



Useful Web Links

January 16, 2008



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[Ministry of Education](#)

[City of Prince George](#)

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[2010 Commerce Centre](#)

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[Northern Development Initiative Trust](#)

[The Exploration Place](#)

[Railway and Forestry Museum](#)

Hello Everyone,

It's been another busy week in Prince George, Victoria and Vancouver.

Earlier this week, I had the pleasure of announcing this year's Literacy Innovation Grants. These grants are provided by the Ministry of Education to each of the 60 school districts across the province to support innovative approaches to improve student literacy. The Prince George School District is set to receive \$141,000 this year. The District has used previous funding to maintain and support the Primary Project and professional staff development to improve student achievement in reading with a focus on aboriginal students, and I know that this funding will continue to make a difference for students in our community.

In the provincial election in May, we will each be given two ballots, one to choose an MLA and one for a referendum. The referendum will determine if the province will change the system that is used to elect our representatives in the legislature. To help British Columbians understand the choice before them, the province has announced that resources will be provided to two groups, one in favour and one opposed to receive funding to educate voters about the choice so that they can confidently make their decision with the information they need. I would encourage everyone to take this opportunity to learn more as they prepare to cast their ballot in May. The results of this vote will make an

Capital Report: [Sign up](#) to find out what is happening in government.

Ask Your MLA Archive: [Click here](#) to read past editions of Ask Your MLA.

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

enormous difference to Northern BC.

An innovative partnership between governments and the United Steelworkers was made earlier this week. The Labour Market Agreement is a \$2M initiative under which the Steelworkers will coordinate employment and training services in northern communities including Prince George, Valemount and McBride. Through this program, these funds will offer services to job-threatened forestry workers who are not eligible for EI, and others who require essential skills to reach their full potential in the current marketplace. For more information about this program, please visit

www.WorkBC.ca. I am confident that this program will support workers and their families as we face transition and economic uncertainty. A special thanks to Frank Everett, President of the United Steelworkers Local 1-424 and his executive for working so hard to bring this issue to our attention. Difficult times mean new strategies and that is certainly the case here.

On Wednesday a number of new forest sector initiatives were announced to help strengthen the forest industry. These are challenging times for the forest sector in Prince George, the Robson Valley and around the province. New forestry sector initiatives include encouraging the federal government to extend the Employment Insurance and the Work-Sharing Program, as well as a new “Wood-First” policy. This new policy requires all new public facilities to include BC wood in their construction whenever possible. There are two aspects to this new policy: modification of the BC Building Code to raise the limit on wood-frame construction from four to six storey, starting April 6th and work to expand the BC Wood-First Policy to a national strategy. These two initiatives should increase the domestic markets for wood and wood products.

The PG Farmers’ Market is hosting another indoor farmers market this weekend at St Michael’s church – this will be a great opportunity to support local business and pick up fresh baking, meat, produce and even crafts. I will not be able to make my regular weekend visits because the legislature has been recalled for Saturday. I will look forward to seeing you later in the week as a co-host of the Economic Summit on January 22nd and 23rd. A number of prominent speakers and cabinet ministers will be in attendance. The event is sold out with all 500 tickets sold.

Until next time...

Shirley

Question of the week:

WHAT ARE THE FACTS ABOUT DISASTER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE?

- Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) is there to help people start to get back on their feet after a disaster by helping replace or restore eligible essential items that may have been destroyed or damaged.
- Over the past five years, the provincial DFA program has provided \$6 million to individuals, \$29 million to local governments and \$0.7 million to farms to help fund the cost of recovery from disasters.
- In 2005, the Province increased the DFA eligibility amount for replacement or restoration from \$100,000 to \$300,000. Financial assistance is provided for each accepted claim at 80 per cent of the amount of total eligible damage that exceeds \$1,000, to a maximum limit of \$300,000.
- People should always check with their insurance company first. If insurance is not readily and reasonably available, then they may be eligible for Disaster Financial Assistance.
- Those impacted by a disaster may apply to the Province for DFA where the losses could not be insured, such as overland flooding events, or where other programs are not available.
- Wind damage is an example of insurable damage and is not eligible for DFA assistance.
- This program covers eligible essential items. A home owner or residential tenant must show that the home is their principal residence. Seasonal or recreational properties, hot tubs, patios, pools, garden tools, landscaping, luxury items (like jewelry, fur coats and collectibles) and recreational items (like boats) are not eligible for assistance.
- Small business and farm owners must demonstrate it is their primary source of income. Owners of damaged rental property must apply and qualify as a small business.
- Applications for DFA must be submitted to the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP) within 90 days of the date that DFA was authorized.

