



Ak-Chin continues to provide a brighter tomorrow for Community

Ak-Chin Farms planting seasonal crops for harvest

It's been over a month since the Ak-Chin Indian Community put a halt to most of its Community departments and enterprises. Essential departments remain open with limited schedules and services, but one operation is still going strong after all that has been said and done and that is Ak-Chin Farms.

Ak-Chin Farms, which has and always will be one of Ak-Chin's most treasured enterprises, remains working a full regular schedule, as it continues its planting and harvesting season, without missing a beat.

Looking out in the farm fields at any given moment and you will see plants sprouting, fields being irrigated and workers getting ready to maintain or harvest crops.

Right now, Ak-Chin has just finished planting cotton as well as potatoes and corn, which are some

of their most productive crops. There is also barley and a new crop this year, sunflowers. The potatoes will be harvested in the next few weeks, destined for Frito Lay, Poore Brothers, and In-and-Out Burger.

Corn silage and barley will be shipped to local feed and dairy operations. The new test crop of sunflowers is destined to become sunflower oil and scheduled to ship out to Mexico. Cotton should be harvested by late fall and the pecans in the winter.

Steve Coester, Ak-Chin Farm Manager has been working for Ak-Chin for over 35 years, first coming to the community as its first water master. Since that time, Steve has seen his fair share of farming.

Steve shared that Ak-Chin plants approximately 2500 acres of alfalfa, 3000 acres of cotton, 6000

acres of corn, 2000 acres of barley, 1000 acres of potatoes and 500 acres of pecans.

Income from the Farm helps to sustain its operation as well as overall Community operations.

Ak-Chin Farms has been in business for over 50 years, providing substantial income, jobs and a way of life for the Community.

For those who grew up working for the farms they know its hard work; laboring long hours in the heat and cold; but they should be proud and so should we, because they are also essential workers, and without them Ak-Chin Farms would not have been as successful.

Retired Farm Board Chairman, Leona Kakar still looks at the fields in awe as she passes by, grateful to see what crops are coming out and hopeful of the farm's harvest.



Ak-Chin Tribal Council Once Again Extends Employee Payroll, Benefits for Government and Enterprises

(MARICOPA, Ariz. – April 27, 2020) – The Ak-Chin Indian Community Tribal Council has once again approved funding that will extend payroll for its employees for another two weeks, through May 14, 2020. The nearly 1,500 employees work for the Tribe's enterprises, including those that work for the Tribal government as well as Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino and UltraStar Multi-tainment Center employees.

"As we continue to monitor the situation regarding COVID-19 in order to re-open our enterprises, the Tribal Council has advised management at Harrah's Ak-Chin, at UltraStar and our tribal administration to remain closed through May 14," said Robert Miguel, chairman of the Ak-Chin Indian Community. "As such, our Tribal Council has

authorized another two weeks payroll funding for all employees at our enterprises."

"Words cannot express how grateful we are to the Tribal Council for their generosity during this time," said Robert Livingston, general manager of Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino. "We have been evaluating our re-opening protocols and putting in place social distancing measures that will be deployed once we are open. To know our teams are taken care of financially for another two weeks is a tribute to the importance the Council places on all its tribal employees."

For Harrah's employees, the Tribe's approved funding also covers health insurance benefits for those employees currently enrolled in Caesars' benefit plans throughout the temporary closure.



Pictured above, potatoes are blossoming in a field south of the main tribal office, while at right, cotton sprouts and at far right pecans begin to bud.



Ak-Chin lends a helping hand to Havasupai

The Ak-Chin Indian Community has always been known for their generosity, especially in times like these, where they have extended payroll for its community, casino and family entertainment employees, as well as providing food and supplies to its membership.

Not only have they stepped up to assist their employees and members in time of need, they recently extended a helping hand to the Havasupai Tribe, which is located deep in the heart of the Grand Canyon.

