



PRESS RELEASE



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\$6.5 Million Seniors' Housing Opens in Port Alberni

PORT ALBERNI, British Columbia, June 15, 2007 — Federal, provincial and municipal representatives, as well as community partners gathered in Port Alberni today to celebrate the official opening of Heritage Place, a new \$6.52 million, 26-unit assisted living development.

“Canada’s New Government is committed to making affordable housing more available in British Columbia and across Canada for those who need it most,” said James Lunney, Member of Parliament for Nanaimo – Alberni, on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. “With the opening of this project, seniors in Port Alberni will now have access to quality, affordable housing and the services they need to meet their specific needs, while remaining close to their families and friends.”

Assisted living meets the needs of lower income seniors by providing a middle option between home support and residential care. The new units provide residents with a private apartment, as well as personal care, hot meals, housekeeping, laundry services, recreational opportunities and a 24-hour response system.

“Seniors are living longer, healthier lives and our government is committed to providing housing and care options that allow people to enjoy their retirement,” said Minister Responsible for Housing Rich Coleman. “Residences like Heritage Place are being built in communities across the island and province, to help improve the lives of seniors and ensure that they can continue to live in their communities.”

The apartments at Heritage Place are funded under Independent Living BC, a housing-for-health program designed for seniors and people with disabilities who require some assistance to remain independent but don’t want or need 24-hour care.

“Through assisted living, Heritage Place will provide residents with the best of both worlds — living independently while still being able to access support services they need,” said Jac Kreut, VIHA board Chair. “With the Echo Village residential care facility, which is funded by VIHA, located right next door, this development creates a campus of care where seniors can age in place.”

“Heritage Place creates a valuable link between the services we now provide, ensuring that our seniors have the lifestyle and healthcare options that they need to maintain optimum health for as long as possible,” said Sylvia Springer, President, Alberni Valley Assisted Living Society.

The Alberni Valley Assisted Living Society operates in partnership with the Alberni – Clayoquot Continuing Care Society (ACCCS), which owns two residential care facilities in Port Alberni: Fir Park Village and Echo Village. Hospitality and administrative services will be provided by the ACCCS through Echo Village. The addition of assisted living units will create a continuum of care among the three facilities.

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These new units are part of the British Columbia Government's commitment to provide 5,000 net-new residential care beds, assisted living units, and supportive housing with home support units by the end of 2008. To date, 8,494 new and replacement beds and units have been built, including 3,196 net-new.

The Province of British Columbia is committed to providing more than 4,000 affordable assisted living apartments for B.C. seniors and persons with disabilities. To date, more than 3,900 have been allocated in communities across the province. The Province's budget for shelters and affordable housing is \$328 million — nearly triple what it was in 2001.

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

Contact:

Renee Schisler
BC Housing
Telephone: 604-439-4757
Cellular: 604-375-1235

Anya Nimmon
Vancouver Island Health Authority
250-740-6980

Barbara Stevenson
Executive Director
Alberni – Clayoquot Continuing
Care Society
250-724-6541

Megan Shaw
Canada Mortgage and Housing
Corporation
604-737-4032

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Backgrounder

Heritage Place

Heritage Place, at 4200A – 10th Avenue in Port Alberni, provides 26 units of assisted living. This new building joins Echo Village, a neighbouring residential care facility, to provide a campus of care. The building opened to residents in April 2007.

The assisted living suites are all one-bedroom units funded through the Independent Living BC program. Eligible residents pay 70 per cent of their after-tax income for their units and services, which include meals, weekly housekeeping and linen services, 24-hour response, personal care services, and social and recreational opportunities.

Partners and Funding

Total capital cost of this project is approximately \$6.5 million.

- The federal government, through CMHC, provided a \$200,000 capital grant under the Canada – BC Affordable Housing Program Agreement.
- The Province provided \$1.1 million in capital grants and will provide approximately \$4 million in housing subsidy over 35 years.
- Vancouver Island Health Authority is providing annual funding of \$130,000 for hospitality services.
- The Alberni Valley Assisted Living Society has provided the land, valued at \$409,875.

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The Alberni Valley Assisted Living Society (AVALS)

The Alberni Valley Assisted Living Society was formed in 2006 to operate the new assisted living units. The society brings together three established non-profit and community-owned seniors' services in the Alberni Valley: The Alberni – Clayoquot Continuing Care Society, operating 133 residential care beds at Fir Park Village and Echo Village; The Abbeyfield Houses Alberni Valley Society, operating 20 supportive housing apartments; and The Alberni Valley Senior Citizens' Home Society operating 85 subsidized housing units for seniors.