Active October for TransAction 2014

Submitted by Kristen Spearman, EAF Member

Pop Quiz: What Employee Advisory Forum (EAF)-sponsored challenge is quickly becoming synonymous with the month of October, in the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure? You got it – TransAction!

In October, more than 200 employees from all over the province took the TransAction Healthy Workplace challenge, brought to you by the EAF. For the third consecutive year, participants teamed up with their colleagues and logged their minutes of activity for the 31 days of October. It was a hard fought but friendly race to the end, with previous year winners, Trans Wars and Lantern Rouge, vying for top spot amongst many other dedicated teams.

The winning team was the Pumpkin Ball Bangs, logging an impressive 42,570 points. Team “TransWars” – always a top competitor – finished as a close second with 41,970 points, followed by Lantern Rouge in third place at 40,393.

The victorious Pumpkin Ball Bangs, consisting of Mark Louttit, Terence Lai, Matthew Bond, Vincent Ong and Daniel Johnson from the Lower Mainland District, chalked up their astounding cache of points through a variety of activities, from trail running to basketball. They even capitalized on their breaks together to take in some fresh air and move around.

But one of the big questions was how did they come up with their offbeat name, Pumpkin Ball Bangs? The team says that none of them really know what it means. It was Dan Louttit who offered up this selection of names, to capture the team’s desire for a Halloween themed name:

- Devil’s Warriors
- Minions of Hades
- Pumpkin Ball Bangs
- The Headless Highwaymen
- Koopa Troopas
- Bunnypocalypse

On top of TransAction tracking team exertions, activity points were also monitored in a separate but equally competitive regional race. This year, the Southern Interior Region squeaked past HQ, the South Coast Region and the Northern Region, in the standings.

Lucy and Gary Stewart enjoy hiking in the open spaces around Kamloops, including Battle Rock, on the north side of Kamloops Lake.
Editor’s Note

It’s always uplifting to get good news, and the arrival of the ministry’s newest TELP – Truly Excellent Little Person, was especially sweet.

Maya Kinnear (featured on Page 14) came into the loving arms of her parents Greg Kinnear and his wife Lisa, on Oct. 2. As I was proofreading the stories in this issue of Road Runner, I was imagining young Maya growing up and one day working for the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, like her father. (It’s intriguing that Greg also started with the ministry as a TELP – a Technician Entry Level Program employee.)

I thought Maya might someday be a development approvals type like those who recently came together in Kelowna to expand their knowledge and skills. She could turn out to be an active person, logging exercise times for the TransAction Challenge (or something like it) as employees did in October, or do muscle-knotting stair climbs to raise funds to help others. Maybe she’ll be a CVSE officer and be honoured at 119-year-old Agassiz’s All Saints Church, which by then would be more than 140 years old. If she was, her photo could appear in the Employee Advisory Forum calendar.

I see great potential and opportunities in Maya’s future. And looking at the character, enthusiasm and professionalism of employees around me and who appear in this issue, I see it throughout our ministry.

Nancy McLeod, Editor

The RoadRunner is an employee newsletter, published four times a year, on the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Internet site.

We welcome your story submissions. Email your article as a Word document (approx. 500 words maximum) and your high-resolution photographs as JPEGs to: RoadRunner@gov.bc.ca.

In the email for your story, please attach the Word document and graphics (photos, charts, etc.) separately. Please DO NOT embed graphics in the article — this compromises reproduction quality and the images may not be useable by our graphic artist. Photos supplied should be one megabyte.

For contributor guidelines, writing tips and upcoming deadlines, see Road Runner on TRANnet.

Check out the Employee Advisory Forum website for regular updates: www.th.gov.bc.ca/EAF/home_intra.asp.

For @Work – the Public Service Community Website, visit: gww.gov.bc.ca/

Graphic design for Road Runner is provided by Kathy Macovichuk.
In all, 201 participants in 43 teams logged more than 680,000 exercise points during October. That equates to 340,072 minutes, or 5,667 hours of medium-intensity exercise!

As always, TransAction was a fun way to get active and enjoy some friendly competition. Thank you for getting out there and participating. A few competitors responded to my request to share their TransAction tales.

