



Gaston Cooper

Justice and Correctional Services

Message from the Director Donald Nicholls

With each passing year, the Department of Justice and Correctional Services (DOJCS) continues to grow its infrastructure, personnel, programs and services for the benefit of Eeyou Istchee. It is our pleasure to work together with communities, Cree entities and other departments to ensure that this growth builds greater capacity within the Cree Nation, complements other services, and better serves all our people. Our justice efforts are guided by our society and the fundamental principle that the delivery of justice and correctional systems within Eeyou Istchee must reflect Cree values, ways and circumstances. Indeed, this principle is enshrined in the *James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement (JBNQA)* and further reinforced in subsequent agreements related to justice and correctional services.

In the past fiscal year, we added to our justice infrastructure with the opening of the Waskaganish and Whapmagoostui Justice facilities, bringing our total contingent of operating justice facilities to seven. The two remaining facilities located in Nemaska and Eastmain were under construction in the last year, and are scheduled to be opened by the end of this summer. The facilities are key to housing personnel, programs, services and hosting various courts. In 2012, an order in council was passed in the National Assembly to allow Superior Courts along with Québec Courts to sit in the new facilities, expanding the type of services we may offer in the communities.

Acquiring personnel and equipping them with the skills and training they need to be valuable resources is perhaps the most important investment our Nation can make. In this respect, the Department has continued to help build the capacity of our Nation in the past year,

through the provision of various training programs and team building exercises for existing personnel. As we did not start with a trained labour pool, the building of personnel on-the-job has allowed new skills and services to be added to the Cree communities each year. The Department has also added new employees in this past year to fill outstanding key positions for each community, in response to identified needs, and has developed new programs and services to complement resources from other departments, entities, agencies and communities.

There has been an increase in preventative programs, community-based justice initiatives and rehabilitative correctional services. Good intervention and prevention initiatives are essential as they target underlying causes of criminal activity – i.e. “root causes” – thereby reducing incidents and enhancing public safety and community wellness. When evidence-based efforts are implemented that reduce the number of people who come into contact with the legal system, substantial costs savings are realized as well as more community-oriented objectives of wellness, safety, healing, and addressing the harm. The benefit of prevention and rehabilitation is not only the cost savings downstream in the criminal justice system; these measures also allow us to work with high risk individuals and partners to put them on a better life path that leads to healthier choices and a better life outcome. To that end, like last year, we will make it a continued priority to develop prevention, intervention, rehabilitation and reintegration programs that can be delivered in schools, communities, correctional facilities and on the land.

The DOJCS works in collaboration with the Cree-Québec Judicial Advisory Committee. Contemplated in

the original JBNQA, the Committee is comprised of five members of the Cree Nation and five members of the Government of Québec. The Committee is an advisory body making recommendations to the GCC(EI)/CRA and the Québec Government with a rotating two-year chairpersonship between Québec and the Cree Nation. We have enjoyed a strong relationship between the Department and the Committee over the past five years, and we are happy to welcome the appointment of a new Cree Chairperson, Mrs. Gerti Murdoch in this past year.

We have had a productive year of growth and development and increasingly have established the capacity to respond to our justice needs. From people and facilities to programs and services in justice and corrections, we are continuing on our mission to ensure that we have our own Cree justice and correction system, with our people in key positions. We will also continue to breathe life into the agreements we have negotiated and signed, to reflect Cree values, traditions and realities, and to respect community needs of healing and restoration. We look forward to another year of working together with communities, partners, other departments, agencies and organizations for a common purpose of a healthier, stronger and more engaged Cree Nation.

Meegwetch.

Mission/Responsibility or Mandate

The Department's mission is to provide a justice and corrections system that best represents and reflects the society it seeks to serve. Before agreements were in place, there were core values and principles, knowledge, understandings and ways within our society that determined what was important, fair and right. Respect for these principles and values were included in Section 18 of the JBNQA; provisions include that all members of the legal system practicing in our judicial district would respect Cree ways, values and circumstances. Also, there are provisions whereby processes, programs and services should be offered in Cree. In 2007, the new *Justice Agreement* with Québec expanded the mandate of DOJCS to evolve into areas as recommended of importance by the Judicial Advisory Committee. There was a recognition that the non-Cree systems have evolved since 1975, and so should the ability of the Cree justice and corrections system. The provisions of the JBNQA, and subsequent Agreements with areas on justice and corrections, deal with facilities, personnel, and programs and services; therefore, we will follow this format throughout this report. We invite you to visit our website www.creejustice.ca to learn more about the Department, personnel, structure, mandate, activities, programs and services.

