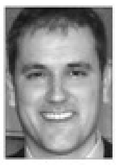
TAXATION

Ottawa not to blame, says MP

Dan Albas refutes claim by Valley MLA that federal gov't responsible for delays in getting rid of HST

By SCOTT TRUDEAU
The Okanagan Saturday


Albas

Responsibility for any delays in getting rid of the HST in B.C. rests squarely on the shoulders of the provincial government, says the MP for Okanagan-Coquihalla.

Dan Albas answered criticism this week from Boundary-Similkameen Liberal MLA John Slater, who pointed to Ottawa as being behind delays in B.C. returning to the GST and PST.

Albas says because the PST was repealed, as of now, it doesn't exist.

"Before the PST can be reinstated, the provincial sales tax legislation has to be drafted, and that's got to go through their process in the legislature and that has yet to take place," he said.

The PST costs more money to administer and brings in less revenue than the HST, and Albas said the Liberals still have to figure out how they're going to account for the lower revenues the government will receive once the PST is brought back.

"There's a lot of considerations for the re-implementation of the PST," said Albas. "Ultimately, it is completely under the province for jurisdiction. There needs to be partnership with Ottawa for reinstating it, but the province of B.C. will need to pass provincial legislation and incorporate PST revenues into their budget soon . . . and, quite frankly, pointing the finger at Ottawa doesn't change any of those things."

Albas also shot back at the B.C. NDP for continuing to demand "increased spending while promoting the PST tax system that will produce less revenue to government."

He said the PST is exclusively a provincial sales tax and that to reinstate it, B.C. will have to rehire administrative staff and re-establish office space eliminated after the HST was brought in. Businesses also will have to re-register for the PST.

The federal government can put forward legislation to scrap the HST at any time, Albas said, but the problem of having the necessary administration, infrastructure and budgetary items in place must be managed by the B.C. Liberals.

"We have a federal process to deal with the federal component," he said. "But it's not as simple as pointing the finger and saying it's their fault."

GARY NYLANDER/*The Okanagan Saturday*

World record attempt a work of art

Oliver Poirier, 4 1/2, works on a drawing at the Kelowna Art Gallery on Thursday. The gallery will attempt a world record in accepting small-scale, Okanagan-themed, original, landscape-based work, and it is looking for at least 2,500 entries with a deadline of 5 p.m. Feb. 10, 2012. The art will then be displayed in the Scotiabank studio until March 1. The only criteria is that artwork must be four by six inches on paper, original and landscape-based with an Okanagan focus. The medium — pencil, crayon, collage, paint, etc. — is up to the artist.

VISITORPICKS

The top 10 places in the world to visit, judging from the buzz on Facebook and compiled by UpTake.com:
1. Luang Prabang, Laos
2. Dubrovnik, Croatia
3. Granada, Spain
4. Penticton
5. Charleston, S.C.
6. Cartagena, Colombia
7. Portland, Ore.
8. Tallin, Estonia
9. Copacabana, Bolivia
10. Hoi An, Vietnam

Tourism

Continued from page A1

"With beautiful beaches, a burgeoning wine industry and outdoor activities galore, it's quickly becoming a year-round vacation hot spot."

Jessie Campbell, tourism marketing manager for Penticton and Wine Country, said the mention is "a huge deal" and is the type of exposure tourism promoters strive to achieve.

"People talk about what they care about," said Campbell. "The reality is now, with Facebook and other social media platforms, we view social media as word of mouth on steroids."

Campbell said Tourism Penticton placed an emphasis on social media during the previous year, "and we're seeing the results of that through this accolade."

Its partners — the Downtown Penticton Association, Naramata Bench Wineries Association and the South Okanagan Events Centre — and key community individuals all played roles in helping to achieve the city's high ranking.

Ashton said he's been tweeting, messaging and phoning to thank many of the people who were pivotal in exposing Penticton's amenities on a grand scale.

Much of the credit goes to staff at the Penticton Chamber of Commerce, Penticton and Wine Country Tourism, social media promoters, and business people such as Allison Markin (All She Wrote Consulting) and Kim Lawton (Dogleg Marketing), who raised the profile of the wine and food industry.

