

Ask Your MLA



Shirley Bond MLA, Prince George-Mt. Robson

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June 6, 2008



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Hello Everyone,

Well it's been a week of exciting events, conferences and announcements. As I said last Friday when I had the pleasure of breaking the ground at the site for the new \$40 million Duchess Park Secondary school – it is great to have some good news after a very tough week, and in fact tough year, for our community.

On Sunday I spent the day with hundreds of Prince George families at Healthy Kids Day. It was a beautiful day and a fantastic event! We kicked off the morning by cheering on over 200 kids participating in the Healthy Kids Marathon, congratulations to all participants – you did a great job. I was pleased that we were able to be a sponsor of the event through the Ministry of Education. As you know, we have been promoting healthy lifestyles in our schools through my ministry and I thought it would be a perfect time to bring out a member of our Action Schools BC Team and a representative from ActNow BC to share some healthy living tips. At our booth we had a lot of information on healthy eating, healthy activities and programs available to schools, communities and citizens. We also offered free pedometers to anyone who signed up for the ActNow BC Activity Challenge. Did you know that it is recommended you take 10,000 steps a day? Visit www.actnowbc.gov.bc.ca to sign up for our Activity

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

Challenge – every move is a good move!

On Wednesday we celebrated Clean Air Day with the release of our BC Air Action Plan. This plan allocates \$28.5 over the next three years to improve and enhance air quality across the province. This is an especially welcome announcement in our community. The plan includes a total of 28 initiatives that will reduce air pollution and improve air quality. The plan is designed to address air pollution from all sources – from transportation and industry to everyday activities, such as woodstove operation. Some of the 28 actions identified in the plan have already been initiated, with all actions expected to be in place by 2009. For more information on the Air Action Plan visit www.bcairsmart.ca.

We were host to a major Bioenergy Conference in Prince George this week. In fact, on Wednesday my colleague Rich Coleman, Minister of Forests, made an important announcement in our community. We are providing the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition (OBAC) with an addition \$870,000 to continue planning that will sustain our pine beetle impacted communities. OBAC is addressing 12 priority topics with its strategy development and it will use the \$870,000 to help complete its remaining strategies. This week OBAC released its alternative energy strategy. For more information on our Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan visit www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle.

This weekend we have some important events happening. On Sunday I will be in a wheelchair navigating my way around Masich Place Stadium. I will be participating in the Rick Hansen Wheels in Motion relay. Following that I will head over to Fort George Park to support the people walking for Multiple Sclerosis. There is also an Art In The Park as a fundraiser for MS. I would encourage everyone to come out and support these organizations and also get some exercise at the same time!

This weekend is also about family as we will celebrate my niece's wedding. We are all thrilled for your Chantal and Jordan and wish you a happy life together.

Until next week,

Shirley

Question of the week:

WHAT ACTION COALITION RECEIVED PROVINCIAL FUNDING TO HELP STABILIZE BEETLE-IMPACTED COMMUNITIES?

The Province is providing the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition with \$870,000 to continue planning that will sustain mountain pine beetle-impacted communities into the future.

The Omineca Beetle Action Coalition has made good progress identifying new ways to diversify and help stabilize beetle-impacted communities. The mining and alternative energy strategies recently completed by OBAC are prime examples of the excellent work the coalition is doing for the Omineca region.

OBAC is addressing 12 priority topics with its strategy development. The coalition will use the \$870,000 to help complete its remaining strategies – which include agriculture, tourism, forest products and fibre use, regional infrastructure, and community services – to stimulate economic growth and job creation.

This funding adds to the momentum and moves the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition one step closer to the brighter future that they are building with the help of government. In the short term, this money is helping them to build capacity and prepare for the future. Over the longer term, these strategies provide them with a road map that they can use to work across our region and with senior levels of government to diversify the economy and build more resilient communities in the future.

OBAC will integrate the strategies as they are finished into a comprehensive economic development and diversification plan to be submitted to government in 2009 for review and decision on implementing recommended actions.

The Province is investing in communities in a way that reflects local aspirations and economic prospects that will grow over time. The work being led by OBAC will help accelerate the development of other resource sectors such as agriculture, oil, gas, mining, tourism and recreation.

The accomplishments and work done by the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition are commendable. They're mapping new ways to exploit opportunities that will enable the region to mitigate the social and economic challenges created by the pine beetle. Co-ordinating and working with those most directly impacted is part of our strategic approach in responding to the beetle and mitigating impacts of the infestation. OBAC is a dedicated group with the necessary know-how to help diversify and revitalize local economies for strong, prosperous futures. This government is showing support for our northern economies by addressing the impact of the mountain pine beetle epidemic. Supporting OBAC is an investment in the economic success of our communities and will help determine a plan for our future. OBAC has now received \$2.57 million from the Province since September 2005 to plan for the future stability and diversification of affected communities such as Burns Lake, Fort St. James, Fraser Lake, Granisle, Houston, Mackenzie, McBride, Prince George, Smithers, Telkwa, Valemount, Vanderhoof and the regional districts of Bulkley-Nechako and Fraser-Fort George.

OBAC is one of three groups receiving funding and support from the Province for developing response and recovery strategies specific to their region. The Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition has received \$2.75 million to date while the Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition has received \$850,000.

