



Joint statement from Penticton Indian Band and City of Penticton concerning racist incident

(Penticton BC – August 12 2022) - Now that our region and community are enjoying all the fun filled activities of the summer months, we would like to remind everyone to please enjoy yourselves in a safe, responsible and respectful manner.

Regrettably we recently experienced a disturbing incident involving PIB youth who are employed with Coyote Cruises. These young student employees were subjected to racist slurs and a minor physical altercation by intoxicated and belligerent guests floating the river channel. The racist slurs and comments included mention of the 215 graves of children discovered at the Kamloops Residential School site.

“I met yesterday with Mayor Vassilaki and Superintendent Hunter to discuss this particular incident and we agree that these actions are not acceptable and cannot be tolerated,” said Penticton Indian Band Chief, Greg Gabriel. “We already have much anger in all First Nations Communities as a result of the initial 215 graves being discovered. This type of irresponsible behavior will only generate more anger and division between communities. Our children and youth who work in these summer positions work diligently in performing their roles to ensure everyone’s safety and enjoyment and should never be subjected to any racism or belligerent behavior.”

“On behalf of City Council, I re-state again that there is no place for racism in Penticton, in particular towards youth. Each of us must stand up and call out racism of any sort, anytime we witness it” said Penticton Mayor, John Vassilaki. To community members and neighbours who are hurting right now, on behalf of the City and Council, I want you to know that we stand with you and we are here for you.”

“Our communities will not accept racist, derogatory or hate motivated comments or actions directed to anyone in our area. These insensitive actions especially towards our youth, will not be tolerated and have been reported to the Penticton RCMP” said RCMP Superintendent, Brian Hunter. “We have initiated a fulsome investigation into the matter. We all recognize that there continues to be much grief and anger in our First Nations communities as more graves are being discovered but it is important that we all lead with compassion and understanding during these difficult times”.