



PRESS RELEASE



Canadian Mortgage News - National Archive 2005

New Assisted Living Units to Benefit Seniors

PORT ALBERNI, British Columbia, March 14, 2005 — Lower-income seniors in need of affordable housing and care in Port Alberni will benefit from the development of 20 new assisted-living units announced today. BC Housing and the Vancouver Island Health Authority have invited the Alberni-Clayoquot Continuing Care Society to develop a detailed proposal for an assisted-living development.

"The Government of Canada is committed to teaming up with our partners to help seniors and their need for affordable housing," said the Honourable David L. Emerson, Minister of Industry, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing. "Units such as these make it possible for seniors to remain close to their family and friends, and allows them to remain active in their communities."

"Seniors in the Alberni Valley need access to assisted living in their own community," said Gillian Trumper, MLA for Alberni-Qualicum. "They want to live independently in suitable affordable housing instead of living in an institutional setting or at home without the needed support. Once complete, these 20 new homes will help to meet their needs."

Assisted-living units are self-contained apartments where residents receive hospitality and personal care services, such as meals, housekeeping and laundry services, recreational opportunities, assistance with medications, mobility, and other care needs as well as a 24-hour response system.

"This development will begin to fill the gap in housing and care for seniors in Port Alberni," said Veronica Doyle, Regional Director, Housing and Community Resource Development, Vancouver Island Health Authority. "Maximized independence often leads to improved health. Assisted living gives people a middle option between home care and residential care where they can remain part of their local community and be as self-sufficient as they are able."

The Alberni-Clayoquot Continuing Care Society currently owns and operates two residential care facilities in Port Alberni: Fir Park Village, and Echo Village. The assisted-living homes will be built adjacent to Echo Village on land owned by the non-profit society. Hospitality and administrative services will be provided by Echo Village and neighbouring Fir Park Village. The addition of assisted living units will create a continuum of care among the three facilities.

"This project will help to fill a need in our community and enhance the range of services available to Valley residents," said Amanda Lord, president of the board of the Alberni-Clayoquot Continuing Care Society. "We are exploring partnerships to develop community wide collaboration in the delivery of more comprehensive and coordinated health and social services for seniors."

The Province, through BC Housing and the ILBC program, is committed to providing affordable apartments with support services across the province by 2006/2007 with 695 in the Vancouver Island Health Authority region. To date more than 2,900 ILBC units have been allocated, 84 percent of the program, in communities across the province.

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Government of Canada, through CMHC, will contribute \$130 million by 2008 towards affordable housing in this province. The provincial government, through BC Housing, will provide a minimum of \$34 million annually to subsidize the cost of units built under this agreement, as part of a larger strategy to provide a range of housing options for British Columbians in greatest need.

This news release is available online at www.bchousing.org

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