



The **Ktunaxa** *Nation*

The Ktunaxa Nation has occupied the upper Columbia Basin for over 100 centuries. The ancestral Ktunaxa were the earliest post-glacial inhabitants of the Kootenay Region.

Geography contributed to their isolation; their language and culture are as unique as the Ktunaxa territory itself.

St. Eugene Mission

In 1912, the 40,000 sq. ft. St. Eugene Mission building was completed—the largest building in the region at that time. Today British Columbia Heritage Trust considers the St. Eugene Mission School one of the most important structures in the interior of BC.

In the early days, the St. Eugene complex was a completely self-sufficient operation. From 1912 to 1970, it served as an Indian residential school, attended by Ktunaxa children as well as children from the Okanagan and Southern Alberta.

St. Eugene Mission Project

Many years after the closing of the residential school, action was taken by the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council to rehabilitate the building into something beneficial for the people. In 1984, Ktunaxa

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Elder Mary Paul said, “Since it was within that building that the culture of the Kootenay Indian was taken away, it should be within that building that it is returned.” This led to the development of the St. Eugene Resort project.

The St. Eugene Mission Resort Project in Cranbrook is owned by the five bands of the Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council: Akis“nuk; Lower Kootenay; Shuswap; St. Mary’s, and Tobacco Plains Indian Bands. Delta Hotels has a management agreement with the Tribal Council to manage a 125-room hotel and a Les Furber-designed championship golf course, rated the third-best new golf course in Canada in 2000. Lake City Casinos of Kelowna manages the Casino of the Rockies on behalf of the BC Lottery Corporation.

The St. Eugene Mission Resort project represents a \$40.8 million investment.



Residential school building today



Pupils in residential school

Contributors include the Columbia Basin Trust, BC Heritage Trust, Ktunaxa/Kinbasket Tribal Council, Aboriginal Business Canada, and Human Resources Development Canada. The St. Eugene Mission Resort initiative is also financially supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada, Royal Bank of Canada, and Delta Hotels Canada.

Part of the development includes an Interpretive Centre—a place where Ktunaxa and Kinbasket (Shuswap) culture and heritage are celebrated and promoted through the study of ethnographic objects, photographs, and historic records.

The Centre's greatest benefit to the Ktunaxa Nation community is the healing received by cultural revival and learning about the ancestors. The public has the opportunity to visit the facility, which tells of the local Aboriginal history from an Aboriginal perspective. ▲

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Residential school in the past