Encouraging immediate and long-term economic sustainability for communities is part of the provincial Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan. For more information on the action plan, or to download a copy, visit www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle online.

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News Around the Province

MORE SENIOR-FRIENDLY PROJECTS APPROVED FOR COMMUNITIES

Twenty-one more communities have received approval to develop plans and programs that address local challenges related to seniors' housing, transportation and support services and enable seniors to age in place. These plans and programs are supported by a \$500,000 grant from government. The province's communities need to be places where seniors are welcome, and have the housing and support services to live healthy, active lifestyles. By involving more communities in the Seniors' Housing and Support Initiative, the province is supporting an innovative response that recognizes the challenges of our aging population and positions B.C. communities to become age friendly.

Project approvals for communities coincide with the 2008 Active Aging Symposium in Vancouver, which promotes healthy, active lifestyles for seniors and older people. The new funding was announced by the Province in October 2007 at the launch of the Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide. It builds on a \$2-million grant provided by government in 2004. To date, 52 pilot projects in more than 40 communities have received funding under the Seniors' Housing and Support Initiative. Richmond, Creston, Prince George and Port Moody are among the communities announced to receive new funding for seniors-friendly initiatives, which include development of age-friendly community plans, seniors' transportation plans and recreational projects for seniors.

The grants offered through the Seniors' Housing and Support Initiatives are a great asset to local governments across the province. We all see in our own communities how the population is aging, and grants that support active aging and age-friendly communities are an important component in sustainable community planning.

Through the funding, Bowen Island will be working with the local Abbeyfield Society to develop an on-call transportation service for seniors to access

appointments and social opportunities on and off the island. In Williams Lake, the “Seniors Sampler” will bring local seniors the opportunity to try out new activities, such as tai chi, Nordic walking and yoga, in a safe, supportive environment. As well, transportation and programs like the Seniors Sampler are also being considered in Chilliwack, where planning for age-friendly neighbourhoods is now underway.

The Seniors’ Housing and Support Initiative is administered by the Union of BC Municipalities. It was created through a \$2.5-million grant from the Ministry of Community Services and the Ministry of Health to assist local governments in preparing for B.C.’s aging population.

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

The Prince George Library and Atieh Reza are showcasing the art work of the city’s youngest artists.

Drop by and see the display the month of June.

Community Announcements

Registered Charities Workshop – Session 2
“Filling in the form T3010A”

Mon, June 16 ~ 1 pm – 4 pm

2666 Queensway Street

Do you work as a bookkeeper or an administrator, or volunteer as the treasurer for a registered charity? Would you like to learn more about the details of filing your annual return, the T3010A? Join your

peers for a workshop to help you complete the annual Charity Information Return (T3010A). This free workshop will be held in Prince George and hosted by Volunteer Prince George.

To register for this FREE workshop, call Volunteer Prince George at 564-0224 or email volunteerpg@telus.net

Mark your calendar...

- ❖ June 5-7-**Forest and Resources Expo** – at CN Centre. Plan to attend, for more info visit info@forestandresources.org
- ❖ June 8 – **Wheels in Motion fundraiser** event at Masich Place Stadium being held from 11am -2pm, come out and support your team.
- ❖ June 8 – **Artist's in the Park** – Come out to Fort George Park and enjoy music, art lessons, games, and an all-out day of family fun. See you there.
- ❖ 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 – **ECRA Father's Day Breakfast** 1692 -10th Ave, 8am –Noon, \$5.00
- ❖ June 15 - 34th **Annual Father's Day Show & Shine** 10AM -3PM, Downtown Prince George and Cruisin' Classics
- ❖ June 15 – **Communities in Bloom**, Walk in the Garden at Centennial Park form 10am to

2 pm

- ❖ June 21- **Sandman Community Garage Sale** with all proceeds to the Spirit of the North Healthcare Foundation for the Paediatric outdoor play area at PGRH for more info call Debbie at 565-2522
- ❖ June 22 – Walk for ALS Prince George at Masich Place stadium, registration 11:30 am – Walk 1-3pm, Build your own team or pre-register. Go to :www.walkforals.ca
- ❖ July 1- **Run for Canada** – Fundraise for Canada's Athletes. For more info on this event visit www.hbc.com or call 1-866-July1st(585-9178)

July 1, Canada Day at Fort George Park

- Cowichan 2008 Spirit Pole: British Columbians Carve a Moment in History. This summer Cowichan will welcome over 9000 Aboriginal athletes and cultural performers to the 2008 North American Indigenous Games. The Spirit Pole will tour the province and be the central feature of the games' opening ceremonies. Come to Fort George Park, to the Canada Day festivities and be a "contributing artist" to the Spirit Pole during its visit here to Prince George, take home Spirit Pole shavings as a souvenir and learn about this historic project. Visit <http://www.bc150.ca/bc150.aspx?page=games> for more information.
- July 1, Canada Day at Fort George Park-- [The 2010 Legacies Now Connecting Communities Tour](#), presented by Bell and the Province of British Columbia, visits Prince George on Canada Day—the tour joins community events and festivals to share the Olympic and Paralympic spirit and encourage British Columbians to create their own legacies leading up to 2010 and beyond. The tour consists of a 200 square-foot display of information panels and a miniature curling rink, along with other interactive activities, to inspire British Columbians to become more involved in their communities through arts, literacy, sport and recreation, physical activity and volunteerism



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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