



## Officials unite in opposition to racist graffiti

(Penticton BC – January 10, 2023) - Penticton Indian Band Chief Greg Gabriel, Mayor Julius Bloomfield and Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen Chair Mark Pendergraft, along with the RCMP, are rejecting racist words and symbols spray painted on signs located on PIB land and those who carried out these deplorable actions.

The Penticton Band Council held a Special Council Meeting early Monday morning upon learning of this disgusting racist act of vandalism to our PIB Signs. “There is no doubt that this disgusting act is a hate crime and has generated much renewed anger and hurt throughout our community. As of this morning, more signs were discovered vandalized with more hateful and racist graffiti,” said Chief Greg Gabriel. “All local governments must send out a strong message that this type of racist ugliness will not be tolerated and must be condemned. Our PIB signs can be replaced, however the ugliness of this type of racism will continue to live within our community for generations.”

“These acts of ignorance need to be rejected and the perpetrators need to know that their actions strengthens our resolve to walk beside PIB community members and build a stronger relationship,” says Bloomfield. “Brandishing a paint can as a weapon is not an act of rebellion, it’s a sign of ignorance and sadly it brings up memories of racism and bigotry for PIB members. We can’t wash those memories away, but we can denounce the racism categorically and continue to do our part to construct a better future.”

The Green Mountain Road signs, noting that a person has entered PIB territory and outlines rules of activity, were defaced with common racist language and symbols of hate.

“The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen stands united with PIB and the City of Penticton in denouncing racist acts and vandalism,” said RDOS Chair Mark Pendergraft. “This behaviour does not represent the feelings and beliefs of the people of this region.”

RCMP Superintendent Brian Hunter is asking for anyone who might have seen the vandals to contact the RCMP.

“This was an act of vandalism motivated by hate. We don’t know if it was one person or a few, regardless, this is not representative of who we are as a community,” says Superintendent Hunter. “We have zero tolerance for racist, derogatory or hateful comments and we are fully investigating this incident. As a community, we are looking to lead forward with compassion and understanding and denounce racism at every opportunity.”

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