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NEWS Briefs

Man brandishes rifle and axe in Fort Liard

A young man is facing multiple charges in relation to an event that took place in Fort Liard on Jan. 11.

In the early morning hours of Jan. 11 the RCMP received a report of a male carrying a rifle in the hamlet and threatening to harm others with the weapon.

Before officers arrived at the scene community residents took the rifle away from the man, according to a RCMP press release.

The man fled but returned with an axe.

After being caught by the RCMP the 21-year-old man was charged with theft of a firearm, pointing a firearm, carrying a weapon for a dangerous purpose, uttering threats and possessing a firearm while prohibited.

Cadet skills competition in Fort Simpson

The Fort Simpson 2860 Royal Canadian Army Cadet Corps is hosting a skills competition for the first time.

Forty cadets and staff from Whitehorse, Inuvik, Norman Wells and the village will be competing from Jan. 29 to 30 in the Western Arctic Area Skills Competition.

The annual competition challenges cadets in four events centered around skills developed in the army and air cadet programs.

Last year the Fort Simpson team won bronze in Inuvik. The four events in the competition include marksmanship, drill, volleyball and a leadership task.

International competition for skaters

Three speed skaters from Fort Simpson are competing in an international event this weekend.

Kevin Roche, Robert Harold and Madison Pilling are competing in the International Children's Winter Games in Kelowna, B.C., from Jan. 26 to 31.

The games, which are for youths ages 12 to 15, began in 1968 to foster understanding, tolerance and respect.

Fourteen other countries including South Korea, Australia, Switzerland, Austria and Lithuania will be represented at the games.

Literacy day events

Events are being held around the Deh Cho to celebrate Family Literacy Day.

In Fort Simpson the Open Doors Society is hosting an evening of games, snacks and door prizes from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the recreation centre on Jan. 27.

On the same night in Fort Liard there will be a family literacy night at Aurora College beginning at 6:30 p.m.

The event will include winter themed crafts and literacy activities and a winter word bingo.



Band Councillor Jayne Konisenta, left, and Chief Fred Tesou were among the representatives to sign an impact benefit agreement with the Canadian Zinc Corporation on behalf of the Nahanni Butte Dene Band during a ceremony on Jan. 20.

Signing celebration in Nahanni Butte

Canadian Zinc and community sign off on impact benefits agreement

by Roxanna Thompson
Northern News Services
Tthenaarago/Nahanni Butte

The Nahanni Butte Dene Band has secured an agreement on training, employment and business contracts related to the Prairie Creek Mine.

On Jan. 20 representatives of the band signed an impact benefit agreement with the Canadian Zinc Corporation during a ceremony witnessed by approximately 40 community members.

"I'm very happy," said Chief Fred Tesou.

"It's a benefit to the community and to the members."

Negotiations for the agreement began after the band signed a memorandum of understanding with Canadian Zinc in October 2008.

The agreement gives band members priority for the 220 full-time positions expected to be created at the mine. A number of contracts have also been set aside specifically for Nahanni Butte.

Canadian Zinc has also agreed to make contributions to an education fund to assist band members seeking vocational or technical skills training or further education. Apprenticeship positions will also be made available.

A lot of work went into creating

the agreement expected to provide jobs and education to residents, said Tesou. Tesou thanked the Nahanni Butte band council as well as the negotiating team for their dedication.

The work, however, is not over, he said. Continued efforts will be needed to implement the agreement so it benefits the people of Nahanni Butte, Tesou said.

The agreement is very significant, said John Kearney, Canadian Zinc's president.

It's important the mine has the support of the aboriginal community and residents are able to participate in and benefit from the project, he said. The benefits should also extend to the rest of the Deh Cho and the whole

of the territory, said Kearney. Canadian Zinc believes the Prairie Creek Mine can give a generation employment and help residents be better trained and educated for the future.

"We want to be good corporate citizens," Kearney added.

To Kearney's knowledge this is the first impact benefit agreement signed in the Deh Cho for a mining project. The company is also in negotiations with Liidlii Kue First Nations in Fort Simpson to reach an agreement.

Many people who attended the signing ceremony had positive things to say about the agreement.

"I think it's a good day," said elder Robert Vital.

If the mine opened for production it would benefit both the community and the whole of the Deh Cho, he said.

Vital said he believes the environmental concerns are being addressed through environmental studies and a planned traditional monitoring program.

"Today I'm happy because

we're side to side," he said.

Nahendeh MLA Kevin Menicoche also approved of the signing.

The agreement is an example of how a First Nation community and a business can work together for the benefit of the community and its children, he said. Menicoche said he regularly hears about the lack of economic and employment opportunities in the Deh Cho but Nahanni Butte is doing something to combat that.

"I believe the leadership and the community made a wise choice here today," he said.



Nahendeh MLA Kevin Menicoche, left, Melvin Vital, Michael Cazon, George Tsetso and Nathan Betsaka played a tea dance song followed by a drum dance song while those who witnessed and participated in the impact benefit agreement signing danced in a large circle in the Nahanni Butte community gymnasium.