

Joseph Orozco

Well, Welcome to Studio 91 by telephone. Mr. Madrone. 5th District Supervisor Humboldt County Board of Supervisors. Thanks for calling

Steve Madrone

Good morning, everybody.

Joseph Orozco

In Well, the the interest I had in doing this call was I got the invitation. We we've been talking about doing interviews, and here it is. Very good. So I'm recording this conversation. So the message the invitation was concerning the message about the Board of Supervisors asking people to wear face masks in public. "Yeah." replied Madrone. So I'm just wondering if you want to, if you could discuss that, what was that conversation at the board level?

Steve Madrone

Sure. Well, as you know, this is a pretty serious disease. And some places are seeing a huge amount of death. Luckily not Humboldt. We have not had any deaths yet. And I know this has been incredibly difficult for everybody. This is uncharted territory for all of us to have such a thing where we shut down all the activities, so intensively and it's put a lot of hardship on everyone. But as you can see in Humboldt while we did have initially some significant cases, many related to travelers coming back into the county, we have flatten that out flatten the curve, as they like to say.

Steve Madrone

And because of all the physical distancing and the hard work that everybody's doing, currently, we have very few new cases, there was, I think, seven days out of nine with no new cases. So that's good news. And that has everything to do with everybody doing their part and physical distancing wearing masks and things like that. And so, in an emergency like this to help office Sir, is in charge along with the sheriff and the board of supervisors are trying to help get messages out and work as part of that operational Emergency Services team in the sense that we're trying to keep the community informed and, and moving forward. And so we know we flatten that curve, we've done really good as a community. And a lot of people really want to see us start opening things back up.

Steve Madrone

Of course, as we do that, the chance of spreading the virus increases. So what we want to do to prepare for starting to open things back up is starting Friday, tomorrow, (April24th) we have a mandatory mask covering requirement. So if you're going out from your home, into public, you need to wear a mask. And this is not only to protect others, but to protect yourself. And while they're not 100% foolproof They do help a lot. And it sends a message that this is a really serious event that we're in the middle of. And so again, starting tomorrow will be mandatory.

Steve Madrone

The sheriff is not going to cite people out of the gate. It's going to be an attempt at education, initially trying to get people to comply. So please, let's all voluntarily get on board and do that. And if people are not adhering to it, there is a potential for citations. And I know that seems all very, very intense for folks believe me, I, I get it this is we've never seen anything like this. But by cooperating and working together like this, we can save lives. And we can reduce the harm to the community from this. So that's what's going on with the mask in place. It starts on Friday. Tomorrow.

Joseph Orozco

yeah, I've got that notice. We have our own Office of Emergency Services and they make their daily reports two times a day. And they include the data from Humboldt County and the data from the Kimaw Medical Center. Yeah. And yeah, I have noticed that your, your number of cases, there's a good reduction. So I'm thinking, Wow, it is coming to an end. But then yeah, who knows?

Steve Madrone

Well, yeah, that's the thing. We're really in uncharted territory here. But you know, we can look at things like the 1918 Spanish flu, which was a pandemic, and it was over 100 years ago. And it traveled around the globe, and it hit Humboldt County. And in the first wave, as they say, which is really where we're at right now in what we call the first wave of the virus. In Humboldt County, there were a number of deaths it hit pretty hard. Ferndale, though amazingly in wave one, masked up. So even back in the early 1900s people recognized wearing masks might be a way to help prevent spread. And so Ferndalians did that and they had very few cases in the first wave. And then the summer came along and then the next winter n fall, and of course with more moisture, that's when flu and virus like things tend to take off. And people have lowered their guards and then Ferndale got hit really hard in the second and third wave.

Steve Madrone

So not to put fear into people at all but to understand that just because the case numbers have gone way down does not mean we're out of the woods with with this situation. And so I doubt that we'll ever go back to you know, the way things were before all of this. We may, you know for a long time, if not forever, avoid shaking hands. I love the Oriental approach of bowing and you know with your hands folded, and other ways people are Kicking toes together, and do another things you know, rather than making that personal contact.

Steve Madrone

So and we probably won't see big concerts and big sports events for some time. But hopefully starting soon, we may be able to start reopening up some businesses and some other movement and activity. The precursor to being able to do that is having this mandatory mask, being aware of being worn when out in public to try and prevent spread, and then also increasing our testing capacity and increasing our surge capacity at the hospitals and clinics and things like that. So we've been lucky and humbled in that we haven't seen a massive surge. Let's all hope that never happens.

