



THE VANCOUVER SUN

SECTION

B

# WESTCOAST

DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE REVISITED | B2-3

NEWS

ALLEGED SMUGGLER SURRENDERS | B4

EDITOR VALERIE CASSELTON 604-605-2125 • WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2006 • E-mail vcasselton@png.canwest.com | FINAL EDITION

## Vancouver death rates from cancer lowest in B.C.

Socio-economic factors and proximity to best medical services credited for situation

BY PAMELA FAYERMAN  
VANCOUVER SUN

**STATISTICS** | Proximity to the best medical care and socio-economic factors help explain why residents of the Vancouver coastal region have the lowest death rates from cancer and cardiovascular disease compared to other regions of the province, according to a report prepared for the provincial government.

B.C. provincial health officer Dr. Perry Kendall said Tuesday that higher education and economic status, along with lower obesity and non-smoking rates among citizens of the Vancouver coastal health region, are some of the reasons why cardiovascular disease mortality is 15.4 per 10,000 population, compared to 19.1 in the northern region.

As for cancer mortality, in the VCH region the rate is 14.1 per 10,000 population, compared to 17.3 in the Interior and 17.6 in the northern region.

The information comes from agencies like B.C. Vital Statistics and Statistics Canada, which the B.C. Progress Board used for its most recent annual report to Premier Gordon Campbell and the government.

The board was formed by the premier five years ago to provide advice on measures to "improve B.C.'s economic performance and social policy supports."

Dr. Reka Gustafson, medical health officer for the city of

See VANCOUVER REGION B8

## DO YOU KNOW THESE MEN?



A surveillance camera shows a pair of robbers entering a bank with gun in hand. Vancouver police are asking for the public's help in catching the pair who have terrified staff and customers at two institutions in the past two weeks. Hit were a TD-Canada Trust branch on Fraser Street and a branch on East Hastings. See Story, B5.

## Homeowner grant threshold to move up

**TAX** | Owners of homes valued up to \$780,000 to get relief as a result

BY CARLA WILSON

**BRITISH COLUMBIA** | Homeowners who have watched their property assessments soar can look forward to a new threshold on homeowner grants.

The province is introducing amendments in February to raise the full homeowner grant threshold to \$780,000 in assessed property value, up from the current \$685,000.

The Ministry of Finance estimates about 27,000 people across B.C. could benefit from the threshold increase. Of those, the vast majority — 23,500 — are in the Lower Mainland or Fraser Valley.

Under the new threshold, more than 95 per cent of B.C. homeowners will be eligible for the full homeowner grant.

The basic grant gives a homeowner a reduction of up to \$470 in property taxes. An additional grant of \$275 is available for those 65 and over, or who are disabled, or eligible for certain war-veteran allowances.

The change responds to yet another rise in property assessments in B.C.

Province-wide, assessments

See TAYLOR SAYS B7



### Tax reduction

The basic homeowner grant is meant to reduce the burden of residential property taxes on homeowners who occupy eligible residences, particularly people with lower valued homes who are often most in need. Current rules:

**\$470** Maximum tax reduction

**\$275** Further grant up to a maximum of \$275 available for seniors, the disabled and some veterans.

**\$5 Ceiling:** The grant is reduced on higher valued properties by \$5 for each \$1,000 of assessed value over \$685,000.

**\$0 Elimination:** The grant is eliminated altogether on assessed values of \$779,000 and up.

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF PROVINCIAL REVENUE

## Legal fees in land claims case soar

Appeal court judges order taxpayer-funded payments to Victoria law firm slowed



IAN MULGREW  
VANCOUVER SUN  
COLUMNIST

**COSTS** | A Victoria law firm representing a small Indian band in a little-known legal battle involving a Chilcotin land claim has col-

lected more than \$10 million in public money and expects to bill several million more before finishing the B.C. Supreme Court case.

The legal costs of the roughly 3,500 natives have skyrocketed from a projected \$1 million to probably more than \$15 million. The trial, which was expected to take six months, has had 300 days of court time already and will likely last another 18 months.

So expensive did the legal bills seem, both Ottawa and Victoria asked the B.C. Court of Appeal to intervene.

In written judgments that should be read as a wake-up call

to taxpayers, three appeal court judges said the situation needs to be addressed.

They agreed the litigation is important "not only to B.C. but also to the whole of Canada," but they split on what to do about the funding situation that in my opinion quite frankly is scandalous.

This mire is a result of a decision two years ago by the Supreme Court of Canada that said indigent native bands must receive public funding for lawsuits over important public issues.

In this case — which involves an aboriginal claim launched in 1990 — the B.C. Supreme Court

judge assigned to conduct the trial ordered the two levels of government to fund the native case and to pay 50 per cent of the legal fees and other costs as they were incurred — not at the end of the trial.

In July 2004, to ostensibly prevent economic hardship on the law firm, the judge amended his order and said the governments had to pay 100 per cent of those fees and costs in advance, subject to a 20-per-cent holdback.

