



## Useful Web Links

**April 18, 2008**



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[2010 Commerce Centre](#)

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Hello Everyone,

This week was another very busy week in the capital. We have finished the 10<sup>th</sup> week of our Spring Session in the Legislature, well past the half way point in the 16 week session. This week I spent three entire days in estimates. In order to approve our budget for the Ministry of Education, the Opposition has the chance to question me on the ministry budget and we go through it line by line for as long as it takes! All estimates debates are broadcast online and on our legislative channel. It's a long and exhausting process, but one that makes us one of the most transparent governments in North America.

I just wanted to say thank you again to everyone in the Robson Valley who made my visit last week a welcome and memorable one as always. I also want to congratulate the Valemount Elementary Students who put on an amazing show Friday night with the Missoula Children's Theatre group. It was the best production of the Little Mermaid I've ever seen! Well done everyone, especially since they put it together in only a week!

Last week, I had the privilege of announcing along with my colleague Claude Richmond, Minister of Employment and Income Assistance, \$500,000 to give a voice to more British Columbians with

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

disabilities. This funding went to Communication Assistance for Young Adults (CAYA) to expand their program and serve adult up to 35 years of age. CAYA addresses the need for communications devices for disabled young British Columbians after high school. I met some wonderful young people and am glad that this program will now serve a much wider age range of disabled British Columbians.

This week Minister Richmond made another exciting announcement. His ministry dedicated \$2 million to the BC Non-Profit Housing Association for tenant starter kits. These kits are designed specifically to help ease the transition moving into new homes that don't have household essentials. These kits should really be called tenant starter truckloads because the 100 items included in the kit covered two tables and part of the floor beneath them at the announcement. They include items for the kitchen, bedroom and bathroom, including cooking sets, cutlery and utensils, bedding, towels, toiletries, basic first aid supplies and a tool kit to name just a few items!

This week the Premier made a very important announcement for the forest industry in B.C. He committed \$25 million for reforestation, forest health initiatives, and to market B.C.'s forest products in our province, across Canada and internationally. More than 80% of our wood products are sold outside of Canada with most of that going to the United States. The overseas demand for wood is growing and B.C. is poised to take advantage of that. This funding along with initiatives like the \$25 million for bioenergy, \$161 million Forests for Tomorrow program and \$130 million from the federal government for the community development trust fund will help us meet our throne commitment of zero net deforestation and diversify our forest industry.

Next week I will be participating in a very important event at Southridge Elementary School. Tuesday, April 22, 2008 is Earth Day and in celebration of that day the Southridge School Traffic Safety Committee will be putting on their 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Southridge Earth Day Challenge. The purpose of this event is to raise awareness about traffic and pedestrian safety in our

school zones while promoting a healthy way to get to school and helping to reduce our community's carbon footprint. I am excited to get the chance to participate in a walking school but for the first time and even more happy that I get to do it in Prince George!!!

This Saturday is the Vaisakhi Parade in Prince George. Vaisakhi is the day recognized as both the Sikh New Year and the anniversary of when Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji created the Khalsa to formalize the Sikh identity and protect their principles of humanity, equality and justice. It is a very important holiday and I want to wish everyone a year filled with good health, happiness, love and friendship – Vaisakhi Mubarak (Happy Vaisakhi)!

On Sunday Prince George is holding its annual Spring Clean Up. I hope everyone will take some time out of their weekend to participate in keeping our city clean and beautiful. You can call 561-7600 or stop by the service centre to pick up garbage bags, gloves and a map of disposal locations. We hope to do our share as well!!

Well here's hoping that spring arrives soon, I know many of you are anxious to get out in your gardens. Let's hope this is the week!

Until next week,  
Shirley

## Question of the week:

### What Improved Retirement Options will give British Columbians more Flexibility?

Amendments to the Pension Benefits Standards Act (PBSA) will give British Columbians more flexibility and choices when planning for their retirement. More than a quarter of British Columbia's population is over 55 and many do not want to retire at 65. It's important to ensure that people have more choices when planning for their retirement, including how long they work and how they build their retirement

savings. These changes provide more options. Individuals may now choose to begin receiving their pension at age 71, up from the previous maximum pensionable age of 69. This will give older workers the option to stay in the workforce longer if they so choose while they continue to build their retirement savings. The increase in the maximum pensionable age will apply to pension plans registered under British Columbia's PBSA and will be retroactive for the 2007 calendar year. It will also apply to RRSP and life income funds that consist of funds transferred from B.C. registered pension plans.

In addition, amendments will allow B.C. registered pension plans to provide phased retirement benefits. Individuals aged 60 or over, or 55 and over and eligible for an unreduced pension, will be able to work and contribute to their pension plan while simultaneously collecting a portion of their pension benefits. Currently, older workers must choose between collecting a pension or contributing to their pension plan.

