



Useful Web Links

January 30, 2009



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Hello everyone:

I want to begin by thanking you for the kind words and condolences on the loss of my friend and colleague Stan Hagen. Without exception everyone who sent a card or spoke to me directly shared a remembrance of a very special connection with Stan. That's the kind of person he was and the way he impacted everyone he met. On Wednesday it was announced that a new \$105,000 scholarship at North Island College would be established in Stan's name. Stan loved his role with post-secondary education and there is no more fitting tribute to him than this scholarship.

One of the areas of my work that I love the most is working with the immigrant and multicultural community. Recently it was my pleasure to partner with the Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society to host the "Healthier You Expo and Forum." As a government we certainly recognize the importance of supporting immigrant families as they choose to live in our province and country. On Monday we announced that the 2009 BC Newcomers' Guide to Resources and Services is being distributed across the province to support new British Columbians as they settle and adapt in their new home. The guide has general information that will help newcomers in their first few months after arrival and includes topics such as finding a place to live, money and banking, health care, education, cars and

[Railway and Forestry Museum](#)

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

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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

driving, employment and business, the legal system, government and citizenship, and much more. The 2009 edition will be available in 11 languages. Included in the guide will be a brochure explaining the history and milestones of aboriginal peoples of British Columbia, which allows our newest British Columbians to learn more about BC's aboriginal peoples. For more information, please visit www.WelcomeBC.ca.

Cleaner air is a significant issue here in Prince George. I am very pleased that we have confirmed a grant of \$40,000 to the Prince George Air Improvement Roundtable to support efforts to improve air quality in our airshed. The funds will support initiatives under Phase Two of the Prince George Airshed Management Plan. I was also pleased to be able to meet with representatives from the People's Action Committee for Healthy Air (PACHA) during the Northern Opportunities Summit last week. At that meeting we reviewed the issues that PACHA had raised with MLAs and outlined the progress that had been made. We agreed to work harder to improve communications and in fact are working on an update that can be shared with PACHA that summarizes the progress that has been made on the key issues that were identified. I look forward to being able to share more of that information in the weeks ahead.

A big bouquet to everyone at the PG Public Library for an outstanding job on their Literacy Carnival last Saturday. I want to say a special thank you to Mayor Dan Rogers and his daughter Kendall and Councilor Cameron Stoltz for taking time to support this important community initiative. We were really pleased to have a visiting children's author Lorna Schultz Nicholson as a special guest for the Carnival. If you have a child that loves hockey, please be sure to check out her work. My family had fun too and I was happy to spend time with Bill and Cristina working at the fishpond!! Improved literacy skills are essential for communities and I am so proud of the incredible team at the library and the many other organizations that make this a priority in Prince George.

I also had the opportunity to meet with a number of Robson Valley constituents this week about a variety of issues and opportunities. One of the best parts of this job is serving my "Valley constituents!" They always keep me focused on looking for ways to support this unique part of British

Columbia.

The weekend ahead is once again packed with activities and events. We look forward to celebrating Chinese New Years and attending the ECRA Drama presentation to name just a couple of things. Have a great weekend and Gung Hay Fat Choi!!

Until next week,

Shirley

Question of the week:

HOW IS THE PROVINCE RESPONDING TO THE NEED FOR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING IN PRINCE GEORGE?

The Province has purchased the Astoria Hotel, a vacant 21-unit property in Prince George, to provide housing with support services for people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness people.

The Astoria Hotel, located at 1145 2nd Ave., will be renovated and converted into supportive housing. Renovations will include fire and life safety upgrades; mechanical and electrical upgrades; and minor aesthetic improvements. An Expression of Interest will be issued to identify experienced non-profit societies to manage the housing and provide on-site support services. Operations are anticipated to start in June 2009.

Homelessness and affordable housing are important issues facing our community. This latest purchase is a great start to building housing that meets the needs of Prince George residents. Access to safe, secure housing is a fundamental part of building a healthy community. By providing these units, the Province is ensuring people will receive the long-term support and housing they require to overcome various issues that put them at risk of homelessness.

The Prince George purchase is one of 15 properties being acquired in 10 communities with an investment of over \$34 million by the Province under the umbrella of the Provincial Homelessness Initiative (PHI), launched as a result of the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and

Addictions. PHI aims to break the cycle of homelessness by integrating support services with housing so people may move beyond temporary shelter to more secure housing, gain greater self-reliance, and achieve appropriate employment.

