

Ask Your MLA



Shirley Bond MLA, Prince George-Mt. Robson

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May 9, 2008



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Hello Everyone,

Many of you may have heard that this week it was decided that MLAs would not be getting their opportunity to be in their constituent next week as planned. Instead we will spend 4 additional days in the Legislature from May 20-23 in order to give enough time to debate a number of important bills we have introduced this session. The schedule for MLAs while the Legislature is in session is demanding. Almost the entire day consists of preparing for and attending Question Period, participating in committees that discuss and make decisions on important issues, and defending legislation. In addition we work very hard to try and find time for everyone who needs a meeting or who has come to Victoria to bring information to MLAs about their important program or initiative. As many of you know, while the Legislature is in session this leaves only Friday and the weekend for us to be in our constituencies. This is why many of us, including me, use legislative break weeks as an opportunity to work and meet with people in our constituencies. This is why I found it rather ironic this week when some of the media characterized break weeks as a vacation. As much as I love being in my constituency, I wouldn't exactly call my time spent there a vacation! (and neither would my family)

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

Nevertheless, it is very significant that we debate and pass the important legislation we have introduced in the Legislature. We have introduced legislation that will help people in northern and rural communities have better access to health care professionals and to their health records. Other health legislation we have introduced will require that our health care system is operated in a way that ensures our children and grandchildren have access to the same quality of health care as we have. This is just one example of some of the bills being considered.

In and amongst the long hours spent in the Legislature this week, we also managed to announce some programs that will be important and beneficial to British Columbians. My colleague Linda Reid, Minister of State for Child Care, announced that we have reached our target of creating 2,000 new child care spaces in B.C. In fact we will have exceeded that number and will have 2,200 spaces open and operating by 2010. This initiative has benefited many places like our PG Family YMCA who will be opening a child care hub in what used to be Highland Elementary School in just a matter of months.

The Ministry of Finance is also working hard this month getting ready to distribute everyone's Climate Action Dividend. In late June every British Columbian will receive a \$100 non-taxable, one-time payment to make it easier to make climate-smart choices. Here are some ideas about what you could do with your Climate Action Dividend that would help the environment and save you money:

- * Get rid of an old second fridge through BC Hydro's Refrigerator Buy-Back Program (includes \$30 rebate and free pick-up) and save \$114 per year.
- * Install one low-flow showerhead and save \$7 per year.
- * Replace three old-style 60W light bulbs with 15W compact fluorescents and save \$10 per year.
- * Replace your old washer or dryer with an ENERGY STAR appliance and receive a rebate as well as save the PST on your purchase.

Today was an incredibly busy day in my constituency.

I spent the day at the annual North Central Municipal Association (NCMA) convention. Our Northern MLAs attended a total of 18 meetings with various municipalities over the course of the day. We discussed many important issues and look forward to working with all of the municipalities on those issues. It was also an exciting day in Prince George as the Premier was here to make an important announcement. We had the privilege to accompany the Premier in announcing will be receiving a much deserved Spirit Square! I say that it is much deserved because I see the spirit of Prince George all the time. That is especially true as our community hosts various events during this important year for our Province. The residents of Prince George and area are gearing up for exciting events such as Rivermania, Homestead Days, and various fairs and exhibitions to commemorate B.C.'s 150th year as a province.

Tomorrow is a very important day to me for two reasons. The first is that it is the start of the Canadian Cancer Society Relay for Life in Prince George. Team Bond will be out in full force celebrating, remembering and fighting for a cure! Team Bond has been working hard to raise funds for the fight against cancer in preparation for the relay. I would like to sincerely thank the people who have signed up to be on my team and have worked so hard and I would also like to thank everyone who is participating in the relay and who has donated to the cause. If you haven't had the chance to donate there is still time. Just show up at the Relay with your cheque book in hand.

Tomorrow afternoon I have the privilege of attending an early celebration of our 23 Northern Medical Program graduates. I am incredibly proud of these 23 men and women and thrilled that 8 of them will be staying in Prince George to complete their residencies and most of the remaining graduates have chosen northern and rural residency positions. I am also proud of the Northern Medical Program itself and happy that I have the chance to see it's results first hand. As Minister of Advanced Education in 2004 I had the privilege of announcing the Northern

Medical Program after working hard for a number of years with Northern residents to see our dream come true.

Sunday I look forward to spending some time with my family on Mother's Day. It's an exciting time in my Victoria Office as one of my wonderful team members is expecting and it brought back memories about when I found out I was expecting twins. What a wonderful shock that was! I hope you will all remember your mothers this Sunday and for those of you that are mothers I hope you will celebrate the amazing thing it is to be a Mom.

Happy Mother's Day and a happy weekend to you all.

Until next week,
Shirley

Question of the week:

WHAT ARE THE CHANGES TO THE MINERAL TENURE AND COAL ACTS?

Amendments to the Mineral Tenure and Coal Acts will be put in force on June 2, 2008, adding requirements to ensure free miners/mineral developers provide notice to private land owners and Crown land leaseholders before they enter the property to start any type of mining or exploration activity. Industry is being given notice of these changes at this time, so that companies can incorporate the new rules into upcoming exploration plans.

The Mineral Tenure Act and the Coal Act provide for the administration of the Province's mineral and coal rights. The two amendments are meant to reduce the potential for conflict between free miners/mineral developers and land holders by promoting and facilitating open communication between the parties. The amendment to the Mineral Tenure Act requires people who explore for minerals ("free miners") and mineral developers to provide notice to private land

owners and people holding Crown land leases or grants before entering the property to commence any mining or exploration activity. The *Coal Act* amendment ensures that the notice, content and delivery methods are consistent between the Mineral Tenure and Coal Acts.

