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## January 9, 2008

Hello Everyone,

Happy New Year!

I hope that all of you got an opportunity to spend some time with your families over Christmas and the New Year.

Following the holiday break, our office is hard at work and we look forward to serving you in 2009.

Like all Canadian hockey fans, Bill and I were cheering hard for our Juniors as they fought for gold at the World Junior Hockey Championships and tied the record as they won Canada's 5<sup>th</sup> straight gold medal in the event. The Prince George Cougars' Dana Tyrell even had a chance to represent Canada in the tournament. It is unfortunate that his injury prevented him from taking his place on the ice but I know that we are all wishing him a full and speedy recovery so that can resume playing hockey next season. We have certainly been fortunate to have him in Prince George as the leader of our Cats and I am sure that he has a great future in the sport. Congratulations also to Brett Connolly, who did a fantastic job on Team Pacific at the World Under 17 tournament, you made all of us in PG proud.

Earlier this week, I was pleased to have the opportunity to meet with our new Mayor and the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General. This was a good chance for us to talk about how we can best work together to prevent future flooding, and the Mayor did a great job representing our

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### **Useful Phone numbers**

BC Nurse line: 24 hour,  
Toll free 1-866-215-4700

Pharma Net Hotline:  
Mon-Fri (8:30-4:30pm) 1-  
800-387-4700

Health Info Line: Mon-  
Fri  
(8:30-4:30pm) 1-800-  
465-4911

Victim Link: 7 days a  
week,  
24 hours, 1-800-563-0808

interests. I am optimistic that the city and province will be able to find the best solution to this concern. We also brought the priorities of Prince George to the Minister of Community Development so that the province and city can continue working together to meet the needs of our community.

Since I was first elected as an MLA, I have regularly heard about the inconvenience people face when they run out of routine medication and need to visit the doctor for a new prescription. This takes valuable time from both the patient and the doctor, and that's why our government has responded by working with the College of Pharmacists to allow pharmacists to renew routine prescriptions for up to 6 months without a visit to the doctor. You can find out more by talking with your pharmacist or visiting [www.bcpharmacists.org](http://www.bcpharmacists.org).

With the present world economic situation, we are working hard to ensure that BC is well positioned to meet the challenges that we face. That's why we're hosting the Opportunities North Summit at the end of the month, which will bring northern community and business leaders together to explore what opportunities exist and how we can work together to deal with the challenges that may come. This is one of 2 summits that the government is hosting, and I encourage you to learn more or register by visiting online at: <http://www.thebceconomicssummit.ca/>. This provides us with the chance to shape the future of Northern BC. Don't miss this important event. The Premier and up to a dozen Cabinet Ministers will participate.

Well we have certainly faced some significant winter conditions right across the province. I hope that you that will drive with care and attention as you travel in our community. Bill and I have a busy weekend full of events so we look forward to seeing you out and about!

Until next week...

Shirley

**Question of the week:**

## **WHAT STEPS ARE IN PLACE TO BETTER MONITOR AND ENFORCE SAFETY ON ALL FOREST SERVICE ROADS?**

Radar guns will now be used to monitor and enforce safety on all provincial Forest Service Roads. Better speed enforcement on B.C.'s 59,000-kilometre network of Forest Service roads means more drivers returning home safely at the end of the workday. Expanding the use of radar guns is another step toward improving safety for forest workers and the public.

The ministry has purchased six new radar guns, for a total to 10, giving all three forest regions an additional two radar guns each. The ministry will then work in co-operation with the RCMP to train two to three Compliance and Enforcement Officers per district, for each of the 29 forest districts, in their proper use.

In conjunction with radar guns, the ministry will also place three speed boards, one per region, in different locations around the province to increase driver's awareness of their speed. The program is supported by the RCMP, ICBC and Conservation Office Service.

Initially, the main focus is to improve compliance and safe driving practices through education and awareness. But make no mistake, officers are empowered to give tickets and chronic, repeat offenders could be subject to fines of up to \$1 million for speeding and dangerous driving on a Forest Service road.

The maximum speed limit on our forest service roads is either as posted or 80 kilometres an hour, and that limit is there for everyone's safety. This is particularly true for recreational users and smaller vehicles. The rules for Forest Service roads apply to all users.

Previously, speed enforcement tended to be localized and focused on high risk, high traffic roads. However, following a pilot project last summer in Powell River, ministry Compliance and Enforcement Officers will now practice speed enforcement on a daily basis, province-wide.

Recent resource road safety initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Forests and Range include, road infrastructure improvements, a pilot project to standardize radio call procedures and road signage. As well, TruckSafe has expanded its Vehicle Identification Plates Program to make it simpler and easier to report unsafe driving incidents.

## **News Around the Province**

### **\$14M REOPENS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE**

A \$14-million collaboration between federal, provincial, municipal and community partners has resulted in the official reopening of the Pennsylvania Hotel, which provides 44 units for Downtown Eastside (DTES) residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The federal government has provided over \$4 million in housing and homelessness funding for the Pennsylvania Hotel project. The Government of Canada is supporting many Canadians with housing needs and is fulfilling its commitment to help those seeking to break free of the cycle of homelessness and poverty. This development will help ensure essential supportive housing, and offer access to services that will help individuals in need.

