

# Wichita and Affiliated Tribes

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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March 16, 2020

### **WICHITA AND AFFILIATED TRIBES MAKES TOUGH BUSINESS DECISIONS REGARDING THE CASINO, CHILD CARE CENTERS AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENT AMID COVID-19**

Anadarko, Oklahoma-With more and more concern regarding the COVID-19 spread, the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes by resolution has declared a state of emergency for the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes due to rising cases of COVID-19 in our state.

These decisions were made after careful consideration of the new cases arising in our state and concerns for our tribal members, children, elders, employees of our businesses, our guests and community. The temporary measures below will allow employees to practice physical and social distancing while efforts are made to further enhance cleaning and sterilization protocols. The Wichita and Affiliated Tribes will reevaluate the decisions below as it gets closer to March 31, 2020.

The Wichita and Affiliated Tribes made the following decisions regarding the following entities:

- Sugar Creek Casino in Hinton, Oklahoma and Canyons Sports Grill
- Wichita and Affiliated Tribes Tribal Government Offices
- Child Development Centers located in Anadarko, Oklahoma

### **Temporary Closure of the Sugar Creek Casino and Canyons Sports Grill Through March 31, 2020**

The Wichita and Affiliated Tribes has decided today that Sugar Creek Casino including Canyons Sports Grill, located in Hinton, Oklahoma will voluntarily close its doors temporarily at 12:00 a.m. Tuesday, March 17, 2020 and will remain closed through March 31, 2020.

We intend to minimize the impact to our employees as much as possible, and will take the following steps to do so:

1. The Sugar Creek Casino will continue to pay employees through March 31, 2020.
2. Employees will spend time over the next few days sanitizing the casino before they will be allowed to stay at home on Administrative Leave.

### **Limited Tribal Government Operations Through March 31, 2020**

The Wichita and Affiliated Tribes decided today that the Tribal Government of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, located in Anadarko, Oklahoma, will require only essential employees to work and will authorize telework as needed beginning on Wednesday, March 18, 2020 and continue through Tuesday, March 31, 2020.

We intend to minimize the impact to our employees and tribal members as much as possible, and will take the following steps to do so:

1. All Employees are required to report to work on Tuesday, March 17, 2020.
2. Staff will be notified on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 of their status regarding essential and non-essential.
3. Non-essential employees will be considered to be on Administrative Leave Wednesday, March 18, 2020 through March 31, 2020.
4. The Wichita and Affiliated Tribes will continue to pay employees through March 31, 2020 while on Administrative Leave regardless if they are considered essential or non-essential.
5. Non-essential employees may be requested to return to work for certain periods of time to distribute food from our feeding programs and/or other supplies as needed as we continue to monitor this situation.
6. Deliveries for food to the tribal elders enrolled in our Administration on Aging (AoA) Program will be delivered food at lunch until and if there becomes a point that we can no longer safely deliver food to those enrolled in the AoA program.
7. The Food Distribution Program will continue to distribute food to people enrolled in the program as long as food is being delivered. They have specific protocols in place for picking up food and clients should call the program directly for instructions.
8. Maintenance staff will return to work prior to reopening to thoroughly clean before we reopen.

### **Closure of Child Care Facilities to Children Through March 31, 2020**

The Wichita and Affiliated Tribes decided today that the Child Care Facilities of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, located in Anadarko, Oklahoma, will close beginning on Wednesday, March 18, 2020 and continue through Tuesday, March 31, 2020.

We intend to minimize the impact to our children, their families, employees and tribal members as much as possible, and will take the following steps to do so:

1. All Employees are required to report to work on Tuesday, March 17, 2020.
2. The Wichita Child Development Center (WCDC) and the Wichita School Readiness Program (WSRP) will be open on Tuesday, March 17, 2020.

3. The Wichita Child Development Center (WCDC) and the Wichita School Readiness Program (WSRP) will be closed beginning on Wednesday, March 18, 2020.
4. Non-essential employees will be considered to be on Administrative Leave through March 31, 2020.
5. The Wichita and Affiliated Tribes will continue to pay employees through March 31, 2020 regardless if they are considered essential or non-essential.
6. Non-essential employees may be requested to return to work for certain periods of time to thoroughly clean the child care facilities.

### **Other Entities Under the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes**

The Wichita Travel Plaza, Sugar Creek Inn & Suites operated by the Wichita Tribe Industrial Development Commission, the Wichita Tax Commission Tag Office and Wichita Tribal Smoke Shop operated by the Wichita Tax Commission and the Wichita Gaming Offices operated by the Wichita Gaming Commission are directed to follow the lead of the Tribe to take all precautionary measures related to the health and safety of their employees, clients and patrons.

### **Future Information**

We are in constant communication with local, State and National leadership and healthcare officials and will heed their advice to do our part to slow the pandemic and “flatten the curve.” We will keep you informed regarding any changes as they arise. Please visit our website at [www.wichitatribe.com](http://www.wichitatribe.com) and the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes Facebook page for more updates.

“On behalf of the Wichita Executive Committee, these were hard decisions for us to make and we stayed the course as long as we could but the health and safety of our tribal members, children, elders, employees and community is of utmost importance in times like these. Businesses can start back up and continue after this is all over but the loss of even one tribal member, child, elder or employee or member of our community is too much if we put business ahead of our tribal members and employees. Pray for our communities so that we all remain strong through this. Our people are resilient and we will make it through this together.” said Terri Parton, President of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes

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