



## PRESS RELEASE



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### **Converted Motel Becomes Affordable Housing**

**VICTORIA, British Columbia, October 23, 2003** - Victoria's lower-income residents will benefit from new affordable housing with the official opening of Cedar Grove Apartments, a former motel converted into 21 residential units. The project combines contributions from the Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the Victoria Community Housing Trust, a subsidiary of Community Economic Development Corporation (CEDCO Victoria).

"This partnership between the Government of Canada and local organizations exemplifies what can be accomplished when we work together", said the Honourable David Anderson, Minister of the Environment on behalf of the Honourable Steven Mahoney, Secretary of State responsible for CMHC. "This is an innovative approach to using existing buildings to address housing needs in B.C."

CMHC has approved funding of \$366,800 through its Residential Rehabilitation Assistance (RRAP) - Conversion Program.

Cedar Grove Apartments result from an innovative partnership between Coast Capital Savings Credit Union, Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) and Victoria Community Housing Trust.

Victoria Community Housing Trust purchased the motel in 2002, with support from Coast Capital Savings Credit Union. VIHA leases the facility from the Housing Trust and provides continuous staff support for the residents.

"Without the creative financing arranged by Coast Capital Savings Credit Union, and the support services provided to residents by VIHA, we would not have been able to undertake this project to help some of our least fortunate residents", said Bill McElroy, Executive Director of CEDCO Victoria and the Housing Trust.

During renovations the Trust used the property as interim housing for homeless people and the completed project includes four units accessible to persons with disabilities. "I'm confident the neighbours as well as residents will be happy to see the appearance of Cedar Grove improved", added McElroy.

Vancouver Foundation provided a \$10,000 grant to support the upgrade and provide amenities, including landscaping and fencing to improve the appearance of the property.

The Government of Canada, through CMHC, spends over \$200 million in British Columbia annually to assist some 77,000 low- and moderate-income households, including ongoing financial support for the many non-profit and cooperative housing projects. This includes \$13.8 million to repair and improve housing occupied by low-income people through RRAP programs.

The Federal Government, through CMHC, also recently implemented the renewed suite of CMHC's RRAP Programs for another three years. Funding for these popular programs, targeted at low-income households was extended by \$384

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million nationally and forms part of the Government of Canada's national housing strategy.

CMHC is Canada's housing agency and is committed to improving housing quality and affordability for all Canadians.

For more information on CMHC's programs visit [www.cmhc.ca](http://www.cmhc.ca)

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### **Fact Sheet - RRAP Programs**

Improvements to the federal renovation programs including the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), Emergency Repair Program (ERP), Home Adaptations for Seniors Independence (HASI) and the Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP) were implemented recently to ensure the program is more effective in serving those most in need, including low income Canadians living in substandard housing, Aboriginal people, persons with disabilities and victims of family violence.

The changes to RRAP were made following consultations and an extensive evaluation of the renovation programs. The consultation revealed strong support for continued targeting to those in core need, who occupy housing below a minimum level of health and safety standards. The evaluation indicated the program is well-targeted and effective in preserving the existing housing stock. However, it also indicated that levels of assistance were inadequate for some applicants and had not kept up with the rate of inflation.

The changes include the elimination of the repayable loan and an increased maximum limit for forgivable loans. In addition, the sliding scale of forgiveness, based on household income, has been eliminated.

RRAP offers financial assistance to low-income households to enable them to repair their dwellings to a minimum level of health and safety, and enables modifications for persons with disabilities. SEP assists in the repair, rehabilitation, purchase or construction of shelters for victims of family violence. ERP offers assistance to low-income households to undertake emergency repairs required for the continued safe occupancy of their home. The HASI program assists low-income seniors to make minor home adaptations to extend the time they live in their own homes independently.

In addition, the Shelter Enhancement Program will now be available to repair, rehabilitate or improve existing shelters for men who are victims of family violence.

Improvements to RRAP for Persons with Disabilities include a change in the calculation of total household income in recognition of the additional costs faced by persons with disabilities.

RRAP has been in existence for 30 years and is a cornerstone of Canada's national housing policy. The extension of funding for three more years is part of the Government of Canada's national housing strategy, which includes a \$1 billion investment in affordable housing by 2007-08.

In B.C. and Yukon, over \$17 million is available for the suite of renovation programs in 2003-2004.