

Chairman Fox provides MHA Nation COVID-19 updates



file photo

Cheryl Bird

Since the COVID-19 pandemic reached North Dakota, Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara (MHA) Nation Chairman Mark N. Fox has provided regular updates on KMHA Radio. In his addresses, Chairman Fox has given information on the MHA Nation's COVID-19 Task Force and other tribal measures designed to slow the spread of the disease. Fox urges all tribal members to stay home, remain calm, and take the coronavirus situation seriously.

Chairman Fox, the Tribal Business Council, and the MHA Nation COVID-19 Task Force are working tirelessly to prepare for and mitigate the spread of coronavirus on the Fort Berthold Reservation. Fox has given numerous addresses on KMHA, often with guests who play an essential role in the tribe's response.

Chairman Fox, Elbowoods Memorial Health Center (EMHC), tribal law enforcement and other departments have collaborated to create action plans to reduce the spread of COVID-19. These precautions are necessary to protect individuals over the age of 60 and those with underlying health conditions such as diabetes or kidney, heart, and lung disease.

"We told our health officials to begin preparing in January," said Chairman Fox. "While this situation is serious, I want to stress that it's important to not panic. I want to give people the peace of mind that we are working very, very hard."

Chairman Fox also discussed the numerous steps the tribe has taken in stockpiling supplies, implementing strong mitigation policies and strategies, and continuing financial assistance for tribal members.

The MHA Nation is acquiring and storing supplies to distribute to tribal members in case of an emergency. Reservation segment leaders have also worked to ensure elders receive care packages. Children currently out of school have been provided with meals through tribal efforts.

"We are working to mitigate the spread and ensure that if people need help, they receive help," said Chairman Fox. "We want to protect the most vulnerable of our people."

The COVID-19 Task Force has also implemented a temporary elder's response line. To request help with obtaining essential items, call 701-421-2159. Tribal business and mortgage loan payments have been suspended for April.

The MHA Nation is also working with local and state healthcare systems to make sure the tribe has enough medical supplies and equipment. Chairman Fox is also advocating for the MHA Nation with state and federal partners.

Dr. Anita Martin, EMHC Chief Medical Officer, discussed the importance of social distancing and staying home as much as possible.

"Since we don't have the ability to test everyone, assume everyone has coronavirus and keep your distance. If you can, stay home," said Dr. Martin.

Dr. Martin advised that all MHA Nation members keep six feet of physical distance between themselves and others, wash their hands often, use sanitizer when soap and water are not available and to not touch their faces. Dr. Martin emphasized that tribal members must stay home to prevent COVID-19's spread from person to person.

"The only way to protect yourself is to stay away from people who are sick," said Dr. Martin.

EMHC's coronavirus hotline is 701-627-7641.

COVID-19 Task Force leader Scott Satermo discussed the tribe's coronavirus website and dashboard which can be found at www.mhanation.com/coronavirus. The task force is also implementing operations and logistics protocols to respond to positive tests, a media wing, a financial wing, a call center, and a mental health wing for tribal members.

EMHC Behavioral Health and Circle of Life are still open and available to help with people struggling with the stress of COVID-19.

Chairman Fox will distribute a coronavirus information sheet for every household on the reservation. Fox and the Task Force will also provide regular updates through radio broadcasts, MHA Times articles, the MHA Nation's coronavirus website, and ChairmanFox.com. Updates will also be provided via the MHA Nation COVID-19 Task Force, MHA Nation Chairman Fox, and MHA Nation: Our River, Our Home Facebook pages.

The MHA Nation has also adopted measures designed to slow the spread of coronavirus on the reservation. These measures include a dusk-to-dawn curfew, a ban on five or more people congregating, and developing cooperative agreements with local businesses. The MHA Nation also adopted a measure to develop and enforce improved testing capabilities on the reservation.

People attending wakes and funerals, procuring essential items, and traveling to and from work will not be subject to the curfew.

Chairman Fox reminded listeners that mitigating the spread of the disease is an effort everyone must participate in.

