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## January 25, 2008

Hello everyone:

45 days and counting! The ice jam continues to grow with the cold weather and we continue to work to find solutions. While we are seeing some progress with the Amphibex and the pending use of warm water – Mother Nature continues to work against us. I am so impressed with the ongoing hard work that is being done and hope that people continue to have the stamina necessary to carry on. In talking to the Solicitor General and his ministry this is a long time for people to work so intensively and we are trying to find ways to support and ensure that staffing and resources continue to be available wherever necessary. I have also discussed the City of Prince George resolutions with Minister Les directly and indicated how important the requested study is. Let's hope we see additional improvement in the situation this week.

This afternoon Premier Campbell announced that UNBC would be part of a collaborative project to focus on climate research in British Columbia. The Province will be creating the Pacific Institute for Climate Change Solutions that will be housed at UVIC and will involve SFU, UBC and our very own UNBC. Our universities have some of the top climate scientists and researchers in the world and we want to have them work together with other experts from around the world to develop new policy

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

alternatives, to develop new green technologies, and to find ways to educate and encourage greener lifestyles. An endowment of 90 million dollars will be created which will generate 4 million dollars every year. 1 million dollars of the 4 will be dedicated to looking at climate change impact and adaptation research. We have certainly seen the impacts of climate change here in Northern BC and I am very proud of the fact that UNBC will play a major role in looking for strategies to deal with the short and long-term impacts! Congratulations UNBC!

I am also thrilled to announce that the provincial contribution to the Raise A Reader program this year will be nearly \$900,000. This is terrific news and I am particularly proud of the special days that took place for this first time this year in a number of communities around the province including Prince George. Over the next number of weeks participating communities will be receiving their matching funds from the government. I hope to be able to make the presentation for the Prince George campaign during the Breakfast of Reading Champions on Sunday. This is one of my favorite events in the year. It is hosted by the PG Public Library and is being held at the Civic Centre on Sunday at 11:00 am. You can bring your family down and for a very reasonable price enjoy a delicious breakfast, listen to an energetic storytime and each child will go home with a book and an activity package. Sunday is ABC Canada Literacy Day and I can't think of a better way to celebrate than by joining us at the Civic Centre for breakfast.

I also want to encourage you to support the Alzheimer Society by participating in their Walk for Memories on Sunday. We are lucky enough to be holding it at the Charles Jago Northern Sport Centre – so don't worry about the weather. You can walk or run around the field as many times as you can and stay to win some wonderful prizes. The Alzheimer Society does fantastic work supporting people and their families who have been impacted

by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Did you know that at least one person every 40 minutes develops a dementia in British Columbia? January is Alzheimer Awareness Month. Why not show how much you care and join us for the Walk on Sunday. Hope to see you there.

Bill and I have another very busy weekend with events - a community appreciation event at CNC, a celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Construction Association at the Civic Centre and numerous other events on Sunday. We always appreciate the opportunity to support the activities and events that make our community a great place to live.

Be sure to drive carefully and bundle up as the temperature looks like it will continue to drop for the next few days.

Until next week,  
Shirley

Question of the week:

### **WHAT INITIATIVE IS BC TAKING TO REDUCE SCHOOL BUS EMISSIONS?**

Children who ride school buses will soon breathe cleaner air, thanks to a \$1.1-million B.C. government investment to reduce emissions from diesel buses, announced today. Emissions from diesel engines in school buses can create serious health problems and worsen existing ones. Requiring the installation of a specialized filter will result in cleaner emissions and a safer environment for B.C.'s children. A province wide retrofit program for school buses is one of several initiatives BC is undertaking to protect the province's air quality.

There are an estimated 1,200 school-district-owned buses in British Columbia. Of these, 345 have already been retrofitted with diesel oxidation catalysts (DOC) through an Environment Canada program.

The government's program will complete the

retrofitting of the remaining buses.

Children are particularly sensitive to the harmful effects of diesel emissions because their lungs are still developing. This program will drastically reduce the exposure of students to the harmful particles in diesel exhaust.

This is good news at a time when incidence of asthma rates in children is reaching epidemic levels. Thousands of children ride the bus to school every day and as a result are regularly exposed to harmful diesel exhaust emissions. Clean air and lung health go hand in hand and so it is a valuable step taken to improve air quality and ensure that future generations will breathe easily.

The school bus retrofit program will be complete by the end of 2009. Last June, a mandatory program was brought in to upgrade the engines of older diesel trucks with DOC filters, and BC was the first province in Canada to make these filters mandatory. In addition, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Transportation are also developing the Provincial Idle Reduction Initiative (PIRI). It will encompass a broad range of organizations, including local governments, health authorities, community groups and the transport and tourism sectors. The initiative's mandate is to change driver's behavior to reduce engine idling, thus improving air quality.

PIRI will eventually be a province wide presence.

For further details of government's initiatives to improve and protect air quality, visit

[www.env.gov.bc.ca/pac/airquality.htm](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/pac/airquality.htm)

## **News Around the Province**

### **WELLNESS ATLAS HELPS B.C. COMMUNITIES GET HEALTHIER**

The communities of North Shore/Coast Garibaldi, Southern Vancouver Island and Richmond are leaders in health and wellness throughout the province, according to the new BC Atlas of Wellness.

