



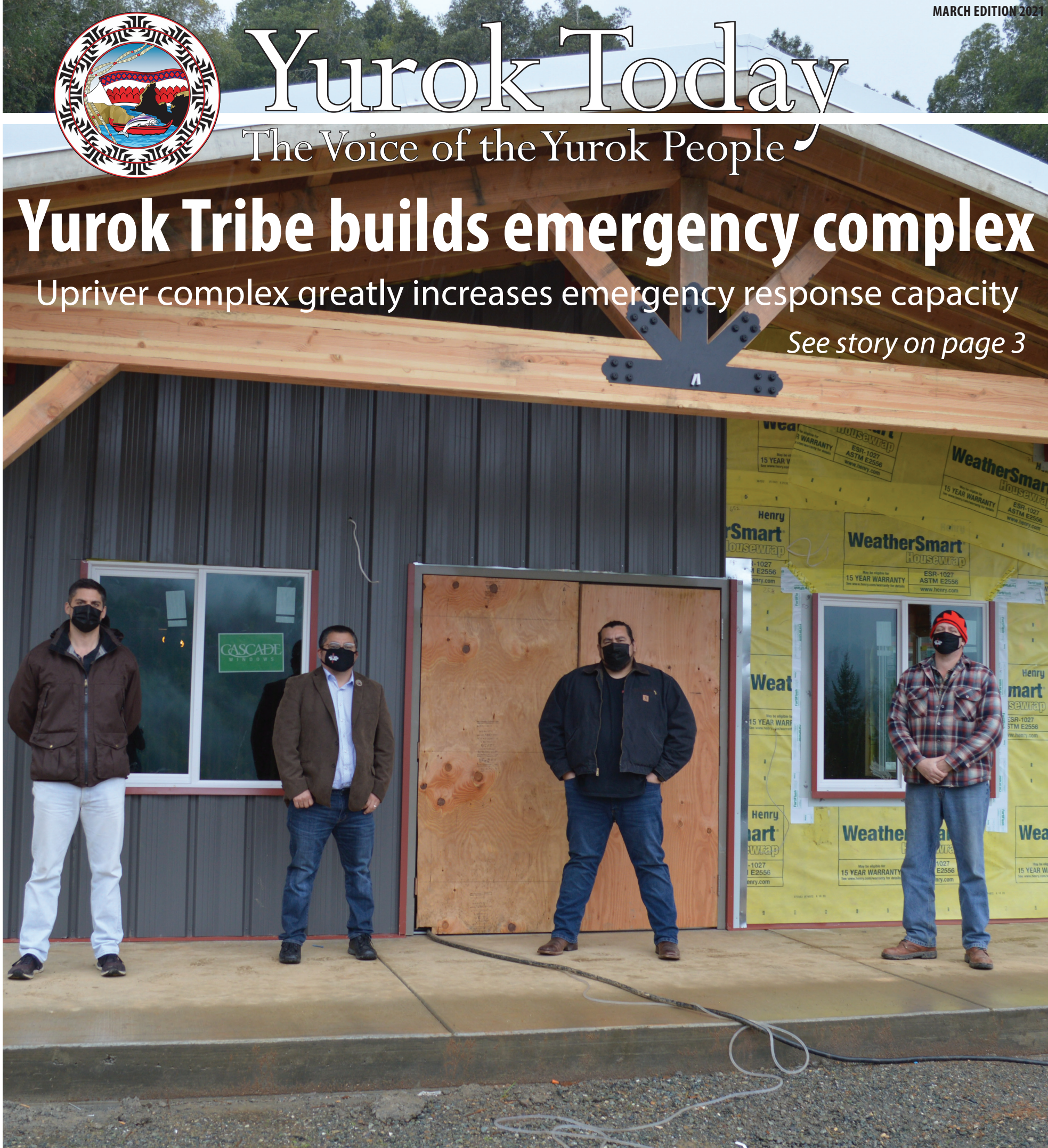
Yurok Today

The Voice of the Yurok People

Yurok Tribe builds emergency complex

Upriver complex greatly increases emergency response capacity

See story on page 3





MARCH 2021 PUBLIC NOTICES



COURT NOTICE

The Yurok Office of the Tribal Attorney (OTA) has filed a complaint against the unknown owner(s) of a gill net that were seized by the Yurok Tribal Police Department (YTPD) from Klamath River at Omgar on the afternoon of Tuesday, May 20, 2020. The gill net is about 10 ft in length, has a white and black cork line, and is unmarked. OTA has requested that a hearing be set in Yurok Tribal Court for May of 2021. If you believe this net is yours and wish to claim ownership and participate in the hearing: you can receive a copy of the complaint and further information about remote attendance at the hearing by contacting the Office of Tribal of Attorney for the Yurok Tribe at (707) 482-1350. Please be advised that the owner(s) of this net may be subject to sanctions by the Yurok Tribal Court for violations of Yurok law.

