



**PRESS RELEASE**



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## **New Subsidized Assisted Living Units Open in Hazelton**

**HAZELTON, British Columbia, April 21, 2007** — Skeena Place, the new \$1.9 million seniors' development in Hazelton, officially opened its doors today with community members and representatives from all levels of government on hand to celebrate.

"Skeena Place will provide seniors and people living with disabilities in Hazelton with quality, affordable housing," said the Honourable Chuck Strahl, Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food and Minister for the Canadian Wheat Board, on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development. "Canada's New Government is very proud to have made a significant contribution to this project, which will provide safe and supportive housing for those who need it in this community."

Assisted living units are funded under the Independent Living BC program (ILBC) and meet the needs of lower income seniors and people with disabilities by providing a middle option between home support and residential care. The new units will provide residents with personal care, hot meals, housekeeping, laundry services, recreational opportunities and 24-hour emergency response.

"The Province is committed to working with our partners to ensure that seniors have access to safe and affordable housing in their own communities," said Dennis MacKay, MLA Bulkley Valley – Stikine. "Skeena Place is a great reflection of that commitment."

"Assisted living is one of many care options for seniors and people with disabilities," said Judy Wass, a Northern Health Board member from Hazelton. "Skeena Place will make new affordable housing options available for Hazelton, and give people greater choice as they direct their own care."

"This new addition of assisted living allows us to continue to meet the growing needs of seniors in our community," said Mayor Alice Maitland of the Village of Hazelton.

"On behalf of the Wrinch Memorial Foundation, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Federal and Provincial partners as well as our local partners; the Village of Hazelton, District of New Hazelton and the Gitksan Health Society. It was the hard work and dedication on all levels that made Skeena Place a reality for our community," said Dr. Phil Muir, President of the Wrinch Memorial Foundation. "This local facility will allow seniors to remain within a home environment for a longer period of time, without losing their independence."

The Province of British Columbia, through ILBC, 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. These units are part of the government's commitment to provide 5,000 intermediate and long-term care beds by 2008.

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The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, will contribute more than \$130 million by 2010 towards affordable housing in this province. The provincial government, through BC Housing, will provide a minimum of \$34 million annually to subsidize the cost of units built under the Canada – BC 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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### Backgrounder

#### Skeena Place

#### Wrinch Memorial Foundation

The Wrinch Memorial Foundation was created to raise funds for the Wrinch Memorial Hospital, founded over 100 years ago. Wrinch Memorial provides acute care and a variety of community services to the Hazelton area and surrounding First Nations villages.

The hospital is a 14-bed acute facility with 4 extended care beds. It includes the community's only pharmacy, physician clinic, dental clinic, podiatrist, private physiotherapy clinic, operating room and obstetrics services. The hospital also operates Wrinch Residence, which provides 10 units of rental housing from the converted nurses' residence.

The Foundation will oversee the management of Skeena Place.

#### Skeena Place

The building is a one-storey assisted living development with six one-bedroom suites. It is situated beside the Wrinch Memorial Hospital, close to complementary health care services. Tenants receive hospitality and personal care services such as meals, housekeeping and laundry, recreational programs, assistance with medications, and a 24-hour response system.

#### Partners and Funding

Capital cost of this project is \$1.895 million.

- The federal government, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, provided a \$300,000 capital grant under the Canada – BC Affordable Housing Program Agreement; \$10,000 in proposal development funding; and mortgage loan insurance.
- The provincial government, through BC Housing, is providing housing subsidies of \$1.3 million over 35 years.
- Northern Health is providing funding for the personal care and part of the hospitality services to tenants.
- The Village of Hazelton provided reductions on various development costs. The value of the contribution is approximately \$20,060.

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- The District of New Hazelton provided landscaping reductions for the development on various development costs. The value of the contribution is approximately \$10,000.
- The Wrinch Memorial Foundation provided \$28,000 in land equity and \$71,000 in cash and in-kind donations through community donations, including \$15,000 from the FK Morrow Foundation.