



## Useful Web Links

October 03, 2008



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[BC Government Caucus](#)

[Ministry of Education](#)

[City of Prince George](#)

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[Act Now! BC](#)

[2010 Commerce Centre](#)

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[Prince George Community Foundation](#)

[Northern Development Initiative Trust](#)

[The Exploration Place](#)

[Railway and Forestry Museum](#)

Hello Everyone,

Wasn't it an unbelievable weather week in Prince George? Several gorgeous sunny days that make us feel like summer had actually arrived! Hope you found even a few minutes outside.

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities Convention (UBCM) in Penticton last week saw many exciting initiatives that benefit Prince George and the Robson Valley. It was announced that the Towns for Tomorrow program that began in 2007 will be expanded. The program was announced in 2007 and has already benefited McBride, as \$400,000 was granted for the new McBride Community Hall on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Grants from the Towns for Tomorrow program will now be open to communities with populations up to 15,000 and a total of \$50 million will be committed to the program - \$10 million for the remainder of this year and \$20 million in each of the next two years.

There were other announcements by the Premier from UBCM that will benefit rural and Northern B.C. The new Connecting Citizens Grant Program will allow communities to apply for \$50,000 grants for "last mile" Internet and cellular phone connectivity. I am aware of Internet and cellular phone connectivity issues through my many visits to the Robson Valley. This program will allow successful applicants to address these concerns with provincial funding support.

Capital Report: [Sign up](#) to find out what is happening in government.

Ask Your MLA Archive: [Click here](#) to read past editions of Ask Your MLA.

### **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

The Premier also announced that we will re-start the environmental assessment process for a transmission line along Highway 37 and that the tolls on the Coquihalla Highway would be removed. The transmission line will create economic opportunities in the north and according to the Mining Association of BC could create up to 11,000 jobs. The removal of tolls on the Coquihalla Highway will put more money back in the pockets of British Columbians. This is especially true for the trucking community, as they account for twenty per cent of traffic on the Coquihalla and will now save thousands of dollars each year.

October is also Small Business Month in British Columbia. Our government has been a strong supporter of small businesses in the province through a number of initiatives. These include the simplification and streamlining of the regulatory environment by reducing the provincial regulatory count by 42.8 per cent. Our government has also consulted with small businesses to complete the Provincial Sales Tax reviews, which will result in savings of \$129 million for small businesses and British Columbians over the next three years. Another highlight is the number of women employed in small businesses. Over 146,000 women in BC are self-employed in one-person operations or in companies they have founded. The number of women working in British Columbia today is at the highest level ever at over one million.

Finally, I would like to remind everyone of the ongoing budget consultations. Every year, British Columbians generate great ideas to improve services in the province. Since 2001, we have seen more than 100 tax reductions and we currently have the highest employment ever on record. The Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services is currently conducting hearings across the province, listening to individuals speak about what they see as priorities. Some of you attended the Committee hearing in Prince George on September 17<sup>th</sup>. However, if you missed that hearing, you may still submit your ideas to the Ministry of Finance website by Friday, October 24<sup>th</sup>. Take this time to express to government how you want your tax dollars spent and in what areas you want your taxes lowered. This way, we can build a stronger and more vibrant Prince George and British Columbia.

Tonight Pat Bell and I will put on our finest and MC the Today's Woman Awards. We are always inspired and amazed by the women who are nominated. Congratulations to each of them!! Why not join us on Sunday as we celebrate the silver medal of our very own Olympian Bo Hedges. Look forward to seeing you out and about.

Until next week,

Shirley

### **Question of the week:**

#### **WHAT SUPPORT IS THE ROBSON VALLEY TUTORING PROGRAMS RECEIVING?**

Provincial funding totaling \$70,000 to McBride and Valemout community groups will assist the College of New Caledonia in offering free tutoring programs to help local adults upgrade their education or improve their English this year.

As Minister responsible for literacy in B.C., I strongly support these programs and know how important they are in rural and Northern Communities. Access to this type of support is essential no matter where you live. This funding will help build on the good work being done in the Robson Valley.

Programs for 2008/2009 being funded include:

##### Community Adult Literacy Programs

- o \$23,100 - Valemout Learning Society
- o \$8,900 - Valemout - Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy
- o \$17,000 - McBride - Robson Valley Home Literacy Society

##### ESL Settlement Assistance

- o \$21,000 - Valemout Learning Society

This year, 105 programs are being funded through the Province's Community Adult Literacy Program, delivered through partnerships between community groups and B.C.'s public post-secondary institutions. In total, government is providing almost \$3.4 million to fund the initiatives.

Colleges, school districts and community-based organizations serving people who have recently arrived in Canada deliver services via a variety of adult English as "a second language" training, but some communities have too few newcomers to offer regular classes. In 2006 and 2007, seven successful pilot projects used volunteer tutors to meet the needs of smaller, more remote communities, paving the way for this year's programs.

Up to \$3 million in federal settlement funding through the provincial government's WelcomeBC initiative is available this year and next. So far, 30 communities have shared \$626,000 for programs that include tutoring by trained volunteers, small group classes, field trips and guest speakers from community facilities and services. The programs are offered by community groups working with B.C.'s public post-secondary institutions.

