

As we approach the Winter Holiday season, we have both hope with the vaccine's arrival on BC soil and at the same time are tasked with the challenge of continuing to do our part to re-flatten the curve. As exciting as the long-awaited vaccine is, it also marks a pivotal moment when we must remain strong in our conviction to protect as COVID19 will not take a break over the holidays. The most important way you can give back this season is by not letting your guard down in order to protect our most vulnerable.

Vaccine arrives in BC

The first vaccines in British Columbia were administered to healthcare workers in the lower mainland this week and begin to roll out across the rest of the province early next week. It is the most comprehensive vaccine program to ever to be delivered in B.C. Care aides in residential care and long-term care facilities are among the first to receive the COVID-19 immunization.

The Coldest Night of the Year

There are so many giving activities you can get involved with, locally. If you know of a way to participate, please let me know and I will be sure to share it in the next e-newsletter. I've been a supporter of the Coldest Night of the Year throughout the years, and I invite you to join me in this year's COVID19-safe, family-friendly virtual event to walk to raise money for charities serving people experiencing homelessness, hurt, and hunger. Raise a team and raise money until February 20, 2021. Here in the Comox Valley the [Transition Society](#) and [Dawn to Dawn](#) are hoping to raise \$121,000. To register or sign up click here: <https://cnoy.org/home>

Active Transportation Funding

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an increased interest in walking and cycling for transportation and recreation in B.C. We have been encouraged by Dr. Henry to get outside and stay active to promote good mental health during these times. I know that this is an important issue to people here in the Comox Valley. This is why I'm very excited to report that \$16.7 million of the BC Governments' Economic Recovery Plan will go towards funding active transportation safety and access. Locally, the second phase of the construction of the trail along Back Road through Komoks First Nation is supported, and just south of us, the north bound shoulder from Buckley Bay to Union Bay will be paved. Learn more [here](#).

PAC funding for extra curriculars

\$166,280 in Community Gaming Grants will allow 17 schools in Courtenay-Comox to ensure that extracurricular activities are available for students once they can participate safely again. Schools receive funding every year through PACs and DPACs to fund activities that benefit the social, cultural and the physical health and well-being of students. This year there is a condition that activities comply with the Provincial Health Officer orders and flexibility is incorporated to provide for delaying projects

and service delivery until they are safe to do so (for up to 3 years).

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020MUNI0114-002053>

BC Recovery Benefit

The support for British Columbians continues this week with the launch of the BC Recovery Benefit application. Here are a few details to remember.

British Columbians can apply for the Recovery Benefit through one of the following:

- Online starting Dec. 18, by visiting: gov.bc.ca/recoverybenefit
- By phone starting Dec. 21, at 1 833 882-0020 toll-free, Monday to Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 5p.m. Agents will be available to provide assistance in multiple languages

What you need to apply

- net income from your 2019 tax return
- Social insurance number, individual tax number, or temporary tax number to verify your eligibility.
- Driver's license number if you have one
- Direct deposit information. Branch (transit) number / Institution number / Account number. If you're on income or disability assistance and don't have a bank account, a modified application will be available in the new year to help you apply for and receive the benefit.

Find the full details here: How to apply <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/recovery-benefit>

This holiday season will look a little different this year, as the large social gatherings that we normally have will be smaller. Take this time to reflect on the blessings, big and small, that keep us safe during this time. Our Christmas, Hanukah, Solstice and other holiday celebrations may feel different, but I would personally like to wish you a warm and meaningful time this year.

My constituency office is available by phone or email. Our office will be closed on December 24th and will re-open January 4th. You can reach us at 250.703.2410 or Ronna-Rae.Leonard.MLA@leg.bc.ca if you have any questions or need assistance with provincial supports.

Sincerely,

Ronna-Rae Leonard

MLA Courtenay-Comox

COVID Resources:

- For medical info, visit bccdc.ca or call 811
- For provincial supports and BC's Restart Plan, visit gov.bc.ca/covid19 or call 1-888-COVID-19 (1-888-268-4319) or text 604-630-0300
- For employer guidelines on returning to work safely, visit WorkSafeBC
- Take the self-assessment at covid19.thrive.health
- For seniors looking for additional support, or for those looking to support seniors, call 2-1-1 or visit bc211.ca

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RonnaRaeLeonard/>

Instagram: @ronnaraeleonard

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYLQfuaKQV-itCluryo2hQg>

Website: <http://ronnaraeleonard.ca/>

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Community Office Hours: Monday to Thursday, 10 am to 4 pm

MY OFFICE REMAINS OPEN TO ASSIST BY PHONE OR EMAIL

www.ronnaraeleonard.ca



It is a privilege to live and work on the traditional lands of the K'omoks First Nations.

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