PHI is an important component of the provincial housing strategy, Housing Matters BC. Increasing the supply of affordable housing and reducing homelessness are key elements of the strategy. Since 2004, the province has committed to the creation of more than 4,000 new and upgraded housing units under PHI.

Through the provincial housing strategy, Housing Matters BC, the Province is investing more than \$400 million in shelters and affordable housing this year, more than three times as much as in 2001.

News Around the Province

PRESCRIPTION PROGRAM PROMOTES HEALTHY EVERYDAY CHOICES

More than 130 health professionals in the Greater Victoria area are helping their patients get active and eat healthier through an innovative community-based program that is promoting healthy lifestyle choices across southern Vancouver Island.

Sometimes, the best prescription is simple, healthy lifestyle choices. Through the ActNow BC Prescription for Health pilot program, health professionals have already written 5,000 prescriptions to help patients lead healthier lives by increasing their physical activity levels at recreation centres and also learning about eating healthier through nutritional seminars.”

Officially launched today at Oak Bay Recreation Centre, the pilot program is supported by the Active Communities initiative in Victoria and runs until Sept. 30, 2009. Since letters went out in November 2008 to promote the program to Victoria-based health professionals, 131 physicians, chiropractors and physiotherapists have registered. Patients in Victoria are now able to access their local recreation centre and receive healthy eating advice from a registered dietitian at no cost through the ActNow BC Prescription for Health pilot program. When we take steps to lead healthier lives, we can also help build stronger families

and community spirit.

Patients who participate in the program first receive a prescription from their health professional that contains contact information for a local recreation centre. The patient contacts the recreation centre to register for free informational seminars on healthy eating and physical activity and, after patients attend seminars, they receive a pedometer, coupon for fitness orientation, and an activity card that is worth five free admissions. Patients are contacted one month and six months after their seminar for a follow up by their health professional.

The ActNow BC Prescription for Health pilot program provides an opportunity for patients to receive a unique prescription that allows them to maintain and improve their health, while helping build a closer relationship with their health professional,” said Dr. Bill Mackie, president of the BC Medical Association.

The communities of Oak Bay, Esquimalt, Saanich, Sooke, Saanich Peninsula, Western Communities and Victoria are all involved.

Health professionals need to discuss and advocate to their patients the importance of making everyday, healthy lifestyle choices,” said Dr. Art Hister, a member of the ActNow BC Leadership Council. “I encourage all health professionals in Victoria to enrol in the Prescription for Health pilot program so they can promote the significant health benefits to their patients.”

“We’re excited to be part of a three-way link that connects us with health professionals and their patients, who can make huge difference to their own health by learning how to eat healthy and be physically active,” said Grant Brown, sport

co coordinator at Oak Bay Recreation Centre.

The engagement and support of physicians to prescribe for physical activity is a concept that has been implemented through a number of initiatives internationally, including Green Prescription (New Zealand), Lifescripts (Australia) and Exercise is Medicine (U.S.). Nationally, the PACE Canada program provides physicians with a toolkit and guide to counseling individuals on healthy active living. ActNow BC is government’s healthy living initiative that encourages British Columbians to eat more healthily, increase physical activity, eliminate tobacco use and make healthy choices in pregnancy. Join thousands of British Columbians in taking the ActNow BC Healthy Living Pledge

and
visit the ActNow BC website at www.actnowbc.ca.

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

*The four dedicated citizen carriers honoured for
outstanding service. Shauna Buchanan, Shaun
Franz, Rod Farrell, and Joe Horwath!!!*

Community Announcements

***Teams needed for Bow for Kids
Contact Big Brothers and Big Sisters to register
a team in the Annual Bowl for Kids Sake
Campaign...250-563-4710***

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The Duchess Park Dry Grad Committee is looking  
for prize donations to raise funds for Dry Grad  
event, contact Diane Van Bakel at 250-564-2099 or  
email [king99@telus.net](mailto:king99@telus.net)

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

- ❖ January 30, 31, & Feb 1 – Valemount Winter Festival at the Visitor Information Centre, Local Trade Show, Snowmobile Poker Run, Dinner and Dance, and much more. For more info on line at [www.visitvalemount.ca](http://www.visitvalemount.ca) or call 250-566-3335
- ❖ 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 6-8 – Drama show at ECRA more info to come or call
- ❖ February 7 – Music of the Masters at Vanier Hall performed by Jonathan Crow and the PGSO.

Tickets are \$32 for adults, \$28 for Students, for more info 250-5620800 or pick up tickets at PGSO office at 2880-15<sup>th</sup> Ave.

- ❖ 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](#)***

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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