"Everyone has a role and responsibility to step up. We need everyone to cooperate and take this seriously. Stay at home as much as you can. We have to reduce the ability for the virus to spread," said Chairman Fox. "You have to remember your role. If you're helping to transmit the disease, you're risking our elders and people with underlying conditions."

Chairman Fox encouraged tribal members to educate themselves on COVID-19 through reputable web sources such as the Centers for Disease Control website and the North Dakota Department of Health website.

"Be protectors out there. Assume your role," said Chairman Fox.

15 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed on the reservation as of April 5. 50 tests have been performed, with 20 tests pending.

Circle of Life / 627-4700

Hours of Operation - 04/06/20

Monday – Friday / 8 am – 4:30 pm

Provision of services during the Covid-19 pandemic:

- Face-to-face services are temporarily suspended.
- Evaluations and assessments of new clients will be done by phone.
 - You will need privacy, a phone, computer, email, and be able to scan signed documents back to Circle of Life.
- For clients who can't access electronic evaluations, names will be added to a waiting list while alternative ways to provide services are developed or until the pandemic ends.
- Outpatient treatment and aftercare services will be done as scheduled individual sessions over the phone.
- Counseling sessions for established clients can be held over the phone.

Availability of Treatment for Substance Use

- **Heartview in ND (701-222-0386)** is still accepting clients with a wait list of 3-4 weeks, which can change daily. Pregnant women have priority. To get on the wait list, call for an initial screening. You have to be symptom free, have current insurance, and have your own transportation to the facility. A full evaluation and health consultation will be done by a nurse on site during admission.
- **Keystone in SD (712-986-7343)** is still accepting clients, an assessment is required, but physicals are NOT required. You have to be symptom free, have current insurance, and have your own transportation to the facility.
- **Good Road to Recovery in Bismarck, ND (701-757-8260)** is not taking new admissions at this time. They are taking referrals (pre-admission paperwork) via online (goodroadrecovery.com) or faxed to 701-751-2298. Services will be updated week-by-week. New referrals will be accepted when the intake requirements are completed and submitted (evals/assessments, physical/labs, Requests for Information, Informed Consents). When the full intake packet is submitted, cases will be staffed based on the date of complete Intake packet. You'll need current insurance and your own transportation to the facility once accepted.

JUST A THOUGHT...

April 4, 2020

The tulip bulbs East of my parents' house are already an inch high. The rhubarb plants are poking through in the garden plot. I saw a gopher standing tall in a stubble field last week, and a robin too. Spring is here! It comes every year and the plants come up and the gophers stand up. They chatter and the Robins sing, but I never notice. Normally this time of year, I'm too busy with life. My job, my family, friends and hobbies ... too self-absorbed to look. I mean REALLY LOOK at how brilliantly green the leaves are on those new tulip blossoms. To see how proudly the gopher stands up ready to conquer this world. To hear how amazing the robin's song sounds.

But not this year. This year, while most of America and the World is 'sheltering in place' or is 'self quarantined', I've noticed these things and so much more. I've noticed for example, that at exactly 10:46 a.m. each morning when the sun rises, it hits my Easterly window in just the right

spot and splashes sunlight on a certain section of the living room floor and my dogs never miss an opportunity to stretch out in that exact spot and play dead to the world. Fully content for that 30 minutes.

I am also overwhelmed at the sight of the thousands of geese flying over my house every day this time of year, honking happily on their way North. I am impressed at how prompt the mail carrier is each day performing that ritual.

So much I've missed. Each incident, just a little thing - but together, tallied up to untold numbers of pleasant memories that before, I have let slip by every day - just by going about my daily life by trying to remain a productive and useful citizen in my community and country. I'm not complaining. Contributing to society and being an active member of society is what we all should be striving to accomplish.

However, while this Corona Virus / COVID-19 crisis is terrible and unprecedented and a scourge on our economy and our lives, we all need to

do our part and follow the guidelines and instructions from our community leaders. I cannot help but wonder if it may also provide something positive - if we choose to look.