**Vincent Ong**

Earlier in 2014, I was involved in a serious motor vehicle accident. Feeling post-accident repercussions, I was determined to get back in shape and return to my normal routine. The accident forced me to stop playing ice hockey, working out and enjoying the beautiful B.C. outdoors. Mandatory physiotherapy twice a week was a good transition for me to get back to my lifestyle. When I started feeling stronger at the end of the summer, I was able to pick up hiking, cycling and low impact weight training. Every month was a new challenge, but I was determined to get back on the ice.

TransAction was great opportunity for me to showcase what I had been doing on my “return to ice.” I play for two teams who play at least three to four times a week. On my days off, you can find me at the gym strength conditioning and cardio training. At home, I practice stick handling and shooting. On the weekends, my girlfriend and I go for hikes and/or cycle. During work hours, the Pumpkin Ball Bangs utilize our breaks to get some fresh air and move around.

Something so simple such as logging hours (which I have never done before) really intrigued me and helped me stay focused.

**Kyla Kelch**

We didn’t have a lot of participation with TransAction teams from our branch but we took the opportunity to celebrate a healthy workplace by going out and doing a fun activity together as a group. About 20 people from the branch rallied together and played ping pong, pool and shuffle board at the local games bar. Just a reminder that healthy workplace month is not just about physical health but about the emotional well-being of the team too.

**Gary Stewart**

Here are some pics of where TransAction took me and my dogs hiking. This has inspired me to be more active and not just on the hiking, that is something I do a fair bit. But I did start a routine of more vigorous exercise three to four times a week that I’m hoping to keep up with.

Thanks to the EAF for getting us out there.
I walked into the room and the buzz of positive energy rippled with promise. It was going to be a great day!

The development approvals community gathered in Kelowna for their first full-team meeting in two years. The focus was “Growing Our Own.” The idea was to support the professional development of these people who form an important pillar of Highways Department and ministry work, which contributes to the province’s economy. Here was an opportunity to transfer valuable knowledge from the seasoned, long-time employees to the newer recruits. And with almost 60 per cent of the group having less than five years’ experience with development approvals, it was a timely choice.

Smiling faces greeted one another as echoes of “Oh, you’re the person I’ve been emailing!” and “This is great, I am glad to meet another dev tech,” and “I can’t wait to hear about what you’re working on,” bounced off the walls of the meeting room. There was even a little bit of awe as someone whispered “So that’s the legendary Jenny Pleice from HQ.”

Tsilhqot’in Nation v. British Columbia

I watched as Kevin Gillese (legal counsel for our ministry) captivated the room with legal stories (seriously, it was interesting stuff) peppered with tales of living in remote locations, championing human rights in Africa and mountaineering (ask him about his motto “move or die”). His passion around First Nations’ land claims was palpable as he discussed the recent Supreme Court of Canada judgment, on Tsilhqot’in Nation v. British Columbia, and what it means for development approvals in the future.

Bill Smith, a ministry employee for more than 30 years, and now a consultant, had much wisdom to share. His laid-back approach was a great foil to Kevin’s quick-moving style. But don’t kid yourself; the passion was just as deep. His anecdotes gave us lots of technical information yet they included tips on things to watch out for (“Don’t let them add water to the concrete after they leave the shop”), ways to keep quality high (“Make sure it’s penetrating prime they’re using”), and expressed a commitment to the best possible outcome.

Skills Needed

Contractor Kurt Edmunds shared a vision for future training offerings, both technical and soft skills. A lot of research has gone into the design for a credentialed program that will cover the full gamut of skills and abilities required in this profession. There was recognition that knowledge, confidence, relationship building and successful development are cornerstones of this training piece. When I saw the list, my jaw dropped.

It included road construction, natural hazards investigation, hydrology, transportation design and traffic impact assessments, acts and regulations, legal survey, mapping, utilities… and I haven’t started to name the communication skills! He left the us feeling hopeful as he reminded us all to “seek first to understand.”

And the excitement didn’t stop there. Senior Highway Design Engineer Grant Irvine shed light on design criteria (including consideration of corridor and community plans), there was a practical case study, and Regional Traffic Engineer

More on Page 5...
Faisal Siddiqui left us with a new mantra “scope development, scope development, scope development.” Corporate Insurance and Bonds Manager Jenny Pleice brought clarity to securities, surety bonds (and why we don’t use them for developments) and a new acronym for me – ILOC (irrevocable letter of credit). Her approachable style of plain language and humorous visuals made the information accessible and appealing.