**STOP
COVID-19
GET VACCINATED**

It is Our RESPONSIBILITY

The Yurok Tribe is now moving into the next stage of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The new phase is focused on making vaccines readily available to Yurok citizens, starting with tribal elders. The elderly will be followed by those with pre-existing medical conditions, frontline workers and traditional culture bearers. As the vaccine is gradually dispersed, all are encouraged to continue to employing all of the personal safety measures, such as wearing a mask in public, practicing physical distancing and avoiding large gatherings. The Yurok community is doing a fantastic job of preventing the spread of COVID-19. Please consider getting vaccinated and keep up the excellent work.

PLEASE STAY SAFE AND HEALTHY

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On The Cover

(Left) Acting Planning Director Michael Gerace, Yurok Chairman Joseph L. James, Vice Chair Frankie Myers and Weitchpec District Representative Toby Vanlandingham tour the Tulley Creek Emergency Services Complex. Photo by Tara Offins

First responder buildings nearly done

Tribe builds new police station, HQ for firefighters and emergency staff

The Yurok Tribe is nearly finished with the construction of two centrally located buildings for the tribal police, firefighters and emergency operations staff serving the upriver side of the reservation.

“The much-needed Tulley Creek emergency services complex will significantly increase our capacity to respond to the COVID-19 crisis,” said Joseph L. James, the Chairman of the Yurok Tribe. “For the first time, we will have a satellite police station and a Yurok Office of Emergency Services office on the upper half of the reservation. In addition to putting us in a stronger position to confront COVID, this will greatly reduce response times and improve coordination in the event of a catastrophic incident, such as a forest fire. Also, the new facilities are large enough to support the expansion of the Yurok Fire Department, YOES and Police Department, all of which are currently growing at a rapid rate.”

“These new buildings will provide a proper base of operations for our professional team of first responders, who are on the frontlines of the effort to combat this crisis. The Yurok Fire Department, Yurok OES and the tribal police play a major part in our response to COVID-19,” said Toby Vanlandingham, the Weitchpec District Representative on the Yurok Tribal Council. “The new infrastructure will serve the community in the present and for many decades to come.”

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act-funded project, located on the hill above the Tulley Creek Fire and Fitness Center, is comprised of two separate buildings. The top structure will house the Yurok Fire Department and the Yurok Office of Emergency Services. The 10,946 square-foot facility contains the following components: an emergency operations center, eight offices, four bays for fire engines, kitchen, weight



This 10,946 square-foot building will be shared by the Yurok Fire Department and Yurok OES.

room, training room, reception area, laundry room and two bathrooms including showers. The Yurok Tribal Police will operate out of the lower building. The secure police station contains the following elements: two private office spaces, one shared office, interview room, a meeting room, a workout area, a breakroom and a reception area. The building also has a bunk room that sleeps eight and a covered parking lot for equipment.

Currently, the only Yurok Tribal Police office is located in Klamath, which is about an hour and half drive from the upper end of the reservation. The new office will enable the police department to permanently place officers upriver, where they will be able to quickly respond to calls for service.

Until the Tribe hired a full-time Public Health Officer earlier this year, Yurok OES managed the Tribe’s coordinated response to COVID-19 and remains an integral of the team. Yurok OES

"THE MUCH-NEEDED TULLEY CREEK EMERGENCY SERVICES COMPLEX WILL SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE OUR CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS."

- JOSEPH L. JAMES, CHAIRMAN OF THE YUROK TRIBE

facilitated the administration of COVID-19 tests and vaccines on the reservation. The tribal entity also orchestrated the delivery of emergency food boxes and secured literal tons of Personal Protective Equipment for the tribal community. Yurok OES also supervised the distribution of generators and other essential items. Presently, the department is splitting time between Klamath and Weitchpec, working out of offices made vacant by the pandemic, but will soon move into the Tulley Creek building. The Tribe is also building an emergency operations center in Klamath. When the Klamath command center is complete, there will be operational hubs on both sides of the reservation.

The Yurok Fire Department is also expanding at a swift pace. The Department recently hired five new permanent personnel, including a new Chief, and has outgrown its headquarters in the Tulley Creek Fire and Fitness Center. The tribal fire agency recently received a charter, which gives it the same status as every other professional tribal, federal and state fire outfit. The foundational document opens up several new opportunities to acquire funds that will be used to support additional growth. The Charter offers the department additional authorities too. For example, the department can now serve as a signatory on the annual operating plans of federal, state and local fire departments. Lastly, the charter guarantees that YFD leadership will have an equitable seat at the decision-making table when strategies are developed



Here is the first-ever upriver police station.

to defend lands on and near the Yurok Reservation from active wildfires.

The Yurok Fire crew has played an essential role during the COVID-19 pandemic. Tribal firefighters have delivered food boxes, generators and firewood to tribal elders living in Humboldt, Del Norte and Siskiyou Counties.

Tribe launches two new corporations

Talented tribal citizen returns home to run new construction firms

After she delivered the valedictorian speech at her Hoopa Valley High School graduation, Yurok citizen Pamela Ames left home with a plan to pursue an educational and professional path that she knew would lead her back to Yurok Country.

