

Province of British Columbia

ANNUAL STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT

AUG
2006

2005–2006



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

The Best Place on Earth



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Message from the Premier

2005/06 was the first year of British Columbia's journey to realize government's vision for the decade ahead to:

- 1 *Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.*
- 2 *Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.*
- 3 *Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.*
- 4 *Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.*
- 5 *Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.*

This strategic plan annual report highlights 2005/06 actions that help British Columbia to meet these goals.

In 2005, government invited the Official Opposition, the B.C. Progress Board, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, First Nations, and others to identify the most appropriate suite of measures to assess progress in achieving the Five Great Goals.

Government received some excellent, thought provoking responses. The best of these were selected and are included in this annual report.

Achieving the goals will take the hard work and resolve of British Columbians. They will only truly be achieved when all British Columbians – Aboriginal and non Aboriginal – have the same sense of hope and opportunity, and the same prospects for the future.



British Columbia is already the Best Place on Earth. I am confident that by working together toward our vision we will make the Best Place on Earth even better.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordon Campbell". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Gordon Campbell
Premier



Vision and Core Values

Our vision for B.C. is:

- To be a prosperous and just province, whose citizens achieve their potential and have confidence in the future.

Government's core values are:

- *Integrity*: to make decisions in a manner that is consistent, professional, fair, transparent and balanced;
- *Fiscal Responsibility*: to implement affordable public policies;
- *Accountability*: to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and the credibility of government;
- *Respect*: to treat all citizens equitably, compassionately and respectfully; and
- *Choice*: to afford citizens the opportunity to exercise self-determination.





First Nations

2005/06 saw the establishment of the New Relationship with First Nations based on mutual respect, recognition, and reconciliation. The Province and First Nations have agreed to work together to close the gap between the overall quality of life for First Nations and other British Columbians in the areas of health, education and economic prosperity.

In support of the New Relationship with First Nations, in March 2006 British Columbia established the \$100 million New Relationship Trust. The Trust will be managed by First Nations and will fund initiatives to build long-term capacity for First Nations to participate in land and resource management, economic development, and restore, revitalize, and strengthen communities and families.



Selected 2005/06 Achievements

- » Established the \$100 million New Relationship Trust.
- » Hosted the Kelowna Summit and signed the Transformative Change Accord that set a vision for closing the social and economic gap between First Nations and non-First Nations.
- » Signed 34 forest agreements with First Nations involving 3.5 million cubic metres of timber and \$30.8 million.
- » With Canada, signed Treaty Agreements-in-Principle with the Yale First Nation and the Yekooche First Nation, and Framework Agreements with Musqueam, Lax Kw'alaams and Tlowitsis First Nations. Approval of these Agreements-in-Principle indicates that these treaty tables are making real progress towards final agreements.
- » Provided \$3 million to First Nations communities affected by the mountain pine beetle.
- » Provided a \$1 million endowment for a National Chair on Aboriginal Economic Development.
- » Provided \$1.8 million for 36 new projects to help Aboriginal students across B.C. pursue their post-secondary education and career goals.
- » Initiated the \$3.8 million First Nation and Remote Community Clean Energy Program to put in place zero-emission electricity supply projects.
- » Increased provincial funding for the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre in Whistler by \$3 million to \$6 million.



Five Great Goals

For 2005/06 to 2015/16, government will focus its energy on achieving the Five Great Goals.

The goals are to:

- 1 Make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.*
- 2 Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.*
- 3 Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.*
- 4 Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.*
- 5 Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.*

British Columbians with higher levels of literacy are more likely to be employed and have higher incomes.



GOAL 1:

Make B.C. the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.

Education and literacy are fundamental to improving people's lives and ensuring the ongoing prosperity of our province and its citizens. Government is working with educators, students, parents, trustees, educational institutions and communities to achieve this goal.

Task Force Support

Two task forces are providing advice for government and others that will help make British Columbia the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent.

- The Learning Roundtable is an ongoing forum for education stakeholders (teachers, parents, trustees, superintendents, principals, and vice-principals) to discuss key education issues such as class size, class composition, and learning conditions.
- The Premier's Advisory Panel on Literacy assessed urgent needs in literacy and, as of February 2006, provided preliminary recommendations to inform the development of a provincial literacy strategy.

