

UPDATE

from the Ministry of Municipal
Affairs and Housing



September 2008

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**Investing in Ontario
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**Province and
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Engaging Youth in
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Invests in High-Speed
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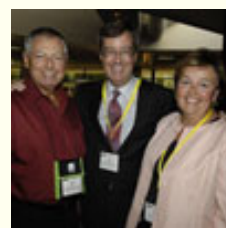
MESSAGE FROM MINISTER JIM WATSON

I had the pleasure of participating in the annual Association of Municipalities of Ontario Annual Conference in Ottawa. Premier Dalton McGuinty made a significant infrastructure funding announcement during his address on the first morning of the conference. [Read more](#)



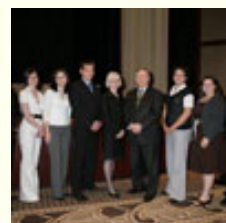
1800 GATHER IN OTTAWA FOR AMO CONFERENCE

The City of Ottawa, Minister Jim Watson's hometown, again played host for the annual AMO conference in late August. This year's conference theme was 'Leading Beyond Tomorrow.' [Read more and see photos](#)



HELPING STUDENTS UNDERSTAND MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Ontario's children and youth will soon get a chance to mix and mingle with municipal leaders. The face-to-face interaction is a feature of Local Government Week, which will begin this year between October 19 and 25. [Read more](#)



A NEW LIFE FOR PETERBOROUGH BUILDING

Myrtle Terrace, a new 60-unit apartment building for seniors and individuals with special needs, opened recently in Peterborough. The building, once a home for the aged, was destined for the wrecking ball when local developer Maurice Kagan revived it with a new purpose. [Read more](#)



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Minister's Message



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

Our government is helping more low-income renters to stay in their homes by investing an additional \$5 million in our Provincial Rent Bank Program.

Rent banks have been very successful in helping low-income tenants avoid eviction for missing a rent payment.

The program is simple and effective: Tenants who are facing possible eviction may apply to their local rent bank to receive financial assistance. If a tenant's application is approved, the outstanding rent is paid directly to the landlord on behalf of the tenant.

Tenants can apply for financial assistance from a Rent Bank no more than once in two years, and receive maximum assistance for two months' rental arrears.

The results have been excellent: Since launching the Rent Bank Program in 2004, we've prevented more than 13,200 low-income households from being evicted due to a missed rent payment.

This May issue of UPDATE has an article on another of our housing initiatives, the Northern Home Repair Program. I met with several homeowners in Thunder Bay recently to learn more about the success of this popular program.

Our government created the Northern Home Repair Program to meet the unique needs of Ontario's Northern communities. It was most enlightening to see firsthand how northern communities with our help are facing the particular challenges of delivering affordable housing.

You will find an article in this issue of UPDATE on the recent presentation of four [Long-standing Service Awards](#) in Sault Ste. Marie. These awards were established in 2004 to mark the dedication of elected municipal officials with at least 25 years of service.

I encourage you to provide us with your feedback. If this issue of UPDATE has been forwarded to you and you would like to continue receiving our e-newsletter, please take the time to subscribe.

Jim Watson

Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

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1,800 Gather in Ottawa for AMO Conference

The City of Ottawa, Minister Jim Watson's hometown, again played host for the annual AMO conference in late August.

This year's conference with the theme, 'Leading Beyond Tomorrow,' attracted 1,800 delegates from municipal governments across Ontario.

Premier Dalton McGuinty made a significant [infrastructure funding announcement](#) during his address on the first morning of the conference. Municipalities across Ontario are to receive \$1.1 billion to build and repair roads, bridges and other public facilities. This major investment will create 11,000 construction jobs, the Premier announced.

During the second day of the AMO conference, there was a ceremony to mark the signing of the [Communities Component Agreement of the Building Canada infrastructure plan](#). This federal-provincial partnership will provide a total of \$724 million in federal and provincial funding for municipal infrastructure projects in smaller communities across the province. With matching contributions from municipalities, this investment is expected to rise to more than \$1 billion.

"With the signing of the Communities Component Agreement, we can now get much needed infrastructure dollars to Ontario's small towns and rural communities as quickly as possible," Minister Watson said.

Minister Watson, following an address to AMO delegates, joined many of his Cabinet colleagues and Parliamentary Assistants for the annual Ministers' Forum. There were questions and answers during the session on topics that included court security, ethanol production, tackling grow ops and provincial policies regulating wind farms.

Municipal politicians from across Ontario place special importance on going to the AMO conference each summer. As Cornwall Mayor Bob Kilger told his local paper, "It becomes even more important to be there and to be a participant in formulating policy and learning of new policies firsthand."



Mario Sergio and Carol Mitchell, Parliamentary Assistants to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing with Minister Jim Watson.



Premier Dalton McGuinty is welcomed to the podium by outgoing AMO President Doug Reycraft.



Cabinet Ministers took questions from the floor during the annual Ministers' Forum.

Helping Students Understand Municipal Government

Ontario's children and youth will soon get a chance to mix and mingle with municipal leaders.

The face-to-face interaction is a feature of Local Government Week, which will be held for the first time between October 19 and 25.

Local Government Week is a project of the [Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario](#), supported by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

The project introduces Grades 5 and 10 students across the province to the world of municipal management – its leaders, the functions and services they provide, and the processes involved in decision-making.

A range of activities for students in social studies, history and civics, and that can also be used by other grades and subjects, is being planned.

For example, to give students a taste of local governance, they could observe council in session or elect a "Mayor-For-A-Day." Mock municipal elections are another option, to give students a voice in choosing community leaders.

Local Government Week is being planned in co-ordination with participating schools and municipalities.

A free resource kit for elementary and secondary school teachers and municipalities contains suggestions on activities to make Local Government Week come alive.

More information about Local Government Week is available on the website of the [Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario](#).

Related Links

- [Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario](#)
- [Association of Municipalities of Ontario](#)



Betteanne Cadman, past president of the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario, and Municipal Affairs and Housing Deputy Minister John Burke attended the recent AMCTO annual conference where it was announced that the first Local Government Week would be from October 19-25, 2008.

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New Life for Peterborough Building

Myrtle Terrace, a new 60-unit apartment building for seniors and individuals with special needs, opened recently in Peterborough.

The building, once a home for the aged, was destined for the wrecking ball when local developer Maurice Kagan revived it with a new purpose. Extensive renovations included converting the main floor recreation area into covered parking.

A beautiful rooftop garden was also added. Many of the building's unique features were retained. Stained glass windows can still be found in the loft apartments, and wood panelling and marble planters are still in place in the lobby.

While Myrtle Terrace was undergoing renovations, one Peterborough resident was becoming familiar with its features during his regular walks through the neighbourhood. Robert Byers said "I liked it so much I decided to move in." Byers became the fourth tenant in Myrtle Terrace.

Minister Jim Watson recently celebrated the new housing development along with MPP Jeff Leal, Peterborough Mayor Paul Ayotte and project developer Maurice Kagan. They had an opportunity to walk through the facility and talked to some of the tenants.

Minister Watson applauded the success of affordable housing developments in Peterborough: "Since the start of the [Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Agreement](#), more than \$19 million dollars has been allocated to the City of Peterborough ... we are making steady progress toward our goal of more than 400 units of new affordable housing in this community."

Related link:

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



Myrtle Terrace tenant, Robert Byers (with Molly) invited Minister Jim Watson, MPP Jeff Leal and Peterborough Mayor Paul Ayotte into his apartment during a tour of the new seniors' residence.

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