Through the Eyes of a Developer

We also looked through the lens of a developer, as Peter Mulyk of Mulyk Consulting Inc., shared his point of view.

Leslie Elder and her organizing committee put together a thoughtful yet action-packed agenda that covered decision-making principles, technical expertise around road construction and an exploration of the professionalism of the development approvals community. Practical tools, checklists and case study information were carefully gathered into a take-away handbook. The cherry on top was a panel of subject matter experts with an open question-and-answer period to wrap up the day.

By the end of the second day of meetings, my head was spinning with new information. What an eye-opener!

Reflections from Participants

“| I was feeling very stagnant in my job. This meeting helped me remember all the knowledge I have gained. And it gave me motivation to get involved in the process of knowledge transfer to the new employees. I left the meeting with boosted confidence and renewed love for what I do.” |
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“I appreciate in these tight fiscal times that Executive supports us coming together face to face to learn, to connect so that we build relationships to transfer knowledge.”

— Robyn Clifford

“I got the sense that the new folks who have joined our development approvals community do come with a very high level of knowledge in many different disciplines. The idea of entering the workforce as a blank slate is no longer applicable. Let’s consider this when we determine how to transfer our internal knowledge. This transfer may very well be more of a reciprocal exchange.”

— Blaine Garrison

“The organizing team did a fantastic job of delivering pertinent information. I had the opportunity to meet many new development approvals staff, as well as connect with people I hadn’t seen in several years. I think it was a huge success.”

— Joan Brickwood

Other Comments Overheard

“Norm Parkes’ words at the start of day one were a true acknowledgement of the value of the work development approvals does.”

“So well organized, the guest speakers were excellent, so much relevant information!”

“The relaxed atmosphere really allowed me to learn.”

“The energy in the room was amazing. The mix of activities combined with knowledgeable yet humorous speakers, really created a valuable experience.”

1. “Banana” is the acceptance curve for gravel sizes.
2. “Cement is to concrete as flour is to bread.”
3. “Land development is not for the faint of heart.” – Peter Mulyk
4. “Risk is inherent, we need to manage it. It includes both opportunity and threat.” – Jenny Pleice
5. “The Williams decision means that our relationship with First Nations is changing.” – Kevin Gillese
6. “Batter” is not just for fish or pancakes. It’s a sample taken from a mixture of wet cement used to measure the consistency of the mix.
7. A signed signal timing sheet is required to have traffic signal timing adjusted.
8. Putting a development approvals project “to bed” involves multiple steps.
9. PLA stands for preliminary layout approval (not picking lighting accessories).
10. “Even old guys can learn new things.” – Bill Smith
Honouring Peace Officers in Agassiz

Honouring peace officers and first responders happens annually at the Agassiz All Saints church, and on Oct. 26, eight Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement (CVSE) officers were among the special guests. CVSE Supervisor Cindy Hogg and her 11-year old daughter Megan were there for their fourth consecutive year. They were joined by CVSE employees Roger Perry, Ben Taylor, Kirsten Roscoe, Leighton Warner, Pete Cocker, Kevin Cook and Mark Steberl.

The RCMP, Canadian Pacific Railroad Police, and the Harrison Hot Springs Fire Department were also guests at the event.

A service was held, then lunch was served, and the mayors of Agassiz and Harrison Hot Springs spoke. It was the sixth year for the event and an attendance record was set, as parishioners and visitors filled the church to capacity and overflowed into the halls.

Kick the Can Creates Greener Waste Management at HQ

Recycling. Organics. Waste. Do these words conjure up images of less-than-pleasurable weekly household chores? Perhaps you never thought that trading in your garbage can would be part of your working day?

That all changed in December, when staff at headquarters participated in the kick the can initiative, by pushing, pulling and dragging their old garbage cans to the courtyard at 940 Blanshard Street, in Victoria. After turning in their metal cans, they received two compact plastic desktop cans with lids – a green one and a black one. The black container is used for non-recyclable garbage, while the green is for organic waste like food scraps, paper coffee cups and paper towels.

