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British Columbia News

B.C. to mark Sept. 30 as day of commemoration

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Victoria - Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, and Selina Robinson, Minister of Finance, have released the following statement on marking the federal Truth and Reconciliation Day:

“Over the last two months Canadians have been coming to terms with what survivors of residential schools have always known. Indigenous peoples are bringing to light the true history of this country and the atrocities of the residential school system.

“We share the grief, the pain and the outrage and understand that we have a painful but necessary road ahead of us to walk together, to right wrongs and to support Indigenous communities who are carrying this ongoing burden with strength, resilience and leadership. The need has never been greater to listen and to learn about B.C.’s colonial history and to seek truth, justice and reconciliation. As government, we have an important role in this process, and we know that non-Indigenous British Columbians throughout the province want to play an active part in this critical work.

“In June, the federal government announced Sept. 30 as a new annual statutory day to commemorate the history and ongoing trauma caused by residential schools and to honour those who were lost and the survivors, families and communities who continue to grieve.

“In recent years, Sept. 30 has been known as Orange Shirt Day, so called because of the residential school experiences of the campaign’s founder, Phyllis Webstad. It is a day when we honour the children who suffered in the residential school system, and many residential school survivors and supporters have advocated for this to become a national day of commemoration, to respond to one of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action.

“Over the coming months, the Province will work with Indigenous leaders, organizations and communities on the best and most respectful ways to mark Truth and Reconciliation Day here in B.C., followed by engagement with business and labour stakeholders for their perspectives on how the national day is commemorated in future years.

“The national holiday will be observed this Sept. 30 by federal employees and workers in federally regulated workplaces. We have advised provincial public-sector employers to honour this day and in recognition of the obligations in the vast majority of collective agreements. Many public services will remain open but may be operating at reduced levels. However, most schools, post-secondary institutions, some health sector workplaces, and Crown corporations will be closed.

“Our government is calling on all of us who deliver services to the public to use this opportunity to consider what each of us can do as individuals to advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and to recommit to understanding the truth of our shared history, to accept and learn from it and in doing so, help to create a better, more inclusive British Columbia.”

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