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OMBUDSMAN TO TOUR CARIBOO REGION

VICTORIA – British Columbia Ombudsman Kim Carter and members of her staff will tour the Cariboo region this month, 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 Prince George, Quesnel, Williams Lake and 100 Mile House between June 23 and June 27. 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. The Ombudsman’s office dealt with approximately 7,000 complaints and enquiries in 2007.

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

Prince George	June 23 & 24
Quesnel	June 25
Williams Lake	June 26
100 Mile House	June 27

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

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