10 people. To assist enrolled members and their descendants during the closure, food, and health assistance will be available including:

Senior Meals:

The Senior Center will provide lunch through home meal delivery each weekday. Seniors who would like a meal should call the center at (641) 484-9222 before 10 AM for delivery.

Children Curbside Grab-N-Go Meals:

For three weeks starting on Monday, March 23rd, the Meskwaki Settlement School will provide lunch via pick-up at the elementary main entrance on weekdays (Monday-Friday) from 10am-12pm to enrolled and descendent children 18 and younger who attend either the Meskwaki Settlement School or South Tama Community School District. There is NO need to sign up ahead of time, but please know the meals CAN ONLY BE PROVIDED TO THE CHILD. Regardless of the school your child attends, you may simply drive or walk up WITH YOUR CHILDREN (ages 18 and younger) to the elementary school front entrances from 10-12pm and they will have a lunch available.

Meskwaki Health Services:

The Meskwaki Health Clinic, Pharmacy, and Behavioral Health Services will remain open normal working hours. Please call ahead for appointments at (641) 484-4094.

Red Earth Gardens:

Red Earth Gardens continues to have organic, farm fresh eggs, beans, and rosemary for sale at the Health Clinic. Eggs are available for purchase at the Meskwaki Travel Plaza.

“The most important thing we can do as a tribe,” stated Tribal Chairwoman Bender, “is to protect our most vulnerable, our children and our elders. So please STAY HOME. Be smart. Pray with good energy. Take care of yourself and keep panic in control. Fear has a spirit, do not feed it.”

At this time, there are no known cases reported on the Settlement or in Tama County. If you experience symptoms, please call the Health Clinic at (641) 484-4094 to be directed to further guidance to a testing facility. For more information, contact JoAnn Youngbear, Executive Director, at (641) 484-4678.

MEDIA RELEASE:

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