

Ministry of  
Community and Rural Development

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2008/09  
Annual Service Plan Report

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**Ministry of Community and Rural Development**

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## Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



As the newly-appointed Minister of Community and Rural Development, I am pleased to submit the Ministry's *Annual Service Plan Report* for 2008/09.

The sharp economic downturn that emerged in the fall of 2008 has required a quick and decisive response across government. This report highlights some of the measures the Ministry of Community and Rural Development has taken to mitigate the effects of the economic downturn while still meeting the goals and objectives we identified in our original *Service Plan*.

This Ministry has taken immediate action to ensure that local governments throughout the province have the resources and tools they need to withstand the economic challenges and prepare for a more prosperous and stable future. We have moved quickly to accelerate financial support, build vital infrastructure, maintain stability and keep British Columbians working.

Through partnerships with local and federal governments, we have helped create a foundation for resilience and prosperity and increased the impact of our financial support with matched, multi-level funding, allowing smaller communities in particular to address large-scale priorities. By working together through the Building Canada Fund – Communities Component, we have approved 42 infrastructure projects to date, with equal financial support from local governments, the Province, and the federal government.

In addition, with Towns for Tomorrow, LocalMotion, B.C. Spirit Squares, Trees for Tomorrow, as well as Infrastructure Planning Grants and initiatives like the RuralBC Secretariat, the Strategic Community Investment Fund and the Community Development Trust, this Ministry has continued to help B.C.'s 187 local governments build strong, adaptable economies over the past year.

Supporting communities to achieve their visions for the future, creating greener communities, bridging the rural-urban divide and helping forestry-dependent communities find ways to emerge from this downturn with a renewed vision and focus remain priorities for this Ministry.

Since 2001, the Province has provided an additional \$2 billion to B.C. communities to meet local and regional infrastructure needs, create jobs, build sustainable communities, as well as target significant support to rural communities.

The *Ministry of Community and Rural Development 2008/09 Annual Service Plan Report* compares the actual results to the expected results identified in the Ministry's *2008/09 – 2010/11 Service Plan*. I am accountable for those results as reported.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Bennett', with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the signature.

Honourable Bill Bennett  
Minister of Community and Rural Development

July 27, 2009

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# Highlights of the Year

In 2008/09, the [Ministry of Community and Rural Development](#) made unprecedented financial and strategic investments in B.C. communities. It focused its programs on the development of strong and resilient communities, continuous monitoring, and effective responses to communities in need. In the fall of 2008, with the emergence of the economic downturn, the Ministry moved quickly to accelerate financial support to further build community infrastructure, maintain stability and keep British Columbians working through the downturn. This section highlights some of the Ministry's accomplishments over the past year.

## Accelerated Infrastructure and other Funding Support

Residents of each of B.C.'s 187 local governments benefitted from infrastructure funding or other grants that helped create jobs, build stronger, more sustainable communities and support rural communities. Investments included:

- [Towns for Tomorrow](#): 110 projects in communities across B.C. were approved for \$37 million in federal and provincial funding, supporting the infrastructure needs of B.C.'s smaller communities with populations under 15,000. Since the project's inception in 2007, 154 projects have been funded.
- Canada and B.C. signed the [Building Canada Fund – Communities Component Agreement](#), part of the \$2.2 billion Building Canada Framework Agreement of 2007. Under the agreement, the provincial and federal governments are each allocating \$136 million to support a broad range of local government infrastructure projects in communities with populations of fewer than 100,000 people. To date, 42 projects have been approved, providing approximately \$58 million in provincial funding.
- [LocalMotion](#): 51 projects were approved for nearly \$11 million in federal and provincial funding to help build cycling and pedestrian infrastructure. Since the start of the program in 2007, 122 projects have been funded through LocalMotion.
- [Trees for Tomorrow](#): 129 projects were approved for \$3 million in provincial funding from the first round of the program, supporting the planting of trees and the implementation of other energy-saving initiatives across British Columbia.
- [Spirit Squares](#): this past year, an additional eight communities were approved to develop common gathering places to celebrate B.C.'s 150th anniversary and many festivities yet to come. The Ministry provided nearly \$20 million to fund over 60 Spirit Square projects across the province since the start of the program.



- [Infrastructure Planning Grants](#): municipalities and regional districts received over \$660,000 in funding for 69 projects to assist with plans to design, develop and manage sustainable infrastructure.
- Strategic Community Investment Fund: the Province provided the first \$133 million instalment from this restructuring of provincial grant programs, providing communities more funding sooner, giving them greater certainty and improved financial flexibility. The investment included:
  - \$63 million from the Traffic Fine Revenue Sharing Program, helping municipalities enhance policing and community-based public safety programs. Since its expansion in 2004, B.C.'s Traffic Fine Revenue Sharing program has put an additional \$263 million into local government coffers to improve public safety and policing.
  - \$70 million from Small Community and Regional District Grants, supporting local governments to provide services in areas with smaller tax bases. This year's payment fulfils the Province's commitment to double these grants over four years.