Priorities for the past fiscal year

Our priorities for the past year include capital projects, personnel, programs and services. The capital projects are the foundation for local services and programs to grow from the community outward in the areas of justice and correctional services. Further, each facility was built with the understanding that space would be needed for staff and for growing programs and services, and to host the various courts that would be using the buildings.

The DOJCS looks to hire personnel locally as not only does it build new skill sets in each community, but it allows the Department to establish networks of partners locally and to better integrate local values, circumstances and ways. The training provided to new employees is designed to provide a foundation for the work they will need to do to build community-based networks, services and programs.

The programs and services include the establishment of a local justice committee to create a body to help provide a process locally to deal with minor offences, and to help with the design and implementation of community-based programs. The personnel work closely with other community resources to help identify needs and emerging issues so the DOJCS can design, with partners, a strategic plan with respect to prevention, rehabilitation, intervention and reintegration.



Dignitaries visit one of the new Justice facilities: Deputy Chief Justice Robert Pidgeon, Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff, Batonnier Nicolas Plourde and Director Donald Nicholls.

Results

Capital Projects

In the area of justice infrastructure, we have officially opened two new Justice Facilities located in the Cree Nation of Waskaganish and the Whapmagoostui First Nation.

At the opening of the Waskaganish Justice Facility, we were honoured to have the Grand Chief Dr. Matthew Coon-Come, Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff, Chief

Gordon Blackned, Minister of Justice Jean-Marc Fournier, Federal Court of Appeals Judge Robert Mainville, Superior Court Judge Jocelyn Geoffroy, Associate Chief Justice André Perrault, members of the Judicial Advisory Committee, and many community members. The entrance was blessed by Pastor Gladys Matoush, and throughout the building there was a real connection to the local community thanks to the paintings depicting Elders and traditional activities, along with many photos of the history, landscape and people of Waskaganish. There was also a special gift of carved flying geese from Chief Gordon Blackned given to honour his son, Gordon Blackned Jr., and to be hung in a special place within the facility. The opening also was an opportunity to host one of the Cree Nation's longtime legal advisors, Robert

requiring coordination and openness. As a first initiative, a community wellness conference was held in the facility early in the past year for Cree and Inuit participants to come together to discuss a sense of a greater community collaboration in addressing justice, wellness and healing.

In the past year, the Department has also looked at ongoing and future capital developments. The Nemaska and Eastmain Justice Facilities will open in the summer of 2013, completing the infrastructural foundation for the Cree justice system. In the summer of 2012, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services (CBHSSJB) negotiated operational funds for a closed custody youth facility and for women's shelters. The DOJCS had been in discussions with the Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee Association (CWEIA) and the CBHSSJB over the past two years on the subject of women's shelters. The initial proposal is to look at a coastal and inland shelter to better provide safety, programming and support for families in crisis. The DOJCS began to research what a closed custody youth facility would look like over the past year. The DOJCS visited youth detention facilities in Québec and also Aboriginal specific facilities located in Ontario. Preliminary reports have been made on this issue. Also, in capital projects for the future, the DOJCS has been meeting with the CBHSSJB to discuss the possibility of building together coastal and inland land-based camps for programming. Given the absence of programming within most detention facilities for Cree detainees to take, a land-based camp would be an ideal location for a number of rehabilitation and reintegration programs post-incarceration, and for community members identified as high risk as a part of intervention.



DOJCS

Opening of the Whapmagoostui Justice Facility, on September 6, 2012. From left: DOJCS Director Donald Nicholls, Kuujuarapik Mayor Rhoda Angutiguluk, Associate Chief Justice Danielle Côté, Grand Chief Dr. Matthew Coon Come, Chief Stanley George and Frédéric Desrosiers.