To apply for DFA, the form and information for individuals and communities are available at PEP Regional Offices,

PEP Recovery Office in Victoria at toll-free 1-888-257-4777, or on the PEP website at www.pep.bc.ca.

News Around the Province

\$8.6M EXPANDS SETTLEMENT WORKERS IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The B.C. and federal governments are investing \$8.6 million to help newly arrived students and their families in the K-12 public school system settle into our province. The Settlement Workers in Schools program is invaluable in assisting new students to integrate more quickly, while giving their parents a critical connection to the broader community. Students and their parents experience a smoother transition into the school system and the ability to more rapidly participate in Canadian society in a meaningful way.

Under the SWIS program, settlement workers help immigrant and refugee children adjust to school culture. The workers also increase parent involvement in their children's education, while helping to build awareness of community and government resources. As well, a valued component of the program focuses on increasing cultural awareness and sensitivity in schools.

The Federal government is committed to helping immigrants and their families succeed in Canada. Schools are one of the first services that newcomers access in their communities and the SWIS program is an ideal way to assist newcomer students and their families on their path to integration. The Federal government is working in partnership with the Province of B.C. to support the expansion of this program to more communities in the province.

Settlement Workers in Schools began in the fall of 2007 in 10 school districts across the Lower Mainland and Greater Victoria. This fall, the program has been expanded to include an additional 10 districts in the Fraser Valley, the Okanagan, Nanaimo, West Vancouver, Langley, Coquitlam, and the

North, based on the percentage of English as second language students enrolled in school districts.

The Agreement for Canada-B.C. Co-operation on Immigration provides funding through the transfer of approximately \$109 million per year from Citizenship and Immigration Canada to the B.C. government, which is

responsible for administering settlement services for new immigrants.

“We know that when students feel welcome and engaged at school, they will achieve their best,” said Education Minister Shirley Bond. “This program provides extra support for immigrant students and their families to allow them to become part of their new communities.”

The Province administers the Settlement Workers in Schools program through WelcomeBC, which supports immigrants and their families in succeeding both economically and socially.

WelcomeBC helps immigrants in B.C. access services under one umbrella to assist them in better adapting to life in their new communities and builds on the province’s history of welcoming newcomers and creating inclusive communities. More information can be found at www.WelcomeBC.ca.

This week’s bouquet of recognition goes to...

Brett Connolly, bringing home Under-17 Silver World Hockey Challenge!!!

Community Announcements

Northern Business and Technology
Awards 2009-01-15
Thursday, January 22, 2009
Prince George Civic Centre
For more info 250-564-3737

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Sultans come to McBride Roundhouse Theatre  
January 28,  
Tickets for the show available at  
Stedmans or call Carol 250-590-0165

## **Mark your calendar...**

- ❖ January 21 – Chamber lunch speaker Rick Steele, assistant vice president of Partnerships BC at the Ramada hotel. For more info 250-562-2454
- ❖ January 23 – Robbie Burns Dinner at the Coast Inn of the North. Silent Auction and 50/50 draw. This is

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, Tickets are \$25 or three for \$60 available at Studio 2880, Books and Co, and Meow Records.
- ❖ January 25 – Walk for Alzheimer’s ,Northern Sport Centre at UNBC, 1:30-3pm, Register on line at: [www.walkformemories.com](http://www.walkformemories.com) or call 250-564-7533
- ❖ January 31 – Feb 7 – Francophone winter Festival, Sugar shack brunch, toffee on snow, sleigh ride, two people saw competition, and much more, for more info call 250-561-2565 or [www.franconcord.bc.ca](http://www.franconcord.bc.ca)
- ❖ February 5 - Spring Fashion show and Dinner at the Ramada Hotel, fundraiser event for Hospice Society, Silent Auction, Tickets \$70, Doors open at 5:30pm, Dinner 7pm and show at 8pm. For more info call Jacquie Clarke 250-562-2323
- ❖ February 8 – Wealth Expo- Coast Inn Ballroom 10am to 5 pm
- ❖ February 12-15- **Disney High School Musical** ice tour at the CN Centre, tickets on sale at Ticket Master.
- ❖ February 21 – Everybody’s Bobbin’ concert at the Prince George Playhouse. Performances at 2:30 and 7:30pm, more info to come.
- ❖ 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](mailto: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.



**My second e-newsletter, People, Places & Projects showcases great people and projects in our area. To subscribe to People, Places & Projects, [click here](#). To read past editions to go: [People, Places & Projects online](#).**

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