### Supporting Rural Communities and Regions

In the fall of 2008, the Ministry established the [RuralBC Secretariat](#) as a major step in the government's efforts to better align its services and resources with the needs of rural British Columbia.



*Dawson Creek, population 11,420, is just one of the rural and remote communities the RuralBC Secretariat was created to assist.*

The RuralBC Secretariat was established to identify and implement new strategies to support healthy and sustainable rural communities and strong regional economies. The RuralBC Secretariat provides rural communities with one-window access to government services. Communities connect to these services through a network of regional RuralBC Secretariat offices, or by visiting the [RuralBC website](#). The Secretariat works directly with communities to create tailored responses to their needs, and engages partners at all levels of government and in the private and non-profit sectors to find solutions to rural challenges.

In the spring of 2008, the \$129 million [Community Development Trust](#) was established to create opportunities for forest workers, their families and their communities. Since that time, the Community Development Trust has:

- Approved close to 1,700 applications for funding to help older forest workers transition to retirement or other occupations and, where possible, to create opportunities in forestry for more junior workers.

- Approved 1,643 applications for tuition assistance funding to help workers retrain or upgrade their existing skills, achieving an application turnaround time of only two weeks.
- Together with the Ministry of Forests and Range, facilitated over 90 job opportunity projects throughout B.C., creating short-term employment for over 800 unemployed forest workers.
- Simplified access to its services by streamlining program application forms, establishing a toll-free telephone information line, and partnering with federal and local governments as well as non-profit service providers.



The Ministry implemented the [Resort Municipality Initiative](#), which transfers a portion of the Hotel Room Tax to participating resort communities, allowing them to further invest in their local infrastructure and amenities in support of tourism development. In 2008/09, 13 communities shared approximately \$10 million under this initiative.

The Ministry has also continued to coordinate the work of more than 53 provincial, federal, and local organizations to fight the pine beetle infestation and to minimize impacts on local communities.

### **Supporting Green Communities**

In 2008/09, the Ministry put forward the *Local Government (Green Communities) Statutes Amendment Act 2008* to support local governments in creating greener, more sustainable communities.

The Ministry implemented the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program to offset 100 per cent of the carbon tax local governments pay for fossil fuel purchases and to further encourage local governments to sign the [B.C. Climate Action Charter](#). To date, 174 local governments, and the Islands Trust, have signed the charter and committed to the goal of becoming carbon neutral in their corporate operations by 2012. In 2008/09, communities shared \$1 million through this program.

The Ministry also launched [Trees for Tomorrow](#), a five-year, \$13 million initiative to plant four million trees in schoolyards, hospital grounds, civic parks and other public spaces in British Columbia.

### **Ensuring a Competitive and Fair Property Assessment System**

Late last year, the Ministry drafted temporary amendments to the *Assessment Act* to maintain certainty and confidence in the property assessment system. For market-valued properties (e.g.

residential homes), BC Assessment produced two assessed values: one established as of July 1, 2007 and another as of July 1, 2008. The 2009 assessment rate was set at the lower of the two values. Properties valued by regulation were assessed using the same regulated rates that were used for the 2008 assessment roll.

Another amendment to the *Assessment Act* created a new supportive housing assessment class to provide property tax relief for non-profit organizations that help the homeless, those at risk of homelessness and those with mental illnesses or addictions.

### **Strengthening Local Governance**

The Ministry encourages local governments to be open, effective and accountable to their citizens. The successful election of 159 mayors, 862 councillors and 162 regional district directors in local government elections held in November 2008 illustrates the leadership role local governments play in their communities and the importance of a clear modern legislative framework for local governments. That framework was enhanced by amendments to local government election provisions put forward in the *Local Government Statutes Amendment Act, 2008*.

The Ministry worked with local officials to create a new form of local government in the Northern Rockies. The new Northern Rockies Regional Municipality combines the Town of Fort Nelson with the area's regional district. This flexible solution provides the community with the opportunity to capitalize on larger geographic and population bases and recognizes the unique needs of the area. Amendments providing explicit authority to customize the structure of new or restructured local governments were also legislated in spring 2008.