During the past decade, the Gates Millennium scholar completed a Bachelor's of Science in Construction Engineering Management degree at San Jose State University and acquired a position with a prominent corporate construction firm in the Bay Area, where she was immersed in every aspect of commercial building. Following a fast ascent up the corporate ladder, Ames was promoted to Senior Engineer and managed major projects, including the construction of hospitals and high-rise buildings. In January of this year, when the Yurok Tribal Council offered her a position overseeing Per-

Geesh and Prey-go-neesh, the Tribe's new construction firm and its subsidiary, she eagerly accepted the offer.

"My goal after high school was to further my education and gain the professional experience that would help me become an asset to my Tribe," Ames said. "From afar, I have followed the Tribe's success in infrastructure development and river restoration and I am excited to be a part of that growth. I am grateful to be home and working for my people."

The Tribe has been developing Per-Geesh and Prey-go-neesh since May of 2019. In the next few months, Per-Geesh will be registered with the US Small Business Administration's Tribal 8(a) Business Development Program, which will make it eligible to receive federal contracts for the types of largescale projects that fall

precisely within Ames' area of expertise.

"Pam has the ideal skillset to lead our new construction companies. She is literally the perfect person for this position," said Yurok Vice Chairman Frankie Myers, who has been cultivating this initiative on behalf of the Tribal Council for the last year and a half. "The construction firms will create many new opportunities for our members in the near future and for many decades to come."

Prior to accepting her dream job with the Tribe, Ames was a Senior Engineer and Senior Project Manager for the corporate construction firm Marelich Mechanical. At Marelich Mechanical, she managed numerous high-profile projects, including the construction of 434,000 square-foot hospital, Ghirardelli San Francisco Brewing Co and a 40-story luxury condominium complex.

"I am confident that my experience will enable me to successfully develop these construction corporations for the Yurok Tribe," Ames said.

The federal government's Small Business Administration's Tribal 8(a) Program was established to aggressively address poverty on reservations through economic development. To accomplish this objective, the program helps tribes launch new revenue-generating enterprises in construction and several other exciting industries. The entities enrolled in the 8(a) program, such as Per-Geesh, are then given preference in the federal procurement process. For example, tribal 8(a) businesses are eligible to receive sole-source federal contracts with no upper dollar limit.

"These new corporations represent an unprecedented platform to create good-paying jobs and subcontracting opportunities for our people and tribal-citizen business owners," said Joseph L. James, the Chairman of the Yurok Tribe. "The Yurok-owned contracting firms will complement our existing businesses and they will greatly enhance our economy for the foreseeable future."

Once Per-Geesh becomes a registered 8(a) contracting firm, the Business Development Program will work with the Tribe on forming additional contracting corporations in the desired professional sectors. In addition to construction, the Tribe is interested in developing 8(a) companies in the following fields: manufacturing, information services, technology, transportation, infrastructure, energy and special trades. The program will also provide technical assistance and training opportunities for the tribal workforce.



Pamela Ames left home to acquire and education and ample corporate experience. Ames recent returned home to run the Tribe's new construction companies.

While the Yurok Tribe will be one of only a few tribes in California to take advantage of the 8(a) Business Development Program, other tribal organizations outside the state have used the program to put their people to work performing meaningful, well-paying work.

For additional information, please visit: https://www.sba.gov/offices/headquarters/ogc_and_bd/resources/11498

Tribal homes receive internet for 1st time

Tribe celebrates major milestone in Yurok Connect Broadband Project

The Yurok Tribe recently celebrated a major milestone in the Yurok Connect Broadband Project.

On March 15, the Yurok Connect team finished the installation of a new 150-foot tower in Wautec and linked the first customers to the high-speed internet service. Located in the most remote part of the Yurok Reservation, the tower is providing first-time internet access to dozens of families and many tribal elders.

“Access to high-speed internet will significantly improve the everyday lives of Yurok citizens and non-Indian reservation residents,” said Joseph L. James, the Chairman of the Yurok Tribe. “This project will facilitate progress in several key areas, including, education, healthcare and economic development. When it comes to developing a prosperous community, internet access is just as important as the basic utilities.”

“This project is a long time coming,” said Mindy Natt, the Pecwan District Representative on the Yurok Tribal Council. “The Yurok Connect service will improve the quality of life on the reservation. It will benefit our youth, our elders and everyone in between.”

