



April 3, 2020

COVID-19 pandemic brings furloughs, layoffs, hour reductions to Tribal government

Tribal Council: 'We value and care about each and every employee, and these decisions were very difficult to make'

With both Emerald Queen Casino locations temporarily closed amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Puyallup Tribe's governing council has decided on a range of actions to conserve the Tribe's resources and ensure vital services are provided to the community.

"Without incoming revenue from the casinos, the financial situation is serious," the seven-member Puyallup Tribal Council said in a statement to the membership earlier today. "Council unanimously agreed to take pay cuts. We have turned over every stone we could find. But in the end we have had to make hard decisions that affect our valued employees."

The decisions include furloughs, layoffs and hour reductions for Tribal government's workforce of over 600 people:

- About 40 temporary and emergency-hire employees have been laid off.
- About 40 percent of the Tribal government workforce are on temporary furlough beginning April 16.
- Nearly all of the other 60 percent of employees are moving from 40 hours to 34 hours per week beginning April 16.
- Other actions include suspension of capital projects and the shifting of their dollars to support government operations.

"We value and care about each and every employee, and these decisions were very difficult to make," the Tribal Council said.

Employees will keep their medical benefits while on furlough and are encouraged to file for unemployment. Most employees were notified April 3.

Most of the government's incoming revenue comes from the Emerald Queen Casino, which temporarily shut down both locations beginning March 17 and which announced March 31 that they would remain closed at least two more weeks unless COVID-19 conditions changed for the better. The announcement followed furloughs and layoffs of 85 percent of the casino workforce.

The Puyallup Tribe has been one of Pierce County's largest employers, with more than 3,000 employees among government, the Emerald Queen Casino, other business ventures and various entities.

"These are uncertain times," Tribal Council said. "But make no mistake: We are in this together. We have been for generations. We will be for generations to come."

Sign up for updates on the Puyallup Tribe's website: <http://www.puyalluptribe-nsn.gov/>

About the Puyallup Tribe of Indians

The Puyallup People have lived along the shores of what is now called Puget Sound since time immemorial. The Puyallup Tribe of Indians is a sovereign nation of more than 5,000 members and one of the largest employers in Pierce County. It serves its people and neighbors with generosity and is committed to building a sustainable way of life for future generations. [Learn more about the Puyallup Tribe.](#)

About the Puyallup Tribal Council

The Puyallup Tribal Council is the elected governing body of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians. The council consists of Chairman David Z. Bean, Vice Chairman Bill Sterud, Sylvia Miller, Tim Reynon, Annette Bryan, James Rideout and Anna Bean.

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