



For Immediate Release

Date: June 23, 2009

Essential funding builds stronger communities: BC library systems applaud provincial support with MLAs at local library receptions

Vancouver: Starting on June 23, public library systems across British Columbia will engage with new and re-elected MLAs to recognize the successful partnership between the province and local Library Boards. The impressive list of provincially funded initiatives includes:

- **OneCard:** no matter where you live or work in the province, OneCard provides access to all public library systems in British Columbia
- **AskAway:** for anyone with a question, BC libraries can provide an answer. This online service is available free to the public throughout the province.
- **BC Summer Reading Club:** children can maintain or enhance their literacy skills at all BC public libraries. The joys and benefits of reading last a lifetime.
- **Books for Babies:** the journey of lifelong learning begins at birth. All babies and their caregivers receive a book to share and to enjoy together.
- **Online magazine, journal and newspaper subscriptions:** hundreds of online publications are packaged in convenient databases. The information is available online, anytime, with the click of a mouse. A provincial licence for these databases provides each public library system with equal access to the information.

"Provincial funding is critical to our success," says Langley Mayor Peter Fassbender, Chair of the Fraser Valley Regional Library Board. "Our catchment area includes 15 communities. We rely on the support of local municipalities, and provincial grants, to cover such a large geographic area. I applaud the provincial government for providing essential support to public libraries. We benefit locally, in the Fraser Valley, and we share in the wealth of library resources available to every BC resident."

The provincial government has traditionally provided 10% of public library funds through an annual grant process. In the fiscal year 2008/2009, \$17.7 million supported innovative and collaborative services that could not and would not be funded at the municipal level. "The OneCard is a popular, convenient, and cost-effective way to share resources across British Columbia," says Loring Bohach, Vice-Chair of the Vancouver Public Library Board. "The public receives similar benefits from our shared collection of databases, our AskAway Service and our programs for children. Together, we can deliver more library services than any individual municipality could offer or afford."

"Without provincial support, the quality of local library service you receive could depend on where you live," says Andy Ackerman, President of the British Columbia Library Trustees Association and Fort St. John Public Library Board Trustee. "Rural, economically challenged communities are particularly at risk if provincial funding is reduced. Most local governments are unable to increase funding to their local

libraries, which adds to the importance of provincial funding. All BC residents should receive equitable access to library service, regardless of their postal code.”

MLA Receptions will be held at local libraries throughout the summer, starting with events in Terrace, Kelowna and Invermere this week.

For more information, contact:

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