

# Mayor unveils program to tag graffiti

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The City of Prince George unveiled a program Friday aimed at combating graffiti.

The program, Graffiti Free PG, provides the labour and supplies to paint over graffiti on private and business property at no cost. Property owners can apply by filling out a form on the city's website.

"We need to send a message to people who don't care about their community as deeply as the rest of us do that this city is not available to them for destructive vandalism," said Mayor Shari Green.

"It's got a social cost, it's got an economic cost and we really do need to raise awareness about it and also the timely removal of it, because when it stays up for a long time that leads to other issues."

Studies have shown that when graffiti markings are left unattended for as little as a week, there's an almost 100 per cent chance additional graffiti will show up nearby, Green said.

"If you cover it up immediately, it sends a strong message that this wall isn't available," she said. Green added that graffiti can also be connected to gang activity.

RCMP Cpl. Craig Douglass said that graffiti can also make tourists and residents believe an area is more dangerous than it actually is.

The program, a partnership



Graffiti on the backside of Blackburn Community Hall was painted over by members of GroundWork PG Friday morning.

between the city, Enhance PG, GroundWork PG and Downtown Prince George, was borne from a recommendation from the Mayor's Task Force on Crime, which was

established to look at the comparatively higher crime rate in the city. A total of \$20,000 has been allocated to pay for supplies and labour.

"This is the first time it's been done in our community," Green said.

"So if it's a successful program, we're going to want to definitely

ensure we allocate some funds each year through our public safety initiatives to make sure it's a sustainable program."

Providing the labour for the project is GroundWork PG, which provides employment opportunities for men who are transitioning from incarceration into the community. Justin Foster, the organization's program co-ordinator, said the project would have a positive effect for those men.

"By being out in the community and giving back, we're showing Prince George that these guys may have committed a crime at one point but they've [paid] their debt to society and here they are giving back and showing that they can be part of our community," he said.

The program was announced at Blackburn Community Hall, where the GroundWork labourers painted over a back wall with graffiti. Green said the location was chosen for a specific purpose: the city has pockets of graffiti everywhere, not just in the city centre.

"People who are participating in graffiti are looking for places that are a little bit hidden when they can spend some time and not be noticed," she said, pointing out that the back wall faced out toward a field where nobody could see it. "If this is unattended, it just sends a signal to the [vandal] that they have just come back tomorrow and do it again because clearly nobody cares."



The smoke haze that has settled over Prince George, as seen from Highway 16 East.

## Hazy sky prompts air advisory

Citizen staff

The forest fires raging outside of town have caused Prince George's air to become hazy and the Ministry of Environment to issue an air quality advisory.

Ralph Adams, an air quality meteorologist with the ministry, said the hazy air is likely coming from the smoke produced by the Red Deer Creek fire, located northeast of Prince George near Tumbler Ridge.

"We tend to have these kind of events in summers where we have large forest fires burning," Adams said. "There's not much we can do in terms of controlling it. The guys that are fighting the fires are doing their best."

The wind also affects the amount of particulate that reaches Prince George. Adams said that on Friday morning particulate levels rose while after the wind shifted at around noon they went down.

Real-time air quality information in Prince George is available at [bcairquality.ca](http://bcairquality.ca).

Free public transit will be available today until the advisory is lifted. The program is used as an incentive for drivers to consider leaving their vehicles at home and take the bus to reduce emissions to improve air quality.

The City's Clean Air Bylaw prohibits all open burning, including backyard burning and land clearing burning while an air quality advisory is in effect.

During these periods recreational fires and street sweeping activities are prohibited, as is the use of wood-burning appliances, except for sole wood burning heat users.

Residents should avoid strenuous activities and seek medical care if having trouble

breathing, chest pain or discomfort, sudden coughing or irritation of airways. Exposure is particularly a concern with infants and the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, lung or heart disease.

For information on the City's Clean Air Bylaw, please contact city hall at 250-561-7600 or visit the City's website at [www.princegeorge.ca](http://www.princegeorge.ca).

## Open fire ban put into effect for region

A ban on open fires has come into effect for the provincial parks, Crown lands and private land outside municipalities in the Prince George Fire Centre to help prevent human-caused wildfires.

The Fort Nelson fire zone is exempted from the prohibition, which also does not ban campfires that are a half-metre high by a half-metre wide or smaller, and it does not apply to cooking stoves that use gas, propane or briquettes.

However the ban does apply to the burning of any waste, slash or other materials, stubble or grass fires of any size over any area and the use of fireworks, sky lanterns or burning barrels of any size or description.

Those lighting campfires must maintain a fireguard by removing flammable debris from around the campfire area and must have a hand tool or at least eight litres of water available nearby to properly extinguish the fire.

The prohibition will remain in effect until Sept. 30, or until the public is otherwise notified.

## RCMP's new detachment open for public tours today

Citizen staff

The Prince George RCMP will be offering one last chance today for the public to get a look its new home.

The tours run 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and there are a few catches – anyone 18 years or older must bring government-issued photo identification, no photographs are allowed and the tours are open only to law-abiding citizens.

"Officers and staff retain the right to refuse access to those that do not meet this standard," RCMP said.

Also, it's first come, first serve with no reservations. Wait times are likely – large numbers were drawn to similar events on Wednesday and Thursday evenings – and larger groups are asked to call the detachment to arrange tours on an alternate date.

Located at 455 Victoria St., the RCMP moved into the new surroundings in late April.

The \$38.95-million, 63,636-square-foot detachment replaced the Prince George RCMP's old home at 10th and Brunswick.

That building is 32,776 square feet in size and was built in 1972.

## Summer setting up well for event

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Poor weather has caused the Nechako River community float some problems in recent years. It has endured flooding, unseasonably cold temperatures, and rain, but so far, said Gray, this summer is setting up well for a successful event.

"We moved the date and are trying to add some entertainment along the float," he said. "This event was a great idea

made by P.G.ers for P.G. and is unique to the north. I want nothing more than for people to have a wonderful, safe time."

The Fifth Annual Huge River Float will be held Aug. 9 with a starting point at Wilkins Park in Miworth. "The posted start time is 12 noon, but I encourage people to come earlier and later because it is hard to get 100 people on the river at a time," said Gray.



## SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATION

The Prince George Community Foundation  
Invites Nominations for the:

# 2014 Citizen of the Year

The Prince George Community Foundation hosts the Annual Citizen of the Year event to recognize exemplary volunteer and philanthropic service. The nominee must have provided this service to the Community for a minimum of three years.

Nomination  
Deadline:  
**JULY  
31st**

Nomination forms are available online at [www.pgcf.ca](http://www.pgcf.ca)  
Completed Nomination forms can be dropped off to:  
**Neil Godbout at the Prince George Citizen,**  
150 Brunswick Street, Prince George. Ph 250-960-2759  
For further information please call: Murry Krause at 250-561-2772






## Summer FASHION SHOW

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