

PROVINCE INVESTS IN HOUSING ACROSS MANITOBA

In recent months, the Province has made several key announcements related to housing in Manitoba.

The City of Dauphin received \$1.4 million to build 12 new supportive housing units at the Happy Haven seniors' residence. Supportive housing provides 24-hour support and supervision to seniors while allowing them to live securely and independently in the community.

Swan River received \$500,000 in funding for phase two of an integrated housing project, Emergency Community Housing Opportunity II (ECHO II). Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Swan Valley is developing ECHO II to help low-income families and those with mental-health issues. The total project costs were approximately \$1.4 million, with the Province contributing \$500,000 through the Canada-Manitoba Affordable Housing Initiative. CMHA has been developing ECHO II for the past year following the success of first project located in Dauphin.

The Northern View Lodge, for seniors in The Pas, will receive \$2.25 million in

funding for 16 new supportive housing units. Northern View Lodge is another seniors' facility that provides the opportunity for independent living in a supervised, secure environment.

The projects in Dauphin and The Pas are funded by the Aging in Place initiative that supports the renovation of existing personal care home facilities, new construction and community programs in Winnipeg. Rural and northern Manitoba received \$21 million in February 2007 along with the commitment to build a new personal-care home in Neepawa. Aging in Place provides support to more than 3,300 living units across Manitoba.

HEALTH CARE IN MANITOBA

The Medical Student/Resident Financial Assistance Program received an additional \$220,000 in funding. Third year medical students are eligible for a provincial grant of \$25,000, up from \$15,000, with a commitment to practice in rural Manitoba for one year. All medical school students are eligible for a 60% rebate on tuition fees, up to \$25,000, should they choose to live and work in Manitoba following graduation.

Nurse recruitment and retention received a \$3 million investment that will allow training for an additional 40 new nursing students throughout Manitoba. As well, a new program will help international nursing students to practice in Manitoba.

The University of Manitoba is the first university to have a graduate level physician assistant program. The Canadian Forces offered the only accredited physician assistant program prior to this.

Physician assistants are able to perform a range of procedures including patient exams, ordering diagnostic tests, performing minor procedures and prescribing needed medications and treatments.

The two-year physician assistant program, which includes lectures and clinical care courses, will accept up to 12 candidates each year. Graduates will receive a master of physician assistant studies degree from the faculty of graduated studies. Graduates must meet with national certification standards and then are able to register with the College of Physician and Surgeons of Manitoba. Manitoba is the only province with legislation in place to allow physician assistants to register and practice.



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EDMONTON COMMITS TO URBAN BIODIVERSITY

On September 8 Edmonton, along with 20 other international cities signed the Durban Commitment to Biodiversity in Durban, South Africa. The Durban Commitment recognizes the importance of the protection of urban biodiversity. Twenty-one cities from six continents are participating in the ICLEI's Local Action for Biodiversity. These cities have declared their intention to conserve and enhance urban biodiversity and to integrate biodiversity considerations into governance and planning. Edmonton, along with the other 20 cities will prepare a biodiversity summary report for work completed in their area. The City of Edmonton Diversity Report may be viewed at www.edmonton.ca/naturalareas

ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEM

Residents of Stewiacke, Nova Scotia will have the option of casting their ballot in the October municipal election from the comfort of their home or by the traditional paper ballot system.

Sheldon Dorey, Chief Administrative Officer for Stewiacke noted council is

hoping for greater participation with the electronic voting option. Each resident will receive a PIN number which allows them access to vote over the internet or by telephone. Security measures are in place ensuring that voters only cast one vote. Election costs have doubled to \$7,200 with the addition of electronic voting. Council may consider eliminating paper ballots should the electronic voting system prove successful, thereby reducing costs.

Stewiacke is the fourth municipality in Nova Scotia to implement electronic voting this year.

In 2006, throughout eight municipalities in Ontario, 82% cast votes electronically as compared to 18% casting votes using the paper ballot.

WELLAND PART OF LED CITY INITIATIVE PROGRAM

The City of Welland was recognized for becoming part of the LED City Initiative, an international program that promotes the use of high efficiency lighting.

The city has been using light-emitting diodes for street lights, traffic signals and other areas for the last three years. Con-

verting all traffic signal lights to LED has resulted in energy savings of 66 per cent. Along Fitch Street 50 LED street lights have been installed. The city's downtown core area will have 50 more LED lights installed along with pedestrian lights as part of its downtown revitalization program.

Welland has a population of 50,331 and is the eighth city in the world to earn LED City Initiative designation from Cree Industries for its environmentally-friendly ways. **L**

In Brief SUBMISSIONS

May be sent to:

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