Why did we do this, you might be wondering…

There were two key reasons:

1) to implement the Solid Waste Management Plan that Shared Services BC (Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens’ Services) developed, and

2) to abide by the new Capital Regional District bylaw that requires all homes and businesses (including government offices) to sort their organics, recycling and waste. Starting Jan. 1, 2015, organizations that fail to comply with this bylaw can face fines.
Pink Shirt Day Plus Respectful Workplaces Every Day
Submitted by Seana van der Valk, Planner, Internal Communications and Engagement

Did you know that Pink Shirt Day is celebrated on various dates across the world, and that it originated in Canada?

That’s right! Two high school students from Nova Scotia started the international movement by taking a stand against bullying, in 2007. And, in 2012, the United Nations declared International Anti-Bullying Day as May 4.

In Canada, this year we observed Pink Shirt Day on Feb. 25. People wearing pink will raise awareness of the issue.

Of course, bullying isn’t just a behaviour that takes place in the schoolyard; it also occurs in the workplace as well as other settings. We all have a role in preventing and addressing bullying and ensuring a respectful work environment for everyone.

Stand up! Raise awareness! Wear your pink shirt.

Check out this video from 2014 Pink Shirt Day: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVEHtgZ8vX8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVEHtgZ8vX8)

To learn more about respectful workplaces, and how to address bullying and harassment, please visit [Working with Others](http://www.myhr.ca) on the MyHR website.

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**RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE RESOURCE MAP**

To ensure respectful behaviour is being practised and promoted we must respond to issues quickly and appropriately, and ensure that problems are being handled well and in accordance with policy.

**Has an issue occurred?**

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**SUPERVISOR**

- Are you communicating often and clearly with your staff?
- Do you act on problems quickly before they get too big?
- Do you show appreciation and recognize your staff?
- What ways do you improve relationships?
- Do you keep an eye out for warning signs?

**EMPLOYEE**

- Are you communicating often and clearly with your supervisor and co-workers?
- Do you act on problems quickly before they get too big?
- Do you show appreciation and recognize your co-workers?
- What ways do you improve relationships?
- Are you keeping an eye out for warning signs?

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Click here for a closer look at this respectful workplace resource map.

This year Pink Shirt Day took place on Feb. 25. For more information, visit [pinkshirtday.ca](http://www.pinkshirtday.ca)
Our Employee Advisory Forum (EAF) enjoyed a face-to-face meeting in Victoria, Nov. 24 to 26. This was one of my first EAF activities since re-joining the EAF – my last EAF term ended in the spring of 2013, before the forum was reorganized. I was excited to see the new structure in action, and get a sense of how it is working.

EAF Then and Now

If you haven’t been involved in the EAF, you may not know that the format of the group was changed last year. In the old format, the forum was composed of six teams, with each team having responsibility for projects related to specific drivers from the Workplace Environment Survey (WES). We accomplished a lot, but sometimes, it was a challenge for members to feel like they were meeting their obligations to the EAF. Trying to balance work and EAF led some members to feeling pretty guilty – not ideal!

In the new structure, there are no teams. Projects are still related to the WES drivers, but now mini-project groups are formed from the full membership, so that members can take on the right size and timing of project for their own availability. The face-to-face sessions are used differently as well, making the most of having a chunk of dedicated time to let members build some content for each of the current EAF projects. This very effective use of meeting time helps to make workload balance through the rest of the year a lot more manageable.

The two-way communication with Executive is “ramped up” as well, with increased focus on Temperature Checks. In case you haven’t been involved in a Temperature Check yet, what happens is that a series of questions is developed. The questions might be on one or two topics for which Executive is seeking employee input, or on topics that EAF members identify as priority through conversations with their business units. Each EAF member then reaches out to about ten people in their work unit for one-on-one conversations using the questions as a guideline, and then provides those responses back to HQ to be compiled into a ministry-wide response. By talking to just ten people each, the EAF members gather information from about 20 per cent of the total ministry staff. This is an excellent representative sample.

Face to Face with Excellence

One thing that hasn’t changed about the EAF is that the atmosphere at a face-to-face meeting is inspirational! This is a keen and dedicated group of employees, and it is a privilege and a boost to my own work engagement to rub shoulders with them and let their enthusiasm influence mine. Organizers thoughtfully prepared a highly interactive agenda, and the presentations were both surprising and interesting. Day one was devoted to the leadership team and eight new EAF members; the next two days included the full forum.