The performance measures selected to measure progress on this goal are:

Performance Measure	Baseline
<p>School readiness.</p> <p><i>An indicator of children’s readiness to learn, including their behaviour and coping skills as they enter kindergarten.</i></p>	<p><i>In 2004/05, 75 per cent of kindergarten students were “ready to learn”.</i></p>
<p>Student literacy in reading, mathematics, science and problem solving as measured by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) – an international assessment of 15-year-old students.</p>	<p><i>Of 41 jurisdictions, including the United States and 10 provinces, B.C. was ranked third overall in reading, fifth in mathematics, and sixth in science and problem solving. Among the provinces, B.C. is ranked second behind Alberta.</i></p>
<p>High school graduation.</p> <p><i>Young adults have a far better chance of making a successful transition to work or further education if they have completed high school.</i></p>	<p><i>In 2004/05 the high school graduation rate was 79 per cent in B.C.</i></p>
<p>A successfully completed apprenticeship, college program or university degree.</p> <p><i>Successfully completed post-secondary education is in high demand in today’s knowledge based economy. We want to ensure British Columbians can take advantage of these opportunities.</i></p>	<p><i>In 2004, 55.8 per cent of British Columbians aged 25–64 had a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree. The Canadian average is 56.9 per cent and the United States average 39.1 per cent.</i></p>

Selected 2005/06 Achievements

- » 4,200 new student spaces were added to the post-secondary system including 825 new seats for computer science and computer and electrical engineering, 508 new seats for nursing and other health education, and 96 medical school spaces.
- » Provided \$223 million in new funding for capital projects on campuses throughout British Columbia.
- » Limited university tuition fee increases to two per cent (the rate of inflation).
- » In conjunction with the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation, forgave \$67.2 million under the B.C. Student Loan Reduction Program, helping almost 28,000 students.
- » Increased apprenticeship opportunities by providing an additional \$13 million dollars per year for each of the next three years to the Industry Training Authority (ITA). The number of registered apprentices in ITA credential programs rose by 6,475 in 2005 to over 26,000.
- » Helped prepare our youngest learners for kindergarten by putting in place the *Ready, Set, Learn* program. In 2005, 35,000 parents attended *Ready, Set, Learn* open houses at nearly 1,000 schools across British Columbia.
- » Established 24 Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements to create school district/Aboriginal partnerships that feature shared decision-making and goal-setting.
- » Provided \$150 million in new funding to improve services and better support special-needs students.

More people in Vancouver walk to work than anywhere in North America except New York City. The proportion of people commuting by bicycle has doubled in 10 years.



GOAL 2:

Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.

Healthy living and physical fitness help British Columbians avoid illness, recover from illness or injury, manage a chronic disease or disability, and enjoy a superior quality of life.

There are many things all British Columbians can do to keep themselves healthy. Active living, eating nutritious foods, maintaining a suitable weight, and eliminating tobacco and other harmful substances will ensure that British Columbians stay healthier longer. By staying healthier, British Columbians will also reduce pressures on our health care system.

The performance measures selected to measure progress on this goal are:

Performance Measure	Baseline
<p>Life expectancy at birth.</p> <p><i>The healthier the population, the longer the average lifespan.</i></p>	<p><i>As of 2004, a baby born in B.C. could expect to live nearly 81 years. This is the highest life expectancy in Canada and greater than the life expectancy in the United States.</i></p>
<p>Physical Activity of British Columbians aged 12 and over.</p> <p><i>Regular physical activity is a basic component of healthy living and illness prevention.</i></p>	<p><i>Physical activity is measured by the Canadian Community Health Survey, which indicates that in 2003, 58.1 per cent of British Columbians were active or moderately active in their leisure time (self-reported for more than 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day).</i></p>
<p>The number of British Columbians considered overweight.</p> <p><i>Being overweight or obese contributes to many preventable illnesses and causes of death. Reduced obesity is a major step towards healthy living.</i></p>	<p><i>In 2003, B.C. had the lowest percentage of overweight or obese adults in Canada. However, 42.3 per cent of B.C. adults were still considered overweight.</i></p>
<p>British Columbia's smoking rate.</p> <p><i>Tobacco use is a major contributor to preventable illness.</i></p>	<p><i>At 15 per cent in 2004, B.C. has the lowest smoking rate in Canada for people aged 15 or older. The overall Canadian rate is 20 per cent.</i></p>

Selected 2005/06 Achievements

- » Updated the BC HealthGuide handbook, which gives British Columbians access to easy-to-read, reliable medically reviewed health information.
- » Established the Crystal Meth Secretariat to integrate efforts to target the use and production of crystal meth in British Columbia.
- » Increased funding for the B.C. Centre for Social Responsibility by \$350 thousand to \$1.1 million. The Centre promotes addiction prevention and awareness of problems related to addictive behaviours.
- » Provided \$13.2 million to support sport, recreation and volunteers.
- » Provided \$50 million for the Major Regional Sports Facilities Initiative and \$60 million for the Major Post-Secondary Sports Training Facilities Initiative.

