



## Useful Web Links

## February 2, 2008



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Hello everyone:

Well it has been another non-stop busy week - in fact so busy that you are receiving this a day later than usual. We were very pleased to be able to host John Furlong of VANOC yesterday. He brought with him the Olympic mascots Quatchi, Sumi and Miga. From all accounts both John and the mascots were a big hit. It was most rewarding to be able to give John a tour of the Northern Sport Centre and see his reaction. He was more than impressed and I know that will mean that as he travels and talks about the provincial reach of the Vancouver Games, that we will benefit from some very positive comments. Congratulations to the Prince George Spirit Committee for inviting and organizing the visit. It went very well.

I was happy to have the Premier back in Prince George this week along with Ministers Bell, Coleman, Neufeld and Krueger to announce our innovative bio-energy strategy. The Premier made it clear that this plan will directly benefit Prince George and the North by giving our local forestry companies the chance to produce electricity from wood waste and beetle-kill timber. Premier Campbell said that he chose to announce the strategy in Prince George because it is the biomass capital of Canada, and in fact, of the world. "It turns challenges into

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

opportunities," said Premier Campbell, adding that he expects Prince George to be a hub of bio-energy activity. We are all excited about the opportunities and jobs this will create for our rural communities and First Nations. I plan to share more information on this important strategy in the weeks ahead.

We were also able to announce another important investment in Prince George and that is the allocation of \$200,000 to respond to City Council's resolution about long term flood mitigation planning. I have worked very hard with Minister John Les to ensure that this funding is available quickly to allow the analysis and strategy to move forward.

Last night we attended the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala for the Northern BC Friends of Children. Congratulations to everyone who worked so hard to make this a very special event. There was great support from the community for an organization who makes a significant difference in the lives of our children and their families. Thanks for inviting us to attend – keep up the important work you all do.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation has declared that February is Heart Month. [www.heartandstroke.com](http://www.heartandstroke.com). Few people realize that heart disease is the leading cause of death among Canadian women. To help increase awareness of the dangers of heart disease and stroke and as part of Heart Month, the Heart and Stroke Foundation's major sponsor Becel is launching a national program called "It Starts With You" to provide Canadian women with the tools necessary to make positive changes in their lives. A key element of the campaign is the Heart Age Tool: an online, interactive tool designed to calculate your heart age verses your real age. The Heart Age Tool will be available online at [www.loveyourheart.ca](http://www.loveyourheart.ca) starting Monday February 4, 2008 and throughout February. More about this project in a future AYMLA.

Well, time to hit the ground running this morning. I

have a number of meetings today including CNC and the PACHA air quality event. Tonight both the Timberwolves and Cougars play – so many tough decisions to make?? Be sure to drive safely, the roads are a little tricky. I hope to see you out and about.

Until next week,

Shirley

Question of the week:

### **HOW WILL EARLY VISION SCREENING HELP CHILDREN REACH FULL POTENTIAL?**

All children in kindergarten in British Columbia will receive free testing for early vision problems. Children learn mostly through what they see which is why it's so important to detect and address potential eye problems as early as possible, so all children in B.C. have the opportunity to reach their maximum potential.

Early vision screening can detect common vision problems, such as near- and far-sightedness, amblyopia ("lazy eye") or strabismus ("cross-eye"). If the screening identifies a potential problem, the child will be referred to an optometrist or ophthalmologist for follow up.

Excellent sight and eye health are vital to a child's development and that is why this initiative ensures parents and other caregivers get the latest information on their children's eye health and vision and what they can do if there are concerns.

Public health staff members go into kindergartens and use hand-held screening devices that will help them take readings. Approximately 40,000 kindergarten children will be tested by the end of the 2007/2008 school year. It's a significant preventative measure in protecting the future of our children.

Today's announcement completes the third phase of British Columbia's early childhood screening program. The Province has already implemented the first two phases of the early childhood screening

program: early hearing screening in all neonatal intensive care units, and early childhood dental screening that includes screening surveys for kindergarten children. The cost of the vision program is \$5.53 million, with the cost of implementing all three initiatives at \$21.43 million.