"Through social media and the electronic media, this kind of stuff goes viral," said Ashton, noting Penticton was the only Canadian city listed and mentioned with the likes of Spain, Estonia, Croatia and Bolivia.

Because information bounces around the Internet at breakneck speed, city council will discuss ways to capitalize on the news at Monday's meeting.

"I know, a lot of these things, the fuse is short on them," Ashton said. "It happens so fast and furious online, and what we need to do is keep the momentum rolling."

While residents are inclined to encourage people to visit Penticton, this latest news signals another segment of the population is aware of the area, the mayor said.

"The trend from what I've seen online is more youthful. The comfort of talking online and sourcing information online is that younger generation," he said. "That's the attraction that we're going after here. Once we get people coming here, we have a tendency to have them keep coming back."

Campbell said it's likely the Facebook survey will pop up frequently in online search engines.

"We had planned to have an even stronger presence on our outlets with Twitter, YouTube and Facebook as well as other new and up and coming social media networks that are coming out," she said. "We'll certainly need to make sure we take full advantage and get as much mileage out of this announcement as possible."

Developer not ready to proceed with project

Kelowna city council

KELOWNA

Manufacturer re...ed

...expand the workforce to 15 ...oyees by month's end.
...'ll be manufacturing in ...na in three weeks," said ... "We'll have close to (25) ...s in four to six months."
... old company generated ...ion to $5 million in annual ... The housing-sector crash in ... damaged its bottom line ...hed it into debt. It restruc... ...d had turned profitable in ...nonths.
...demand for product is so ... challenge is to meet cus...eeds. The employees — ...em key investors — are ...on making it happen.
...n't keep good men ... All the guys who have ...gether as a team are ...team. Christmas was a ...this year."

...eased, Drummond ...
...e the engineers take ...he said. "We're go...t we can to make ...t have an issue like ...
... traffic was ...ne lane for a ...lowing the ...kSafeBC is also ...
...two-lane stretch ...between Winfield ... winding road that hugs the shore of Wood Lake.

It has been the scene of numerous fatalities and serious injuries over the years, and the poor safety record was the main reason the provincial and federal governments agreed to fund construction of the new bypass.

...like this happen," Drummond said. "This is a very unfortunate incident."

Construction in the area where the rock was dislodged was halted while engineers conducted an assessment. It's possible the height of the containment berms

...and then travelled another 70-100 metres down the hillside, between all the trees, before landing on the highway," Drummond said.

As their name suggests, the containment berms are built-up

...day's winning numbers were 36, 37, 76 and 95.

In the event of a discrepancy between these numbers and the official winning numbers list, the latter shall prevail.

JANUARY 7, 2012

The Okanagan SATURDAY

Hard luck
Junior Rockets shoot for 1st win – B1

It's a wrap
Beginning of the end for comedy series – C6

Wise words
The truth is rarely pure and never simple. — Oscar Wilde

Wise Counsel
Doak Shirreff LLP Lawyers

PENTICTON

City basks in glow of tourism buzz

By SCOTT TRUDEAU
The Okanagan Saturday

Penticton's mayor had one word to describe the city being named a top-10 world travel destination for 2012.

"Wow!" said Dan Ashton of an article that appeared on the Huffington Post website Wednesday. "I'm just ecstatic Penticton is able to get this kind of recognition."

Penticton secured the No. 4 spot on a top-10 list of places in the world to visit. The list was compiled by UpTake.com, which came up with the rankings by analyzing travel buzz on Facebook from more than 200 million comments, status updates, photo descriptions and check-ins.

The accompanying story by UpTake.com co-founder Yen Lee stated: "Haven't heard of Penticton? Well, heaps of folks on Facebook have and are buzzing about this scenic town."

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Okanagan Saturday file photo
Young visitors to one of Penticton's beaches chat on their cellphones while soaking up the sun. Penticton was listed among the top 10 travel destinations for 2012 in an article that appeared on the Huffington Post website on Wednesday.

WHY I LOVE LIVING HERE
Favourite Thing #13
At Missionwood, I am able to lock the door and go traveling without any worries, knowing that my home is safe and secure.
Ingrid Krause, Missionwood Resident
Regency Retirement Resorts
Learn more about enriched retirement living at Sandalwood, Missionwood, Westwood, or Northwood, call 250.712.6363 or visit www.RegencyResorts.ca