ActNow BC

ActNow BC is the most comprehensive health promotion program of its kind in North America, promoting physical activity, healthy eating, and making healthy choices during pregnancy. The program has the potential to deliver significant improvements in health outcomes, health system access and overall quality of life.

- Action Schools! BC, which involves 935 schools and over 170,000 students across the Province, received \$1.5 million in funding for physical activity supplies, the development of a new healthy eating component, and training and support for teachers.
- The Active Communities program challenges communities to increase their physical activity levels. There are 96 Active Communities registered.
- \$1.3 million in direct funding was provided to public schools for the purchase of physical activity equipment.

Canadians are living longer and as we age the chance of acquiring a disability increases. Disability can affect anyone at any point in life, but by age 65 one in three people has a disability.



GOAL 3:

Build the best system of support in Canada for persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors.

Many British Columbians face particular barriers to improving their social and economic well-being. Every British Columbian deserves an opportunity to live to their full potential, to participate fully in society and to pursue their dreams.

During 2005/06, improving services for children and youth was a key priority. Shifts in child protection and family support were made that emphasize protection, long-term planning, family and community based alternatives to government care, and increasing family and community participation in planning and decision making.

The performance measures selected to measure progress on this goal are:

Performance Measure	Baseline
<p>The employment rate for working age British Columbians with disabilities.</p> <p><i>In order for all British Columbians to live a full, rewarding life there has to be opportunities to participate and thrive in society, including having employment and participating in the economy. Having a disability should not prevent people from working if they wish to.</i></p>	<p><i>The employment rate for working age British Columbians with disabilities was 44 per cent in 2001, the fourth highest rate in Canada and substantially above the Canadian average of 41.5 per cent.</i></p>
<p>Percentage of school age disadvantaged children in a grade that is normal for their age.</p> <p><i>How well socio-economically disadvantaged children are keeping up in school is a good measure of whether the system of support around them is generating good outcomes.</i></p>	<p><i>In 2005, 86 per cent of disadvantaged B.C. children were in their age-appropriate grade.</i></p>
<p>The percentage of British Columbians aged 75 or older living in health care or related institutions.</p> <p><i>For many seniors, independent living is a major determinant of their quality of life.</i></p>	<p><i>According to the 2001 Canadian census, 10.3 per cent of British Columbians 75 or older were living in health care or related institutions such as nursing homes or senior citizens' homes.</i></p>

Selected 2005/06 Achievements

- » Provided \$10 million in funding to restore the BC Senior's Supplement Program. The program provides 43,900 seniors receiving federal Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement or federal allowances with a guaranteed minimum income level.
- » Increased support for persons with disabilities by \$37 million or \$70 more per month per person. Earnings exemptions were also increased to \$500 per month per recipient or \$750 for two-recipient family units, to support financial independence and greater community engagement.
- » Provided over \$43 million in health and dental assistance to 129,300 individuals and families with limited incomes.
- » Funded approximately 1,500 new child care spaces under the Child Care Major Capital Program.
- » Enhanced the Child Care Subsidy program to help low and moderate income families meet the costs of quality child care. Approximately 6,500 additional children and their families were made eligible to receive the subsidy and some 6,000 children and their families received an increase in their existing subsidy.
- » Provided new supports for families of young children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) including new regional key worker services and new assessment, diagnosis, education and support services.
- » Made a \$15 million investment that benefits children and youth with special needs and their families by increasing access to therapies, infant development, respite, and supported child development programs.
- » Provided \$15 million to the Pacific Alzheimer Research Foundation.

Selected 2005/06 Achievements (cont.)

- » Invested an additional \$2 million in supports and services for sexually exploited youth, such as outreach, one-to-one support, counselling, family mediation, and assistance with basic needs like food and clothing.
- » Allocated \$12.7 million to expand treatment and support for children and youth with mental health disorders.
- » Created Community Living British Columbia (CLBC) to provide adults with developmental disabilities with choices regarding community living services that meet their needs.
- » Provided over \$1 million in grants to 53 organizations in 70 communities across British Columbia to support projects to increase the safety of women and build awareness of and prevent domestic violence.
- » Renewed the Vancouver Agreement. The Agreement is an example of the federal, provincial and municipal governments working together with the community and the private sector to achieve positive results in economic revitalization, employment, and health and safety. Projects completed in 2005/06 included a pilot project to create 86 units of affordable housing.
- » Doubled funding for rent assistance under the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program. This increase recognized rising rents in the private rental market in many parts of the Province. The program was also expanded to include seniors paying pad rental fees for owner-occupied mobile homes.
- » Worked with communities hit hardest by homelessness to allocate 533 new units of transitional housing and committed funding for 450 additional units.

