



ONTARIO EDITION

Newsbriefs

Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada

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About 21,000 co-op households affected

High-level provincial meetings held, as download plans move quickly

Senior staff from CHF Ontario Region are meeting with senior staff from the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as the province moves ahead with its plan to download provincial social housing programs to municipalities.

Reform of provincial programs had been stalled for more than a year, then moved quickly into high gear with the signing of the federal-provincial Social Housing Agreement last November. About 21,000 households in provincial and federal-provincial (F/P) co-ops are directly affected by the provincial download plan.

"These high-level meetings are expected to continue right through April," says **Dale Reagan**, Managing Director of CHF Ontario Region. "There are several big issues and a huge amount of detail to work through. But in the end, we want to win the best possible deal for co-ops." Key issues for co-ops include the use of operating surpluses,

High-level continued on page 2

Ontario annual meeting: May 19 in Ottawa

The annual meeting of CHF Ontario Region will be held at the Ottawa Convention Centre on May 19. This meeting is part of an action-packed, five-day event for CHF Canada members that includes workshops, business meetings and social activities. It is the biggest co-op housing event of the year.

A key part of the Ontario meeting is the election of new members of the Ontario Council. The Council has seven or eight members, including one or two representatives from the CHF Canada board. Three Council positions are up for election at this year's annual meeting:

setting a new financial base (also called benchmarking) and making sure there are adequate capital reserves for future needs.

Representatives from the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association are also attending the meetings. There is a separate set of meetings to consult with municipal officials on reform.

The province has hired consultants to look at several important issues, including the funding model for housing programs and capital reserves. Ontario Region staff met with the consultants on the funding model in January and February. We'll hear their proposals and will have a chance to respond when they have finished their report. We have also been promised the chance to meet with the other consultants and review their recommendations.

"The overall goal set by CHF Canada members in Ontario is to win long-term financial security and autonomy," says Reagan. "We want to make sure that co-ops can continue to operate as co-ops and that our future is as financially secure as possible."

"The next few months will be very important," says Reagan. "The province has set a tight time frame and is determined to meet it. We don't

know yet what will be in the legislation, but one way or another it will set out the framework that provincial co-ops will operate under. We're glad to be back at the table, though we don't know at this point how far we can get. Some big differences remain. Our bottom line is that co-ops will not allow the government to legislate away existing legal contracts and replace them with a worse deal."

Look for more news in upcoming issues of the *Bulletin* on social housing reform and the May issue of Ontario *Newsbriefs*. For information, call **Harvey Cooper** or **Michael Shapcott** at 1-800-268-2537 (in Toronto, call 416-366-1711). E-mail: hcooper@chfc.ca or mshapcott@chfc.ca. ★

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- two at-large members elected by all Ontario Region members, and
- one representative of staff associations, elected by association members.

In addition, one Ontario Council representative from Northern Ontario will be elected at a meeting of Northern Ontario members in Sault Ste. Marie on April 29.

At the Ontario annual meeting, members will also consider resolutions and other business for the year.

Full information about the CHF Canada and Ontario Region meetings has been mailed to all co-ops and is available on our web site at <http://www.chfc.ca>. We will mail more information to delegates in the coming weeks. We'll be sending out notices of regional meetings for delegates to be held throughout the province.

For information on the Ontario Region meeting, call **Dale Reagan** at 1-800-268-2537 (in Toronto, call 416-366-1711). E-mail: dreagan@chfc.ca. For information on the CHF Canada national meeting, call **Linda Stephenson** at 1-800-465-2752 (in Ottawa, call 613-230-2201). E-mail: lstephenson@chfc.ca. ★

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Fighting the good fight

Momentum building for new national co-op agency

After a series of big wins in 1999, CHF Canada is moving ahead with its campaign to bring long-term security to co-ops across Canada.

Early in 1999, the federal government announced that federal co-ops in Ontario (which represent almost half of the province's 44,000 co-op households) would not be part of the social housing transfer to the province. Later in the year, similar deals were announced for federal co-ops in British Columbia, Alberta and Prince Edward Island. These breakthroughs came as a result of the hard work of co-op members across the country.

In late November 1999, the new Manitoba government announced that it wanted the federal government to take back federal co-ops that had been transferred to that province earlier in the year. In early March, **Alfonso Gagliano**, the federal Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, agreed to their return.

**"The momentum
co-ops have created
is continuing to build"**

Wes Hosler, President of CHF Canada

Minister Gagliano has also agreed to begin talks with the co-op housing movement and the provinces on a new national agency to administer co-op programs. He agreed to start talks once two or three provinces have expressed an interest in participating. Work is well under way to achieve this.

"The momentum that co-ops have created through our successful campaign is continuing to build," says **Wes Hosler**, President of CHF Canada. "Our goal now is to win federal approval for an agency outside government that specializes in co-op programs. CMHC is getting out of the

administration of social housing programs. We need to bring all co-op housing together under one umbrella."

Over the next few months, federal co-op members across the province will be meeting with their MPs to urge them to support the co-op sector's agency proposal.

For information, call **Jayoti Howlett** or **Louise MacNaughton** at CHF Canada at 1-800-268-2537 (in Toronto, call 416-366-1711). E-mail: lmacnaughton@chfc.ca. ★

Getting set for municipal download

Municipalities across Ontario are getting set to take on administration of provincial social housing programs. As we told you in the special Ontario insert to the February issue of CHF Canada's *Newsbriefs*, it's more important than ever for co-ops to build a solid relationship with local politicians.