Could there be an unintentional life lesson nestled within the walls of this horrible virus? Telling us to slow down a bit? Look at life around us? Perhaps spend a little time in solitude to reflect or pray or ponder? To notice the beauty and the grace of our surroundings?

Perhaps part of the lesson is also that regardless of where you live in this world, what color you are or what religion you practice, we are all first and foremost HUMAN and maybe our real job is to protect and care for one another. To look after our families and young ones. Can a little virus do both? Call me naïve, but I'm choosing to believe it can.

Author: Larry Zieman, Executive Director, Fort Berthold Communications Enterprises

FROM THE EDITOR

EDITOR APOLOGY AND RETRACTION

I would like to apologize to the readers and all involved. In one portion of the article Volume 14, page 6 of Wednesday April 1st, MHA TIMES, Chairman Fox introduced information regarding a Contact Sheet with names and phone numbers of members of the COVID-19 Emergency Task Force. A word was incorrectly transcribed from the recording of MHA Nation Chairman, Mark N. Fox and his guest speakers (KMHA radio live broadcast on March 27 at approx. 12 PM). This word was printed as "laid" where it should have been "name". This resulted in a potentially embarrassing and confusing reading of the article.

The program was transcribed using voice to text technology. As anyone who uses a cell phone and voice recognition understands this technology is not entirely reliable and requires careful proofing and correction. I did not catch the error during my reading of the words and while most transcription errors are minor this one was not. It created a message with a primarily derogatory interpretation. This distorted the message of Chairman Fox and his affiliates and therefore did not meet common standards of journalism and professional editorial responsibility.

I bear full responsibility as the editor for this obvious oversight and failure to capture the mistake and I want to apologize fully to the Chairman and his guests who appeared on the March 27th KMHA show as the message they were conveying regarded critical information related to community safety and the COVID-19 response.

