

# Ask Your MLA



Shirley Bond MLA, Prince George-Mt. Robson

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## July 11, 2008



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Hello Everyone,

Wow, what a week! Today we announced the opportunity for the College of New Caledonia to obtain a research forest tenure. This will allow for the training of resource management students and serve as a centre of applied research in Prince George. It will also generate as much as \$300,000 in revenue a year, which will be used to help to revitalize the forest and resources technology, programs at the College. Congratulations to the coalition of industry partners, the CNC faculty and administration and the Forest ministry team for moving this proposal forward so quickly. This is an excellent example of how dynamic partnerships can work together to address challenges and come up with innovative solutions. Well done everyone!

There has also been great news recently for families in BC. We announced additional funding that will expand the screening that is done when babies are born in our province. We know that early detection and treatment is key in so many disorders and this expanded screening process will detect disorders at birth that can then be treated early to avoid lifelong health issues. The expansion will be phased in over the next 12 months with full implementation expected by 2010. With just a few drops of blood collected on a filter paper card, about 42,000 babies are screened each year. This is welcome news for many parents and organizations that have been seeking

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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

expanded screening for some time.

We had two Ministers in Prince George and Northern BC this week. Minister of Transportation Kevin Falcon has been traveling to numerous northern communities to award grants that will support improving local road infrastructure that has been so significantly impacted by increased hauling of Mountain Pine Beetle wood. A 10 million dollar fund was designated in response to concerns expressed by small, rural communities about their inability to deal with these challenges effectively because of a small tax base. As a northern MLA I have worked hard to bring this concern to Victoria on a regular basis and it is fantastic to see communities like McBride, Valemount, Mackenzie, Vanderhoof, Ft. St. James and others have this concern addressed. Minister Falcon also did a visit of the Simon Fraser Bridge project to say thanks to the hard working team that is doing the construction. Great news on that project – on budget and on time!!

Our new Minister of Finance Colin Hansen was here as well to do a day of meetings with constituents and partner groups including the BC Cattlemen and the Chamber of Commerce. Colin is working hard to visit northern and rural communities to increase his understanding and to listen to our concerns. Thanks Colin for taking the time to be here in Prince George.

What a beautiful day today! While it really feels like summer our busy schedule continues. Our office is busy on a daily basis meeting the needs of our constituents and working hard to solve individual issues. I appreciate the hard work of my support staff here in Prince George, Dustie, Dorothy and Eric. You are appreciated and do a great job for the constituents of Prince George Mount Robson.

Have a fun weekend. As you are planning your weekend don't forget to drop down to the Farmers Market, take in a soccer game with the visiting Whitecaps or just enjoy a backyard BBQ. I hope to see you out and about!

Until next week,  
Shirley

## **Question of the week:**

### **WHAT NEW CONTRACT WILL HELP INCREASE ROAD SAFETY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND KEEP PRINCE GEORGE COMPETITIVE CANADA?**

A \$4.7-million dollar contract has been awarded to build the approaches to the new Simon Fraser Bridge beginning in August, announced Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Kevin Falcon.

The Simon Fraser Bridge is one of the key pieces of our Cariboo Connector strategy to improve the safety and efficiency of Highway 97 between Prince George and Cache Creek. Highway 97 is our key north-south trade corridor, so it's vital that we continue to make improvements to the highway to support economic growth and improve B.C.'s competitiveness.

IDL Projects Inc. of Prince George has been awarded the contract to build the approaches that will tie the new Simon Fraser Bridge into the northbound lanes of Highway 97.

"The awarding of this contract is another important milestone in the construction of the twinned Simon Fraser Bridge," said Prince George-Mount Robson MLA Shirley Bond. "Construction of the new bridge is proceeding extremely well, and the bridge approaches are the next prominent piece of the work."

This project is essential for the economic development of our northern communities. By upgrading the Simon Fraser Bridge, we are investing in future tourism and expansion of the North.

The Province understands the necessity to maintain and support Highway 97, our link between the North and southern B.C. This investment ensures safer travel for our

visitors and residents and strengthens our community for the future.

The \$42-million project will increase the capacity of Highway 97 across the Fraser River to four lanes by twinning the Simon Fraser Bridge. The federal government is providing up to \$18 million of the funding through its Mountain Pine Beetle Program under the Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor initiative. The new bridge is expected to be completed in summer 2009.

## **News Around the Province**

### **SMALLER BC COMMUNITIES RECEIVE \$272 MILLION FOR INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES**

For the first time, smaller British Columbia communities with populations of less than 100,000 can now access more funding for cleaner water, better waste management and flood mitigation thanks to a \$272-million investment by the federal and provincial governments through the Building Canada Plan.

