Gas Tax & Building Canada ~ Page 3

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The centerpiece of the provincial budget was a revenue-neutral carbon tax, designed to encourage individuals and businesses to make environmentally responsible choices. The budget stated that the key points of the tax include:
• the carbon tax will be revenue neutral, so that revenues raised through the new tax will be returned to individuals and businesses in the form of reduced personal and business taxes;
• revenue neutrality will be supported through legislation, with none of the carbon tax revenues being used for expenditure programs;
• the carbon tax will apply to virtually all fossil fuels, including gasoline, diesel, natural gas, propane, coal, and home heating fuel; and
• the proposed carbon tax on gasoline will result in an increase of 2.41 cents per litre, rising to 8.27 cents per litre over a five year period.

The carbon tax is forecast to generate $1.8 billion over three years, and revenues raised will be returned through the following tax reductions:
• the bottom two personal income tax rates will be reduced for all British Columbians resulting in a tax cut of 2 percent in 2008 and 5 percent in 2009 on the first $70,000 in earnings (6784 million over three years);
• effective July 1, 2008, the general corporate tax rate will be reduced to 11 percent from 12 percent, with further reductions planned to 10 percent by 2011 ($415 million over three years); and
• effective July 1, 2008, the small business tax rate will be reduced to 3.5 percent from 4.5 percent, with further reductions planned to 2.5 percent by 2011 ($225 million over three years), and a Climate Action Credit will provide lower-income British Columbians a payment of $100 per adult and $50 per child, effective July 1, 2008. In addition, a one-time Climate Action Dividend of $100 dollars will be given to every British Columbian in June 2008 to encourage them to transition to a greener lifestyle. The dividend will be funded through the 2007 budget surplus.

The budget also committed to provide $1 billion over four years for operating and capital expenditures and tax incentives for climate change action including:
• $98 million for the new LiveSmart BC Efficiency Incentive Program and other initiatives to encourage communities and individuals to make energy efficient choices for their homes, businesses, and vehicles;
• $370 million for the Provincial Transit Plan which will improve and expand public transportation through the introduction of four rapid transit lines and the purchase of buses;
• $9 million for creating emission standards for landfills and new motor vehicles, designing a Green Building Code and developing a cap and trade system for large greenhouse gas emitters; and
• $33 million to provide tax relief for the purchase of fuel efficient vehicles, including up to $2000 in reduced sales tax on new vehicle purchases.

Other taxation measures of interest to local governments were:
• $60 million to reduce the school tax rate for major industrial properties;
• Raising the threshold on the First Time Homeowners Program from $375,000 to $425,000, and eliminating the previous financing rules and regulations.

For more information on the provincial budget, please see the February 20th member circular on the UBCM website at www.civicnet.bc.ca under Publications/In The House/2008 - Provincial Budget Highlights.
Member Visits

Each year UBCM staff visit at least 25% of UBCM members outside of the Metro Vancouver and Capital regions. This is a great exchange. It allows UBCM to brief members on our activities but more importantly it updates our staff on what is happening in the regions. It is a great staff development opportunity.

This spring, staff have six tours planned:

1. Sechelt, Sechelt Indian Government, Powell River, Powell River Regional District, Sunshine Coast Regional District and Gibsons.


3. Masset, Port Clements, and Queen Charlotte.


5. Ashcroft, Cache Creek, Clinton, Chase, Lytton, Thompson-Nicola Regional District and Merritt.


UBCM STAFF

UBCM would like to congratulate Errin and Grant Morrison on the birth of their son Jack on January 20, 2008. Errin was employed with UBCM as our Information and Resolutions Coordinator for the past four and one-half years and has recently taken on a new career opportunity as Executive Director of the BC Library Trustees Association in addition to her duties as a ‘new mom’. We extend our congratulations and best wishes to Errin and her family.

UBCM is pleased to announce the appointment of Reiko Tagami as our new Information and Resolutions Coordinator. Reiko joined UBCM full time on January 28, 2008. She was previously employed at the Japanese Canadian National Museum as an Assistant Archivist where she was involved in archival studies. She holds both a Masters degree in Archival Studies and a B.A. in History and Japanese Studies. She was hired as our Information and Archives Coordinator on January 28, 2008.

UBCM wishes to congratulate Errin and Grant Morrison on the birth of their son Jack on January 20, 2008.

UBCM STAFF

A t l o n g l a s t ,  W i n t e r  i s  a l m o s t  o v e r  a n d  s p r i n g  i s  f a s t  a p p r o a c h i n g !

As I write this article the federal budget was just delivered and an announcement has been made to permanently extend the gas tax transfer to local governments. This is good news indeed and on behalf of the membership I have expressed our support for this move. There is no question that local governments in BC are dealing with an infrastructure deficit and in part due to decades of insufficient levels of funding from senior levels of government. This resulted in a situation where we could not afford to fully address our infrastructure needs.

FCM has made efforts to calculate this infrastructure deficit and the numbers are staggering indeed. We have a lot of catching up to do, but permanently establishing a gas tax transfer is a step in the right direction.

With regard to the recent provincial budget there are questions that need to be answered around the new carbon tax. Specifically we need to know how tax neutrality will be achieved for local governments. Despite all of the innovation and new practices that are emerging from local governments, in many instances we still rely on traditional energy sources to heat our buildings, run our fleets and operate our facilities, and they will be subject to the new carbon tax.

Yet local governments will not secure the personal income tax or business tax reductions that are being implemented to address the tax neutrality. The UBCM membership has shown its support for the provincial efforts to address climate change. Currently over 100 local governments have signed onto the Climate Change Charter. But if tax neutrality is not extended to local governments, the costs of our operations will increase with the result of either increased property taxes or service reductions.

We have written to Minister Taylor requesting clarification of the impact of the carbon tax on our membership. We will keep you informed.

UBCM has also been actively involved in discussions regarding the Build Canada Fund that was announced last fall by Prime Minister Harper and Premier Campbell. We are particularly interested in the amount of funding available for the Communities Component of Build Canada and we are also keenly aware that this component applies only to municipalities with a population under 100,000. The eight municipalities in BC with a population greater than 100,000 also have profound infrastructure needs, and these need to be addressed within the Build Canada Fund.

Our next UBCM Board meeting is slated for April in Victoria. This is the second consecutive year that we have chosen to meet in Victoria as it allows us greater access to Cabinet Ministers and government officials. It also provides an opportunity for our Executive to attend the AVICC conference which will be held in Langford this year.

From all indications the spring sitting of the legislature will have a full slate of legislation. With 2009 being a provincial election year and 2010 being an Olympic year we anticipate that several substantial pieces of legislation will be brought forward this spring. As in the past UBCM will provide circulars to our membership advising of legislation which impacts local governments.

Finally, on a personal note, I am looking forward to attending all five Area Association conventions set for April and May. This provides me with an excellent opportunity to meet with you personally, participate in your meetings and learn about issues of importance to your community and region.

And with the departure of Lesley Arsenault, policy analyst and staff support to the Healthy Communities Committee, recruitment is presently underway for this position.
Second Round of Application Based Funding Underway

The second intake of applications for the General Strategic Priorities Fund (GSPF) and the Innovations Fund (IF) is now underway. Both the GSPF and IF delivers federal funding for two kinds of projects:
- Capital projects (public transit, community energy, water, wastewater and solid waste infrastructure) that contribute to cleaner air, cleaner water or reduced greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Capacity building and Integrated Community Sustainability planning projects.

Who Can Apply?
- all local governments may apply for an IF grant.
- all local governments outside of Metro Vancouver may apply for a GSPF grant. (At the request of the GVRD, all funding allocated to the regional district and its member municipalities is directed towards transit investments identified in TransLink’s Strategic Transportation Plan).

When is the Application Deadline?
April 30, 2008

How Much is Available?
- $24.3 million in total for GSPF and $17.3 million in total for IF.
- In the first round of funding, UBCM received applications totaling $268.3 million in GSPF applications for available funding of $67.4 million and $68.1 million in IF applications for an available $31.8 million.

How Can I find Out More?
Detailed program guides and application forms are available at www.vancouver.ca or on the “Gas Tax / Public Transit” page.

$5.65 Million Expands Capital Region’s Bus Fleet

BC Transit’s fleet will see its largest expansion in over a decade thanks to funding from the federal Gas Tax Fund. The Capital Regional District (CRD) has directed a portion of its Regionaly Significant Projects allocation to the purchase of 16 double-deck buses that will provide service throughout the region. The new buses will implement the initial stages of the CRD’s Regional Growth Strategy and Transit/Choices strategy, which includes the Douglas St. Busway project. The total cost of new buses will be $12.8 million, with the additional funding provided by BC Transit.

Salt Spring Island Transit System Launched

Salt Spring Island has a new bus system, thanks to funding through the provincial Public Transit Infrastructure Program. The launch of the new system was celebrated in a memorable event that included local students, 130 residents and the “Raging Grannies” performance group. The new system will connect the town centres on Salt Spring with three ferry terminals, providing four routes with scheduled service six days a week. With the assistance provided through the funding, the Capital Regional District will be able to operate the service at a cost of approximately $12 per household annually.

Budget 2008 Makes Gas Tax Permanent

The 2008 Budget tabled in the House of Commons by Finance Minister Jim Flaherty builds on the Government’s 2007 Economic Statement by providing modest spending increases in the face of anticipated slowed growth in the Canadian economy. While the centerpiece of the Budget is the creation of a new Tax Transfer fund, there are several items of interest to BC local governments, the most significant of which is the Government’s decision to make the Gas Tax Fund permanent.

Gas Tax Transfer to local governments - an extra four year extension of the current Agreement - worth over $1 billion

Building Canada is the new comprehensive federal infrastructure program. It brings under one umbrella, previously separated federal infrastructure programs such as Strategic Infrastructure and Municipal Rural Infrastructure; it also includes the Gas Tax Transfer funding. An Infrastructure Framework Agreement - the first of its kind in Canada was signed between the federal and provincial government on November 6, 2007. The basic architecture is summarized in the accompanying graphic and further details on the various components were described in the December UBCM Newsletter. Signing of the Framework Agreement has allowed negotiations of several agreements for the component parts of Building Canada to begin this year.

