



British Columbia Golf Awareness Day

Photo credits: Walter Tychnowicz

British Columbia Golf Awareness Day

May 18th, 2011

The British Columbia Allied Golf Association (BCAGA) kicked off the golf season with a visit to the British Columbia Legislature on May 18th. This was BCAGA's first-ever lobby day and the visit was focused on providing Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) with a full introduction to the industry-side of British Columbia's most popular sport: its size and scope, its charitable and youth involvement, its sound environmental practices, and the numerous health, social, and economic benefits the sport provides. The day emphasized that golf courses are responsible stewards of their lands and that the industry wants to be a partner in the development of smart, science-based regulations, so we can promote the game of golf and make British Columbia a better place to live, work, and play. The day featured a breakfast roundtable with the Minister of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation, a press conference, 15 meetings with MLAs during the day, and a post-session reception attended by 22 MLAs and their staff members.

The Issue

Golf industry representatives went to Victoria to meet with Ministers and MLAs concerning the size and scope of the golf industry in BC, particularly in regards to the provincial economy. Through the individual contribution of many small businesses, the sport is responsible for more than \$1.58 billion of BC's GDP. The golf industry is also responsible for over 46,000 jobs and \$417.2 million in taxes paid to all levels of government.

It is important that government decision makers be made aware of the fact that BC's golf courses are leaders in environmentally sustainable golf course operations, and are constantly researching technologies and methods to reduce their environmental impact, having spent a significant amount of money in recent years to research more environmentally sustainable practices. Water and pesticide use are strictly regulated by the government and monitored by the courses, and represent only the absolute minimum needed, improving sustainability while reducing expenses. Golf course superintendents focus on turf and wildlife preservation techniques based in sound science. They are trained in soil chemistry, fertility, and maintenance practices in accredited diploma programs at BC post-secondary institutions. They are trained in the proper storage, usage, and disposal of pesticides in compliance with the Pesticides Act and the Integrated Pest Management Act.

The BC golf industry also wanted to speak to MLAs regarding the industry's support of healthy living. It is estimated that 812,000 British Columbians play golf at more than 300 golf courses across the province, and the average golfer in BC plays 18 rounds of golf per year.

Breakfast with the Minister of Jobs, Tourism, and Innovation

Pat Bell, the Minister of Jobs, Tourism, and Innovation, kicked off the day by meeting the team for breakfast in the Cabinet Room at the Hotel Grand Pacific. This offered an excellent opportunity for the team to discuss some of the opportunities and challenges facing the golf industry in B.C., and to have a dialogue with the minister about ways to showcase the industry among legislators.



Minister Bell (left), speaks to BCAGA members during the breakfast roundtable, chaired by Kris Jonasson (right).



Minister Bell with the entire BC Allied Golf Associations delegation.

Press Conference

BCAGA hosted a press conference in downtown Victoria to highlight the visit to the Legislature. Spokesperson Doug Ferne spoke to the size and scope of BC's golf industry, the role that it plays in the province's economy, and its commitment to environmental stewardship. A media advisory was distributed the day before, and a press release was sent out in conjunction with the press conference. A teleconference was also held that afternoon for media that were not in Victoria.



Spokesperson Doug Ferne delivers his remarks during the BCAGA Press Conference.



The conference was covered by Vancouver Island's most popular news station, A-Channel Victoria.

Meetings with MLAs

Throughout the day, BCAGA representatives met with key players from the Legislature, including the following MLAs:

- Mr. Harry Bains, NDP MLA for Surrey-Newton
- Mr. Ron Cantelon, BC Liberal MLA for Parksville-Qualicum
- Mr. Guy Gentner, NDP Critic for Public Health and Sport, and MLA for Delta North
- Mr. Kash Heed, BC Liberal MLA for Vancouver-Fraserview
- Mr. Gordon Hogg, BC Liberal MLA for Surrey-White Rock
- Mr. Douglas Horne, BC Liberal MLA for Coquitlam-Burke Mountain
- Mr. Richard Lee, BC Liberal MLA for Burnaby North
- Mr. Norm Letnick, BC Liberal MLA for Kelowna-Lake Country
- Dr. Margaret MacDiarmid, BC Liberal MLA for Vancouver-Fairview
- Mrs. Joan McIntyre, BC Liberal MLA for West Vancouver-Sea to Sky
- Mr. John Rustad, BC Liberal MLA for Nechako Lakes
- Mr. John Slater, BC Liberal MLA for Boundary-Similkameen
- Mrs. Jane Thornthwaite, BC Liberal MLA for North Vancouver-Seymour
- Mr. John Yap, BC Liberal MLA for Richmond-Steveston

Overall, MLAs were very supportive of our issues, and many commented that they would be interested in an ongoing relationship with the industry.



MLA Harry Bains (left) and NDP Critic for Sport Guy Gentner (right) show off their BCAGA golf balls.



Lori Randle (left) and Michael Matber (right) with MLA Gordon Hogg.



Tasha Bukovnik (centre) talks about environmental stewardship with MLA Douglas Horne (right).



MLA Kash Heed (left) was excited to meet Jerry Rousseau (right).



MLA Ron Cantelon with Andy Hedley.



First Row (left-to-right): Davin Marr, Barrie McWha, Jerry Rousseau, Doug Ferne. Second Row (left-to-right): Donald Miyazaki, MLA Joan McIntyre, MLA John Slater, MLA Jane Thornthwaite, Kris Jonasson, MLA Richard Lee, MLA John Yap, MLA Norm Letnick.

Reception

The day ended with a reception, after the adjournment of the Legislature for the evening, in the Vancouver Island Ballroom at the Hotel Grand Pacific. Delegates, MLAs, and political assistants mingled and discussed the golf industry. A putting green, the Vancouver Canucks game, and equipment from the government-sponsored *Playground to Fairway* youth program were available to entertain legislators and their guests.

Turnout at the reception was excellent with 22 MLAs, plus their assistants, attending, including Mary Polak, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Naomi Yamamoto, Minister of Advanced Education, and Ida Chong, Minister of Community, Sport, and Cultural Development. MLAs were having so much fun the event ended much later than planned.



Debbie Pyne (centre) shows MLAs Nicholas Simons (right) and Gary Coons (left) the Playground to Fairway program.



Trevor Smith (left) listens intently as Doug Ferne (centre) and MLA Bill Rontley (left) talk about golf.



Debbie Pyne steps back to give the very tall MLA Jagrup Brar room to swing.



Naomi Yamamoto, Minister of Advanced Education, tries her hand at learning to golf.



Kris Jonasson with Mary Polak, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation.



MLA John Rustad takes a moment to perfect his putting.



Minister of Community, Sport, and Cultural Development Ida Chong was very pleased to see her putting has improved.

Participants

British Columbia Golf

- Kris Jonasson
- Debbie Pyne
- Tasha Bukovnik

Western Canada Turfgrass Association

- Jerry Rousseau
- Trevor Smith

Professional Golfers' Association of British Columbia

- Donald Miyazaki
- Lori Randle

BC Golf House Society

- Barrie McWha

National Golf Course Owners' Association Canada

- Doug Ferne
- Andy Hedley
- Michael Mather

British Columbia Golf Course Superintendents Association

- Davin Marr
- Greg Austin
- Tim Kubash

Please visit www.canadagolfs.ca for more information

