



SHIN



Social Housing in Niagara

Issue 4

Fall, 2004

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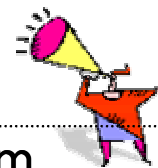
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*Welcome to the new look of
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Affordable Housing Program

Our Request for Proposal call released June 22, 2004 for the development of up to 150 units of affordable housing resulted in a number of quality proposals from a variety of private and public sector organizations. A list of recommended projects was approved by Regional Council on September 16, 2004 and has been forwarded to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) for final approval. Once approval from MMAH has been granted it is expected that construction/renovation will begin in the spring of 2005 with estimated occupancy dates as early as September 2005.

This program, with funding coming from the Federal, Provincial, Regional and Municipal levels of governments, has now ended.

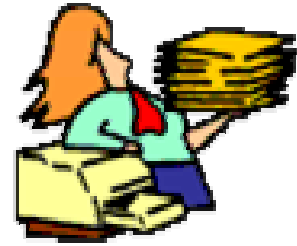
Niagara Regional Housing continues to look for opportunities to increase affordable housing. Please check back with us for further information and announcements. Any further Request for Proposals will be posted on our website and advertised in local newspapers.



NRH Notices Update

The following NRH Notices have been issued since the last edition of the SHIN Newsletter:

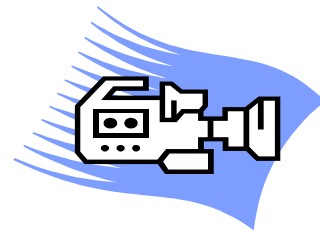
04-03	Rent/Housing Charge Reimbursement
04-04	2004 Dr. Albert Rose Bursary Program
04-05	Rent/Housing Charge Collection and Arrears Policy
04-06	Purchasing/Tendering Policy
04-07	Excessive Heat Alert
04-08	Guidelines for the Eligibility and Allocation of an Additional Bedroom because of a Disability or Medical Condition
04-09	Rent Control, Inflation & Cost Factors
04-10	Unit Rent Factors
04-11	Special Payments for Social Assistance Recipients
04-12	Amendments to Regulations Accompanying the SHRA , 2000
04-13	GST Rebate for Providers with Municipal Status



The Notices are also available on our website at www.nrh.ca.

Privacy and Security Cameras

According to the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner, the use of security cameras must meet a four-point test.



1. Is the measure demonstrably necessary to meet a specific need?
2. Is it likely to be effective to meet that need?
3. Is the loss of privacy proportionate to the benefit gained?
4. Is there a less intrusive way of achieving the same end?

Security cameras in public areas of rental buildings have been considered acceptable if used responsibly. Easy-to-read notices that the premises are under video surveillance for security purposes should be posted. It is advisable for the Board of Directors to clearly state in the minutes that the purpose of the cameras is for building security. Then, if the camera picks up illegal activity, it can be shown that this was inadvertent and not the intended purpose of the cameras.

A camera used specifically to validate a tenant/member's information with regard to their RGI calculation would be considered an unnecessary invasion of privacy by the Federal Privacy Commissioner.

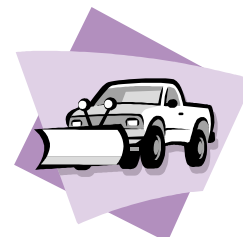
ONPHA Quick Connections June 2004

As The Temperature Drops, Slips and Falls Rise



Rain, snow and ice can create slippery conditions in parking lots and walkways. The best way to avoid a serious slip or fall this winter is to recognize these hazardous conditions and take proper precautions.

- ⇒ Do not allow plowed snow to remain in a parking lane. Slips and falls can easily occur as people enter and leave their vehicle.
- ⇒ Be sure to remove re-melted snow and ice and salt walkways. The appearance of a clear path may cause people to proceed with less caution.
- ⇒ Poor snow removal procedures may hide defective or uneven conditions of walkway areas and may increase the risk of injury.



For the safety of your tenants/members, deal with snow and ice immediately.

Benchmark Update

On November 4, 2004 NRH released the Ministry draft benchmarks to housing providers. The draft figures represent the new subsidy entitlements for non-profit and co-operative housing providers as legislated by the SHRA 2000. NRH responded to the Province on the methodology used in the development of the benchmark figures and provided recommendations on improving the process to ensure benchmarks are both fair and equitable to all providers in the Niagara region.

Housing providers are encouraged to review their own draft benchmark figures and discuss any areas of concerns with their Housing Administrator. The Province will release revised benchmarks to providers in mid-January 2005.