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UBCM News

BUILDING CANADA

Building Canada is the new comprehensive federal infrastructure program. It brings under one umbrella, previously separated federal infrastructure programs such as Strategic Infrastructure and Municipal Rural Infrastructure; it also includes the Gas Tax Transfer funding. An Infrastructure Framework Agreement - the first of its kind in Canada was signed between the federal and provincial government on November 6, 2007. The basic architecture is summarized in the accompanying graphic and further details on the various components were described in the December UBCM Newsletter. Signing of the Framework Agreement has allowed negotiations of several agreements for the component parts of Building Canada to begin this year.

Building Canada Fund - two components for a total of $1 billion

1. Major Infrastructure Component (up to $900 million)
2. Communities Component (minimum of $111 million federal contribution)
   - All local governments under 100 k population
   - “traditional” application based program

Is the federal government’s overall infrastructure program that will deliver $2.2 billion to British Columbia in the 2007-08 – 2013-14 period. Under it are a number of component programs.

Base Funding - $175 million

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LGLA Forum Turns Leaders Into Learners

The second annual Local Government Leadership Academy (LGLA) Leadership Forum took place February 12-14, 2008 at the Delta Vancouver Airport Hotel. Almost one hundred enthusiastic participants kicked off the event with George Cuff’s exhortations to set and follow through on “leading and learning agendas.” Carol Boothroyd’s evening presentation, aimed at demystifying public speaking and public communication, was equally well received.

Forum programming followed three streams – personal learning, community planning and best practices, and building effective partnerships. Popular topics included:

- personal learning plans and goal setting
- planning for seniors
- working with Aboriginal peoples
- successful regional districts and green communities
- speechwriting and media relations

Feedback was positive, with participants rating the forum overall a 4.6 out of 5. Comments from participants:

“[Presenters] utilize interactive, practical applications for their topic to promote practical use. Very informative and useful information for all sessions I attended.”

“Great conference. Best governance conference I have been to.”

“Great improvement on course content and delivery.”

“This was my first local government training session and ... I am pumped to get back to the community and apply some of the knowledge and tips I’ve learned these last two days.”

For information on future LGLA learning opportunities, including Seminars for Newly Elected Officials being planned for early 2009, check the LGLA website regularly: www.lgla.ca.

THE OLYMPIC OVAL

The City of Richmond is building a world-class multi-use community facility, which will host the long track speed skating competition for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Post-Games, the site will provide an active venue that harmoniously brings together summer and winter sports, recreation, culture, business and environment in one pristine location on the waterfront.

IN MEMORIAM

Director Shelley Zenzen

Shelley was born and raised in the Fraser Valley, but lived and worked in the Prince George area for almost 30 years. She served as a Director on the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George board since 2002. She passed away suddenly in a car accident in Boston Bar at the age of 53. A celebration of her life was held in Ferndale on January 12th, 2008.

If you’ve got questions, we’ve got the answers you’re looking for

We have been providing the public sector with audit opinions and accounting advice for well over 60 years. But that’s not all. Increasingly, our clients are turning to us for related services as well, such as management advice, feasibility studies, financial indicators reports, financial planning, information technology, and human resources planning. Our specialized skills, tailored for your needs, allow you to use your resources — people, facilities, and money — as productively as possible.

For more information on how we can help your Municipality or Regional District, contact one of our 21 offices in British Columbia, or one of our 98 offices across Canada. We’ve got the answers.

UBCM Executive and staff toured the site in January

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GOLD STAR RESOLUTIONS

As you prepare resolutions for consideration at the 2008 Convention, draw inspiration from the winners of the 2007 Gold Star and Honourable Mention awards for excellence in resolutions drafting. Consult the Gold Star Resolutions Criteria to prepare resolutions for 2008, and use the following resolutions as examples of quality drafting.

Gold Star Resolutions Criteria

1) Resolution must be properly titled.
2) Resolution must employ clear, simple language.
3) Resolution must clearly identify problem, reason and solution.
4) Resolution must have two or fewer recital (WHEREAS) clauses.
5) Resolution must have a short, clear, stand-alone enactment (THEREFORE) clause.
6) Resolution must focus on a single subject, must be of local government concern province-wide and must address an issue that constitutes new policy and solution.
7) Resolution must include appropriate references to policy, legislation and regulation.
8) Resolution must be submitted to relevant Area Association prior to UBCM.
9) Resolution must be properly titled.

2007 Gold Star Winners:

A5 Motor Fuel Tax Sunshine Coast RD
B61 Delivery of Tax Notices via Email North Vancouver District
B68 Proposed Amendments to Section 69 of the School Act Port Moody
B94 Civic Election – Voting Machines Pitt Meadows
B106 Motorized Scooters Ladysmith

2007 Honourable Mention Winners:

B90 Support for Monitoring High Risk Offenders Oliver
B101 Highway Speed Reduction in Rosland Downtown Core Areas
B122 Watershed Management Dawson Creek
B150 Appointment of Alternate Electoral Area Directors Fraser-Fort George RD

Drafting Effective Resolutions

Use the following template to draft a resolution. Note the maximum two “WHEREAS” and “BE IT RESOLVED” clauses, punctuation details, and sentence structure. Craft a resolution to be as readable as possible within these guidelines.

RESOLUTION TEMPLATE

SHORT TITLE: Sponsor’s Name

WHEREAS

AND WHEREAS

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that

*Note: A second “enactment” clause, if it is absolutely required, should start as follows:

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that

Problem – Cause – Solution

A resolution should answer the following questions:

• What is the problem?
• What is causing the problem?
• What is the best way to solve the problem?

Title

Make the title clear and concise, no more than three or four words. Long titles may be revised for clarity and brevity to print in the Annual Report and Resolutions Book.

Preamble

The preamble consists of one or two “WHEREAS” clauses, each a concise paragraph about the nature of the problem or the reason for the request. If explaining the problem requires more than two clauses, then provide supporting documents to describe the problem more fully. Do not add extra clauses.

Enactment

The enactment, or “THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED”, clause must convey the resolution’s intent, and should propose a specific action by the UBCM. Keep the enactment as short as possible, and clearly describe the action being requested. The wording should leave no doubt about the proposed action.

Summary

• address one specific subject in the text of the resolution
• construct a brief, descriptive title
• use simple, action-oriented language and avoid ambiguous terms
• provide factual background information
• check legislative references for accuracy
• focus on issues that are province-wide

For further guidance, refer to the 2007 Gold Star and Honourable Mention Resolutions, and consult the Gold Star Resolutions Criteria, both available on the UBCM website under Resolutions & Policy/Gold Star Resolutions.

Responses to 2007 Resolutions

As reported in the December 2007 edition of the UBCM News, UBCM conveyed 175 member-endorsed resolutions to the provincial government for consideration and comment following the 2007 Convention. Eight additional resolutions referred to the Executive were subsequently conveyed to the Province. The UBCM anticipates receiving responses from the provincial government in March. Once received, provincial responses will be forwarded to resolution sponsors and added to the UBCM’s online, searchable resolutions database – accessible on the UBCM website under Resolutions & Policy/Resolutions Database. The UBCM will also post the full provincial response in PDF format on the website in the same location.

The UBCM has received responses from the federal government and some other organizations. These responses have already been forwarded to resolution sponsors and added to the online database.

For information about the above referrals and follow-up to the 2007 Convention resolutions sessions, contact Reiko Tagami, Resolutions Coordinator. Tel: 604.270.8226 ext. 115 Email: rtagami@civicnet.bc.ca

The full text of these winning resolutions may be viewed on the UBCM website under Resolutions & Policy/Gold Star Resolutions.
Gas Tax to Become Permanent

- The Gas Tax Fund, which will be worth $2 billion nationally in 2009–10, will become a permanent measure once new legislation is introduced.
- Establishing the terms for permanent delivery of Gas Tax funding will be a matter of discussion between Canada, BC and UBCM. In the meantime, the three parties are poised to extend the current agreement as called for in last year’s federal budget by four years.

New Funding for Transit Infrastructure

- Up to $500 million will be set aside in support of capital investments to improve public transit.
- The funding will be targeted for three projects across Canada, one of which is the Evergreen Line Light Rapid Transit System in Metro Vancouver.

Establishment of a New Crown Corporation

- The establishment of a Crown corporation, PPP Canada Inc., was announced. PPP will work with the public and private sectors to support public-private partnerships.
- The Minister’s speech suggests that this new Crown corporation should be able to leverage a “100 billion dollar investment in infrastructure”. It is uncertain yet if this new Crown corporation will affect the delivery of “Building Canada”.

New Funding For Demonstration Projects Addressing Homelessness

- $110 million will be provide for five demonstration projects across Canada that will assist homeless persons who suffer from mental illness. It is anticipated that the projects will generate best practices that can be shared with other jurisdictions.
- Vancouver will be the site of one of the five demonstration projects.

For more on Budget 2008, see “In The House” (February 27, 2008) at www civicnet.bc.ca

In Memoriam

Former District of North Vancouver Councillor Ernie Crist lost his battle with cancer on February 16, 2008. A UBCM Long Service Award recipient, Crist was first elected in 1979 and served until 2005. Crist was also a recipient of the Freedom of the District of North Vancouver award, which he received while in hospital shortly before his passing. Crist, who was 79, is survived by his wife Joyce and son David.

Resolutions Categorization

There are three main categories of UBCM resolutions, and each category is handled differently at Convention.

SECTION A resolutions address new and/or priority issues with broad application for local government as a whole.

SECTION B resolutions are divided into three parts.
- Part I: resolutions in keeping with established UBCM policy
- Part II: resolutions on new issues, or issues that were considered previously but not endorsed
- Part III: resolutions addressing matters of interest to, but outside the jurisdiction of, local government

SECTION C resolutions are also divided into three parts.
- Part I: resolutions referred to policy papers/special sessions at Convention
- Part II: resolutions referred to other resolutions in the Resolutions Book, where similarity permits
- Part III: resolutions regional in nature, thus referred to Area Associations

SECTION A and B resolutions are introduced for debate in the order in which they appear in the Annual Report and Resolutions Book. SECTION A and Part BII resolutions are considered individually. Part BI resolutions are considered as a block, and in the event of time constraints, the Chair may also introduce a motion to adopt the recommendations for Part BII resolutions as a block. In both cases, voting delegates have the option to withdraw resolutions from the block for individual consideration.

