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Yuutu?it?ath

Umacuk YG News

Volume 15, Issue 9 | December 2025

www.ufn.ca

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Events

Tuesdays
Physician Clinic
at the huu?atu Health Centre

Tuesdays
Soup at the Six-Plex

Wednesdays
Naa?uuwitasin ha?uk
("We're going to eat together")

December 25
YG Offices Closed

January 5
YG Offices Re-Open

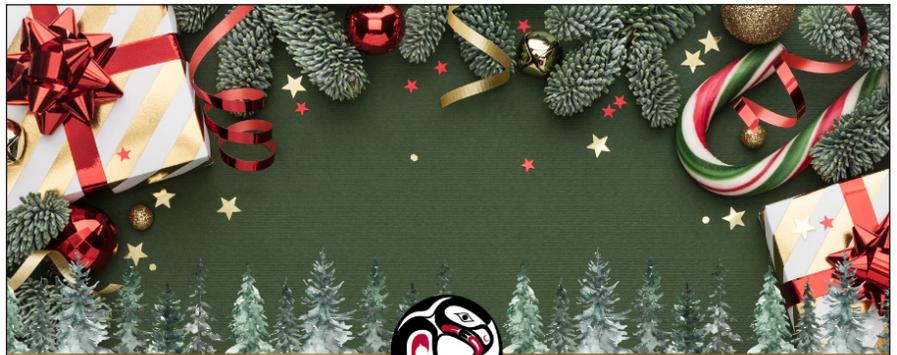
February 13
Education Conference

In this issue, we have coverage from the recent B.C. Cabinet and First Nations Leaders' Gathering and photos from holiday events earlier this month. We have information from the Marine Response Team about winterizing your vessel and tips to protect your home from wildfire with YG's new FireSmart Program. We also wish a warm welcome to Sunny Dhaliwal, YG's new CAO!

Yuutu?it?ath Government offices will be closing on **Wednesday, December 24 at 12:00pm** and won't be re-opening until **Monday, January 5, 2026**. If you need to contact someone during this time, a list of Holiday Closure Contacts can be found below.

For this holiday season, Yuutu?it?ath Government will be providing each family with a \$250 gift card. For application criteria and procedures, visit our website at www.ufn.ca, click on "Forms" and scroll down to "Holiday Gift Card Application."

We hope you have a safe and happy holiday season. See you in 2026!



Holiday Closure Contacts

Housing Emergency
(250) 266-5055

Patient Travel Emergency
(250) 266-1099 OR mpt@ufn.ca
Fax: (250) 726-7552

Public Works Emergency
(250) 726-6518

Public Works emergency line is for water or sewer related disruptions only.

Communications@ufn.ca will be monitored at select times, not for emergency use.

Yuutu?it?ath Government Offices
close for the holidays on
Thursday, December 25, 2025

Yuutu?it?ath Government Offices
will re-open on
Monday, January 5, 2026

Service Change

Effective **January 4, 2026**



BC Transit and the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District are pleased to announce the following:

- ▶ Introduce new trips:
 - Leaving hitaꠁu at 9:56 am to Ucluelet
 - Leaving Ucluelet at 10:20 am to Tofino
 - Leaving Tofino at 11:25 am to Ucluelet
- ▶ Permanent late night service leaving Ucluelet at 9:20 pm and Tofino at 10:25 pm
- ▶ New bus stop on Peninsula Rd. at the Ucluelet Medical Centre

For more information on routes, maps, and schedules please visit bctransit.com/west-coast.

Transit Info
778-421-8617 • bctransit.com



Happy Holidays!

Yuułu?it?ath celebrates the holiday season with dinners in hitaču and Port Alberni

Images by: Elena Rardon

Yuułu?it?ath citizens, staff and community members in hitaču and Port Alberni celebrated the holiday season with a pair of dinners earlier this month.

Both holiday dinners took place on December 11, 2025 and were connected by livestream, allowing attendees to enjoy the festivities in both communities at the same time.

Santa was able to visit both communities, delivering presents to all the youth.

Āeekoo āeekoo to all of the event organizers, YG staff and volunteers who put these events together.



Youth enjoyed a game of musical chairs at the Italian Hall Events Centre in Port Alberni.



Santa Claus paid a visit to the Holiday Dinner in Port Alberni, bringing presents for all the youth.



