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Gila River Indian Community to Provide Direct Relief Payments to Community Members

(Sacaton, Arizona) Governor Stephen Roe Lewis announced today the Gila River Indian Community Council has approved the creation of a COVID-19 relief fund, using surplus funds from Community accounts, to provide the Community government with the ability to take action quickly to meet the needs of the Community and its members. The first approved expenditure from the COVID-19 Emergency Fund will be a direct payment to all community members 18 years of age and older, in the amount of \$500. Funds are also set aside to provide food for Community members, both on and off the Gila River Indian Reservation.

Governor Lewis explained, "This payment is to assist you, our Community members in meeting the unexpected needs you are now all confronting and ensure that you are able to focus on your health and not your finances."

The COVID-19 Emergency Fund was approved by the Community Council at a Special Meeting on March 24. The Council also approved amendments to an interim employee leave policy extending leave benefits for COVID-19 related issues, approved a teleworking policy, and a resolution allowing the Community Council and its Standing Committees to meet remotely if necessary during this time.

The Community government has also been very active in meeting the essential needs of Community members, including deliveries of food, water and essential items. While the Community government is closed, certain departments and programs will continue to provide essential services and functions to the Community, and all public safety departments will remain fully operational.

More details about how the tribal government will be getting the payment to Community members will be made available on March 26 and a system for delivery of payments will be completed in next few days. Governor Lewis emphasizes, "Community members can rest assured we will be getting it out to you all very quickly."

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Gila River Indian Community located on 372,000 acres in south-central Arizona and home to the indigenous O'odham (Pima) and Pee Posh (Maricopa) people. The Tribe is comprised of seven districts, the administrative offices and departments are located in Sacaton, and serve the people throughout these seven community districts. 100% of its profits from gaming and 17 other Enterprises are utilized by the community providing services and opportunities to achieve the highest quality of life.
