

## PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS AT UBCM CONVENTION

THERE WERE MANY ANNOUNCEMENTS MADE BY PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS DURING THE CONVENTION. INCLUDED WERE:

### PREMIER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Premier's Office has issued the following summary of the highlights of his speech to the UBCM Convention:

#### HOUSING

- A commitment to increase the shelter allowance for income assistance recipients in next provincial budget.
- A commitment to work with municipalities to build more affordable housing, new facilities, and supports for people with mental illnesses and addictions through concerted actions aimed at increasing densities, reducing building costs, and achieving net benefits for the environment.

#### B.C. SPIRIT SQUARE PROGRAM

- Up to \$20 million to assist communities in creating or enhancing outdoor public meeting spaces.
- Spirit Squares may take the shape of traditional town squares or community commons with design and location up to each community.
- The Province will share up to half the capital costs of projects, up to \$500,000, that reflect their community, their diversity, their cultural and First Nations Heritage, and their history.

#### GREEN CITIES PROJECT/LOCALMOTION FUND

- Annual Green City Awards at future UBCM conventions to be given to communities encouraging physical activity, energy conservation, and environmental benefits.
- LocalMotion Fund of \$10 million per year for four years (\$40 million in total) to help build bike paths, walkways, greenways, improved accessibility for persons with disabilities, and support programs to get kids playing in communities and parks. Province will provide 50 per cent of capital funding, up to \$1 million per year.
- New financial incentives to help municipalities shift to hybrid vehicle fleets and retrofit dirty diesel vehicles with cleaner technologies.

- \$2,000 tax break on hybrid vehicle purchases will be extended beyond current March 2008 deadline in next provincial budget.
- As of 2007, all new cars leased or purchased by provincial government will be hybrids.
- A provincial commitment to contribute one third of the capital funding towards the best, lowest cost solution that will provide proper sewage treatment in Greater Victoria.

#### TOWNS FOR TOMORROW PROGRAM

- Targeted to communities with a population under 5,000 and their infrastructure projects that are often ineligible for larger federal-provincial programs.
- \$21 million program – \$7 million a year for three years to support small towns' infrastructure priorities on cost-sharing basis whereby the Province will fund 80 per cent of project cost and the municipalities fund the remaining 20 per cent, up to a maximum total value of \$500,000.
- Program to be overseen by the Premier's new Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development, Kevin Krueger (MLA for Kamloops-North Thompson).

#### GETTING BEST VALUE FOR TAXPAYERS

- A new capital standard that will require all provincially-funded capital projects with a value of over \$20 million to be considered first by Partnerships BC to be built as public-private partnerships unless there is a compelling reason to do otherwise.
- Public-private partnerships to date have resulted in significant benefits, including \$131 million in additional benefits on the Sea-to-Sky Highway, \$92 million in benefits for the new Canada Line, \$39 million in benefits on the Abbotsford Hospital and Cancer Centre, and \$25 million in benefits from the new William R. Bennett Bridge.
- The Province will provide one third of the capital funding for the Capital Regional District to provide proper sewage treatment in Greater Victoria, as long as Partnerships BC takes a hard look at how project can be done as a P3.
- Work with municipalities to harmonize municipal business licences by 2008 so businesses can operate freely across the entire province.

*Please make copies of this circular and distribute to Council/Board Members /Staff.*

## BUILDING CANADA'S PACIFIC GATEWAY

- Push for unified Pacific Port Authority to ensure co-ordinated trade through all BC ports.
- Work with Northwest to establish an integrated port plan for the millions of container shipments that will come from increased trade.
- Work with Prince George to establish inland port to move air, sea, and land cargo through to Asian and North American markets in record time.
- Work with Kamloops and Ashcroft to develop the best possible Southern Interior inland port.

The full text of the Premier's speech is available on the provincial government web site.

## COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITIES TASK FORCE

Their report was presented to a convention session on the Tuesday afternoon. Copies of the report are available through the Ministry of Community Services web site.

## SMALL COMMUNITY AND ELECTORAL AREA POLICING COSTS

The Honourable John Les, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General announced that the following changes would be made to the new police tax for small communities (under 5,000 population) and electoral areas., based on consultation with UBCM Police Cost Task Force:

- application of a tax credit in electoral areas from the provincial rural tax of \$.10 per \$1000 (all assessment classes) to offset the new rural police tax – this is intended to recognize the fact that Electoral Areas currently pay something now towards policing and will reduce the amount of money recovered by the province for policing costs by \$7.5 million.
- application of an offset for traffic fine revenue to electoral areas and small municipalities – this is expected to further reduce the police tax, as traffic fine revenues which will be allocated on the basis of policing costs in each electoral area and small municipality will be subtracted from the police tax allocated to the area.

The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General will be updating the report "Police Financing in British Columbia: A New Police Financing Model in Small Communities and Rural Areas" in which it estimated the police costs in each electoral area and small municipality.

## 10 BY 10 CHALLENGE

At the Thursday workshop Measuring Up: Creating Accessible and Inclusive Communities, the Honourable Claude Richmond, Minister of Employment and Income Assistance issued a challenge to all communities to increase employment of persons with disabilities in BC communities by 10 % by the year 2010. Joining the Minister in that announcement was Mayor Sam Sullivan from the City of Vancouver, co-chair of the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities.

The Minister indicated that overall, the 10 by 10 Challenge means increasing employment of persons with disabilities from 132,000 to 145,000. Minister Richmond advised that in follow-up to the session, each community would be receiving information from the Province regarding the number of persons with disabilities in their community and what their 10% target would be to meet the Minister's challenge by 2010.

To assist communities in meeting the challenge, two tools were identified. The first is from the Minister's Council, a WorkAble Solutions Tool Kit consisting of an employer's handbook, video presentation and information on accessing the WorkAble Solutions website, where employers and job seekers can directly connect.

As well, B.C. communities will be supported by 2010 Legacies Now's Measuring Up Guide – a tool that provides a step-by-step approach to topics ranging from creating fully accessible public spaces to promoting employment and community involvement for people with disabilities.

To find out more about the work of the Minister's Council on Employment for People with Disabilities, please visit: [www.eia.gov.bc.ca/pwd.htm](http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/pwd.htm).

For information on 2010 Legacies Now, please visit: [www.2010legaciesnow.com/content/home.asp](http://www.2010legaciesnow.com/content/home.asp).

## TREATY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FUNDING

Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Minister Mike De Jong announced on October 23, 2006 at the UBCM Convention that the Province would be supporting local government participation in the treaty negotiation process by providing an additional \$100,000 to UBCM and Treaty Advisory Committees. The funding announced is for use between now and the end of this fiscal year. The money will flow to UBCM and UBCM will work with the Province to determine how to distribute the funding.