

local



Kevin Falcon, left, the provincial minister for health sciences, along with MLA Pat Bell, second from right, the provincial minister of forests and range, and MLA Shirley Bond, right, the transportation minister, hand over a cheque for \$500,000 to Marshall Smith, the executive director of the Baldy Hughes Addiction Treatment Centre and Therapeutic Community.

Citizen photo by David Mah

'Great program'

Provincial government finds \$500,000 for Baldy Hughes, to be used to renovate existing buildings

Sarah Makowsky
Citizen staff

Health Services Minister Kevin Falcon presented the Baldy Hughes Addiction Treatment Centre and Therapeutic Community with \$500,000 for renovations to existing buildings, Monday.

"We will continue to support what is a great program," said Falcon. Twenty-five per cent of people struggle with mental health or addiction issues and a stigma shouldn't be attached to that, he added.

Baldy Hughes is "changing lives, creating new lives," said MLA Pat Bell.

At Baldy Hughes, a participant's treatment is tailored based on individual need by combining

traditional therapy alongside academic education and employment skills development.

It has 80 to 85 beds available to provide treatment for people with addiction and homelessness issues. More than 225 patients from B.C. have been treated in the last 18 months.

At the ceremony, one resident was awarded with a one-year milestone medallion. This achievement is "the reason we're here today," said MLA Shirley Bond. It's important to celebrate each success.

"The future of addiction services lies with integrated programs like Baldy Hughes," said executive director Marshall Smith. Working at Baldy Hughes is the "most rewarding thing in the world."

He added that the program wouldn't be as successful as it is without community support, particularly from companies like Canadian Tire and Rona that employ some of the residents.

"I haven't had this much attention since the police found something in my trunk in downtown Calgary," joked former Baldy Hughes resident Dale Restler as he addressed the audience. He struggled with addiction for 20 years and is now clean and sober and back in the workforce.

Upon deciding to seek treatment, "I needed a place where I could go and relax and feel at home." He describes Baldy Hughes as a "piece of heaven. It really changed my life."

smakowsky@pgcitizen.ca

Narrow vote defeated proposed LTFN treaty in 2007

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"I understand the investment they made, but we have to do things in a proper sense for our community, not for the satisfaction of Canada's government of the day. Why November 30 of all days? That's not even the end of the fiscal year. I think that is unfair of them to drop it on us."

Abbott is remaining patient.

"This is a decision the Lheidli T'enneh have to make. We will certainly support them," said Abbott, who confirmed the province had, as a sign of good faith, kept their part of the 2007 tripartite proposal on the table.

"If they want another vote, we will also be happy to provide resources for education so (LTFN) members know what the vote and the treaty is about, so they can feel confident making an informed decision."

Since the LTFN voters turned the first proposal down on March 30, 2007, by a margin of 111 in favour to 123 opposed, other British Columbia aboriginal groups have signed their own treaty agreements. Abbott said that is valuable experience because First

Nations like the Lheidli T'enneh can now see what a modern treaty looks like and operates like in practice.

"There is considerably more understanding and momentum behind the B.C. Treaty Process now than when the Lheidli T'enneh did their first vote," said Abbott.

"It might have seemed like a more dramatic step back then than it does now."

Frederick said he wasn't going to guess at the LTFN public's position, he was going to wait for the committee to do its work. But he felt confident they could, although grudgingly, get a definitive answer about a re-vote in time for the federal government's demanded deadline.

fpeebles@pgcitizen.ca

Good news on the forest fire front

Serena Black
Citizen staff

The fire at Bull Canyon, west of Alexis Creek, reached complete containment over the weekend.

Though firefighters were challenged by the steep terrain, crews were able to build guards by hand and with heavy machinery, stopping the fire's spread and diminishing fire activity.

The fire has been mapped at 177 hectares.

The Tsacha Lake fire near Kluskus, 140 kilometres west of Quesnel, is now 90 per cent

contained.

Helicopters are dropping water to cool flare-ups within the fire perimeter, and crews are extinguishing hot spots. Eighty wildland firefighters are working in conjunction with heavy equipment to build fire guards around the flanks of the fire.

Today crews are continuing to work toward complete containment of the 450 hectare fire.

Much of the Cariboo region remains in an extreme fire danger rating.

To report a wildfire or unattended campfire call *5555 on your cell phone, or 1-800-663-5555.

Paving project gets under way on University Way

Citizen staff

The City of Prince George will have road rehabilitation crews on University Way from Monday through Wednesday.

The project involves the south-bound lanes from 15th Avenue

up to the Shane Creek Bridge.

Asphalt milling will happen until sometime Tuesday followed by paving that should be complete by Wednesday.

The estimated investment in this project is \$573,000 and will cover about 2.5 lane kilometres of roadway.

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Thumbs Up Good News Story of the Week

Sir Elton John

This could only be one man's concert — Elton John came to town and blew past all our standards for a great concert at CN Centre.

We want to be entertained, we want the music to move us, the artist to charm us, the lights to dazzle, the sound system to eclipse anything we've ever heard before.

No one was disappointed. Everyone in attendance rose to their feet time and time again to show appreciation for the incredible talent that is Elton John. It wasn't so much a concert as it was one long standing ovation.

You may have heard some people had what were considered to be the worst seats in the house. Well, those souls at the back of the 360 degree stage, the last rows in what might be called the nose-bleed section — those people were invited to secretly-held reserved seats in the very front row. It's true. It was a dream come true, said one benefactor of that little twist Sir Elton threw into the mix.

Ah, you just have to love him a little more for that thoughtful thrill he gave to his fans.

Elton John was at the centre of the spotlight for a CN Centre concert that will not soon be forgotten in these parts. More than 6,200 turned out on Friday night for a show that still has people talking.

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