- » Revised the BC Seniors' Guide (7th edition) to provide seniors, their families, and caregivers with up-to-date information on government services and programs in English, French, Chinese and Punjabi.
- » Contributed over \$35 million to organizations supporting persons with disabilities, those with special needs, children at risk, and seniors, including:
 - » \$15 million to the Rick Hansen Foundation to improve the lives of people with spinal cord injuries;
 - » \$5 million to the Vancouver Foundation in support of the Disability Supports for Employment Fund;
 - » \$4.2 million to the 411 Seniors Society to assist in purchasing the building at 411 Dunsmuir – their home for more than 30 years;
 - » \$750,000 to the Canadian Mental Health Association to support individuals with mental illness with income, housing, and medical problems; and
 - » \$400,000 to She-Way to provide supported housing for pregnant women with substance abuse issues in the Vancouver Downtown East Side.
- » Amended legislation to provide a simple and inexpensive way to resolve disputes for tenants and landlords of supportive housing and assisted living facilities.
- » Launched "Measuring Up: A Guide for Accessible Cities" to help communities determine ways to be more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities.
- » Increased legal aid funding to the Legal Services Society by \$4.6 million, enabling the Society to expand representation for individuals with low incomes and for the most serious family cases in both Provincial and Supreme Court.
- » Working with non-profit housing providers completed 966 new supported and assisted living spaces for frail seniors and persons with disabilities under the Independent Living BC program.



Task Force Support

Two task forces support Government in its efforts to accomplish Great Goal 3.

- The Premier's Council on Aging and Seniors' Issues will identify pressing needs and opportunities to improve senior's independence and quality of life, including housing options, homecare, mandatory retirement, lifestyles, and nutrition and services. The Council will present their report to government by November 30, 2006.
- The Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions is developing a continuum of housing and support services for the homeless population including emergency shelters, transitional housing, and support services. The Task Force's term was extended in the Fall of 2005 and expanded to include more communities and explore options at the regional level. In 2005/06, through a unique series of partnerships among three levels of governments, First Nations, and the non-profit sector, the Task Force initiated 12 housing developments in 9 communities across the Province.

13.09 million hectares or 13.8 per cent of British Columbia's land base, an area the size of England, is now protected.



GOAL 4:

Lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.

British Columbia's spectacular natural beauty is known around the world. So that British Columbians, visitors and future generations can continue to enjoy the many benefits of our natural environment, the Province is taking steps to lead the world in sustainable environmental management. Clean air, superior water quality and strong, sustainable fisheries are essential to our society, our economy, our quality of life and our health.

British Columbians understand that the environment, the economy and all social systems are interdependent and that we all share responsibility for the stewardship of our environment.

The performance measures selected to measure progress on this goal are:

Performance Measure	Baseline
<p>Annual average fine particulate (pm 2.5) concentrations in major metropolitan areas.</p> <p><i>Fine particulate matter can make air appear brown and causes respiratory problems.</i></p>	<p><i>When comparisons are made between major metropolitan areas of similar size and population, Vancouver is ranked second in Canada with respect to its air quality.</i></p>
<p>Per capita greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.</p> <p><i>Greenhouse gases trap energy from the sun. While greenhouse gases can occur naturally, they are also created by human activity.</i></p>	<p><i>In 2003 B.C. had the third lowest per capita greenhouse gas emissions in Canada (behind PEI and Quebec). B.C. currently emits more greenhouse gas per capita than Oregon, but less than Washington.</i></p>
<p>Water quality trends.</p> <p><i>In order to move to the best possible water quality B.C. will monitor and measure trends in 30 different water bodies.</i></p>	<p><i>Trends in 30 water bodies monitored under the Canada-BC Water Quality Monitoring Agreement. In 2004/05, 96 per cent of the monitoring stations had stable or improving water quality trends.</i></p>