The program is an expansion of the Ministry of Advanced Education's Community Adult Literacy Program, which provided \$2.4 million to 62 projects around B.C. for the 2007-08 school year. Since 2001, \$9.3 million has been provided for Community Adult Literacy Programs throughout B.C. The Province has announced more than \$131 million in new literacy programs and services in the past six years, including \$44.5 million for ReadNow BC, a comprehensive action plan to improve British Columbians' literacy skills.

## **News Around the Province**

### **OCTOBER IS FOSTER FAMILY MONTH IN BRITISH COLUMBIA**

October is Foster Family Month in British Columbia – an opportunity to recognize the remarkable contribution foster families make in our communities. It is a month where we honour the foster parents who open their hearts and their homes – and say thank you for the positive difference they make in the lives of children.

Home and family is, for most of us, a safe and loving environment. It is where we find the security and stability we need to feel confident and secure in our lives. Children can enter care for a variety of reasons.

It can be neglect, illness or a family death. When children's

parents are not able to care for them, foster families are there to provide love, support and stability for children at a difficult time in their lives.

Whether they provide emergency, short- or long-term care, foster families play an invaluable role in the lives of thousands of children in British Columbia. Foster parents come from all walks of life. They are our neighbours and colleagues. They have diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds. They bring different life experiences to their role and they have different reasons for doing the work they do. They are ordinary people engaged in extraordinary acts of kindness.

In British Columbia, there are more than 3,200 foster families caring for over 6,000 children and youth. A family-like setting is the best environment for a vulnerable child. A child may arrive in the middle of the night, to a strange home in an unfamiliar neighbourhood. They are with people they have never met, feeling vulnerable, alone, and frightened about the future. Yet, they have found a warm bed, kindness and concern, and a safe place to call home. There is always a need for more individuals and families to open their hearts and their homes and join the thousands of other foster families who contribute to the fabric of our communities. The most important qualifications you can bring are a desire to provide a supportive and caring environment and make a positive difference in a child's life. I encourage anyone interested in fostering to call the Fosterline at 1 800 663-9999 for more information.

As Minister of Children and Family Development, I see the challenges we face in our communities and I am privileged to be a part of helping to address the needs of our children and youth. Foster families can play an integral role in creating the foundation a child needs to develop into a confident adult and their influence lasts a lifetime. I hope you will join me in recognizing and supporting foster families who make a difference in your community – during October and throughout the year.

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

UNBC student, Cherisee Seaton,  
Congratulations on receiving a \$105,000  
scholarship from the social Sciences and

Humanities Research Council of Canada  
*We are proud of you!*  
*Keep up the great work!*

## Community Announcements

The Gretzky raffle - A Signed picture of Wayne and a print of his homestead - nicely framed. For more info contact AiMHi at 250-564-6408 or at 950 Kerry Street, PG

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ECRA Craft and Bake Sale  
October 25, 9 am to 2pm  
Served Lunch \$5  
Raffle, craft items, baked goods,  
Entertainment all during the day

## Mark your calendar...

- ❖ October 3 & 4 - Stuart McLean on CBC Vinyl Café tour at Vanier Hall – tickets at Ticketmaster.ca
- ❖ October 4 - SISTERS IN SPIRIT VIGIL- Remembering murdered/disappeared aboriginal women across Canada Drumming, opening welcome and prayer circle smudging, silent vigil, speakers, open mike, closing prayer/balloon launch. Everyone welcome: sponsored by a number of local organizations including the Lheidli T'enneh Band and the PG Native Friendship Centre; also Amnesty International, KAIROS and the Native Women's Association of Canada for more information contact: George Harding, Northern John Howard Society 250-561-7343
- ❖ October 5 – Breakfast celebrating the Paralympic and the Olympic Dream – Coast Inn of the North at 10:30 am, tickets \$25 ea or table of 8/\$175. call 250-963-5346, RSVP by Oct 1.
- ❖ October 3-25- Theatre North West first play of the season–“The Number 14” call 250-563-6969 for tickets and info.
- ❖ October 10 – AiMHi's Community Living Pancake Breakfast – 8am – 10am – 950 Kerry Street. Cost \$2.00 per person.
- ❖ October 15- AiMHi's Healthy Living Fair – 1pm - 7pm Held at AiMHi- 950 Kerry Street, admin by donation.

- ❖ October 17-19 – **West of the Rockies Pro Rodeo** finals at CN Centre. Rodeo dance, Sat Oct 18 at the Roll-a-dome, tickets at ticketmaster.ca
- ❖ October 17- Shattering- Forum Theatre created and performed by people who have struggled with addiction at the Prince George Civic Centre, pay by donation, 7pm for info 250-565-6332
- ❖ October 19 - Child Development Centre's 20<sup>th</sup> **Annual Dutch Auction**, for info call 563-7168
- ❖ November 8 – **Wine Festival** – Come out and support theatre North West while enjoying a fun evening of delicious wine tasting, appetizers, silent auction and new for 2008- mini wine tasting lessons. 7:30 pm to 10:30 pm Tickets \$35 available at Books and Co. and TNW office.

***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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