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**Pascua Yaqui Tribal Council Takes Action in Response to COVID-19;
Authorizes Establishment of the Incident Command System**

(TUCSON, Ariz. March 19, 2020) - The Pascua Yaqui Tribal Council has declared a tribal emergency concerning the COVID-19 virus and through Resolution No. C03-66-20, has activated the Incident Command System (ICS) to ensure that all information is funneled through a central source and that is as accurate and up-to-date as possible.

Fire Chief Carlos Flores will lead the ICS team and has been named the temporary Emergency Manager with all authorities and duties necessary to protect the Tribe, its members, and the public until the COVID-19 concerns are resolved, subject to the authority of the Chairman. The Resolution provides emergency authority to the Chairman for all issues regarding COVID-19 and authorizes the Chairman to sign all documents and take any necessary and proper action to carry out the intent of this Resolution.

“The ICS is comprised of representatives from police, fire, health, IT, communications, among others, who have been authorized by Tribal Council to communicate directly to the community information regarding COVID-19,” said Robert Valencia, Chairman of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe.

Earlier this week Chairman Valencia signed Executive Order # 20-01 that outlines specific and immediate actions to be taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The order addresses such things as meetings and gatherings, trainings and the implementation of social distancing protocols and work-from-home policies. This is in addition to the travel restrictions and preventative and proactive measures for the health and well-being of the Pascua Yaqui tribal communities that were ordered late last week.

“It is critically important that we do what we can to protect our community members, especially our most vulnerable members,” said Chairman Valencia.

The Pascua Yaqui Tribe has approved additional preventative and proactive measures in addition the previous measures of March 13, for the health and well-being of the Pascua Yaqui tribal communities.

The following Tribal Programs/Services have been temporarily suspended until further notice:

- Liogue Senior Center, Ili U’usim Mahtawa’po Headstart, The Dr. Fernando Escalante Library at the Itom Mahtawa’po Education Center,
- Limiting Dental services to emergencies/extractions only.
- Temporarily suspending the weekly Health Transportation Services from Guadalupe to Pascua.
- Postponing the Dia de los Ninos celebration gathering till further notice.
- Temporarily closing the Wellness Center effective 3/23/2020 till further notice.
- Suspending Tribal-sponsored meetings/gatherings of 50 people.

“The Pascua Yaqui Tribal Health Department is in regular communication with state and county Health Departments, El Rio Community Center and Indian Health Service for COVID-19 updates, technical assistance and guidance,” said Reuben Howard, Executive Director of Health Department.

“It is essential for the health and well-being of our Tribal members, community, employees and staff that we do everything we can to minimize exposure and do what we can to flatten the curve of this virus,” said Howard.