

Penticton continues to support Provincial State of Emergency

(Penticton, BC – July 30, 2021) – With the Southern Interior of British Columbia facing challenging wildfire activity, the City of Penticton, with help from volunteers, businesses and not-for-profits, has been providing mutual aid to other municipalities since June 30.

The City has sent Fire Chief Larry Watkinson and other resources to various centres to provide structural protection over the past month. Penticton Emergency Support Services (ESS) has also been active since July 1. During this time, ESS volunteers have invested over 700 hours, provided some level of services to over 506 families, worked with 25 local businesses to provide services to evacuees, and established a group lodging facility in partnership with the Penticton Indian Band and Regional District of the Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS), should it be needed again for evacuees.

“Penticton ESS has seen hotels and motels bend over backwards to help find extra rooms for evacuees to sleep in, and malls are offering parking lots for evacuees to park their RVs” says the City’s Emergency Support Services Coordinator, Adam Goodwin. “We’ve also had remarkable volunteers give up most of their July to support evacuees from other communities, along with the amazing work being done by Animal Lifeline Emergency Response Team (ALERT) supporting evacuees’ livestock and animals across our region.”

Based on the unpredictability of wildfires, the City is monitoring the evolving wildfire emergency across the province to identify any additional opportunities the City of Penticton has to support our neighbours with fighting fires, protecting property, and supporting evacuees while ensuring Penticton has resources available, should they be needed for an event in Penticton. Residents are asked to think ahead and prepare a personal preparedness plan and consider how ready they are to evacuate in the event of a wildfire threat.

“I’m proud that our City’s experts and dedicated volunteer resources are available to assist others. Penticton received wide-spread support from other parts of BC during last summer’s Christie Mountain wildfire, so it’s nice to give back when others are in need now,” said Penticton Mayor, John Vassilaki. “For those calling the City asking what they can do for evacuees who’ve been forced to flee their homes to Penticton due to wildfires, we recommend donations to the Red Cross’s BC Fires Appeal or drop off gift cards to City Hall and Penticton ESS will distribute these to evacuees staying in our community.”

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