Selected 2005/06 Achievements

- » Approved the new Central Coast and North Coast land use plans covering a 6.4 million hectare area and containing protected areas three times the size of Prince Edward Island, including the 103,000 hectare Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy. The Conservancy protects primary habitat of our new official provincial mammal, the Spirit Bear. The plans represent an unprecedented collaboration between First Nations, communities, industries, environmental organizations, and government.
- » Created four new Class A provincial parks (Enderby Cliffs, Kiskatinaw River, Klin-se-za, and Sikanni Chief Canyon) and added lands to three existing Class A parks and one existing ecological reserve.
- » Committed \$14 million to the Living Rivers Trust Fund to bring the total funding allocated to the Trust to \$21 million.
- » Together with the federal government and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, signed the New Deal for Cities and Communities agreement that ensures that British Columbia's local governments benefit over the next five years from \$635.5 million in federal gas tax revenue. The dollars will go towards projects leading to cleaner air, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and cleaner water.
- » Undertook a \$27 million project to clean up contaminated water flowing from the Britannia Mine. As part of the project, a \$15 million water treatment plant was built at the Britannia Mine site. The plant treats an average of 3,000 gallons per minute of metal-laden mine water and groundwater at the Britannia Mine south of Squamish, and removes a combined total of over 600 kilograms/day of copper and zinc from waters flowing to Howe Sound.
- » Provided approximately \$3.6 million in funding to the Habitat Conservation Trust Fund for 78 fish and wildlife projects. These projects include river and stream restorations, steelhead recovery, grassland ecosystem restoration, and wildlife population studies.



Selected 2005/06 Achievements (cont.)

- » Fifteen Vancouver Island marmots, Canada's most endangered mammal, were released back into the wild in 2005. This brings the number of marmots now living in the wild on Vancouver Island to approximately 35.
- » Established the Special Committee on Sustainable Aquaculture. Chaired by the Official Opposition, the Committee is looking at the economic impact of aquaculture on the B.C. coastal and isolated communities, sustainable options for aquaculture, and how B.C.'s regulatory regime for aquaculture compares to other jurisdictions.
- » Created a new mountain pine beetle response team to lead government's Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan and ensure co-ordinated actions between agencies. The team is working cooperatively with communities on economic diversification planning and has solidified a partnership with First Nations in beetle-affected areas.
- » Provided \$80 million for safe drinking water and waste-water projects to be implemented by local governments across the Province over the next three years.
- » Funded 87 British Columbia Community Water Improvement Program projects to a total value of \$127 million.

British Columbia has rightfully earned its reputation as Canada's gateway to the booming Asian economy.



GOAL 5:

Create more jobs per capita than anywhere else in Canada.

Employment provides opportunities for individuals, families, and communities. Economic growth and prosperity also provide resources for programs such as health care, education and support for those in need.

Government continues to focus on strengthening the conditions for a prosperous economy. Competitive taxes, appropriate regulation and balanced budgets are key to keeping our economy strong.

British Columbia's transportation network is the backbone of a growing economy and healthy, vibrant communities. Government is strengthening B.C.'s network of roads, railways, ports and airports in every region. Improving our transportation network lets our industries and shippers meet the needs of their customers, which creates jobs and stimulates trade. A modern transportation network also helps keep travellers safe, reduces congestion and pollution, and protects and expands access to vital services such as health care, schools, and recreation.

British Columbia is Canada's Pacific Gateway. Asia-Pacific countries are leading the world in economic growth and British Columbia has opportunities to strengthen trade, tourism, and cultural relationships and realize its potential as the gateway between Asia and North America.

The performance measure selected to measure progress on this goal is:

Performance Measure	Baseline
Number of new jobs created per 1,000 population compared to other provinces.	<i>In 2004 B.C. ranked third, behind Alberta and Nova Scotia. In 2005, B.C. was ranked Number One.</i>

Citizen-Centered Service Delivery

British Columbia is working to transform service delivery to ensure that programs and services are easy for citizens and business to understand and access. Progress is being made.

- In 2005/06 British Columbia opened its first FrontCounter BC office - a single window service for clients of provincial natural resource ministries and agencies. Highly trained, efficient and friendly staff assist clients to obtain approvals, licenses, and permits for natural resource uses based on each client's particular interests and needs.
- The quality of services in British Columbia has been rated markedly higher than the Canadian average. In 2005, satisfaction with provincial government services in B.C. has shown a twelve point increase, compared to a five point increase across Canada.

