

UPDATE

from the Ministry of Municipal
Affairs and Housing



March 2007

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Minister John Gerretsen's speech to combined conference of the Rural Ontario Municipal Association and the Ontario Good Roads Association

Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review

March training sessions for Municipal Act Reform (Bill 130)

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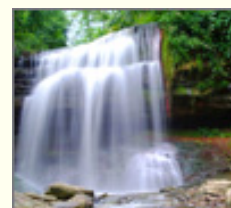
MESSAGE FROM MINISTER JOHN GERRETSEN

Welcome to the first issue of **UPDATE**, our new e-newsletter to keep you informed of ministry news and progress toward building strong communities. [Read the full story.](#)



HIGH MARKS FOR GREENBELT'S SECOND ANNIVERSARY

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CHANGES FOR LANDLORDS AND TENANTS

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OGRA / ROMA CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

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Message from Minister John Gerretsen



Welcome to the first issue of **UPDATE**, our new e-newsletter to keep you informed of ministry news and progress toward building strong communities.

Recently, I was able to meet many of the 1300 delegates attending the combined Ontario Good Roads Association and Rural Ontario Municipal Association conference. I found my discussions with delegates, both formal and informal, to be invaluable: it's my view that only collectively can we find solutions to the issues of the day.

In that vein, I want to update you about the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review. The Review is examining how the province and municipalities can best deliver and fund services for our communities. The table of elected provincial and municipal representatives leading the Review has already met twice. Everyone has demonstrated a willingness to work hard, honestly and cooperatively to come up with new ways of tackling these issues.

We have established a [Review website](#) to keep you informed of the Review's progress. I invite you to provide [your input](#) to the Review through an online questionnaire.

My ministry staff are working with all our partners and stakeholders on the implementation of a number of significant initiatives this year, including the new Municipal Act, planning reform and the new building code. We will keep you posted through **UPDATE** on our progress.

I look forward to receiving your feedback on this first issue and encourage you to forward **UPDATE** to your colleagues and friends.

John Gerretsen
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

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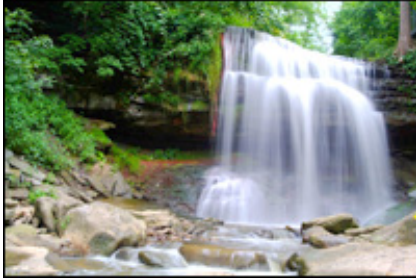
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High Marks for Greenbelt's Second Anniversary

Ontario celebrated the second anniversary of the Greenbelt on February 28, 2007. The Ontario Greenbelt Alliance marked the day by releasing its [annual report card](#) giving the government's efforts high marks.



"The Greenbelt is an important element of our government's plan to tackle gridlock, contain sprawl and preserve greenspace," said Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing John Gerretsen. "We welcome the Greenbelt Alliance's report card because it clearly indicates that we are on the right track."

A recent Decima Research poll found that 89 per cent of residents in the Greater Toronto Area "support the Greenbelt as a way to ensure cities in Greater Toronto remain liveable and environmentally healthy." (*Toronto Star*, November 3, 2006)

About the Greenbelt

The Greenbelt permanently protects 1.8 million acres of environmentally sensitive and agricultural lands around the Greater Golden Horseshoe. An [online 'virtual tour'](#) partially illustrates the extent of the Greenbelt, and [official maps](#) delineating the Greenbelt boundaries are available on the ministry website.

The Greenbelt lands include thousands of acres of prime agricultural land and specialty crop areas, such as those found in the Holland Marsh and the Niagara Peninsula, so that future generations of Ontarians will enjoy locally grown food. The Greenbelt preserves the area's watersheds, rivers and forests, key to protecting and improving the quality of Ontario's water and air.



The Greenbelt also provides countless recreation, sports and tourism opportunities through its trails, open spaces and parklands. The Ministry of Tourism provides a wealth of online information about [exploring the Greenbelt](#).

Greenbelt and planning reform



The Greenbelt is just one of the reforms of Ontario's planning system in the last few years. The reforms also include changes to the [Provincial Policy Statement](#) and the establishment of the [Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe](#). Most recently, [reforms to the Planning Act](#) came into force on January 1, 2007, complementing the Greenbelt by providing additional municipal tools that encourage sustainable development. For the latest on planning reform, see this new [Building Better Communities brochure](#).