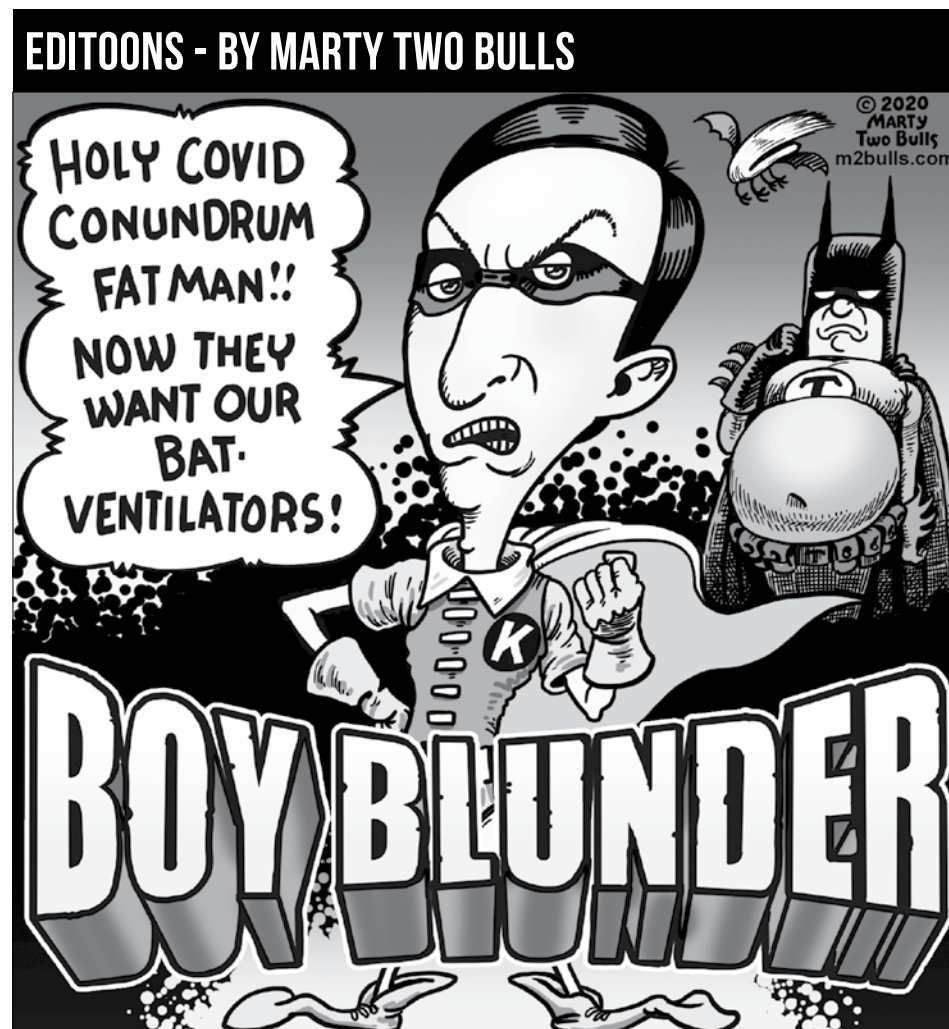
I also want to apologize to the readers

who may read the article and become diverted or offended by its unfortunate but obvious connotation. (This error will not be repeated and please do not let this take away from the important information in this week's edition).

Note: The effects of COVID-19 and its community response has delayed distribution by one to two days.

I am honored to have the opportunity to serve as the editor of the MHA Times. This is a valuable reminder for me of the need to use more care and diligence in reporting essential information during this time of grave emergency.

Sherry Stevens
MHA Times Editor



"The People's Paper"

THE MANDAN, HIDATSA AND ARIKARA TIMES

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MHA Times will provide news reporting services by preserving and promoting the culture and history of the Fort Berthold Reservation and surrounding communities.

All letters to the editor and guest editorials must comply with normal standards of decency, courteousness and professionalism, avoiding any personal attacks on individuals or companies. This newspaper is not meant as a venue to air personal grievances against other persons, government (including Tribal) entities or companies. Letters to the editor or guest opinions must comply with the above or they will not be published.

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Stay home to protect our community



**Stay
home**



**Wash your
hands for
20 seconds**



**Avoid
touching
your face**



**Keep 6 feet
of physical
space**



**Protect elders
& vulnerable
people**

What you need to know and do

What is the coronavirus or COVID-19?

"COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person."

- Center for Disease Control

What is social distancing?

Social or physical distancing is deliberately keeping six feet of physical space between people to avoid spreading COVID-19. This includes your family members, elders, and your neighbors.

What is self-quarantining?

Health experts recommend that anyone who has come into contact with COVID-19 practice self-quarantining for at least 14 days. This includes practicing standard hygiene, staying at home, not having visitors, not sharing utensils, and staying at least 6 feet from other members of your household.

Who is most at risk?

Vulnerable populations include our elders, those who have weak immune systems, pregnant women, and people with underlying conditions like asthma, heart disease, and diabetes.

Who can contract COVID-19?

Anyone can contract and transmit coronavirus. Importantly, many people do not show symptoms and can be carriers, exposing others who have greater risk.

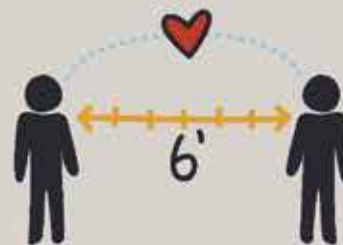
Common symptoms

Cough • Fever • Shortness of breath

If you are experiencing symptoms, call Elbowoods Memorial Health Center Coronavirus Hotline at **(701) 627-7641** to discuss your condition before visiting a clinic.

If you live off Fort Berthold, contact your local clinic for instructions.

If you are in need of immediate medical care, dial 911.



**We are a
relational people**

But now, we must care
for each other by limiting
physical contact.

**We are
resilient.**

**We are here
today because we
are survivors, so
be accountable
to each other.**