



January 22, 2018

New First Nations Court in Prince George to improve delivery of Justice

VANCOUVER, B.C. - Provincial Court Chief Judge Thomas J. Crabtree announced today that British Columbia's sixth First Nations Court, the Prince George Indigenous Court will open in Prince George in April 2018.

First Nations Courts currently operate in five B.C. communities - New Westminster, Duncan, Kamloops, North Vancouver and Merritt. The Indigenous Court working group in Prince George invited the Provincial Court to work with them to develop a court process that could help address the overrepresentation of indigenous people involved in the criminal justice system.

As a result of their initiative, the Court was involved in the process of consultation and planning with First Nations, B.C.'s Ministry of Attorney General, the community of Prince George, B.C. Community Corrections, lawyers, the Legal Services Society, The Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of B.C., the Law Foundation, police, and support services groups.

Today's announcement is a significant step in the ongoing process of community involvement in the creation of innovative solutions to improve the delivery of justice. In April 2018, the Court will begin sitting monthly at the Prince George courthouse.

The opening ceremony for the Court will take place on March 23, 2018. Further details to follow in due course. The event is open to the public.

A First Nations Court is a sentencing court. It provides an indigenous perspective, based on a holistic and restorative approach, to sentencing indigenous persons who have acknowledged responsibility for their criminal offence(s). Local Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers who have completed a program of orientation give advice on a healing plan. The healing plan may then be incorporated as part of a fit sentence for the Indigenous person who has pled guilty.

For more information, please contact the Legal Officer, Office of the Chief Judge, at:

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Thomas J. Crabtree
Chief Judge
Provincial Court of British Columbia