Both full team days started with a conversation with a member of Executive. Deputy Minister Grant Main joined us to talk about our ministry as seen from his level, what his days are like, the BC on the Move 10-year transportation plan, how big our big projects are and the Managed Staffing Strategy. He generously fielded questions on everything from his own professional development to meaningful employee input.

Partnerships Assistant Deputy Minister Jacquie Dawes met with us the next morning. She spoke about Treasury Board, current projects in the Partnerships Department and the value she sees in the EAF. This was followed by a great question and answer session.

In addition to Executive conversations and work on EAF projects that will be released over the year, our meeting time was peppered with impactful presentations. Those included a presentation for leadership and new members entitled, Building Working Relationships; a TED Talk on everyday leadership; presentations about on-going ministry initiatives such as “LEAN Where You Work”, and a surprisingly engaging mindful meditation with Correctional officer and Core Programs Facilitator Mary McAlister, who works at the Vancouver Island Regional Correctional Centre. We had a blast playing the ministry version of the game show “Jeopardy”, which Michael Dinney built for us, and relaxed with ministry jigsaw puzzles during our breaks.

It was a powerful two and a half days, and I emerged delighted to be back, and very much looking forward to continued involvement with the EAF. ✤
DID YOU KNOW?

**FACTS ABOUT PAY AND BENEFITS**

**Help is Just a Phone Call Away**

Submitted by Kim Brown, EAF Member

**Homewood Human Solutions Offers Experts**

The following programs and services are available to everyone, including all auxiliary employees. Dependants who normally live with an employee may also use these services, which include:

- Personal finance planning
- Legal advice and referral services
- Short-term counselling, which can help address a range of common concerns including:
  - Relationship challenges
  - Family and parenting issues
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Stress management
  - Work-related issues including conflict and work-life balance
  - Grief and bereavement, addiction and trauma

Counselling services are available face-to-face, by telephone and via e-counselling.

I have found the telephone counselling extremely helpful. They provided me with resources and materials that helped me talk to my daughter about being bullied at school. Knowing that there are experts at the end of the phone line to help, listen and give guidance is a great benefit.

Each service includes a needs assessment conducted by a professional who will determine the number of sessions you may receive — there is no maximum limit assigned. They may also suggest additional services that may be of benefit to you. Feel free to re-access services throughout the year for different reasons.

Call Homewood Human Solutions at 1-800-655-5004 or submit the Homewood Human Solutions Request Form to access this service. Visit the Homewood Human Solutions website for more information: www.homewoodhumansolutions.com.

**Kim Brown found Homewood Solutions to be extremely helpful when her child was having problems at school.**

**EAF Recognition Calendar Released**

Submitted by Karina Kersten, EAF Member

Yeah! The new 2015 Employee Advisory Forum (EAF) recognition calendar is here!

That’s right — your EAF welcomes the New Year again with the annual calendar.

The EAF calendar is fun, functional and features your co-workers from across the province.

This calendar is our gift to you, to thank you for another year of commitment and dedication, to share our successes and to celebrate our diversity. This is our way of recognizing and promoting the fine work you do. Thank you for a great year and here’s to another excellent year ahead!

The calendar is now available in 8½” x 11” print-ready format and accessible on our EAF Website. If you have any questions or feedback, or difficulty downloading or printing the file, please contact me, Karina Kersten, at (250) 387-5062, or contact your branch EAF representative.

Enjoy!

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FACTS ABOUT PAY AND BENEFITS**

**Coaching Can Help**

Submitted by Beverly Van Druten-Blais and Susan Cringle, EAF Members

**Coaching Services — Helping You Reach Your Potential**

It’s the season of New Year’s resolutions and the commitment to self-improvement.

Have you pledged to improve your performance at work? Are you in need of a career challenge? Are you looking for ideas and support to inspire your team? Or, maybe you’re just looking for a fresh perspective.

Well, did you know that performance coaching is available to all BC Public Service employees at every career level? Working with a performance coach will challenge you to examine your present state and then when you’re ready, your coach will help you develop an achievable plan to help you reach your goals.

