



City of Maple Ridge News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Update: St Anne Camp Evacuation

Maple Ridge, BC: Late Friday afternoon, March 1, the City of Maple Ridge was advised that an Evacuation Order was issued for the St. Anne Camp site by the Provincial Fire Commissioner after an application by Maple Ridge Fire Chief Howard Exner. On Saturday, March 2, that evacuation was completed and the site was closed and secured.

The City of Maple Ridge's Emergency Support Services (ESS) team opened a Reception Centre at 12 noon on Saturday to provide meals and overnight accommodation for the evacuees from the St. Anne Camp; fifteen people registered for support and accommodations on Saturday. The ESS operation will continue until Noon on Tuesday March 5 at which time the operation will transition to the Salvation Army who will provide overnight emergency weather response services moving forward.

The Maple Ridge Fire Department began their work on the site today and removed a significant quantity of ignition sources and accelerants from the site. In total there were 34 propane cylinders removed from the site ranging from consumer to commercial sizes. Specifically, there were 10 one pound, 2 ten pound, 1 fifteen pound, 15 twenty pound, 2 thirty pound, 2 sixty pound and 2 one hundred pound propane cylinders removed and disposed of safely. In addition, the inspections located 2 two gasoline cans and an oil can. The City believes the majority of these items were newly brought onto the site following the inspections of February 23-24 and, during which time, approximately 100 propane tanks were removed from the site. Work will continue on Monday to locate any further ignition sources and accelerants on the site.

Due to the damage to the tree canopy from the most recent fires, a City arborist is assessing the safety of the tree canopy and vegetation on the site. Recommendations from the assessment will be forwarded to the Fire Department on Monday for consideration.

The site was secured overnight on Saturday and will continue to be patrolled 24 hours a day by security personnel supported by the police. A number of occupants were escorted onto the site today to retrieve personal items left behind in the evacuation.

In response to questions relating to the propane fuel supply for the warming tent, the City's understands that, in the absence of any propane supplier willing to deliver propane tanks to the site, BC Housing made arrangements on Friday to bring electrical heaters and an electrical generator to the site. Heat was restored to the warming tent at that time, albeit briefly, as the evacuation of the property commenced the following day. Contrary to some media reports, the City did not unilaterally deny power to the washroom trailer and heat to the warming tent, rather, Maple Ridge Fire Department responded to dangerous conditions created by tampering and which BC Housing has responded to.

Work will continue to clear the burned out areas of the property and address the accumulated debris and fire-safety related hazards in and around the site. Maple Ridge Fire Chief Exner is providing a briefing to the Provincial Fire Commissioner daily under the terms of the Evacuation Order.

The City of Maple Ridge is aware that the Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing, was asked a number of questions relating to the situation in Maple Ridge on Sunday, March 3 as part of a ground breaking event in Vancouver. Mayor Morden had the opportunity to meet with the Minister and her colleagues, along with the local MLAs, last week to explore housing need delivery of addiction and mental health services and community safety to address short and long terms needs for Maple Ridge. Those conversations are ongoing with our senior government partners.