



PRESS RELEASE



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Affordable Assisted Living Opens for Island Seniors

VICTORIA, British Columbia, July 17, 2006 — A new \$8.8 million assisted living residence in Langford was announced today as federal, provincial, and civic representatives joined members of M'akola Housing Society to help celebrate the official opening of Jesken Aerie, which will provide 60 affordable apartments with support services for Aboriginal elders and non-Aboriginal seniors.

"Canada's new Government is committed to working with our partners to help seniors live with dignity and independence," said the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. "The Jesken Aerie residence demonstrates how all levels of government and community groups can work together to help meet the unique needs of B.C.'s seniors."

The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, provided a capital grant of \$1.5 million under the Canada – B.C. Affordable Housing Agreement for construction of the four-storey building located at 817 Goldstream Avenue.

"We're committed to providing B.C.'s seniors with more affordable housing options," said Minister Responsible for Housing Rich Coleman. "Langford is just the sort of place where seniors want to spend their golden years and this facility will allow them to do so comfortably, safely and affordably."

Operating costs for the assisted living apartments are subsidized by the provincial government, through BC Housing, under Independent Living BC program, to make them more affordable for elders and seniors with low incomes. Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) will fund home support and home care services provided to tenants.

Providing more options for seniors' housing and care is a priority, given that over the next two decades the seniors' population in B.C. will double to an estimated 1.4 million. While some frail seniors need ongoing professional nursing care, the vast majority do not want or need 24-hour care in a hospital setting. Assisted living adds to the range of housing and care options currently available, and better suits a growing population of seniors who are living longer, healthier lives.

"Most people want to stay in their own communities, as independently as possible for as long as possible," said Ellen Godfrey, board member of the Vancouver Island Health Authority. "Allowing seniors to age in place — often nearer to their friends and family — is good for an individual's health, and it's also good for the community."

"Langford is growing," said Langford Mayor Stewart Young, "and our elders and seniors laid the foundation for that growth. On behalf of the city and our council, I want to thank all the groups that made this opening possible."

The new assisted living development is owned and managed by M'akola ILBC Housing Society, a non-profit Aboriginal group that has been providing a range of affordable housing options on Vancouver Island since 1984.

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"This is a very exciting time for the M'akola Group of Societies," said M'akola's executive director Kevin Albers. "Being able to build on our existing capacity by providing a health and housing option for the community's Aboriginal elders and non-Aboriginal seniors is a positive step towards further meeting our community's needs."

The Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia, through the ILBC program, are committed to providing 4,000 affordable assisted living apartments across the province. To date, more than 3,500 ILBC units have been allocated in communities across the province.

Today's announcement reflects the B.C. government's goal of providing the best system of support in Canada for seniors.

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Backgrounder

The Jesken Aerie will provide housing for elders and seniors. This is the 41st project for the M'akola Group of Societies, and will provide 60 units of assisted living for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. The 60 units consist of 54 one-bedroom units, and 6 two-bedroom units.

The Jesken Aerie is located on a traditional gathering area of local Aboriginal people. In addition to meeting the needs of elders, seniors and people with disabilities, the development is designed to meet the special needs of Aboriginal elders. It is important to Aboriginal people to be cared for by members of their own culture.

The estimated capital cost of the development is \$8,835,362.

Funding partners include:

- The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, provided \$1.5 million under the Canada – British Columbia Affordable Housing Agreement.
- BC Housing provided a grant of \$357,762 and will provide \$13,842,554 in rental subsidies over the course of the 35-year mortgage.
- The City of Langford provided \$322,000 in municipal Development Cost Charge reductions and a 10-year permissive tax exemption of approximately \$1,088,000.
- The Vancouver Island Health Authority will provide operational funding for personal care and hospitality services as well as home and community care services, professional support such as nursing and rehabilitation, and case management.