Mainville, who also happened to be on the Judicial Committee that helped design the buildings, and was the first Federal Court judge to attend one of our openings.

At the Whapmagoostui Justice Facility opening, we were honoured to have the Grand Chief Dr. Matthew Coon-Come, Chief Stanley George, Mayor Rhoda Angutiguluk, Associate Chief Justice Danielle Côté, Frédéric Desrosiers, and many community Elders and members. The Whapmagoostui facility took much longer than anticipated to build, given the building materials needed to be shipped by barge and the short construction season. Whapmagoostui, although not one of the largest Cree communities, has one of the most active court circuits in Northern Québec. The municipality of Kuujuarapik is literally across the street from the Whapmagoostui First Nation. So the justice facility will be in the Hudson Bay Circuit, meaning the court files will be a mixture of Cree and Inuit cases at each sitting. This court and facility will bridge four justice systems,

Our Personnel

With respect to justice and corrections personnel, the past year has seen increases in the number of staff to allow for the expansion of programs and services, and to fill outstanding positions. As each facility is completed, there is a need for five positions – a community justice officer, a community reintegration officer, a receptionist, a janitor and a maintenance worker. In the past year, a new coordinator has been engaged, five new community reintegration officers, two new community justice officers, six support staff, a program support worker, four summer students and one work study placement. Through Capital Works, eight janitors and five maintenance workers have also been hired. For each of the above positions, a training program has been established as the positions, facilities, programs and services are unique and have not existed in the Cree Nation previously.

In the next year, the DOJCS will continue to hire and train new personnel for key community-based and regional positions. There will be additions to the number of CJOs and receptionists, as well as new positions

such as community support worker, correctional release worker, department psychologist, justice terminology specialist, computer technician, and a financial officer. There will also be new positions in the communities dealing with the Cree Stop Now And Plan (ages 6-11), and other programs and services in development.

Programs and Services

In the past year, the Department has worked on developing programs and services in each of the communities. One of the first key priorities is the establishment and training of a local justice committee or panel. The membership is chosen locally, and once the committee members have had training, they can work on cases that have been diverted to them locally or minor offences that the crown attorneys have sent to them. The committees are funded by the DOJCS, as are the band by-law prosecutors, and work together with the justice officers to develop community- or land-based programs that include Cree values and ways, and address the needs of high risk clients. It gives a voice to the community in the development of local initiatives for prevention, and through intervention provides for a community-based body to work in the justice system. Last year, eight of the nine communities had committees that were receiving training or were active in hearing cases. The committee training was provided for under a funding agreement with the Department of Justice.

Other services last year have included the preparation of Gladue Reports in the Cree justice system for the first time. A Gladue report follows the court ruling of the same name whereby judges must take into consideration Aboriginal circumstances and history when determining an appropriate sentence and types of programming for Aboriginal offenders. While the first few of these reports have taken a while to prepare, they have been well received by the judges in the communities. A type of Gladue report is also done in the corrections system when determining assessments internally. Further, there have been sentencing circles, mediation circles, healing circles, bush-based programs, community workshops, and wellness conferences hosted in the Cree communities over the past year.

With respect to rehabilitation and reintegration, Cree reintegration officers (CRO), along with regional corrections staff, have been regularly visiting Cree clientele in detention facilities. There have been coordinated visits for assessment, for mentoring with counselors and Elders, events within detention facilities, and transitional visits on various types of releases. Cree reintegration and corrections officers have worked on correctional release plans for clients, and attended parole hearings, assessments for placements in programs, and follow-up court hearings. The CROs are also in regular contact with parole and probation officers in the system.

One of our key services is the Cree victims' services, CAVAC. Over this next year, we will sign a confidentiality agreement allowing our services to work closer with the crown attorneys in our judicial district to provide more services to victims of crime. In the Department, one of the first trainings provided employees with a perspective of historical trauma and resulting cycles of victimization. Given a history of residential schools and assimilative policies, we are working toward addressing areas of domestic violence, interpersonal violence, and forms of bullying. Preventative programs, awareness campaigns and intervention are important in building support and a voice for victims of crime in Eeyou Istchee. This is a collaborative effort with partners, and is a growing area of concern, not only within our communities but nationally as well. The Provincial Government just completed an inter-ministerial domestic violence action plan after consultations with our Department and other organizations in Québec. The Federal Government is in consultations to ready legislation they call the *Victims Bill of Rights* that would give victims more of a voice in the criminal justice system, and create a national office and strategy to better serve victims of crime.

