



PRESS RELEASE



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\$4.3 Million Supportive Housing Development Opens in Smithers

SMITHERS, British Columbia, June 22, 2007 — Seniors and adults with disabilities in the North now have access to more housing and health options after today's official opening of The Meadows, a new \$4.3 million, 14 unit assisted living development in Smithers.

"Canada's New Government is committed to providing housing solutions for seniors and adults living with disabilities, so that they can continue to live in their communities with dignity and independence," said Dick Harris, Member of Parliament for Cariboo – Prince George, on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development and Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. "As the first project of its kind in Smithers, The Meadows will give residents more access to quality, affordable housing to meet their specific needs."

The Meadows is the first housing development of its kind to open in Smithers. The 14 units of assisted living for seniors and adults with disabilities are funded under Independent Living BC, a housing-for-health program in which the federal and provincial governments, the regional health authority and non-profit societies partner together to provide more housing and care options for seniors.

"The Province is committed to providing seniors and adults with disabilities with secure and affordable housing," said Dennis MacKay, MLA Bulkley Valley – Stikine. "The opening of The Meadows means that seniors and adults with disabilities in Smithers will be able to maintain their independent lifestyles in a supportive and welcoming environment."

The units are self-contained, wheel chair accessible, 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.

The Province provides an annual housing subsidy to ensure that the housing remains affordable. Northern Health funds the personal care and hospitality services for the residents.

"Our community is thrilled to open a facility that will allow our seniors and adults with disabilities to have access to assistance and housing support, without having to leave," said Smithers Mayor James A. Davidson. "The Meadows is offering more choice to those who need it most."

"The development of assisted living units in communities in the Bulkley Valley and throughout the North is a major step in providing local seniors and adults with disabilities with new supports and services to help them stay healthy and independent," said Rowena Holoien, Northern Health's Northwest chief operating officer.

"Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for all members of our community," said Shirley Mueller, Administrator, Smithers Community Services Association. "The Meadows serves an important role in our community, offering our

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seniors and adults with disabilities housing and health support that leads to longer, healthier lives.”

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 2010 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.

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The Meadows

The Meadows, at 1180 Alberta Street in Smithers, provides 14 assisted living apartments for seniors and adults with disabilities. The development was completed and opened to residents in March 2007.

The one-storey wood-frame building includes 14 one-bedroom suites, all of which are wheelchair accessible and two of which are designated fully accessible. The new assisted living suites are 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:

Capital cost of this project is \$4.27 million.

- The federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, provided a \$575,000 capital grant.
- The Province provided \$475,000 in capital grants, and will provide a housing subsidy of \$2.3 million over 35 years.
- Northern Health will provide \$146,170 in annual funding for the personal care and hospitality services.
- The Town of Smithers agreed to sell the land, valued at \$345,000, to the Society for \$1.
- The Smithers Community Services Association raised \$100,000 through community fundraising efforts.

Smithers Community Services Association

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Smithers Community Services Association is a non-profit organization that was formed in 1973, committed to developing services, programs and partnerships that enhance the quality of life for all the members of the community.