## Purpose of Ministry

The purpose of the Ministry of Community and Rural Development is to equip communities across British Columbia to build strong, competitive local and regional economies that support sustainable, socially-responsible communities. The Ministry supports communities in reaching their full potential by providing a broad range of tools and resources. These include:

- A legislative framework enabling local governments to govern effectively and be accountable to their citizens.
- Tools that foster effective government structures, services, land-use planning and engagement in consultation with municipalities, regional districts and First Nations to achieve local goals.
- Programs, funding and strategic support that enable local communities to grow economically, construct needed infrastructure, improve air and water quality and enhance policing and community safety.
- A single point-of-contact for rural communities to access the resources, advice and funding they need to help them diversify their economies, overcome barriers to development and realize their full economic potential.
- Investment in local and regional infrastructure that is flexible in meeting the priorities of urban and rural communities.
- Assistance for forest workers and their families by creating opportunities for transition to retirement, retraining and temporary employment that supports their local economies.
- Leadership and coordination of the provincial government's response to the social, economic and environmental effects of the mountain pine beetle epidemic.



The Ministry has realigned its services and supports for rural communities to make them more effective and easier to access. The relationship between urban and rural B.C. is one of inter-dependence and the Ministry aims to facilitate and strengthen that relationship. Likewise, the Ministry works to build and strengthen other ties, such as the relationship between local governments, First Nations, federal and provincial bodies, the private sector, community groups and Regional Development Trusts, which include: [Northern Development Initiative Trust](#), [Island Coastal Economic Trust](#) and [Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust](#).

The Ministry is committed to ensuring transparent, flexible, equitable and fair property assessment and review services. This is achieved by supporting policy development and the Province's property assessment processes to ensure the system is competitive and affordable while enhancing economic growth for B.C. property owners.

The Ministry governs three Crown corporations: the [Columbia Basin Trust](#), the [Nechako-Kitamaat Development Fund Society](#) and the [BC Assessment Authority](#). Further, it administers the annual [Property Assessment Review Panel](#) program across the province and is responsible for the [Property Assessment Appeal Board](#), the [Islands Trust Fund Board](#) and the [Board of Examiners](#).

## Strategic Context

British Columbia has tremendous human and natural resources. With 187 local governments, all with their own circumstances, needs and aspirations, it is also a place of great diversity. The Ministry's work to support our communities in their development takes place in a broader context of the external economic, social and political environment. This section describes how external factors – both challenges and opportunities – have influenced community development throughout the province in 2008/09.

Economically, 2008/09 can be divided into two distinct phases. For six years prior to late summer 2008, the B.C. economy had continued on a steady growth trajectory.<sup>1</sup> That period of growth allowed many communities the opportunity to enhance and expand their services to citizens. However, by late summer 2008, both global demand for and the price of energy and mineral exports, which had been driving our economic growth that year, began to slump and then fell sharply as the global financial crisis struck in September. By the end of 2008, the provincial economy had contracted by 0.3 per cent over the previous year,<sup>2</sup> and by March 2009 the provincial unemployment rate had increased to 7.4 per cent, from 4.4 per cent a year before.<sup>3</sup>

Property taxes collected by local governments make up the majority of the revenue needed to pay for services such as the construction and maintenance of local roads, water and sewer services, policing, firefighting and libraries. As the economy slows, property values decrease and businesses and industry become reluctant to expand, have more difficulty paying the assessed tax rates and, in some cases, close down altogether.

Rural communities in particular have felt the impact of the economic slowdown. Many communities were already struggling with industry closures and layoffs due to a crisis in the forest sector. That crisis was exacerbated by a further downturn in the U.S. economy witnessed in the second half of 2008/09. Provincially, employment in the forest sector decreased by 28.4 per cent in 2008.<sup>4</sup>

In 2008/09, the province continued to battle a severe mountain pine beetle epidemic. The Ministry of Forests and Range estimates that about 76 per cent of the pine volume in the province's interior might be killed by the beetle by 2015. The area of the epidemic covers 68

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, "2008 in Review", in *Canadian Economic Observer* (Apr. 17, 2009) [www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-010-x/2009004/part-partie3-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-010-x/2009004/part-partie3-eng.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, "Provincial and Territorial Economic Accounts Review: 2008 Preliminary Estimates" (Apr. 2009) p. 16. [www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/13-016-x/13-016-x2009001-eng.pdf](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/13-016-x/13-016-x2009001-eng.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> BC Stats, *Labour Force Statistics* (Mar. 2009) [www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/lfs/lfs0903.pdf](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/lfs/lfs0903.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> BC Stats, "British Columbia Employment by Detailed Industry, Annual Averages" (Jan. 13, 2009) available at [www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/lss/labour.asp](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/lss/labour.asp)

municipalities, 103 First Nations and numerous settlements, all of which depend on forests for their economic, environmental and cultural well-being.<sup>5</sup>

The past year also presented B.C. communities with some significant opportunities for growth. The mining and oil and gas extraction industries saw very substantial growth in the first half of 2008, as prices of energy products nearly doubled. Although prices have since returned to 2007 levels, these industries show great potential to stimulate growth in rural B.C. in the future. Moving forward, B.C. communities can also play a vital role in supporting clean energy opportunities and the green economy.