Havasupai, which relies heavily on their tourism enterprise, had fallen on hard times, as they were unable to obtain feed for the mules and horses that are used to ride down into the Grand Canyon and also for the mail delivery.

"On Saturday March 21, I was contacted by a friend of mine from the Hopi Tribe," shared Gabriel Lopez, Ak-Chin Vice-Chairman. "He informed me that Havasupai Tribe was in need of feed for their Horses and Mules due to the Corona Virus... Because of the Pandemic, the Tribe had to shut down their Tourism Enterprise, which greatly effects their economy and revenue that helps feed their families and livestock, via mule and horseback riding down into the Grand Canyon and also US Mail.

Vice-Chairman Lopez was soon contacted by Havasupai Vice-Chairman, Matthew Putesoy, Sr. and they began discussing Supai's situation. Putesoy asked if Ak-Chin could donate or provide a discount on alfalfa.

Continued on page 2.

Bren's Bike Ride



This mother-daughter team of Teresa Masaquaptewa-Valisto and daughter Bren Valisto have been enjoying great moments together, like this one recently shared on Facebook. "Had a nice afternoon stroll with Bren. Then she wanted me to give her a ride on her bike."

Community receives dry goods distribution



On April 23rd, Ak-Chin Council members and department employees handed out over 300 bags of flour, beans and rice to Community homes.

Those who live off the reservation can pick up their dry goods on Saturday, May 2, at the Ak-Chin Service Center, from 7 am - 12 pm.

For questions, call 520-568-1000.

Runner's Chris Picciuolo shares down time during COVID-19 quarantine

During the quarantine I have stayed quite busy while making sure to take extra careful precautions for the health of my family and the Community.

I have often gone on nature walks with my camera and taken videos and photographs of nature like animals, the moon and sunset, the mountains and wildflowers.

During the pandemic I also moved to a new apartment in Mesa, which provided me plenty of exercise moving heavy furniture and storage bins.

As for continuing my hobbies, I bought a used MicroKorg synthesizer and have been making electronic music at night whenever I have time.

I also built a new raised garden bed for all of my native seeds. Gardening has been keeping me sane while couped up inside.

My wife Sarah and I got a good deal on some original artwork by our favorite artist, Brazilian painter Ozz Franca, and have been hanging the works up around the new place.

Sarah works as a librarian for the City of Mesa and is working from home for the Mesa Cares call center, which provides residents with resources like health info, senior hours for shopping, and



To get out of the house while practicing social distancing I walked along a trail at Userly Mountain Park, saw the mysterious Superstition Mountains in the background and had to take a snapshot of the moment.

where to find essentials. I have volunteered my time to help and call local businesses asking to allow posters at entrances for Mesa Cares.

During this stay at home order I have also spent time researching stories that might benefit the Ak-Chin Indian Community and the newsletter. We have been doing all right, but I look forward to getting back to work in the Community. I really miss the O'odham language classes and helping to tell the stories of the Community.

Below are a few ideas Chris wanted to share with the Community. If you would like to share how you and your family are staying healthy and busy during this time please feel free to send us your information, selfie/photo to runnernews@ak-chin.nsn.us

During quarantine I built a new raised garden bed specifically for native seeds. My next goal is to plant the seeds, which include: cowpea, amaranth, beans, squash and various herbs during spring before planting summer varieties.



While taking photos of nature near Tonto National Forest I looked up and noticed a hawk circling for prey and zoomed in to catch it flying past the moon, which was in waxing gibbous phase.



"I informed Vice Chairman Putesoy that I certainly understood their situation, and the effects that the Corona Virus has caused all over Indian Country. This Pandemic has caused hardship with tribes that rely on the Tourism, which boosts their economy, and in return provided the resources to the tribe." Lopez shared.

He then informed Vice-Chairman Putesoy that he would forward his request to the Community Council for support as well as talk with the Farm Manager, and then requested Putesoy to submit a formal request.

The request was approved at the March 31, Farm Board meeting,

and a total of 480 three wire bales were donated to the Havasupai Tribe.

