

RICHMOND

Bogus bylaw officer

Police are warning residents of east Richmond of a man posing as a city bylaw officer, requesting access to back yards on the pretext of enforcing water-restriction regulations.

The RCMP note that all legitimate bylaw officers carry City of Richmond business cards and drive a distinctive white and blue city vehicle. —Staff Reporter

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE

Man stabbed on street

A man was in serious condition in hospital yesterday after being stabbed at Princess Avenue and Powell Street in the Downtown Eastside about 4 p.m.

"His injuries are quite serious," said Vancouver police Const. Howard Chow.

Police would not disclose the motive for the attack. The assailant escaped. —Staff Reporter

VANCOUVER

Sockeye levels look low

The migration of Fraser River sockeye is at levels well below initial forecasts, raising fears that a commercial fishery may not even go ahead this summer. The Pacific Salmon Commission says assessments are currently well below the forecast of 7.8 million salmon, even with assumptions the fish are arriving several days later than average. —CP

VANCOUVER

Census help sought

Statistics Canada is accepting applications for hundreds of full-time temporary jobs leading up to Canada's next census, set to take place May 16. Recruitment has started in Surrey and Burnaby for hundreds of enumerator positions.

For more information or to obtain an application, visit www.census2006.ca or call 604-666-7183. —Staff Reporter

Oliver homes face 'imminent threat'

FOREST FIRE: 54 homes placed under evacuation alert as winds whip up blaze

BY LORI-ANNE CHARLTON
SPECIAL TO THE PROVINCE

OLIVER — Dozens of families on the outskirts of town were put on evacuation alert yesterday as firefighters battled the wind-whipped Camp McKinney blaze.

Occupants of 13 homes on the Osoyoos Indian Band Reserve and 41 homes in the residential subdivisions of Shrike Hill and McCuddy Creek were told to be ready to leave on short notice if the direction of the fire changes.

"This is not an evacuation order, but if they're put on alert it's because we believe there's a serious and imminent threat," said Kelly Harris, an information officer with the Emergency Operation Centre in Oliver.

Several residents voluntarily evacuated Tuesday afternoon, after a hillside brush fire broke out around noon and grew out of control. About 30 had registered with Emergency Social Services at the Oliver Community Hall, yesterday.

Those without family or friends to stay with are being put up in hotels and given vouchers for food and necessities when they register, said Carrie Cooper, an Emergency Social Services volunteer.

Fernando Bottoni, who lives on Shrike Hill and has been put on evacuation alert, said the fire came within about six kilometres of his house Tuesday night — not quite close enough to scare him into evacuating.

"I have a suitcase ready to go," he said. "You could see the fires from the deck."

"If it was a few kilometres more south, then we would move."

Yesterday, many of those who hadn't left the area had started evacuating livestock — horses, llamas, cats and dogs — to the nearby rodeo grounds.

Jessica Stelkia said her father, Robert, had already lost a corral to the fire, but managed to save his herd of 13 horses.

She said her father is thinking positively, and realistically, and has removed his pictures, a couple of Indian blankets and some sad-



The Camp McKinney fire has forced dozens of families in the Oliver area to start preparing for evacuation should the direction of the blaze change. More than 50 homes were under 'imminent threat,' said officials. STEVEN WIND — FOR THE PROVINCE

dles from the house.

The fire has doubled in size since Tuesday. By late yesterday it covered more than 400 hectares.

"It's been an interesting fire to watch," said fire information officer Radha Fisher. "Seeing how quickly it grew in four hours is an indication of how hot and dry it is."

"It has been windy and it's expected to stay windy. Wind and fire never mix well."

Emergency crews have set up camp, with about 50 firefighters

working on the blaze and another 40 en route from other areas of the province. Four helicopters were being used in the effort, as well as air tankers.

The cause of the fire is still under investigation but officials suspect it was human-caused.

"We have not had any lightning in this area for the last little bit so human cause would be a pretty safe bet at this point," said fire information officer Dale Bojzara.

Meanwhile, 10 forest service fire-

fighters and members of the Okanagan Falls Fire Department were battling a new fire that began yesterday at about 3 p.m.

"It's a quiet fire . . . it's moving along the grass and in open timber," said fire information officer Suzie Atherton.

Although the fire is accessible by road, no homes have been put on evacuation alert. The fire covers about six hectares.

Firefighters battling B.C.'s largest blaze at Sleet's Creek were helped

by rain yesterday. The fire covers about 4,600 hectares in steep, rugged terrain.

Forests Minister Rich Coleman has visited the fire near Spences Bridge and said that, so far this summer, the province has been lucky.

"Touch wood, we've had a very good season for forest fires, both on the numbers, the size and the budget we've spent, and I'd like to continue that," he said.

—with files by Glenda Luymes and CF