In the majority decision written by Justice John Hall, supported by Justice Allan Thackray, the

See SECOND CHILCOTIN B6

## Ex-NPA president claims 'power play' led him to quit

BY FRANCES BULA  
VANCOUVER SUN

**VANCOUVER** | Paul Barbeau says he resigned as president of Vancouver's Non-Partisan Association party because he believes a group of board members have orchestrated a bid to take control for reasons that mystify him.

That bid for control occurred when two board members, without any discussion or notice to Barbeau, put out a motion by e-mail Sunday to appoint two new members to the board that day — one of them Mayor Sam Sullivan's campaign manager — even though the NPA board had a regularly scheduled meeting Tuesday.

"This is a power play to take control of the board," said Barbeau, who helped lead the centre-right party back into civic power in last November's elections after its near-annihilation three years earlier.

In an interview with *The Sun* Tuesday morning, Barbeau said there is a group of people on the board who see themselves as political players and want to be more involved in ongoing politics than the NPA has been traditionally in the past.

"It's been one of our struggles — do we maintain this independence between the board and elected

See BARBEAU SAW B5

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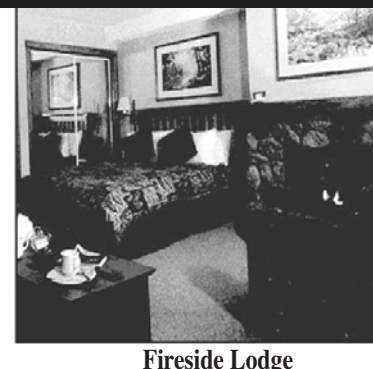
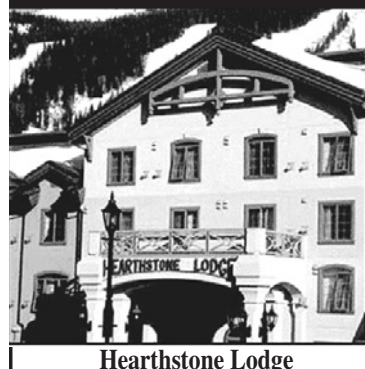
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# Taylor says grant aims to help people stay in their homes

From B1

have gone up 16 per cent.

This is the third year in a row that the government has raised the threshold, starting with moving it from \$525,000 to \$585,000 in 2004.

B.C. Finance Minister Carole Taylor said: "With the homeowner's grant, we really try particularly to get to those families that are perhaps under a bit of stress meeting the housing prices and needs of their families."

"It really is difficult for a lot of seniors and families who want to stay in their homes, but find that with these increased prices and increased taxes it's really a chore to do that. So the homeowner's grant is intended to help people stay in their homes."

Retiree Cam Young, 69, of Saanich, said Tuesday, "Well, God bless," when he heard the news. His home was assessed

at more than \$790,000 — up \$130,000 from the previous year— and a little over the planned new threshold. Young checked the value of 10 neighbours' homes to find that half had been pushed past the current \$685,000 threshold.

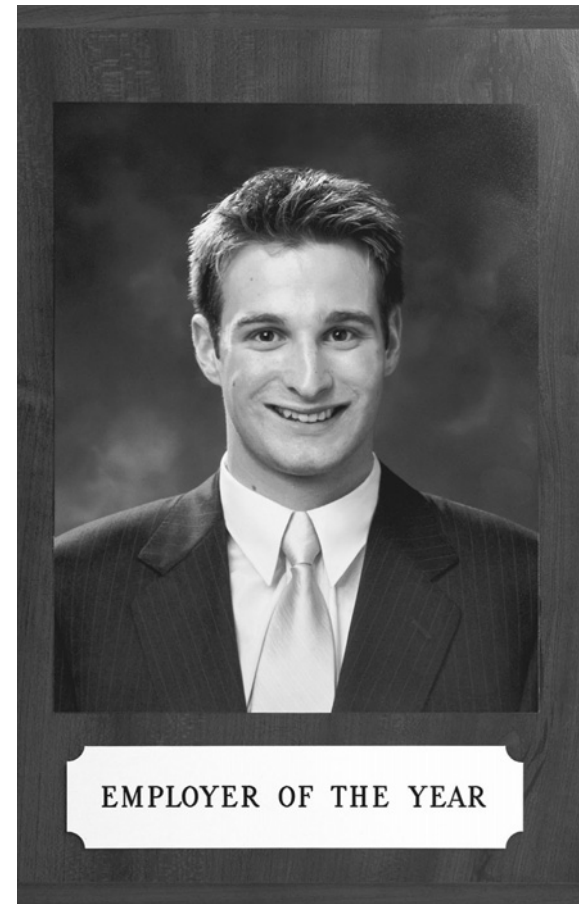
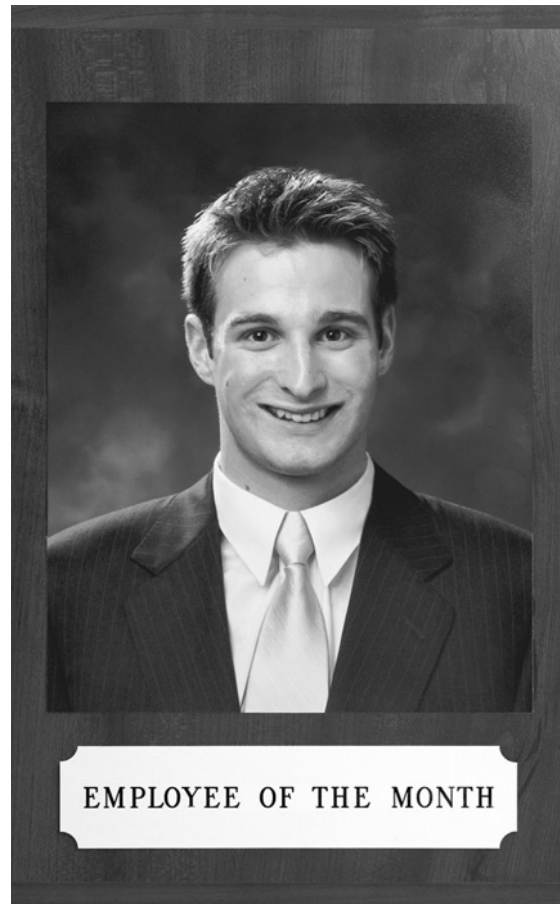
Young noted the provincial government was quick to respond to a similar situation last year — just before the election — by raising the grant threshold.