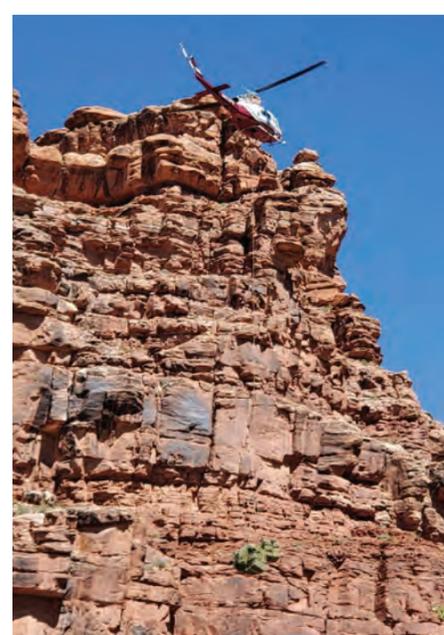
There were a few hiccups getting the pick-up and delivery set up, but it was all worked out.

The alfalfa was delivered on Tuesday, April 14 by CG Commodities Trucking to Hill Top on the Rim of the Canyon and placed in cargo nets, which were then flown down to Havasupai via helicopter.

There were many helping hands behind the scenes, including Ak-Chin Council and Farms, Abbie Fink with HMA, Kellye Pinkleton, Senior State Director, Arizona Humane Society, Havasupai Council and

tribal members. Pinkleton shared this to Vice-Chairman Putesoy via email, "On behalf of HSUS, I was honored to be a part of this effort with you, Abbie and the additional partners. I know that hay has been desperately needed for equines in the village and hope this provides some relief for the animals and owners. This is yet another example of how positive outcomes occur when we work together in partnership and friendship."

Vice Chairman Putesoy Sr. also shared his gratitude as he, "Thanks the Ak-Chin Council and Ak-Chin Farm Board on the generous donation, this really helps a lot."



Children are not immune to stress.

That's why it's important to keep an eye on their mental and emotional health.

Complete health care coverage supports the mind and spirit with the same care as physical health.

Contact your local Indian health care provider for more information, visit [Healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov), or call 1-800-318-2596.





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The "Runner" is delivered to all residents and departments of the Ak-Chin Indian Community, as well as surrounding community businesses, interested groups and subscribers.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS
Announcements and wishes may be phoned in, faxed or e-mailed.

ARTWORK, LETTERS, STORIES
The Ak-Chin O'odham Runner is a Community Newspaper and encourages Community involvement.

If you have artwork, photos, poems or a great story that you would like to share, please contact us so we can include it in "YOUR" newspaper.

Also, if you have suggestions or comments about "YOUR" newspaper, let the Runner Staff know that too.

All submitted letters MUST be signed by the author and are limited to 200 words. Authors must also include their name, address, and phone number. Names can be omitted by request. Anonymous submissions will not be accepted.

We reserve the right to edit all submitted material for clarity, grammar and good taste. All submissions should be received as typed or non-cursive writing. Please do not submit UPPERCASE or formatted paragraphs.

Submitted pictures need a return address and brief description. Pictures with no address will remain on file. Allow 2 weeks for return.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE
2020 Subscription rate is \$33.75. If you would like to receive the "Runner" by mail, please send a \$33.75 check/money order to:

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DEADLINE
Don't forget the DEADLINE for the MAY 15 - JUNE 4, 2020 issue is due by **FRIDAY, MAY 8TH**

Please submit all announcements, wishes, etc. no later than **FRIDAY, MAY 8TH**

Material submitted after the **MAY 8TH DEADLINE** cannot be guaranteed placement. If appropriate and relevant, it will be included in the next issue.



Temperatures are starting to rise

We've had such great weather lately, not too hot or too cold, a blessing to those who have been stuck at home; working on home improvement projects, enjoying the outdoors with kids, spring cleaning and gardening.