SECTION C resolutions are not admitted for debate.

LATE resolutions may be submitted to UBCM up to Friday noon on September 19, 2008. Resolutions addressing urgent issues arising since the June 30 deadline may be recommended for emergency consideration at Convention. All others will be entered automatically into the resolutions cycle for the following year.

RESOLUTIONS FROM THE FLOOR of Convention may be introduced by voting delegates, but require assent from a three-fifths majority of the delegates present in order to be considered. Sponsors of these resolutions must be prepared to distribute print copies to the plenary.

For information about resolutions submission, categorization, or consideration at Convention, contact:
Reiko Tagami
Information & Resolutions Coordinator
Tel: 604.270.8226 ext. 115
Email: rtagami@civicnet.bc.ca

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Community Economic Development

Mobile Business Licence Initiative Update
- contributed by the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue

The Government of British Columbia is committed to making our Province the most small business-friendly jurisdiction in Canada. In support of this goal, at the UBCM Annual Convention in October 2006, Premier Gordon Campbell encouraged local governments to develop a Single Business Licence Framework. The objectives of the Single Business Licence include:
- making it easier for businesses to operate across municipalities and boundaries with comply with municipal business licence bylaws.
- reducing the administrative burden on small business,
- increasing residents’ choice of contractors and service providers.

Staff from the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue conducted research into existing intermunicipal licensing systems and consulted with municipalities on possible approaches to a Single Business Licence Framework.

As a first step, municipalities in the Okanagan Similkameen region agreed to launch the Okanagan Similkameen mobile business licence Pilot Project. This Pilot Project builds on the mobile business licence framework that was already in place in the North Okanagan.

In January 2008, 17 municipalities from the Okanagan-Similkameen regions launched the Pilot Project. Under the Pilot, eligible businesses have the option to upgrade to a Mobile Business Licence (MBL) for $150, allowing them to work across all participating municipalities. The Pilot Project is very positive since January 1st, municipalities have issued over 1200 mobile business licences indicating pilot is supported by a web-based system providing service providers; • increasing residents’ choice of contractors and service providers; • making it easier for businesses to operate across municipalities boundaries and comply with natural resource issues, reviewed the original bill and has since reviewed the changes with respect to the new bill. We solicited feedback from the members on the original Bill but received limited feedback.

With the introduction of the new Bill and its proposed amendments, the Committee wanted to alert the UBCM membership of the new Bill and advise of any comments. A memo is circulated via membership on February 15, 2008 seeking member feedback.

FODO staff has advised that consultation will not end with the tabling of Bill C-45. The Bill will most likely be referred to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, where the Committee will review the text of the Bill and approve or modify. At this stage the Committee may invite individuals and representatives of organizations that have an interest in the legislation to provide comments either in writing or by personal appearance.

As well, if the bill receives Royal Assent, stakeholders will be engaged in the development of policies and regulations for the implementation of the Bill. Since many sections of the Bill require publication prior to its implementation, there will be an opportunity for further stakeholder input on such areas as fisheries management, agreements, allocation and fisheries management orders.

Please direct comments to: Community Economic Development Committee c/o UBCM Suite 60-10551 Shellbridge Way, Richmond, BC V6X 2W9 or via email to mcrawford@civicnet.bc.ca.

BC Announces Bioenergy Strategy

Building on the February 2007 BC Energy Plan, the Province released its new bioenergy strategy in January 2008. Bioenergy is defined as “energy derived from organic biomass sources such as trees, agricultural crops, food processing and agricultural wastes. Since BC is home to 50% of the biomass energy-generating capacity of the entire category, the Province is looking to convert more waste into clean energy. BC’s biomass resources can be broken down as follows:
- • sustainable forestry (53%)
- • mountain pine beetle damaged timber (34%)
- • sustainable agriculture (10%)
- • municipal solid waste (3%)

As part of the strategy the Province will look to establish a $25 million Bioenergy Network that will provide for greater investment and innovation in BC bioenergy projects and technologies. The Network will encourage the development of pilot projects with industries and communities in key biomass resource areas. It will also support research and technology expertise in BC, including the establishment of at least one academic leadership chair in bioenergy. Up to $10 million in funding over three years will be allocated for biodeis bakery production.

Two goals have been specifically identified within the Strategy:
- meeting 50% or more of BC’s renewable fuel requirements by 2020 with biofuels produced in BC; and
- establishing at least

Continued on page 12

FISHERIES ACT REINTRODUCED

On December 13, 2006 the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans announced that the 138-year old Fisheries Act would be modernized. As a result, Fisheries Minister Loyola Hearn introduced Bill C-45. Provincial and territorial fisheries ministers had urged the federal government to table legislation that would recognize their role in fisheries management, and would provide greater stability, transparency and predictability in fishery access and allocation. However, last spring the Opposition introduced a “hoist” amendment during second reading of Bill C-45 that set the proposed new act aside. The first session of Parliament ended and Bill C-45 died on the Order Paper.

On November 29, 2007, the Minister of Fisheries introduced Bill C-32. In his communications around the reintroduction of the Fisheries Act Bill, the Minister indicated that over the past 11 months DFO had heard from a number of groups and organizations with their comments on the original Bill. The new proposal under Bill C-32 differs from Bill C-45 in the following manner:
- adds reference to the fisheries as a “common property resource” in the preamble;
- amends s. 25 to clarify that conservation is the first priority in access and allocation - and all other considerations will be “mays” rather than “mays”; amends s. 30(1) to remove “licence confers access” and “non-transferability” language; and
- amends s. 43(2)(g) to remove “quota of fish” as part of a fisheries management agreement.

The above four key areas that differ between Bill C-45 and C-32. The remainder of the original Bill is almost identical to Bill C-32. Links to the text and background information on the new Bill can be found at: www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/media/ infocus/2007/20071129_ehm. The UBCM’s Community Economic Development Committee, which addresses community economic development, will be engaged in the development of policies and regulations for the implementation of the Bill. Since many sections of the Bill require publication prior to its implementation, there will be an opportunity for further stakeholder input on such areas as fisheries management, agreements, allocation and fisheries management orders.

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Protective Services

Crime Prevention Conference: Gangs, Drugs and Domestic Violence

A local government conference on crime prevention entitled “Building A Safer Community: Gangs, Drugs and Domestic Violence” was held on Thursday, February 28, 2008 and Friday, February 29, 2008 at the Delta Vancouver Airport Hotel in Richmond. The conference was a joint partnership with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Ministry of Community Services and the RCMP. Assistance in planning the conference was provided by the Criminal Justice Reform Secretariat.

Over 170 delegates attended the two-day conference, 107 representatives from local government and 63 representatives from other agencies (i.e. RCMP and provincial government etc.). The conference looked at a number of important issues to enhance community safety:

• an integrated approach to crime prevention and crime reduction measures, using evidence based programs;
• crime prevention measures being undertaken by local communities;
• strategies for dealing with youth gang violence;
• drug issues facing local communities and strategies to mitigate the problems;
• community-based strategies to address domestic and sexual violence.

Delegates received an update by Deputy Commissioner Biss on the challenges faced by the RCMP in dealing with organized crime and illegal drugs, the two issues being closely linked in British Columbia. Fiona Young provided an overview of the crime prevention and reduction strategies being implemented in England. The delegates were also challenged by Dr. Mark Totten, an expert in youth gang issues, to address some of the underlying factors which foster the development of youth gangs in local communities (i.e. domestic violence, racial discrimination etc.). He noted that one of the major issues that local communities will have to deal with in the upcoming years is a rapidly growing population of aboriginal youth and that this issue is not dealt with effectively one of the outcomes could be increased gang activity.

Copies of most of the powerpoint presentations made during the two days of the conference will be available on the UBCM website (www.civcenet.bc.ca).

Expanded Prolific Offender Program Underway

Solicitor General John Les announced the expansion of a strategy aimed at prolific offenders who have long criminal records and are assessed to be at high risk to re-offend. The strategy is aimed at reducing high volume crimes like break and enters, car thefts, arson, assaults, robberies and drug trafficking. It is an expansion of a crime reduction strategy that the RCMP has been testing between 2004-2006 in Penticton, Coquitlam, Ridge Meadows, Courtrey / Comox, Fraser Lake and Port McNeil. The Prolific Offender Management Project will be expanded to Surrey, Kamloops, Nanaimo, Prince George, the Capital Regional District and potentially Williams Lake.

RCMP Community Safety Officer Program

The RCMP stated that it intends to introduce a new Community Safety Officer (CSO) pilot program in 2008. The pilot program will last for 18 months and will be implemented in a number of different communities across Canada. The conference indicated that the exact details of the program will be worked out with the local government that have agreed to participate in the pilots (i.e. Maple Ridge, Surrey etc.).

The Community Safety Officer pilot program is intended to create a mix of resources to assist the RCMP in fulfilling its mandate and to address community priorities. The Community Safety Officer (CSO) will be an unarmed peace officer established to provide back-up for regular members and to assist in the implementation of community based policing programs. The CSO will focus on the following activities: crime prevention, community safety, traffic support, community policing and investigative support to regular RCMP officers.

The RCMP indicated that it had gone to Treasury Board to determine whether or not the program fell within the existing RCMP contract and was informed that it could be implemented under the current agreement (i.e. 90/10 split etc.). It also stated that it was awaiting final direction from Treasury Board about the details of the City of Abbotsford, states “We are extremely pleased with the amount of enthusiasm and commitment from many property owners and managers in the Abbotsford area. Although there is a requirement for participation in the CFMH program, most people are proactively involved.” Abbotsford, who just recently held a Phase One workshop in January of this year, had over fifty participants and is expecting that number to rise next year.

T he number of communities involved in this crime prevention program will provide one-time-only grants of up to $20,000 to help prevent and address the effects of crime. Local governments, community and youth organizations, school districts, police departments, victim service programs, Aboriginal organizations and First Nations Bands are eligible to apply. Priority will be given to projects that address one or more of the following:

• Tackle the root causes or risk factors that contribute to crime. These include individual risk factors like a history of violence and substance abuse; family risks such as poor parenting skills or family violence; and community risks such as high crime or needed services.
• Respond to local, specified crime issues.

