



**Date:** Thursday December 11, 2008, 10:30 a.m.

**Event:** Official opening – The Saanich Integrated Police/Fire Communications Centre

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*Check Against Delivery*

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- Good morning, and thank you all for joining us today.
- Not long ago, I met many of you here for the launch of the Saanich Police Department's new mobile shooting range.
- Today, Saanich Police and their partners – the Oak Bay Police Department and the fire departments of Saanich, Oak Bay, North Saanich, Central Saanich, Esquimalt and Sidney – have another asset to take pride in, the Saanich Police/Fire Communications Centre.
- The Province is pleased to have played a part in bringing about this facility by providing \$600,000 in traffic fine revenue to local governments.
- It's part of more than \$250 million that municipalities across B.C. have received since 2004, when we began giving local governments 100 per cent of traffic fine revenue.
- Since then, we've seen this money used in a variety of innovative ways to help make our communities safer and better places to live.
- Facilities like this continue to reaffirm that traffic fine revenues do make a difference.
- We appreciate working with local governments to invest money in ways that will improve community safety.
- We will see today how this centre provides critical support to police officers and firefighters in the challenging work they do.
- Accurate, clear and ongoing communication in emergency situations is critical to supporting these highly trained and professional men and women.
- And 9-1-1 has come a long way in providing that support.
- Although it may seem like 9-1-1 has been around forever, it was first used in B.C. in 1976 in Vancouver.

- Before that, callers relied on telephone operators to transmit their calls for help.
- Sometimes, it was faster for people to dial direct to a fire hall or to the ambulance, and just about everyone kept a list of emergency numbers near the phone.
- Working with local governments, we have been improving the efficiency and effectiveness of 9-1-1 centres across B.C.
- Today, despite B.C.'s challenging geography, more than 98 per cent of British Columbia residents have 9-1-1 service.
- The system we will see later this morning is a shining example of the convergence of teamwork, technology and resources.
- The Saanich Communications System not only pulls together the participating departments; it connects them with the other communications systems operated by the city of Victoria and the RCMP.
- If one system goes down, a flick of a switch brings another communications centre online.
- This has, essentially, created a virtual 9-1-1 communications system with the three locations.
- Congratulation to all of you for making this substantial contribution to public safety.
- Thank you to the local government for the great collaborative effort we have here.