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July 4, 2008



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Hello Everyone,

Today I made my regular visit to the Robson Valley and I had company. Joining me for the trip was Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon. Kevin has been to the Valley several times and in fact took a personal holiday there and thoroughly enjoyed his time. One of my priorities as an MLA has been to remind Victoria about the importance of small, rural communities and the support they require to ensure they can maintain and improve infrastructure. Today is an excellent example of how we have responded to that concern. We are very happy to announce that today the Robson Valley received a combined \$1.7 million to help upgrade roads impacted by the harvest of Mountain Pine Beetle infested wood. These investments are in addition to the rehabilitation of provincial roads in our area that have been similarly affected by increased logging truck traffic. This year alone we will be investing over \$12 million for road improvement projects in the Robson Valley. We recognize the importance of this type of support for small, rural communities.

Our Education team returned home from China tired, but feeling very positive about the work we did while there. A highlight was the opportunity to meet many BC teachers who are teaching in offshore schools and also to meet public servants from Prince George who were selected to be part of the terrific staff in the BC Canada Pavilion in Beijing. Many countries are working to build relationships

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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

in China, but it was apparent that the emphasis that we have had with our Asia Pacific strategy is paying off. We were very encouraged about the strong desire there is to partner with British Columbia in a number of areas including education.

I was glad to be home in time to celebrate Canada's 141st birthday. And what a celebration it was! We had beautiful weather and a day filled with Canada Day events and entertainment. In addition to the wonderful program of multicultural performers and cuisine, we had the honour of hosting the BC150 Spirit Pole. The Spirit Pole is traveling throughout British Columbia and people are given the opportunity to carve a portion of this remarkable red cedar pole. On July 1 Prince George made its mark on the Spirit Pole and our work will be shared with the world when the pole is raised at the opening ceremonies of the North American Indigenous Games in the Cowichan Valley in August of this year. Thanks to all the organizers for making this a special part of Canada Day!

On Wednesday we had the pleasure of announcing funding for the Prince George Aboriginal Business Development Association along with MP Dick Harris. The provincial government contributed \$337,500 and the federal government's contribution brings the total grant to \$750,000. This investment will help the PGABDA improve business advisory services and deliver key programs like business workshops, access to capital, resource materials, and one-on-one business counseling. These services will help Aboriginal members of the community to start and maintain successful small businesses, and will keep entrepreneurial development in the North moving forward. The PGABDA is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing business advice, referrals, support and technical assistance to Aboriginal peoples in Northern B.C. Special thanks go to Vince Prince for his very moving song at the event and to Ray Gerow for never failing to remind us about the importance of this work and the need for ongoing funding. Great job everyone! For more information about the PGABDA and its services please call 562-6325 or visit abdc@bcgroup.net.

Next week is shaping up to be another busy week. It is the time of year when many families take holidays, so I would like to remind everyone to drive safely and also to be

patient with the road construction crews on our highways. We have a large number of projects underway and more to come. This work may cause minor delays. Let's try to remember that it is a small inconvenience for something that is critical for our future and once finished will allow for a much more enjoyable drive through our beautiful province. I wish everyone happy and sun-filled holidays and I hope to see some of you at the Farmers' Market and other community events this weekend. I will see you out and about!

Until next week,

Shirley

Question of the week:

WHAT NEW IMPROVEMENTS WILL BENEFIT RESIDENTS OF FORT ST. JOHN?

The Province is investing \$43.9 million in transportation improvements for the Fort St. John and North Peace area this year, Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Kevin Falcon and Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources Minister and Peace River North MLA Richard Neufeld announced July 2nd.

The Province continues to improve roads in the North Peace to support economic growth, to systematically improve year-round load capacity for industry and to improve safety for the traveling public.

Work taking place includes a \$9-million project to complete paving and replace a bridge on Upper Halfway Road.

Other projects include:

- Paving on Airport Road, Baldonnel Road, Road 255, Montney Hwy and South Montney Coulee.
- Paving of the West Bypass Road in Fort St John
- Completion of the Cache Creek Bridge replacement

project.

- Completion of paving on 85th Avenue in Fort St. John
- Additional graveling, ditching and brushing on North Peace roads.
- Completion of four-laning from Road 269 to Road 271 in Fort St. John.

These projects will benefit residents and industry throughout the North Peace. Protecting and upgrading roads will also support the increased activity by oil and gas companies in their exploration, drilling and production endeavours.

Falcon also announced \$341,000 in transit funding for the Fort St. John area, including \$206,000 to purchase and run a second handyDart bus. These buses provide door-to-door transit service for people with disabilities and others who cannot use conventional bus service. The remaining \$135,000 in provincial funding will support service expansions to Fort St. John's regular bus service.

The provincial funding announced today is part of the funding from the Provincial Transit Plan, which aims to double transit ridership provincewide by 2020 by increasing choices for travellers. The \$14-billion plan also focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from cars by 4.7 million tonnes cumulatively by 2020.

News Around the Province

BC LEADS CANADA IN ATTRACTING NEW RESIDENTS

The latest figures from Statistics Canada show British Columbia continued to be a Canadian leader in attracting people from other areas of the country and the world during the first three months of 2008.

B.C.'s population grew by 1.5 per cent, or an estimated 14,383 people, during the first quarter of 2008, for a total population of 4,428,356.

B.C. is a destination of choice for people to live, work and raise a family. B.C.'s economy, job options, low taxes and natural beauty are a strong magnet for people who want a better future.

Immigration was a large factor in B.C.'s population growth, with 10,058 people coming from other countries, accounting for 18.9 per cent of Canada's total immigrant arrivals.

The total number of newcomers to B.C. from elsewhere in Canada was 13,513. The largest number – 6,871 – came from Alberta; another 3,585 moved here from Ontario. Only Saskatchewan gained more people than B.C. due to interprovincial migration.

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

Lexie Elliot, for receiving a **50 year** service pin in recognition of her dedication to the Royal Purple club in McBride. A big congratulation to a very deserving lady!

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 8th, from 8:00 am – 12:00 pm.

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

- ❖ July 7 – **Little Voyageurs Summer Story Time** – (3-5 year olds) Stories, games, songs and crafts.

Transportation assistance is available to the South Fort George Family Resource Centre. Call Jennifer Scammell at 614-9449 for more info.

- ❖ July 8 – **Power Play** – Drop in play time for families with children ages newborn to age five. South Fort George Family Resource Centre. Call Jennifer Scammell at 614-9449 for more info.
- ❖ July 8 – **Smart Growth on the Ground Opening Forum** – Come and participate in a forum discussing downtown issues and explore future directions for development. Coast Inn of the North, Tabor Room. Introductory presentations at 4:30 and 7:00 pm. Visit [www.sgog.bc.ca](http://www.sgog.bc.ca) for more info.
- ❖ July 10 - **Little Voyageurs Summer Story Time** – (6-8 year olds) Stories, games, songs and crafts. Transportation assistance is available to the South Fort George Family Resource Centre. Call Jennifer Scammell at 614-9449 for more info.
- ❖ 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.com)***

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@askyourmla.com). 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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