The Municipal Finance Authority of British Columbia, which pools the borrowing needs of B.C. local governments, maintained its highest possible AAA credit rating through the financial storms that began last year. This means that B.C. municipalities were able to access affordable credit in 2008/09.

In 2008/09, communities all around the province came together to mark 150 years since the founding of the Crown Colony of British Columbia in 1858. BC150 included over 1,000 events and programs throughout the province, from parades to Spirit Square openings, street parties and cultural exhibits. Communities can build on this festive spirit by continuing to profile their unique qualities and features leading up to, during, and after the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games.

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<sup>5</sup> Government of British Columbia, *Sustaining Communities: 2006-2011 Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan: Progress Report: April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2008* (Apr. 2009) p. 2  
[www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/mountain\\_pine\\_beetle/MPB\\_ActionPlan\\_ProgressReport.pdf](http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hfp/mountain_pine_beetle/MPB_ActionPlan_ProgressReport.pdf)

# Report on Performance

This past year witnessed some significant changes to the Ministry's structure and responsibilities. At the time of the government-wide reorganization of June 2008, the Seniors' and Women's Partnerships and Information Branch transferred to the [Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport](#) and the Community Programs Branch transferred to the [Ministry of Housing and Social Development](#). As a result, responsibility for the following [2008/09 - 2010/11 Service Plan](#) goals and performance measures was transferred to other ministries:

- Goal 3: "Women are safe from domestic violence" transferred to the Ministry of Housing and Social Development, along with:
  - performance measure 5: "Number of women and their children sheltered through transition house services".
  - performance measure 6: "Number of outreach services used by women and their children".
- Goal 4: "Women have the opportunity to reach their economic potential" transferred to the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport.
- Goal 5: "Seniors have improved social and economic well-being" transferred to the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport.

In addition, the reorganization included the transfer of the [BladeRunners](#) program and the associated performance measure, "Percentage of BladeRunners participants moving into employment", to the [Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development](#).

In 2008/09, the Ministry also gained the following units, responsibilities and performance measure:

- The [Community Development Trust](#).
- The Mountain Pine Beetle Response Team (now the [Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic Response Division](#)) and the performance measure "Percentage of mountain pine beetle-impacted communities covered by a mountain pine beetle socio-economic adjustment plan."
- The Rural Development Division, comprised of Regional Economic Development Officers, which later became part of the new [RuralBC Secretariat](#).
- Oversight of three Crown corporations: the [Columbia Basin Trust](#), the [Nechako-Kitamaat Development Fund Society](#), and the [BC Assessment Authority](#).
- Three trusts: the [Northern Development Initiative Trust](#), the [Southern Interior Development Initiative Trust](#), and the [Island Coastal Economic Trust](#).
- The Property Assessment Services Branch, responsibility for the [Property Assessment Review Panel](#), and the [Property Assessment Appeal Board](#).

## Performance Plan Summary Table

<b>Goal 1: Community governance is open, effective and accountable to its citizens</b> For greater detail see pages 16 to 18	<b>2008/09 Target</b>	<b>2008/09 Actual</b>
<b>1.2 Local governments are accountable and make effective use of their legislative powers</b> Percentage of municipalities operating within their liability servicing limit	>97%	99% <sup>1</sup> ACHIEVED

<sup>1</sup> Estimate; see page 17 for details.

<b>Goal 2: British Columbians live in resilient, sustainable communities</b> For greater detail see pages 18 to 24	<b>2008/09 Target</b>	<b>2008/09 Actual</b>
<b>2.1 Local governments reduce greenhouse gas emissions and take other climate change actions</b> Percentage of British Columbians living in communities that have signed the British Columbia Climate Action Charter	70%	93% EXCEEDED
<b>2.3 Communities are resilient and able to adapt to change</b> Number of municipalities collecting at least 90 per cent of their current year taxes	148	149 <sup>1</sup> ACHIEVED

<sup>1</sup> Estimate; see page 21 for details.

During the 2008/09 fiscal year, the Ministry inherited the performance measure below from the Ministry of Forests and Range:

<b>Ministry of Forests and Range Goal 2: Sustainable socio-economic benefits from forest and range resources</b> For greater detail see pages 22 to 24	<b>2008/09 Target</b>	<b>2008/09 Actual</b>
<b>2.2 Conditions that promote safe and competitive forest and range sectors that contribute to sustainable forest and range based economies</b>  Percentage of mountain pine beetle-impacted communities covered by a mountain pine beetle socio-economic adjustment plan	56%	56% ACHIEVED

## Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Results

This section describes the goals, objectives and strategies pursued by the Ministry in 2008/09. In addition, it outlines the associated performance measures and Ministry results pertaining to the performance targets set out in the Ministry's [2008/09 Service Plan](#). During the past year, the Ministry has worked towards achieving the following goals:

## 1. Community governance is open, effective and accountable to its citizens

### 2. British Columbians live in resilient, sustainable communities

In 2008/09, the Ministry came to share the responsibility for achieving the following goal with the Ministry of Forests and Range: "Sustainable socio-economic benefits from forest and range resources". More information on the extent of the Ministry's responsibility for this goal may be found on pages 22 to 24.

