

UBCM DAILY

UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA MUNICIPALITIES

CONVENTION 2004
DAILY UPDATES



WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- 7:30 a.m. **Clinics:**
- Shoreline Stewardship Support for Local Government
 - North Shore Bylaw Enforcement Forum Pilot Project
 - Procuring a High Performance (Green) Building
 - School Board-Council Collaborations
- 8:30 a.m. Convention Opening and Annual Meeting
- 9:20 a.m. Resolutions
- 10:30 a.m. Address by FCM First Vice-President, Mayor Michael Coleman
- 2:00 p.m. Address by the Minister of CAWS, Hon. Murray Coell
- 3:00–5:00 p.m. **Cabinet Session: A Panel with Ministers of ...**
- Resources
 - Health, Education and Social Development
 - Community and Safety
 - Business and the Economy

DAILY #1

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2004

Best Practices in Sustainability and Accountability

AT YESTERDAY'S URBAN FORUM, delegates were treated to an overview of the projects initiated by communities that have been recognized for excellence in an aspect of the four pillars of sustainability: economic, social, environmental and cultural practices. The City of Prince George has been recognized by the Solicitor General and has received the Canadian Safety and Crime Prevention Award for their "Partners for Healthy Downtown" initiative. This initiative brought together the many stakeholders and social service providers involved in the downtown business area, recognizing that there was a need to deal with its social issues. **George Paul**, Administrator, Prince George, noted that there was a realization that money for enforcement may not change things and that it was unrealistic to believe that the problems could be eliminated. The PHD initiative sought to find consensus among the involved parties for techniques to manage social concerns. At a weekly meeting, parties grew to trust and support each other and develop shared solutions. As a result of these meetings, fourteen recommendations were presented to the city council. Prince George city councillor, **Murry Krause**, noted that the council could easily embrace these recommendations as the task force will be involved in their implementation, and will continue to have an ongoing stake in their success.

In the area of cultural best practices, **David Graham**, Director of Parks and Leisure Services of the City of Kelowna, informed delegates of the cultural initiatives his city has undertaken that have been recognized by the city being awarded as a 2004 Cultural Capital of Canada. He stated that a foundation in early policy development was essential, and that, by creating an arts development office in the 1990s, the economic value of arts in the community was recognized and financially supported. The Kelowna Arts Foundation was also created so that arts funding could be evaluated and distributed in a professional and fair manner. Partnering with entities with cultural objectives in the community is also essential, for example museums, symphonies,

theatres, and art galleries. Mr. Graham added that there is a need for outside expertise to develop a high product standard that also reflects the uniqueness of the community and can hold its own in the larger marketplace.

In recognition for its environmental best practices, the Deputy Engineer of North Vancouver City outlined the process that led his city to develop its own energy production and delivery system. He credited city council for bringing forward the idea and having the consistent vision to realize this plan. The Lonsdale Energy Corporation, wholly-owned by the City of North Vancouver, consists of a system of mini heating plants using natural gas boilers which are installed in new commercial and residential highrises in strategic locations. These mini-plants deliver heated water to highrises within the area, eliminating the use of inefficient electric baseboard heating systems. Funding for this infrastructure initiative was shared by the City, by Terasen Utility Services, who maintain and operate the system, and by green initiative funding from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

The last presenter was Mayor **Kathy Morse** of the District of Maple Ridge. Maple Ridge is the recipient of the Government Finance Officers' Association of the United States and Canada Award for its Annual Report. Mayor Morse stated that the award was based on Maple Ridge making a commitment to involve citizens in the Annual Report. This has been accomplished by basing the photographs in the report on faces of people within the community, which has given the community a sense of ownership of the report. ■

Organized Crime

Garry Bass, Assistant Commissioner, Officer in Charge of Criminal Operations, "E" Division, RCMP, provided a sobering overview of the entrenchment of organized crime into communities throughout British Columbia at a Tuesday afternoon session. Over the past two to three years the nature of organized crime has changed, and drug-related crime is now driving all other crime, he stated. He added that, although the organized crime groups were historically centred in Montreal, their impact has now spread not only across the country, but globally. Canada is now, on a per capita

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Troy DeSouza

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Kathryn Stuart
Bruce Jordan

Colin Stewart
Peter Johnson
Lui Carvello

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Cabinet Panel changes

As a result of last week's Cabinet appointments, there will be some changes to Wednesday's Cabinet panels:

- Hon. **Stan Hagen** (Children and Families); Hon. **Susan Brice** (Human Resources); and Hon. **Brenda Locke** (Mental Health and Addiction Services) will be on the Health Panel.
- Hon. **Patrick Wong** (Immigration and Multiculturalism) will join the Community Safety Panel.
- Hon. **Sandy Santori** (Resort Development) will not be able to participate.

Unfortunately, Hon. **Sindi Hawkins**, who had wished to attend the convention, will be unable to do so.

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basis, near the top as a home to the most sophisticated crime organizations in the world. Not only do these groups have branches in British Columbia, the province is also the North American gateway for Asian heroin, which is distributed from the west coast to the rest of Canada and into the Eastern Seaboard of the United States.

The marijuana that is produced in BC is also primarily going out of the country. Mid-sized dealers are taking BC-produced marijuana and trading it for cocaine across the border. This drug-trade, in Assistant Commissioner Bass' opinion, is driving crime in BC. There are an estimated 8,000 to 20,000 marijuana grow operations in the Lower Mainland, and they are run by organized crime groups, he stated. These grow ops are now associated with violent crimes. As marijuana has been viewed as a soft drug, the issues around grow ops were seen to have more to do with such issues as the theft of hydro power and children living in grow op homes. Now, grow ops are associated with violent crimes, as gangs are staging armed raids on rival growers. There is an estimated \$7.5 billion dollars generated by these grow ops in BC, although Assistant Commissioner Bass believes it could be up to \$20 billion. This money is funding a broad range of other criminal activities including the importation of other drugs and trafficking. The Assistant Commissioner challenged the popular view that decriminalizing marijuana would solve the criminal problem. He noted that alcohol and cigarette smuggling was a huge problem, even though both are legal.