Pilot programs to provide vision screening for preschool children (three-year-olds) will begin in the spring of 2008 with the eventual goal of transferring the vision screening program from kindergarten children to preschool children.

## **News Around the Province**

### **NEW BIOENERGY STRATEGY: A NATURAL ENERGY ADVANTAGE**

British Columbia has an abundance of natural biomass resources, including sawmill residues, mountain pine beetle-killed timber, logging debris, and agricultural and municipal wastes. To enhance B.C.'s leadership role and help meet the province's electricity needs for clean, renewable power, the Bioenergy Strategy will take steps to:

- Collaborate with the Western Climate Initiative and the Pacific Northwest Economic Region.
- Create First Nations bioenergy opportunities.
- Require methane capture from our largest landfills.
- Utilize waste wood from phased-out beehive burners to lower greenhouse gas emissions via cleaner energy production.
- Support wood gasification research, development and commercialization.
- Provide energy providers with information to develop new opportunities.

Opportunities will be available to smaller energy producers with projects that are immediately viable through a two-part Bioenergy Call for Power focusing on existing biomass inventory in the forest industry.

When used to generate energy, biomass is considered carbon-neutral because it releases no more carbon into the atmosphere than it absorbs during its lifetime. As a result, bioenergy is seen as a way to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere if it replaces non-

renewable sources of energy. The Province will X also work with industry to develop new fine particulate standards for industrial boilers to improve air quality.

In April 2006, the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources, Ministry of Forests and Range and BC Hydro reviewed bioenergy issues and opportunities in British Columbia. A project team consulted with government, the forest sector, independent power producers, community groups, and the academic research community to produce reports which contributed to the Bioenergy Strategy. For more information on the new Bioenergy Strategy, go to [www.energyplan.gov.bc.ca/bioenergy](http://www.energyplan.gov.bc.ca/bioenergy).

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

The Prince George L'Hedli T'enneh. The Band won the Forest Capital award for 2008. For the first time ever, a first nations municipality has won this award. Congratulations to the Chief and band members that work hard to leading forests of change in our community.

### **Community Announcements**

Community Information Forum  
Prince George Ice Jam & Flood, public information session held every Tuesday evening, from 7pm to 9pm at the Prince George Civic Centre. For more info visit the City's web site at [www.city.pg.bc.ca](http://www.city.pg.bc.ca)

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Job Fairs sponsored by the Prince George Chamber of Commerce and Initiatives Prince George will be held in Mackenzie in February, and mid March in Prince George, for more info contact Christie Ray at 250-649-3204

## Mark your calendar...

- ❖ 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 564-227
- ❖ 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 2 – Better Air Symposium – Coast Inn of the North, 9am – 4pm, Key Note speaker, Mark Bekkering, for more info visit <http://www.pachapg.ca>
- ❖ 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 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Snow Daze
- ❖ Feb 9 – Exploration Place – Chinese New Year celebration. Fireworks, Chinese Cuisine, silent auction, games, and activities. For more info call 562-1612
- ❖ Feb 0 – Valentine Jamboree at ECRA, 1pm Ivan Paquette and the Country Cuzzins. Sing-a-long, dance, light refreshments, admin: \$5.
- ❖ Feb 10 – 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Prince George Citizens ICEMAN – for more info and to register go to [www.mag-net.com/iceman](http://www.mag-net.com/iceman)
- ❖ Feb 24 – the Seniors Fun Fair at the Hart Pioneer “Centre from 10AM to 5PM Free admission with food at minimal cost.
- ❖ Feb 27 - United Way launches forestry support seminars at the Civic Centre 7-9pm for more info call Jocelyn Snih at 561-1040

- ❖ Mar 1 – Can West Can Spell National Spelling Bee 2008 at Vanier Hall. More info to come....
- ❖ Mar 7-9 – The Rainbow singers and musical friends present Musical Eastcoast Kitchen Party at ECRA, Admin: \$10

***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.



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