## Goal 1: Community governance is open, effective and accountable to its citizens

### Objective 1.1: A governance system that is open, representative and responsive

#### **Local Government Elections 2008**

*In November 2008, British Columbians all over the province went to the polls to elect their local governments. In all, 159 mayors, 862 councillors and 162 regional district directors were elected to office.*

*Our province is culturally diverse. To promote access for all British Columbians, the Ministry published Voter's Guides to Local Elections in English, French, Cantonese and Punjabi.*

A local government system in which citizens choose their representatives and have input into the way they are governed expresses fundamental democratic principles. Elected officials who are responsive and accountable to the electorate they represent, and local government processes that are open and responsive to the changing interests of citizens, provide communities with effective and timely governance.

#### **Strategies**

Over the past year, the Ministry has:

- Continued to provide local governments with a modern, broadly empowering legislative, regulatory and policy framework.
- Continued to promote citizens' access to local governments and to build capacity for citizen participation in local decision-making. For example, in 2008, the election provisions of local government legislation were amended to provide greater transparency and accountability, as well as more flexible voting opportunities.
- Assisted local governments with incorporations, amalgamations and boundary extensions, and established a clear legislative basis for customized restructures, to meet the unique needs of different communities.

## **Objective 1.2: Local governments are accountable and make effective use of their legislative powers**

In 2004, the Province enacted the *Community Charter*. With the *Charter's* implementation, British Columbia's relationship with local governments changed. Rather than provincial oversight and prescriptive regulation, the focus now is on local accountability and local solutions to local issues, with the Province acting in an advisory and facilitative capacity. This flexibility, along with collaboration among partners in the local government system and between orders of government, increases local government capacity to respond innovatively to citizens' changing needs and desires.

### **Strategies**

Over the past year, the Ministry has:

- Continued to support innovation and the effective use of legislative and regulatory powers.
- Facilitated constructive relationships among various Ministry stakeholders, including local governments, federal and provincial government bodies, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, and the Local Government Management Association.
- Continued to develop strong, mutually beneficial partnerships with local governments.

### **Performance Results**

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>2006/07 Actual</b>	<b>2007/08 Actual</b>	<b>2008/09 Target</b>	<b>2008/09 Actual</b>
Percentage of municipalities operating within their liability servicing limit <sup>1</sup>	99.4%	97.5%	>97%	99% <sup>2</sup> ACHIEVED

**Data Source:** Local governments provide their financial data to the Ministry through the Local Government Data Entry electronic reporting process at the end of their fiscal year. The Ministry's reporting requirements are comprehensive and the data received is highly accurate.

<sup>1</sup> Liability servicing limit is equal to 25 per cent of annual own-source municipal revenue. Own-source revenue is primarily composed of municipal taxes, fees, charges, penalties, fines and investment income. It is distinguished from municipal revenue from external sources, such as government funding.

<sup>2</sup> This figure is an estimate based on responses by the 85 per cent of municipal governments that have provided their data to the Ministry as of July 15, 2009. As such, this figure is subject to amendment as new data becomes available. The final tally is expected in fall 2009.

### **Discussion of Results**

The liability servicing limit sets out the maximum amount municipalities can spend to service their long-term financial obligations for the year. The percentage of municipalities operating within this limit demonstrates how effectively local governments use their legislative and regulatory powers to develop strong partnerships and financially plan for their capital requirements, and how well they utilize the different financing options available to them.

Local governments in British Columbia borrow money for multiple purposes through the Municipal Finance Authority of British Columbia with the approval of the Inspector of Municipalities. These loans must generally fall within their individual liability servicing limits

and the Inspector approves all local government borrowing bylaws on the basis of their fiscal capacity and ability to repay the debt. This financial oversight role ensures that local governments are within their borrowing limits, which in turn mitigates the risk to the Municipal Finance Authority's AAA credit rating, thereby enabling local governments in the province to borrow at lower than industry rates.