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Continued on page 10
The report of the Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP entitled “Rebuilding the Trust” was released by the federal government on December 14, 2007. The Brown Task Force makes a total of 49 recommendations for changes in the structure, accountability, independence and oversight of RCMP operations.

The report makes four major recommendations:
1. Conversion of the RCMP to a separate entity from government and separate employer status.
2. Establishment of a Board of Management to independently oversee the RCMP's financial affairs, personnel, property, services and procurement.
3. Creation of an independent commission for complaints and oversight of the RCMP.
4. Implementation of a renewal council to oversee the renewal process and provide public updates.

The Task Force indicated that “funding for the RCMP has been insufficient and categorized by the Treasury Board that demographics indicating policing needs by the RCMP leadership has been reduced to almost zero.” It pointed out that “the funding restrictions prevent management from effectively managing shortages in one area while surpluses exist in another area” and that over the last “two over $200 million dollars of funds allocated to particular programs remaining unspent and therefore were redirected toward the RCMP” as result of the current policy. The Task Force recommended the view that “the RCMP cannot provide the level of policing services that is expected of it in the dynamic environment in which it operates unless its financial management capacity is improved and it gains a clear sense of accountability for this crucial activity.”

In its review the Task Force noted that

“The policing is an expensive and expansive public service. There is no reason to predict any future reductions in policing costs. Increases in personnel and technology costs as a result of increased public service expectations, service standardization and integration of police and the pressure for increased police expenditures will remain strong. The RCMP budget, close to $4 billion, has increased significantly over the past few years; yet large segments of the Force believe that it is under-resourced. Indeed, the Task Force has not been able to determine whether there is enough information or whether resources currently available aren’t being best used.

The Brown Report made two recommendations of particular interest to local government:

Recommendation 41 - Contract Policing

The RCMP should examine and review its approval authorities to ensure that those decisions are made in a timely manner. The Task Force pointed out that there should be greater involvement on the part of the provincial and local authorities in the establishment of policing objectives in the contracting jurisdiction. In addition, the Task Force noted that after talking at length with local authorities, it has become clear that local relationships with the local Commander and the community in terms of interaction with the local authorities was that local authorities felt input into the selection of RCMP members who fill key roles at the division, district and detachment levels.

The report highlighted the approach used in the lower mainland as an example of the process that might be used “The Crown Office created a list of candidates it felt would be appropriate for the position. Local UBCM members then interviewed each candidate and selected the one of the candidates that best met the needs of the community in terms of interest, experience and other key areas.”

The next step in the process will be in review of the recommendations by the federal government to assess the costs of the closest to operational needs. The report and to determine what measures the federal government may be interested in implementing. The provincial government, which contract for RCMP services will also review the recommendations in the report to determine the cost implications and the changes that would like to see implemented. UBCM will continue to monitor the process and determine what action it may want to take in the future.

**Prolific Offender Program**

**Continued from page 8**

Evidence suggests that 50% of reported crime is committed by 10% of offenders. The prolific offender pilot project establishes integrated teams made up of representatives from the police (RCMP and municipal police), provincial and federal corrections, Crown counsel, Ministry of Environment and Family Development, health authorities (mental health and addictions), Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance and BC Housing. The project aims to use more intensive supervision of prolific offenders and timely intervention with a small group of prolific offenders in each community.

The goal of the Prolific Offender Management Project is to achieve the following outcomes:

- **reduce the crime rate in the pilot communities**
- **reduce the offending by prolific offenders**
- **improve compliance with sentencing conditions and treatment**
- **reduce management and cost effectiveness of service delivery in the social service and justice systems**
- **improved outcomes for offenders (access to and maintenance of health, housing, and other social services)**
- **enhanced coordination between agencies**
- **improved public safety and confidence in the justice system**

The intent is to evaluate the results in each of the pilot communities to determine how much crime declines in each community, and what approaches work best.

The results of these pilots will be shared with other communities and the program will be expanded based on the evaluation shows it works.

The prolific offender pilot project led by the Criminal Justice Reform Secretariat, which was formed in 2005 by the provincial ministries, Public Safety and Solicitor General: Attorney General and Children and Family Development, to aid in the development and implementation of provincial crime prevention and reduction programs. The project is a result of the federal-provincial comprehensive justice initiative, which will complement the federal government’s national strategy announced in the speech from the throne.

**Scrap Metal Bylaw**

A model bylaw entitled the “Scrap Metal Dealer Regulation Bylaw” has been prepared by the Scrap Metal Working Group to assist local government in dealing with the problem of metal theft. The group was established in the Lower Mainland in November 2006 to address the problem of metal theft, which in 2006 was estimated to have cost nine Lower Mainland municipalities approximately $865,345. Given that there is currently no provincial legislation to effectively deal with metal theft the bylaw is an attempt to provide local government with some regulatory tools, that working in cooperation with local police, will help address the problem. The approach is intended to be regional in scope and was developed after consultation with the scrap metal industry. The bylaw has been drafted to comply with the recent BC Court of Appeal decision in the Royal City Jewelers v. Royal Bank of Canada decision. The bylaw is intended to cover normal commercial transactions between businesses and does not apply to auto wreckers and other dealers of ferrous metals (iron & steel) or recyclers of beverage and food containers.

Under this process, the scrap metal dealer would be required to register with the local government. Fees would be required for the new grants and are to be used to fund the program. The Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Victim Services Program Division at 604.660.3274.

**Civil Forfeiture Funding for Crime Prevention**

**Continued from page 8**

- **Increase the ability of victims and community members to fully participate in justice processes, like the opportunities already provided by alternative restorative justice programs in many BC communities.**

- **Adopt evidence-based community safety and crime prevention approaches that have proven effective in other jurisdictions.**

- **Focus on the needs of rural and Aboriginal communities.**

Local governments interested in applying for the new grants are invited to contact the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Victim Services Program Division at 604.660.3274.

The model bylaw entitled the “Scrap Metal Dealer Regulation Bylaw” focuses on cash transactions and requires the scrap metal dealer to “tag and hold” metal purchased in this way for one week, given that the metal theft phenomenon revolves around cash paid for stolen goods. Under this process, the scrap metal dealer would be required to maintain a “Goods Information Register” of scrap metal, which they would share with police on a daily basis and a “Seller Information Register” which would be available for review by municipal bylaw staff. The regulation is not intended to cover normal commercial transactions between businesses and does not apply to auto wreckers and other dealers of ferrous metals (iron & steel) or recyclers of beverage and food containers.

Civil forfeiture funding for crime prevention is available through the upcoming community projects to complement the comprehensive justice initiative, which will complement the federal government’s national strategy announced in the speech from the throne.

UBCM NEWS MARCH 2008
The provincial government recently issued a report, "Changing Climates-BC’s Forests," which highlights the role of forests in combating climate change. British Columbia’s forests are estimated to account for about 80% of the province’s annual GHG emissions, with a significant impact on the carbon emissions of other sectors.

Looking at local government operations, the province is working towards a community-wide focus on green development, including strategies and actions to support green development, infrastructure and energy.

In addition, the working group may be requested to provide advice on proposals developed or initiated by the GCC, the Province of UBCM, regarding greenhouse gas emission reductions related to local government operations, services and/or infrastructure or carbon-neutral initiatives, offsets and/or registry programs. There are also practical working groups:

- Urban Strategies and Actions Working Group
- Small Communities Strategies and Actions Working Group

The groups have been organized based on urban and small communities, rather than along topical lines (e.g., "capacity building" or topics like "land use or transportation") because many of the topics mean such different things to urban and small communities. Where it makes sense the two working groups may form joint sub-committees. The GCC will begin its work with practical ideas the communities can now share — thus building the capacity of communities and leading to an explanation of what a carbon-neutral community looks like.

Science Proves that BC’s Existing Forests, Grasslands and Wetlands are the Largest Defence Against Global Warming in Canada

Contributed by Sheila Harrington, Land Trust Alliance of BC

Oceans and terrestrial (land-based) ecosystems remove about 50 to 60 percent of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions... and curb more intense global climate change.

Continued on page 12

Land Trust Alliance of BC’s 2008 Seminar Series

Stewardship and Conservation through Changing Climates

Manning Provincial Park, April 11 – 13th

The series includes a tour of a Pune Beetle Management areas and many workshops and seminars given by BC’s leaders in the field. Plenary speakers include Sara J. Wilson, an Ecological Economist and co-author of the recently released TATC report, Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change through the Conservation of Nature in BC as well as Dr. Timothy Kittel, a research ecologist at the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research, University of Colorado, Boulder. He has studied the dynamics of climate change and its impacts on ecological systems for over twenty-five years. Dr. Kittel is a contributing author on Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports and was a team leader for the U.S. National Climate Change Assessment. His most recent focus is on developing ways to deal with the uncertainties of climate change in conservation action. Pursuing this, he currently leads a Climate Working Group for the Nature Conservancy of Canada BC Office.

The program and registration is available through www.landtrustalliance.bc.ca or by contacting 250-538-0112.

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Three Green Communities Working Groups Struck

In addition, the working group may be requested to provide advice on proposals developed or initiated by the GCC, the Province of UBCM, regarding greenhouse gas emission reductions related to local government operations, services and/or infrastructure or carbon-neutral initiatives, offsets and/or registry programs. The working group may form joint sub-committees. The GCC will begin its work with practical ideas the communities can now share — thus building the capacity of communities and leading to an explanation of what a carbon-neutral community looks like.

The Urban Strategies and Actions Working Group and the Small Communities Strategies and Actions Working Group:

The groups have been organized based on urban and small communities, rather than along topical lines (e.g., "capacity building" or topics like "land use or transportation") because many of the topics mean such different things to urban and small communities. Where it makes sense the two working groups may form joint sub-committees. The GCC will begin its work with practical ideas the communities can now share — thus building the capacity of communities and leading to an explanation of what a carbon-neutral community looks like.