**What is coaching?**

Coaching is an active partnership that helps you in identifying and obtaining clarity on your goals and supports you to be successful at work. Through coaching, you will move toward your goals with focus and commitment as you close the gap between where you are now and where you want to be.

EAF Member Susan Cringle is considering accessing coaching services to reach her 2015 goals. “I’m looking for additional support in reaching my highest potential in my current role, and I’m excited about the possibilities working with a coach can offer,” she says.

**What’s available?**

Coaching sessions are strictly confidential and can be held in person, over the phone or by webcam. Services include:

- Individual coaching
  - Optimize your performance
  - Expand your professional career opportunities

More on Page 10…

**Susan Cringle is considering coaching services.**

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FACTS ABOUT PAY AND BENEFITS**

**Help is Just a Phone Call Away**

Submitted by Karina Kersten, EAF Member
Northern Region Business Services Event Goes Tropical
Submitted by Lenora Fillion, Regional Manager, Business Services

Who says it is cold in the north?
With temperatures well above zero, I invited my staff to my home for a winter celebration to recognize all their efforts in 2014. Because I couldn’t take my staff to Hawaii, I brought Hawaii to my staff.

On Dec. 10, at our monthly meeting and after our ham luncheon, we enjoyed a few games. These games consisted of a hula hoop contest, a rock rolling contest where they had to hit the front leg of a three legged stool (none of the rocks were round so this was very unpredictable) and a spear throwing contest.

Although every member of my team is a winner, for the games we played, it was evident that Jean Bergman won the hula hoop contest hands down.

The rock rolling victory was clinched by Linda-Lee Schell by a smidgen, and the spear throwing contest was a draw (because the spears didn’t work very well). Overall, gauging by the amount of laughter, a happy time was had by all. The photos really speak for themselves!

I wish to thank my staff, once again, for all that they do every day. Each of you are amazing and so appreciated! ♦

In her flamboyant tropical outfit, Melanie Robbestad focused everyone’s attention on her Business Continuity Plan presentation.

FACTS ABOUT PAY AND BENEFITS Coaching Can Help

…Continued from Page 9

- enhance the performance of your direct reports
  - Team coaching
  - optimize team performance
  - 360° assessment debriefs

EAF Member Beverly Van Druten-Blais says, “So many private companies now offer coaching to employees identified as high potential, as a perk, while the BC Public Service makes it available to everyone, at no cost to the employee.”

It’s easy to sign up!

Complete the online Coaching Services Request Form or email a PDF version to Performance Coaching. You are eligible to receive six sessions.

So what are you waiting for? Take the next step in reaching your career goals. You don’t need to do it alone – qualified professionals are there to help! ♦
The Hearty Harvest Lunch served up by Executive for the annual Provincial Employees Community Service Fund (PECSF) was a “souper” success.

All seats were sold for the Nov. 13 event, in HQ’s 3A boardroom at 940 Blanshard. Tasty soups and delicious sandwiches were savoured by about 80 employees.

The event was among many PECSF happenings around the province, including a mini-golf tournament at HQ. In total, ministry employees contributed about $49,000 from events and payroll deductions.

Thanks go to Executive Sponsor Deborah Bowman, Campaign Coordinator Susan Kwan, Regional Coordinators Loretta Carlson, Nicole Folk and Melanie Robbestad, and the many canvassers and event volunteers who pitched in to make PECSF 2014 a success. Appreciation also goes to all who supported fund raising events or made direct donations to the fund.

Tickets to the fund-raising event were sold out.

Employees line up for lunch from Deborah Bowman, Grant Main, Rosa Cutler, Stacy Scriver and Vincent Lee.

Employees share conversation and a hearty mid-day meal.

Partnerships ADM
Jacquie Dawes, Deputy Minister
Grant Main and
Policy and Programs
ADM Deborah
Bowman ready to
serve up lunch.
Northern Region PECSF Activities a Big Win

Submitted by Melanie Robbestad, Regional Management Administrator

Visitors to the building appreciated Melanie Robbestad’s PECSF presentation of coffee and baked goods.

I’m very proud to announce that the Northern Region Office was able to raise $661.05, by the end of the Provincial Employees Community Services Fund (PECSF) Annual Fall Campaign.

