

September 17, 2013

Reconciliation Week Proclaimed in British Columbia

VANCOUVER – The Government of British Columbia has proclaimed that Sept. 16-22, 2013, shall be known as Reconciliation Week.

Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation John Rustad announced the proclamation today, ahead of the sixth national Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) event in Vancouver.

The proclamation acknowledges the important work of Reconciliation Canada and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. It also acknowledges the injustices and harm experienced by the survivors of Indian Residential Schools, the affected families and the need for continued healing.

The Government of B.C. encourages Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal British Columbians to participate in Reconciliation Week activities in Vancouver this week. In particular, the TRC will be gathering and witnessing survivor statements. In an open invitation, the commission invites people to share their truths, and to witness and celebrate the resilience of Aboriginal cultures.

In proclaiming Reconciliation Week in B.C., the Government of British Columbia remains committed to creating a new path to move forward with dignity and in the true spirit of reconciliation.

Quotes:

John Rustad, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation –

“Reconciliation is our collective journey and an opportunity for us all to make our individual contribution to healing the terrible wound left behind by Indian Residential Schools.”

“Healing the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians will take time, sincere effort, education and understanding toward those who are still experiencing the impacts of Indian Residential Schools today. Together, we must create a new path to move forward with dignity and in the true spirit of reconciliation.”

Quick Facts:

- On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper, on behalf of all Canadians, offered a historic formal apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools and sought

forgiveness for the students' suffering and for the damaging impact the schools had on Aboriginal culture, heritage and language.

- Indian Residential Schools operated from the 1870s until 1996, when the last school was closed. This covers more than five generations of Aboriginal people.
- More than 150,000 children, some as young as four years of age, attended government-funded, church-run residential schools. It is estimated that some 80,000 survivors are still alive today.
- Reconciliation Week, hosted by Reconciliation Canada and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, offers a significant opportunity toward healing the trauma and lasting impacts of Indian Residential Schools.
- Reconciliation Canada is a B.C.-based charity led by B.C. First Nations with the support of the First Nations Leadership Council, the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council and the Indian Residential Schools Survivors Society.
- Established in 2008, the TRC is one of the components of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, which was negotiated by the Government of Canada, Aboriginal organizations, the churches and former students. Its purpose is to create a lasting, positive legacy of the stories and experiences of Indian Residential School survivors.
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has organized seven national events across Canada, including one in Vancouver from Sept. 18-21.

Learn More:

- The B.C. proclamation for Reconciliation Week is available at:www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/oic/2013%20Proclamations/default.htm
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: www.trc.ca
- Reconciliation Canada: <http://reconciliationcanada.ca>

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