The heat is coming, the triple-digit kind, and what that means for all us Southern Arizonans is that its time to stay cool, especially with everything else going on right now.

Tips from the CDC for Preventing Heat-Related Illness:

STAY COOL
Wear Appropriate Clothing: Choose lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.

Stay Cool Indoors: Stay in an air-conditioned place as much as possible. If your home does not have air conditioning, go to the shopping mall or public library—even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help your body stay cooler when you go back into the heat. Call your local health department to see if there are any heat-relief shelters in your area.

- Keep in mind: Electric fans may provide comfort, but when the temperature is in the high 90s, they will not prevent heat-related illness. Taking a cool shower or bath or moving to an air-conditioned place is a much better way to cool off. Use your stove and oven less to maintain a cooler temperature in your home.

Schedule Outdoor Activities Carefully: Try to limit your outdoor activity to when it's coolest, like morning and evening hours. Rest often in shady areas so that your body has a chance to recover.

Pace Yourself: Cut down on exercise during the heat. If you're not accustomed to working or exercising in a hot environment, start slowly and pick up the pace gradually. If exertion in the heat makes your heart pound and leaves you gasping for breath, STOP all activity. Get into a cool area or into the shade, and rest, especially if you become lightheaded, confused, weak, or faint.

Wear Sunscreen: Sunburn affects your body's ability to cool down and can make you dehydrated. If you must go outdoors, protect yourself from the sun by wearing a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, and by putting on sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher 30 minutes prior to going out. Continue to reapply it according to the package directions.

- **Tip:** Look for sunscreens that say "broad spectrum" or "UVA/UVB protection" on their labels- these products work best.

Do Not Leave Children in Cars: Cars can quickly heat up to dangerous temperatures, even with a window cracked open. While anyone left in a parked car is at risk, children are especially at risk of getting a heat stroke or dying. When traveling with children, remember to do the following:

- Never leave infants, children or pets in a parked car, even if the windows are cracked open.
- To remind yourself that a child is in the car, keep a stuffed animal in the car seat. When the child is buckled in, place the stuffed animal in the front with the driver.
- When leaving your car, check to be sure everyone is out of the car. Do not overlook any children who have fallen asleep in the car.

Avoid Hot and Heavy Meals: They add heat to your body!

STAY HYDRATED
Drink Plenty of Fluids: Drink more fluids, regardless of how active you are. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink.

- **Warning:** If your doctor limits the amount you drink or has you on water pills, ask how much you should drink while the weather is hot.
- **Stay away from very sugary or alcoholic drinks—** these actually cause you to lose more body fluid. Also avoid very cold drinks, because they can cause stomach cramps.

Replace Salt and Minerals: Heavy sweating removes salt and minerals from the body that need to be replaced. A sports drink can replace the salt and minerals you lose in sweat.

- If you are on a low-salt diet, have diabetes, high blood pressure, or other chronic conditions, talk with your doctor before drinking a sports beverage or taking salt tablets.

Keep Your Pets Hydrated: Provide plenty of fresh water for your pets, and leave the water in a shady area.

STAY INFORMED
Check for Updates: Check your local news for extreme heat alerts and safety tips and to learn about any cooling shelters in your area.

Know the Signs: Learn the signs and symptoms of heat-related illnesses and how to treat them.

Use a Buddy System: When working in the heat, monitor the condition of your co-workers and have someone do the same for you. Heat-induced illness can cause a person to become confused or lose consciousness. If you are 65 years of age or older, have a friend or relative call to check on you twice a day during a heat wave. If you know someone in this age group, check on them at least twice a day.

Monitor Those at High Risk: Although anyone at any time can suffer from heat-related illness, some people are at greater risk than others:

- Infants and young children
- People 65 years of age or older
- People who are overweight
- People who overexert during work or exercise
- People who are physically ill, especially with heart disease or high blood pressure, or who take certain medications, such as for depression, insomnia, or poor circulation

Visit adults at risk at least twice a day and closely watch them for signs of heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Infants and young children, of course, need much more frequent watching.