The Urban Strategies Working Group will develop actions and strategies that could be employed by urban local governments in reducing community-wide greenhouse gas emissions. In this regard, communities possess a number of targets and strategies other than the local government’s corporate operations (which will be the focus of the Carbon Neutral working group) but within the sphere of local government influence.

It is a widely held view that the most significant impact urban local governments can make in relation to reducing community-wide greenhouse gas emissions is to work towards a goal of complete, compact communities (e.g., communities that avoid sprawl and the extensive infrastructure needed to support it; communities that are oriented around public transit; and communities that meet the social, cultural and economic needs of their residents). It is recognized that many urban local governments in BC are actively taking steps towards a vision of complete, compact communities and GCC wishes to build on that wealth of experience.

Consequently, the working group will provide practical advice on strategies and actions that may be employed by rural local governments in reducing community-wide greenhouse gas emissions. In this regard, the Urban working group, this group will focus on emissions other than those from local government corporate operations, but still within the sphere of influence of local governments.

The working group will provide practical advice on strategies and actions that may be employed by rural local governments in helping to reduce their community-wide greenhouse gas emissions, including identifying barriers to taking action and proposing options to overcome these barriers.

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At its most recent meeting the Committee has continued to work on its mandate:

- appointment are in process to the three working groups with a schedule to be set by the end of March (see the side bar for the three committees and their terms of reference).
- putting in place the facilitation and supports for the working groups.
- reviewing proposed 2008 legislation related to greenhouse gas reductions.
- reviewed 2008 Throne Speech and Budget announcements related to green communities including the LiveSmart and the forests related initiatives.
- updated on survey of municipal response to zoning for supportive housing in municipalities over 25,000 population.
- updated on meeting with Climate Action Secretariat.

The Green Communities Committee issued its first update at the beginning of February 2008. It reported that there are now over 100 local governments that have signed or committed to the Charter and steps taken to implement the Charter (see www.civicnet.bc.ca for a copy of the February 8th report).
Environment Policy

Community Ecosystem Restoration Initiative

In October of 2004, the District of Maple Ridge became the first community in British Columbia to participate in the “Community Ecosystem Restoration Initiative” (CERI) with Ecosystem Restoration Associates Inc. (ERA). To date over 60,000 trees have been planted in the District by ERA.

The District of Mission, the City of Langley, Township of Langley, Metro Vancouver, The Nature Trust of B.C., and the Hasla Nation are also current CERI participants. A number of other local governments that have been given presentations are expected to join the initiative.

The Community Ecosystem Restoration Initiative represents a unique community-based approach to fighting climate change. Through the enhanced removal of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere. In brief, it involves ERA, at no cost to the government partner, identifying and preparing degraded ecosystems to allow the planting and monitoring of native trees (in the Lower Mainland this has included Douglas fir, western red cedar, Sitka spruce, and black cottonwood) that have a natural ecological fit for the surrounding area. The cost of this work is covered by the purchase from ERA of carbon offsets by ethical companies, individuals and, if interested, local governments. This is made possible as a result of the sequestration of additional carbon by the trees planted on the restored sites.

CERI has been developed in response to the growing awareness of the role of healthy ecosystems in addressing climate change. The ultimate goal of these projects is to return degraded ecosystems, impacted by historical tree harvesting and urban development, back to their pre-disturbance state. These restored ecosystems, through their natural photosynthetic processes, will begin to remove additional carbon dioxide from the atmosphere very shortly after they are established.

Benefits to the Community

In cooperation with community partners, the implementation of an ecosystem restoration involves ERA, at no cost to the community, identifying suitable restoration sites; conducting biometrics to determine site productivity; developing restoration prescriptions; implementing those prescriptions; and, ensuring the upkeep and monitoring of these sites. The carbon offsets generated through the project are purchased by environmentally conscious organizations and individuals to “neutralize” their carbon footprints and contribute to the global effort to address climate change.

As it is not possible for communities to reduce their CO₂ emissions to zero, offsets will have to be a part of any carbon neutral strategy. Within this context, as local governments increasingly take measures to become carbon neutral, CERI programming can provide locally produced carbon offsets at a significant discount from market prices to participating communities. These offsets can be made available over extended periods of time under renewable agreements. The CERI projects have the additional benefits of providing local jobs; direct community involvement in a climate change mitigation strategy; urban forest and watershed restoration; and, fish and wildlife habitat and water quality enhancement.

ERA’s methodology for ecosystem restoration follows the ISO-14064-2 standard for greenhouse gas projects, and is reviewed and validated by a Registered Professional Forester (RPF), and certified environmental auditor (CEA). The ISO validation and verification process ensures that the carbon removals claimed are conservative, additional to “business as usual”, scientifically sound and long term.

The Company Behind CERI

ERA was established in 2004 to integrate climate change mitigation efforts with ecosystem restoration. ERA has over 45 years of combined experience in the businesses of ecosystem restoration and climate mitigation including the planting of over one hundred million trees in Canada, and over 15 years of climate change research.

New Provincial Brownfields Strategy

On February 25th, 2008, the Honourable Pat Bell, Minister of Agriculture and Lands, announced a new provincial brownfields redevelopment strategy supported by a $10 million dollar remediation fund.

Brownfields are abandoned, vacant, derelict, or underutilized commercial and industrial properties where past actions have resulted in actual or perceived contamination. They are different from other contaminated sites in that they hold active potential for redevelopment.

The new BC Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy will address policy, regulatory, and tax funding barriers through the creation of a more effective public policy regime for liability and risk; application of strategic investments to encourage redevelopment; and the development of a number of approaches for building awareness of redevelopment opportunities.

Effective immediately, the strategy will:
• fast-track green developments waiting for provincial environmental approvals, as outlined in the provincial throne speech;
• implement a $10 million fund built up over five years that will match provincial and private sector investment in the early stages of investigations on sites where market forces have not achieved redevelopment and where it is possible to achieve triple-bottom-line outcomes; and
• broaden brownfield tools for local governments, linking brownfield renewal with government’s proposed Green Communities Initiative to ensure brownfield opportunities can be a part of community revitalization.

The strategy will also provide local government staff involved in redevelopment projects with direct assistance on a project-by-project basis, as well as a virtual brownfields office to assist local governments with brownfield renewal through the provision of information and guidance.

According to the Province, the strategy is designed to "encourage redevelopment of brownfield sites that will help reduce development pressure on farm and forested land, reduce urban sprawl, improve public and environmental health and safety, increase land values, revitalize communities and renew derelict and underutilized land."

UBCM participated in the initial stakeholder consultation session, and will continue to work with the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands in further developing the strategy to meet the needs and interests of local governments.

ENVIRONMENT POLICY IN BRIEF

Climate Action

In the summer of 2007, UBCM and the Province developed a non-binding Climate Action Charter aimed at fostering collaborative relations for reducing greenhouse gases. The Charter commits local government signatories to: becoming carbon neutral in their operations by 2012; measuring and reporting on their GHG emissions profile; and creating complete, compact, more energy efficient rural and urban communities. To date, one hundred (100) local governments have provided UBCM with signed copies of the Climate Action Charter, while several other local governments have notified UBCM of their intent to sign the Charter.

For further information on the process for signing the charter, please contact Jared Wright, Senior Policy Analyst by email at jwright@civicnet.bc.ca or by phone at 604-270-8226 (ext.113).

Contaminated Sites

The Land Remediation Section of the Ministry of Environment held a two-day contaminated sites stakeholder update and consultation session on February 27 and 28, 2008. The session provided an update on key developments including the site profile process, protocol for classifying sites according to risk, compliance and enforcement strategies, and the new provincial brownfields strategy. The Ministry is planning to release the revised site profile process for additional public consultation in the coming months.

Local governments interested in receiving the most up to date information on contaminated sites are encouraged to sign up to the Ministry of Environment’s free E-Link services. Instructions for subscribing to this service are available on the Land Remediation website at www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/remediation.

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Global Warming in Canada

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emerging field that values nature’s services. Dr. Richard J. Hebda is an adjunct associate professor, Biology, Schools of Earth and Ocean Sciences and Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria and a respected, published author and presenter on climate change.

The LTABC commissioned report highlights the wisdom of investing in mother nature’s intact ecosystems as a means of both adapting to and mitigating the significant effects of climate change. In British Columbia, virtually all discussions and proposed solutions to the increasing concerns about climate change are about energy, transportation and other technological advances. However as noted above, protecting existing ecosystems is equally as important to both mitigate carbon and to help communities adapt to coming changes.

Land trusts work with private landowners and volunteers in their communities on voluntary restoration and stewardship projects. The more than 30 land trusts in BC also work to permanently protect land through registering conservation covenants on private lands and regional parks; this means that even when the land changes hands, the features protected in the covenant must remain intact, or the landowner will face enforcement proceedings. Land trusts also work with many partners, including landowners, businesses, local and provincial government agencies and the public to acquire and conserve lands outright. One example of a recent acquisition which will protect Victoria’s watersheds and drinking water was facilitated by one of these land trusts: TLC, The Land Conservancy of British Columbia. Many land trusts have worked with local governments to protect community trails and other sites of particular significance to local communities. They also work with local governments to identify, map and protect key ecosystem features, corridors, and areas that provide the economic services local governments would pay many times more to create or restore from degraded areas.

Conserving natural ecosystems provides an as yet untapped opportunity for meeting the Climate Change challenge. Healthy butts of healthy resilient landscapes provide adaptation options and benefits for citizens and the economy. Conserving healthy ecosystems is a cost effective way to ensure a reliable supply of clean water and mitigate inevitable extreme climatic events such as floods and droughts. They also protect biodiversity and the ecological services that provide for our economies, our health, and less tangible values directly linked to the quality of life in BC.

The LTABC report provides a comprehensive description of projected changes in BC ecosystems, in addition to providing some suggested tools, such as carbon offsets, which local governments and their local land trusts can use to help address the challenges of climate change.

The full report and the executive summary are available directly through our website or by contacting us.