YG staff had an Ugly Christmas Sweater competition during the Staff Christmas Luncheon on December 10, 2025. Katie Burden was the winner, with her unbe-wreath-ably creative sweater.

Supporting stronger families in the new year – join our parenting program!



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"to guide or show the way"

PARENTING 101

**Monday, January 12
to Friday, January 16**

***TinWis Resort, Tofino
(accommodation provided)***

Program covers topics around unpacking pain, communication, boundaries, healthy conversations, building trust, family traditions and values, healthy supports, removing judgement, working with a support system, and moving forward.

**To register: contact nicole.burtini@ufn.ca or gloria.valentine@ufn.ca
Registration deadline is December 24, 2025**

Time to get FireSmart

YG Staff offering Home Assessments in hitaçu to protect against wildfire

Written by: Elena Rardon

A new program will help hitaçu residents protect their homes against the threat of wildfires.

Ben Shuster is Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government's new FireSmart Coordinator. FireSmart is a risk reduction program that focuses on keeping communities safe from wildfire. By using FireSmart practices, homeowners and residents can make their homes safe from being ignited during a wildfire.

Since his arrival in hitaçu, Shuster has already hosted one community gathering and has more planned for the coming months in order to get the word out about FireSmart best practices.

"We are preparing the community for the event of a wildfire," explained Shuster. "FireSmart is all about preparing a home through certain construction techniques and principles to make a home safe from being ignited during a wildfire. It's easy to think that we live in a rainforest, so it might not ever happen here. But if it does, let's be prepared."

It might seem strange to focus on wildfire mitigation in the middle of winter. But Shuster says the cold months are the perfect time to take a look at homes and make sure they are prepared for the upcoming dry season.

He points to the Wesley Ridge wildfire that ignited near Cameron Lake east of Port Alberni earlier this summer. Although fire came right to the doorstep of several homes, none of them were lost to fire. Shuster attributes this to the four years of FireSmart mitigation that the neighbourhood had undergone before the fire.

FireSmart focuses on the wildland-urban interface, where the forest meets the community.

"That's where we're looking at providing mitigation, to break that fuel line to our homes," said Shuster.

Shuster explained that fires can spread to homes in three different ways: direct contact, radiant heat, and ember transfer. Ember transmission makes up 90 percent of all structure loss, Shuster said.

In West Kelowna in 2023, for example, embers travelled more than two kilometres across Okanagan Lake to ignite homes.



FireSmart coordinator Ben Shuster presents to Yuułuʔiłʔatḥ Government staff during a luncheon on November 18, 2025. Photo credit: Kendra Stoner.

"What we're doing here largely is trying to create our homes and sustain our homes and structures so that ember accumulation cannot result in a structure fire," said Shuster.

Shuster's biggest role in the community will be leading home assessments, where he will identify hazards and risks on properties and provide tips to residents and homeowners to protect their homes.

During each assessment, Shuster will look at three different zones outside of the house: the immediate zone (0 to 1.5 metres outside the home), the intermediate zone (1.5 metres to 10 metres outside the home) and the extended zone (10 metres to 30 metres outside the home).

The immediate zone is the most important one, said Shuster.

"You have an 85 to 90 percent chance of your structure surviving a wildfire if you have a good roof and clean gutters," said Shuster. "The rest just helps the process."

Shuster emphasized that home assessments are entirely voluntary. There are no fines or penalties, and Shuster will only assess the outside of the home—never inside.

Small action steps can make big changes in protecting homes, said Shuster. Some of these steps can include moving combustibles (such as firewood or construction materi-

als) away from the house, pruning trees, and adding fire-resistant plants to landscaping.

“I want to come around to every single home and meet most of the community members. None of this is policing,” he added. “If there’s anything wrong with the home, nobody gets into trouble. It’s all just for the benefit of the community.”

Home assessments will be used to create a wildfire resiliency plan for the community, which is a detailed plan of action steps that can be taken to make the community safe from wildfire.

If you would like to schedule a home assessment, please reach out to Ben Shuster at ben.shuster@ufn.ca or call 604-932-0773.

Keep an eye out for upcoming FireSmart events in hitaču.



Yuulu?if?ath Government staff learn about FireSmart best practices from FireSmart Coordinator Ben Shuster during a luncheon on November 18, 2025. Photo credit: Kendra Stoner.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
FireSmart™



FIRESMART HOME ASSESSMENTS

Help protect your home and community from wildfire!

