



NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier
Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
Government of Canada
Daylu Dena Council

Canada, B.C., Daylu Dena Council partner to build new cultural centre, demolish former residential school

LOWER POST, B.C. - Together, Canada, British Columbia and Indigenous peoples are working in partnership to deliver infrastructure projects that meet the interests and needs of Indigenous communities and help advance reconciliation for the benefit of current and future generations of all people in Canada.

Funding to build a new multi-purpose community building in the Kaska Dena community of Lower Post and to demolish the former residential school building was announced during a virtual event attended by Harlan Schilling, Deputy Chief of Daylu Dena Council; Marc Miller, federal Minister of Indigenous Services, on behalf of Catherine McKenna, federal Minister of Infrastructure and Communities; and John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia. They were also joined by Chad Norman Day, President of Tahltan Central Government, John D. Ward, Spokesperson for Taku River Tlingit First Nation, Carolyn Bennett, federal Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations; Murray Rankin, B.C.'s Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation; Josie Osborne, B.C.'s Minister of Municipal Affairs; and Nathan Cullen, B.C.'s Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations and MLA for Stikine.

Reflecting the community's interests, culture and traditions, the new facility will provide much needed recreational, educational and cultural spaces for older youth and Elders and the broader community, and will accommodate administrative offices for Daylu Dena Council. The facility will include program rooms for beading, storytelling and Elder's Tea, an indoor gym, an industrial kitchen, a garden and other outdoor recreational areas. It will replace the remaining portion of the former Lower Post residential school that served as office space until it was permanently closed due to water damage in June 2020.

The Government of Canada is investing \$11.5 million to build the new facility, including \$10 million from Infrastructure Canada's Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, and \$1.5 million from Indigenous Services Canada. The Government of British Columbia is investing \$1.5 million, and Daylu Dena Council is contributing \$538,960. Indigenous Services Canada is providing an additional \$1.3 million to remove hazardous materials and demolish the remaining structure of the former residential school.

Quotes:

Harlan Schilling, Deputy Chief, Daylu Dena Council -

"The Lower Post Residential School building has been a dark cloud over our people for far too long and stood in the center of our community as a reminder of a painful past. It was the only building in our community that we could use for our government. It held our offices, our post office and it was a place that people would have to enter every day. Many could not enter it because of painful memories. The one torch that has been passed on from Leader to Leader was to get rid of that building and get our people a new one.

"We are extremely proud of the work that we have done with the federal and provincial governments to demolish the residential school and to have a new building for our community. It has been a long time in coming, and I want to thank all the previous Chiefs who went before me for their commitment to achieve this. Removal of the residential school building and construction of the multi-purpose cultural center will finally allow our community to grow. The multi-purpose building will be the heart and soul of our community. It will be a place for social programs, our economic development, but most importantly it will be a safe place for people to feel proud and happy to enter each day."

Catherine McKenna, federal Minister of Infrastructure and Communities -

"The new Daylu Dena multi-purpose community building will offer the community a welcoming place to gather, be active, and share cultural experiences. In partnership with Indigenous peoples, provinces and territories, we continue our work to advance reconciliation and ensure Indigenous communities have the tools needed to succeed and ensure the well-being of their people. Closing the infrastructure gap in Indigenous communities is an important part of reconciliation, and a Canadian imperative for the well-being and economic health of our country."

Marc Miller, federal Minister of Indigenous Services -

"The Government of Canada has been working closely with Daylu Dena Council on remediation of the former residential school site in Lower Post since 1993. We will be supporting the demolition of the remaining structure guided by Daylu Dena Council's timelines and priorities on behalf of the Lower Post community and the needs of Residential School Survivors so that this dark chapter of the community's history can finally come to a close. We're also proud to work with federal and provincial partners to support Daylu Dena Council's efforts to build a new facility which will better suit community needs and support healing."

Carolyn Bennett, federal Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations -

"Addressing the terrible legacy of residential schools is at the heart of reconciliation between Indigenous peoples who attended these schools, their families and communities, and all Canadians. We support Daylu Dena Council's longstanding efforts to build a new facility for the community to gather, celebrate and learn, while also removing what remains of the Lower Post residential school in a way that is meaningful and that will support healing for those affected."

John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia -

"When I walked through the residential school building in Lower Post in 2019, I could see from the Elders with me that this was a place of terrible trauma. I want to acknowledge Daylu Dena Council for their unflagging commitment to closing a chapter that has been a source of pain for the community for so long. The new community centre will be a place of healing, hope and well-being."

Murray Rankin, B.C.'s Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation -

"The former residential school building in Lower Post has been an unwelcome reminder of a painful past for the community for far too long. Demolishing it and replacing it with a welcoming place for community members to gather together will be an important step forward for reconciliation with the Kaska people and Indigenous peoples throughout the north, one that supports healing and the health and well-being of residential school survivors and their families in the region, and everyone who lives in Lower Post."

Josie Osborne, B.C.'s Minister of Municipal Affairs -

"The removal of the former residential building and construction of the new community centre are vital investments in reconciliation and in people. They show us what can be achieved when we work together to make a difference in people's lives. This multi-cultural space will serve the people of Lower Post and Kaska Dena for years to come, bringing people together, preserving heritage and culture, and promoting community, health and healing."

