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SAFER COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS ACT TAKES EFFECT

WHITEHORSE – Justice Minister Marian Horne has announced that the Yukon government’s new Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods (SCAN) legislation is ready to be put to work.

SCAN provides Yukon citizens with a safe and confidential method to deal with specific illegal activities that create an unsafe and unhealthy environment in their communities. These activities include producing, selling or using illegal drugs, prostitution, solvent abuse or the unlawful sale and consumption of alcohol.

“Together, we can put a stop to these threats,” Horne said. “We are pleased to respond to the needs of citizens with legislation that empowers them to take back the safety of their neighbourhoods.”

Citizens who have concerns about such activities in their neighbourhoods can call the SCAN office at 456-SCAN (456-7226) or toll-free at 1-866-530-7226. The SCAN unit will begin operations on Wednesday, November 29. Complaints will be investigated by the SCAN team of experienced law-enforcement personnel. Following the investigations, options will be considered under the new legislation to remedy the complaints.

Remedy options range in formality and severity. The SCAN officers will work cooperatively with landlords or tenants of dwellings to stop the illegal activity. SCAN officers can also apply to the Supreme Court for a community safety order to stop the illegal activity by closing down the house. Should third parties find themselves affected by actions under SCAN, SCAN officers will work cooperatively with other government departments and non-government organizations to ensure that necessary services such as alternative housing and support for children are provided, and support and treatment are available.

SCAN is part of the Yukon Substance Abuse Action Plan, which is a coordinated and comprehensive approach to substance abuse. The Action Plan was developed after extensive consultation with Yukoners and stakeholder groups and released in October 2006.

“SCAN legislation helps fulfill one of the government’s platform commitments to protect the family and create safer communities,” Horne added.

Information about this legislation is available on the website of the Department of Justice, Government of Yukon at www.justice.gov.yk.ca/.

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