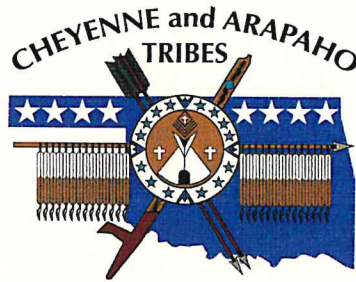


OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Reggie Wassana
Governor

Gilbert Miles
Lieutenant Governor



March 24, 2020

Dear Tribal Members:

I find myself filled with emotion as I watch the COVID-19 coronavirus overtake thousands of people in this country ... including in Indian Country. I know many of you are concerned about your family and your future.

As Governor of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, it is my obligation and duty to all of our citizens to take steps to protect our citizens and to set forth a plan for a health crisis unlike anything most of us have seen in our lifetime.

Our ancestors faced this same crisis when they were exposed to small pox ... but we survived ... and we will again, if we take simple precautions:

Stay at home – only go out for food or medicines.

Wash your hands – for a minimum of 20 seconds.

Clean surfaces in your home with bleach water or another antibacterial cleanser – including doorknobs and surfaces.

If you must go out protect yourself by wearing gloves. If you don't have gloves, use a cloth or paper towel to open public doors, gas pump handles, any hard surface you may have to touch while out. Wash your hands as soon as you return home, and if you have access to hand sanitizer – use that immediately after touching surfaces.

These things may sound simple, but they are what is going to “flatten the curve” so many scientists and doctors are talking about. We have to slow the spread of this deadly virus and hopefully keep it from attacking our communities.

I am aware there are many who have been let go from their jobs and many are scared. We want to assist as many tribal citizens as we can during this unprecedented health crisis. The reality is we will be able to assist some; the ones who have the greatest need and impacted the hardest, and will do so until our resources run low and won't be able to.

There are several programs the state and federal government have made available that will help, and I encourage each of you to look into some of these programs. The first is mortgage companies across the US are deferring mortgage payments up to 3 months – check with your mortgage company to see if yours is one of them. If not, talk to them about reduced payments – many will work with you. If you owe any state or federal taxes, those deadlines to pay tax bills have been extended to July 15, and in Oklahoma the one-week waiting period for unemployment benefits has been waived.

During this time our main focus is to provide shelter and food to our families. Check local food banks and churches. If you have been laid off, apply for unemployment and food assistance through the state.

Currently we are organizing food care packages that will be given to district legislators to distribute in their communities and I increased the April Elder's food check from \$150 to \$250 to help assist with the burden on our Elders.

Our HOPE Program has been overwhelmed with applications for emergency assistance – please be patient as they go through each and every application, with priority being given to out of district tribal citizens in hard hit areas, such as California and New York and those directly impacted by this health epidemic. We will be able to assist some until resources become low and won't be able to assist. I again encourage you to reach out to other state and federal programs that can assist you and your family during this time.

We must come together as a tribe right now to support and encourage one another. We must protect our families, our children, and our Elders. And the only way to do that is to work together – to do the simple things listed above and most important STAY AT HOME if at all possible.

As many of you know, we closed our casinos and are operating on a skeleton crew for essential services at tribal headquarters. This move was to protect all of our tribal employees and their families. Following suit throughout the state and the country, many Tribal Nations have done the same. We have formed a task group to monitor the situation daily, and will be meeting again to determine more steps/action going forward.

As your Governor, I want you to know I am praying for all of us. Your Lt. Governor Gib Miles, many others, and myself are monitoring this health epidemic and we are making decisions based on the overall welfare of our tribal citizens.



Governor Reggie Wassana