Launched in 2013 and administered by the Yurok IT Department, Yurok Connect is a Yurok Tribe-owned, wireless internet service provider. In addition to the tower in Wautec, a beautification and communications hut will be constructed around the site April however the tower is fully operational.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act-funded Yurok Connect Broadband Project will generate numerous positive outcomes. For example, it will greatly improve emergency communications on the reservation during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The Tribe will be able to spread out its workforce to keep its staff safe. Yurok Connect customers will be able to schedule telehealth appointments, rather than driving hours to the nearest doctor’s office. Students will be able to participate in online learning at home because of the high-speed service. Yurok business owners, entrepreneurs and artists will be able to engage in the global market. Parents of young children will be able to work from home. Extended families and close friends will be able to communicate over any number of platforms. These are just a few examples of how high-speed internet will strengthen the community and there are many more. The Yurok



Yurok Tribal Council Member Mindy Natt and her son Andrew James Lewis V attended the grand opening celebration. The Pecwan District Representative is excited about the new internet infrastructure and what it means for tribal youth and elders.

Reservation, located in far Northern California, is in one of the most technologically underserved parts of the state. The lack of reliable internet is a major disadvantage with respect to public health, education and economic development. That is why the Tribe decided to become of only a few wireless internet service providers in Indian Country.

Over the last eight months, the Yurok Information Technology Department and Yurok Connect Team, in partnership with EnerTribe, a Native American and woman-owned firm, have been working on re-engineering and building up existing Yurok tower sites and adding new towers to accommodate better broadband speeds. The towers were equipped with cutting-edge, superior quality hardware to support fast service for the long-term offering a 200% increase in backhaul speeds.

"We are extremely excited to participate in the monumental project. High speed and reliable internet are an essential component of all successful communities. Like water, the value can be truly seen in the way we use the resource, broadband is no different. The Wautec tower is but one piece or a much larger infrastructure project being carried out by the tribe. We are proud to play a role in bringing this essential service to Yurok Country," said EnerTribe CEO Forest James (no relation to Chairman James).

The paradigm-shifting Yurok Connect Broadband Project is now 75 percent complete and is expected to conclude in the next few months. When it's done, nearly all of the reservation will have access to dependably fast internet.

"We are quickly moving to the right side of the digital divide. I would like to thank the Yurok Team and EnerTribe for working so hard to make this project a reality," said Chairman James.

The construction of the Wautec tower was funded by the CARES Act and the Amateur Radio Digital Communications. In addition to the CARES funds, three separate organizations contributed to the rest of the project, including the Tribal Nations Grant Fund, US Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration and the California Public Utilities Commission.

Launched in 2013, Yurok Connect offers inexpensive broadband internet to individuals, Tribal offices as well as Tribally owned and private businesses. The Yurok IT Department built the whole, wireless internet system from the ground up. The wireless internet service provider is a self-sustaining business administered entirely by Yurok citizens.



(left) Yurok Chairman Joseph L. James, Pecwan District Representative Mindy Natt, Vice Chairman Frankie Myers and Requa District Representative Ryan Ray spoke about all of benefits associated with this historic project.



Yurok Connect Coordinator Duston Offins installs new equipment.

For current information about the Yurok Tribe's response to the COVID-19 crisis, please visit yurokoes.org or call 1-888-225-8952



THIS IS WHAT A RESTORAT



Yurok citizen Tiana Williams-Claussen is the Director of the Yurok Wildlife Program. The program will soon reintroduce the California condor to Yurok Country, where the critically endangered bird has been absent for more than a century.



Yurok Citizen Merle Stevenson, a Yurok Tribe Environmental Program Technician, studies the many different types of algae on the Klamath River.



Yurok citizen Amy Cordalis, an attorney, is a leader in the effort to remove four dams on the Klamath River. The historic river restoration project is slated to begin in 2023.



Yurok citizen Onna Joseph managed one of the teams that harvested native seeds that will be used to re-wild the landscape following the removal of the Klamath dams.

ION ECONOMY LOOKS LIKE



Yurok citizen Koiya Tuttle manages the Yurok Tribe Environmental Program's Pollution Prevention Division. The division is restoring green spaces and moving Tribe toward zero waste production .



Yurok citizen Rosie Clayburn is the Director of the Yurok Tribe's Cultural Division. She is intimately involved in the preservation and revitalization of traditional land management practices.



Yurok citizen Roger Boulby is a veteran watershed restorationist. Roger has led crews in restoring critical salmon habitat at many different sites on the Klamath River and the Sacramento River.



Yurok citizens Yadao Inong and Jamie Holt work for the Yurok Fisheries Department. They capture crucial data on the Klamath River salmon as well as other culturally important fish species.



Tribe mourns the loss of beloved elder

Aawok Howard White is the first local Yurok to pass from COVID-19

The Yurok Tribe extends its sincerest condolences to the family of beloved tribal elder, Aawok Howard White, who is the first Yurok citizen to pass away due to confirmed COVID-19-related complications.

“Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of Aawok Howard White,” said Joseph L. James the Chairman of the Yurok Tribe. “Our elders are our cultural knowledge keepers, historians and ceremonial leaders. We ask that everyone continue to be vigilant about practicing all of the personal safety measures. It is up to all of us to prevent the spread of COVID-19.”

