



PRESS RELEASE



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Work Underway for New Seniors' Housing in Fort St. James

FORT ST. JAMES, British Columbia, October 6, 2005 — Construction has started on the Fort St. James Senior Citizens Home Society assisted living development, which will provide two new assisted living apartments for Fort St. James seniors.

"The development of this project will allow seniors in Fort St. James to live in a quality environment at an affordable cost," said the Honourable David L. Emerson, Minister of Industry and Member of Parliament for Vancouver–Kingsway, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing. "Shelter is one of the foundations upon which healthy communities and individual dignity are built. We are pleased to work with our partners in British Columbia to provide more seniors with better housing in their community."

The Fort St. James development is one of many new assisted living homes created under the Independent Living BC program, providing a middle option for seniors who can no longer live independently, but who do not want or need 24-hour residential care. These two new assisted living homes in Fort St. James will provide affordable alternatives for low- to moderate-income seniors.

"Many people who helped build their communities would like to stay in their community in their golden years," said Prince George–Omineca MLA John Rustad. "Our government is committed to ensuring that our seniors in the North are provided with quality health benefits."

The assisted living units are self-contained apartments with a 24-hour response system. Residents receive personal care services, such as recreational opportunities and assistance with medications, housekeeping, meals, and laundry services. Northern Health will provide ongoing funding for personal care services and a portion of the hospitality services to ensure that tenants have access to the health-care services they need to remain independent.

"Part of our mandate is to provide seniors with the health supports and services that they need to live independently," said Northern Health board member Roseline Ferré. "Assisted living brings together housing and health services, allowing seniors to remain independent in their home communities. We're pleased that this new housing option will soon be a reality in Fort St. James."

"The addition of these assisted living units provides a much needed option for seniors in this community," said Ann McCormick of the Fort St. James Senior Citizens Home Society. "We're building up the housing options in this community a few apartments at a time with the help of all of our partners and the community itself."

The Province of British Columbia, through BC Housing's Independent Living BC program, is committed to providing 3,500 affordable assisted living apartments across the province. To date, over 3,200 ILBC units or 92 per cent have been allocated. Independent Living BC is a partnership between the provincial and federal governments, local health authorities, non-profit and private sectors.

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

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Backgrounder

Fort St. James Senior Citizens Home Society

Development Facts

The new assisted living building will be a one-storey, wood-framed building with two cottage-style units with surface parking. The new assisted living apartments will neighbour the Society's existing seniors' apartment building.

Tenants will receive hospitality, and personal care services, such as meals, housekeeping and laundry, recreational programs, assistance with medications and various care needs and a 24-hour response system.

Construction is expected to be completed by January 2006. Residents should contact Northern Health for eligibility to the assisted living program.

Partners and Funding

Capital cost of this project is \$368,618.

- The federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, is providing a capital grant of \$100,000.
- The provincial government, through BC Housing, will provide a housing subsidy of \$323,000 over 35 years.
- Northern Health will provide funding for the personal care and part of the hospitality services to tenants.
- The Fort St. James Senior Citizens Housing Society provided \$20,000 in land equity and \$5,600 through community donations, including \$3,100 in reductions of municipal levies.