

UPDATE

from the Ministry of Municipal
Affairs and Housing



December 2007

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MESSAGE FROM MINISTER JIM WATSON

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Ontario's co-ordinated approach to brownfield redevelopment received a Brownie Award at the recent Canadian Urban Institute annual conference. [Read more](#)



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Minister's Message



I am pleased to introduce myself to the readers of UPDATE, the e-newsletter produced by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Our goal is to keep you informed of news and progress in the housing and municipal sectors.

I was excited when Premier McGuinty appointed me Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As a former councillor and mayor of Ottawa I have some familiarity with my new portfolio. That said, I have taken advantage of every opportunity to attend meetings, events and conferences to renew acquaintances and make new ones.

During these sessions I have heard repeatedly that the federal government needs to be part of the solution to deal with very serious fiscal challenges in housing, transit and infrastructure.

I have called on the federal government to come to the table and help. The Province and municipalities must continue to work together to convince federal politicians we need not just their goodwill and good words; we need their good money to invest in our communities.

While on the subject of working together, the important work of the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review is in the final stages. Finance Minister Dwight Duncan and I will soon have our first opportunity to meet with the other members of the Political Table, which is overseeing the Review. [The Review's pages on the web](#) are encouraging you to provide your opinions, comments and suggestions and I would like to urge you to get your views in sooner, rather than later, as we are aiming to have a consensus report in the spring.

I recently attended a ceremony in Ottawa to mark National Housing Day, an annual event that recognizes the need for safe, affordable and sustainable housing. I am committed to further the partnership among the federal, provincial and municipal governments and the project sponsors and service providers who provide affordable housing.

A new video production will soon be available on my ministry's website that provides an overview of the McGuinty government's affordable housing program. We hope you will take the time to view the video after its launch and see how we are increasing the availability of affordable housing through the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program.

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](#).

I also want to wish you and your families the best of the holiday season and a happy new year.

Jim Watson
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

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Brownfields Gets Brownie Awards

Ontario's co-ordinated approach to [brownfield redevelopment](#), led by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, received a Brownie Award in the Policy and Program Development category at the recent Canadian Urban Institute annual conference.

Marcia Wallace, Brownfields Coordinator, accepted the award on behalf of the province.

At the same October event, former Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister John Gerretsen was recognized with a special Brownie Award for his leadership role in making brownfields a central part of the government's planning agenda.

The McGuinty government reiterated its commitment to brownfield redevelopment with the passage of legislative brownfield reform last spring. This legislation clarified the responsibility of developers and industry when they do cleanup work on contaminated lands. Industry partners have consistently identified liability as a hindrance to more activity in brownfields.

The Ontario government will continue to work with stakeholder groups on related regulatory changes needed to encourage brownfield redevelopment and fully implement these reforms.



Marcia Wallace, Brownfields Coordinator, and Minister John Gerretsen pose after Canadian Urban Institute awards ceremony with Shawn Parry, Brownfields Policy Advisor, and Liz McLaren, Assistant Deputy Minister, Municipal Services Division, MMAH.

Related Links:

- [Brownfields Ontario](#)

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Meeting the One Tonne Challenge

The Ontario Southwest Municipal Conference, recently held in London, was billed as “carbon neutral” — no small feat for an event hosting over 400 people from all around the southwest and points beyond.

Organizers Andrea Neill and Jill Bellchamber-Glazier wanted to reduce the event's carbon footprint while raising awareness of options for more efficient energy and resource uses.

“We had a lot of fun learning about what we could do to reduce the impact of our event, and we all felt good about the outcome,” says Bellchamber-Glazier.

She also appreciated the support of the organizing committee and management team in the incorporation of “going green” into every aspect of the conference.

As with any event, collaborations were very important. A few of Neill and Bellchamber-Glazier's green partners included:

- the hotel chef at the Best Western Lamplighter who prepared lunch with locally grown foods
- attendees who took public transit or carpooled, and
- [Bullfrog Power](#) which injected carbon-free green power onto the Ontario grid matching the amount of electricity used by the conference.

The event succeeded in reducing its emissions by at least one tonne. Of the 21.2 tonnes of greenhouse gasses it did produce, most was transportation related.

Going green proved to be an economic win as well: over 70 per cent of paper expenses were saved by distributing fewer hard copies of conference materials and making them available electronically instead.

Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Jim Watson attended and, during his address, recognized the dedication of Chatham-Kent Councillor Frank Vercouteren with a long-standing service award.

The Minister said “While this ministry addresses environmental concerns through policy such as the Greenbelt and Brownfields remediation, I am very pleased to see the efforts of individuals and groups within the ministry leading by example to reduce our impact on the environment.”

Related links:

- [MSO - Southwest](#)
- [Bullfrog Power](#)



Minister Watson at the Southwest Regional Conference

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Seeing the Light at the End of the Tunnel

When Catherine* moved to her new apartment at 313 Athlone Avenue in Ottawa, she didn't just change her postal code, she also changed her life.

Catherine, 40, was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, self-harm and suicidal disorder. She spent most of her life in a physically, mentally and sexually abusive environment.

Five years ago, after several suicide attempts and seven months in a psychiatric hospital, Catherine started to deal with her past and present abuse. In 2006, she moved to 313 Athlone, Ottawa Salus Corporation's latest affordable housing project.

Catherine says the adjustment period was difficult, but support from workers at 313 Athlone made it easier.

"Salus has shown me that I am not alone," says Catherine. "It is hard to recover, and sometimes I think I won't be able to make it, but with the help and support from all the workers at Salus, I think there might be a light at the end of the tunnel!"

The project, which provides 40 supportive housing units for lower income individuals, received \$1,160,000 through the [Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Agreement](#).

30 years of commitment to affordable housing

Salus, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this month, began by renting apartments where clients could live with visiting support from a social worker. It quickly became apparent, however, that housing with on-site staffing was needed for many clients, at least for a transitional period.

In 1979, Salus opened its first group home and has used a variety of government funding programs over the years to expand its housing stock. Salus also provides housing through lease and referral arrangements with non-profit housing organizations.

Now, Salus owns and operates housing in 12 locations, including five group homes. 313 Athlone is the newest of seven apartment building locations.

"Building 313 Athlone is a real milestone for Salus," says Carolyn Buchan, Salus' President and Chair of the Board of Directors. "The inclusion of office and program space greatly improved our ability to offer services to our clients. And housing an additional 40 people at one time has felt like a huge step forward, even though the need for more housing for people with serious mental illness is still great."

On National Housing Day, November 22, the Honourable Jim Watson, Minister of Municipal Affairs took part in a ceremony where a plaque was presented to Salus in honour of its supportive housing project at 313 Athlone. National Housing Day recognizes the accomplishments of the many individuals and community organizations who work together to advance affordable housing solutions.



Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Jim Watson helped commemorate National Housing Day by presenting a plaque to Carolyn Buchan, President of Ottawa Salus, in honour of its supportive housing project, 313 Athlone.

Related Links:

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

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* The name has been changed.

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