



Useful Web Links

November 21, 2008



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Hello Everyone,

This week I am back in Victoria for the legislative session. Our government is proposing legislative amendments to ensure financial stability in the province during these uncertain economic times. I have mentioned this previously announced economic plan in this column many times and know how important it is to northern British Columbians. These legislative changes include accelerated personal income tax relief for individuals and families, tax relief for small business, allowing homeowners who have 15 percent equity to defer their property taxes and unlimited deposit insurance protection for depositors at BC credit unions. It is important to be proactive to keep British Columbians working and to put more money back in the pockets of individuals and families during this temporary economic downturn.

There will also be a "New North" economic summit to address economic concerns specific to northern British Columbia and expert advice will be sought to improve the economy of northern BC. This summit will focus on two issues: productivity and competitiveness. I look forward to attending this summit, working with economic experts and bringing the views of my constituents to the table. There is reason for optimism for the northern economy. This past week saw the first consistent shipment of container stuffed with northern BC goods between Prince George and Prince Rupert. The expansion of the container port in Prince Rupert

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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

will be a boon to the northern and Prince George economy.

One of the sectors of great importance to Prince George where there has been a downturn in the market is the forest sector. Despite this downturn, it is clear that new opportunities are emerging to keep the forest sector robust and healthy in the long term. One of these opportunities is the Chinese market, where delegates from the forest sector and our government, including local MLA and Minister of Forests Pat Bell were recently on a trade mission to promote BC wood and wood products. BC companies were able to secure 83 million board feet in new orders for BC lumber from all areas of the province. New projects using BC wood include an earthquake resistance school using BC lumber, called the British Columbia Wenchuan Earthquake Reconstruction project. Projects like these offer exciting opportunities to export BC wood products and at the same time help rebuild areas of China devastated by past earthquakes.

Our recent Healthier You Expo and Forum showed how important the multicultural community is to Prince George. The immigrants that reside in Prince George add so much to the richness and vibrancy of Prince George. This immigrant and multicultural community often face challenges integrating into Canadian society. A joint announcement between the provincial and federal governments this week shows how we are helping integrate new immigrants right here in Prince George. The BC and federal governments are investing \$22 million province-wide to help new British Columbians improve their English skills. These English language services are delivered through community agencies across the province, including one here in Prince George. These classes will be free of charge and offered where there is a demonstrated demand. This investment is possible through the Canada-BC Cooperation on Immigration, in which Citizenship and Immigration Canada transfers approximately \$109 million per year to the BC government for settlement services for new immigrants.

I hope you all enjoy these last few weeks leading up to Christmas and the holidays. I know I will be out doing my Christmas shopping in the upcoming weeks and attending Christmas-related events. I can't wait! Holidays are a time to spend with family and I know that I look forward to spending quality time with my husband, kids and extended family.

In the meantime be sure to visit the Festival of Trees, some of the amazing craft fairs and why not take in a Cougars or Kings game this weekend? We plan to do all this and more....look forward to seeing you out and about.

Until next week.

Shirley

Question of the week:

HOW CAN THE PROVINCE PROVIDE ADDITIONAL DOLLARS FOR LOCAL SERVICES?

The Village of McBride will benefit from a \$3,601 provincial grants in lieu of property taxes from the B.C. government.

It is important to support small, rural communities whenever the Province can, This grant will provide additional dollars for local services or infrastructure. It is challenging for some communities to meet their infrastructure needs without additional resources like these.

Grants-in-lieu of property taxes are distributed as a way to compensate municipalities for services that benefited government properties. In the past, it was the practice that one level of government did not tax the property of another level of government. However, beginning in the 1960s, the Province began to recognize its responsibility to compensate municipalities for local services that benefited these properties, such as roads, sewers and fire protection.

The annual grants are based on the assessed value of provincially owned office buildings and other properties in each municipality. They are paid through Accommodation and Real Estate Services (ARES), a division of the Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services.

Since 2002, ARES and its predecessor organization have distributed more than \$124 million as grants-in-lieu to B.C. municipalities.

Each municipality sends a portion of its grant-in-lieu to its regional district, and those local governments use the

money to help pay for

News Around the Province BC LIQUOR STORES' SHARE A BEAR CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY

BC Liquor Stores begins this year's Share a Bear campaign on Wednesday Nov. 19, 2008.