Empty parking lots are a rare sight at Ak-Chin Circle, Multi-tainment Center and Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino. Both Ak-Chin enterprises have been closed since March 19, 2020, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The closures are tentatively in effect until May 14, 2020.



SHOW UPDATES at The Events Center Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino

Please note: the Gary Allan show scheduled for April 3rd at The Events Center at Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino has been **rescheduled** to Friday, October 9th, 2020. Tickets for the original date will be valid for the rescheduled date. Refunds available at the point of purchase for those ticket buyers unable to attend the new date.

Please note: Rob Lowe: Stories I Only Tell My Friends LIVE scheduled for May 22 has been postponed. More information will be provided as soon as it is available. Ticketholders should retain their tickets until a new date is announced.

Please note: the Kevin James show scheduled for May 30, 2020 at The Events Center at Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino has been **cancelled** due to the current COVID-19 crisis. All tickets for the May 30 show have been automatically refunded from the original point of sale.

Please note: Martina McBride scheduled for June 12 has been postponed. More information will be provided as soon as it is available. Ticketholders should retain their tickets until a new date is announced.

Please note: Ken Jeong scheduled for July 10 has been postponed. More information will be provided as soon as it is available. Ticketholders should retain their tickets until a new date is announced.

Please note: Chris D'Elia has been rescheduled to Saturday, November 28, 2020. Updated Presale/On Sale timeline to follow once available, as this show is not yet on sale.

Please note: Josh Turner will be rescheduling his performance; no date has been determined. More information will be provided as soon as it is available. Ticketholders should retain their tickets until a new date is announced.

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HEALTH ALERT

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

It is important to know that the risk of contracting COVID-19 is low. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends taking preventive measures.

IMPORTANT REMINDER!

Disinfectants are not to be ingested or injected into the body as a method for combating COVID-19.

We at **Gila River Health Care** wish for all our patients to know that it is never appropriate to ingest or inject a disinfectant or household cleaner. Please use these products as intended – to clean a surface such as a countertop or a bathroom fixture. To do otherwise can cause grave injury or death.

If you or someone you know has ingested a cleaner or disinfectant, please seek emergency medical care immediately. To learn more about how to clean and disinfect your home correctly, go to grhc.org/coronavirus.



Gila River Health Care's Virtual Care Now Available at Ak-Chin Clinic

Schedule your virtual appointment, by calling (520) 568-3881.

PREVENT THE SPREAD OF COVID-19



Why should I wear a facemask?

A: This can help keep you and your loved ones safer and low the spread of COVID-19.

When should I wear a facemask?

A: When you go out in public, especially in places like grocery stores, the post office, or to pick up a prescription at a pharmacy.

Does wearing a mask mean it is safe for me to be closer than 6 feet to other people in the Community?

A: NO! Masks have been shown to decrease the distance the virus can travel person to person but is not a substitute for proper physical distancing.

What should the mask be made of?

A: 100% cotton or denim material is easy to get and make.

Is there someone in my family who should NOT wear a mask?

A: Children under 2 years old and people who cannot remove the mask themselves or have trouble breathing should not wear masks.

Is there a right or wrong way to wear a mask, how should I wear it?

A: Yes, the mask should fit snugly but comfortably against the outside of the face. It should cover the nose, around the sides of the face and under the chin. Think of it as creating a good seal around this area so that little to no air comes in around the edges of the mask.

If there are germs collecting on the mask, how do I take it off and what do I do with it after I use it?

A: Just be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when taking off the mask and put it in a regular washing machine. WASH YOUR HANDS after removing it.

For general info about Coronavirus, go to GRHC.org/Coronavirus

**GRHC CORONAVIRUS HOTLINE
(520) 550-6079**



Reminder

MEMORIAL DAY CLOSURE

Gila River Health Care's Administrative Offices and Outpatient Clinics will be

CLOSED MONDAY, MAY 25, 2020