Steve Madrone

And you know, people can get upset 'Oh, it never happened. The hurricane we had the warning and it didn't happen.' But really, it's so much better to be prepared. And to have it go better, than to not be prepared and have a whole lot of people dying and getting sick and overwhelming our healthcare facilities. So we have made great, great bounds in increasing our health care capacity. As far as facemask, shields, ventilators, hospital beds prepared, all of these things are happening. And we're trying to be set up further, before further opening things up. And so with the masks in place tomorrow, with the efforts on the county and others to increase supplies, testing and all these other things, we may be able to start loosening some things up for some businesses, and some some activity of moving around the community.

Steve Madrone

But we will be doing that slowly so that we can monitor what's going on. And so if we initiate new standards of movement and opening up more businesses and all that. If we have increased testing, and other abilities for search, if we start seeing the numbers pick up within a couple of weeks, we know that

we've got a problem, maybe we better back off. But if we start opening things up, and we're not seeing increased cases after a two week incubation period, then we can try some more measures to be loosened up and then watch that for two more weeks, which is a basic incubation period. And so that's kind of what we're thinking as far as the new normal. Slowly opening things up monitoring really carefully, asking folks to continue physical distancing, and wearing masks, washing your hands and all those other things and together we will get through this and get back to something that is closer to normal.

Steve Madrone

But we don't know will there be another wave next fall next winter, and other things so you know, ultimately, it may be a year or so before a vaccine is created the Gates Foundation is putting hundreds of millions of dollars into that effort. And it is hoped that those vaccines will be available sometime in the not too distant future six to 12 months, something like that. And then we'll be able to move forward at that point.

Joseph Orozco

Yeah, the the medical approaches is something that takes time. Yeah, you've got to test it. And it's got to be done in the laboratory. And that's, that's gonna take time.

Steve Madrone

Yeah, and it's hard for folks. Yeah, you know, people are struggling, loss of jobs, loss of income. Businesses are folding up. There's a lot going on, and we can talk a little bit more about that and resources too, if you want.

Joseph Orozco

Yeah, I heard on the news program earlier this morning that some city is considering opening up coffee houses. I think you have to take off your mask.

Steve Madrone

Yeah, to drink coffee. I know there's Georgia's being a little nutsy. They think you know, their numbers are going up really rapidly and they're saying, oh, we're gonna open it all back up. It's like Wow, good luck. Yeah.

Joseph Orozco

Yeah, yeah, I don't see that happening.

Steve Madrone

No and I know people are getting antsy you know, we're all it's getting hard, right, but if you need help reach out there are phone numbers and other entities that are set up to help people. So that's really what we're trying to do is keep an eye on each other keep an eye on your neighbors your family and let's try and help each other out in this this time of need and really it's going to strengthen our community in the long run in terms of us all learning how to help each other better focus on our food sources and growing more more food in the garden you know, you can't hardly find starts in stores right? And now people are are doing it they're planting the gardens they got time on their hands right so that's good.

Joseph Orozco

Yes. Your Victory Gardens from World War II. I remember hearing about that. Yeah. Those are years way back, but I really don't know because I was a young child.

Steve Madrone

And yeah, and it shows that the majority of Americans still do approach to social distancing or physical distancing. And, and other things, other measures to try and help prevent the spread. We are seeing some protests in Del Norte county and other states around the union. People are getting antsy, they want to get out and and just open everything back up right away. And that's just not the wise thing to do. So we got to take this carefully, scientifically, and make sure that we're prepared and taking care of each other. So.

Joseph Orozco

Are there stores on the coast that are making home deliveries?

Steve Madrone

Yeah, there are. Like, for instance, in Trinidad Murphy's Market is doing that and I believe many of the stores have a process set up to be able to do that curbside deliveries. And you can call in orders. There's a lot of that going on around the coast. Yes.

Joseph Orozco

Yeah. We have that here in Hoopa. They are doing home deliveries to people 65 years of age and older. So anybody can make call, and you call in by three o'clock or before three, and you will get home delivery that day. "Wow wonderful." replied Madrone. Yeah, it is. We've used it several times now. Yeah, a minimum of \$20 per purchase. But hey, that's easy.

Steve Madrone

Well, it is. And if you went out, you'd spend five on gas and you got your time. And so yeah, that's a worthwhile effort and good.

Joseph Orozco

Yeah, it was it was a learning curve when they went into it. "I'm sure." remarked Madrone. There's a young staff there, and they're very dedicated. Now they aim to please and they're doing well. Right now we really, even with the social distancing seen this when they deliver. So we get an opportunity to chat a little bit with them here.

