

UPDATE

from the Ministry of Municipal
Affairs and Housing



August 2007

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**Celebration Marks
Construction of New
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Results-based Plan
2007/08**

MESSAGE FROM MINISTER JOHN GERRETSEN

Following on the heels of successful provincial initiatives such as the Greenbelt, Places to Grow, and the Clean Water Act, Premier McGuinty announced on July 6th his intention to introduce the proposed Lake Simcoe Act. [Read more](#)



AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT OPENS NEW DOORS FOR A NEW LIFE

For some, moving can be stressful. For Stephanie, one of the residents of Genesis Court, an affordable housing project in St. Catharines, her recent move lifted a load off her shoulders by providing her with a second chance and a new life. [Read more](#)



GREENBELT'S BOUNTY CELEBRATED AT LOCAL FARMERS' MARKETS

With the sweet aroma of the season's first strawberries hanging in the air, Farmers' Markets Ontario recently celebrated the grand opening of one of its two new certified local farmers' markets. [Read more](#)



STARTING A CAREER IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Gang Wang is one of the first to undergo training in local government management under the Municipal Internship Program. [Read more](#)



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Minister's Message



Welcome to UPDATE, the e-newsletter of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Each edition keeps you informed of news and progress in the municipal and housing sectors.

Following on the heels of successful provincial initiatives such as the Greenbelt, Places to Grow, and the Clean Water Act, Premier McGuinty announced on July 6th his intention to introduce the proposed Lake Simcoe Act. If passed, this legislation would take measures to protect and improve the water quality of the lake.

Regular readers of UPDATE know that projects under the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program are very important to communities across the province. This issue highlights one such initiative in St. Catharines that provides shelter for vulnerable people.

This issue of UPDATE also contains a story on the opening of new certified local farmers' markets in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The markets bring the fresh produce of the Greenbelt to urban residents. By protecting 1.8 million acres of agricultural and environmentally-sensitive land, our government is ensuring that future generations will enjoy the bounty of the Greenbelt.

This issue of UPDATE also profiles one of the first candidates to undergo training in local government management under the [Municipal Internship Program](#). My ministry is proud to be helping mentor the next generation of municipal leaders.

I look forward to receiving your [feedback](#) on this issue of UPDATE and encourage you to forward it to your colleagues and friends. If UPDATE has been forwarded to you and you would like to continue receiving it, please take the time to [subscribe](#).

John Gerretsen
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

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Affordable Housing Project Opens New Doors for a New Life

For some, moving can be stressful. For Stephanie*, one of the residents of Genesis Court, an affordable housing project in St. Catharines, her recent move lifted a load off her shoulders by providing her with a second chance and a new life.

Stephanie had moved to the Niagara city to escape an abusive past. She ended up living in a cardboard box in one of St. Catharines' parks, struggling to survive a harsh winter.

She had hit rock bottom before turning to an emergency shelter for help.

Four years later, Stephanie is now working and living in her new home at Genesis Court.

She has obtained her grade 12 diploma and reconnected with children she had given up for adoption.

"I feel there are many new doors opening for my new life," says Stephanie. "I was given a second chance and for that I am very grateful!"

Genesis Court, sponsored by Bethlehem Projects of Niagara, opened its doors to tenants early this year.

"Our goal was to create an attractive and accessible apartment building that will blend into the neighbourhood, providing a safe, affordable and pleasant environment for tenants," says Julie Dennis, the multi-service organization's executive director.

A Dream Come True

Through partnerships with the three levels of government and community, volunteer and private-sector organizations, Genesis Court became a reality.

The \$4.8 million project provides 40 affordable housing units in St. Catharines.

Funding includes \$1.2 million from the [Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program](#).

The Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Agreement, signed in 2005 by the federal, provincial and municipal governments, includes about three-quarters of a billion dollars in investment. The federal and provincial governments provide \$301 million each.

The result will be 20,000 new units of affordable housing and housing allowances for lower-income families across Ontario.

Genesis Court is designed for people with moderate to low income, including those with specific needs such as people with disabilities and the homeless.

