

UPDATE

from the Ministry of Municipal
Affairs and Housing



September 2007

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**McGuinty
Government Uploads
\$935 Million In
Social Programs
From Municipalities**

**Municipal
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**McGuinty
Government Wins
Major Provincial
Planning Awards**

MESSAGE FROM MINISTER JOHN GERRETSEN

I had the pleasure recently of attending the 2007 Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference in Ottawa. Such opportunities to hear views and concerns are invaluable. [Read more](#)



HOUSING ASSISTANCE FOR WORKING FAMILIES

Ontarians can now apply to the province's latest affordable housing program, Rental Opportunity for Ontario Families (ROOF), which will provide a monthly housing allowance to low-income families struggling to pay their rent. [Read more](#)



GREENBELT AND GROWTH PLAN WIN PLANNING AWARDS

In the late 1960s, Leonard Gertler, one of the founding fathers of urban planning in Canada, completed a ground breaking study of the Niagara Escarpment. Now, almost 40 years later, the Government of Ontario is receiving awards named in his honour. [Read more](#)



NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT REVITALIZES DOWNTOWN HAMILTON

Walking down King Street in Hamilton, you can't miss the giant crane at the construction site next to Ferguson Station, marking downtown Hamilton's latest affordable housing project. [Read more](#)



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> [Home](#) > [About the Ministry](#) > [UPDATE — E-Newsletter](#) > [Articles](#) > [Update - September 2007](#) > Minister's Message

Minister's Message

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

I had the pleasure recently of attending the 2007 Association of Municipalities of Ontario Conference in Ottawa.

At the Ministers Forum on the second day of the AMO conference, 11 ministers and five parliamentary assistants were there to take questions from the floor. During this year's conference there were 304 delegation meetings, 65 more than last year. My colleagues and I find such opportunities to hear views and concerns to be invaluable.

Premier Dalton McGuinty [announced](#) at the conference that our government will upload the municipal share of Ontario Drug Benefits and the Ontario Disability Support Program. This will reduce costs to municipalities by more than \$900 million by the time the upload is fully implemented in 2011. And, as I announced at the AMO Conference, there will be no reduction in the overall dollars for the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund.

As the Premier stated, this is an important step, and our government looks forward to continuing the important work of the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review. Members of the Review's Political Table recently met to discuss the progress to date and the next steps for the [Review](#).

Regular readers of UPDATE know that ministry staff works hard at developing training that is self-paced and accessible. They have just completed the revised [Municipal Councillor's Guide](#). The guide is a comprehensive tool that gives councillors important details on municipal governance and my ministry's policies and programs.

In addition, the affordable housing e-learning module is now live. I invite you to visit the [Learning Centre](#) and learn about the affordable housing policies in the Provincial Policy Statement, 2005 and guidelines for implementation.

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



At the recent AMO Conference in Ottawa John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Doug Reycraft, AMO's President, renewed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that sets out the principle of government consultation with the municipal sector. The MOU is part of the government's continuing commitment to a strong partnership with the municipal sector. Witnessing the MOU renewal signing are John Burke, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Premier Dalton McGuinty, and Pat Vanini, AMO's Executive Director.

[Back to UPDATE - September 2007](#)

Top

| [central site](#) | [feedback](#) | [search](#) | [site map](#) |
[français](#)

| [Home](#) | [Front and Centre](#) | [Resources for Municipalities](#) | [About the Ministry](#) | [Related Links](#) | [Reference Centre](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Site Updates](#) |



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Housing Assistance for Working Families

Ontarians can now apply to the province's latest affordable housing program, [Rental Opportunity for Ontario Families \(ROOF\)](#), which will provide a monthly housing allowance to low-income families struggling to pay their rent.

Families can request an application form by calling 1-888-544-5101, TTY line 1-800-263-7776, or by signing up online at <http://www.ontario.ca/ROOF>.

The \$185-million program will provide a housing allowance of up to \$100 per month to more than 27,000 low-income working families in the province, starting next January.

The allowance will help eligible families reduce the amount of household income spent on rent, and allow them to cover other family expenses such as food and clothing.

"Many of the families receiving assistance will be newly arrived in Ontario, struggling to make their way forward in our province, and we want to offer them a helping hand," says John Gerretsen, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. "Thanks to its innovative approach to providing housing assistance, ROOF will make a positive difference in the lives of thousands of families that will directly benefit from the monthly housing allowance."

Who is Eligible for Assistance under ROOF?

Working families may be eligible for the program if they:

- are a resident of Ontario and have appropriate status in Canada;
- have one or more dependent children under the age of 18 years, as of January 1, 2008;
- have filed a 2006 income tax return;
- have a Family Earned Income of at least \$5,000 and an Adjusted Family Net Income below \$20,000;
- are paying more than 30 per cent of Adjusted Family Net Income towards rent;
- have less than \$10,000 in liquid assets;
- are not currently receiving any rent subsidy or social assistance; and
- do not own a home suitable for year-round occupation.

Strengthening Ontario's Affordable Housing Strategy

ROOF, along with the Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program and the Affordable Housing Program, brings the total number of housing allowances funded by the Government of Ontario to 35,000.