Steve Madrone

Yeah. Oh, that's great. That's great. And you know, there's going to be a public dialogue on all this tonight. And I know out there in the Trinity Valley, it's sometimes hard to access some of this coastal information. And that's why KIDE is so important. You guys do such a great job of keeping your community informed. But I just want to let your listeners know if they happen to hear this today. That tonight from six to 730, there is a fireside chat with Sheriff Honsal, the Health Officer, Dr. Theresa Francovich, Deputy Health Officer, Dr. Joshins, and they're going to be talking about the economy. The surge that is expected, hopefully will never happen. And then what's next for Humboldt and how we're gonna roll things out and all that. So for people in the Trinity Valley, I mean, if you get channel 10, you can get it there but I don't have channel 10. But you can go to Access Humboldt YouTube page, just type into your browser Access Humboldt YouTube, and I believe you could watch the event there if you have a computer and have internet. So those are some of the ways that you could access that forum tonight. And I'm sure there'll be some written material out there in the media as well.

Joseph Orozco

I can do a little edit on what you just said. "Right." And we could run that as a public service announcement run a few times so people can get to Access Humboldt. We've done that before when

they gave us advanced notice about some events that are happening. Madrone comments "Oh, that's great."

Joseph Orozco

So you were mentioning something about we don't know how much we can recover and how quickly we can, so that hints at a new normal type of situation. Is there a discussion going on at the board level about that?

Steve Madrone

Yeah, there is, you know, we have not been having a lot of board meetings, so many of them been canceled because we can't meet in person. And we're so focused on this COVID event that we're not really processing a whole lot of the other work that we might normally be engaged in.

Steve Madrone

And again, folks need to understand that the Board of Supervisors are not in charge during an emergency. I think most people think we are. But we are not the Health Officer and the Sheriff are the ones that are in charge, and they're doing an incredible job. And as a Board, what we try to do is number one, when they pass emergency ordinances, we need to ratify those within a week. And so we've been doing that with the various orders that have come along, Shelter in Place, masks, and other things. But the other thing is that the Board, we can engage in discussions about issues and think about policy directives that we might pass in order to provide support to our staff, and the community for doing things.

Steve Madrone

For instance, with the homeless population, which you know, it's large in Humboldt a couple thousand people and I don't know what the homeless population is in the Trinity Valley. I know there's a significant number of people around the Willow Creek area. Not sure about the the reservation in the Square, but I suspect they're homeless people on the reservation as well, right. And so there's this project called Project Room Key that is trying to take the most vulnerable in the homeless population, and put them in hotel rooms that the county is renting and getting some funding from the state to help with that. So people that are tested positive, or they have symptoms or they're 65 years old or older and say they have a compromised immune system, that we're trying to get those people into hotel rooms as best as we can. Not everybody wants to do that.

Steve Madrone

There are many people that due to various conditions in their life are not going to be able to move into that kind of a situation. Maybe they have a substance abuse issue or mental health issues or other things. We're trying our best to reach out to that community and help those that want that help. But there's a huge amount of people that are still left living in the woods, in the marshes in the along the stream corridors, the wooded areas in along the coast anyway, and in very unsanitary conditions, and yet they still are coming out into the community. And so that has a great potential for many of them to be infected and or to cause a spread or a surge in the community. So, at the Board level, we have been initiating discussions on you know, what else can we do for the homeless population? You know, and and things like that.

Steve Madrone

So, and right now the Board is working with the Health Officer and the Sheriff to talk about what are essential services and of those that we're not allowed to open? which ones might we start thinking about reopening and what sort of requirements on physical distancing and things can be in place. So

we're trying to think about that now because we need to get businesses back open, you know, small businesses have taken a huge hit in this around Willow Creek, Hoopa I'm sure, as well as on the coast. So, you know, that's what we're doing now as a board is having discussions about what will the new normal look like? How do we go about reopening and things like that and being safe?

Joseph Orozco

And part of that the the new normal is the education services. Yet the Humboldt County has got the University and the College of the Redwoods.

Steve Madrone

That's a big deal. And, you know, schools aren't going to reconvene till next fall, and what's that gonna look like? And so with everybody sheltering in place, one of the other things that's happened is that our internet services whether you're on satellite, I'm on Dish Network, whether you were actually on exceed Viasat and, you know, as more and more of us are staying home and trying to work from home and students are trying to zoom and, you know, tie in to the internet to get their schoolwork and different things. It's overloading the system.

Steve Madrone

And I know you and I have talked quite a bit about how can we improve internet service in the Trinity Valley and Hoopa? You know, where are we at with Digital 299? The Karuk just got awarded a increased grant amount for their project coming down 96 that's going to go over Bald Hills to the coast. You know, we were talking about how do we interlink that 96th line, the 299 line, work with Hoopa an increased capacity in the Hoopa Valley.

Steve Madrone

But one of the things I've discovered is that there have been a number of lines that have been run around the county out to rural schools, and like Maple Creek up the Mad River and others where the line goes to the school. At least say from Blue Lake or Kobel goes all the way out there. And nobody along that line is allowed to tie into it. Because the line was put in with grant money from the state and the feds. And so AT&T who put it in isn't allowed to hook anybody up for a period of years. Because they're not allowed to make profit on what was a grant funded project.