Born in 1952, Aawok Howard White was raised in Orick, which was a bustling timber town in his youth. His parents were Francis Coleman “Beeb” White and Barbara Dean White. The McKinleyville High School graduate worked in several different fields, which complimented his love for the outdoors. He first worked on the ocean as a longshoreman. Later, he acquired jobs with logging companies and the US Forest Service. Like many Yurok men of that era, Aawok Howard was a talented boxer and won many local matches. A father of two, he and his former wife Ruby regularly took their children to visit their great grandmother Aawok Eunice White who lived in an old house above the mouth of Redwood Creek in Orick. He also took his children to South Dakota to see the Sun Dance. In retirement, the tribal elder spent much of his time at the Cher-Ae Heights Casino, where all of the staff knew him by name. Many members of the local tribes are mourning the passing of the esteemed elder, who is one of too many Native Americans to be lost to the COVID-19 crisis.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Yurok Tribe has assumed an aggressive approach toward addressing the many different aspects of the pandemic. The Yurok Tribal Council issued a proactive emergency declaration on March 13, 2020, which mobilized the Yurok incident management team to respond to the crisis. Prioritizing elders and individuals with preexisting medical issues, the emergency response team has provided and continues to offer the tribal community many different forms of assistance, ranging from free distance learning devices to emergency food boxes. The Tribe has also made COVID-19 tests available multiple times per week at two sites on the reservation. Concurrently, tribal leaders are working with United Indian Health Services to get the vaccine to everyone over 50 years old as well as frontline workers and traditional culture bearers.


“The tribal government is doing everything possible to keep our elders and our community safe,” said Frankie Myers, the Yurok Tribe’s Vice Chairman. “We encourage everyone to practice physical distancing, avoid large gatherings and wear a mask in public. We are all responsible for protecting those who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.”

The Yurok Reservation has many of the same demographics as the tribal nations that have been devastated by the fast-spreading illness, including a large population of people who suffer from serious health issues. Health experts, such as the CDC, have pointed to a longstanding disparity in federal healthcare funding as the primary cause of pandemic’s disproportionate impact in Indian Country. Compared to white people, tribal citizens are 3.7 times more likely to be hospitalized as a result of the illness. To date, there have been a total of 21 verified COVID-19 cases on the Yurok Reservation. Aawok Howard White resided off of the reservation in Orick.

COVID-19 Response Summary

Knowing before the crisis started that 60 percent of the reservation population is comprised of elders and individuals with underlying health issues, the Tribe has continuously employed a proactive strategy toward mitigating the many facets of the crisis. During the last 11 months, the Tribe has successfully confronted the health, social, economic and education-related challenges associated with the emergency. For example, the Tribe distributed top quality distance-learning tools, including, tablets and all-in-one printers, to students between the age of 2 and 17. \$1,750 in emergency funds were sent to eligible Tribal adults who were laid off or lost income because of the pandemic. The Tribal Council invested Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act funding in a forgivable grant program, which served nearly 200 Yurok business owners and vendors. The Tribe delivered thousands of food boxes to tribal elders living in Humboldt, Del Norte and Trinity Counties. Currently, the Tribe is supplying elders with firewood as well as a month’s supply of face coverings and hand sanitizer.

Yurok Health and Human Services, in collaboration with the Yurok Office of Emergency Services and other tribal departments, performs regular check-ins with tribal elders. YHHS also conducted a survey to identify the needs of the elderly and persons with chronic illnesses. The survey illuminated an urgent need for generators to keep medical



equipment running during power outages. Late last year, the Tribe delivered generators to the homes of all Yurok elders in Northern California and Southern Oregon and is now bringing power-producing devices to tribal seniors who live outside of the region.

Earlier this month, the Tribe appointed a permanent Public Health Officer and hired Regional Administrator, who are tasked with overseeing the response to COVID-19 and developing the first Yurok Health Department. Additionally, the Tribe is building an innovative

emergency operations center in Klamath.

Lastly, the Tribe purchased agriculture properties in Klamath and near Weitchpec. These acquisitions will increase access to organically grown produce and will resolve an enduring food security issue. Making fresh fruits and vegetables more widely available is another way that the Tribe is working to improve health outcomes on and near the Reservation for the long term.

YEDC puts on webinars for biz owners

Webinars aim to help tribal biz owners open up new opportunities

The Yurok Economic Development Corporation (YEDC) and the U.S. Commercial Service are putting on a series of webinars to help tribal business owners and entrepreneurs grow their customer bases. The two organizations recently hosted the Globalize Your Website webinar. The purpose of the live-streamed skill-building event was to teach rural and Native American business owners how to expand their online presence and participate in the global market via e-commerce.

Webinar participants learned the mechanics of promoting and selling merchandise on the international market. The webinar provided a roadmap for business owners to reach their target audience by using photos, videos and top Google ratings. The online seminar hosts also taught attendees about the documentation requirements and import regulations associated with international trade. Business owners and entrepreneurs also received information on the following: sales strategies, market intelligence, business matchmaking and commercial diplomacy.

There are many upsides for tribal business owners and entrepreneurs to engage in the global market.

