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NEW AFFORDABLE, ENERGY-EFFICIENT HOMES OPENED IN NORTH END

WINNIPEG – MARCH 18, 2002 – Four new affordable, energy-efficient homes featuring geothermal heating were opened today in the Lord Selkirk neighbourhood, providing more housing options for low and moderate income families. The project was made possible by funding assistance from the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI) and the Winnipeg Development Agreement *Homes for Tomorrow* project.

Funding for the four units on Flora Avenue is part of a \$550,000 commitment announced last October. The assistance helped the North End Housing Project, the Spence Neighbourhood Association and the Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation, build nine infill housing units in the Lord Selkirk and Spence neighbourhoods. Six of the nine units, including the four on Flora Avenue, were built by Qualico Developments Inc.

The announcement was made by: Glen Murray, Mayor of the City of Winnipeg; Tim Sale, Manitoba Minister of Family Services and Housing; and the Honourable Rey D. Pagtakhan, Minister of Veterans Affairs, on behalf of John Manley, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of Infrastructure and Crown Corporations.

"We are committed to becoming a greener, more sustainable city so that future generations may enjoy pure water, clean air, and the quality of life we so take for granted today," said Mayor Murray. "This unique housing option for people on Flora Avenue is a tremendous example of how we can conserve energy while providing an attractive and affordable living environment. I applaud the Lord Selkirk neighbourhood for their housing vision and the housing partners who made it a reality under the Homes for Tomorrow project."

"It is gratifying to be able to support this community-driven project which helps rebuild the neighbourhood and strengthen families," said Minister Sale. "The families benefit from the new, affordable, energy-efficient homes. The innovative use of geothermal technology means significant energy cost savings and reduced greenhouse gas emissions, consistent with recommendations from Manitoba's Climate Change Task Force."

"The energy system used in these new homes will make it easier for families with limited incomes to benefit from the cost savings, durability and low maintenance of the system, while enjoying year-round comfort," said Minister Manley. "The Government of Canada, through CMHC, is pleased to be a partner with the WHHI in projects such as this, that ensure the residents who want to remain in their neighbourhoods are provided with quality, affordable housing."

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As part of a unique partnership of community organizations, the North End Housing Project and the Spence Neighbourhood Association developed designs and issued a joint tender call for the construction of the housing. The designs called for homes to be cost effective, energy efficient, low maintenance, adaptable for people with disabilities and in tune with the character of the neighbourhood. Manitoba Hydro also worked with the WHHI to ensure that the homes were built to energy-efficient Power Smart R2000 standards.

The side-by-side duplexes on Flora Avenue are heated, cooled and provided with hot water by geothermal heat pumps, which draw energy from the ground. Underground piping loops move heat from the earth into the home in the winter and pull heat from the house and discharge it into the ground in the summer, substantially reducing energy use. Geothermal heating is also environmentally friendly because it significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

"High energy costs are a contributing factor to deterioration in inner-city neighbourhoods," said Mary Williams, North End Housing project Executive Director. "The use of environmentally friendly, energy-efficient and affordable heating systems is an important aspect of making houses truly affordable and safe for low-income families, and in helping to revitalize inner-city neighbourhoods."

The Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative is a three-year, multi-million dollar tripartite partnership established by the Government of Canada, Province of Manitoba and City of Winnipeg to address declining housing stock, homelessness and the revitalization of Winnipeg's older neighbourhoods. To date, the WHHI has committed over \$15 million to help community groups rehabilitate houses and provide assistance to homeless individuals and families, or those at risk of becoming homeless.

Located at 233 Portage Avenue in the Curry Building, the WHHI serves as a Single Window office for community organizations to access information on government-funded housing and homelessness programs. This also helps improve co-operation and information sharing between the three levels of government and community groups. Community groups wanting more information on programs can call the WHHI at (204) 940-3070.

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Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI) Funding

Government of Canada

Under the *National Homelessness Initiative (NHI)*, communities in Manitoba will receive approximately \$24 million:

- \$12.7 million through the *Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI)*, which includes \$10.8 million for homelessness projects in Winnipeg, and \$1.9 million for projects outside the city.

The SCPI is based on a community plan developed by the various partners to design and implement local solutions to their particular homelessness issues. The SCPI funds up to 50 per cent of the costs of implementing the community plan. The other 50 per cent is comprised of direct or in-kind contributions from a variety of partners, including other levels of government, community organizations, and the private and voluntary sectors.

Additional federal funding assistance is provided through the following programs:

- Close to \$1.7 million for youth projects under *Youth-at-Risk-Homelessness (Youth Employment Strategy)*; and
- \$9.9 million for Aboriginal-specific projects under *Urban Aboriginal Strategy-Homelessness*.
- *Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)*, to help low-income households and landlords make necessary repairs to bring their properties up to acceptable health and safety standards. RRAP is cost-shared 75/25 per cent respectively by the federal government through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and by the provincial government through Manitoba Family Services and Housing. Manitoba is administering the program while the City of Winnipeg acts as the delivery agent.

For more information on the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative, visit the NHI Web site at: www.hrdc.gc.ca/homelessness

Government of Manitoba

Under Neighbourhoods Alive! and through the WHHI, the Government of Manitoba has committed \$8 million over four years for housing in Winnipeg neighbourhoods through the Neighbourhood Housing Assistance (NHA) program, plus an additional \$1 million each year for housing in Brandon and Thompson:

- The NHA will contribute to the revitalization of housing in designated neighbourhoods by providing assistance of up to \$10,000 per dwelling unit to neighbourhood based development/renewal corporations and non-profit and co-operative housing corporations for locally planned and developed housing initiatives. Funding can also be provided directly to homeowners or owners of rental housing projects where there is demonstrated community support.
- The Manitoba government has also committed close to \$2 million annually to its share of federal renovation programs, including the *Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)* and the *Shelter Enhancement Program (SEP)*.

WHHI Backgrounder

Neighbourhoods Alive! is a long-term development strategy aimed at providing community groups in designated areas of Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson with the support they need for programs in the areas of housing and physical improvements, employment and training, education and recreation, and safety and crime prevention. The Manitoba government has also committed \$3.7 million to Neighbourhoods Alive! in the 2001 budget to develop local capacity, innovative training and provide a fund through which local neighbourhoods can implement their revitalization plans.

City of Winnipeg

Under the Winnipeg Housing Policy, \$7 million over five years will fund housing initiatives in targeted inner-city neighbourhoods. Funding is available through several programs:

- Winnipeg Municipal Cost Offsets Program provides financial assistance up to \$5,000 per housing unit through reimbursement of City fees and other eligible costs.
- Winnipeg Housing Revitalization Program provides financial assistance up to \$5,000 per housing unit for housing project pre-development costs.
- Winnipeg Neighbourhood Housing Plans and Advocacy Program provides financial assistance and other supports to neighbourhood stakeholders to develop a Neighbourhood Housing Plan.
- Winnipeg Housing Demonstration Program provides financial assistance to proponents to encourage unique and innovative approaches to addressing inner-city housing issues that result in quality, affordable housing.
- Winnipeg Minimum Home Repair Program provides financial assistance to owner-occupants to undertake minor necessary repairs required for continued healthy and safe occupancy of homes.