

Water board helps take torture out of climate

Okanagan Basin board gets \$600,000 from a \$6.9-million program

By Daily Courier Staff

The Okanagan Basin Water Board will receive more than \$600,000 from a \$6.9-million program designed to address the impact of climate change.

Stockwell Day, the Federal Treasury Board President, announced the program at Quails' Gate Winery on Monday.

The Okanagan-Coquihalla Tory MP said the program will bring together 18 groups to address climate change issues.

The initiative, Preparing for Climate Change: Securing B.C.'s Water Future, is co-ordinated by the non-profit Fraser Basin Council and the B.C. Ministry of Environment. Natural Resources Canada is providing \$3.3 million of the \$6.9 million, which includes contributions from provincial ministries, local governments, First Nations and non-governmental organizations, the private sector and academia.

"That does not happen easily," Day said of getting all these groups together. "That shows the level of commitment."

The program will help B.C. communities deal with the impacts of climate change on water use, forest and watershed management, flood protection and community planning. Activities will include risk assessments, economic analysis, knowledge transfer, consultation and using the new knowledge acquired in planning and decision-making processes.

The local water board will receive \$298,000 from Natural Resources Canada over three years, matched by \$331,850 in cash and in-kind contributions from the OBWB and other B.C. agencies. With the funding, the water board will move on to phase three of its Okanagan water supply and demand project.

Phase 3 will attempt to modernize water policy in the Okanagan, based on a scientific assessment of water availability conducted in phase 2.