



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IMPORTANCE OF OPEN GOVERNMENT HIGHLIGHTED DURING 'RIGHT TO KNOW WEEK'

Victoria—Information and Privacy Commissioner David Loukidelis today announced a series of events to be held across British Columbia as part of national Right to Know Week, to be held September 28 to October 3, 2008. In announcing the events, Loukidelis said, “Through these events, we’ll emphasize the role access to information plays in open and accountable government. The right to know is critically important in ensuring good government, as these free public events will show.”

In British Columbia, the public’s right to know is guaranteed by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The public’s right to information allows anyone to request records relating to the decisions, operations, administration and performance of government. The underlying principle is that citizens are best equipped to hold government accountable, and are better able to participate in the democratic process, when they have timely access to relevant information.

Some of the key events open to the public include a seminar on October 1 in Victoria, where Assistant Information Commissioner of Canada Suzanne Legault and Loukidelis will speak to “The State of Open Government in Canada: A1 or 911?” Vancouver events include a public seminar by internationally respected access-to-information academic Alasdair Roberts and archival expert Professor Terry Eastwood, titled “Government Secrecy in Canada and BC: Are We Winning the Struggle?” Other public seminars will be held in Parksville and Campbell River, with further special seminars being held in Surrey, 100 Mile House, Kamloops and Prince George. In addition, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner is hosting a province-wide, online ‘Right to Know Contest’ for students, with the winner receiving an Apple *iPod touch*.

Full details of all Right to Know Week events can be found at www.oipc.bc.ca.

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