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**YUKON GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES NEW PROGRAMS AT WHITEHORSE
CORRECTIONAL CENTRE**

WHITEHORSE – Justice Minister John Edzerza has announced three new programs for the Whitehorse Correctional Centre in the upcoming territorial budget.

Inmates will benefit from \$174,000 for mental health services, \$120,000 for an Elders and First Nation cultural program and \$35,000 to build a shop for trades programs.

“The government is committed to providing quality programs and services to help inmates get back into the community and make a positive contribution,” said Minister Edzerza.

“While we move forward with the Yukon-wide public consultation on corrections in partnership with Council of Yukon First Nations, Kwanlin Dun First Nation, Liard First Nation and the Ross River Dena Council, the Yukon government is continuing to improve our existing programs, services and training at Whitehorse Correctional Centre,” Edzerza said.

Research indicates that individuals suffering from mental health problems need to be better supported within the justice system throughout Canada. The Yukon is actively working to address this issue, and has earmarked \$174,000 next year to provide increased counseling treatment, staff training, and to renovate treatment facilities.

First Nations inmates have expressed an interest to reconnect with their culture. Elders will be brought into the facility on a regular basis to provide First Nations cultural training. Additional First Nations programming will be developed and may include medicine wheels, traditional sweats and other culturally relevant programs. The Department of Justice will enter into discussions with CYFN and other First Nations to determine how these programs could be delivered.

The development of a shop will expand department programs to give inmates technical skills they need to succeed in the workforce.

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