



# SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 22, 2020 – 7:30 P.M.**

## **Chairman Christine Sage restricts tribal operations to limit exposure of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19)**

Southern Ute Indian Reservation – On Sunday, March 22, 2020 Southern Ute Tribal Chairman, Christine Sage along with Southern Ute Tribal Council, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe Incident Management Team (IMT) and tribal entities, ordered the Southern Ute Indian Tribe to modify tribal government services and business operations. The Southern Ute Tribal Permanent Fund, Southern Ute Growth Fund, Southern Ute Shared Services and positions within the Sky Ute Casino Resort have been directed to work remotely unless otherwise communicated. Critical functions have been revised and only critical tribal staff must report to their workstations. This will be effective Monday, March 23, 2020.

The directives are as follows:

- Identified tribal staff who reside in the State of New Mexico will be required to work remotely beginning tomorrow, Monday, March 23, 2020 with exception Southern Ute law enforcement agencies and tribal staff in some operations within the Southern Ute Growth Fund and key Southern Ute Shared Services infrastructure staff.
- According to a public service announcement issued from the IMT sent on Friday, March 20, 2020, all tribal staff who voluntarily travel outside of the identified safety area (including San Juan County, NM) will be placed on a 14-day self-quarantine symptom watch period.
- If symptoms arise and/or COVID-19 is suspected, the employee is required to consult their primary healthcare provider for COVID-19 screening or access telemedicine consultation services from Anthem found here (<https://livehealthonline.com>).
- Tribal members who have traveled outside of a 50-mile radius are strongly encouraged to self-quarantine for 14 days for their own health and safety as well as that of members of their household and the tribal community.
- Staff from the Southern Ute Permanent Fund are not expected to report to their workstations. All staff needed to perform critical operations will begin working remotely on Monday, March 23, 2020. Exceptions include designated tribal personnel from the following departments: Tribal Information Services, Clean Team, Grounds Maintenance, Food Distribution, Legal Department, Southern Ute Police Department, Southern Ute Detention Center, Division of Gaming, Southern Ute Tribal Rangers, Southern Ute Health Center, and

SunUte Community Center (operating as the Southern Ute COVID-19 Call Center; SunUte facilities will be closed otherwise.)

- Staff from the Southern Ute Growth Fund are not expected to report to their workstations and should begin working remotely on Monday, March 23, 2020. Exceptions include designated tribal personnel from the following operations: Southern Ute Utilities, essential operations/maintenance personnel related to natural gas production and mid-stream operations, and critical support staff as needed. Growth Fund personnel shall implement the required health screening prior to entering a Growth Fund location.
- Staff from the Southern Ute Shared Services are not expected to report to their workstations and instead should begin working remotely on Monday, March 23, 2020. Exceptions include designated critical I.T. infrastructure staff.
- The Sky Ute Casino Resort will cease all operations on Monday, March 23, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. The hotel, all dining operations, gaming operations, and bowling alley will be closed. All events will be postponed.
- All staff needed to perform critical services and work remotely that need additional resources should notify their immediate supervisor who will work with the chain of command, SUSS, and the IMT to resolve all logistical issues. This is especially applicable to computer needs and remote connectivity.
- All staff identified for IMT operations and meetings must be available to assist the IMT when requested.
- All Tribal buildings will be on lockdown with no public access.
- This will remain in effect until further notice.

A summary of continuing core services for the Southern Ute Indian Tribe during the COVID-19 outbreak can be found on the tribal websites, tribal social media, with the Southern Ute Indian Tribe COVID-19 Call Center, on KSUT Tribal radio, and by mail.

#### **SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE COVID-19 CALL CENTER**

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe COVID-19 Call Center will remain active through the duration of the modified government services being provided. Tribal members can reach the call center by dialing 970.563.0214. Calls regarding medical concerns should use extensions 2651 and 2654; calls with general questions or concerns should use extensions 2652 and 2667. Call center hours of operation are 6:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m., 7 days a week until further direction is mandated by the Southern Ute Indian Tribe (IMT). In addition to fielding calls, the call center will be making proactive calls to Tribal Elders, the disabled and high-risk tribal membership.

#### **TRIBAL STAFF SELF-SCREENING PROTOCOL**

Southern Ute Tribal staff identified to report to their workstations are required to take their temperature with a thermometer to accurately provide symptom information. If you can answer “yes” to any of these questions, including COVID-19 symptoms, staff must call their supervisor and consult their primary healthcare provider for COVID-19 screening or access the telemedicine consultation services from Anthem found here (<https://livehealthonline.com>) If your response is “no” to **all** questions and symptoms, staff are required to report to work.

#### **Exposure-related Questions**

- Have you traveled in the last two weeks, if yes, where?

- Has any member of your family traveled anywhere in the last two weeks, if yes, where?
- Have you or a family member been in contact with a COVID-19 positive patient?

**Are you currently experiencing any of the following symptoms?**

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Abnormal fatigue

“As the Tribal Chairman, I hold the lives of the tribal staff, tribal membership, and their families, as well as the tribal resources in my hands. Making the decision to modify tribal services and business operations to an even greater degree was made by prioritizing the health, safety and welfare of the entire tribal membership and tribal staff. We each have a responsibility to attempt to limit the exposure of COVID-19, especially to the Tribal Elders and the high-risk population of the Southern Ute Tribal membership and our community. Modifying tribal services and business operations and asking tribal staff to work from home will help “flatten the curve”, thereby reducing the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19, and putting additional stress on the healthcare system. Please stay home, take this time to enjoy your loved ones. This time can be spent sharing our traditions and culture with those in your household,” stated Chairman Sage.

If you are a tribal member and concerned about your symptoms, please contact your primary care provider or call the Southern Ute Health Center at 970.563.4581 to speak with a health care professional.

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