What is website globalization?

Globalization is the process of making your website world ready or internationalized, localized and translated. The goal is to make the website functional and accessible to a global audience that is not limited to just a few countries or locations.

Why should you globalize your website?

- 60% of households worldwide have access to the internet
- 76% of households worldwide use a smart phone
- 75% research products online before visiting or buying
- 38% stop engaging if website is not attractive
- 39% leave a slow website or image lagging upload
- 44% leave a website over little or poor contact information

“YEDC is excited about our partnership with US Commercial Service. The pandemic has posed significant hurdles for small business owners and entrepreneurs and we want to help them get through this

challenging time,” said Sara Barbour, YEDC Deputy Director. “Business owners are having to shift business plans, think outside the box, and get creative to keep their businesses afloat.”

The Yurok Tribe has worked diligently to help small businesses, entrepreneurs and vendors get through the pandemic in a positive position. For example, YEDC manages Yurok Country Designs, which is an e-commerce site that Tribal members can market and sell their goods through. The Alliance CDFI puts on financial education classes online, and provides contacts to resources specific to business owners’ needs. YEDC has also partnered with North Coast Small Business Development Center (SBDC) on providing support and resources for business owners.

Last summer, the Yurok Tribal Council authorized the distribution of \$2 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) funding to help the many Yurok business owners and entrepreneurs that have experienced losses due to the global COVID-19 crisis. Enrollment in this economic recovery-focused program wasn’t restricted by business location or the size of the enterprise. Overseen by The Alliance CDFI staff, the program distributed approximately 200 grants to Yurok business owners and entrepreneurs.

The next webinar in this series is called International Market Research & Growing Your Global Brand: A Webinar for Rural & Native American Firms. The webinar will be held on March 25, 2021 and you can register here: <https://bit.ly/2PSy98v>

“We greatly appreciate our new partnership with the US Commercial Service. Together, we were able to provide Tribal business owners and entrepreneurs with a blueprint for reaching a new customer base in the international market space. We look forward to bringing more trainings to our Tribal members in the near future,” concluded Sara Barbour, YEDC Deputy Director.

The free Globalize Your Website webinar was a joint effort between, the Yurok Economic Development Corporation, U.S. Commercial Service, Northern California Indian Development Council and the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association.

Yurok Tribe partially reopens Head Start

Eureka Head Start reopens at 25 percent, Klamath and Kepel sites to follow

The Yurok Tribe is pleased to announce the partial reopening of the Head Start and Early Head Start in Eureka. The Aawok Bonnie Green South Operations Site facility is now open at 25 percent capacity.

“We are extremely pleased to be on the path back to normal operations. It is a good day,” said Jim McQuillen, the Yurok Tribe’s Education Director. “Our amazing team and our partners put in ton of work to get us here. I would like to sincerely thank everyone who contributed to the reopening. I would also like to give a special thanks all of our teachers and support staff. We are very grateful for their dedication to creating a strong educational foundation for our children.”

Prior to the reopening, the United Indian Health Services offered vaccinations to all of the Yurok Head Start and Early Head Start staff. To further minimize risks, the Education Department and the Yurok Public Health Officer developed a detailed plan to keep students and staff safe. Before class begins each day, temperature and health checks are performed on students and staff. All of the classrooms have been reconfigured to prevent the potential spread of the illness. For example, there are clear plastic barriers that separate children in their work areas. All are practicing physical distancing, wearing masks and washing hands regularly. The Education Department has also hired fulltime cleaning staff to sanitize the facilities at the end of each day.

Currently, Humboldt County is in the red tier of the state’s COVID-19 chart. This tier is less stringent and allows for in-person classes.

Additionally, the Education Department hopes to partially resume operations at the Head Starts in Klamath and Kepel soon. An announcement will be made on this page when the facilities reopen.



WE ARE EXTREMELY PLEASED TO BE ON THE PATH BACK TO NORMAL OPERATIONS.

- JIM MCQUILLEN, YUROK EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR

Yurok citizen, Tribal Judge sworn in

Associate Judge William D. Bowers presides over Wellness Court cases

In early March, Yurok Chairman Joseph L. James swore in William D. Bowers as an Associate Judge for the Yurok Tribal Court. Judge Bowers, a Yurok citizen and traditional culture bearer, presides over Yurok Wellness Court cases involving adults and families. The restorative justice-based Wellness Court provides culturally centered services to non-violent offenders who are struggling with substance abuse. The court's multidisciplinary team offers clients the tools and support they need to live a healthy life and reintegrate into the community.

"I love working for the Wellness Court because every member of our team has a heart of gold. They also embody the highest professional standards," Judge Bowers said. "We approach each case with compassion and respect. It doesn't matter if it's the client's first time trying to get clean or if it's their tenth attempt, we treat everyone with dignity and we are here to do whatever it takes for as long as it takes to help the individual turn their life around."