Nathan Cullen, B.C.'s Minister of State for Lands and Natural Resource Operations and MLA for Stikine -

"A dear friend and elder from the Wet'suwet'en once told me that our challenge as the elected governments in Canada wasn't to tell Indigenous peoples what reconciliation means but to show them. This work will never end and the steps we are taking today, together, the Kaska Dena, B.C. and Canada, moves us that much closer to not only acknowledging the crimes of the past but working towards the healing of the harms done. As the representative for Stikine I am humbled to bear witness to this good work being done today and thank the Kaska Dena for their hospitality and courage."

Chad Norman Day, President of Tahltan Central Government -

"As Indigenous brothers and sisters, as Nations, and as governments, we made a commitment to tear this former school down. Today we are taking those steps together to not only end a dark chapter in Canada's history but to rebuild in its place a new centre, focused on wellness, and a building for everyone that can make them proud. I pray the removal of this building brings healing and a new chapter of prosperity. I commend all the Kaska leaders, and all of those who have worked relentlessly to bring us to this point today. It's been our privilege as Tahltan leadership and people, and our duty to stand beside you in this fight to build a better future for all peoples and the generations to come. I'm sure our Ancestors are smiling."

John D. Ward, Spokesperson, Taku River Tlingit First Nation -

"On Oct. 1, 2019, Premier Horgan sat with the 3 Nations and he made some big promises. Now we are about to celebrate his follow through on those commitments. This is a really great start to the healing from everything that happened in the Lower Post mission school. It's going to take so much more than a new facility to reconcile the past, however, it is gaining momentum. We are all healing together, our people, the Church, the government, and all Canadians. I am glad we are getting on with this so that the next generation do not have to pay for it. It is our responsibility to finish this business about mission school. This community building will be a shining example of strong relationships that have been forged in recent years. The new structure will house many events and gatherings to bring our communities together to learn from each other, to heal, and to celebrate. I want to share my gratitude to Kaska leadership, Deputy Chief Harlan, Premier Horgan, and both provincial and federal governments, for keeping the dream alive and getting us to this momentous milestone."

Quick Facts:

- Through the Investing in Canada Plan, the Government of Canada is investing more than \$180 billion over 12 years in public transit projects, green infrastructure, social infrastructure, trade and transportation routes, and Canada's rural and northern communities.
- In British Columbia, Infrastructure Canada has invested over \$110 million in Indigenous infrastructure projects under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.
- A National Indian Residential School Crisis Line is available to provide support for residential school survivors. Survivors can access trained crisis counsellors by calling the 24-Hour National Crisis Line: 1 866 925-4419.

Multimedia:

- Video: <https://youtu.be/26Agw0hMgr4>
- Photos: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/bcgovphotos/Rj6cs2>

Learn More:

Investing in Canada Plan Project Map: <http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/gmap-gcarte/index-eng.html>

Federal infrastructure investments in British Columbia
<https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/investments-2002-investissements/bc-eng.html>

Investing in Canada: Canada's Long-Term Infrastructure Plan:
<https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/plan/icp-publication-pic-eng.html>

Investing in First Nations community infrastructure: <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1526995988708/1526996020578>

Daylu Dena Council website: <https://kaskadenacouncil.com/daylu-dena-council/>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

Partnering to build a new community building and demolish former residential school in Lower Post

The Government of Canada is investing \$11.5 million to build the new multi-purpose community building, including \$10 million from Infrastructure Canada's Community, Culture and Recreation Infrastructure Stream of the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program, and \$1.5 million from Indigenous Services Canada. The Government of British Columbia is investing \$1.5 million, and Daylu Dena Council is contributing \$538,960.

Furthermore, Indigenous Services Canada is contributing an additional \$1.3 million through the First Nations Solid Waste Management Initiative for the removal of hazardous materials and demolition of the remaining part of the former Lower Post Residential School. Between 2016-2019, \$4 million was provided through the Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan to assess and remediate the site.

Features of the new facility

Reflecting the community's interests, culture and traditions, the new facility will provide administrative, recreational, educational, and cultural spaces for older youths and Elders.

This multi-purpose facility will include:

- outdoor recreational areas, landscaping and garden installations
- an indoor gym
- an industrial kitchen
- program rooms for beading, storytelling, and Elder's Tea
- administrative offices and meeting spaces

The facility will be a viable space to deliver social programs and promote economic development. This multi-purpose building, at the heart of the community, will be a place of pride for Kaska Dena and will support healing and growth in the community.

Demolition of the former Lower Post residential school

The former Lower Post residential school has been a painful reminder of the legacy of the residential schools system, especially for those who attended the school from 1951 to 1975.

Since 1993, the Government of Canada has worked closely with Daylu Dena Council on the environmental remediation of the site where the former residential school was located, in preparation for the demolition of what's left of the building. Site remediation and hazardous materials removal are necessary to minimize any negative environmental impacts from the demolition or other related work.

Demolition of the remaining structure, which will be led by Daylu Dena Council, symbolizes healing and hope in the community. Indigenous Services Canada will continue to work with Daylu Dena Council until the demolition is completed.

Dismantling the last pieces of the former residential school and adding a new multi-purpose cultural building represent significant steps forward for reconciliation.

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