Until 2014, the federal and provincial governments will each invest \$136 million to be applied to projects approved under the Communities Component, which includes \$25 million for flood mitigation. Together with matching funds from the local governments, \$408 million will be available, through until 2014, to help meet the local infrastructure needs and priorities of smaller British Columbia communities.

The announcement of the Communities Component of Building Canada was made by the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, the Honourable Stockwell Day, Minister of Public Safety, the Honourable Kevin Falcon, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, and the Honourable Blair Lekstrom, Minister of Community Development.

The government is committing an unprecedented level of

funding to assist communities with populations of less than 100,000. This commitment will provide better sewer, water, local roads, tourism infrastructure, short-sea shipping, and short-line rail, as well as flood mitigation infrastructure. It will make a real difference in the everyday lives of the people in British Columbia's smaller communities.

The announcement is a significant step forward in implementing the Building Canada plan in British Columbia. The Communities Component will help to address the infrastructure needs of smaller communities to help develop a stronger, safer and better British Columbia.

Eligible applicants may now submit applications for the first round of the Communities Component. The focus of the first intake will be projects related to sewer, water, local roads, tourism infrastructure, short-sea shipping, and short-line rail, as well as flood mitigation. Projects funded will be selected through a competitive process, with priority given to those demonstrating the principles of sustainability and supporting provincial initiatives such as action on climate change and the objectives in B.C.'s Energy Plan, Living Water Smart and Green Building Code. Applications are available on the BC Secretariat website at [www.bcbuildingcanadafundcommunities.ca](http://www.bcbuildingcanadafundcommunities.ca), with a deadline of Sept. 5, 2008.

The announcement supports the government's commitment to work in partnership with federal and local governments to ensure high-quality, modern public infrastructure. This new infrastructure funding will contribute to long-term economic growth, a clean environment and strong communities.

The Province is committed to helping B.C.'s local governments build and improve their communities. This new infrastructure funding will be key in supporting local governments as they build strong local economies and greener, more sustainable communities.

All local governments, large and small, will have the opportunity to benefit from Building Canada. Over \$1.485 billion will be transferred to British Columbia local governments through the federal Gas Tax Fund between

2007 and 2014. Further, both governments have agreed that a further \$78 million will be made available for major projects in communities with populations over 100,000 or to further supplement the Communities Component. In addition, significant funding will flow to major projects of importance to municipalities. For example, Canada and British Columbia today announced a tri-partite working group with representatives from all three levels of government to advance planning and preparations for moving forward on the first phase of the Capital Regional District Sewage Treatment Project.

Through its unprecedented \$33-billion Building Canada infrastructure plan, the federal government is providing long-term, stable and predictable funding to help meet infrastructure needs across Canada. Building Canada will support a stronger, safer and better country. On Nov. 6, 2007 the governments of Canada and British Columbia announced the signing of a Framework Agreement under Building Canada worth \$2.2 billion.

The Communities Component of the Building Canada Fund will be administered jointly by Western Economic Diversification Canada, and the provincial Ministry of Community Development.

For more information on the Building Canada plan, visit [www.buildingcanada.gc.ca](http://www.buildingcanada.gc.ca).

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

**Bo Hedges**, a Fort St. John native who will be heading to Beijing on Canada's Paralympic team for wheelchair basketball. Good luck Bo!

## **Community Announcements**

All BC residents should have received their \$100 Climate Action Dividend Cheques by June 30<sup>th</sup>. If you have not received your cheque, contact the Canada Revenue Agency at 1-866-426-1526.

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## Mark your calendar...

- ❖ 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)
- ❖ July 20 – **Kidz Carnival** – At the **Huble Homestead**. Includes magic and puppet, shows, Clowns, carnival and pioneer games, face painting, pony rides and much more. From 10-5.
- ❖ 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 9<sup>th</sup> – **Peacekeepers Day Parade** – United Nations Peacekeeper annual parade leaving from the legion at 10:40 am marching to the cenotaph for a short service. Call 250-962-4684 for info.
- ❖ 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)
- ❖ August 24 – **BC 150 Rivermania** - Come celebrate the culture and Peoples of the Fraser River. Every BC community is invited to take part in this event. The launch in Prince George takes place August 24. Visit <http://www.bcrivermania.com/index.html> to find out what's going on in Prince George and to see how you can be part of the flotilla
- ❖ September 12<sup>th</sup> – **Spirit of the North Radiothon** – Join 101.3 the River during a full day broadcast fundraiser in the atrium of PGRH. Come and make a donation to generate much needed funds for our hospital. Contact Debie Byl at 565-2522 for info.
- ❖ 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@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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