



John Horgan MLA Juan de Fuca

Community Report JANUARY 2010

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Tough year ahead for British Columbians

A new year and a new decade is a great time for a fresh start, a clean slate. The troubles of yesterday replaced with the opportunities of tomorrow. We have much to look forward to in the year ahead. Next month, a significant focus will of course be the winter Olympic Games. Love them or hate them, the games will garner attention and be a source of pride in the achievement of the human spirit.

I will try to keep my thoughts towards the positive, but the reality is that this coming year will bring considerable strife to many in our area. With the truth of the provincial financial situation, communities are bracing themselves for significant and continued cutbacks.

Revenue shortfalls not predicted in the pre-election budget have lead the BC Liberals to announce a series of new tax measures and funding cuts to keep the budget deficit under \$3 billion.

Everyone is feeling the effects of cutbacks. Our health system has been hit particularly hard and, in this region alone,

the Vancouver Island Health Authority is facing a \$45 million dollar shortfall. They'll try and recoup some of that money by capping surgeries, cutting jobs and increasing fees.

The province is also cutting back its health budget and they've decided to target seniors as a source of additional revenue, many who are barely making ends meet right now. Beginning January 1, Health Minister Kevin Falcon started taking \$54 million out of the pockets of seniors in residential care, most who have low to modest incomes. This revenue grab will leave many patients without the means to pay for prescriptions, personal affects, and basic needs while they receive the lowest standard of care in the nation.

Why is this happening? A new rate structure came into effect on New Years Day that increased fees for 75% of seniors in residential care. A senior whose before-tax income is \$22,000 will be required to pay close to an additional \$2,000 – or approximately 10% of net income –

Health Minister Kevin Falcon started taking \$54 million out of the pockets of seniors in residential care

to be in a residential care facility. This is unacceptable. And it's only the latest in a series of policy decisions that has left seniors feeling vulnerable and alone.

Finally, if you think your MSP premiums have gone up you are correct. Starting this month premiums for an individual will go up three bucks, a family of four will pay another eight dollars. Expect a similar increase next January as well. I've heard from some seniors and their family members from across the region about the impact of these fee increases. If you or a family member is experiencing hardship due to these increased fees, please contact my community office and share your story.

Community Office

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COMMUNITY EVENTS

January 15—17 Pacific Cup Hockey Tournament. Canada's largest Adult Recreational hockey tournament takes place at both JdF Arena and Bear Mountain Arena. Free.

January 19 Coast Capital Free swim at the Juan de Fuca pool from 7:30 – 8:30 pm.

January 21 Healthy Eating for Adults. Free seminar hosted by Thrifty Foods, the University of Victoria and Active Communities. Have high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes? Want to prevent these issues? Seminar will highlight which foods to choose. 6:30–8 pm, SEAPARC Leisure Centre, 2168 Phillips Rd. Space limited so register soon: 250-642-8000.

January 23 Open Mic Night Coffee House at Metchosin Community House. Everyone is welcome to play or just listen at this free event. Bring your guitar, banjo, fiddle or whatever instrument you fancy if you want to play a set or join in with others. Performers are asked to bring a goodie plate for the concession. Donations going to Wild Arc. 7 – 9 pm at 4430 Happy Valley Road. Contact Kristin if you want more info at kristin.oreilly@gmail.com

January 23 Mill Hill Regional Park Owl Prowl (Guided Night Walk). Join CRD Parks interpreter; with a lot of patience and a little luck, you may see an owl! If not, you'll have fun trying. Wear warm clothing; meet at information kiosk in parking lot off Atkins Ave. No fee but pre-registration required by Fri., Jan 22 as space is limited. Call 250-478-3344. 7 to 8:30 pm. Suitable for ages 7 and over.

John in the House: on care facilities, a new school, and HST

On November 26, the last day of the 2009 Legislative Session, John rose in the House to speak to some important local issues. Here are some of the highlights:

On Replacement of School:

It's a good business plan. It's replacing a 60 year-old building. Talk about carbon footprints. The seismic moneys approved are \$25 million. The government has approved \$25 million to fix a 60 year-old building. Well, the business plan will put a brand new school in a brand new location for \$10 million more. New school. New facility. Carbon footprint greatly reduced. Good program. Belmont replacement, Hon Speaker – put that on your list. I think it's something I might get in my stocking for Christmas.

On a Primary Care facility in Sooke:

If you can bring health care providers together, multidisciplinary projects work. It gets your communities healthier. If there ever was a



community ready for a primary care facility, it would be Sooke. It's just ripe for opportunity, and I'm enthusiastic that the new Minister of Health is getting up on his files, and he has the assistance of the able former Minister of Health to direct him to the programs that he should be supporting in places like Sooke.

On Western Forest Products Land:

I want to talk about the sense of disappointment that I hear when I'm in my community in Langford, in Highlands, in Sooke, and that is the lack of support from the provincial government to address the challenges that our communities now face

because of the release of these private lands to Western Forest Products. I'm hopeful that Western Forest Products will recognize that this is an opportunity for them to demonstrate good corporate citizenry and come to the community with a plan to ensure that we save places like Sandcut Beach, that we can participate in land use planning for the benefit of all the people in our region.

On the Harmonized Sales Tax:

The amount that consumers will fork out as a result of the HST. Do I have any guesses from my colleagues sitting here? It's \$1.9 billion. During the election campaign – not on the radar. "We're not going to do it. We will not harmonize the sales tax," and here we are in November with my modest comments on the throne speech, a tax shift of \$1.9 billion. Tourism jobs that will be lost to the HST. Do we have any guesses on the other side? Ten thousand jobs potentially lost in the tourism sector; 12,000 in the restaurant industry.

What will the HST cost schools in British Columbia in the first year of implementation? Any guesses? Forty million. Forty million dollars will have to be found by school districts right across British Columbia just to implement the HST – unbelievable.



↑ John hosted his Community Office Christmas Open House in December and many enjoyed this annual gathering. Thanks to people's generosity, we were able to donate 10 bags of food to the local food bank.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

January 27 Pajama Storytime.

Wear your pjs and cuddle up with your favourite stuffy for some bedtime stories. 6:30 – 7 pm at the Juan de Fuca Library.

January 28 Crystal Meth Prevention Society Free Pre- sentation for Families.

Spencer Middle School, 1026 Goldstream Ave, at 7 pm. Come out and learn about this highly addictive drug. Info: 250 388 6384, mark@crystalmethbc.ca or www.crystalmethbc.ca

January 29—Febru- ary 7 Victoria Inter- national Film Festival.

Love movies? This festival is for you. Dozens of films from around the world shown at a variety of venues. Info: victoriafilmfestival.com

February 6 Sooke Philharmonic Chamber Players

present Mozart in Vienna at the Sooke Community Theatre, 6218 Sooke Road, from 6 - 8 pm. Info: sookephil.ca

February 8 Be My Val- entine.

Come decked out in Valentine's Day colours to hear stories, rhymes and songs. Create a fancy valentine for someone special. For ages 3-5 from 10:30 – 11:30 am at the Juan de Fuca Library.

Tuesdays January 12— March 3 Drop- in Storytimes

for babies and caregivers. 10:30 – 11 am at the Juan de Fuca Branch.

Every Tuesday Yoga at 6:30 pm

at the Shirley Community Hall, 2795 Sheringham Pt. Road. \$10.00 drop in fee, please bring your own mat and blanket