

Dennis Patch Platform

At the beginning 2020, CRIT had a lot of plans mapped out. We were looking into implementing hemp on the California side to expand our water usage on a very valuable crop as well as planting indigenous vegetation to bring the wildlife and waterfowl back to help protect our cultural ties to those lands and water. On the Arizona side we were just hitting the ground with farmers that wanted to pay higher land leases and start growing an assortment of produce with built-in conservation methods to save our water.

Then COVID-19 hit with a full force across the world and here on our reservation. We had to shift gears quickly to try to understand how to fight this virus and how to protect our people and community. As Chairman, I worked diligently every day to protect CRIT and the surrounding communities with my main priority being our elders and children by providing food and supplies distributed to them specifically, so they did not have to venture to stores and we also got testing kits needed as our local Colorado River Service Unit only had 16 total testing kits for March and April. I knew in order to fight this unknown virus we had to start testing. So I requested the help of Sonora Quest Laboratories, Border Health, ASU Biodesign Institute (who specifically were the first to be able to test children via saliva-based testing) and Dr. Dwivedi to oversee the testing and guide us in our battle against this virus. We were able to flatten the curve in September. However, like the rest of the world a second surge is coming, and I can say we have been in preparation for many months to meet this virus again with enough PPE, testing kits for COVID-19 and vaccines for the Flu.

Without the passing of the CARES Act monies that native tribes were able to attain, we would be in much different place today. The CARES act enabled us to purchase more testing kits and supplies, provide monies to help those in need, food, water, cleaning supplies as well as, electrical and water payments for members. CRIT updated all first responders with new gear and supplies. We also sent many non-essentials workers with pay home for four months with the Stay at Home Resolution to prevent the spread of the virus to protect our families and communities. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank and commend CRIT Fire Department, CRIT Fish & Game, Western Boundary, Big River Development employees, CRIT Police, DHSS and all essential workers for all their commitment in helping and protecting CRIT during this stressful time brought on by the virus.

The pandemic of COVID-19 has exposed many areas that need improvement not just on this reservation but all reservations and all rural areas in the United States it exposed how inadequately we are served in terms of water utilities, technology, education and healthcare. My vision for our people is to connect our reservation to the world to bring about a lasting change as we transition into a more technology-based world brought on by COVID-19 by implementing wireless & fiber internet throughout the reservation. Once this is accomplished our people will be able to enhance their economical, educational & job opportunities. We can also use this technology for implementing and harnessing solar energy, implementing wireless electronic water metering of our water system to conserve our water, connecting all our enterprises on Arizona and California side of the reservation to better enhance a true economic business structure. Lastly, but most importantly to bring Telehealth/Medicine care to our members, with the pandemic many healthcare facilities had to move to a remote provider-based healthcare model. I foresee this method of patient care only expanding especially as

there is no vaccine for COVID-19 available and no plan if there is one available that has been properly tested.

We must not let ourselves be the forgotten people any longer and as your Chairman it's my commitment to not let that happen.

Thank you for your continued support.
Dennis Patch, Chairman