Steve Madrone

And you know, I get that, right. We don't want to pay private sector individuals to do something, give them a grant and then let them somehow make a ton of money off that. But could we change that and actually, there's hearing today that I'm going to call in on with the California Public Utilities Commission to suggest that maybe they could allow for connections along that line, but just not make a profit. break even at whatever the cost is to connect, because the lines are there and with people working from home, and school, distancing, you know, school distance learning, we need to increase our internet capacity all over the county. Trinity Valley is a big part of that. So

Joseph Orozco

I agree with that. The Klamath Trinity Joint Unified School District is one of those districts that have that line. Yes. And we always wonder how come no one else can tag into that? You just explained that. Okay, so

Steve Madrone

yes, Maddie covered all this last week. So well.

Joseph Orozco

thank you for sharing. "Sure." Why Couldn't there be a nonprofit organization? You got non commercial education media already, we got KIDE and KEET TV, non commercial education services. And why couldn't they entertain that type of, "Exactly."

Steve Madrone

Yeah. I mean, you got the hardware there and everything. It's like, come on.

Joseph Orozco

Yeah, well, well, our Public Utilities District just submitted an application probably won't germinate for a couple of years. More years yet, I have hope it is approved. And we suspect that it will be approved because they're asking us to do it. Yeah. So that's in the works. And that's going to make that connection to the Karuk and 299. Yeah, lines here. So yeah, looking forward to that.

Steve Madrone

Yeah. That's the new normal part. We like, you know, these kinds of emergencies. The silver lining is that it presents opportunity for communities and government to think about, how can we make all of this better, you know, and that's going to be part of the new normal is allowing for increased capacity for people to work from home, get educated from home and all these kinds of things, and it will serve as well in the future.

Joseph Orozco

Well, it just so happens, we're shopping around or there's been a recent pool of interviews for a new Superintendent for the Klamath Trinity Joint Unified School District, "I saw that Yeah, yeah." So we have to put that on the table here.

Steve Madrone

That's right. That's exactly right.

Joseph Orozco

Yep. Look forward to that. Thank you for sharing that information. Well, yeah,

Steve Madrone

Well, yeah that's exciting. That's exciting stuff that if we can get some real serious positives out of all this, then the rest of it, will come back together over time. But let's let's take care of each other. Right.

Joseph Orozco

Absolutely. Is there anything else you'd like to talk about at this time?

Steve Madrone

Oh, well, you know, I'm looking forward to getting back to the normal stuff of fighting for the water on the Trinity River, you know, that we have a right to. And getting people working in our forest doing thinning and other projects, and working to get the the Modular Facility at Hoopa back up and running, maybe building Tiny Homes and things like that to help with our homeless, homelessness issues and other things. So everybody, the answer I know I am to get back to the work at hand and focus in on what's going on. I look forward to renewing my monthly office hours in Willow Creek, just as soon as the shelter in place is lifted, I will re-initiate those.

Steve Madrone

Those will be on the third Wednesday of every month at the Willow Creek Library from 10 till two o'clock and I am also working to establish office hours in Hoopa. And in Weitphec, at the Yurok tribal headquarters as well as up in Orleans. So come June or so, I am very hopeful that I'll be able to reestablish and start those new office hours in order to provide better access for both folks in the Trinity Valley to their supervisor and to county government.

Steve Madrone

So I look forward to that I really enjoy that time getting out with people. You know, it's not always easy to get over there. So I'm more than willing to make that effort. It's part of my District. And I look forward to talking with people.

Joseph Orozco

I look forward to you opening these office. Yeah. And a simple phone call works just as well for us anyway, because we share a lot of information and its just not a broad conversation with more people.

Steve Madrone

That's true. That's true. I'm always available by phone. And by email, though, sometimes it can take a little while to get back with it or not. I get a lot of calls and emails every day, but that's the job. Right? That's absolutely.

Joseph Orozco

Thank you for doing that. Good, work.

Steve Madrone

Well, thank you, Joe.

Joseph Orozco

So with that, maybe we can make arrangements to do a follow up and find out maybe in another week, maybe a couple of weeks.

Steve Madrone

That sounds great. Yeah, I think that'd be really good. Everybody. You know, on one level, we're getting way too much information. And on another level, we're not quite getting the information we need when we need it. Right. So, right. It's tricky to find that but I'd be more than happy to do a weekly or every other week update with with you all.

Joseph Orozco

Very good. All right. Thank you very much for your time and your work.

Steve Madrone

Thank you. Take care,

Joseph Orozco

you too.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>