It also builds on Ontario's successful affordable housing strategy aimed at ensuring every family has a safe, healthy, affordable place to call home.

The province's affordable housing strategy includes a variety of programs designed to fund and support the creation of new affordable housing units, provide housing allowances and rent supplements to households in immediate need, and assist low and moderate-income households in buying their own homes.

Related Links:



- [ROOF](#)
- [The Ontario Mortgage and Housing Initiative \(OMHI\)](#)
- [The Provincial Rent Bank Program](#)

[Back to UPDATE - September 2007](#)

Top

| [central site](#) | [feedback](#) | [search](#) | [site map](#) |
[français](#)

|
[Home](#) | [Front and Centre](#) | [Resources for Municipalities](#) | [About the Ministry](#) | [Related Links](#) | [Reference Centre](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Site Updates](#) |



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Last Modified: September 04, 2007

> [Home](#) > [About the Ministry](#) > [UPDATE — E-Newsletter](#) > [Articles](#) > [Update - September 2007](#) > Greenbelt and Growth Plan Win Planning Awards

Greenbelt and Growth Plan Win Planning Awards

In the late 1960s, Leonard Gertler, one of the founding fathers of urban planning in Canada, completed a groundbreaking study of the Niagara Escarpment. His work contributed to the escarpment's protection and led to the creation of the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

Now, almost 40 years later, the Government of Ontario is receiving awards named in his honour for similar work in protecting additional lands in the same area. The Greenbelt Plan extended permanent protection to precious farmland and environmentally sensitive lands surrounding the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine.

The [Ontario Professional Planners Institute \(OPPI\)](#) will award Leonard Gertler Awards of Distinction to the Government of Ontario for the Greenbelt Plan and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.



OPPI says the Leonard Gertler Award of Distinction recognizes planning accomplishments that have a significant impact on the people of Ontario.

"We can think of no other recipient that would be as deserving," said Gary Davidson, FCIP, RPP, President of the OPPI. "Generations of Ontarians will benefit from these plans, and we applaud the government's efforts."

Professor Gertler, who passed away in 2005, was a co-founder of the University of Waterloo's School of Urban and Regional Planning.

"It is an honour to receive awards named after Professor Gertler," said John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. "He was an early advocate of protecting sensitive lands in Ontario and our work builds on the legacy that he left us."

The awards will be handed out at OPPI's conference in October.

Related Links

- www.ontarioplanners.on.ca

[Back to UPDATE - September 2007](#)

Top -

| [central site](#) | [feedback](#) | [search](#) | [site map](#) |
[français](#)

| [Home](#) | [Front and Centre](#) | [Resources for Municipalities](#) | [About the Ministry](#) | [Related Links](#) | [Reference Centre](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Site Updates](#) |



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Last Modified: September 05, 2007

> [Home](#) > [About the Ministry](#) > [UPDATE — E-Newsletter](#) > [Articles](#) > [Update - September 2007](#) > New Affordable Housing Project Revitalizes Downtown Hamilton

New Affordable Housing Project Revitalizes Downtown Hamilton

Walking down King Street in downtown Hamilton, you can't miss the giant crane at the construction site next to Ferguson Station, marking Hamilton's latest affordable housing project: the Terraces on King.

Spallacci Construction Ltd., the sponsor of Terraces on King, has owned the property since the early 1990s. The original building on the site was an eyesore and was demolished to make way for the new development.

The \$17.2 million project, including \$8.6 million from the Strong Start initiative of the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program, will provide 123 apartments on King Street East in Hamilton.

The apartments, designed for lower-income families, seniors and persons with disabilities, will alleviate some of the city's waiting list for social housing, and at the same time, rejuvenate part of Hamilton's downtown core.



Rudi Spallacci, President of Spallacci Contracting Ltd., (left) and Chris Murray, Director of the Housing Division of the City of Hamilton, hold a time capsule used during a ceremony to mark the official start of construction of Terraces on King. A rendering of what the project would look like is shown in the background.

"Strong Start funding allows us to transform an underdeveloped site that will have tremendous impact on the continuing revitalization of downtown Hamilton, while also providing affordable rental housing," said Rudi Spallacci, President of Spallacci Contracting Ltd.

Time Capsule Marks Project Launch

A placement ceremony for a time capsule was held recently to celebrate the official start of construction of Terraces on King.

A letter from Minister John Gerretsen, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and an Ontario Trillium pin were placed among other items in the time capsule. Future generations will learn about current affordable housing projects when the time capsule is recovered.

Through funding from the [Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program](#), eight housing projects with 525 units have been launched in Hamilton since 2005. Already, 159 units are occupied, and development on 366 units is progressing.

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.

Related Links

- [Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program](#)

[Back to UPDATE - September 2007](#)

Top

| [central site](#) | [feedback](#) | [search](#) | [site map](#) |
[français](#)

| [Home](#) | [Front and Centre](#) | [Resources for Municipalities](#) | [About the Ministry](#) | [Related Links](#) | [Reference Centre](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Site Updates](#) |



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