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## A Word from the President Sept. 25, 2020

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*CIRI President and CEO Sophie Minich*

My fellow CIRI shareholders and descendants:

Fall is in the air and change is upon us! While news headlines have been dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic, West Coast wildfires and Black Lives Matter movement, it is important to remember that we are less than six weeks away from the U.S. general election. On **Tuesday, Nov. 3**, we will be called upon to exercise one of our basic rights of citizenship by voting for the national, state and local candidates we believe will best represent us.

This year, along with the presidential election, one of Alaska's two U.S. Senate seats and its lone U.S. House of Representatives seat will be decided. Additionally, all 40 seats in the Alaska State House of Representatives and 10 seats in the Alaska Senate are up for election. There has arguably never been a more important time for Alaska Native/American Indian (AN/AI) voters to make their voices heard!

In most states, including Alaska, voters may [apply](#) online for absentee mail-in ballots (the State also plans to send paper absentee ballot applications to all registered voters 65 years of age and older). Information about mail-in and early in-person voting for each state, including the first day you can cast your ballot, may be found [here](#). Keep in mind that Alaska's voter registration

deadline is Oct. 3 for mail-in voting and Oct. 4 for in-person voting.

## **2020 U.S. Census**

The last day to complete the U.S. census questionnaire is **Wednesday, Sept. 30**. AN/AI people go uncoun­ted more often than other groups, which means they don't receive an equal share of federal resources, services or political representation. The census has only 10 questions and takes less than 10 minutes to complete, yet billions of dollars are at stake and the results will lay the groundwork for the next 10 years of federal funding decisions. The census may be completed [online](#) or by calling (844) 330-2020.

To encourage AN/AI people to respond to the census, First Alaskans Institute is offering prizes to Alaska residents who have completed the census or commit to completing it by Sept. 30. Simply fill out the online [entry form](#) to be entered to win \$1,000 weekly cash prizes and a grand-prize drawing of \$3,500 or your choice of other fantastic prizes!

## **Alaska Federation of Natives Convention – 'Good Government, Alaskans Decide'**

The 2020 Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) Convention will be held virtually **Thursday, Oct. 15 and Friday, Oct. 16**. This is an excellent opportunity for everyone, regardless of where they live, to tune in!

The Convention will feature a combination of live and pre-recorded presentations by Alaska Native leaders and elected officials, interactive panels, the announcement of the AFN President's Awards and more. The popular cultural performances, known as Qujana Alaska, will be presented over two evenings as a best-of-show using previously recorded performances.

The Convention will be viewable on certain Alaska television stations, [KNBA 90.3 FM](#), social media and video platforms, and via webcast. For more information, including an event agenda, visit the AFN [website](#).

## **September is National Suicide Prevention Month**

Suicide is a major public health concern and among the leading causes of death in the U.S. In 2018, it was the second-leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 10 and 34, and the fourth-leading cause of death among individuals between the ages of 35 and 54. There were more than two-and-a-half times as many suicides (48,300) in the United States as there were homicides (18,800).

A 2019 report by Alaska public health officials showed suicides among Alaskans increased 13% between 2012 and 2017 and that suicide was the No. 1 cause of death for people between the ages of 10 and 64.

AN/AI people have the highest rates of suicide of any racial/ethnic group in the U.S., and the rates of suicide in this population have been increasing since 2003. Complex, interrelated factors contribute to the escalating rates, including

economic deprivation, the loss of culture, alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence and a lack of access to mental-health services.

As the COVID-19 pandemic spreads and has longer-term effects on the general population, the economy and vulnerable groups, suicide is likely to become an even more pressing concern. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the pandemic has added intense emotional and mental stress to the lives of people around the world. Fear, anxiety and depression can stem from a wide range of concerns and experiences, from personal and family issues to work-related stress.

While suicide prevention is important to address year-round, Suicide Prevention Month provides a dedicated time to come together with collective passion and strength around a difficult topic. We must not be afraid of speaking up and seeking help.

- There are a variety of resources available to help you know how to talk to someone you are worried about, including on the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention's [website](#).
- If you or someone you know is in an emergency, call 911 immediately.
- If you are in crisis or are experiencing difficult or suicidal thoughts, call the National Suicide Hotline at (800) 273-TALK or text 741-741.
- In Alaska, Southcentral Foundation's Denaa Yeets' program provides services to AN/AI adults at risk for suicide or who have experienced the death of a loved one from suicide. For information, call (907) 729-5260 / (800) 478-3343.

For more information, visit the websites for the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) or the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#).

### **Contacting Us**

A reminder that while the Fireweed Business Center remains closed to the public, the Shareholder Relations department can nonetheless be reached by phone at (907) 263-5191 / (800) 764-2474 and via [email](#) during normal business hours. With no on-site staff, calls will go to voicemail. Please leave a message and a Shareholder Relations team member will return your call. Please note that because staff are working from home, calls made to shareholders will not display CIRI's name or phone number. [Qenek](#), the shareholder portal, remains available 24/7.

Stay safe and healthy, and please remember to **complete your census by Wednesday, Sept. 30 and to VOTE in the U.S. general election on Tuesday, Nov. 3!**

Warm regards,  
Sophie Minich

