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Affordable Student Housing Pilot Program Extended to Cape Breton

SYDNEY, Nova Scotia, November 24, 2005 — Low-income single-parents attending Cape Breton University will have access to affordable rental housing thanks to a student housing pilot program created under the Canada – Nova Scotia Affordable Housing agreement.

Rodger Cuzner, Member of Parliament for Cape Breton, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing, and David Morse, Minister of Community Services, made the announcement today. Under the program, rent supplements will be provided for up to five low-income single-parent students attending Cape Breton University full time.

"The government of Canada is proud to support affordable housing initiatives for all Canadians," said MP Cuzner. "In helping to house single parent students attending Cape Breton University, we are demonstrating our commitment to families and to higher learning. Access to education through affordable housing is an investment in Canada's future."

"Access to affordable housing will help relieve some of the financial pressures for single parent students and their families while they attend university," said Mr. Morse. "We hope to learn more about the needs of single parent students and how we can best support their efforts to obtain a university education."

Single parent students attending Cape Breton University full time are able to apply for a rent supplement to help them pay their housing costs. Rent supplements will be available for qualifying students whose apartments have been safety inspected and approved by the Cape Breton Island Housing Authority. This means families may be able to continue to live in their current place of residence.

To qualify for the student housing program, applicants must be enrolled full time at Cape Breton University, and be a lone custodial parent who is eligible for public housing and approved for Nova Scotia Student Assistance.

"Cape Breton University is pleased to take part in this student housing pilot project for single parents," said university president John Harker. "Affordable housing and appropriate support for students, especially low-income single-parents, is vital as they pursue their post-secondary education options. Without support, access becomes meaningless."

The Department of Community Services has been working with universities in Nova Scotia to determine how to best support single parent students attending university. Student housing pilot programs are also being offered at Acadia University and St. Francis Xavier University. The province hopes to launch similar affordable student housing pilot programs at other universities in Nova Scotia.

To date, almost \$26 million has been announced by the government of Canada and the province of Nova Scotia and its partners for the construction or renovation of nearly 600 units in the province. A total of \$56.18 million will be available under Canada – Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Agreement.

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