

**LOW-INCOME, ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM**

The Hon. **Greg Selinger**, Finance Minister and minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro recently announced the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation (BNRC) would bring a low-income, energy and water efficient program to its city. Brandon is following in the footsteps of the City of Winnipeg where a similar project proved successful last year.

Around 120 homes will be retrofitted with energy and water saving materials in the next year. This will, in turn, result in \$30,000 in energy savings, \$25,000 in reduced water bills and save more than 10 million litres of

water per year. These devices include attic and basement insulation, weather stripping, pipe wrapping, low-flow showerheads, faucet aerators, high-efficiency toilets and compact fluorescent light bulbs.

Manitoba Hydro will provide funding through the Power Smart program and Affordable Energy Fund. Work on this project will be completed through the Westbran Training Centre, which provides training to people that will lead to careers in the construction field.

Government departments and agencies supporting this initiative include Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation; Competitiveness, Training and Trade; Science, Tech-

nology, Energy and Mines; and Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives.

**FUNDING FOR CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**

The Hon. **Christine Melnick**, Minister of Water Stewardship announced that Manitoba's 18 conservation districts will receive almost \$5 million in funding. Funding will enable conservation districts throughout Manitoba to improve land and water management planning and programming and increase protection of our province's lakes and rivers.

Conservation districts have increased from 9 in 1999 to the current 18 districts.

**FIVE NEW NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE! COMMUNITIES**

The Hon. **Steve Ashton**, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, announced that the Neighbourhoods Alive! Program is expanding to Dauphin, Flin Flon, Portage la Prairie, Selkirk, and The Pas.

Consultation meetings were held in the communities in September and October to brief community businesses and residents on available programs. Community revitalization opportunities will be discussed.

The Province launched NA! in Brandon, Thompson and Winnipeg in 2000. In 2005 NA! expanded to seven of Winnipeg's inner city neighbourhoods. Over \$40 million in funding for projects has been invested in these communities. This has resulted in improved housing, safety, recreation, training, and employment opportunities.

**\$3 MILLION WINKLER HOUSING PROJECT**

A new 24 unit-housing complex will be built in Winkler. This bi-level style, row housing will provide safe, affordable, quality housing to lower income families and persons with disabilities.

This project was made possible through federal and provincial funding through the Canada-Manitoba Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI), land contribution from the City of Winkler with the balance of funding from Winkler Affordable Housing Inc. Estimated total cost is over \$3.1 million.

**INCREASE IN DOCTOR NUMBERS**

Since 1999, Manitoba has seen a steady increase in the number of practicing physicians. To date there are 2,272 doctors, which includes 584 rural doctors. 2007 saw the highest annual increase since 1999, with a gain of 54 doctors. This is followed by 2002, which saw a gain on 48 doctors in one year.

This steady increase since 1999 is due in part to the Province's:



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- expansion of medical school admissions from 70 to 100;
- introduction of the Medical Licensure Program for International medical graduates;
- implementation of the Medical Student/Resident Financial Assistance Program in 2001;
- introduction of a rebate program that offers up to 60% rebate of tuition costs; and
- introduction of the Physician Resource Coordination office which supports physician recruitment.

The Hon. **Theresa Oswald**, Minister of Health, states Manitobans are the beneficiaries of a growing and constantly evolving health-care system. Manitobans have access to health care that is closer to home and families.

**BILINGUAL COMMUNITIES RECEIVE FUNDING**

Over \$2.3 million in funding will be provided to the Canada-Manitoba Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) as announced by the Hon. Greg Selinger, Minister of Finance and minister responsible for French Language Services in Manitoba, and **Rod Bruinooge**, Member of Parliament for Winnipeg South, on behalf of the Hon. **Rona Ambrose**, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Diversification.

This funding allows the EPA to promote investment, attract tourism, and encourage economic development in the bilingual communities across Manitoba. The Agence nationale et internationale du Manitoba (ANIM) will be established through funding from the EPA. Funding through this non-profit organization enables Manitoba businesses and organizations to expand to the national and international francophone markets.

The Conseil de developpement economique des municipalities bilingues du Manitoba (CDEM) and Entreprises Riel receive \$661,300 for training and marketing to promote tourism and economic development in bilingual municipalities. CDEM gets \$140,000 from the EPA for the *c'est si bon! Ensemble Together* project, which promotes the benefits of bilingualism in the 16 CDEM member communities.

**ECO-FRIENDLY PLATES IN ONTARIO**

In the spring of 2008, Ontario residents who buy environmentally friendly, low emission cars and trucks will receive a green-hued licence plate that gives them free parking and access to high-capacity commuter lanes.

Incentives will be chosen during the consultation process conducted by auto makers and environmental groups. Also included is a \$15 million pilot project to enable businesses to convert to more environmentally friendly technologies such as hybrid power. Two new ethanol-fuelling stations in London and Peterborough will be available to municipal fleets once operational.

**CALIFORNIA'S FIGHT AGAINST GLOBAL WARMING**

California Attorney General **Jerry Brown** filed suit against the San Bernadina County holding it accountable for greenhouse gas

emissions caused by poorly designed suburban development. This case brought forth a new battle in the fight against climate change. The regulation of power plants, industrial factories, and vehicle emissions dominated the battle prior to this.

One of the fastest growing regions in the US must now measure how much it contributes to global warming and set goals to cut greenhouse gas emissions over the next two-and-a-half years. Counties in California are realizing that new subdivisions, roads, and building construction are factors in climate change that reduces water supply, increases air pollution and fuels forest fires. ⚡

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