



**PRESS RELEASE**



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## **Urban Ecology EQUilibrium™ Demonstration Project Starts Construction in Winnipeg**

**WINNIPEG, Manitoba, September 11, 2009** — The Government of Canada today marked the start of construction of the Urban Ecology demonstration project, an energy-efficient and environmentally friendly home to be built in Winnipeg.

The home will be constructed by Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation (WHRC), as part of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC's) EQUilibrium™ Sustainable Housing Demonstration Initiative, which encourages builders and developers to build the next generation of sustainable housing in Canada.

The Honourable Steven Fletcher, Minister of State (Democratic Reform), on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development and Minister Responsible for CMHC, was joined today by Flor Marcelino, Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Wellington, on behalf of the Honourable Gord Mackintosh, Minister of Family Services and Housing and minister responsible for persons with disabilities for the Province of Manitoba, City Councillor Jeff Browaty, on behalf of Mayor Sam Katz and the City of Winnipeg, and Menno Peters of WHRC, along with sponsors and supporters in the ground-breaking of the first demonstration home of its kind in Manitoba.

“The Government of Canada is pleased to work with the housing sector to develop such innovative homes. We congratulate WHRC on their winning design and commitment to environmental responsibility,” said Minister of State Fletcher. “Urban Ecology gives people in this region an opportunity to see first-hand how we can create beautiful, healthy homes, conserve energy and resources, and reduce pollutant emissions.”

Urban Ecology will integrate solar energy systems into its design and construction, in addition to high-efficiency appliances, water-efficient fixtures and building materials with lower pollutant emissions. A two-storey duplex on an infill site in an established downtown area, Urban Ecology represents a new approach to building in an urban environment. It also demonstrates how the principles of EQUilibrium™ housing can play a key role in the delivery of affordable, efficient and healthy housing as part of the overall renewal of Canada's inner cities.

The project received over \$160,000 in funding from the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI). WHHI is a partnership between the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg. WHHI funding includes \$120,000 from the cost-shared Canada – Manitoba Affordable Housing Initiative and up to \$41,200 from the City of Winnipeg in funding and land costs. CMHC is also providing \$60,000 to WHRC to help with the costs of designing, documenting and promoting the project. Other contributors include the Province of Manitoba Sustainable Development Innovations Fund (SDIF), the Province of Manitoba Science, Technology, Energy and Mines (STEM), the Winnipeg Foundation, and Manitoba Hydro.

“Manitoba has always enjoyed a leadership role in innovation, and we are especially glad to see these designs aimed at entry level or first time home buyers” said Doug Martindale, on behalf of Minister Mackintosh. “Environmental

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responsibility is everyone's business and we all win when new housing options are made available to Manitobans, especially in existing neighbourhoods."

Representing Mayor Sam Katz, Councillor Browaty said, "Building sustainable neighborhoods is a key focus of the City's long-term planning in the Speak Up Winnipeg process. We're pleased to be partners in a project that advances that goal, and helps point the way to a greener Winnipeg."

"As with many growing cities, Winnipeg's downtown neighbourhoods are in need of rehabilitation and renewal. We are excited to be creating affordable housing while renewing the urban environment," said Menno Peters of Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation. "Urban Ecology will demonstrate that energy-efficient healthy homes can be affordable for entry-level buyers of the housing market."

Urban Ecology is one of 15 projects that won CMHC's national EQUilibrium™ sustainable housing competitions since the initiative was launched in 2006. All EQUilibrium™ projects will be open to both the general public and professional audiences for tours, and then monitored for performance by CMHC for one year, once occupied.

EQUilibrium™ offers a new approach to housing in Canada. It strives to balance our housing needs with our environmental priorities. It brings together the principles of occupant health and comfort, energy efficiency, renewable energy production, resource and water conservation, and reduced environmental impact.

As Canada's national housing agency, CMHC draws on more than 60 years of experience to help Canadians access a variety of quality, environmentally sustainable, and affordable homes — homes that will continue to create vibrant, healthy communities and cities across the country. For more information, call 1-800-668-2642.

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