Daily Province.

**Passing |** An electrician with BC Hydro Construction Services died at the Cranbrook Substation on Monday. No cause of death has been released.



# ARSON SUSPECTED IN RECENT ISLAND FIRES

*TOM FLETCHER (Black Press)*

On top of highway closures and evacuations on the mainland, B.C.'s Coastal Fire Centre is also coping with a rash of fires in the Nanaimo area that officials suspect may be deliberately set.

Three fires in the Nanaimo Lakes area this week are considered suspicious, with equipment stolen from the site of one of the fires.

Fire officials say they have suspected arson in the area for several years, based on 158 human-caused fires the Coastal Fire Centre has responded to since 2005.

With firefighting assets stretched to the limit and more flare-ups expected from wind conditions late yesterday, the forests ministry and the RCMP are appealing for public assistance.

Anyone with information on the fires is asked to contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS or www.bccrimestoppers.com.

Fire activity is at its worst in the coastal region from Bella Coola inland, and up through the Cariboo region, around Prince George and the Northwest.

A series of evacuation orders is in effect and numerous large fires are uncontained.

The prospect of a cold front with dry easterly winds late yesterday prompted Forests Minister Pat Bell to issue a public plea for people to stay out of the back country.

"If it isn't critical for you to go out into the back country in those areas, please don't go," Bell said. "Please stay out of isolated areas and follow evacuation orders or alerts."

She added, "If you ignore the advice of safety officials and get into trouble, we may not be able to help."

BC NEWS WATCH



BC FOREST SERVICE

**Flames spread rapidly at Alexis Creek in the Cariboo region, where fires have reached rank six, the highest danger level measured. About half of B.C.'s forest fires are human-caused, and some may have been deliberately set.**

**Police investigation —**

# MAN BADLY SLASHED IN MAPLE RIDGE

*MONISHA MARTINS (Maple Ridge News)*

A man was rushed to hospital early yesterday following a vicious slashing attack in Maple Ridge.

Ridge Meadows RCMP found the man lying bleeding on Dewdney Trunk Road near Laity Street after receiving a 911 call around 3:30 a.m.

A black two-door Honda with a loud muffler was seen leaving the area quickly.

RCMP Insp. Derren Lench said the man, who is around 25 years old, was attacked with an "edged weapon."

"It could have been a machete, an axe or a knife, we don't really know," he added.

"He is in surgery now and his status has been downgraded to serious."

The man had injuries to his head, legs and arms and was rushed to Royal Columbian Hospital in New Westminster where he remains.

Police closed Dewdney Trunk Rd. from Laity Street to 210th Street during the morning rush hour as a forensic team collected evidence that was strewn across a bloody sidewalk and street.

Their investigation led them to a property at 21185 Dewdney Trunk Rd.

Police have applied for a warrant to search the home.

Lench said police don't know why the man was attacked.

The first officers were able to speak to him but were unable to glean evidence that pointed to a suspect.

BC LOCAL NEWS...

## RCMP FINDS BLACK BEARS GUARDING POT CROP

*GRAND FORKS GAZETTE (Black Press)*

On July 30, police executing a raid on a marijuana grow-op near Christina Lake were surprised to find 10 bears. The West Kootenay Integrated Road Safety unit received information and executed a search warrant, with the assistance of Grand Forks RCMP. Sgt. Fred Mansveld, of the road safety unit, said, "The bears appear to have been habituated to the property by the residents; we found a lot of dog food at the scene and that type of thing."

## TRANSLINK UNDER FIRE FOR STAFF, RETIREE PASSES

*SURREY LEADER (Black Press)*

Ex-bus drivers and other former TransLink staff with as little as two years service enjoy free transit passes as a retirement bonus. More than 10,000 such free passes exist for current and retired employees and some of their family members. Employees with at least two years service who retire from TransLink, Coast Mountain Bus Co. or the Transit Police get a lifetime pass and can get a family pass for their spouse as well.

## MINE EVACUATED DUE TO WILDFIRE RISK

*INTERIOR NEWS (Black Press)*

Huckleberry Mine, 123 km southwest of Houston, is not immune from the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako's evacuation order in the Chisholm Lake area. Late Monday afternoon management at the mine decided to begin the extraction of 120 of its personnel after monitoring the area's wildfire with the Ministry of Environment. This was ahead of the official announcement from the Regional District that the area was under an evacuation order.

## PRINCE RUPERT TO BEGIN NEW LAND NEGOTIATIONS

*THE NORTHERN VIEW (Black Press)*

The City of Prince Rupert says it is moving closer to the sale of a former pulp mill property, indicating that its "representatives will initiate negotiations regarding the use and sale of Watson Island." According to Mayor Jack Mussallem, the negotiations will involve "interested groups within our region ... Some of whom are involved in the transportation industry." The negotiations come after negotiations with other parties did not result in an agreement.

## PARK AND BATTING CAGE COMING TO ALDERGROVE

*ALDERGROVE STAR (Black Press)*

Aldergrove Athletic Park is getting a makeover. Thanks to funding from Industry Canada, Langley Township,and local groups, work has already begun on a new bike park and a batting cage, and a new all-season soccer field may be built down the road. Township councillor Charlie Fox said the plan started several years ago when several community groups came up with the ideas for the various projects.

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