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Public Library AskAway Virtual Reference Service Will Close June 30, 2010

AskAway, the province-wide virtual reference service, will close for public library patrons on June 30, 2010 at 5 p.m. Public library service was funded by the B.C. Ministry of Education, and this funding ended on March 31, 2010. Public libraries have been able to continue the service until June with existing funds by making staffing adjustments and reducing service hours.

Thousands of British Columbians have accessed the AskAway service, which has answered more than 130,000 questions since its launch in 2006. Over half of the questions answered by the librarians staffing AskAway come from B.C. school children in grades 5 to 12. One patron commented "You saved me from endless hours of Internet searching for information!! Thank you so MUCH!!!!!"

Public libraries throughout the province contributed staff to the Public Library AskAway service, which was available 7 days per week from 2006 to 2009, most days until 10 p.m.

AskAway has been a collaboration between public and post-secondary libraries in British Columbia. Post-Secondary AskAway, which serves college and post-secondary students in British Columbia, will remain in place. It is funded by its libraries in partnership with BCcampus, a collaborative online learning agency that supports BC's public post-secondary institutions.

To find out more about the public library services in over 200 British Columbia communities, visit <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/pls/> or your local library's website.

For more information contact:

AskAway - BC Public Libraries

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AskAway - BC Post-Secondary Libraries

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