Other issues involve the phenomenal costs of mounting police investigations into these criminal organizations, and the lack of resources available to enforce the law when it comes to mid-level drug dealers. The Assistant Commissioner noted that organized crime concentrated on low risk and high gain crime which includes grow ops, major fraud, prostitution, gaming, credit card fraud, telemarketing, street and mid-level drug trafficking, and money laundering.

There is no war on drugs, the Assistant Commissioner concluded. In fact, he added, there is more lack of action on drug enforcement issues than there has ever been. The police can assess the level of crime within its communities, but there is a need to seek some form of public consensus to decide what level of crime society is willing to tolerate, he concluded. ■

Forming a Traffic Safety Commission

PANELISTS FROM THE CAPITAL Regional District's Traffic Safety Commission outlined the Commission's mandate for the benefit of delegates who may be considering applying for seed funding available from the UBCM for the establishment of traffic safety commissions in their regions. At this Tuesday morning clinic, Commission members stated that this initiative differed from other traffic advisory committees. The Commission has the mandate to work independently and is funded with a budget to initiate projects. It also has the ability to undertake independent research and evaluate projects to ensure that they are based on best practices. Projects initiated cover not only engineering solutions, but are also intended to be effective on educational and enforcement levels.

Another component of the Commission's mandate is to involve partners who contribute either funding, expertise, in-kind services or reduced costs for goods and services. The panelists stated that their commission's goal was to have a \$2 partnering contribution for every \$1 of commission funding. Initiatives that have been undertaken include the production of a "Safer Driving for Seniors" audio CD, the "BikeSafe" project to increase bike helmet usage, and the Christmas Counter Attack programme. Further information can be obtained at the Commission's website: www.traffic-safety.ca. If you would like to obtain copies of the Safer Driving for Seniors CD for your community you can order them through ICBC who have a booth at this convention. ■

Welcome Reception in Kelowna's Cultural District

Last evening's welcoming reception for UBCM delegates was held in the revitalized industrial area which has won Kelowna a Cultural Capital of Canada award for 2004. This area was once the centre of Kelowna's fruit packing industry and the Laurel Packinghouse was established in 1917 as a shipping house for orchard produce. It is now the only original packing house left standing in the city, and is home to the Orchard Museum and the Wine Museum. The top floor has been developed into 16 offices.

The Rotary Centre for the Arts was added in 2002, and is a multipurpose venue which includes studio spaces, rehearsal space and a theatre. The third venue for last night's reception was the Kelowna Art Gallery. Surrounding these buildings are many lovely artistic installations, including the Artwalk, which has a pergola with grape vines, and the "Fruit Stand" representing the history of the fruit packing industry with fruit sculptures and tile mosaics of fruit box labels.

This six block area is also the location of the Kasugai Japanese style gardens, the community theatre, the library and the Kelowna and Okanagan Military Museums. ■

Harvesting Opportunities through "Granting" Strategies

AT THE TUESDAY MORNING FORUM for mid-sized communities (5,000 – 20,000 population), delegates were given an overview of the strategies that can help communities succeed in "harvesting" grant monies that are available from other governments. Mayor **Wayne Dahlen** of Dawson Creek and **Brian Carruthers**, acting CAO of Williams Lake, both provided tips on producing successful grant applications. Mayor Dahlen stressed the need to thoroughly do the homework required to produce a comprehensive application that succinctly identifies the problem and shows how the funding will solve that problem. He emphasized the need to be tenacious in dealing with the funding agency, to show community support by lining up community partners, enlist the support of the MLA and MP, and added that Dawson Creek also employed a public relations firm that has good government contacts to lobby on their behalf. Brian Carruthers identified keys to success that included applying for funding for projects that were identified in one's municipal planning strategies and that also tie into the senior governments' own initiatives. He stated that applicants should outline how the project will support the goals and objectives of the other orders of government as well as those of the community, and to be sure to "lobby, lobby, lobby."

Ken Pleasance, a former Senior Infrastructure Engineer, gave delegates advice for ensuring that their infrastructure grant applications had the greatest opportunity for success. Mr. Pleasance was part of a team of five engineers assigned to evaluate local government applications for the Canada-BC Infrastructure Works Program, and stated that a community wanted their application to "rise like cream to the top of the pile." "You do this by understanding the process, and working within it," he stated. "Demonstrate the need for provincial and/or federal government assistance, but ensure that the project fits in with their criteria and meets the program's priorities," he advised. Other strategies for success include doing the planning in advance and having the application "shelf-ready" so that it is ready to go when the grant program is announced. Applications are subject to a financial and engineering review that can only be completed if all the required information is provided, so the application must be thorough and complete, but should provide only the necessary information.

For infrastructure grants, quality of environment issues carry the most weight; "public health and environmental issues have the highest ranking," he advised. He added that it was necessary to show what solutions had been considered for the problem, and to identify the preferred option. If this option was not the least expensive, it is prudent to provide a sound rationale for why it was chosen, he commented. Also including some professional expertise supporting the project is helpful, and show how this project ties into other initiatives. Mr. Pleasance observed that it was a difficult process as there are so many applicants and so little funding available. ■

BC Hydro Reception Hours

UBCM wish to clarify the BC Hydro Reception hours are Wednesday, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. (not 8:30 p.m. as previously published).