Thanks to the support services offered by Bethlehem Projects of Niagara, tenants will have access to opportunities such as good jobs and skills training.



Julie Dennis, Executive Director of Bethlehem Projects of Niagara, at the opening of Genesis Court, which provides 40 affordable and supportive housing units in St. Catharines.

“Genesis Court was a great opportunity to achieve that goal and to make our community a better place to live. It’s a dream come true,” says executive director Dennis.

* The name has been changed for confidentiality purposes.

Related Links

- [Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program](#)
- [Gallery of announced affordable housing projects](#)

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Greenbelt's Bounty Celebrated at Local Farmers' Markets



John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, [right], celebrates the local fresh produce season and the bounty of Ontario's Greenbelt at MyMarket Woodbine Centre in Toronto. With Minister Gerretsen is Luke Whitty of Whitty Farms in St. Catharines

With the sweet aroma of the season's first strawberries hanging in the air, Farmers' Markets Ontario recently celebrated the grand opening of one of its two new certified local farmers' markets.

MyMarket Woodbine Centre, as well as MyMarket Liberty Village, both in Toronto, are the country's first certified local farmers markets. The markets feature food grown and produced in the Greenbelt.

Each of the markets' 40 vendors has undergone a farm inspection to verify that the produce they sell at the markets is actually grown on their farms.

"These local farmers' markets are a way for all of us to celebrate the good fortune we have to live so close to the rich farmlands of the Greenbelt," said John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

The [Greenbelt](#) permanently protects from development 1.8 million acres of land around the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

It includes about 100,000 acres of Niagara Peninsula tender fruit and grape specialty crop areas and the entire Holland Marsh specialty crop area of over 15,000 acres, located in York Region and Simcoe County.

The Greenbelt has earned high praise recently. It won awards from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario and the Canadian Institute of Planners for environmental planning.

"The Greenbelt ensures that we, our children and our grandchildren, will continue to enjoy foods that are grown and raised close to home," said Gerretsen.

Visit [Farmers' Markets Ontario](#) and [MyMarket - Certified Local Farmers' Market](#) for more information on Farmers' Markets Ontario and its new certified local markets.

Related links:

- [Greenbelt](#)
- [Farmers' Markets Ontario](#)
- [MyMarket - Certified Local Farmers' Market](#)

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Starting a Career in Local Government

Gang Wang is one of the first to undergo training in local government management under the [Municipal Internship Program](#).

"I am honoured to be among the seven selected this year, the first year of the program" Wang said. "It's an opportunity to learn about managing local governments and to help me set a career goal for the long-term."

The Municipal Internship Program is a vehicle to mentor the next generation of municipal leaders.

A pilot program is currently running with Greater Napanee, Marathon, Newmarket, Oliver Paipoonge, Thunder Bay and Waterloo and Hastings County each hosting an intern this year. They are preparing for careers as the future managers and administrators of Ontario's municipalities.

The [Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario](#) and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing consulted with the University of Western Ontario's Local Government Program and the Seneca College Centre for Financial Services in developing the program. The Ministry is providing 50 per cent funding and the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario is also providing financial support.



Gang Wang is one of the first to undergo training under the Municipal Internship Program, a vehicle to mentor the next generation of municipal leaders.

A Good Place to Call Home

Wang moved to Canada with his wife and son in 2005. A daughter, the "first" Canadian in the family, was born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 2006. In May, Wang completed his undergraduate studies in Philosophy from Nankai University, China, and a Master of Public Administration degree from Dalhousie University in Halifax.

He is a keen observer of local governments, which "provide a form of grass roots democracy." For Wang, local government is "the easiest way for citizens to participate in issues that affect their lives."

Wang is presently working on the review of Key Performance Indicators for the Town of Newmarket's business plan.

He has good things to say of his host community. "I see strong entrepreneurship and accountability in the administration of the municipality."

Wang feels at home in Newmarket, his home for the year-long internship. "It is a lovely city and a good place one can call home."

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