Victoria Times Colonist

With files from Chad Skelton, Vancouver Sun

### Correction Notice

On January 10th 2006, the Dodge Dealer advertisement titled "You Could Be A Millionaire" in this newspaper ran incorrectly. Please be aware that the "You Could Be A Millionaire" Contest had officially closed on January 3rd, 2006, and entries can no longer be received. Please also note that the purchase price and lease offer for the 2006 Dodge Caravan and 2006 Grand Caravan ran incorrectly. We apologize for any misunderstanding this may have caused.



EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

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#### Best Buy - Correction Notice

To our valued customers: We apologize for any inconvenience caused by an error in our flyer dated January 06 - January 12. Product: XBOX 360. Due to a manufacturing shortage, this product will not be available as advertised on p. 3 or our January 6th flyer. SKU:10066139.

#### Best Buy - Correction Notice

To our valued customers: We apologize for any inconvenience caused by an error in our flyer dated January 6 - January 12. Product: eMachines 3304 Computer Package. This product does not burn DVDs, as advertised on pg. 1 of our January 6th insert. In fact, it is able to burn CDs. SKU: 10070489.

#### Best Buy - Correction Notice

To our valued customers: We apologize for any inconvenience caused by an error in our flyer dated: January 06 - January 12. Product: ATI All-in-Wonder 9600 Video Card. This product is advertised for \$119.99 after a \$130 savings on p. 7 of our January 6th insert. In fact, no savings apply. SKU: 10065773/5772

#### FUTURE SHOP CORRECTION NOTICE

ATI All-in-Wonder X800 XL OEM Graphics Card 10067121. This product is advertised for \$349.99 after a \$100 savings on p. 5 of our January 6th flyer. In fact, no savings apply. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused our valued customers.

#### FUTURE SHOP Correction Notice

GE Front Load Laundry Pair 10067270/10067282. This washer/dryer pair is advertised for \$1899.99 after a \$300 savings on p.20 of our January 6th flyer. In fact, it is \$1899.99 after a \$170 savings. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused our valued customers.

#### FUTURE SHOP Correction Notice

XBOX 360 10066139. Due to a manufacturing shortage, this product will not be available as advertised on p. 1 of our January 6th Entertainment insert. We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused our valued customers.

#### Best Buy - Correction Notice

To our valued customers: We apologize for any inconvenience caused by an error in our flyer dated: January 06 - January 12. Product: Sanyo Portable CD Boombox. This product is advertised for \$89.99 after a \$10 savings on p. 7 of our January 6th flyer. In fact, no savings apply. SKU Z239: 10044888.

#### FUTURE SHOP CORRECTION NOTICE

To our valued customers: We apologize for any inconvenience caused by an error in our flyer dated: January 06 - January 12. Product: ATI X850XT Video Card. Due to a shortage of supplies, this product will not be available as advertised on p. 7 of our January 6th insert. SKU: 10061200



## VOTING IS ON MONDAY, JANUARY 23. YOU CAN ALSO VOTE IN ADVANCE.

**You can vote before election day**, if you wish. Advance voting will be held on Friday, January 13, Saturday, January 14, and Monday, January 16, from noon to 8:00 p.m. Locations of advance polling stations appear on the back of the voter information card.

**If you haven't received this card**, you are probably not on the voters list. To be able to vote, all you have to do is go to your polling station and present an official document that includes your name, address and signature.

**You can also vote by mail or in person** at your local Elections Canada office if you make the request before 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 17. Download the *Application for Registration and Special Ballot* form at [www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca) by clicking on the "I'm Mailing My Vote!" icon or call us now.

**To vote**, you must be a Canadian citizen and be at least 18 years old on election day.

**For more information**, please visit our Web site or contact your local Elections Canada office. You'll find the telephone number at [www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca) by clicking on the Voter Information Service icon.

[www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca)

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