

To our Wonderful Methow Community:

In the early days of the pandemic, as COVID-19 cases began to rise, PPE (personal protective equipment) became scarce, even to front line medical workers. Home sewers across the nation rose to meet that challenge and began sewing cloth surgical masks. Methow Valley sewers, quilters and the Quilting Hive in Twisp joined their ranks, devising creative solutions to the shortage of other supplies, including elastic. In mid March, a group of valley residents banded together to provide an organized mechanism to collect and deliver masks to health care providers and others in dire need of masks. Methow Valley PPE was born.

The website <<https://methowvalleyppe.wixsite.com/website> > provided a link to order masks, as well as information on how to sew and wear masks. Collection boxes were deployed at the Winthrop Town Hall, the Mazama Store and the Twisp Grange where inventory was also sorted, stored and packaged for delivery from Mazama to Pateros. Methow Valley PPE became the conduit between sewers and community organizations and individuals needing masks.

In late March, eqpd gear joined the effort. As a small factory, they were able to provide mask kits that expedited home sewn mask production, and over 275 kits, making ten masks each, have been provided to community sewers. By the end of June, 9,000 masks will have been donated to health care providers, businesses and individuals.

Since March, much has changed. Masks, both disposable and reusable, are now readily available including from the local manufacturer eqpd. No longer urgently needed, donations of home sewn masks have dramatically decreased, as sewers respond to other demands in their work and daily lives. Methow Valley PPE will also take a break until — if and when — needed again. The website will remain, but inactive.

Research has shown that masks do help reduce corona virus transmission, especially when all parties wear masks and practice physical distancing – **the reasoning behind the new Washington State requirement to wear masks in public spaces**. The commitment of sewers to help slow the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 and keep us all healthy is tremendously appreciated.

A BIG thank you to all Methow Valley sewers. Stay safe. Wear your mask.

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