

New way of policing

Citizen staff

There's a new way of policing in two remote communities north of Prince George.

The RCMP have opened a satellite station in the village of Tsay Keh, formerly known as Ingenika, to serve people there and in Fort Ware.

Opened in January, the detachment was officially signed into existence during a special ceremony this week in both villages. Members of the Tsay Keh Dene say the opening represents four years of work.

Staffed with four Mounties, the contingent includes two native constables with the RCMP First Nations Community Policing Service.

Having a permanent body of police on the ground represents a change for the region that once was visited by the RCMP for only four days a month. Industrial growth in logging and mining in recent years has speeded up development in the area and makes the permanent force necessary, says Chief Johnny Pierre of the Tsay Keh.

"We've looked forward to this agreement for a long time," he said in a press release. "We have a good working relationship with the members and the service will benefit, not just our communities, but everyone living in this area of B.C."

Construction of the new office was financed by the band through logging operations. Ottawa and Victoria share the cost of the policing agreement with the federal government paying 52 per cent of the cost.

The office is a satellite of the Mackenzie RCMP detachment about 200 kilometres southeast of the villages, which lie near the north end of Williston Lake.

Bad year for fires

The forest fire situation in northern B.C. has finally quieted down after a near record number of fires and millions of dollars spent fighting them.

There have been 174 fires in the region thus far this year, compared to 83 through June

13 in 1994.

The Ware fire, about 425 kilometres north of Prince George, covers 15,000 hectares and has cost the provincial government about \$2 million to combat.

It's still burning, but is shrinking as crews move in from the edges. Since the fire has a 61-kilometre perimeter, work is expected to continue on the fire line for several weeks with people to watch over the remains as it burns out for the rest of the summer.

This has been a bad year for

fires. Crews also continue mopping up a large fire near Kluskus Lake about 80 kilometres west of Quesnel.

There were 1,909 lightning strikes between 4 p.m. Tuesday and 3:30 p.m. Wednesday in the Prince George Forest Region, the northeast quarter of the province. The lightning caused 11 small fires that crews went to work on Wednesday.

Controlling fires in B.C. has allowed the forest service to send crews and equipment to Alberta and Saskatchewan.

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