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## June 27, 2008



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Hello Everyone,

This has been a very different week for me. I am sure everyone has heard by now that the Premier has shuffled cabinet. I'm pleased to have been able to keep my portfolio as Minister of Education, which is one that I truly enjoy and am passionate about. I also retained my role as Deputy Premier. However, I received the news a little later than everyone else as I've been on a ministry trip to China for the week. As you know, Beijing is hosting the summer Olympics this year and because we are the incoming Olympics host they have a British Columbia-Canada Pavilion displaying the best of B.C.'s culture, business and tourism. It was very exciting for us to arrive at the front entrance of the Pavilion with the magnificent wooden arches representing the 13 provinces and territories. It is beautiful and full of fantastic images and stories of BC. All of the Pavilion staff were waiting for us and we were greeted by each of them. There were 3 staff members from Prince George and even two red serge RCMP officers! We officially opened Education Days and felt really proud of the work that had been done to create BC Canada House.

We had the opportunity to visit Dalian international High School and tour the campus. We also cut the ribbon and did a groundbreaking. Quite grandiose compared to our events. They even unveiled an 18 ton piece of jade - yes 18 tons - pretty spectacular. The firecrackers and fireworks

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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

at the end were something I won't forget - it went on for 9 minutes and I couldn't hear for ages afterward! The highlight of the day was meeting BC teachers - in fact 2 that I know very well. One was our son's hockey coach when he was young and another was the daughter of a close friend who was our superintendent of schools. I also met other teachers from Quesnel and PG - what a great bonus to see them!

This is also an important trip for us to support our existing off-shore schools, attract more international students to British Columbia and promote B.C. as a choice destination for business, investment, trade and tourism. China is B.C.'s second-largest trade partner, with more than \$10 billion annually in trade. In fact, B.C. exports to China have increased more than 97 per cent since 2002. Aside from all of that excitement, the cultural differences (the driving - I've yet to figure out why they've even bothered painting lines on the roads), the language barrier (I'm still getting used to waiting for translation), the food (I've now tried jelly fish and a number of other dishes I have yet to identify), and the jet lag have made it an incredible experience! Although, as exciting and important as the trip is, I will be very glad to be back home soon.

I can't wait to be back at home so that I can make another trip to the Farmer's Market. Every chance I get, I visit our Farmer's Market and can't help but pick up at least a couple of treats and delicious fresh fruits and vegetables. I was pleased that our government is also supporting local Farmers' Markets and families by providing the BC Association of Farmers' Markets with \$750,000. This money will help expand the Farmers' Market Nutrition and Coupon Project that will give up to 50 low-income families in Prince George better access to local, nutritious food. Province-wide the program will give about 2,000 low-income families, including 2,500 children, better access to local, nutritious food over the next two years. Our Prince George Farmers' Market is held every Saturday, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and is located in Wilson Square, at the corner of George Street and Third Avenue. I would encourage everyone to come out and support our local Farmers' Market and families.

I would also like to encourage everyone to come out this Saturday to the Dunster Ice Cream Social. It is such an

incredible event and last year I was amazed at the amount of ice cream I was actually capable of eating! Unfortunately, I will be on a plane on my way back from China and am disappointed I'll have to miss this year's Ice Cream Social. However, I hope you will bring your families out and help them create an even more impressive turnout than last year!

I hope you're all gearing up for Canada Day on Tuesday. We've got some really exciting events happening in Prince George and the Robson Valley. I am thrilled to have the Spirit Pole come to Prince George and look forward to our contribution to this amazing project.

I hear Mother Nature may bless us with beautiful weather for our Canada Day weekend. I'll keep my fingers crossed for sunshine and wish you a wonderful weekend with your families.

Hope to see you all at the Canada Day celebrations – until next week,

Shirley

## **Question of the week:**

### **WHAT COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM HAS HELPED TO CREATE QUESNEL'S NEW SPIRIT SQUARE?**

The \$20-million B.C. Spirit Squares program is helping to create or improve outdoor public meeting/celebration spaces based on 50/50 cost-sharing with local governments. Residents of Quesnel are celebrating B.C.'s first completed Spirit Square, built to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of the crown colony of British Columbia.

It is very exciting to see the completion of the Province's first Spirit Square, the first of many to be finished and opened this year, celebrating our province's 150th anniversary, and reinforcing the special spirit that defines our cities, towns and villages. This square is a place for

Quesnel to showcase its community strengths and achievements, and a centre for people to meet, to celebrate, and to connect with one another.

In August 2007, the Province announced \$54,500 in funding to erect a clock tower and build a wooden roof over the existing stage at Four Corners Square in Quesnel. The Quesnel Spirit Square symbolizes what can happen when a community works toward a common goal.

This Spirit Square is a way for the residents of Quesnel to commemorate BC150 – celebrating our heritage and achievements – past, present and future. Each of the B.C. Spirit Squares tells the world about the community, its history and values. In Quesnel, wood features are included in the square, reflecting the fact the community is also known as the Woodsmart City.