Sign up for a **FREE** home assessment by YG FireSmart Coordinator Ben Shuster, who will:

- Identify hazards and risks on your property (exterior only)
- Provide tips to protect your home

Winterizing your vessel

Seasonal tips for keeping our waters safe from Yuułu?it?ath Marine Response

Submitted by: Max Pattison, Marine Response Specialist

As we approach the winter season, and challenging weather, we may want to explore ideas to ensure our vessels are prepared for cold weather conditions.

Winterizing helps prevent damage, improves safety, and extends the life of your equipment.

Here are some tips:

- **Inspect Bilge Pumps:** Ensure pumps are functioning and free of debris. Consider carrying a backup pump.
- **Fuel & Engine Care:** Top off fuel tanks and add stabilizer to prevent condensation and corrosion.
- **Protect Lines & Fittings:** Check ropes, cleats, and fittings for wear. Store extra lines in dry conditions.
- **Battery Maintenance:** Disconnect or trickle-charge batteries to avoid freezing damage.
- **Cover & Secure:** Use a proper boat cover to protect against rain and moisture buildup.



Other Helpful Resources:

- Learn about Transport Canada Indigenous Marine Safety Programs at <https://tc.canada.ca/en/campaigns/oceans-protection-plan>.
- Weather Forecasting Tools: Track storms and wind conditions in real time at www.windy.com.
- Looking for bilge pumps, or other safety gear/equipment? Check Pioneer Boatworks: 250-726-4382.

We want to hear from you! What topics would you like us to cover? What does Marine Response and Stewardship mean to you? Share your ideas and questions to max.pattison@ufn.ca.



HOLIDAY GIFT CARD DISTRIBUTION



www.ufn.ca > Forms > Holiday Gift Card Application



Education Conference

MOVING THROUGH TRAUMA BY CONNECTING TO LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND TRADITIONAL FOODS

Cix^watin Centre Gym, 700 Wya Road, hitaçu

Friday, February 13 | 9:00am to 5:30pm

With a seafood feast and traditional foods for lunch.

All Teachers, Daycare Providers, Parents, Caregivers & Guardians are welcome!

Join us in hitaçu at the Cix^watin Centre for a day of insightful discussions, workshops, and strategies to support our young ones.

Guest speakers Anita Charleson-Touchie, Jeneva Touchie, Lisa Watts and Rachel Dickens-Greening will discuss moving through trauma with traditional healing, language learning, culture, and traditional foods.

Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/moving-thru-trauma-by-connecting-to-language-culture-and-traditional-foods-tickets-1902311337419>

YG goes to Vancouver

Yuułu?iŋaṭh Government staff attend First Nations Leaders' Gathering

Written by: Elena Rardon

Staff from Yuułu?iŋaṭh Government recently had a chance to meet with provincial leaders during the 10th annual B.C. Cabinet and First Nations Leaders' Gathering.

The gathering was held on Nov. 4 and 5, 2025, on the territories of the Xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations at the Vancouver Convention Centre West.

As one of the largest meetings of provincial and First Nations leaders in the country, this event provides space and time for provincial leaders to engage directly with First Nations leadership and youth about their Nation's aspirations and community issues.

Yuułu?iŋaṭh Government President Charles McCarthy attended the gathering, along with youth representative Ethan Joseph and staff from YG's Department of ʕatinkin?aałā (Intergovernmental Affairs).

This was Joseph's second time attending the gathering, and he said it was overall a productive event.

"The second time around, I felt a little more comfortable talking in front of the ministers," he laughed. "We had a lot of meaningful conversations."

With the Ministry of Water, Lands and Resource Stewardship, YG was able to discuss further progress on groundwater and water governance negotiations, as well as creating co-management agreements on areas like forest operation management and foreshore.

With the Ministry of Infrastructure, YG discussed building opportunities to address gaps across the West Coast



Yuułu?iŋaṭh Government representatives, including President Charles McCarthy and youth representative Ethan Joseph, attend a meeting during the B.C. Cabinet and First Nations Leaders' Gathering. Photo credit: Logan Anderson.

of Vancouver Island, such as housing and specialized health facilities.

With the Ministry of Health, YG continued discussions to address the opioid crisis, and with the Ministry of Education and Child-care, YG discussed the possibility of a daycare expansion and creation of a youth centre.

