

NEWS RELEASE

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New welcome pole unveiled at Fire Station 1

Ceremony on National Indigenous Peoples Day celebrates official opening of new fire hall

Summary

Snuneymuxw First Nation and the City of Nanaimo marked the official opening of Fire Station 1 and National Indigenous Peoples Day with the unveiling of a welcome pole by Snuneymuxw Master Carver Noel Brown.

The new Fire Hall replaces an aging structure built in 1966. It is home to Fire Rescue Operations, Emergency Operations Centre and Fire Rescue Command and Business Centre. The building is built to post-disaster standards and was designed to serve the needs of Nanaimo today and reflect the character of the community.

The building was designed with efficiency in mind, from materials and systems to the size of the building, so that fire services can be deployed quickly, and the multiple uses of the building could co-exist comfortably.

Master Carver Noel Brown, commissioned to create the welcome pole, is a member of Snuneymuxw First Nation. Brown has been carving since 1995, learning from artists Richard Baker, Matthew Baker, Chris and Doran Lewis and Craig Manson.

Strategic Link: n/a

Key Points

- The Welcome Pole marks the western entrance to Nanaimo's downtown and the significance of the relationship between Snuneymuxw First Nation and the City of Nanaimo.
- National Indigenous Peoples Day was first recognized in 1990, eight years after the Assembly of First Nations initially recommended it become "National Aboriginal Solidarity Day". June 21st is also summer solstice.

Quotes

"First responders are the backbone of our community, fearlessly putting their lives on the line to help their neighbours. As you continue down your noble path, this pole, carved by my brother Noel, will guard and protect you, helping you through the challenges ahead. We raise our hands to you, for the critical work you do in our community. We also extend thanks to your families, for supporting you and giving you the strength to do this profound work."

Mike Wyse
Chief
Snuneymuxw First Nation

"Today's ceremony and this pole are more than public art. This is a tangible way for all of us to say thank you for the Fire Service who protect all of us 24/7, 365 days-a-year, and literally save lives every day. We are grateful for everything you do."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

"We are grateful to have this welcome pole to greet our fire fighters and first responders who work hard every day to keep our community safe. I can't think of a better way to celebrate the opening of this new Fire Hall than coming together as a community like we did earlier today. I thank City Council for investing in public safety, and all first responders for their efforts and care."

Tim Doyle
Fire Chief
Nanaimo Fire Rescue

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