Program Activities

In addition to the creation of programs and services related to the functions of our community justice and reintegration officers, the DOJCS also works toward the creation of programs that are proactive in the areas of prevention, intervention, rehabilitation and reintegration. For all such programs, the Department looks at how they can best be adapted to provide for Cree values, circumstances, ways and needs. In the past, we launched our Jobs Not Jails program that helped us develop a profile of our clientele, and the type of programs and services we needed to develop. In accordance with our Global Crime Prevention Plan, we have also completed a number of school-, community- and land-based programs under our Youth Engagement Strategy in the past year. We organized a Cree Nation anti-bullying and We Day initiative with the Cree School Board and Cree Board of Health as partners, and programming in schools such as One Voice One Team and Challenge Day. In the fall, with the Cree School Board and CBHSSJB, we will also hold an anti-bullying conference in Eeyou Istchee. We have also now entered our third year of the successful Stop Now And Plan (SNAP) program.

The SNAP Program specifically targets children ages 6 to 11, to work with children and parents to help them regulate angry feelings by getting them to stop, think and

... there have been sentencing circles, mediation circles, healing circles, bush-based programs, community workshops, and wellness conferences ...

plan positive alternatives before they act impulsively. We received \$1.4 million from the National Crime Prevention Centre of Public Safety Canada to pilot a project for our Nation over a three-year period. The Cree SNAP program was a part of a *National Multisite Evaluation of SNAP* to determine the effectiveness of the program to reduce aggressive or impulsive behaviour, and to see if it can be delivered in remote communities. In the past year, we launched the girls' program to complement the program we were running for the boys. Social science has shown that if anti-social behaviour is not addressed at an early age, then by the time children become teenagers, they have likely graduated to criminal behaviour. After three years, we have had incredibly positive results and feedback on the program. This is thanks to the hard work of the SNAP workers and team; therefore, the DOJCS would like to expand the program throughout the Cree Nation in the next year. We were invited to speak at the Kids Not Cons conference in Toronto, as well as at the recent National Crime Prevention Centre conference in Montreal, which dealt with topics including communities as partners, and the engagement of parents in prevention programming such as the Cree SNAP initiative.

One of the programs for rehabilitation that the DOJCS has also started to develop for Eeyou Istchee is the renowned In Search of Your Warrior (ISOYW) program developed by Native Counseling Services of Alberta (NCSA). The program which can run in detention, in a community or on the land, is a 30-day program that targets people caught in a cycle of violence. Through principles such as caring, kindness, respect, love and self-determination, a group of 10-14 individuals are taught how to better understand the intergenerational cycle of violent behaviour, identify root causes of violent behaviour, the context in which violence occurs, addressing feelings of vulnerability, and how to distinguish between anger and rage. The participants then build knowledge and skills on how to eliminate violent behaviour, and start on their path to a life-long healing journey.

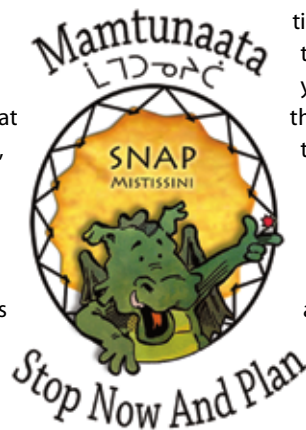
The DOJCS sent two justice officers to Alberta to take the facilitators' course to become instructors, and then they will help teach a course in Eeyou Istchee to other personnel. NCSA will then award the Cree Nation the right to teach and deliver the program. The DOJCS will work with partners to offer this course in detention facilities, as a part of post-release plans in communities or as a part of reintegration in land-based programs. The DOJCS would also like to explore the possibility of offering such courses to high risk individuals who can benefit from this type of process and program and who

are not in or exiting the corrections system. NCSA also developed the Spirit of the Warrior for women, and the TAPWE Youth Warrior Program to similarly deal with the cycle of violence.