The final benchmarks are expected to be released by June 2005 and will be effective with providers' fiscal year starting in 2006.

Depending on provider feedback, NRH may host workshop sessions to review the final benchmarks and its overall impact on operating budgets.

Communication will be issued at that time.

PAIR (Provider Annual Information Return)

In order to complete Niagara Regional Housing's 2004 Service Manager Annual Information Return, once again we will be collecting certain 2004 statistical information from all housing providers.

We will require a breakdown of the number of households according to income, with a further breakdown of units according to household type (Families, Seniors, Non-Elderly Singles, and Special Needs). Information will also be collected with respect to average incomes of households at or below the established Household Income Limits (HILs), number of modified units, and number of households receiving support services. All data will be as of December 31, 2004.

Accordingly, NRH will supply all housing providers with the Provider Annual Information Return (PAIR) forms by December 31, 2004.



Housing Provider Forum - Nov 4, 2004

On November 4, 2004, NRH hosted a housing provider forum and its 1st Board Networking Dinner. The event was well-attended by both provider board members and staff. Over 60 participants attended the day session representing the non-profit, co-operative and federal non-profit sectors. Board members representing 12 providers attended the dinner and evening session.



The presentations and workshops allowed for the sharing of information and best practices and provided networking opportunities for providers in Niagara.

Guest speakers included representatives from the SHSC, Diane Miles from CHF Canada and Cindy Ledl, Manager of Shelter Services, Women's Place who provided the group with some insight on the special priority category and women who are victims of abuse. Other attendees included representatives from ONPHA, GH-CHF and NRH Board members.

NRH will be reviewing the feedback questionnaires and arranging further training/information sessions based on topics identified by housing providers.

Ontario Energy Board

New Pricing Structure effective April 1, 2004



- Q. What are the new rates?
- A. The first 750 kwh of usage per month will be billed at 4.7 cents per kilowatt hour. Consumption above 750 kwh per month will be priced at 5.5 cents.
- Q. Won't the removal of the cap on electrical rates lead to higher costs for housing providers?
- A. We recognize that the removal of the cap on electrical rates will lead to increased costs for housing providers. However, as noted on the Provincial website, taking simple conservation measures, all consumers will be able to limit the impact of the price change on their electricity bill.
- Q. Is the pricing structure fair to landlords who operate bulk meter buildings? Will I have to pay the higher rate since the total energy consumption for the building will be much higher than an individual unit?
- A. Regulations are being developed that would allow building owners to report the number of individual units to electricity distributors. This will ensure that the monthly bill for the building reflects the two block pricing structure. Since the average monthly electricity use for most residents of apartments is about 750 kwh or less, most of their use will be at the 4.7 cents per kwh rate.

Investment Options Expanded—Waiver Requirement Terminated

To address provider concerns, the boards of the Social Housing Services Corporation (SHSC) and SHSC Financial have terminated the use of the Release/Waiver form. It is no longer required that providers without capital reserve plan sign a waiver in order to invest in the bond and equity funds.

The boards of SHSC and SHSC Financial continue to encourage only those providers with capital plans to invest in the Equity Fund. If providers do not have a capital plan and wish to invest in the Equity Fund, SHSC Financial will advise providers of the risks involved. However, it is ultimately the responsibility and decision of the provider board to make the final investment decision.



If you would like further information on your investment options, please contact Phillips, Hager & North at 1-888-771-7473.

La Residence Des Aines Canadiens Francais St. Catharines Inc. Celebrates 10 Years!



La Residence Des Aines Canadiens Francais St.. Catharines Inc. (La Residence) celebrated its 10th year anniversary in May 2004.

In February 1993, the ground-breaking ceremony was held to celebrate the construction of an 81 unit apartment building. A driving force behind the development of this seniors facility was J. Ramond Lanthier, President of Les Aines of St. Catharines and current Property Manager of La Residence.

La Residence has a mission to contribute to the quality of life for seniors in the community.

The complex provides various amenities for the residents of the building. A cafeteria is on-site and is open for breakfast and lunch. A recreation room was recently added to the complex and provides a pool table for the residents' use. The complex has an exercise room for the residents and the services of a chiropractor and manicurist are made available on-site.

The complex has a large common room located on the 2nd floor used for "Club Soleil" activities and enjoyed by the residents as well as the community. Daycare activities and computer learning opportunities, together with various socials are held in the common room.



From left to right: J. Raymond Lanthier, Property Manager; Estelle Perusse, Past President; Germain Bourgoie, Past President; and Raymond Cayouette, Current President.



Residents enjoying the festivities