## **Goal 2: British Columbians live in resilient, sustainable communities**

### **Objective 2.1: Local governments reduce greenhouse gas emissions and take other climate change actions**

Local governments are key partners in helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions due to their direct or indirect influence over urban growth, transportation and land use patterns. The Ministry of Community and Rural Development is actively working with B.C. local governments to ensure the right mix of tools, incentives and other supports are in place to support local actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, contain sprawl, conserve water and energy, and preserve green space.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is essential to building vibrant, connected communities that are socially-responsive, resilient and environmentally sustainable. Many local governments are already taking steps towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and these actions provide a good foundation. Continuing to accelerate progress on reducing emissions and ensuring that British Columbian communities are compact, energy-efficient and sustainable is an ongoing priority for the Ministry.

### **Strategies**

Over the past year, the Ministry has:

- Encouraged local governments to sign the British Columbia Climate Action Charter, which commits signatories to the goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2012.
- Provided incentives for local governments taking action on climate change through the Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program.<sup>6</sup>
- Continued to develop a legislative, regulatory and policy framework that provides the right mix of tools to support local government climate change actions. For example, the Ministry put forward the *Local Government (Green Communities) Statutes Amendment Act 2008*, which provides local governments with a variety of tools to help them reduce greenhouse gas

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<sup>6</sup> This strategy was developed and implemented in 2008/09 and does not appear in the Ministry's 2008/09 - 2010/11 Service Plan.

emissions, conserve water and energy, and work towards creating more compact and sustainable communities.

- Ensured that infrastructure funding programs targeted those local governments undertaking climate action activities focused on maximizing greenhouse gas reduction and using innovative, green technologies.
- Provided local governments implementing climate change initiatives with tools, best practices material and advice.
- Ensured that infrastructure capital grant programs contained goals, outcomes, and evaluation criteria that target those infrastructure projects that integrate sustainability and climate change principles.
- Actively supported cross-ministry climate action initiatives.



*Environmental sustainability and family fun converge in Campbell River.*

## Performance Results

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
Percentage of British Columbians living in communities that have signed the British Columbia Climate Action Charter <sup>1</sup>	N/A	N/A	70%	93% EXCEEDED

**Data Source:** The Union of British Columbia Municipalities records and tracks the local governments that sign the British Columbia Climate Action Charter. The Ministry determines, through BC Stats, what percentage of British Columbians this represents.

<sup>1</sup> "Communities" are defined as those municipalities and regional districts that have signed the British Columbia Climate Action Charter. Population percentages have been calculated using BC Stats P.E.O.P.L.E. projections; electoral area populations were used to represent persons living within the regional district outside of municipal jurisdictions.

## Discussion of Results

At the 2008 Union of British Columbia Municipalities convention, Premier Gordon Campbell announced the new Climate Action Revenue Incentive Program created to provide conditional grants to offset the carbon tax paid by local governments. To be eligible for the grants, local governments have to sign the B.C. Climate Action Charter and commit to the goal of becoming carbon neutral in their corporate operations by 2012. This grant program created a significant incentive for local governments to sign the Climate Action Charter and was a key factor in the Ministry exceeding the 2008/09 performance measure target for this objective. By signing on to the B.C. Climate Action Charter, local governments also pledge to measure and report on their communities' greenhouse gas emissions profile and work to create compact, more energy-efficient communities.

**Objective 2.2: Planning and infrastructure investments contribute to community sustainability**

Citizens in communities throughout the province expect their local governments to provide safe drinking water, appropriate levels of wastewater treatment, and other essential services through economically-sustainable means. Local governments are often challenged to renew aging infrastructure and prepare for the future needs of their citizens; this has been especially true since the start of the current economic downturn. Over the past year, the Ministry has worked to support local governments through the provision of advice and funding for infrastructure planning and development.

**Strategies**



*A water treatment facility in Kamloops providing clean water for the city's residents.*

Over the past year, the Ministry has:

- Advised local governments with respect to infrastructure planning and development.
  - Developed, implemented and managed water and sewer infrastructure capital funding and infrastructure planning programs such as Towns for Tomorrow, the Building Canada Fund, and Infrastructure Planning Grants, among others.
  - Supported/accelerated infrastructure investment in communities across the province to help stimulate the economy, maintain stability and keep B.C. working.<sup>7</sup>
- Negotiated federal/provincial/local government infrastructure capital grant programs.
  - Implemented the Federal Gas Tax Transfer and Transit Agreements with the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

**Objective 2.3: Communities are resilient and able to adapt to change**

Regional and local socio-economic conditions in British Columbia are constantly changing. Local governments need both expertise and targeted funding initiatives to build their resiliency and the capacity to adapt to changing economic, social and environmental conditions. The Ministry works to ensure communities are well equipped to respond to change.

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<sup>7</sup> This strategy was developed and implemented in 2008/09 and does not appear in the Ministry's 2008/09 - 2010/11 Service Plan.

