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**GILA RIVER INDIAN COMMUNITY GOVERNOR LEWIS SIGNS
EXECUTIVE ORDER MAKING PROTECTIVE MASKS MANDATORY
ON TRIBAL LANDS**

*Mandate comes amid statewide spike in COVID cases and on the heels of
Community Council vote to “pause” tribal casino operations for two weeks*

SACATON, AZ. – As cases of COVID-19 continue to spike in Arizona, Governor Stephen Roe Lewis of the Gila River Indian Community today signed an executive order making protective face coverings mandatory on Community lands. The measure – signed just hours after the Community Council voted to close the Community’s casino operations for a two-week pause in business – is meant to ensure the safety and health of the Community’s members, children and elders, and all Gila River employees.

“With positive tests for coronavirus continuing to spike in Arizona, I am determined to exercise an abundance of caution,” said Gov. Lewis. “In the face of such a serious situation statewide, my new Executive Order requires all persons on Community lands to wear a mask when in public and not on a federal or state right of way. I am working with our Police and Public Health Departments, and our Office of General Counsel to implement effective enforcement for this new critical public health measure.”

Late Wednesday afternoon, the Gila River Community Council voted to temporarily close the Community’s three tribal casinos for a two-week pause in operations. The casino closure follows the recent spike in coronavirus cases in Arizona and the passing of Robert Washington Jr., a security guard at Lone Butte casino who tested positive for coronavirus.

“I emphasized when our casinos re-opened that if the circumstances changed or conditions became worse in the State, we would take the necessary steps to ensure public safety, including closing again if need be. We have clearly reached that point,” said Gov. Lewis. “We will use this stoppage to see whether the recent rise in Arizona COVID cases subsides and to comprehensively re-examine every aspect of our operation. We want to be absolutely certain that we are doing everything we can to keep our team members and our guests as safe as possible.”

All employees will be paid and receive full health benefits during this pause. Lewis added that contract tracing and COVID testing in the wake of Washington’s death have determined that each Mr. Washington’s co-workers who had been in direct contact with



him all subsequently tested negatively for coronavirus. The contract tracers have not yet been able to determine how and where Mr. Washington contracted the coronavirus.

Gov. Lewis also announced that his Executive Order will allow tribal government employees to seek paid leave for up to 60 days if they have one of the underlying conditions that makes them more vulnerable to the coronavirus.

The Governor again offered his deep condolences to the Washington family as they lay Robert Jr. to rest on Father's Day weekend.

"The hearts, thoughts and prayers of our people are with the Washington family and Robert's loved ones as they mourn such a tragic loss," said Lewis. "We will continue to hold the Washington family in our hearts and to pray for them for a long, long time to come. This invisible enemy really knows no bounds and we grieve with everyone who has lost someone dear."

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Gila River Indian Community, located on 372,000 acres in south-central Arizona and home to the indigenous people of O'Odham (Pima) and Pee Posh (Maricopa). The people are known for their farms, deep traditions, basket weaving and pottery. 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.