

## Co-op Housing News

An e-bulletin for municipal service managers

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### Building more co-operative housing

CHF Canada's Ontario Region has sent a brief to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, the Honourable David Caplan, on changes that are needed to the federal/provincial *Affordable Housing Program* inherited from the Eves' government. During the election, the Liberals promised to create 20,000 units of affordable housing during their first term. But CHF Canada is concerned that without major changes to the program design the housing won't remain affordable and very little co-operative housing will be developed.

In our brief we call on the Liberal government to:

- fully match the \$360 million federal contribution to the *Affordable Housing Program* in Ontario
- keep their promise to set up a housing allowance program and make sure that half of the new 20,000 units have rent supplements
- overhaul the program to focus on not-for-profit housing that is permanently affordable
- set a program objective of developing a mix of not-for-profit housing forms with a target of developing 25 percent of the units as housing co-ops
- change program rules to remove barriers to the development of smaller community-based co-ops and non-profits.

To read [\*Developing Co-operative Housing Under the Affordable Housing Program in Ontario\*](#), log onto the CHF Canada Web site. CHF Ontario Region will be meeting with Minister Caplan in early February to discuss the brief.

If you have questions about the brief or want to discuss issues related to co-op housing in your region, call **Harvey Cooper**, Manager of Government Relations at 416-366-1711, extension 237. Or e-mail [hcooper@chfc.ca](mailto:hcooper@chfc.ca).

### ***Latest Downloading Details***

We have just sent out the latest issue of *Downloading Details*. It deals with the federal *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act* (PIPED Act) that comes into effect on January 1, 2004. *Downloading Details* is an education series published by CHF Ontario Region to help Ontario-program co-ops understand and comply with the new provincial program.

There are conflicting legal opinions on whether the Act applies to housing co-ops. No one will know for sure until a case goes to court and a judge makes a ruling. However, CHF Canada's view is that the Act does apply and we are advising co-ops to follow the privacy principles in the Act.

The *Social Housing Reform Act* also has privacy requirements.

*Downloading Details, #22, Meeting the new requirements on personal information protection: some guidelines for Ontario-program co-ops*, outlines the principles of the new federal legislation, explains where the federal and provincial laws differ, and sets out some steps co-ops can take to implement the new rules.

The issue is available in the Members' Network of our Web site ([www.chfc.coop](http://www.chfc.coop)).

### ***Winning improvements to the Social Housing Reform Act***

The Province started a review of the *Social Housing Reform Act* (SHRA) regulations in the summer of 2002. Over the past year, CHF Canada's Ontario Region has met with a group of service managers and the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) in an effort to develop a set of recommended changes. We are pleased that we have been able to reach significant consensus on what changes to propose to the Province.

The election of a new provincial government has presented new opportunities and challenges. The Ontario Region will continue to support the need for immediate regulation changes. At the same time we will be pushing for more significant improvements, including revisions to the Act.

Our goal is to simplify the cumbersome regulatory framework and overly detailed rules imposed by the SHRA. We want to re-establish a clear accountability framework that better supports the kind of volunteer-led, community-based housing which has a long history of success in Canada. And we want to ensure financial certainty for co-ops.

CHF Ontario Region is preparing a brief on improvements to the Act that we will present to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Honourable John Gerretsen early in 2004.

### **See you in Quebec City**

Mark your calendars for CHF Canada's annual meeting in Quebec City, June 9-12. The week is full of events including workshops and business meetings. The annual meeting of CHF Canada's Ontario members is on Friday, June 11. There will be many opportunities to network with service managers and co-op staff and members. We look forward to seeing many service managers at the meeting. Watch our Web site ([www.chfc.coop](http://www.chfc.coop)) for more details.

### **More service managers joining as associates**

Sixteen service managers have now joined CHF Canada as associates. Associates receive all the publications, technical documents, reports and newsletters from CHF Canada at the same time as they are sent to housing co-ops in Ontario. By joining CHF Canada as an associate, municipalities also get access to the Members' Network part of CHF Canada's Web site and show their support for CHF Canada.

For more information on joining CHF Canada, send an e-mail to [info@chfc.ca](mailto:info@chfc.ca) or call the Ontario Region at 416-366-1711.

### ***Newsbriefs***

The December edition of *Newsbriefs* was just mailed to our members. It has stories on the recent provincial election, energy efficiency, insurance and more. Read the issue by logging onto the CHF Canada Web site ([www.chfc.coop](http://www.chfc.coop)).

### **SHSC board appointments**

The Social Housing Services Corporation (SHSC) has appointed two co-op housing representatives to its board for two-year terms beginning January 1, 2004. **Lori-Anne McDonald**, President of the Ontario Council was reappointed. **Jennifer Farmer**, General Manager, **Clarion Co-operative Homes** in Cambridge was also appointed. **Ken Lawson**, who was appointed to the founding board by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing stepped down after a two-year term.