



Media Release

Friday, October 24, 2025

For Immediate Release

Sprucelodge Opens a New Door Under Shared First Nations Stewardship

(Treaty 5, 6, 8 & 10) PRINCE ALBERT, Sask. – The Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) and Hatchet Lake Denesuline Nation (HLDN) marked a major milestone on Friday with the grand opening celebration of their jointly owned Sprucelodge Medical Boarding Home, now housed in the former Days Inn on Marquis Road in Prince Albert.

For almost forty years, Sprucelodge has provided a safe and welcoming space for First Nations clients who travel from northern and remote communities to access medical care. The new partnership between PAGC and HLDN signals a stronger, shared commitment to ensuring that northern patients have access to safe, comfortable, and culturally supportive care.

“Sprucelodge has always been there for our people,” said Grand Chief Brian Hardlotte of the Prince Albert Grand Council. “By joining forces with Hatchet Lake, we are strengthening something that has already proven its worth. Together, we have created a space that is bigger, better, and ready for the future. It is a good feeling to know our members will have a safe and caring place to stay when they come to Prince Albert for medical appointments.”

Originally opened in 1985 as a small ten-room home, Sprucelodge has grown to serve more than one hundred and sixty clients each day. The facility now offers sixty-five rooms, a commercial kitchen, a lounge, and a twenty-two seat boardroom. While the building offers the comforts of a hotel, it continues to provide the warm, community-centered atmosphere that has always defined Sprucelodge.

“In the North, access to health care is not easy,” said Chief Bart Tsannie. “People travel hours on winter roads or fly south for treatment. Sprucelodge gives them a place that feels like home and takes away some of that worry. It shows that the North matters, and that our people deserve the same level of care as anyone else. This joint ownership means our communities have a real stake in the care we provide for our people.”

During the grand opening ceremony, guests were welcomed by PAGC Executive Director Al Ducharme and offered prayers by Veronique Dzeylion. Dignitaries included



Chief Peter Beatty of Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Shirley Woods, PAGC Director of Health and Social Development, and Kelly Ulrich from Indigenous Services Canada's NIHB Saskatchewan Region.

For Corrine Fiddler, Director of Sprucelodge, the day was deeply meaningful. She's watched the lodge grow from its early years into a bustling operation that now serves communities across the North.

"This is more than a change in ownership," said Fiddler. "It is a renewal of commitment. Our staff go above and beyond because they know what it feels like to be far from home, especially when you are not feeling well or are caring for someone who is. Here, we treat everyone like family. That is what makes Sprucelodge special."

The event also featured drumming, blessings, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially unveil the new facility.

"Sprucelodge has come full circle," said Grand Chief Hardlotte. "It stands as a symbol of partnership, care, and community. This new chapter with Hatchet Lake shows what can happen when Nations work together for the well-being of our people."

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