Another program that the DOJCS has been developing for better services in the Cree communities is with the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution (CICR). An internationally recognized program to train personnel going into situations involving conflict, and provide neutral processes, mediations, and community dialogues for resolution of those conflicts, was adapted to Cree values, circumstances and ways. To date, two groups of employees have gone through trainings with CICR; the training is 160 hours spread over four weeks.

Given the type of work in the justice and corrections systems, the ability to understand how to approach conflict is essential. In the next year, we hope to offer our third delivery of this program to new personnel as foundational training for front-line work. Building upon the skills taught in the program, the DOJCS would also like to engage in community dialogues. A community dialogue is a process whereby issues identified as of importance within a community go through a series of structured dialogues involving organizations, services and community members. The DOJCS has participated in a community dialogue on the over-representation of Native children in the child welfare system. The mobilization of organizations and community members to address an important issue is key if we are to reverse trends within systems that negatively and disproportionately affect the welfare of our communities. Mediation and facilitation are also a part of the CICR training; therefore, the DOJCS would also like to look at further developing these services within the communities as well.

The DOJCS has also been into discussions with various law schools in Québec and Ontario to look at the possibility of establishing a Cree law program to help Cree members obtain law degrees that would help us work toward our medium to long-term goals of having Cree lawyers, prosecutors, administrators and judges in the future. The Department has been hoping to use a multimedia system in each facility, along with a bridge, thereby utilizing technology to allow greater accessibility for people to participate in programs. The multimedia system would also be used for training purposes of staff, staff meetings, visits with lawyers, bail hearings, youth protection cases, virtual visits for families that have persons in detention, video testimonies and a number of other programs – thus reducing costs and travel for individuals, organizations and the system overall.



The DOJCS partnered with the CWEIA as they applied for a special prevention program addressing violence against women and girls. The application was successful in securing a grant of \$195,000 over an 18-month period to determine how violence affects women and girls. The purpose is to ultimately reduce victimization of women and girls in the community and schools. As a part of this initiative, a group of Cree men who first approached CWEIA with the proposal will start advocating for the elimination of violence towards women, and to make an apology and amends for violence against women in the past.

Another program that the DOJCS is working on developing with the Cree Nation Youth Council is a Leadership Resiliency Program (LRP) for youth ages 12-19 to build resiliency to peer pressure and enhance leadership skills in youth. The goal of the LRP is to reduce substance use, improve high school graduation rates, and reduce juvenile delinquency. The program will also impact attendance rates, reduce bullying and behavioural incidents, and community engagement. The LRP will establish school leadership groups, community volunteer projects, and outdoor/adventure programs to build resiliency and leadership skills. Given the target age group of a LRP, it would nicely complement the Cree SNAP program.

Operational Improvements

Operational improvements in the past year have included the modifications to facilities, the addition of new positions within the Department, and improved delivery of programs and services.

During construction of the initial four facilities, security experts from the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) visited one of the sites for an inspection. The experts delivered a report with a list of 25 modifications to improve overall security for staff and clients to the detention areas of the justice facilities. These modifications were taken note of in the subsequent justice facilities. At the end of construction of the modified facilities, the DOJCS and Department of Capital Works (DCW) took another tour with the MPS security experts. After a review of a number of facilities, the security experts added a number of recommendations for modifications and improvements to the facilities. These modifications have begun in the past year to improve the overall quality and safety of the facilities.

Another operational improvement to the facilities has been the inclusion of a preventative maintenance plan between the DOJCS and DCW. This new program allows for the hiring of new personnel to oversee the regular maintenance of the facilities and of the equipment within them. It also involves monitoring of all complex equipment by servicing experts via internet connections.

In the past year, there has also been the building of storage facilities located behind each facility. Upon completion of the initial buildings, it was realized that additional space was required for the equipment necessary to maintain the building, as well as to store files and other capital assets.

In terms of personnel, a number of new positions were created both in the DOJCS, as well as the DCW to enhance operations. Some of the key positions created within the Department have been: a) a community program support worker; b) a correctional support worker; c) a financial officer; d) a justice terminology specialist; e) a psychologist; and f) a computer technician. Other positions filled through DCW for operational effectiveness are the janitors and maintenance workers.