## Strategies

Over the past year, the Ministry has:

- Provided the tools and resources to ensure that local governments have the fiscal capacity needed for self-government.
- Provided resort-based municipalities in British Columbia with tools to assist them in financing new or improved resort amenities and services in their communities.
- Promoted targeted support for policing, crime prevention and community safety through the Traffic Fine Revenue Sharing Program.
- Established the RuralBC Secretariat to provide rural communities with a one-window access to government services, and to identify and implement new strategies to support economic growth in rural communities.<sup>8</sup>
- Provided funding through the Community Development Trust to address the impacts of the forest sector downturn on forest workers and their families.<sup>9</sup>

## Performance Results

Performance Measure)	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
Number of municipalities collecting at least 90 per cent of their current year taxes	143	147	148	149 <sup>1</sup> ACHIEVED

**Data Source:** Local governments provide their financial data to the Ministry through the Local Government Data Entry electronic reporting process at the end of their fiscal year. The Ministry's reporting requirements are comprehensive and the data received is highly accurate.

<sup>1</sup> This figure is an estimate based on responses by the 85 per cent of municipal governments that have provided their data to the Ministry as of July 15, 2009. As such, this figure is subject to amendment as new data becomes available. The final tally is expected in fall 2009.

## Discussion of Results

Property taxes constitute the majority of municipalities' annual revenues, providing them with the funds they need to operate effectively and independently to provide the services expected by residents.

The target for this measure was achieved in 2008/09 with the vast majority of municipalities collecting at least 90 per cent of their current taxes, reflecting the stability of local tax bases. The achievement of the target is a result of the Ministry's efforts to assist communities with financial management. This assistance has included assessing and modifying their tax base and/or restructuring their boundaries to provide additional revenue for services.

The minority of municipalities that are at risk of collecting less than 90 per cent of their taxes are generally single-resource-based communities affected by larger external market forces. Through

<sup>8</sup> This strategy was developed and implemented in 2008/09 and does not appear in the Ministry's *2008/09 - 2010/11 Service Plan*.

<sup>9</sup> This strategy was developed and implemented in 2008/09 and does not appear in the Ministry's *2008/09 - 2010/11 Service Plan*.

the Community Transition Program, the Ministry assists these communities to evaluate their options, review their expenditures and examine their economic development opportunities.

**Objective 2.4: Local governments work together to advance regional interests and build British Columbia's regions**

British Columbia's communities are part of larger regions. These regions are diverse in size, geography, demographics and socio-economic status. Community resilience is increased when neighbouring communities work together to strategically advance regional interests. These interests include sustainable regional growth, efficient provision of regional services, as well as shared water management, air quality planning and emergency preparedness.

**Strategies**

Over the past year, the Ministry has:

- Worked with local governments through the [RuralBC Secretariat](#) to develop "community-centric agreements" to advance individual rural priorities as well as regional interests.<sup>10</sup>
- Worked to strengthen regional governance in ways appropriate to particular regions.
- Promoted the harmonization of regulatory requirements across B.C. communities to reduce the regulatory burden on citizens and businesses.

**Objective 2.5: The capacity of rural and urban communities to respond to socio-economic issues is strengthened**

Community resiliency implies the ability to respond to serious socio-economic challenges. The current downturn in the resource sector, the mountain pine beetle infestation and inner-city issues are just some challenges that communities need to address and overcome if they are to thrive. The establishment in 2008 of the RuralBC Secretariat and the Community Development Trust represents the Ministry's efforts to assist rural communities with the challenges faced as a result of the forest sector downturn.

**Strategies**

Over the past year, the Ministry has:

- Partnered with natural-resource ministries and provincial and federal social-development agencies to help mitigate impacts to forest sector communities.
- Established the RuralBC Secretariat to better align government services in support of building strong and sustainable rural communities and regions.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> This strategy was developed and implemented in 2008/09 and does not appear in the 2008/09 - 2010/11 Service Plan.

- Through the RuralBC Secretariat's Community Adjustment Office, provided transition assistance to rural, resource-dependent communities and regions facing significant challenges as a result of industry downsizing or closure.
- Through the Community Development Trust's transition assistance, tuition assistance, and job opportunities programs, led government efforts to address the impacts of the forest sector downturn on forest workers and their families.<sup>12</sup>
- Through the Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic Response Division, collaborated with beetle-impacted communities and other stakeholders to develop strategies to increase socio-economic resilience.
- Provided funding, through the Labour Market Agreement, for training and employment services to low-skilled and Employment Insurance-ineligible workers in the region supported by the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition.
- Partnered with local and federal governments, communities and the private sector to address inner-city issues.