Selected 2005/06 Achievements

- » 100 per cent of public sector agreements that expired by March 31, 2006 were successfully re-negotiated. More than 230,000 public sector employees benefitted from agreements reached in 2005/06.
- » Committed \$2.3 billion to transportation infrastructure investments over three years. Projects include the Sea-to-Sky Highway Improvement Project, the second phase of the Kicking Horse Canyon Project, and the William R. Bennett Bridge.
- » Unveiled a \$3 billion Gateway Program to open up key economic gateways through the Lower Mainland.
- » Achieved a \$3.1 billion surplus and a \$1.5 billion reduction in provincial debt.
- » Introduced legislation to streamline access to private capital and expanded the Venture Capital Program budget by \$17 million. These funds are an important source of investment capital for eligible small and medium-sized B.C. businesses.
- » Committed \$66 million to the Community Development Initiative (CDI). More than 60 community projects located across the Province received funding to improve urban and rural local government infrastructure.
- » Announced an additional \$50 million for the Northern Development Initiative Trust, making a total of \$185 million in seed capital available to benefit families and businesses located in B.C.'s North. The additional \$50 million includes \$30 million specifically aimed at cross-regional pine beetle management and \$5 million to each of the four NDI regions for development projects. The Trust was first established in 2004 as part of the B.C. Rail Partnership.
- » Provided \$100 million to establish the Southern Interior Trust and North Island-Coast Trust, to create economic growth and more jobs based on regional priorities.

Selected 2005/06 Achievements (cont.)

- » Implemented tax changes to encourage companies that develop intellectual property to stay in British Columbia and expand their capital investment in B.C.
- » Announced a training tax credit to encourage employers to create new opportunities and help meet the demand for skilled workers. The credit program will be designed in consultation with industry representatives from around the Province.
- » Expanded the B.C. Provincial Nominee Program to allow more business immigrants and foreign dollars to flow to B.C. regional economies.
- » Announced a \$2.4 million dollar expansion of the BladeRunners program. BladeRunners is a successful industry supported employment program that trains at-risk youth for construction jobs.
- » Extended the film tax credit until 2008 and provided \$200,000 through the BC Film Commission to regional film commissions across the Province.
- » Provided \$25 million to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities for Community Tourism projects.
- » Provided \$12 million in one-time funding to B.C.'s six tourism regions to help attract visitors to B.C. regions.
- » Approved a new royalty scheme for ultra-marginal oil and gas wells and deep, marginal, coalbed gas.
- » Invested \$42 million to upgrade public roads throughout northeast B.C. so they can be used year-round by industrial traffic.
- » Dedicated \$2.3 million to train rural and aboriginal youth for careers in B.C.'s mining and mineral exploration industry.

- » Provided \$1.6 million for immigrant support services, including ESL and Youth Buddy programs that match immigrant youths with young Canadian mentors.
- » Reduced the general corporate income tax rate from 13.5 per cent to 12 per cent.
- » Provided \$500,000 for four pilot projects providing mentoring for women starting or changing careers.
- » Approved \$33.6 million in funding for research through the British Columbia Knowledge Development Fund. This funding will leverage \$65.2 million from the federal government and others.
- » Provided \$50 million to establish the Natural Resources and Applied Sciences Research Endowment.
- » Provided \$45 million to Genome British Columbia to support genome-related research in the Province.
- » Provided \$4 million to the Canadian Cancer Society, B.C. and Yukon Division to establish a research chair in primary cancer prevention
- » Dedicated \$10 million to create the One World Scholarship program.
- » Introduced the B.C. Conservation Corps program, to provide work for students and recent graduates to promote interest in conservation and environmental careers. Over 150 Corps members were employed in 2005/06 to work on 34 projects located throughout the Province.



Olympic Opportunities

The 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games offers many opportunities to create economic activity and jobs, build new relationships, and showcase British Columbia. Preparations for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games in 2010 reached a new milestone in February 2006 when the Olympic flag was passed to Vancouver at the Olympic Winter Games in Torino, Italy. From January through March of 2006, B.C.-Canada Place in Torino hosted over 100,000 visitors and was the site of dozens of workshops and networking events. More than 80 B.C. companies and communities took advantage of the facility.



Conclusion

2005/06 was an exciting and successful year for British Columbians. The achievements move our province closer to each of the Five Great Goals. There is more to be done but we will continue to move forward on our vision and ensure British Columbia remains what we know it to be – the Best Place on Earth.



A person in a white shirt and dark shorts is sitting on a dark, rocky hillside, looking out over a vast landscape. In the background, there is a large body of water, likely a lake or bay, and distant mountains under a hazy sky. The overall scene is serene and contemplative.

The Five Great Goals

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- 2 Lead the way in North America in healthy living and physical fitness.*
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