To make overall operational improvements with personnel, there has been Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution training, justice committee training, dialogue for life training, Corrections Services Canada (CSC) training, Gladue report writing training, computer training, management skills training, and gender specific program training. Beyond training, there were some employee improvement initiatives in the past year, and a team building exercise to allow staff to discuss their expectations of each other, and what is expected of them in their role within the Department.



After delivering his high energy message to encourage young Crees to live up to their full potential, Eric Thomas takes time for a picture with some High School Students.

In programs and services, the DOJCS has worked closely with legal counsel on improvements to agreements including the renegotiation of provisions to ensure they respect Cree values and rights. The introduction of new provisions and methods facilitates enhancing services and programs, allowing for growth in design. It also allows us to oversee the presentation of Cree history, culture, ways and circumstances within programs. Besides the review and improvement of protocols, processes and agreements with the various agencies and partners in justice and corrections, there have been a number of improvements in the working relationships

with these organizations. In correctional services, over the past year, there has been an increased involvement of local CROs and the corrections liaison officer in case management of Cree members in the corrections system. The DOJCS involvement has led to improvements in intakes, assessment, programming, planning, monitoring, and reviewing.

The SNAP Program expanded in the past year to include Troubleshooting services to the schools on a regular basis. These services were at the request of schools to assist in the management of behavioural issues, and also to provide sessions on a number of identified issues for children. The clinical program, along with the new initiatives, has led to an improved school environment. Parents and teachers have come back with stories of how their children have adopted the principles and changed their behaviour. This summer, SNAP will also work closely with children in the summer camps to deliver sessions as well. It is a good example of complementary programming with partners such as the Cree School Board.

Lessons Learned

In the past year, the Ministry of Public Security has released a report entitled *2007-2008 Correctional Profile: Native Persons Committed to the Custody of the Québec Correctional Services*. The French version of this report can be found on the Ministry's website www.securitepublique.gouv.qc.ca. The report highlights that a large group of Aboriginals in Québec in detention do not speak French, and there is an absence of programming available for them. The most common form of offence deals with violence against another person so the report recommends anger management programs. There is an absence of training for detention officers and staff on Aboriginal peoples' history and culture, even though they are overrepresented in their system. The report recommends prevention programs in their communities in areas of education and recreation. Finally, it talks on how the solution also includes improving standards of living in the Aboriginal communities in Québec.

When the Department first started visiting the detention facilities in Québec in 2007, we noted the lack of communication between staff and Cree members due to the language barrier. Therefore, basic services were not offered, and there was an absence of rehabilitation programming for them. We started our Jobs Not Jails program to do intakes and create a profile of Cree members entering the corrections system. We learned much of the same information, specifically that violence was the common offence in most cases. This was also something we were aware of from Carole Laprairie's

justice report on the Cree Nation in 1991, but with our intakes, we went further and collected more in-depth information to determine how best to design prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration programming to reduce incidents within communities and people returning to the corrections system. We started a traditional food program in detention to remind our people of values and culture, as a part of their rehabilitation, and to help with healing, as they would eventually reintegrate back into the community. This approach was something given to us by the Elders when we did our community tours - to take the land to those who needed to heal from it. Some of the institutions eventually stopped this program, feeling it was a privilege, and not seeing its significance as a reintegration tool and as culturally appropriate dietary staple. We have developed a number of other

programs for the Cree clientele in detention or post-release to help with rehabilitation and reintegration. We, consistent with the mindset of the provincial ministers of justice at a recent ministers' meeting, vest hope in the development of good community-based prevention and rehabilitation programs to address high incarceration rates.

On the over-representation of Aboriginal peoples in federal detention, Howard Sapers, the Correctional Investigator of Canada issued a report in March 2013 entitled *Spirit Matters: Aboriginal People and the Corrections*

and Conditional Release Act. Despite the 1992 *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* allowing the involvement of Aboriginal communities in corrections, to help reduce high incarceration rates, the numbers have continued to rise in Canada. Today, almost one in four inmate in federal penitentiaries is of Aboriginal ancestry, despite that the Aboriginal population in Canada is less than 5 percent of the overall population.

