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WHHI FUNDS DOWNTOWN AFFORDABLE SENIORS RENTAL HOUSING PROJECT

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA – The construction of a new 42-unit apartment complex at 435 Cumberland Avenue will soon provide much-needed affordable seniors' rental housing and services for Winnipeg's Indochina Chinese community. The project is being made possible with the help of \$1.7 million from the Government of Canada, Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg through the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI).

The funding for the Indochina Chinese Association of Manitoba (ICAM) was announced today by the, Honourable Christine Melnick, Manitoba Minister of Family Services and Housing, the Honourable Raymond Simard, Parliamentary Secretary to the Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, the Minister responsible for Official Languages, the Minister responsible for Democratic Reform and Member of Parliament for Saint Boniface, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing; and Deputy Mayor Mike Pagtakhan, on behalf of the City of Winnipeg.

“This is another exciting project that builds upon the revitalization of downtown Winnipeg and will provide low or moderate income seniors with access to more affordable housing,” said Minister Melnick. “This winning partnership includes the WHHI, the Indochina Chinese Association of Manitoba and CentreVenture and is creating 42 accessible apartments for seniors on what was a vacant parcel of land.”

“The Indochina Chinese Association of Manitoba has been an important part of the downtown ethnic community of Winnipeg for over 20 years,” said MP Simard. “This new residence will enhance the Indochina Chinese community's ability to offer more affordable housing for seniors wanting to live independently and among people with similar cultural backgrounds.”

“This City Oasis project by the Indochina Chinese Association of Manitoba is a great example of the WHHI's ongoing efforts to revitalize our inner-city neighbourhoods,” said Deputy Mayor Pagtakhan. “The construction of this new residence will go a long way in enabling Winnipeg's growing and dynamic Indochina Chinese community to provide affordable housing options and services for seniors.”

Total project costs are estimated at just over \$4 million with the Indochina Chinese Association of Manitoba contributing \$340,000 in equity and the balance of the costs provided through mortgage financing. Funding of \$1.7 million includes \$1.6 million provided by the governments of Canada and Manitoba under the Canada-Manitoba Affordable Housing Initiative's New Rental Supply Program. In addition, CentreVenture is providing a \$60,000 grant, the City of Winnipeg is contributing \$55,000 through its Winnipeg Multi-Family Grant program and CMHC is providing a Seed Funding grant of \$10,000 and a Seed Funding loan of \$10,000.

The project will be known as the *City Oasis* and involves the construction of a six-storey apartment building, comprised of 42 units at 435 Cumberland Avenue, at the corner of Edmonton Street. The project is targeted to seniors aged 55 and over and will be accessible to persons with disabilities. The main floor of the building will include a multi-purpose area with a kitchen that will be used to hold recreation activities for the residents and the community. Construction is expected to be completed by March 2006.

City Oasis will be managed by the Indochina Chinese Association of Manitoba that successfully operates and manages the Indochina Gardens, a 26-unit non-profit housing complex located at 150 Greenway Crescent.

"Our current housing residence is full with a waiting list of 40 seniors urgently needing affordable accommodations," said Kwok Ngan, President of the Indochina Chinese Association of Manitoba. "We are grateful to the WHHI for allowing us to make this project a reality."

The funding is coordinated by the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative, a partnership established by the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg to address homelessness, declining housing stock and the revitalization of Winnipeg's older neighbourhoods. Since 2000, the WHHI partnership has committed close to \$72 million that has or will contribute to the repair, rehabilitation or construction of over 2900 units and 137 rooms or beds, as well as assist the homeless or those at risk of being homeless. Located at 361 Hargrave Street, the WHHI serves as a single-window office for community organizations to access information on government funded housing and homelessness programs. For information, organizations or citizens can call 940-3070.

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