



June 16, 2010

Alberta government celebrates National Aboriginal Day 2010 *New project to enhance safe communities through cultural ties*

Edmonton... The Government of Alberta helped kick-off National Aboriginal Day celebrations across Canada by hosting a noon-hour gathering in downtown Edmonton and announcing a new Safe Communities Innovation Fund pilot project.

“This cultural showcase is one of many ways the Alberta government recognizes the important role and contribution of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in the social, cultural and economic life of our province,” said Len Webber, Minister of Aboriginal Relations. “Aboriginal people and communities are vital to Alberta’s future prosperity and success, and we are proud to celebrate that fact.”

At the National Aboriginal Day celebrations, Webber announced funding for the *Enhancing Safe, Diverse Communities through Cultural Community Groups* project. The project targets Aboriginal and immigrant/refugee communities in Edmonton. It is being coordinated by REACH Edmonton: Council for Safe Communities in partnership with the City of Edmonton. Under the 3-year pilot, the City and REACH Edmonton will work together with local agencies to design and deliver crime prevention strategies based on culture. The goal is to create an enhanced support network to help people at-risk make connections to others from similar cultural backgrounds. It is expected this will build a sense of cultural pride, belonging and community engagement, which will help reduce risk factors in these communities.

The Alberta government will provide \$500,000 for the project each year for three years. It is one of 14 projects designed to build safer communities, reduce crime and address the needs of at-risk members of Alberta’s Aboriginal community. The Safe Communities Innovation Fund builds on the work of the Safe Communities initiative to address crime on an immediate basis, as well as over the long term. For more information please visit: <http://www.safecommunities.gov.ab.ca/scif>.

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations provides leadership on Aboriginal issues and builds relationships with Aboriginal communities, the federal government, industry and other partners to strengthen social and economic opportunities for Aboriginal people in Alberta. National Aboriginal Day is celebrated annually on June 21 in Alberta and across Canada. A list of events can be viewed at www.aboriginal.alberta.ca.

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