

## SUBJECT LINE

### **June 26<sup>th</sup> MLA Reception**

## BULLETIN TEXT

Attention Library Board Chairs:

BCLTA, with the support of ABCPLD and the Library Federations, is organizing a series of province-wide Library Receptions to honour MLAs and acknowledge the provincial contribution to public libraries. The receptions will be held on **June 26** at libraries across BC, and we are anticipating significant media coverage.

This event is intended both to congratulate new and returning MLAs on their election to the Legislature and to ensure that they are aware of the importance of provincial funding to BC's public libraries. We want to invite local MLAs into our libraries; show them the kinds of programs, services and resources on offer; and explain where provincial funding goes and what it allows us to do.

In these difficult economic times, many of you will have heard rumours of impending budget cuts\* at the provincial level. BCLTA feels it is vitally important that library boards take immediate action to communicate the significance of provincial funding and the return on investment we provide for this funding – *before budget deliberations begin*. The provincial contribution may represent only about 10% of library revenues, but it is a critical 10% that enables libraries to provide province-wide services such as BC OneCard, AskAway electronic reference, the BC Summer Reading Club, Books for Babies, etc. and to work together collaboratively to seek operational and service efficiencies that help to even the playing field for small and large libraries across the province (e.g., library federations, SITKA, group database licensing, etc.). Without this provincial funding, we face the prospect of losing core services at a time when people need them most and we could end up in a situation where British Columbians experience drastically different levels of library service depending on their postal code. Local governments are unlikely to pick up the provincial tab, so this is essentially a proactive event intended to express sincere appreciation for provincial grants and to help us protect them rather than having to scramble to retrieve them if they are lost.

In addition to MLAs and key library supporters, local elected representatives should be encouraged to attend the receptions as well. Although BCLTA, BCLA, and ABCPLD hold an annual reception at the UBCM Convention to officially thank mayors, councillors and regional district chairs and directors for the local government contribution to libraries, it is nevertheless important that we make sure our local elected understand the importance of that provincial 10%.

Despite the urgency of the situation, the reception itself should be upbeat and celebratory in tone. We would like board chairs to introduce MLAs and other honoured guests and to say a few words of thanks for provincial support, and we would encourage you to invite library supporters and stakeholders who will help convey the central role the library plays in your community. Offer snacks and refreshments and make this both an informative and an enjoyable event for all. You may also consider presenting your MLA with a gift such as a CD, DVD, or book donated to the library collection on his or her behalf.

Several resources have been prepared to assist you and your staff in organizing and planning your reception and these are available for download on the "June Library Reception" page of the BCLTA website at [www.bclta.org/mlarec.html](http://www.bclta.org/mlarec.html).

- Ideas for Planning Your Reception
- Template Telephone Script for Contacting Local MLA
- Template Invitation Letter to Local MLA
- Template Invitation Letter to Mayor and Council/Chair and Board
- Electoral Area Maps
- Election Results/Elected MLAs
- Press Release for Contacting Local Media
- Press Release Sent to Major Media Outlets by BCLTA
- Fact Sheet on Provincial Library Funding
- List of Key Provincially-funded Programs/Services
- ALA Advocating in a Tough Economy Toolkit
- Key Correspondence on the Importance of Maintaining Library Funding
- Key News Articles on Potential Cuts and Importance of Libraries in Tough Economic Times

As well, a very useful **Q&A document** is attached to this email and should help clear up any of your lingering questions about the reception. Please have a look at this attachment and make use of the resources available on the BCLTA website – and don't hesitate to contact your regional BCLTA board representative or BCLTA staff person if you have any questions. We are counting on your support and participation – please help us to make this a truly province-wide event.

Photos and event summaries are most welcome and can be submitted to [execdirector@bclta.org](mailto:execdirector@bclta.org) after June 26.

*\* Campbell must halt disastrous cut plans, May 26, 2009, Times Colonist, Dave Obee*  
[www.timescolonist.com/Obee+column+Premier+Gordon+Campbell+must+halt+disastrous+plans/1631064/story.html](http://www.timescolonist.com/Obee+column+Premier+Gordon+Campbell+must+halt+disastrous+plans/1631064/story.html)