We started off the campaign with our Annual Coffee Kickoff on Oct. 2. Once again, our local Starbucks was very generous and donated all the coffee, cups, cream, sugar, and this time, even a coffee warmer. The Administrative Team (aka the A-Team) organized and staffed the table and Ryan Todd was gracious enough to be our runner back and forth to Starbucks to refresh supplies. We raised over $50 more than last year, with a total of $139.50 being deposited.

There were two ministry-wide bingo games held this year, one on Oct. 7 and another on Oct. 21. Although it’s been a busy season, we still had a handful of participants and a winner on the second game. Linda-Lee Schell won a beautiful stainless steel travel coffee mug and we raised $54!

Books, Baking and Beans

On Oct. 15, we held our Book and Bake Sale. We received many donations of baked goods and books. Great deals were had that day, and we were able to raise $173.75. Special thanks to all those that brought baking – Lenora Fillion, Denzil Amor, Deanna Ramsey, Pam Castle, Raylene Otto, Linda-Lee Schell and Heather Harris. We couldn’t do it without you guys. Plus you’re all darned good bakers!

I especially enjoyed the Earl Grey cookies from Denzil – very different, and by different, I mean awesome!

Pam Castle held a couple of 50/50 draws, on Oct. 15 and Nov. 6, with an added bonus of a grand prize surprise draw

Winning Auction

A Loonie Auction was held on Nov. 6. This was an event that our Aboriginal Youth Intern, Naomi Findlay, had brought to us last year, and because it was such a success, Linda-Lee Schell knew she had to carry it on. We had some amazing donations and lots of tickets were sold – we raised $94! The auction winners and the goods they won are as follows.

Linda-Lee Schell won both of the Bahindi Bags, all of the crystal including the decanters, and the woven basket. Pat Egan won the address book with horses on the front, the red towels and bag, the cutting mat and the shelf/drawer liners. Tony Bennett won the horse puzzle, the Tassimo coffee holder, the Kobo jackets and the large framed and matted picture. Denzil Amor won the "Welcome Friends" clothes pin and the print by local First Nations artist Shirley Babcock. Lenora Fillion won the glass ice bucket, with six glasses and the bottle of champagne, and both of the bags made by Heather Harris. Melanie Robbestad won the leather wine carrier. Catherine Seel won the baking dish and the power mixer. Mary Laing won the tool set and Jed Zimmerman won the garden puzzle. The glass pitcher was given to Jean Bergman for all her help in cleaning and packing up.

The district offices took part in the province-wide bingo, as well as holding some of their own events. All in all, the PECSF Annual Campaign was another roaring success. Thank you to all of you who assisted with organizing, participating and to those that signed up for payroll deductions as well.

If you would like to see more photos – click on this link PECSF 2014 – and for those that have more photos, please load them into that folder as well. ♦
The Ups and Downs of Scaling Stairs for Santa

Submitted by Mark Pratt, Fleet Services Manager

Stair climbers at HQ stepped up to raise funds for two families in Victoria, for Christmas.

Employees climbed up and down thousands of steps to help others, for the second “Stairs for Santa’s Stocking Stuffers” event, at HQ in December.

It started in 2013, when Ian Pilkington and I, along with a few others like Jason Wood and Kim Thompson, who occasionally “train” in the back stairwell on rainy days, thought we could use the stairs to raise funds for the two families that HQ employees assist every Christmas.

Our “stairwell challenge” connects eight floors (basement to the roof) for a total of 152 steps up per trip. To compare, 12 trips up the stairs is equivalent to running up to the main deck at the CN Tower.

In our first year, we had 10 participants ascending and descending the stairwell – all of whom managed to out-do my 16 trips in one hour. From all accounts, a few of them couldn’t walk for the next couple of days, and rumour is one of the younger ones had to take a day off to recover!

In 2013, we raised just over $400 which was to be split with the champion “Stair Master”. However, winner Alex Ritchie gave his share to Sharon Cowden, HQ’s long-time Christmas families contact, who turned it into Christmas essentials for the families.

In 2014, we had nine climbers return for more punishment and we raised well over $800 for our Christmas families. This time, we decided that all the money would go directly to the fund. This was just as well, as previously generous Alex Ritchie was the winner once again, logging a total of 27 trips (4,104 steps or nearly two times up the CN Tower!). Our second place climber, Gord Bonwick, deserves extra acknowledgement for doing his 25 round trips while suffering from the flu.

