

Tribal Council Update 8-22-2020

We are writing this statement regarding the recent positive cases on the Bois Forte Reservation, Nett Lake and Vermilion communities. As of today, there are five positive cases. Four (4) in Vermilion and one (1) in Nett Lake.

On Thursday, August 20, in the late afternoon, we were notified that there was a positive cases on the Vermilion side of the Bois Forte. There was an individual from off the reservation at a party on Monday, August 17 in Vermilion who had contact with band members. This party then resulted in an employee from the Wilderness testing positive on Thursday, but the employee only worked at the golf course on Tuesday and was only in the kitchen area of the golf course. As most of you are aware there was a golf event that was held on Thursday at the Wilderness Golf Course. Once we were made aware of the positive case we were in contact with Bois Forte Health Services, Mn Dept. Of Health and the Indian Health Service in order to put the necessary safety precautions in place to end the event. The kitchen was then closed immediately and staff were tested and we have been made aware that none of them have tested positive as of today.

The case tracking was done immediately and the Tribal Council was made aware of the positive case in Nett Lake on Friday, August 21. It was an employee of the Tribal Government who had symptoms on Friday morning and went in for a test and it came back positive. It was at that time that the decision was made to close the Tribal Government Building, the DNR offices and the Fitness Centers. The buildings were not open to the public, but had staff working in them. This was done to protect the health and safety of the staff in these buildings. There was contact tracing done and any individuals who have had contact with that employee are quarantining. The buildings will be closed and intensely cleaned on Sunday. Also, we will be having an emergency Tribal Emergency Response Committee meeting at noon on Sunday to discuss the upcoming week. The individuals who are quarantining must do so for two weeks and some are staff, family members, tribal council members so they are to wait and see if they develop any symptoms. Remember the entire household does not need to quarantine, just the exposed individual. If the exposed individual has symptoms, then the rest of the household will be quarantined.

We will meet on Sunday and see what transpires as to how the Tribal Government will continue to offer services such as COVID and per capita check questions, having staff that can work from home be set up to work from home and communicating everything together to band members as soon as these decisions are made.

The statement regarding large gatherings was made for tribal government staff as we have had staff who have attended large gatherings such as the Effie Rodeo, Sturgis and there was a party planned on the Vermilion side over the weekend. We feel that staff made their own decisions for going out and about and should not be attending large events due to possible exposure. This statement was not directed toward Fortune Bay, the Y Store, C Store, etc. But people need to remember that when they go off reservation to mask up, use hand sanitizer and social distance even at Walmart, gas stations, everywhere. You never know who has the virus.

This is not just happening at Bois Forte but it is everywhere. There are new cases in Hibbing, Virginia

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and everywhere. We must be in the mindset that just because we have been extremely fortunate to this point, it can still happen here.

We will be posting on the Bois Forte website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as things change or are updated.

Please do not believe everything you hear, get the facts as we all need to come together at this time and be supportive and help our families, friends and neighbors.