***Transition Assistance for Mackenzie***

*The District of Mackenzie, one of the communities that received transition assistance in 2008/09, was provided funding to support economic diversification and transition planning, augment local counselling services and investigate short-term employment opportunities to help retain workers in the community. This funding builds on over \$2.5 million provided to Mackenzie through the Community Development Trust.*

**Performance Results**

Performance Measure	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Actual	2008/09 Target	2008/09 Actual
Per cent of mountain pine beetle-impacted communities covered by a mountain pine beetle socio-economic adjustment plan <sup>1</sup>	N/A	15%	56%	56% <sup>2</sup> ACHIEVED

**Data Source:** Impacted community data is tracked by the Ministry of Forests and Range.

<sup>1</sup> The Ministry inherited this performance measure from the Ministry of Forests and Range during 2008 when the Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic Response business area was transferred to the Ministry.

<sup>2</sup> The Omineca Beetle Action Coalition, one of three regional pine beetle coalitions in the province, has substantially completed work on its socio-economic adjustment plan and expects to submit it to government by July 2009.

**Discussion of Results**

The mountain pine beetle socio-economic adjustment and mitigation plans are regional-scale strategies that identify potential impacts and recommend mitigation measures. They demonstrate

<sup>11</sup> This strategy was developed and implemented in 2008/09 and does not appear in the 2008/09 - 2010/11 Service Plan.

<sup>12</sup> This strategy was developed and implemented in 2008/09 and does not appear in the 2008/09 - 2010/11 Service Plan.

the Province's commitment to engage collaboratively with communities in an effort to address mountain pine beetle impacts and plan for the future.

The Cariboo-Chilcotin Beetle Action Coalition completed and submitted its socio-economic adjustment plan to the provincial government in 2007/2008 and the Omineca Beetle Action Coalition plan is substantially complete and is anticipated to be finalized and submitted to the Province by July 2009. The Southern Interior Beetle Action Coalition expects to finalize and submit its plan during 2009/2010.

# Report on Resources

## Resource Summary Table

	Estimated <sup>1</sup>	Other Authorizations	Total Estimated	Actual	Variance
<b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>					
Local Government	220,965	186,000	406,965	403,981	(2,984)
RuralBC Secretariat	61,712	(55,308)	6,404	5,574	(830)
Pine Beetle Response Division	0	173	173	317	144
Property Assessment	0	762	762	800	38
Executive and Support Services	9,453	0	9,453	9,418	(35)
<b>Total</b>	<b>292,130</b>	<b>131,627</b>	<b>423,757</b>	<b>420,090</b>	<b>(3,667)</b>
<b>Full-time Equivalents (FTEs)</b>					
Local Government	98	(2)	96	98	2
RuralBC Secretariat	37	(29)	8	19	11
Pine Beetle Response Division	0	1	1	1	0
Property Assessment	0	16	16	18	2
Executive and Support Services	70	0	70	88	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>(14)</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (Consolidated Revenue Fund) (\$000)</b>					
Local Government	725	0	725	750	25
RuralBC Secretariat	375	(200)	175	20	(155)
Pine Beetle Response Division	0	0	0	0	0
Property Assessment	0	0	0	0	0
Executive and Support Services	880	0	880	157	(723)
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,980</b>	<b>(200)</b>	<b>1,780</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>(853)</b>

<sup>1</sup> "Other Authorizations" include the results of Supplementary Estimates, government reorganization of June 23, 2008, and the Property Assessment Services Branch joining the Ministry in January 2009. Amounts in this column are not related to the "estimated amount" under sections 5(1) and 6(1) of the *Balanced Budget and Ministerial Accountability Act* for ministerial accountability for operating expenses under the Act.

# Annual Service Plan Report Appendices

## Appendix A: Ministry Contact Information

### **MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

P.O. Box 9490 Stn. Prov. Govt.  
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9N7  
[www.gov.bc.ca/cd/](http://www.gov.bc.ca/cd/)

### **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST**

[www.cd.gov.bc.ca/cdt/](http://www.cd.gov.bc.ca/cdt/)  
P.O. Box 9595, Stn. Prov. Govt.  
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9K4  
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Telephone in Victoria: (250) 387-5349  
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### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT**

[www.cd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/](http://www.cd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/)  
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Policy and Research Branch  
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Governance and Structure Division  
P.O. Box 9839 Stn. Prov. Govt.  
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Infrastructure and Finance Division  
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Victoria BC V8W 9T1  
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### **MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE EPIDEMIC RESPONSE DIVISION**

[www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle](http://www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle)  
510 – 175 2nd Ave.  
Kamloops, B.C. V2C 5W1  
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### **PROPERTY ASSESSMENT SERVICES BRANCH**

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### **RURALBC SECRETARIAT**

[www.ruralbc.gov.bc.ca](http://www.ruralbc.gov.bc.ca)

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**Strategic Initiatives Office**

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