



Government Announcements

- The Province will put \$165 million into needed infrastructure projects such as roads and bridges as part of its finalized Olympic Security agreement with the federal government. The new agreement raises the provincial government cost for staging of the 2010 Games to \$765 million. [Read more](#)
- The number and value of major construction projects planned or underway across B.C. went up during the fourth quarter of 2008 despite the global economic downturn. Small Business, Technology and Economic Development Minister Ida Chong released the quarterly major projects report, which showed 880 major construction projects worth an estimated \$179.4 billion. [Read more](#)
- Environment Minister Barry Penner announced the release of the Western Climate Initiative's 2009 Workplan for the design of a regional cap-and-trade program to reduce greenhouse gases. [Read more](#)
- Labour and Citizens' Services Minister Iain Black announced \$8.3 million in funding to help expand Internet connectivity and open up social and economic opportunities for rural and remote First Nations communities. [Read more](#)
- Premier Gordon Campbell officially opened Canada's third largest runway at Prince George Airport, a \$33 million expansion project that means more economic opportunities for northern and central B.C. [Read more](#)
- The provincial government is providing \$186 million in community grants that municipalities that will go to support community safety and local economic development. [Read more](#)
- Health Services Minister George Abbott announced a new \$1.17-million pilot program that will provide general practitioners with easy access to information on mental health and addictions resources through a secure web-based directory. [Read more](#)
- Tourism, Culture and the Arts Minister Bill Bennett announced an extra \$15.1 million for arts, culture and heritage across B.C. The funds will be distributed through the BC Arts Council to artists and arts and culture organizations across the province, and go toward the conservation and management of heritage properties. [Read more](#)

Question Period Topics

- Budget provisions for public safety
- Economic forecasts and budget process
- B.C. Hydro revenues and rates
- Budget provisions for public safety
- Level of gang activity
- Budget provisions for rural B.C.
- Budget revenue projections
- Gasoline tax
- Mackenzie pulp mill

Opinion Leader Roundup

- Finance Minister Colin Hansen offered his take on Budget 2009 in an op-ed in the *Vancouver Sun*. Of note – he states that “Despite the economic slowdown, skilled labour shortages will remain a critical issue.” [Read the article](#)
- Opposition leader Carole James and her finance critic Bruce Ralston had a dueling column in the *Sun* – laying out their criticisms of the budget. They state that their plan for the economy would be to “start building affordable housing, to reduce crushing student debt-loads, and to make work pay by raising the minimum wage.” [Read the article](#)
- *Vancouver Sun* columnist Vaughn Palmer lays out how budget projections are made in the midst of a rapidly changing global economy – and some of the challenges that could impact budget numbers: “there's little doubt that the B.C. government will be forced to substantially revise the three-year budget and fiscal plan.” [Read the article](#)
- Paul Willcocks from the *Victoria Times Colonist* lays out an interesting warning about the troubles the BC government might face in 2010 and 2011 with the budget predictions: “The claim that budgets will be balanced by the 2011 fiscal year, after small two deficits, is shaky at best. Unless, that is, the government is prepared to do some heavy slashing and burning in programs and services.” [Read the article](#)

Status of Bills

BILLS DEBATED

Government Bills

- Bill 2 — [Budget Measures Implementation Act, 2009](#)

Reports Tabled

- Office of the Auditor General, report No. 15, 2008-2009, *Wireless Networking and Security in Victoria Government Offices: Gaps in the Defensive Line*.
- *Budget and Fiscal Plan 2009/10-2011/12*: Government's service plans and strategic plan.
- Representative for Children And Youth and Provincial Health Officer joint report: *Kids, Crime and Care: Health and Well-Being of Children in Care — Youth, Justice Experiences and Outcomes*.