News Release
For Immediate Release

Prince Rupert, May 27th, 2009 - An assembly of BC's business leaders from across the province voted in favor of a policy recommendation submitted by the Fort St. John & District Chamber of Commerce and supported by the Chambers of Commerce from Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson and Tumbler Ridge.

Gathered in Prince Rupert for the 57th Annual General Meeting and Conference of the BC Chamber of Commerce, business delegates expressed their concerns for the literacy issues in the province.

Literacy issues have been raised in several sectors of our province and in particular the Fort St. John and area by a survey done by Ipsos Reid in 2007. This study surveyed companies in Fort St. John and area. Several of these companies identified literacy as being a large contributor to absenteeism, accidents in the workplace and reduced job performance and more. Another study conducted by the Deputy Chief Economists for the Toronto Dominion Bank shows that a 1% increase in literacy will have an economic payoff to Canada of close to $80 billion.

The Fort St. John & District Chamber of Commerce recommends that the Provincial Government

a) create a provincial literacy champion to ensure that the provincial goals of having the highest literacy levels in British Columbia are met;
b) call for a comprehensive British Columbian literacy strategy and with the resources necessary to make a difference;
c) increase funding levels to community literacy initiatives to ensure long term sustainability for these plans.

"It is our hope that with the use of a provincial literacy champion the government will demonstrate how these recommendations will be achieved," said Chamber President Russ Beerling. "And that the resulting legislation will recognize our province as a solid literacy foundation."

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