Judge Bowers is also especially impressed with how the Tribal Court quickly adapted in response to the constraints associated with the COVID-19 crisis. At the beginning of the pandemic, the Wellness Court altered its operations to ensure the safety of its staff and clients, while keeping the tribal justice system moving at its usual rapid pace.

"I am so proud of how we handled this new reality. We are using a number of different platforms to stay connected with clients, who continue to receive best-quality services from the court," Judge Bowers said.

After the swearing-in ceremony, Judge Bowers gave a special thanks to Yurok Chief Judge Abby Abinanti, who is responsible for developing the fast-growing court, which is a model throughout Indian Country.

"In my 30 years as public servant, I have never worked with someone as smart, hardworking and talented as Judge Abinanti," Judge Bowers said. "It is an exciting time to be working for the



(right) Yurok Chairman Joseph L. James swore in Associate Judge William D. Bowers.

Tribal Court. Under her leadership, we are increasing our capacity to serve the community in many different ways."

Judge Bowers has worked for the court since December of 2018. He first applied for the judgeship after working with youth and families in Oregon for 30 years. The former caseworker and parole/probation officer was one of the first Indian Child Welfare Act advocates in State of Oregon.

In addition to Bowers' extensive professional experience, he brings to the position an equally immense understanding of the Tribe's culture. For his entire life, he has been closely involved in organizing the Tribe's sacred ceremonies. During his youth, he spent ample time with tribal elders learning about the Tribe's history and lifeway. An intimate understanding of tribal traditions is a requirement for serving as a judge within the culturally focused Yurok Tribal Court.

I LOVE WORKING FOR THE WELLNESS COURT BECAUSE EVERY MEMBER OF OUR TEAM HAS A HEART OF GOLD.

- WILLIAM D. BOWERS, ASSOCIATE JUDGE FOR THE YUROK TRIBAL COURT

Judge Abinanti joins nonprofit board

Accomplished Yurok Judge brings focus to rural, native justice issues

BAYSIDE, CA —Chief Judge Abby Abinanti of the Yurok Tribe, a longtime advocate for the creation of tribal value-based tribal justice systems, is the newest board member for Humboldt Area Foundation (HAF).

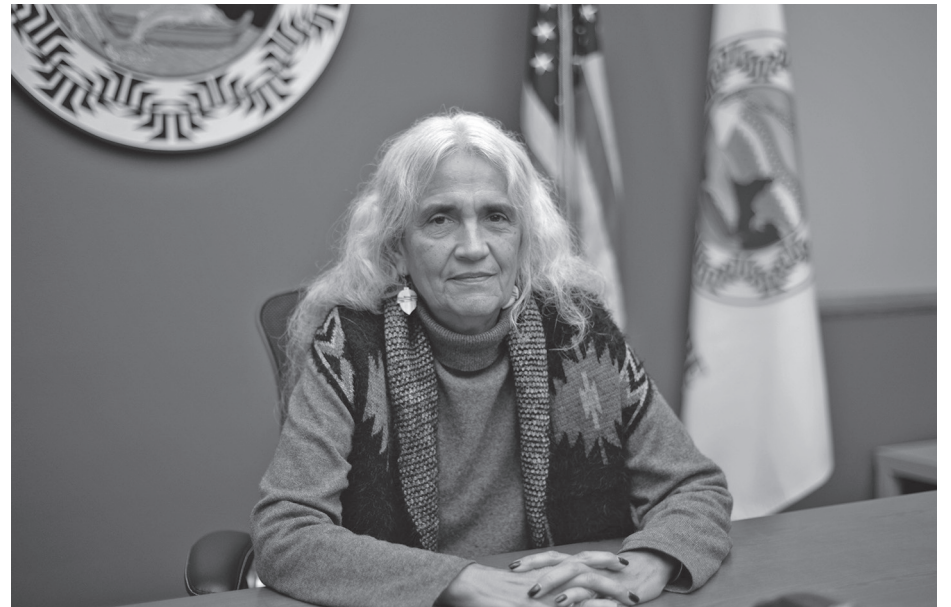
"We are beyond thrilled to have Judge Abby join the Humboldt Area Foundation's board," says Mary Keehn, chairperson of the HAF board. "Her experience with state and tribal justice systems and her unique approach to community building are going to be tremendous assets as we move forward with the board's strategic vision. This will be a great benefit for our communities and a big step toward uniting the broad region Humboldt Area Foundation serves."

Abinanti built the Yurok Tribal Court and its many programs from the ground up. Rooted in traditional cultural values, the cutting-edge court seeks to provide justice and life-changing services to people often failed by the conventional criminal justice system. A retired San Francisco Superior Court Commissioner and lifelong supporter of Native American rights, Abinanti is currently the Chief Justice of the Yurok Tribal Court and a Judge for Joint Family Wellness Courts in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. In these roles, she has positively influenced the lives of many local community members.

"First, I want to thank everyone on the Humboldt Area Foundation's board for their kind welcome. I am looking forward to working with the board to imagine new ways to support all members of our community. I am excited to begin taking actions that benefit our shared communities for the long term," says Abinanti.