Sheila Harrington
Land Trust Alliance of British Columbia
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Crime Free Multi-Housing

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program is also growing rapidly. The most recent addition to the CFMH program is the City of Kamloops and it has received welcome support from the community. As Mark Huhn, Crime Prevention Supervisor for the City of Kamloops, states “The Crime Free Multi-Housing is a welcome addition to our community safety strategy. This program, as evidenced in other areas, will prove to be an invaluable tool here in Kamloops. Proper tenant screening and employing crime prevention through environmental design principles will create not only a safer and more secure rental community, but also impact the surrounding areas and neighborhoods as well.”

We are extremely happy to have the support of the BC Crime Prevention Association and many other stakeholders involved in the CFMH program to make the City of Kamloops a safer and even better place to live.”

Many certified property owners and managers will also attest to the benefits of being involved in the CFMH program. Some of the more common benefits are: maintaining a stable and satisfied resident base, improved safety for owners, managers and residents, and lower maintenance and repair costs, which can often be associated to criminal activity being conducted in or on rental properties. The BC Crime Prevention Association, Provincial Administrator of the CFMH Program, also recognizes the benefits of the crime prevention program for all parties involved; from the residents who see a reduction in crime on or around their property, to police who see a decrease in emergency calls originating from CFMH certified buildings.

For more information on the Crime Free Multi Housing Program or its upcoming workshops, please contact the provincial administrator, Kirsten Janz, at 604-291-9959 ext. 223 or www.bcpa.org.

BC Announces Bioenergy Strategy

Continued from page 7

10 community energy projects that convert local biomass into energy by 2020.

The Strategy announces the establishment of a comprehensive provincial biomass inventory that creates waste-to-energy opportunities. As well, a two part Bioenergy Call for Power will be issued – the first part was issued recently by BC Hydro on February 26, 2008 and a second will be issued on July 1, 2008. The two calls will be focused on the existing biomass inventory in the forest industry and aimed at offering opportunities for smaller energy producers with projects that are immediately viable.

An information guide on pursuing biomass energy opportunities and technologies has also been released to assist First Nations, local governments and industry. A copy of the information guide and other background related to the BC Bioenergy Strategy can be found at: www.energyplan.gov.bc.ca/bioenergy.
### CONVENTION IN REVIEW

#### COMPARATIVE RATINGs OF THE CONVENTION

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#### MOST IMPROVED

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<th>2006 SCORE</th>
<th>2005 SCORE</th>
<th>2004 SCORE</th>
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<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday Clinics Overall</td>
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#### MOST IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT

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<td>Electoral Area Directors Forum</td>
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<td>Opportunity to meet with Ministry of Comm. Services</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to meet with other Provincial Officials</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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#### CONCLUSION

*Welcome Reception Generates Interest in Biodegradable Products*

**Contributed by Pamela Lewis, Future Focus Event Management**

In our ongoing efforts to run a “Green Convention”, we decided to join in the Vancouver Aquarium’s biodegradable, compostable products program for the Welcome Reception. And we hoped, in making that decision, to be a model for event management that follows environmentally sound practices. We hoped that delegates would notice the use of these food service products and be interested in taking some of these ideas back to their communities.

Kaslo Mayor, Jim Holland, who is also the Executive Director of the Kaslo Jazz Festival, was curious when he noticed that the plates were made of a unique fibrous material and that the knives and forks were both biodegradable and compostable. “How can we get these products for our Festival, and for our community use?” he asked.

Mayor Holland recently reported that the Regional District is interested in doing a pilot project with some of the compostable materials to see how it could work in a seaport. There is strong interest in the event presentation community to incorporate Zero Waste principles.

The supplier is BS1 Biodegradable Solutions, a Vancouver based company that specializes in producing biodegradable food service ware. See their website at www.biodegradablewaresolutions.com or call them at 604-250-8892.

The plates are made of the remains of sugarcane processing, the cups made from a corn base, and the knives, forks and spoons made of a potato based starch….all compostable items.

Under commercial compost conditions, they degrade within 55 days, compared to 50-80 years for plastics, and of course, styrofoam which does not degrade at all. Some items are also suitable for backyard or worm composting.

For further information on the Vancouver Aquarium composting program, please contact Philippe Antes, Manager, Food Service Operations at 604-659-3432. The Aquarium uses these products for all of the food service outlets at the Aquarium, and has a compost facility on-site.

We hope that other communities noticed the use of these products and will pursue similar initiatives. We’d like to hear about those initiatives and include more information in the upcoming Convention Newsletter.
Construction of New Municipal House Underway

Excavation began on March 3rd, 2008 for the new Municipal House in Victoria, BC. Premier Gordon Campbell, on behalf of the Province of BC, granted the site for the new building on the occasion of UBCM’s 100th Anniversary. The new building, located at 525 Government St. near the provincial Parliament Buildings, signifies the close and permanent ties of local and provincial governments in BC, and provides a permanent home for UBCM in the provincial Capital.

The building has been designed to achieve LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold certification. The new Municipal House will showcase mountain pine-beetle enhanced BC wood, local building products, recycled construction materials, a green roof, sustainable landscaping and several features to enhance water and energy efficiency. Municipal House will provide close to 6,000 square feet of office and meeting space. Along with offices for UBCM’s Victoria based operations, the new building will offer enhanced services and meeting space for UBCM members visiting Victoria on local government business.

Completion of the new building is anticipated for December of 2008.

The construction crew begins excavation for the new Municipal House.

2008 Application Coming Soon!

The Community Excellence Awards celebrates the best of the best in BC communities. As we enter our fifth year of the program, UBCM looks forward to once again recognizing innovative best practices and sustainable partnerships where BC municipalities and regional districts are leading the way. As visionaries that fulfill the needs of their citizens, winners of the Excellence Awards demonstrate what all communities should strive for.

The Excellence Awards recognizes exceptional programs and projects in the following categories:

- Best Practices
- Best Practices, Annual Reporting
- Best Practices, Website
- Best Practices, Website Innovation
- Leadership & Innovation – Small, Mid-Size and Large Community divisions, as well as a Regional District division
- Partnerships

There are many benefits to applying for an Excellence Award – both to the applicants and to our members at large. With the partnership of UBCM and CivicInfo to establish an on-line version of the Excellence Awards Library, member programs and projects can be shared across the nation and worldwide. And of course, all applicants are invited to one of the most popular events of Convention week – the awards breakfast reception, which is attended by the Minister of Community Services and other important partners.

Don’t miss the application booklet - available in May 2008! More details on category criteria will be available at that time. Keep an eye on the UBCM website for your opportunity to share your success with the rest of BC and join the list of your esteemed colleagues who have previously taken home this honour.

PAST WINNERS

| City of Abbotsford | City of New Westminster |
| City of Campbell River | City of North Vancouver |
| Capital Regional District | District of North Vancouver |
| Central Okanagan Regional District | Town of Osoyoos |
| District of Chemewyn | District of Pitt Meadows |
| City of Chilliwack | District of Powell River |
| City of Coquitlam | City of Revelstoke |
| City of Dawson Creek | City of Richmond |
| City of Duncan | District of Saanich |
| District of Elkford | City of Surrey |
| City of Kelowna | City of Trail |
| Town of Ladysmith | District of Ucluelet |
| District of Maple Ridge | City of Vernon |
| Regional District of Nanaimo | City of White Rock |
CONVERSATION ON HEALTH

The Conversation on Health was launched on September 25, 2006 in light of increasing concerns of government about rising cost of health care and the future pressures on the system and the need to consider changes to the system: its delivery, its funding and its infrastructure. The purpose was to talk to British Columbians about these challenges and seek their advice on how to address them.

It was a year-long process that used a variety of techniques:
- a public stream to obtain input consisting of phone, email, website, mail and 16 all day public forums. Also there were 16 small patient focus groups, input from high school students and four Aboriginal community meetings.
- a health professional stream of 16 workshops.
- a Health Innovation stream of focused workshops and an International Symposium on Health Innovation.

REVIEW OF SELECTED ISSUES

The input received from 78 meetings and 12,000 submissions has been compiled into 45 chapters under three overall themes:
- Envisioning a Healthy British Columbia
- Envisioning a Strong and Sustainable System of Care
- Envisioning a Revitalized Health Care Workforce

Summary of Input

The summary does not make recommendations but it does make "conclusions". Conclusions on some topics of interest to UBCM are reported below.

Health Promotion

Participants believe that we need a combination of policies and education related to health promotion, lifestyle and personal responsibility for health to encourage healthy behaviours. The importance of moving towards a prevention-oriented system with a focus on health promotion was discussed in the vast majority of meetings, forums, and responses received over the course of the Conversation on Health.

Lifestyle and Health

With regards to lifestyle, the majority believe that we need to make the healthy choice the easy choice, including by alleviating poverty. Participants recommended that the government play a leadership role in assisting the province to move towards healthy living. To do this, many suggested providing incentives to facilitate the adoption of healthy lifestyles and increasing people's capacity to take responsibility for their health.

Self-Care

In working towards making British Columbia's health care system more sustainable, there is widespread recognition that people will have to take more responsibility for their health. An important part of this equation also involves increasing the focus on self-care, and its ability to decrease waste in and demands on the system.

Social Determinants of Health

Participants asserted that the social determinants of health are complex and have a direct impact on an individual's health in both the long and short-term. Most participants noted that as a result of this complexity, improving only one social determinant is not enough to increase the overall health of an individual. Providing good quality housing, for example, needs to be coupled with access to affordable food, education and health services in order to significantly improve the outcomes for low-income and vulnerable populations. Participants believe that if government works together across sectors to ensure equal access to the system, social services and health, we will see significant improvement in the health of British Columbia's most vulnerable citizens.

Food Quality and the Environment as Determinants of Health

Participants were vocal in expressing their concerns about how food and the environment can contribute to good health. Although concerned with the availability and affordability of good healthy food and the current state of our physical environment, British Columbians suggest that increased consumer education, individual choice, and the focus on cleaning up the environment, increasing support for healthy food manufacturers and farmers can lead to better population health.

Public Safety

Public safety encouraged strong opinions throughout the Conversation on Health. Participants emphasize that the population needs to be safer and more hygienic to protect against infectious diseases and accidents. Overall, they suggest that better publicity and education around disease management would aid early detection and prevent a potential outbreak, while more stringent rules would promote greater public safety on the road and at home. Though the message about the public's need for better safety and sanitation is clear, the ideas for achieving this goal are varied and will continue to be debated.

