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Media Advisory

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OMBUDSMAN TO TOUR FRASER VALLEY

VICTORIA – British Columbia Ombudsman Kim Carter and members of her staff will tour the Fraser Valley in early March, aiming to raise awareness about their work and increase access to their services.

“The Ombudsman’s office is here to serve the entire province, so it’s helpful for us to regularly visit and connect with different parts of B.C.,” Ms. Carter said. “It’s important that people know they can come to us if they feel they’ve been treated unfairly by a provincial government ministry or agency, and have been unable to resolve the problem themselves. We’re here to ensure the provincial government and its agencies deal with people in ways that are consistent and fair.”

The Ombudsman’s staff will set up temporary offices to receive complaints in person while in Mission, Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Hope between March 4 and March 7. Anyone who wishes to discuss a problem with one of the Ombudsman’s staff should call 1-800-567-3247 to book an appointment.

The outreach tour is also an opportunity for Ms. Carter to explain the role of her office to community leaders and organizations such as local councils, school districts, MLAs and non-profit groups. While not an advocate, the Ombudsman can conduct impartial and confidential investigations to determine whether a public agency is treating the people it serves fairly. The Ombudsman strives to settle complaints through consultation, but can also choose to make recommendations and issue public reports. The public bodies over which the Ombudsman has jurisdiction include: provincial ministries, Crown corporations, colleges and universities, public schools, health authorities and municipalities. In 2007, the Ombudsman’s office dealt with approximately 7,000 complaints and enquiries.

The schedule for the Ombudsman’s tour of the Fraser Valley is below:

Mission	March 4, 2008
Abbotsford	March 5, 2008
Chilliwack	March 6, 2008
Hope	March 7, 2008

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To schedule an interview with the Ombudsman or for more information, please contact:

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(250) 356-7740 (direct) or 1-800-567-3247 (toll-free)