With the population of the Greater Golden Horseshoe expected to rise by four million by 2031, good planning decisions are essential to ensure Ontarians' continued high quality of life. The Greenbelt is a living legacy that will make a real difference to the quality of life of Ontarians.

Related Links:

- [Ontario Celebrates Greenbelt's Second Anniversary](#)
- [Greenbelt Protection and the Greenbelt Plan](#)
- [Online 'Virtual Tour'](#)
- [Detailed Maps of the Greenbelt](#)
- [Tourism in the Greenbelt](#)
- [The Greenbelt Council](#)
- [Ontario Greenbelt Teacher's Resource](#)

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Changes for Landlords and Tenants



The new Landlord and Tenant Board reports a smooth transition to the new [Residential Tenancies Act](#) which took effect on January 31, 2007.

With the new legislation, the name of the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal changed to the Landlord and Tenant Board — better reflecting its mandate of enhanced customer service and accessibility for tenants and landlords. A lot of effort was put into educating clients about the new Act and that's paid off: Staff at board regional offices report that stakeholders and clients seemed well-informed and understanding during the transition.

Brochures explaining the changes to the legislation are now available in English, French and ten other languages [through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's website](#). On January 31, the Landlord and Tenant Board also launched a [new website](#) with detailed information and help for landlords and tenants.

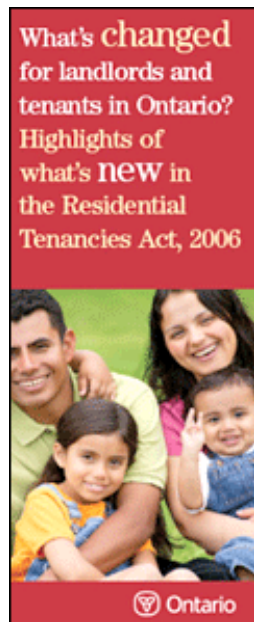
About the Residential Tenancies Act

The Residential Tenancies Act has two goals — balanced protection for both landlords and tenants, and promoting a healthy investment climate. It ensures fairer rents for tenants, helps landlords protect their investments and helps to keep the rental housing market strong. The Act:

- Eliminates the five-day default eviction process, so that every tenant has an opportunity to go to a hearing or mediation.
- Bases the annual rent increase guideline on a real cost indicator — the Consumer Price Index for Ontario.
- Requires rent reductions for sitting tenants when utility costs go down, if a unit's rent had been increased to reflect high utility prices.
- Requires rent reductions for sitting tenants when a capital expenditure such as a new roof has been paid for, if a tenant's rent had been increased to pay for those costs.
- Permits the Landlord and Tenant Board to disallow all rent increases if a landlord has failed to maintain the building.
- Creates a fast-track eviction process for tenants who vandalize their units or buildings or cause serious problems when the apartment is in a small complex where the landlord also lives.
- Continues to exempt rental units built since 1991 from most rent controls, and allows new tenants and landlords to negotiate starting rents in private rental units.
- Significantly reduces some administrative fees.

With some 1.35 million renter households in Ontario, representing 32 per cent of Ontario's population, the Residential Tenancies Act meets the province's need for a new era of balanced protection for landlords and tenants.

Related Links



- Landlord and Tenant Board: www.ltb.gov.on.ca
- Landlord and Tenant Board toll-free number: 1-888-332-3234
- [Residential Tenancies Act](#)

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OGRA/ROMA Conference Highlights



John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, delivered the [plenary speech](#) at the opening session of this year's annual combined conference of the Ontario Good Roads Association and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association.

"Together we have achieved a great deal," noted Mr. Gerretsen in his remarks. "But we all know there is still more to be done. I look forward to your continued input and partnership as we continue to strengthen Ontario's municipalities."

The conference, held February 25-28, 2007 in Toronto, attracted more than 1,300 elected officials and staff from across the municipal sector.

Workshop topics included creating clean energy from solid waste, infrastructure financing, rural Ontario issues and municipal best practices.

Ministry presence strong at conference



Many newly elected councillors were eager to learn more about ministry initiatives, making it a busy time for employees staffing the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's information booth. Darlene Watman, who coordinated the booth, said there was a high level of interest this year from delegates.

Related Links:

- For more on the conference, see the [ROMA website](#).

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