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## December 19, 2008

Hello Everyone,

Well, hello winter! What a week of cold and snow...and not just in Prince George but Victoria as well. I hope you are adjusting to the temperature and taking lots of time to drive according to the road conditions.

A new report released Wednesday shows a dramatic drop in auto theft crime in Prince George and across the province. Between 2006 and 2007, the overall reduction in auto theft was 8 per cent. In Prince George the numbers are similar. By the end of the third quarter of 2007, there were 710 auto thefts in Prince George. By the end of the third quarter of 2008, the number of thefts was 338. This statistics reveal the effectiveness of provincial programs such as the Integrated Municipal Provincial Auto Crime Team (IMPACT), strategies such as bait cars, automatic licence plate recognition, the stolen vehicle enforcement team and the use of police dogs. Auto theft is just one area where crime in Prince George has dropped. There was a 23 per cent drop in overall crime in a direct comparison between the third quarters of 2007 and 2008. This includes property crime and person-crimes such as assault where the province's Prolific Offender Pilot Program is helping to reduce crime. We all want Prince George to be a safer community and with the hard work of the RCMP and some of the programs this provincial government has implemented we are seeing a reduction in crime.

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

On Tuesday we announced the three teams shortlisted for the new Cancer Centre in Prince George. These three qualified proponent teams will participate in the request for proposals (RFP) phase of the competition to design, build and maintain the BC Cancer Centre Agency Centre for the North in Prince George. The Cancer Centre was approved in July of this year, with a targeted start date of 2009 and a completion goal of 2012. No matter who is chosen I know that Prince George and northern BC will have a cancer centre to be proud of. We anticipate being able to start construction in late 2009. This is one of the most important initiatives I have worked on as an MLA. Northern families need and deserve this service closer to home and that is what we intend to deliver.

In other health news, Northern Health attracted 45 physicians to Prince George and other northern communities this year. This is great news, as Northern Health has taken an aggressive approach to attracting physicians and speciality professionals through the "Love Where You Live" recruitment campaign. The northern medical program has helped to attract doctors to the region as well, primarily to assist with teaching and research. For the first time graduates of the program are working in the region. There are currently eight program graduates completing their residences in Northern Health hospitals. In Prince George, the new doctors include eight general practices, two plastic surgeons, and one each for internal medicine, paediatrics, psychiatry, gastroenterology, radiology and obstetrics/gynaecology. McBride also has a new general practice physician. This is a significant improvement and a trend we hope will continue.

This will be our last AYMLA before Christmas. I want to say a special thank you to my staff in Prince George and Victoria for their hard work over the past year. You have done an awesome job!! Bill and I are planning to spend a quiet Christmas with our family and wish each of you a special time with your loved ones as well. Merry Christmas and thank you for showing me repeatedly that the true spirit of Christmas is alive and well in our community and province. See you in 2009!

Until next week,

Shirley

## **Question of the week:**

### **WHAT IS THE LATEST DEVELOPMENT WITH THE BC CANCER AGENCY CENTRE FOR THE NORTH?**

Three qualified proponent teams have been shortlisted to participate in the request for proposals (RFP) phase of the competition to design, build, finance and maintain the BC Cancer Agency Centre for the North in Prince George.

With the annual number of new cancer diagnoses in the north projected to increase 30 per cent to around 1,325 cases by 2015, expanding the network of cancer care services is critical to ensuring access to specialized health care. This project demonstrates the government's ongoing commitment to providing modern, state-of-the-art health-care facilities, while ensuring value for taxpayer dollars.

Four proponent teams responded to the request for qualifications (RFQ) that closed on Oct. 21. Following evaluation of the responses received, three teams were shortlisted. They are:

- Northern Gateway Health;
- Plenary Health; and
- Sequence Health.

The teams each have a variety of members who represent B.C.-based, national and international companies.

The short-listed respondents will be invited to respond to the request for proposals (RFP). The RFP stage will result in the selection of a preferred proponent to undertake the cancer centre project in Prince George.

"The shortlist announced today moves us one step closer to ensuring that patients and their families who are battling cancer will be able to do that closer to home. All of us have been impacted by cancer in some way and we know that having the support of loved ones makes an enormous difference," said Prince George-Mount Robson MLA Shirley Bond. "The BC Cancer Agency Centre for the North will make treatment closer to home a reality."

The BC Cancer Agency Centre for the North project is one component of the Northern Cancer Control Strategy, a joint initiative undertaken by the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA), BC Cancer Agency and Northern Health. The new Centre for the North will provide residents of northern British Columbia with increased access to cancer treatment and diagnostic services. The cancer centre will be located on the Prince George Regional Hospital site. The 4,200-square-metre facility will include two linear accelerators used in the delivery of radiation therapy treatment. The centre will be designed to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification.

The Centre for the North will be an integral part of the agency's provincial cancer control system, providing care and research for the people of B.C.