Beginning Nov. 19, BC Liquor Store customers are invited to buy twin teddy bears for \$11. One bear goes home with the customer, while the other is donated to a charity chosen by liquor store staff in their community.

Thanks to BC Liquor Store customers, in November and December 2007, more than 30,000 bears were donated to children in various hospitals, shelters and special homes throughout the province. Since the program began in 1989, more than 288,000 bears have been donated to British Columbia charities.

The annual Share a Bear campaign is part of BC Liquor Stores public safety and corporate responsibility program. In 2007, BC Liquor Stores won the Retail Council of Canada's Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative Award for its Share a Bear program.

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

UNBC JDC West Team

*Fundraising for the Spirit of the North Foundation
goal of \$50,000*

Northland Dodge Chillin for Charity Brunch

at the Civic Centre, November 23,

Hot chocolate during the plunge!

See you there

Community Announcements

***Coast Mountain Sports is accepting
used winter jackets, non-perishable
food items and children's toys from
Nov 24 to 30. Donated items will be
distributed by***

St Vincent de Paul society. Enter to win \$200 gift card with each donation.

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**Kettle Volunteers needed!**  
The Kettle Campaign starts  
November 21 through to December 24  
Call 250-564-4000 ext 224 to help!

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Third Avenue Cares
November 28 - 30 customers will be asked to bring donations of non-perishable food, toys and clothing to any business on Third Ave. Items disturbed through Salvation Army

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**Mark your calendar...**

- ❖ November 20 - December 11- Theatre Northwest's presentation of "**A Christmas Carol**" Tickets on Sale at Books and Company, \$28 for Adults, \$22 for youth, for info call 250-614-0039
- ❖ November 21 – **Spa Night** – Northern Women's Centre at UNBC is holding a fundraising event just in time for the holidays from 7-10pm on Friday. Tickets are \$25 ea. available at 250-960-5632
- ❖ November 22 – **Festival of Trees** – open to the public Nov 22, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 Gala Auction Evening – Tickets calls Debie Byl, 250-565-2522
- ❖ November 22 - **Diabetes expo** hosted by the Canadian Diabetes Assoc. at the Ramada from 8 am to Noon, for more info 250-561-9284
- ❖ November 22 – **Dunster Community Winter Market** for details call Kathy at 250-968-4404
- ❖ November 23 – **Two Rivers Gallery Holiday Homes tour**, run from 10 – 4pm, \$30 per person, for info call 250-614-7800
- ❖ November 23 – **Bel Canto Choir concert** – Open the Stars to Me- at Prince George Playhouse, two preferences, 2:30pm and 7:30pm, tickets \$15, available at Books and Co. or at the door.
- ❖ November 25 – **Festival of Trees Fashion show** at the Civic Centre – for info call 250-565-2515
- ❖ November 27 - **Festival of Trees Senior Tea** at the Civic Centre – for info call 250-565-2515
- ❖ November 28 to January 2 – **Northern Lights**

**Festival** on Connaght Hill, Sun to Wed, 5-9 pm, Thurs to Sat 5-10pm, \$10 at entrance or \$8 for downtown businesses.

- ❖ November 29 – Vivaldi's Four Seasons presented by the **PGSO at Vanier Hall**, 8pm, tickets at 2880 15<sup>th</sup> Ave or call 250-562-0800
- ❖ November 29 – **Jingle Bell Dance** – Civic Centre – tickets available at 250-565-2515
- ❖ November 29 – **Kelly Rd Craft Fair** –10am to 5pm and Sunday Nov 30 10-4pm, 250-962-6887 for more info.
- ❖ November 29-30 -**Blackburn Christmas Craft Fair** – call Claudia at 250-963-3292
- ❖ December 5 – **Winter wonderland Christmas Lunch** from 11:30 to 1:30 pm at the Civic Centre. \$19 per person for info call 250-561-7723
- ❖ December 6 – **Disney High School Musical**; the Ice Tour at the CN Centre – tickets go on sale call Ticket master
- ❖ December 13 – Gospel concert at Prince George Playhouse – **Sacred songs of Elvis Presley**- tickets at Studio 2880 for info call 250-563-2880
- ❖ January 24 to Feb 1 – The **Coldsnap Festival**; six mainstage events are \$25 or three for \$60. Tickets go on sale Nov15 at Studio 2880, Books and Co, and Meow Records.

*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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