Seniors

Many participants feel that seniors should be treated with greater respect and dignity in the health care system. The perception that seniors are being blamed for increasing health care costs was seen by most as unfair to those whose effort and contributions built the health care system British Columbians are working to sustain. Many participants feel that an emphasis on prevention, improved access and service delivery, and healthy, active living will shift the perception of an aging population from being a burden to being an opportunity to improve the lives of seniors while controlling costs.

People with Disabilities

Participants discussed the need for increased acceptance of people with disabilities within the health care system and an increase in core funding for special needs. The majority of participants who explored these issues agreed that people with disabilities should be asked what they want and need from the health care system. That consultation, a new system could be built to support people with disabilities.

Part II: Envisioning a Strong and Sustainable System of Care

Health Care Models

Most participants believe that our concept of the health care system must change in order to support its sustainability but, more importantly, to support the citizens of British Columbia. A shift of focus to developing and maintaining healthy populations over illness care means a shift in investment. A system of patient-centred care requires that we train our health practitioners to work in teams and communicate with patients differently. Participants

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CONVERSATION ON HEALTH
Continued from page 15

emphasize that replicating best practices from British Columbia and around the world takes time and investment, but will ultimately yield results. The kind of change participants are looking for is dramatic and foundational and will require time, adjustment, discipline and leadership to make it happen.

Collaboration in the System
The themes of integration and collaboration came up frequently throughout the Conversation on Health. Participants wanted collaboration whether it was in relation to forming collaborative practices with nurse practitioners, larger integrated community clinics with a number of health practitioners from many different traditional conventional health disciplines, or seeking systemic collaboration between all social agencies in the delivery of services. While there are administrative, cultural and infrastructure barriers to implementation of this approach, many participants see collaboration and integration as a key step towards creating and maintaining good health for British Columbians.

Canada Health Act and its Principles
The Canada Health Act and its principles came up throughout the Conversation on Health, alternately as the positive foundation for our health care system, a fundamental right of all Canadians, and the sacred cow that stops us from making positive changes. Most participants support the Canada Health Act, but there is no real agreement on what it means or stands for. Discussions around each of the five principles of the Canada Health Act, and the sixth principle proposed by the Government of British Columbia, highlight some of the debate around this topic.

Public Private Debate
While the vast majority of those in attendance at the forums were in support of the continuation of public health care in British Columbia, this same level of support was not as clear through the other avenues of input in the Conversation on Health. The debate between those in support of some element of public private sector involvement in health care delivery and those who suggested a fully public delivery model and funding system continues to be fractious. While the Conversation on Health has managed to elevate this debate to some extent, it is fair to say that the debate among British Columbians around both the existing model of health care delivery, and new models (whether fully public or some combination of public and private) is still in its infancy.

Governance and Accountability
There is no consensus around how to or who should manage the health care system. Participants debated the governance structure, the extent of public involvement, the administration of health authorities and the performance management system. Through it all, there was agreement that there needs to be more disciplined attention on all of these aspects of the delivery of health care. Furthermore, participants uniformly believe that there needs to be a long-term integrated plan, along with some common way of measuring how the system is doing and whether it is meeting the needs of British Columbians. To the participants, focused attention on governance and accountability structures would help the health care delivery system to meet the needs of the citizens of British Columbia today and into the future.

Health Financing
Many participants see adjusting the source, amount and mechanisms of health care funding as a means to achieving sustainability in the health care system. There are numerous solutions proposed and references made to international examples. The common features of many of the recommendations are improved accountability, efficiency and outcomes. Many British Columbians are willing to accept increased personal and collective financial responsibility in return for a health care system they can rely on. While increased funding is often seen as a requirement for positive change, there is an understanding that money alone will not solve the issues facing health care in British Columbia.

Health Care Spending
Health care spending is a contentious issue for many participants. Some are sceptical that the sustainability situation is as dire as has been suggested, but most agree that changes must be made in the manner that health care funds are spent and accounted for. British Columbians are seeking accountability and measurable results in return for their current and future investments in the health care system. Participants are aware of many of the challenges facing health care, but believe that focused spending and long-term planning will lead to solutions.

Rural Health Care
Some of the participants in the Conversation on Health believe that if British Columbians choose to live in isolated communities, then they should accept some reasonable challenges in accessing health care. However, many suggest that the challenges facing residents of rural areas are extreme. Other participants believe that rural communities are under-served and do not receive the same standard of care as larger communities. Most suggest that providing sufficient resources targeted to transportation and ambulance services as well as increased health care professionals and facilities would improve access to health care for rural communities.

Community-Based Care
Many participants highlight the need for accessible, community health services based on community needs. The majority of participants in the Conversation believe that investment in community care will result in decreased costs and demands in other parts of the health care system.

Home Care and Support
Many participants believe there is a need for a broader, more accessible home support system with increased hours per client. Participants identify increasing supportive housing and home care programs and the availability of community options as important areas for improvement. These steps would allow people to live independently for as long as possible and ensure caregivers receive the supports they need. Many believe improving homecare will also decrease costs and demands in the acute and long term care sectors.

Residential Care and Assisted Living
There is widespread concern that the demands on the long-term care system will continue to increase as the population ages. Participants agree that the system should provide secure, quality, affordable, dignified care to those in long-term care and assisted living to meet all levels of care needs.

Mental Health Facilities and De-Institutionalization
Participants in the Conversation believe that there should be more mental health facilities and services available in the province, and that patients should receive more comprehensive care. Some believe that all mental health patients require more medical interventions, both while staying in facilities and after discharge. Others add that medical services should be combined with community resources to assist patients to live in and be productive members of society. There was general agreement that people with mental health concerns require greater access to integrated, co-ordinated and multi-disciplinary supports.
First Nations Relations Update

Treaty Negotiations Update

According to the BC Treaty Commission Annual Report 2007, Yale has been working to conclude final agreement negotiations since signing their agreement in principle in March 2006. Negotiations on a few key outstanding issues continue and the parties have targeted early 2008 for completion. For Slłammon, intensive negotiations are expected to continue in 2008 until a final agreement is reached. In-ShUCK-ch and Yekooche are at an advanced stage and activity has been high. The Tsawassen and Maa-nulth final agreements have been ratified by their respective communities as well as the provincial government. The Tsawassen final agreement has been introduced in federal parliament while the Maa-nulth agreement has not.

UBCM Pursues a Role for Local Government in the New Relationship

Under its New Relationship initiative with First Nations, the Province is seeking reconciliation with First Nations not only in the treaty process but also outside the process. They are addressing land and resource issues as well as social issues like health and education. UBCM is advocating for a local government role in the Province’s activities relating to the New Relationship. Specifically, UBCM would like to see local governments be consulted on agreements being negotiated with First Nations outside the treaty process that have the potential to affect local government jurisdiction. UBCM is pursuing a new memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Province that expands on our 2003 MOUS on local government participation in treaty negotiations.

BC Supreme Court Ruling: Tsilhqot’in Nation v. British Columbia

In November 2007 BC Supreme Court provided a ruling in the case Tsilhqot’in Nation v. British Columbia. The Court found that the Tsilhqot’in established aboriginal title to approximately 200,000 square hectares in and around the remote Nemiah Valley, south and west of Williams Lake. Although Justice Vickers declined to make a legal declaration of title based on technical issues, he found the claim area including the right to trade furs as a means to securing a moderate livelihood. For further information on this ruling please see the following links for legal bulletins by a few major law firms: www.blakes.com/english/view.asp?ID=8195, www.fasken.com/aboriginal_bulletin_november_2007 and www.lawsonlundell.com/news/index.asp?AOP=34

UBCM Implements Work Plan on Information Sharing and Relationship Building

The Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation provided UBCM with $300,000 for information sharing and relationship building activities relating to the three final agreements that were reached in 2007.

Staff developed a proposal of eligible activities and expenses that could be funded from the provincial grant and received feedback from Treaty Advisory Committees/local governments. A workplan was then developed to implement the proposal. As part of this workplan UBCM is developing a case studies handbook on local governments’ experiences in treaty negotiations with a focus on local and provincial governments who have participated in advanced stages of the final agreement negotiations. A Master’s student has been hired to work on the handbook.

In addition, two grant programs have been launched to support local governments that are involved in the treaty process:
1. Treaty Knowledge Exchange Dialogue Program (TKE)
2. Supporting Treaty Implementation Pilot Project (STIPP)

Treaty Knowledge Exchange Dialogue Program

The TKE program provides small grants to encourage the exchange of knowledge, information and experience between local and provincial governments that have participated in advanced stages of the treaty process and those local governments that are involved in earlier stages of the process.

A TKE Dialogue is a jointly organized meeting between staff and/or elected leaders from TACs and/or local governments that provides a venue for the exchange of knowledge, information and experience related to the treaty process. Dialogue events provide a time and place for conversation and presentation on issues related to the treaty process and may relate to any of the activities at any stage of the treaty process. The application deadline is March 21, 2008. For more information, see UBCM’s website (click on Programs & Services/Local Government Program Services/Treaty Knowledge Exchange).

Supporting Treaty Implementation Pilot Project

The intent of this program is to demonstrate options and provide examples of initiatives that local governments are undertaking to support treaty implementation activities in their communities. The program is open to local governments affected by a signed or initialled final agreement and those local governments that provide a venue for the exchange of knowledge, information and experience related to the treaty process. Dialogue events provide a time and place for conversation and presentation on issues related to the treaty process and may relate to any of the activities at any stage of the treaty process.

The application deadline is March 28, 2008. The Program Guide and application materials are available on UBCM’s website (click on Programs & Services/Local Government Program Services/Supporting Treaty Implementation).
LGPS AT A GLANCE

For program details go to www.civicnet.bc.ca. Look under Programs and Services/Local Government Program Services.

1. Applications now being accepted for:
   - Community Tourism Phase 2 - accepting applications until November 30, 2008
   - Seniors Dialogues - Accepting applications until November 30, 2008 for dialogues before December 31, 2008
   - Strategic Wildfire Prevention – accepting applications for the following programs on an on-going basis
     - Community Wildfire Protection Plans
     - Pilot Projects
     - Operational Fuel Management

2. Local Government Reporting Deadlines:


3. New Reports:

   Premiers Report, December 2007 - highlights of projects funded through Local Government Program Services

4. Newly Launched Programs:

   • Supporting Treaty Implementation Pilot Projects – application deadline is March 28, 2008.
   • Treaty Knowledge Exchange Dialogue Program – application deadline is March 21, 2008.

