



PRESS RELEASE



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Fort St James Assisted Living Homes Open to Seniors

FORT ST. JAMES, British Columbia, December 19, 2006 — Residents have settled into their new homes at Pioneer Lodge, a two-unit assisted living development for seniors in Fort St. James.

"Pioneer Lodge will provide seniors in Fort St. James with the safe, quality housing they deserve," said the Honorable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, on behalf of the Honorable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. "Through the creation of additional assisted living units and a proposed Tax Fairness Plan that will allow income splitting, Canada's New Government is showing its commitment to Canadian seniors and their communities."

The lodge is operated by the Fort St. James Senior Citizens Home Society and funded under the Independent Living BC (ILBC) program. Assisted living homes add to the range of housing and care options available to seniors by providing a middle option between home support and residential care.

"During the 2005 election campaign, seniors' care facilities in Fort St. James was a big issue. Seniors would like to be able to stay in their home community close to family and friends," said Prince George – Omineca MLA John Rustad. "I'm pleased that we've been able to help create these options at the Pioneer Lodge."

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

"In providing these assisted living units, we are addressing the need for affordable seniors housing options in our community," said Ann McCormick of the Fort St. James Senior Citizens Home Society. "With the help of our funding partners, we're offering more to maintain the health and well-being of our seniors."

The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, will contribute more than \$130 million by 2010 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 the Canada – BC Affordable Housing Agreement, as part of a larger strategy to provide a range of housing options for British Columbians in greatest need.

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Backgrounder

Pioneer Lodge

Pioneer Lodge is a one-storey, wood-framed building with two cottage-style units and surface parking. The new assisted living apartments are connected to Pioneer Place, the Fort St. James Senior Citizens Home Society's existing seniors' apartment building, by an exterior walkway.

Construction was completed in late May 2006 and the two units were occupied by residents by August 2006.

The capital cost of this project is \$418,618.

- The federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, provided a capital grant of \$100,000.
- The Province, through BC Housing, will provide a housing subsidy of \$20,296 over 35 years, plus a \$50,000 capital grant.
- Northern Health provides approximately \$6,000 in annual 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 \$15,100 through community donations.
- The District of Fort St. James contributed \$3,100 in reductions of municipal levies.
- The remainder of the funding is provided in the form of a mortgage through BC Housing's operating agreement.