

**FOR RELEASE  
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**CONSTRUCTION OF THE STRAND ON WATERFRONT DRIVE BEGINS  
AMID BUZZ OF BUILDING ACTIVITY  
Development Expected to be City's First LEED-Certified, Multi-Family Building**

**WINNIPEG** – With the cacophonous sounds of construction activity on Waterfront Drive providing background mood music, architect-developer Rudy Friesen, Winnipeg Mayor Sam Katz, and MLA for Radisson Bidhu Jha, attending on behalf of Manitoba Premier Gary Doer, today unfurled a giant, “future-home-of” banner to mark the official launch of The Strand. The residential-commercial complex will be the third such development to rise in the rapidly-evolving East Exchange neighbourhood.

Developed by Friesen Tokar Architects, The Strand is expected to be the first, multi-family building in Winnipeg to meet the stringent “green building” design and construction standards required to attain LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification.

The \$6-million development will include 15 condominium units, 1500 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor, and 7500 square feet on the second level which will become Friesen Tokar’s new home.

“The Strand will be a great place to live – for its aesthetics and comfort level, its panoramic Red River and cityscape views and proximity to the arts and entertainment district, as well as for its environmentally sustainable features,” Friesen said.

The Strand was one of the four winning submissions selected from among 19 submitted to CentreVenture Development Corporation, the agency responsible for downtown revitalization, in response to its 2004 request for proposals for the purchase and development of the prime land fronting Waterfront Drive. The Strand, the neighbouring Ship Street Village and The Excelsior, both of which began construction last year, and Sky Waterfront, slated for a fall 2006 start, will offer some 205 residential units and 35,000 square feet of commercial space. All told, the four projects represent private sector investment in excess of \$57 million.

“Our firm had been looking at relocating downtown for some time,” Friesen said. “When this unique opportunity arose to play a role in developing this underutilized riverfront district, to create new housing options that are so vital to a vibrant downtown, we knew we had found our new corporate home and, for two of us in the firm, our new private home.”

Walking the talk, Friesen and Brian Tokar and their spouses will be among the first residents of The Strand to move into their units in about 11 months. Half of The Strand’s 1100- to 1950-square-foot, residential units have already been sold.

Mayor Katz said, "City Council showed considerable foresight in acquiring these former CP Rail lands for mixed-use development. The area is now being transformed into one of this city's most remarkable neighbourhoods thanks to the capital investment of the private sector. As developers build on the foundation laid by the three levels of government, a vibrant Waterfront District will rise on these previously non-performing lands."

Premier Doer noted, "The energy, excitement, and building cranes are not leaving downtown Winnipeg any time soon. Whether it's the century-old Exchange District attracting Hollywood, or today's new condos attracting young professionals and their families, people and business continue to rediscover and reclaim downtown Winnipeg, Waterfront Drive and The Forks."

The six-storey Strand, set against the backdrop of The Exchange's century-old buildings, will feature a brick and stone exterior (including reclaimed masonry products), energy-efficient mechanical and electrical systems, a roof garden and terraces, and contemporary, open-concept suites with lofty ceilings, expansive windows and upscale amenities. Condominium prices start at \$295,000.

An open-air public walkway through the complex at street level will link future developments to the west with Waterfront Drive, while bistros in The Strand and The Excelsior will share an outdoor plaza for their patrons.

"The value of cooperation and partnerships between the public and private sector in the redevelopment of our downtown is clearly illustrated by these signature projects on Waterfront Drive," said CentreVenture's incoming Board chair Polly Craik, the president and CEO of FineLine Solutions. "These developments will bring hundreds of new residents downtown – a crucial ingredient in the coordinated effort underway to revitalize the heart of our city."

Friesen Tokar Architects, which recently marked its 30th year in business, is a leader in sustainable design. A member of the Canada Green Building Council, the firm is committed to designing buildings that are good for people, businesses, communities and ecosystems. The new, Friesen Tokar-designed student residence at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg was recognized by Manitoba Hydro as Manitoba's most energy-efficient building.

To learn more about The Strand, Friesen Tokar Architects and its various projects visit [www.friesentokar.com](http://www.friesentokar.com).