The fairness advisor, ADR Chambers Inc., has reviewed the RFQ process and found that the evaluation met the criteria of fairness, openness, transparency and integrity. The fairness advisor's report is available on Partnerships BC's website at [www.partnershipsbc.ca](http://www.partnershipsbc.ca).

The cancer centre was approved by the Province on July 18, 2008. Construction is targeted to start in late 2009, with a completion goal of 2012. The facility is being pursued as a public-private partnership.

All health services will be funded by the Province of British Columbia through PHSA and Northern Health, in keeping with the Canada Health Act.

## **News Around the Province**

### **FUNDING SUPPORTS WOMEN IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Final operating grants to school districts confirm the \$122-million increase in education funding announced in Budget 2008, despite an 11-year enrolment decline across the province, Education Minister Shirley Bond announced.

“Our government has been clear that key programs areas such as K-12 education would continue to see investment despite changing economic circumstances,” said Bond. “By confirming this \$122 million increase first announced in February, we are ensuring that commitment to school boards and to students remains a priority.”

Under this final allocation, no district will receive less funding in the 2008-09 operating grant allocation than they did last year, despite continuing declining enrolment. Fifty-five of the 60 school districts are receiving increases to their operating grants and five remain at last year’s levels.

Boards of education are receiving \$4.467 billion in operating grants for this school year – an increase of \$122 million over last year and an increase of \$789 million since 2001. Per-pupil funding has also increased for the ninth year in a row, totalling \$8,118 in 2008-09 – a \$268 increase over last year. The per-pupil grant has increased by \$1,897 since 2000-01.

School districts have reported 545,269 full-time equivalent students in 2008-09, compared to 550,582 last year. This translates into 5,313 fewer students this year. Eight of the 60 school districts have enrolled more students in 2008-09. Operating grant allocations are based on enrolment information submitted by school districts.

Boards of education are also receiving \$3.5 million annually to help attract and retain teachers in remote communities.

“We’re investing record levels of funding for education and helping districts attract and retain teachers in rural and remote communities,” said Bond. “In addition, we recognize that many of our rural districts face particular challenges as a result of declining enrolment, and the Province continues provide ongoing funding protection supplement for boards of education.”

School districts with an enrolment decrease greater than one per cent in a year receive a funding protection supplement from the Province. The Province also provides additional funds to help districts with a decrease in enrolment of four per cent or more, and districts with a decrease of seven per cent or more over the previous three years. This year, districts are sharing almost \$11.5 million to help with declining enrolment.

The operating grants also include \$12.8 million in funding for expanded summer learning programs that occurred during the summer of 2008. For the first time ever, nearly 42,000 students across British Columbia were able to enrol in academic courses during the summer without charge.

Since 2001, the Province has increased funding to B.C. public schools by nearly \$1.2 billion: \$789 million in operating grants and \$407 million in one-time grants. During the same period, enrolment has declined by 50,000 students.

Provincewide enrolment and funding information for 2008-09 can be viewed at:  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/accountability/district/budget/fs-operating-grants-0809.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/accountability/district/budget/fs-operating-grants-0809.pdf)

## **BC Hydro announces successful proposals in phase one of Bioenergy Call for Power**

For more information visit [www.bchydro.com](http://www.bchydro.com)

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

*Former Mayor Colin Kinsley,  
A big thank you for your years of committed leadership and community service to our city.*

## **Community Announcements**

The Community Arts Council proudly presents  
Winter Fest and the "Angels Among Us"  
Awards  
December 19, 2008

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**Northern BC Business and Technology  
Awards  
Call for Nominations  
Deadline January 9/2009  
For More Information Call Michael Kerr  
250-960-5938**

## Mark your calendar...

- ❖ December 18-24 - **PG Railway Museum** is presenting its Celebration of Lights with Santa, a Christmas village and rides on the Cottonwood Railway. Chocolate and hot dogs around the bonfire- open 11-8pm.
- ❖ December 19-21 – **Hansel and Gretel with UBC Opera**, tickets available at the PGSO office on 15<sup>th</sup> for info 250-562-0800
- ❖ December 20-21 – **Aboriginal Arts Festival**, A festive gathering of 12 local artisans at the South Fort George Family Resource Centre 1200 La Sall Drive 10-6pm. More information from Natasha Catcheside 250-612-0808
- ❖ December 29 – **Free Games Event for Kids**, PG Public Library will host a free event with Guitar Hero, Twister, Chess, Monopoly and more from 1-2:30pm. Bob Harkins Branch 250-563-9251.
- ❖ January 1st - **Free Skate at the YMCA**, Come down to the Coliseum from noon to 2pm and show your support for JumpStart. Free hot chocolate and pucks.
- ❖ January 24 to Feb 1 – The **Coldsnap Festival**; six main stage events are \$25 or three for \$60. Tickets go on sale Nov15 at Studio 2880, Books and Co, and Meow Records.
- ❖ February 12-15- **Disney High School Musical** ice tour at the CN Centre, tickets on sale at Ticket Master.

***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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