Del Norte County resident and HAF board member David Finigan said Abinanti's background is ideal for the board's strategic objectives.

"Her experience in the Del Norte County region and Tribal Lands are sure to bolster the Foundation's mission of leadership and inclusion," said Finigan, who is also a board member for Wild Rivers Community Foundation, an affiliate of HAF. "I look forward to working with her to address vital community issues."



Yurok Chief Justice Abby Abinanti was selected to serve on the Humboldt Area Foundation Board.

About Judge Abinanti

Abby Abinanti, Yurok Chief Judge, is an enrolled Yurok Tribal member. She holds a Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University of New Mexico School of Law and was the first California tribal woman to be admitted to the State Bar of California. She was a State Judicial Officer (Commissioner) for the San Francisco Superior Court for over 17 years, assigned to the Unified Family Court (Family/Dependency/Delinquency).

Abinanti retired from the Superior Court in September 2011 and, on July 31, 2014, was reappointed as a part-time Commissioner for San Francisco assigned to Dependency, and Duty Judge for that Court, where she served until 2015. She has been a Yurok Tribal Court Judge since 1997 and was appointed Chief Tribal Court Judge in 2007, a position she held in conjunction with her Superior Court assignment until 2015.

About Humboldt Area Foundation

Vera Vietor established the Humboldt Area Foundation in 1972. Since then, more than \$80 million in grants and scholarships have been awarded in Humboldt, Del Norte, Curry, and Trinity Counties. Humboldt Area Foundation promotes and encourages generosity, leadership, and inclusion to strengthen our communities.

For more information on services provided by the Foundation, please visit the Humboldt Area Foundation website at hafoundation.org or call (707) 442-2993.

Resources for Yurok military veterans

Presumptive Conditions due to Exposure to Agent Orange Expanded

On January 1, 2021 Congress voted to authorize the expansion of the presumptive conditions associated with Agent Orange. This expansion allows for bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson's-like symptoms to be added to the presumptive list, thereby lowering the threshold required for veterans with these conditions to be found to have them service-connected.

While the bill authorizing the expansion has become law, the Department of Veterans Affairs will need time to finalize internal regulations. While this takes place, veterans and their families interested in applying under the expanded list should begin locating copies of their medical records.

If you're a Vietnam Veteran or the family member of one and would like to submit a new claim regarding any of the existing or the newly added conditions, please contact your nearest Veterans Service Officer: <https://www.va.gov/find-locations>.

Learn more about eligibility for Agent Orange Disability here: <https://www.va.gov/disability/eligibility/hazardous-materials-exposure/agent-orange/>.

Military Observances

March 13 - K 9 Veterans Day

A national effort to make March 13 K9 Veterans Day. March 13, 1942 is

the official birthday of the United States K9 Corps, and so it seems only right to annually honor their service on that date. They served to save, and they deserve to be remembered.

March 29 - Vietnam Veterans Day

A day set aside to show honor and respect to our Vietnam Veterans

April - Month of the Military Child

An opportunity to recognize military children and youth for their heroism, character, courage, sacrifices and continued resilience.

April 5, 2020 - Gold Star Wives Day

In 2013, the U.S. Senate designated April 5 as Gold Wives Day in recognition of the sacrifices made by spouses and family members of our fallen heroes.

Attention Veterans and Active Duty Military! Do we have your current address? We'll be sending out a Veterans Newsletter and other important information that you don't want to miss! The Yurok Tribal Court's Veterans Wellness Coordinator is available to help veterans connect to resources for which they may be eligible. Contact Jessica Wolsfeld at (707) 951-5425 or jwolsfeld@yuroktribe.nsn.us.

Smoking worsens COVID-19 symptoms

By Amos Wright, Health Promotion and Education Specialist,
NATIVE Tobacco Project

United Indian Health Services' NATIVE Tobacco Project provides Education to the surrounding Tribal communities about tobacco use prevention, cessation methods and traditional tobacco use.

Are you still smoking or vaping this year during the global pandemic? The Stanford University School of Medicine recently shown new studies on how there is a relation to contracting COVID-19 with smoking and vape users. Smoking or vaping tobacco or cannabis products damages the lungs and harms the immune system, making your body weaker to fight diseases. Breathing in secondhand smoke/vape will also negatively affect the immune system. This doesn't mean that smoking or vaping directly causes COVID-19. It means any person who smokes or vapes are at greater risk to have worse symptoms of COVID-19.

The study consists of adolescents and young adults aged 13-24 years old. This is considered a low risk population for COVID-19. But with smoking and vaping, this creates a specific moderate-high risk population for people that use these products. The best way to protect yourself and others during these unprecedented times is to quit the use of tobacco products and vaping. Some ways you can do that is:

- Plan and decide how you want to quit your tobacco use
- Set a quit date and take it day by day
- Find a support group or family who will help you with your goals
- Call 1-800-NO-BUTTS for the California Smoker's Helpline



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