

Your Issues

REPRESENTED IN VICTORIA

Barry Penner's MLA Report — Summer 2008



BC Budget lowers income taxes again

BC's *Balanced Budget 2008-09* reduces personal income taxes and other taxes by \$1.8 billion over three years, while offsetting foregone revenue with a tax on carbon emissions. This tax-shift is part of our climate change and economic strategy.

All carbon tax revenue will be returned to British Columbians through reductions to income and business taxes. The Auditor-General will be able to publicly report on the government's success in meeting this legal requirement.

The budget provides another



Barry and Premier Gordon Campbell announce BC's Climate Action Team in Victoria. Moments later, Barry introduced the *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act*, the first legislation of its kind in Canada.

provincial income tax cut, 2% this July and increasing to 5% next year. Since 2001, BC income taxes have been

reduced by more than 30%.

To help reduce BC's greenhouse gas emissions by one-third by 2020, the budget

includes a revenue-neutral carbon tax, provides \$40 million for a one-time \$100 Climate Action Dividend for every BC resident, and over \$1 billion for a broad range of climate action programs and tax incentives.

The purpose of the carbon tax is to encourage individuals and businesses to make more environmentally responsible choices, reducing their use of fossil fuels and related emissions.

The idea of tax-shifting has been talked about for many years. In BC, we want to reduce taxes on things that we

See **Lowest Taxes**, page 4

Groundbreaking agreement protects Chehalis heritage

The BC Government and Chehalis Indian Band have agreed to protect an area in the Chilliwack Forest District that contains sacred sites of the Chehalis people.

Using a regulation under the *Forest and Range Practices Act*, a 1,072-hectare management area on Kweh-Kwuch-Hum (Mount Woodside) in the District of Kent will be affected.

This follows a 15-month policy pilot project involving the BC Government and Chehalis to increase shared

knowledge of the location's spiritual areas, practices and forest management.

Kweh-Kwuch-Hum was declared a spiritually sensitive designated area by the Chehalis in July, 2006.

This is a good example of the BC Government's effort to establish a new relationship with BC's First Nations.

Another important initiative that is part of the "New Relationship" is the Wellness Village being built near Chilliwack Lake - see page 2 for details.



Kerry Grozier (Ministry of Forests and Range), Barry, RCMP Supt. Ernie MacAuley (ret.), Hon. Steven Point (Lt. Gov. of BC), Her Honour Mrs. Gwen Point, and Chehalis Chief Willie Charlie at the Kweh-Kwuch-Hum announcement along the Harrison River.

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Flood protection for Wilson Road

The frightening flooding that occurred along the Chilliwack River in November, 2006 was a reminder of how vulnerable we are to extreme or unusual weather events. The severity of that storm and the heavy rains caused a great deal of damage to many homes and properties.

In partnership with the Fraser Valley Regional District, the BC Government assisted home owners affected by the flood, first with the Disaster Financial Assistance program to address uninsurable losses, and then with urgent flood damage repairs to prevent further erosion of the river banks.

The second phase involved the reconstruction of the existing dike, built in 2003.

Now, work crews have completed Phase Three, the \$3.1 million extension of the Wilson Road dike. Thanks to funding provided by the Provincial Emergency Program (PEP), the dike has been completed to Provincial standards and has been tied into high ground to prevent outflanking.

The project, which received the approval of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, involved an extensive environmental assessment.



James Baxter/Photo
Barry and Fred Feistmann of Emil Anderson survey the \$3.1 million Wilson Road dike expansion. This important project will help protect this vulnerable neighbourhood from future flooding.

Included in the project were provisions for shade tree and fish habitat compensation.

I've worked closely with David Lamson, regional district director, to ensure the people living along Wilson Road have peace of mind and are protected from another flood.

Harrison gets grant for new Spirit Square

Harrison Hot Springs will build its own BC Spirit Square, thanks to a \$280,000 grant from the provincial government.

The Harrison Lake Plaza is a planned redevelopment of the Harrison Hot Springs beachfront and lagoon area. The site will be host to several annual events, including the World Championships of Sand Sculpture and the Harrison Festival of the Arts.

As we celebrate BC150, the 150th anniversary of the province, projects like this will allow residents and visitors to share our heritage together. This new Spirit Square will help create a greener, healthier more accessible and inclusive community. To learn more about BC150, visit www.bc150.ca.

Wellness Village offers hope to troubled youth



James Baxter/Photo
Barry and Premier Campbell listen as Chief Frank Malloway, chair of the Ch-ihl-kway-uhk Tribe Society, helps to announce the new Stehiyaq Healing and Wellness Centre. Chief Malloway was joined by his granddaughter, Ms. Janelle Johnson.

A traditional village site near Chilliwack will be transformed into a unique Aboriginal healing and wellness village, with \$3 million in funding and a transfer of land from the BC Government.

The Stehiyaq Healing and Wellness Village will be operated by the Ch-ihl-kway-uhk Tribe Society, and will consist of 28 healing beds to serve Aboriginal youth and families who are struggling with addictions or who are victims of abuse. Residents of the village will have ac-

cess to counselling, healing, recreation and program space.

In a unique partnership with First Nations, Provincial funding will renovate existing buildings at the site of a former youth correctional facility.

The village is scheduled to open in October 2008.

The BC Government has also provided more than \$1.5 million toward Abbotsford's new Spirit Bear Centre, a 10-bed transition house for young Aboriginal women in recovery from addictions.

\$3.2 million for sewer upgrades

Federal and provincial investment of almost \$3.2 million will support major improvements in sewer and wastewater treatment in the District of Kent and Harrison Hot Springs. Funds come from the Canada-BC Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF).

This investment will help ensure the residents of these two communities have a safe and reliable wastewater system.

