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Literacy Action Day

For Immediate Release

November 9, 2006

OTTAWA – Literacy Action Day (November 9th) is a great opportunity to recognize the importance of literacy skills. Literacy impacts quality of life and self-esteem. It helps people upgrade their skills to find, and retain, good jobs. Since 1994, under the previous Liberal government, the number of Canadians with low literacy skills actually increased. Canada's New Government believes we can do better.

- Canada's New Government will honour all existing agreements.
- We have not cut any literacy training. Instead, we want to refocus spending for literacy on programs that teach people how to read and write, instead of funding conferences and advocacy work.
- We believe the Federal government should spend money on literacy education, not on the promotion of meetings and websites for the literacy industry.
- Over the next two years, Canada's New Government will be investing over \$80 million directly towards programs to help adults improve their reading and writing skills.

Some of the old-style spending on literacy under the previous Liberal government included:

- Contracts for websites: \$81,900, \$45,000, \$71,000 (with a consultant billing of \$750 per day for work completed), and \$70,000.
- Contracts for promoting meetings: \$53,760, \$220,500.
- Contracts to consultants: \$57,905 paid to a media consultant for working 31 days, \$800 per day to a consultant to develop a strategy, \$206,600 paid to a researcher.
- Salaries for Literacy industry executives: \$151,561 per year to an Executive Director, \$45,000 paid to a National Director for 50 days of work, \$103,972 paid to an Executive Director for one year of work.

Canada's New Government wants to better support Canadian men and women by getting more value for money from the taxpayer dollars put towards literacy. Some of the programs we are funding include:

- \$28 million for the Enhanced Language Training Initiative, which includes the new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (Citizenship and Immigration).
- Another \$900,000 for the Essential Skills and Workplace Literacy Initiative (Human Resources and Social Development).
- \$73 million over two years for the Workplace Skills Initiative (Human Resources and Social Development).
- \$4.6 million for the Computers for Schools program (Industry Canada).
- \$1.5 million for Adult Education Skills Development in PEI (Service Canada).
- \$63 million a year for the Sector Council Program, which supports workplace skills and literacy programs in key economic sectors (Human Resources and Social Development).

On Literacy Action Day, Canada's New Government announced funding for grass-roots literacy projects that allow Canadians to develop their skills in various settings: in the family, in the workplace and in the community. This announcement included funding for:

- Volunteer Mobilization – Leadership – Community (Frontier College): \$1,350,000.
- Building Island Literacy (P.E.I. Literacy Alliance): \$275,000.
- Adults Reading Across Canada (Word on the Street Canada Inc.): \$200,000.
- Le projet Alpha Media Reseau (Groupe Action pour s'en sortir in Quebec): \$481,583.
- Introduction and Implementation of the new Unified English Braille (UEB) to Canadian Adults (Canadian Braille Authority): \$191,800.