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New Correctional Facility Highlights Treatment and Women's Living Unit

WHITEHORSE – The Yukon government is committing \$21.6 million for a new treatment and correctional centre, as well as \$719,000 for a new Transitional Women's Living Unit, subject to legislative approval, announced Premier Dennis Fentie.

"This new correctional facility will include secure custody units as well as a separate treatment space," Fentie said. "The treatment space will be accessible to inmates and scheduled outside users seven days a week, and will not exclude other treatment initiatives such as land-based camps in natural settings."

"We've worked through a territory-wide public consultation as well as with Whitehorse Correctional Centre staff and inmates," Justice Minister Marian C. Horne said. "The new correctional centre will focus on treatment and programming to help offenders transition back into the community."

"Providing treatment to people while they are incarcerated will benefit them in the long run," Health and Social Services Minister Glenn Hart said. "The majority of offenders need treatment and I am pleased to see we will be targeting that need. We know that many of the inmates at the correctional centre have substance abuse issues which often lead to crime and re-offending."

Tenders for the correctional centre have been issued this month with site work beginning this spring. This project will employ approximately 350 people over the course of construction. Depending on project schedules and timelines, the new correctional centre is scheduled to open in late 2011.

As for the Transitional Women's Living Unit, it will be a separate facility located on the Whitehorse Correctional Centre property and will hold a maximum of nine low-to-medium security female inmates.

"The unit will offer a supportive, secure environment and provide programming that focuses on teaching living skills and promoting successful re-integration into the community," Horne added. "We want to make effective use of the relatively short time that these women are in custody to offer skills they can use for a lifetime."

The women's living unit foundation is now in place and work on the remainder of the facility will start this spring. Completion of the Transitional Women's Living Unit is set for late fall 2009.

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Contact:

Roxanne Vallevand
Cabinet Communications
867-633-7949
roxanne.vallevand@gov.yk.ca