The report looks at the initiatives around Section 81 which allow the Minister of Public Safety to agree to transfer Aboriginal clients to an Aboriginal community facility called a Healing Lodge. There are two types of facilities, those controlled by CSC and those by Aboriginal communities themselves. The report found that the Aboriginal community controlled ones were underfunded. There has been an over 40 percent increase in Aboriginal population incarcerated in the last decade, but the Lodges at present capacity could accommodate only two percent of the federal incarcerated Aboriginal clientele. The Department visited both types of facilities: Pê Sâkâstêw Centre, Stan Daniels Healing Centre, Buffalo Sage Healing Centre, and Waseskun Healing Centre. While visiting Pê Sâkâstêw, the staff met with Aboriginal detainees who were taking scaffolding training, and were excited at the guarantee of secured employment

This approach was something given to us by the Elders when we did our community tours - to take the land to those who needed to heal from it.

upon release through the program. There was also a more relaxed atmosphere than in other detention facilities, as detainees had “graduated” to this type of institution, so they were careful not to be transferred out of it. The Buffalo Sage Healing Centre was the most recent addition, a 16 bed women’s facility that offers post-incarceration reintegration services.

The Sapers’ Report also looks at the implementation of Section 84 that provides for Aboriginal communities to be involved in the release of Aboriginal detainees returning to their community. There were a number of areas that Saper’s touched upon such as the under use of Gladue reporting within the system for assessments, expanding CSC staff training in the areas of culture, history and spirituality, developing protocols and MOUs with Aboriginal organizations, and creating a position of Deputy Commissioner for Aboriginal Corrections to ensure that necessary coordination takes place to implement improvements and to build in accountability.

The DOJCS has worked closely with the Aboriginal community development officers at CSC. All corrections staff members have had Section 81 and 84 training, along with training on the overall corrections system. Cree corrections officers have worked closely with CSC on both types of releases, creating correctional release plans, and being involved directly with assessment processes, and the preparation of internal Gladue reporting. The Department has also made presentations on the DOJCS and Cree history, culture and circumstances to further educate CSC staff. We have completed a first draft of protocols with CSC for a better collaboration in the case management of Cree clientele in federal detention. One of the key areas indicated by the Sapers’ report is that CSC should share more control with Aboriginal organizations; this is an area the Department is committed to as well. We have corrections staff who are trained, engaged in corrections processes, and have the best knowledge and ability to serve Cree members in detention. Recently, we have also met with Howard Sapers concerning his report to discuss areas we are fulfilling outlined in the report, and to look at areas we could continue to improve to provide better services for our people in detention facilities in Canada.

The over-representation of Aboriginal peoples in detention affirmed in these reports continues to rise within Québec and Canada. However, the common thread identified in both reports is that although an Act was passed to help address this issue over twenty years

ago, there has been little in terms of effective measures to facilitate changes within the system. Rehabilitation and reintegration programming for Aboriginal peoples that would reduce recidivism is in most cases absent from the system. This can be attributed to lack of resources, which is interesting considering that if successful, the decrease in numbers within both the justice and corrections would essentially save the system resources overall. Also, after forty years of this issue being researched and identified,



One of the many buildings within the Pê Sâkâstêw Centre, in Hobbema, Alberta, which is based on a Healing Lodge design model where offender accommodations are residential houses.

there is still a lack of knowledge within the institutions about Aboriginal peoples, culture, history and circumstances. The Department has been fortunate that most institutions we have dealt with welcome presentations for their staff.

Conclusion

In 2012-2013, the Department of Justice and Correctional Services has continued to grow in all aspects of its mandate. It has a regularly updated website, with word press, that members can visit to learn more www.creejustice.ca. The DOJCS has made significant investments to complete justice facilities in each of the Cree communities. The completion of these facilities will create a foundation for the growth of local justice services and programs to better serve each community. The DOJCS has also made important investments to engage and develop human resources in each community, and regionally. In terms of development, whether it is community, organizational, programs or services, this is the most significant investment you can make. In prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration programming, the Department continues to work closely with partners to impact community wellness, safety and engagement.