4. Coming Soon:

   • Healthy Food & Beverage Sale
   • Active Transportation Planning
   • 2008/09 Regional Community to Community Forums

Premier’s 2007 Status Report Released

L ocal Government Program Services (LGPS) recently released its annual “Premier’s Status Report” which provides an overview of the 12 provincially funded programs administered by UBCM in 2007. The report is a testament to the creative and effective work that has been undertaken by local governments in BC over the past year through the use of provincial funding. LGPS staff appreciates the reports and photographs provided by local governments in support of our reporting process.

Some quick facts highlighted in this year’s report:
- Since LGPS began operations in 2004, over 1,500 grant applications have been reviewed and approved, approved in principle or are pending.
- More than $42.8 million dollars has been committed to projects throughout the province.
- Every local government in the province has accessed one or more fund.

This year’s report provides a high-level review of program highlights from around the province, lessons learned, and key messages. The report is posted at www.civicnet.bc.ca in the “Reports” section of the LGPS page.

Bill 7 - Elections Provisions

Continued from page 1

Campaign Finance
- campaign finance rules are extended to apply to “campaign organizations” in addition to candidates and elector organizations. A “campaign organizer” is an individual or group running an election campaign that is intended to support a candidate or elector organization, but is not run directly by a candidate or an elector organization.
- individuals and organizations that undertake election campaigns will be required to provide the chief election officer with up-to-date contact information.
- campaign accounts will only be required when a candidate or elector organization is ready to deposit a contribution or is about to commit to incur an expense. If there are no contributions to deposit, and if there is no commitment to incur any expenses, then it is not necessary to open a campaign account.
- additional public access to campaign financing disclosures, including publication on a local government website, may be provided by local bylaw.
- candidates, elector organizations, and campaign organizations that fail to file a campaign financing disclosure statement will be prohibited from campaign fundraising and spending until after the next general local election.

Voting Opportunities
- all electors will be eligible to participate in advance voting. Official declaration of advance voting eligibility is no longer necessary at these voting opportunities.
- mail ballot voting, where authorized by local bylaw, is extended to snowbirds and other electors who will be absent throughout the voting period

Final Proceedings

Copies of the documents generated at voting opportunities will no longer be available to the general public as a consequence of public inspection.

Note to Members:

Ministry of Community Services staff have indicated that they will work with the LGMA Elections Committee to revise forms and summarize changes as a supplement to the Elections Manual. The Ministry will revise the Candidate’s Guide and Voter’s Guide, and will also produce a separate guide to outline the campaign and campaign financing rules for elector organizations and campaign organizations.
In-Camera Meetings

There are several misconceptions about the so called in-camera meetings. This article is intended to offer clarifications and address commonly asked questions.

First, in this context “camera” means “chamber,” and “in-camera” means “in closed chambers.” It does not mean that cameras are used or that any pictures are taken. A new Board member once told me that, in response to a notice of an in-camera meeting, she wore her best outfit to the occasion, only to be disappointed when no cameras were there. Another individual once said: “I guess the reason they bring in the cameras is that they don’t want to miss anything.”

The concept of in-camera meetings conflicts with the general principle of transparency, under which most meetings and decision making processes of a public body must be fully open for the public to view. Citizens who miss an open meeting are entitled to review the meeting’s agenda, reports and minutes as public documents, under access to information procedures.

With transparency being a very significant overriding principle, most meetings must be open. However, there are times when the principle of transparency must be set aside in favor of the principle of risk management. On occasions when harm might be caused by making the proceedings public, a decision making body may need to meet behind closed doors.

The decision to meet behind closed doors should not be taken lightly. Many public bodies found themselves on the receiving end of complaints and challenges because they routinely designated contentious issues as in-camera without legitimate reasons for it. Protection of organizational interests or the privacy of individuals are legitimate reasons for the in-camera status, but potential embarrassment or discomfort for publicly elected officials are not.

The specific types of issues that justify designating an issue as in-camera are listed in the applicable legislation (e.g. the B.C. Community Charter Section 90 specifies when meetings may or must be closed to the public) and – in some instances – in the respective bylaws. Usually such issues involve the privacy of individuals, sensitive legal advice, contract negotiations, and others. Sometimes such issues are referred to as the three L’s: Labour, Land and Law; but these words are not the only ones that may apply.

Under the Community Charter Section 92, the process of designating an item as in-camera must be a public one, i.e.: A resolution is adopted at an open meeting to go into a closed meeting for designated purposes. Your Corporate Officer will draft the appropriate resolution to go into an in-camera meeting.

Sometimes items are erroneously given the in-camera status. An example is an amendment to a municipality’s HR (Human Resources) policy. Despite the fact that the word personnel may be invoked as the reason for the in-camera status, there may not be a justification for doing so, as the item relates to the generic policy and not to a specific individual.

What should be done if an item was mistakenly designated as in-camera? The person who discovers this error can make a motion (in the course of an in-camera meeting) that the item be transferred to the agenda of the next open meeting.

And what should be done if an item that requires confidentiality was mistakenly placed on the agenda of an open meeting? A motion can be made to delete such an item from the open meeting’s agenda and transfer it to the agenda of the next in-camera meeting.

If confidential items and non-confidential items need to be dealt with on the same day, there should be two separate meetings, one open and one closed, possibly scheduled back to back.

Minutes of a closed meeting should only contain the topics covered and any decisions that may have been made. Given the sensitivity of the issues at hand, such minutes should NOT contain a summary of the discussions that took place in a closed meeting.

Minutes of an in-camera meeting should be kept confidential, although the Council or the Board may later declassify them and make them public if the need for confidentiality no longer exists, e.g.: a contract has been awarded or a land purchase or sale has been concluded. In addition to (or instead of) declassifying the document, the Mayor or the Chair should make an announcement about the declassified decision at the start of the next open meeting.

Council or Board members must keep the proceedings of in-camera meetings confidential. Those who contemplate leaking confidential details must consider that leaks are highly damaging, in two ways. The first casualty of leaks is the organization’s interests or the privacy of individuals that were supposed to be protected by the confidentiality. The second casualty of leaks is the trust among the members, who may subsequently become guarded and less free and open during closed meetings, for fear of leaks. This is likely to constrain debates and may consequently damage the quality of the group’s decisions.

Eli Mina, M.Sc., P.R.P., is a Vancouver based consultant, meeting mentor and Registered Parliamentary. Since 1984, Eli has served his clients by chairing contentious meetings, demystifying and humanizing the rules of order, preventing and dealing with organizational dysfunctions, building better Boards and Councils, and advising on minute taking standards.

Eli is the author of “The Business Meetings Sourcebook,” “Mina’s Guide to Minute Taking” and other books on meetings, rules of order and shared decision-making. Eli can be reached at 604-730-0377 or by e-mail at eli@elimin.com. He has numerous articles posted on his web site is http://www.elimin.com.
Recycle that aluminum can and get more than your nickel’s worth

Did you know that recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to light a 100-watt bulb for 3½ hours?

Recycling aluminum saves 95% of the energy cost of processing new aluminum. Because the resources being processed are purer the melting temperature is reduced from 900°C to 600°C. Aluminum is by far the most efficient material to recycle. Recycling plastic saves 70% of the energy used in creating new plastic, and paper recycling saves 40% of the energy required to make a new product.

Recycling aluminum saves 95% of the energy cost of processing new aluminum.

Energy savings from recycling, and the consequent reduction in the production of greenhouse gases, can really add up. Take that single aluminum can and multiply it by the number of cans the Encorp system recycled in 2007 and it works out to enough energy saved to light a 100-watt bulb for every man, woman and child in BC for eight hours a day for about five weeks.

In 2007 the Encorp system recycled over 14,000 tonnes of plastic, saving about 180,000 barrels of oil.

You can also measure energy savings by the amount of crude oil saved. Each tonne of plastic recycled saves as much as 13 barrels of oil. In 2007 the Encorp system recycled over 14,000 tonnes of plastic, saving about 180,000 barrels of oil.

Recycling glass saves up to one barrel per tonne while recycling the paper from polycoat containers saves up to nine barrels per tonne. In 2007 Encorp recycled a total of more than 90,000 tonnes of aluminum, plastic, glass and paper, saving more than 278,000 barrels of oil.

The recycling Encorp does has a direct impact on BC’s air quality because the fewer barrels of oil we use, the less carbon dioxide we release into the atmosphere.

The reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in BC resulting from Encorp’s recycling program is about the same as taking nearly 17,000 cars off the road for a year.

Every single beverage container matters. You might think that one plastic bottle or aluminum can doesn’t make a difference or that someone else will pick it up and return it for you. But each year millions of containers end up in the landfill. And that’s a waste of resources.

Make the effort. At home, at work, at play, always return it. It’s worth it.

HOW ENCORP REDUCES ITS ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

Encorp and its industry partners are always seeking ways to realize greater overall energy and material savings by examining ways to use less energy collecting, transporting and recycling beverage containers.

Transporting empty containers is an energy intensive, and expensive business when weight, rather than the number of containers, is taken into consideration. To reduce the environmental and financial cost.

Encorp has undertaken a number of measures:

• Encorp, in partnership with its transportation contractors, has introduced 13 new, low-emission trucks for use in the Lower Mainland
• A new ‘mini’ megabag for plastic containers holds three times the volume of the previous bags but are still manageable for individuals to move

• By extending the box on five-tonne trucks, the transporters have increased their carrying capacity by 11%• To reduce transportation costs and environmental impacts Encorp utilizes “backhaul” transport wherever possible. Grocery delivery vehicles which typically return to the warehouse mostly empty are contracted to collect containers from depots on their return journey and take them to processing sites.

Measures like these have enabled Encorp to reduce individual transporter pickups at depots and beverage retailers by about 5%. Encorp is continually examining all facets of its operation looking for more ways to save energy.

Find out more at encorp.ca