The notice will advise the landowner of the free miner/mineral developers' statutory right of entry under the Acts, and inform the owner about the timing, scope and nature of activity to be done on the property.

Since November 2006, ministry staff has been consulting on the changes with industry and landholder stakeholders. They have also sought advice from other parties who contribute expertise and best practices based on their own experiences interacting with resource developers and landholders.

The amendments strike a balance between promotion of economic growth through access to land for mineral exploration and development, and the recognition of land-holder's interests regarding the enjoyment and use of their property. They complement the legislative restriction that the right of entry does not extend to land occupied by a building, the curtilage of a dwelling house, orchard land, and land under cultivation, protected heritage property or land in a park.

News Around the Province

2,200 NEW CHILD-CARE SPACES ACROSS B.C.

The Government of British Columbia has reached its target of funding the creation of more than 2,000 new licensed child-care spaces across the province by 2010, Linda Reid, Minister of State for Child Care announced today.

Last fall, the Government announced \$12.5 million to support the creation of 2,000 additional child-care spaces – and I am pleased to say that with this latest round of capital funding we have exceeded that goal.

Over the next two years, more than 2,200 additional licensed spaces are expected to open to serve B.C. families for years to come. A total of 114 new child-care projects in 60 B.C. communities have received funding to assist with the costs of building new facilities, renovating leased buildings or expanding existing centres.

All of the projects were made possible through community-based partnerships – many that will create child care and family service hubs, and make use of vacant public spaces such as school classrooms and municipal buildings.

We are always pleased to see such innovative partnerships that find greater community use for surplus school buildings. This approach turns the challenge of declining enrolment into an opportunity to support early learners, working families and communities.

The former Lampson Elementary School in the Greater Victoria School District will be the site of one such centre where CFB Esquimalt's Military Family Resource Program will convert three classrooms for child-care use.

Finding quality child care is an important issue for many families today. It's an even bigger challenge for military families who have to find child-care that fits an ever-changing operational schedule. We are excited to open up new child-care spaces with this funding.

Today's announcement coincides with Child Care Month in British Columbia.

Since 2001, the Government of British Columbia has provided capital funding to support the creation of more than 5,500 new licensed child-care spaces. In addition, ongoing operating funds support more than 87,000 licensed spaces across B.C. – part of a near \$300 million provincial budget for child-care programs and services this year. For more information, visit www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare.

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

All the RCMP North District Members who received “Long Service Awards” this past week. We join in recognizing the dedication and work you do. Thanks for your years of Service!

Community Announcements

**Carnations for Mom
Help fight MS
During the Mother’s day Weekend
volunteers will offer Carnations to raise
funds to fight against MS
Show your Support**

Walk

Mark your calendar...

- ❖ May 9-11 Carnival Midway at the Prince George CN Centre
- ❖ May 10 – Prince George Ducks Unlimited 21st Annual spring Banquet & Auction Coast Inn of the North for tickets call 960-2664
- ❖ May 10 - Mothers Day Tea at ECRA, 1692 10th Ave. 2pm to 4pm Cost \$5.00 per person.
- ❖ May 10 – Sea Cadet Corps 50th Anniversary Parade at 1pm in Connaught Youth Centre gym
- ❖ May 10 – Walk a Block for Lupus- UNBC Walk the Ring Road Meet at Parking **Lot B** at 10AM for pledge forms and information call Penny 564-9426
- ❖ May 11 – David Douglas Botanical Garden Society Plant Sale at UNBC Agora 10am to 1pm rain, snow or shine.
- ❖ May 16-18 2008 Family Focus Conference – Bringing Families into Focus and AiMHiare co-hosting event. For more info visit their website at www.familyfocusconference.com to view workshop schedules, speakers’ bios and to register on line.

- ❖ May 17 – PGSO at Vanier Hall, The concert starts at 8pm.
- ❖ May 17 – Motorcycle Show and Shine at the Pine Centre Mall -10:45 to 3pm
- ❖ May 17 – May Day Parade at 11AM –Victoria street, 7th Ave, 9th Ave, 3rd Ave, George Street
- ❖ May 18-19 – Spring Antique Fair held at Huble Homestead, also pancake breakfast and BBQ for tickets call 564-7033 or Books & Co.
- ❖ May 23 – the Golden Violin in concert at Westwood Mennonite Church at 7pm. Adults \$15, Senors \$10
- ❖ May 24 – Children’s Author Robert Munsch, at the Prince George Civic Centre 11am – 1pm for more info call 614-9100
- ❖ May 25 – Great Strides – Taking steps to Cure Cystic Fibrosis to register call www.cysticfibrosis.ca/greatstrides
- ❖ May 26 – AimHi and Value Village, a community barbeque starting at 11:00AM at the Value Village parking lot on Spruce Street.
- ❖ May 29th – CNIB 7th Annual Drive Thru Breakfast at Costco Wholesale. 7 am to 9 am
- ❖ May 30- 8th annual Kiwanis /Friends of Children Golf Classic –PG Golf & Curling Club for more info call 564-2217
- ❖ May 31 – 2008 Stroll for Liver Walk/Run in Ft George Park, For more info call 963-9756
- ❖ June 13th - 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
- ❖ June 15 – Communities in Bloom, Walk in the Garden at Centennial Park form 10am to 2 pm
- ❖ July 1- Run for Canada – Fundraise for Canada’s Athletes. For more info on this event visit www.hbc.com or call 1-866-July-1st(585-9178)

If you are a non profit organization and would like to advertise an upcoming event or share a story please email [Shirley](mailto:shirley@leg.bc.ca)

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](mailto:shirley@leg.bc.ca). 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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