For more information about B.C. Spirit Squares, visit [www.spiritsquares.gov.bc.ca](http://www.spiritsquares.gov.bc.ca) online. To learn more about BC150, please visit [www.bc150.ca](http://www.bc150.ca).

## **News Around the Province**

### **PROVINCE URGES MOTORISTS TO BE SAFE WHILE CELEBRATING CANADA DAY**

Maximizing road safety is the goal as ICBC, police and the Province remind drivers of their responsibility for safe Canada Day weekend travel.

A four-day weekend, which many people will be taking, compounds traffic volume and the risk you pose if you drive irresponsibly. There is no excuse for driving while impaired, racing or speeding, or not buckling up. People who engage in behaviours like these can expect to face some of the most severe penalties and fines in Canada.

According to ICBC's statistics for the past five years, on Canada Day alone, typically three people die and 165 are injured in nearly 595 crashes on B.C. roads. Between 2003 and 2007, the average numbers of crashes and injuries, by region, were:

- Fraser Valley: 150 crashes, 55 injuries.

- Greater Vancouver: 210 crashes, 50 injuries.
- North/Coast: 45 crashes, 10 injuries.
- Southern Interior: 100 crashes, 25 injuries.
- Vancouver Island: 80 crashes, 25 injuries.
- Other (due to inaccurate location details): 10 crashes, 0 injuries.

The BC government, police and ICBC urge B.C. motorists to:

- **Plan a safe way home**, such as a designated driver or taxi, if your holiday activities will involve alcohol. Remember that impairment begins with the first drink, and that drugs – including prescription drugs – can affect your ability to drive safely. Impaired driving remains the top criminal cause of death in Canada, with 28 per cent of fatal crashes associated with impaired driving.
- **Buckle up.** Seatbelt use is the single most effective step you can take to protect yourself from death or serious injury in a collision. Last year, the fine for not wearing a seatbelt increased to \$167 from \$138, and drivers can be fined \$598 for operating their vehicle with more passengers than seatbelts.
- **Slow down and stay calm.** Speed and aggressive driving are among the main causes of fatal crashes.
- **Plan ahead**, keeping in mind that congestion or construction may add to your travel time.
- **Keep distractions to a minimum.** Place calls before you leave and pull over to check maps.
- **Leave plenty of space** between your vehicle and the one ahead of you.
- **Watch for motorcycles.** Drivers need to recognize there are more riders on B.C. roads every year, and their presence peaks in the summer.

Police across B.C. and ICBC have launched a summer awareness and enforcement campaign reminding all drivers that excuses for drinking and driving will not be tolerated. To help ensure motorists get the message, advertising will appear in communities across the province and police across B.C. will be ramping up road checks.

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

**Don Homan**, a teacher at D.P. Todd Secondary, was presented Tuesday with the **Prime Minister's Award of Excellence**, one of only 51 teachers in Canada to receive the honour. Great work Don!

## Community Announcements

The Ministry of Small Business and Revenue will be holding sales tax seminars on PST and GST for new and existing businesses at the Prince George Native Friendship Centre July 8<sup>th</sup>, from 8:00 am – 12:00 pm.

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## Mark your calendar...

- ❖ June 29 – **Exploration Place** - Sunday 2-4pm – T-Shirt painting – Bring you own plain t-shirt
- ❖ July 1 - **Run for Canada** – Fundraise for Canada's Athletes. For more info on this event visit [www.hbc.com](http://www.hbc.com) or call 1-866-July1<sup>st</sup>(585-9178).
- ❖ July 1 - **Canada Day Festival at Fort George Park** – Live entertainment, international food concession and craft fair.
- ❖ July 1 - **The Exploration Place** will again be hosting Canada Day activities in Fort George Park. July 1<sup>st</sup>. There will be birthday cake, a BBQ, great kids activities and much much more. BBQ from 11 am – 4:30 pm
- ❖ July 1 – **Dominion Day** – at the Huble Homestead. Pancake breakfast, contests, entertainment, pioneer demonstrations, and lots of activities. Admission by donation.
- ❖ 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

- ❖ July 3 – **Downtown Heritage Walking Tour** – Weekdays at 1 pm. Tour lasts 1 hour and explores downtown Prince George. Meet at Bob Harkins circulation desk PG Public Library 887 Dominion St
- ❖ July 11 – **Spirit of the North Healthcare Foundation Pro-Am Golf Tournament** – Held at PG Golf and Curling Club. For info call Debie Byl (565-2522) or to register call Laurie Pierce (563-4417)
- ❖ August 7<sup>th</sup> to August 10<sup>th</sup> - **The Prince George Exhibition** - This year's theme includes Agricultural Awareness driven exhibits and events.
- ❖ August 17 – **Pamper Me Golf Tournament** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Tournament held at Ness Wood Golf Course. Funds raised will go to equipment and education for women's cancer issues in our community. For info call Brenda Lothrop (562-4433)
- ❖ September 20 – **Evening of Pink** – A community fundraiser to support education and equipment in our community for the fight against breast cancer. For info call Monica Peacock (552-4114)

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