The Province, through the Provincial Housing Program (PHP), provided approximately \$4.6 million for renovations and will provide \$341,000 annually in operational funding for daily, round-the clock support services and staffing.

Access to secure and affordable housing is a fundamental part of building a healthy community. The opportunity to work with federal, municipal and community partners to support housing solutions like this one will help the Province break the cycle of homelessness.

Metro Vancouver provided a grant of \$850,000 to the project. Metro Vancouver owns and operates over 3,400 units of affordable housing throughout the region, providing homes for more than 10,000 people.

Metro Vancouver is working with the City of Vancouver, provincial and federal governments and other partners to help provide solutions to homelessness.

The City of Vancouver provided \$1.3 million for renovations and façade restorations, and Concord Pacific contributed with the \$3.6-million heritage density transfer.

This project demonstrates the positive collaboration between all levels of government and community partners, which is resulting in safe, affordable housing for those who need it most. By working together to provide stable housing solutions for low-income residents, will bring the Province closer towards our goal of making sure everyone has a place to live.

The Downtown Eastside is a community and has its own unique problems just like other communities, but also has

more serious ones like homelessness and drugs. Problems in a community are best solved by leaders and groups who have lived and worked in a community for a long time and have established a successful track record. Homelessness is the highest priority problem in social housing today. Concord Pacific, with its roots in housing, is pleased to support and work with leading Downtown Eastside community groups and the various levels of government to help solve the homelessness problem that is concentrated in, and unique to, this community within our great city. The Pennsylvania Hotel, originally built in 1906 by architect William Tuff Whiteway, is located along the Carrall Greenway in the Historic Precinct. The Portland Hotel Society (PHS) will manage and provide affordable housing and support services for low-income singles that are at risk of homelessness.

It's an exciting day that we dreamt of and struggled towards for years – to save this beautiful old hotel for the community; we can't believe it has actually happened,” said Liz Evans, PHS executive director and founder. “We would like to commend and thank Premier Gordon Campbell, the mayor, the federal government, Metro Vancouver and Concord Pacific, our private developer partner who put all differences aside and worked with us to create homes for our low-income community.”

Budget 2008 increased the amount the Province invests in affordable housing and shelters to more than \$400 million a year, more than three times as much as in 2001.

## **This week's bouquet of recognition goes to...**

*Jose Pereira, D.P. Todd teacher winner of the "Show Your Appreciation" contest held by Stapes. Congratulations Jose!!!*

## **Community Announcements**

**Head to Otway Ski Centre for Skifest on Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup>. The day begins with pancake breakfast and there are free lessons, ski tours, wax clinics and a biathlon demo.**

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## Mark your calendar...

- ❖ January 10 - Prince George Symphony Orchestra, Phantom of the Opera, 8pm at Vanier Hall, Tickets available at the PGSO office – 2880-15<sup>th</sup> Ave or call 250-562-0800
- ❖ January 23 – Robbie Burns Dinner at the Coast Inn of the North. Silent Auction and 50/50 draw. This event is suitable for the whole family. Tickets available at Excalibur Performers Assoc studio. Tickets \$25 for adults, \$15 for children, for info call 250-564-6326.
- ❖ January 24 - Ukrainian New Years Showcase, 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Malanka, Dinner, Entertainment and Yalenka Dancers and 2 live Bands at the Hart Community Center. Tickets available at Studio 2880 Adults \$35, Youth \$15, Children \$5
- ❖ January 24 – Improve at the Duck, the Waddling Duck, 1157 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, doors open at 7pm, show at 8pm, Tickets \$10 advance or \$12 at the door.
- ❖ January 24 to Feb 1 – The **Coldsnap Festival**; six main stage events are \$25 or three for \$60. Tickets go on sale Nov15 at Studio 2880, Books and Co, and Meow Records.
- ❖ February 12-15- **Disney High School Musical** ice tour at the CN Centre, tickets on sale at Ticket Master.
- ❖ February 25 – Jacson Katz, renowned speaker and author to talk against violence against women. Coast Inn of the North at 7pm, to register call Paz Milburn at 250-5617343

***If you are a non profit organization and would like to advertise an upcoming event or share a story please email [Shirley](#)***

Thank you for taking the time to read my newsletter. If you would like to see something specific in the next edition of Ask Your MLA, please [email me](#). If you know someone who would like to receive our newsletter, email their name so we can add them to our list.



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Toll Free: 1-866-612-7333  
Phone: 250-612-4181  
Fax: 250-612-4188

[www.shirleybondmla.bc.ca](http://www.shirleybondmla.bc.ca)  
[shirley.bond.mla@leg.bc.ca](mailto:shirley.bond.mla@leg.bc.ca)

1350 5th Ave,  
Prince George, BC  
V2L 3L4