The BC Atlas of Wellness, the first such initiative in Canada, will help planners in local governments and

community organizations put in place policies to encourage British Columbians to lead healthy, active lifestyles. This is part of our ActNow BC commitment to encourage healthy choices by all British Columbians, so that everyone can enjoy the best possible quality of life to end of life.

The atlas, which was created in partnership with the University of Victoria Geography Department, uses the ActNow BC initiative as a framework to present its findings. It consists of more than 270 maps and supporting tables that provide data related to approximately 120 wellness-related indicators for B.C. communities, where positive and negative indicators are offset against each other to give an overall wellness score. The provincial government provided \$300,000 to the project.

BC Atlas of Wellness maps cover a broad range of health and wellness indicators that were compiled through surveys involving residents' age, gender and location in the province. The highest overall scores went to North Shore/Coast Garibaldi, Southern Vancouver Island and Richmond.

The BC Atlas of Wellness shows that:

- Northern Fraser Valley and Richmond residents reported having the highest quality level of personal health;
  - Thompson Cariboo Shuswap residents and Kootenay Boundary area residents reported the highest level of life satisfaction;
  - Southern Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland have the majority of smokefree home environments;
  - Northeast B.C. residents had the highest positive response rate for households who could afford to regularly eat balanced meals;
  - Communities in the Central Okanagan and North Vancouver Island are leaders for nutritional policy development in elementary and secondary schools.
- Information from the atlas is already being used to support ActNow BC initiatives, including those that show rates of non-smoking, healthy weights and physical activity.

By focusing on assets and taking a wellness approach, the BC Atlas of Wellness provides a unique and most interesting look at health and wellness in the province. The atlas encourages

British Columbians to make healthier lifestyle choices that can help support a sustainable health system by reducing the burden of chronic disease. It will also be useful in helping to close the gap in health status between Aboriginal and other British Columbians.

The BC Atlas of Wellness is an important tool that allows communities to learn from each other and improve their health. Les Foster, an adjunct professor in geography from UVic, helped to co-author the study.

The authors designed the atlas to communicate what is positive and to share success instead of using the more traditional approach of focusing on what is negative. Peter Keller, UVic professor of geography is the other co-author. Hard copies of the atlas will be sent to school districts, municipalities and libraries. The BC Atlas of Wellness is located online at [www.geog.uvic.ca/wellness](http://www.geog.uvic.ca/wellness).

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

This week's bouquet of recognition goes to the graduates of the CNC and SD 57 Career Technical Program. This fantastic program allows students to earn both college credit and high school graduation through this unique partnership. Thanks to coordinator Tim Power and everyone who works so hard to provide this opportunity to our students. To the Grads – great job! Keep it up as you return to your secondary schools to complete your high school program.

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

- ❖ Jan 25 – 26 Boogie woogie player Kenny “Blues Boss” Wayne plays the Treasure Cove Showroom. Tickets available at Books and Co.
- ❖ Jan 26 – Prince George Construction Association 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary “Gala Evening to Remember” at the Civic Centre – tickets

\$75 – for tickets and more info call Jeanette at 563-1744

- ❖ Jan 26 – Walk for Memories at the Northern Sport Centre from noon to 3pm. For info to sign up team phone 564-7533
- ❖ Jan 26 – Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>- Cold snap 2008 – The Prince George Winter Music Festival- For Venues and artists performing call Books and Company phone 563-6637
- ❖ Jan 27-Breakfast of Reading Champions hosted by Prince George Library is a fun-filled family event to promote reading and literacy. For more info call 563-9251
- ❖ Jan 31-Feb 2 – Dinner Theatre at the Ramada Inn, Play is called Self HELP. For tickets call Books and Co. or Studio 2880. For more info call 961-0615
- ❖ Jan 31-Feb 2 – Theatre North West at Parkhill Centre presents Hockey Mom Hockey Dad. Tickets at Books & Co. or Studio 2880 Call 614-0039 or 563-2880
- ❖ Feb 1 – Northern BC Friends of Children 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala at the Coast Inn of the North. Tickets available at The friends of Children office phone 564-2271
- ❖ Feb 1 – “The 2010 Winter Games- Celebrating the Possible” Speaker John Furlong. 11:45 am to 1:30 pm at the Civic Centre - tickets \$20, for more info call Mary Graydon at 614-3766
- ❖ Feb 2 – COLDSNAP 2008 – Please come out and support this great week of music in PG. For info [www.coldsnapfestival.com](http://www.coldsnapfestival.com)
- ❖ Feb 2 - Feb 9 – Le Cercle des Canadiens Francais. Presents the 23 annual Festival d’Hiver. Call Prince George French Community centre 561-2565 for info on scheduled events.
- ❖ Feb 3 – The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Sweetheart Bridal Extravaganza – Prince George Civic Centre 11 am – 5 pm
- ❖ Feb 8 – 23 – Prince George Mardi Gras presents Snow Daze.

*If you are a non profit organization and would like to advertise an upcoming event or share a story please email [Shirley](mailto: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.



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