

Thursday, October 18, 2001

## Public safety a priority for Alberta Solicitor General

*Red Deer* – Public safety will not be jeopardized by the one per cent budget adjustment announced today by Alberta Solicitor General Heather Forsyth.

Funding for provincial policing remains at current levels. Two work camps and three contracted correctional programs will close.

In addition, funding will be lapsed for community-based crime prevention and restorative justice initiatives, the Shunda Creek work camp for young offenders will close for the winter, and some planned evaluations of First Nations police services will be deferred.

“We identified savings that would have the least overall impact on our operations and on the safe communities Albertans expect and deserve,” said Forsyth. “It is imperative to have highly skilled staff in place in our correctional centers 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Internal security operations will remain at current staffing levels to provide for the ongoing security needs of our courts, institutions and prisoner transfers.”

“Finding savings in our budget required some difficult decisions. The work camps and programs that will close have provided valuable service, but similar programs are offered through correctional facilities. I wish to thank the fine staff and program operators of these facilities who helped offenders become contributing members of their community.”

Closures affect the Kananaskis work camp, Kapashwatinak work camp, the City of Edmonton Alternative Measures Program, the John Howard Youth Residential Centre (Red Deer) and the Genesis Day Program. Permanent Alberta Correctional Services employees affected by the closures will be reabsorbed into their parent institutions.

In addition, all discretionary grants are lapsed for the remainder of the budget year. Grants for community crime prevention programs and restorative justice initiatives will be deferred to the new budget year. Decisions on future funding will be made in the context of the 2002-03 budget.

“Community-based programs are the heart and soul of safe neighbourhoods. I’m committed to continuing a strong partnership with stakeholder groups and volunteers to ensure Alberta communities remain safe places to live, work and raise our families. I know we can count on them to work with us as we overcome these challenges,” said Forsyth.

Alberta Solicitor General’s base budget for 2001-02 was \$240 million, requiring a one-percent adjustment of \$2.4 million.

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**Solicitor General Web Site:** <http://www.gov.ab.ca/just/>

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