

Around the province

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Math program receives funding

Burnaby - B.C. graduate students in mathematical sciences will receive \$100,000 in funding from the B.C. government in an effort to place student interns into businesses province-wide.

The goal of the funding is to move more math students from the classroom into the workforce for hands-on experience. This will enable businesses to benefit from a unique mathematical skill set, which is being seen as a new driver of innovation in the Canadian economy, said Dr. Arvind Gupta, Scientific Director of MITACS, which manages the math internship program. MITACS - the Mathematics of Information Technology and Complex Systems - is a national research network that brings together university researchers and companies in a collaborative effort to solve industry problems. Launched in 2003, the MITACS Internship Program provides graduate students with an opportunity to address high-level research issues using advanced mathematics on-site at a company.

Carr steps down as leader

Gibsons - Green Party of BC leader, Adriane Carr has announced her intention to step down as party leader at the end of November, 2006.

Carr led the party through two elections (2001 and 2005), establishing the Green Party as BC's third major political party. Her decision reflects her commitment to ensuring Green politics move ahead in the next provincial election in 2009.

"After seeing the excitement the Green Party leadership race at the federal level generated, I am sure that we can attract new members to the party by holding a vibrant leadership contest with new faces," said Carr. "British Columbians are embracing Green policies and I believe the best way for the party to continue building momentum is to open the door to new leadership."

International tourism down

VICTORIA - International tourist visits to B.C. were down 4.5 per cent as of July, as the latest Statistics Canada report tended to support forecasts of a drop in visits due to a higher Canadian dollar and fuel prices.

But with gasoline prices coming down, the latter part of the tourist season appears to be stronger, partly on the strength of internal tourism that was measuring

large increases early in the season. Border crossings registered an upturn in late July, and B.C. Ferries ended its summer schedule at the beginning of September, but has continued to add extra sailings since, on its main Vancouver Island runs. Credit Union Central B.C. predicts tourist operators will see fewer international visitors for some time to come.

"No significant improvement in U.S. tourist traffic to B.C. is expected this year or next, since the depreciated U.S. currency, higher gasoline costs and increased border crossing times work against the possible rising trend," Credit Union Central says in its weekly economic update.

500 new spaces for nurses

VICTORIA - More than 500 new spaces for student nurses have been added to B.C.'s public post-secondary education system this year, bringing the total increase in nursing seats to 75 per cent since 2001, Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell announced recently.

"The world is facing a critical shortage of nurses, which is why we have been moving as quickly as we can to create new nursing programs around the province and to fund a record number of nursing seats," Coell said.

"When we assumed office, there were just 4,064 nursing seats at post-secondary institutions in the province, and only 85 new spaces had been added in the previous decade. In a little over half that time, we've provided funding for 3,021 more spaces for student nurses."

The 510 new nursing spaces are part of the government's six-year, 25,000-seat expansion of the public post-secondary education system.

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