

Affordable housing project celebrates start of construction

WELLAND, ON, July 26 /CNW/ - The Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, Niagara Region and the City of Welland held a sod-turning ceremony today to mark the start of construction on a project that will create 44 units of affordable housing in Welland; thirty-nine of the units are funded under the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program.

The Honourable Robert Nicholson, Member of Parliament for Niagara Falls and Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Minister for Democratic Reform, on behalf of the Honourable Diane Finley, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development; the Honourable Jim Bradley, MPP for St. Catharines and Ontario Minister Responsible for Seniors, on behalf of the Honourable John Gerretsen, Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Niagara Regional Chairman Peter Partington; and Welland Mayor Damian Goulbourne attended the ceremony.

"The new construction made possible by the funding announced today will make a difference in the lives of many residents of Welland, from the elderly to young children," said Minister Nicholson. "Canada's new government is pleased to support this affordable housing success story."

"Affordable housing is a priority for the McGuinty government," said Minister Bradley. "We are on the side of the most vulnerable. That is why we invest in worthy projects like this one - to ensure that low-income households can have safe, adequate and affordable places to live."

The \$5 million project, including \$1.05 million from the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program, will provide 39 apartments at 26 Mill Street in Welland. An additional 5 units are funded by the sponsor, Niagara Falls Masonry Contractors Inc. The units will be occupied by seniors, families and singles with lower incomes.

"This development is another significant step forward in providing much needed affordable housing in Welland. It is a fine example of municipal, regional, provincial and federal governments working together for the benefit of the people of Niagara," said Regional Chairman Peter Partington.

"This project is going to bring additional affordable housing to Welland where the need is more than apparent. It is also a major component of the city's initiative to improve Welland's Downtown. Thank you to Niagara Falls Masonry Contractors for their perseverance and dedication," said Welland Damian Goulbourne, Mayor of Welland.

Today's federal and provincial allocation will be complemented by \$872,905 in municipal financial incentives.

The federal-provincial agreement, signed on April 29, 2005, comprises a commitment of \$301 million from each of the two levels of government. With this commitment, the federal, provincial and municipal governments will invest at least \$734 million in affordable housing over the life of the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program. In total, the program will help 20,000 Ontario households by 2010.

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