More than 2,500 people in Kent and Harrison Hot Springs will benefit from an extension of the sewer main to the Agassiz wastewater treatment facility and an improved treatment process at that site.

Committed to our students

We've committed \$144 million over three years in increased funding for K-12 education. Per student funding will increase in each of the next three years, to the highest level ever.

StrongStart BC centres have opened at Watson and Little Mountain Schools in Chilliwack, and another one is set to open at Kent Elementary in Agassiz, to benefit families in their communities.

StrongStart BC centres use underutilized school space to offer a free drop-in program for parents or caregivers and their children.

Full University status granted to UCFV

Increased funding will help UFV meet region's training needs

The University College of the Fraser Valley has become a university, to be called the University of the Fraser Valley!

With amendments to BC's *University Act*, the new University of the Fraser Valley will focus on the training needs of the region and build on its provincial, national and international reputation.

UFV has pursued excellence in areas such as its School of Criminology and Criminal Justice; Trades and Technology Centre – Advanced Vehicle

Technology Program; Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies; and Aviation.

With a new university serving the Fraser Valley, students will be able to access degree programs closer to home.

As a former student of UFV myself, I know that students will often stay in the community if they can pursue their education goals, making campuses outside major centres vital to developing an educated workforce in less-populated areas.

UFV has an enrolment of 14,049 students, including 568 international students.

Since 2001, we have increased operating funding for the University of the Fraser Valley by almost \$14 million and invested \$31 million in capital projects. These include the new



Chilliwack-Sumas MLA John Les, Premier Campbell, UFV President Dr. Skip Bassford and Barry joined several of their colleagues in April to announce the bestowing of full University status to UCFV.

\$21.6-million Trades and Technology Centre in Chilliwack, which recently received \$660,913 from the BC Government for new equipment for the automotive, welding and heavy duty mechanic programs.

Evans Rd. Connector-Interchange project underway



Barry listens as Squiala Chief Sam Jimmie addresses an audience during last November's MRIF announcement at Chilliwack City Hall in November, 2007.

The BC Government is proud to be contributing to the \$49.5 million Evans Road Connector and Interchange project, the largest single capital project in Chilliwack's history.

Through the Canada-BC Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF), the Province and the Federal Government have together

provided a \$2 million grant for the project.

In addition, the provincial Ministry of Transportation has contributed \$4 million toward the interchange.

This project includes a north-south municipal road network connecting Evans Road in Sardis to Ashwell Road in Chilliwack via Evans Parkway, along with the construction of a Hwy. 1 flyover and partial interchange. Construction has already begun with completion planned for early 2010.

In my very first speech in the BC Legislature in 1996, I spoke about the need for a project like this to support the growth of our community.

Transit, cycling and pedestrian links will also be improved. In addition, this new arterial route will ease vehicle congestion and reduce greenhouse gases by reducing travel times and idling times.

BC will have lowest personal income taxes in Canada

Continued from page 1

like (such as income) and make up for the foregone revenue to pay for important services, like health care and education, by taxing things we don't like (such as emissions).

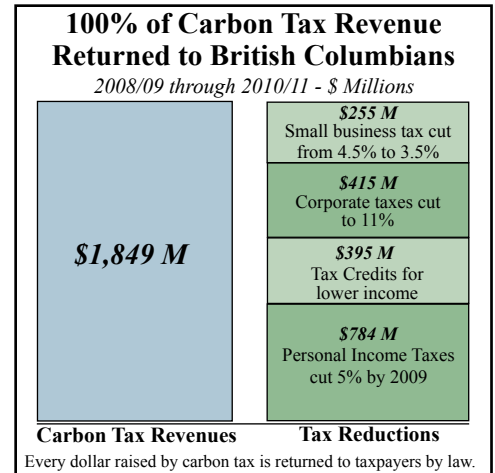
A new "Lower Income Climate Action Credit" will provide \$100 per adult and \$30 per child every year, increasing by five per cent in 2009.

To learn more about North Amer-

ica's most comprehensive climate change plan, the tax-shifting carbon tax and funding to help you pay for energy efficient upgrades, contact my office or visit the website:

www.livesmartbc.ca

With tax reductions since 2001, the changes in *Budget 2008* will give British Columbians, by 2009, the lowest personal taxes in Canada on incomes up to \$111,000.



PENNER POLL

WHAT DO YOU WANT YOUR GOVERNMENT TO DO?



1 Do you support a carefully planned program of gravel removal from the Fraser River to help reduce flood risks?

YES ___ NO ___

2 Did you know that, by law, every penny from BC's Carbon Tax will be returned to British Columbians through cuts to other taxes?

YES ___ NO ___

Name.....

Address.....

Postal Code

Phone

Fax

email.....

Comments

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Please return survey to:
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#101 - 7388 Vedder Rd., Chilliwack, BC, V2R 4E4,
or fax it to (604) 858-6254 www.barrypenner.com

To sign up for my FREE email news updates,
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Hope receives \$500,000 for upgrades to Memorial Park

Hope's well-used Memorial Park will be upgraded and improved, helping the community celebrate its rich history and commemorate BC150, British Columbia's 150th anniversary, thanks to a \$500,000 contribution from the BC Government's BC Spirit Squares program.

Memorial Park has long been considered a local jewel. This funding will revital-

ize the main social gathering place for families, groups and tourists in Hope and give residents an opportunity to celebrate BC150 and future community events.

The funding will create an events lawn, expand the tennis court for multi-sport use, create a water feature with a water recovery system, provide tour bus and plaza kiosks, and expand the existing Japanese garden.



Julie Brewer/Photo

Barry and Mayor Wilfried Viktor of Hope at the March event to announce a \$500,000 contribution from the BC Government for upgrades to Memorial Park and other improvements.