"We need our own space for youth to be youth," Joseph explained.

For Joseph, transportation is a major priority

in hitaču. With the Ministry of Transportation, YG's team discussed updates to Port Albion Road to address safety concerns, but Joseph also talked about public transit.

"I just got a car last year," he explained. "For the first 24 years of my life, I had no access to a vehicle, so I relied on doing hires and hitchhiking to get around."

While West Coast Transit has helped to bridge the transportation gap in hitaču, Joseph says the infrequent schedule makes things difficult for workers and students.

"I get calls from students all the time who missed the bus and need a ride," he said.

Joseph says his favourite parts of the gathering were the discussion sessions led by other First Nations leaders across the province.

"It was great hearing from other First Nations about the things they've accomplished, stuff that's not typically in the news," Joseph said. "Everyone has big ideas, and they're trying to figure out solutions. Those were quite meaningful."



YUULU?IL?ATH
GOVERNMENT



BC Aboriginal
Child Care Society



HELP US PLAN A BETTER FUTURE FOR OUR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES!

Yuulu?il?ath Government has begun a process of envisioning and planning for the future of early learning and child care in our community.

We want to hear from citizens and community members to help create a vision for the Government, and identify current gaps and needs related to early learning and child care.

TAKE THE SURVEY!

WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/UFN-ELCC



BY COMPLETING THIS SURVEY, YOU CAN ENTER INTO AN OPTIONAL
DRAW FOR \$200 GIFT CARD

New Staff Highlights

Welcome to Yuuḷuʔiḷʔaṭḥ Government Sunny Dhaliwal!

Sunny Dhaliwal has joined the Yuuḷuʔiḷʔaṭḥ Government (YG) as the new Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

In his role, Sunny will support the day-to-day operations of YG, work closely with the Executive and staff, and help strengthen organizational systems and governance in service of Yuuḷuʔiḷʔaṭḥ citizens.

"I'm very grateful for the opportunity to join the Yuuḷuʔiḷʔaṭḥ Government," says Sunny. "I'm looking forward to listening, learning, and supporting the important work already happening across the community."



Sunny Dhaliwal is YG's new CAO.

Sunny brings a 35-year career in public service, including 20 years in the military and seven years with BC Emergency Health Services, where he worked in senior leadership roles supporting complex operations and community-based services.

When not working, Sunny enjoys reading, spending time in nature, and staying active, including hiking and camping.

Sunny's office is located on the main floor of the Cixwatin Centre in hitaču. He can be contacted by email at sunny.dhaliwal@ufn.ca.



GATHERING OUR VOICES 2026

Yuuḷuʔiḷʔaṭḥ Government's Department of huuḷtakšiiḥinʔaala (Education and Youth) has secured tickets to Gathering Our Voices from March 17-20, 2026.

WHAT IS IT?

- Gathering Our Voices is Canada's largest annual Indigenous youth leadership training conference.
- The 2026 conference will take place in Vancouver, B.C.
- Delegates gather from across Canada to participate in ceremonies, workshops and engaging, informative and educational experiences.
- Participants must be at least 14 years old and no older than 24 years old on the first day of the conference.

TO APPLY:

Email ethan.joseph@ufn.ca and explain why you are interested in joining.

hiłstiis hupii?ut YG Services



December 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday Sunday
1 Yuutu?it?ath Childcare Needs Gathering with Asya Touchie 4:00pm – 8:00pm	2	3	4 Kimberly Touchie Outreach Support Coordinator Culture Night 5:00pm to 8:00pm	5	6 7
8	9	10	11 Holiday Dinner! Italian Hall 5:00pm to 8:00pm	12	13 14
15	16	17 Counselling with Amber Severinson 11:00am to 1:00pm	18 Kimberly Touchie Outreach Support Coordinator Language Classes with maḥima 6:30pm to 8:30pm	19	20 21
22	23	24	25 Statutory Holiday YG Offices Closed	26 Statutory Holiday YG Offices Closed	27 28
OFFICE CLOSED					
29	30	31			
OFFICE CLOSED					

*Services offered during regular operating hours of the Yuutu?it?ath Government Satellite hours, 9:00am to 2:00pm and by appointment from 2:00pm to 4:00pm, unless otherwise noted. Operating on the territory of the Tseshaht First Nation & Hupačas?ath First Nation.