



## News Release

### Abbott Commits to Restoring Grants Funding to the Arts

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**December 3, 2010**

Vancouver, BC – George Abbott announced today that as Premier he would restore funding to arts and culture grants to 2008-09 levels, meeting the recommendations laid out by the Select Standing Committee on Finance last year.

“Arts and culture programs are important services to our families and our communities. These programs not only feed civic involvement and spirit, but they also create jobs in our towns and villages,” says Abbott. “As Premier I commit to restoring funding to 2008-09 levels in the next budget.”

Arts and culture grants are funded through two main mechanisms: the BC Arts Council and direct access gaming grants. In 2008-09, the BC Arts Council received approximately \$16 million in annual funding, while an additional approximately \$18 million went to local arts programs through direct access gaming grants.

Due to changing economic circumstances, in the 2010-11 budget those grant programs were reduced to \$9 million for the B.C. Arts Council and \$11.5 million in gaming grants – although the BC Arts Council received a mid-year \$16 million in September.

As Premier, George would boost the gaming grant portion by the remaining \$4.5 million in this fiscal year to return it to 2008-09 levels, and ensure that both BC Arts Council grants and gaming grants remained at least at this level in future years. He would also restore the eligibility criteria for direct access arts grants that were in place before 2009.

This funding supplements George’s commitment that, as Premier, he would provide a tax credit to parents to support childhood health and wellness, including sports, arts and cultural activities.

“Our arts and culture sector can range from large arts organizations like the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra to small community productions and festivals. Yet each organization faces

the same challenge -- ensuring they have certainty and stability when it comes to funding,” says Abbott. “As Premier, I will ensure that the province’s approach to funding is remains predictable and allows arts organizations to grow, fundraise, invest and thrive in our communities.”

As Premier, George is also committing to restoring the BC Arts Council’s role as an organization responsible for advocacy on behalf of the arts. He will also examine options in other Canadian jurisdictions on potential improvements to the BC Arts Council structure to better foster an “arms length” relationship with government and ensure all the province’s regions receive the benefits of the arts.

George also voiced his continued support to for targeted arts and culture programs such as the \$60 million Sports and Arts Legacy program announced in the last budget, and previous programs like the BC Arts Renaissance Fund and BC 150 Cultural Fund that created endowment funds for the arts.

George Abbott announced on November 25, 2010 that he was running to be the new leader of the BC Liberal Party and Premier of B.C. George was elected to provincial government in 1996 and was a five-time cabinet minister whose portfolios included health, the environment, aboriginal affairs and communities. Prior to being in cabinet, George was a college instructor, a regional district chair, and ran a berry farm in his hometown of Sicamous.

For more information, visit [www.georgeabbottforbc.ca](http://www.georgeabbottforbc.ca).

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