



NEWS RELEASE

Lower Post Residential School Ceremonial Demolition and Ground Blessing Ceremony for New Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre

JUNE 30, 2021 - LOWER POST, B.C. – On June 30, 2021, British Columbia, Yukon, Canada, the Kaska Nation, and Indigenous peoples from across the north are coming together to witness the ceremonial demolition of the Lower Post Residential School.

The Lower Post Residential School operated from 1951 until its closing on June 30, 1975, and has been used as an administration building for Daylu Dena Council since that time. Lower Post Residential School survivors, their families and their supporters, community members and Indigenous and Government leaders from all levels are coming together to share in this historic moment in recognition of the trauma, grief, and devastation of the past.

The community's hearts and prayers are coming together in solidarity, support and commitment to our brothers and sisters in Tk'emplups te Secwépemc and Cowessess First Nations and we share in their grief and loss.

To honour the Kaska Nation interests, culture, and traditions, a blessing of the ground for the construction of a new community Multi-Purpose Cultural Center will take place at the June 30 Gathering. This new Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre will be a place of healing, celebration, and community strength for the future of our Nation. Together we celebrate the incredible resiliency of Indigenous peoples.

This act of reconciliation among leaders, will ensure that our partnerships remain strong, long-lasting, reciprocal, and marked by continued listening and action. This event has been long awaited. By closing the Residential School building in Lower Post, and the horrendous history it holds within it, we are dedicated to working together for a healthy future.

"We are proud to finally be demolishing the residential school in our community. I thank the leaders that came before me who have fought for this for years. Their hard work, the strength of our community, and the support of so many other Nations have made this day a reality. I send out my sincerest thank you to all who have worked with us to finally put this building and its dark history in the past. We are now looking forward to the construction of the new multi-purpose building in our community. Just as the community of Lower Post has served as a meeting place along the river for the Kaska to gather, this new building will serve as a space for all."

-- Deputy Chief Harlan Schilling, Daylu Dena Council

“We will continue working to support our citizens to help them overcome the deep, inter-generational trauma inflicted by the Lower Post Residential School. Together, we are embarking on a path of empowerment; one that celebrates our traditions, our culture and our resiliency as Kaska people, and represents the true intent of reconciliation and what the future will look like. I am very humbled to stand here today and be a part of this historic event and our Nations’ call to action for change so that all Indigenous communities from coast to coast to coast can grow and thrive.”

-- Chief Stephen Charlie, Liard First Nation

“The Lower Post Residential School represents a shameful period in Canada’s history – one that failed Indigenous peoples and their communities. Today, with the demolition of this building and the eventual construction of a new cultural centre, we take a further step to removing the trauma and pain felt by too many of the Kaska people and the survivors of Residential Schools in the North. We all have a role to play in walking the shared path of reconciliation, and the Government of Canada remains committed to working with Indigenous people and communities to right past wrongs and build a better future for everyone.”

-- The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada

“This building has been a constant source of fear, anger and sadness for residents of Lower Post. For many elders in the community, it has meant returning to the very rooms where they were abused. Let us not turn away from the past but let us honour this important moment of healing in Lower Post and continue to work together toward reconciliation and a better future for our children and grandchildren.”

-- Hon. John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia

“The history of the Lower Post Residential School, like all residential schools across Canada, is tragic and shameful. Many survivors and their family members live in the Yukon and devastating impacts of residential school continue to be felt throughout the territory. Today’s ceremony is an important step forward on the path of reconciliation. We must continue to move forward together, learning from the past and building a stronger, healthier future.”

-- Hon. Sandy Silver, Premier of Yukon