Appreciation also goes to volunteers Dale Wood (ready with defibrillator and first aid), Jason Wood (music man/electronics) and Sharon Cowden (audit). The money raised by Stairs for Santa’s Stocking Stuffers makes a significant addition to the other gifts of goods and cash donated by HQ employees to the families.

I am very impressed with my colleagues at 940 Blanshard for their participation and donations, and especially for the concern supporters showed for the climbers making strenuous up and down treks. (Some of those climbers, once again, had trouble walking properly for a couple days.)

Stiff and sore muscles seem to be a small price to pay to help make two families’ Christmases special!

12 trips up the stairs is equivalent to running up to the main deck at the CN Tower.

In our first year, we had 10 participants ascending and descending the stairwell – all of whom managed to out-do my 16 trips in one hour. From all accounts, a few of them couldn’t walk for the next couple of days, and rumour is one of the younger ones had to take a day off to recover!

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>No of steps</th>
<th>Equal to [ ] round trips at 940 Blanshard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>940 Blanshard, Stairwell # 3 (P-3 to 6), Victoria</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Ben, London, England</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forth Rail Bridge, Scotland</td>
<td>680</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BT Tower, Birmingham, England</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackpool Tower, Blackpool, England</td>
<td>1,036</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle Space Needle, United States</td>
<td>1,164</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canary Wharf Tower, London, England</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eiffel Tower (Deck # 3) Paris, France</td>
<td>1,710</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN Tower (Main Deck) Toronto</td>
<td>1,776</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN Tower (Sky Pod) Toronto</td>
<td>2,579</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petronas Twin Towers, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia</td>
<td>2,860</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tallest stairwell in the world – Dubai Tower, Dubai, United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>3,097</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 SANTA’S STAIRS TEAM</th>
<th># of round trips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alex Ritchie</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gord Bonwick</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Pilkington</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian Sturrock</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameron Derdak</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grace Sherratt</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilal Bakht</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicky Willow</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Thompson</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Pratt (sets the minimum stair standard the day before the event)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2014 SANTA’S STAIRS TEAM

Stiff and sore muscles seem to be a small price to pay to help make two families’ Christmases special!
How the Bulkley Stikine District Celebrates the Holidays
Submitted by Caitlin Dobson, TELP Operations Technician

The holiday season has come and gone yet again, but it’s the acts of generosity that stay with us all year round.

A group of us from the Bulkley Stikine District had a blast working together to get a Christmas hamper ready for a deserving family in the Bulkley Valley. We filled it with all the necessities to ensure that the family had everything that was required to make the holiday a special one, and we added a few extras to carry the holiday cheer into the New Year.

No one was forgotten in the making of the hamper which included everything from diapers to dog food! It was a great team-building exercise for our group and we also got to see how the hamper program brings a community together.

On delivery day, three of us and our operations manager’s daughter brought our boxes of donations to the hamper depot. The smiling faces and handshakes of appreciation that greeted us showed just how much this community valued the extra help.

Bulkley Stikine District employees have been providing a Christmas hamper for a local family for more than five years. The program, which has been run by Smithers Community Service Association for more than 30 years, supports more than 1,000 residents every year. Each hamper includes non-perishable food items and new toys and gifts for children under the age of 16, and helps make the Christmas season a bit brighter for families in three communities in our district.

Christmas should be a time for celebration, not stress, and we’re pleased that we could help a family enjoy the season without them having to worry about the most basic of things.

Tiny TELP Born in West Kootenay
Submitted by Hugh Eberle, West Kootenay District Manager

It is with great pleasure that the West Kootenay District office announces its youngest TELP (Truly Excellent Little Person) ever.

Trail Road Area Manager Greg Kinneer is a new dad, with the arrival of his daughter Maya on Oct. 2, at 6 pounds, 13 ounces.

Greg has been with our ministry now for three years and started as a TELP himself. I guess like father like daughter. Please feel free to pass on your best wishes to Greg and his wife, Lisa.

Maya Kinneer, pictured here shortly after her birth, had grown to 12 pounds by late January.

We’re looking for stories and photos for the May Road Runner

Please email them to RoadRunner@gov.bc.ca by April 7