The Pension Benefits Standards Act helps protect the interests of pension plan members by setting minimum standards for pension plans registered in British Columbia. Many of the PBSA's provisions are linked to federal income tax rules to take full advantage of preferred tax status made available to registered pension plans. British Columbia and Alberta are currently working together on a comprehensive review of pension standards to ensure pension plans continue to benefit workers, employers and investors. The Joint Expert Panel is scheduled to present its final report to both governments in September 2008.

## **News Around the Province**

### **BC Ambulance Service Recognizes Dispatchers**

The BC Ambulance Service (BCAS) will join partners at ambulance, police and fire agencies across the country in celebrating National Public Safety

Telecommunications Week, April 13 - 19. The annual recognition week provides an occasion for all Canadians to honour and express their gratitude for the contributions emergency medical dispatchers and telecommunications support staff make on the job every day.

Emergency medical dispatchers are more than a calm and reassuring voice at the other end the phone. They are knowledgeable and highly trained individuals who work closely with partners in police and fire to ensure that British Columbians have access to timely and effective care.

Emergency medical dispatchers (EMDs) work 24 hours a day, seven days a week in a fast-paced and challenging environment. On a daily basis, they are the "first contact" in life and death situations, providing vital information to paramedic crews and hospitals. EMDs use an internationally recognized Medical Priority Dispatch System to quickly assess each situation and respond with the appropriate help. They direct both advanced life support and basic life support ambulances and, when needed, air ambulances. They also communicate with first responders, search and rescue and police to ensure the right people are on the scene.

As well as co-ordinating the appropriate response, BCAS EMDs will also remain online whenever possible to provide life-saving first aid instructions, such as how to perform CPR, while the ambulance is en route.

The BC Ambulance Service is fortunate to have individuals of such a high-calibre both in our communications centres and within the management group. Because emergencies can strike at any time, we rely on the vigilance and the preparedness of these dedicated men and women 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Many EMDs have been instrumental in providing CPR instructions on cardiac arrests, aiding in the birth of children, assisting in major trauma with severe bleeding etc. Providing these life-saving first aid instructions makes a huge difference in many

cases. This week, the BCAS asks that you take a moment to think of or thank an EMD who has helped you or a loved one in a time of need.

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

**Dr. Heiner Tillmanns**

***For donating X-ray equipment to the CNC's Dental***

***Studies Department. Thank you for your generous donation of the Panorex machine. You make a difference in our community!***

## **Community Announcements**

***Diabetes Expo at the Coast Inn of the North, April 26, 2008, 8:45 - 3:30 pm***

***To Register call 561-9284***

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

- ❖ April 18- Charity Shopping Night at the Pine Center Mall 6pm – 9pm. Grand prize draw at 9pm –come out and support local charities.
- ❖ April 18- Celebrate the Museum Society's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday at reunion and AGM at the Canfor Atrium, Exploration Place. Lacey at 562-1612
- ❖ April 18 – Prince George Volunteer Fair at the Pine Centre Mall. Member agencies will display information about programs and volunteer opportunities.
- ❖ April 19 - Rummage Sale put on by the Good Cheer Club at Moose Hall on Douglas Street from 9am to 1pm. For more info call Ann at 564-6751
- ❖ April 20 – Performers North fundraiser at Vanier Hall, show starts at 7PM. General admission \$15. Tickets available at Studio 2880 for more info 563-2880
- ❖ April 25- Chamber of Commerce Luncheon

at the Ramada Hotel- Guest Speaker  
Minister of Education, Shirley Bond. Tickets  
available at the Chamber 562-2454

- ❖ April 26- ECRA - Garage Sale and bake Sale  
at 1692 – 10 Ave 9am to 2 pm
- ❖ April 26- Chamber of Commerce President's  
Gala and Auction 6:30 pm to midnight at the  
Ramada – for info call 562-2454
- ❖ April 26 – Evening of Yuk Yuk's Comedy with  
PG Kinsmen Club. Tickets are \$35 for dinner  
and entertainment, Doors open at 6 pm for  
more info call 562-8767
- ❖ April 26 - College Heights Community  
Association – spring "good as new Sale" at  
the Columbus Community Centre
- ❖ **Apr 27 – May 3 – National Volunteer Week**
- ❖ May 10-11 – 24 Hr Relay for Life & Team  
Autism, Registration forms & info can be  
obtained from Dave at 981-8384,
- ❖ May 10 - Mothers Day Tea at ECRA, 1692  
10<sup>th</sup> Ave. 2pm to 4pm Cost \$5.00 per person.
- ❖ May 29<sup>th</sup> – CNIB 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Drive Thru  
Breakfast at Costco Wholesale. 7 am to 9 am
- ❖ June 13<sup>th</sup> - Visions Luncheon at the Treasure  
Cove Casino show lounge with blind  
comedian Gord Paynter. Gord has been  
featured on Yuk Yuks circuit and at the Just  
for Laughs Festival. Tickets are \$50 each or  
\$400 for table of eight. Silent auction for  
more info call Brad or Jeff at 563-1702

***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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