The first issue of CHF Ontario Region's *Municipal Outreach Bulletin*, a new publication for provincial and F/P co-ops with the latest news and tips for action, will be sent out soon. For information, please call **Brian Eng** at 1-800-268-2537 (in Toronto, call 416-366-1711). E-mail: beng@chfc.ca. ★

Keeping the promise for federal-provincial co-ops

Before the federal and provincial governments signed the Social Housing Agreement (SHA) last November, federal officials, including housing minister **Alfonso Gagliano**, promised that the operating agreements of federal/provincial (F/P) co-ops would be fully protected.

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There are close to 7,000 households in more than 100 F/P co-ops in Ontario. The provincial government administers these co-ops, but their funding is shared between the federal and provincial governments.

As we told you in the Ontario insert in the February issue of *Newsbriefs*, it is clear that there is no protection for F/P contracts in the SHA. The agreements remain legally binding contracts, but the province can use legislation to override them.

For details on our work to protect F/P co-ops, check out the special insert, or call **Harvey Cooper** or **Michael Shapcott** at CHF Ontario Region at 1-800-268-2537 (in Toronto, call 416-366-1711). E-mail: hcooper@chfc.ca or mshapcott@chfc.ca. ★

Housing and homelessness: Communities rising up

As the Ontario-wide housing crisis and homelessness disaster get worse, people across the province are demanding action. Meetings have been held recently in London, Kitchener, Guelph, Windsor, Toronto and Ottawa. A common call has been for the federal and provincial governments to provide funding and programs to build new affordable housing, including co-ops.

**“We need to keep
the pressure on
to come up
with real housing
programs”**

Michael Shapcott, Manager for Government
Relations and Communications
for CHF Ontario Region

The growing pressure has produced some results. Ottawa, London and Toronto have created municipal housing funds. Some of the federal homelessness funding announced in December might be used to renovate rundown housing or acquire federal lands for housing projects. In addition, the province's new rent supplement program allows new affordable housing projects (including new co-ops) to apply for subsidies for low-income households. In recent weeks, plans for a handful of new co-op and non-profit housing projects have started to move forward in Ottawa, Toronto and Windsor.

“We need to keep the pressure on our federal and provincial governments to come up with real housing programs,” says **Michael Shapcott**, Manager of Government Relations and Communications for CHF Ontario Region. “Governments need to spend a huge amount of money to respond to the housing crisis. It's up to Ottawa and Queen's Park to show leadership.”

“In the meantime, a patchwork of government and non-government funding might allow a few new co-ops and other non-profit housing projects to be built,” says Shapcott. “It's no substitute for national and provincial programs, but it is an opportunity to build desperately-needed new homes.”

For news on housing and homelessness issues, upcoming events, alerts and a resource library, check out the Housing Again web site at <http://www.housingagain.web.net>. CHF Ontario Region is a partner in the Housing Again group.

For information on new co-op initiatives, call **Michael Shapcott** at 1-800-268-2537 (in Toronto, call 416-366-1711). E-mail: mshapcott@chfc.ca. ★

Busy session expected for Ontario Legislature

The Ontario Legislature is set to return from its winter break in April. The spring session is expected to be a busy time. The government will

release its 2000 provincial budget in May. In addition, legislation to complete the transfer of social housing to municipalities could come as early as May.

"The province must ensure there is enough affordable housing to meet the needs of all Ontarians"

Joyce Morris, President of CHF Canada's Ontario Council

Joyce Morris, President of CHF Canada's Ontario Council, appeared before the Ontario Legislature's Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, on February 3. "Co-op members from every part of the province have an important message for this committee: please don't ignore the serious housing crisis facing Ontario," said Morris. "The province must ensure there is enough new affordable housing to meet the needs of all Ontarians. The province must also ensure that the province's 250,000 co-op and non-profit households are protected and their ability to manage their homes well is enhanced as the government moves ahead with its plan to transfer housing administration to the municipalities."

For a copy of her presentation, or for more info, call Michael Shapcott at 1-800-268-2537 (416-366-1711). E-mail: shapcott@chfc.ca. ★

**CHF Ontario Region
annual meeting
Friday, May 21, 2000
Ottawa**

Serving our members

Ministry makes mistake on year 2000 cuts

The Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing made a mistake in its directive to co-ops on year 2000 budget cuts and has sent a note to co-ops with the correct information. If cuts affect your co-op, please:

- call your local federation or CHF Ontario Region if you need help doing the calculation and understanding the impact on your budget
- let your local federation know if the cuts affect your co-op so that we can co-ordinate help regionally
- fax a copy of your calculation sheet to CHF Ontario Region at 416-366-3876 so that we can keep track of the impact of the cuts.

The February national issue of *Newsbriefs* had full details on the cuts. For information, or to get your copy of the insert, please call Diane Miles or Sombo Saviyé at CHF Ontario Region at 1-800-268-2537 (in Toronto, 416-366-1711). E-mail: dmiles@chfc.ca or ssaviye@chfc.ca. ★

More news for Ontario co-ops in the February insert to *Newsbriefs*

The February national issue of *Newsbriefs* had a special insert with news for provincial co-ops in Ontario. In addition to the year 2000 budget cuts from the Ontario government, the insert includes news about:

- the energy management initiative, and
- integrated income-testing.

Make sure to check out the important information in the February insert. If you didn't get a copy, or need more information, please call Diane Miles or Sombo Saviyé at CHF Ontario Region at 1-800-268-2537 (in Toronto, call 416-366-1711). E-mail: dmiles@chfc.ca or ssaviye@chfc.ca. ★

Norman Brudy: 1919 to 2000

Norman Brudy, a long-time tenant advocate and active co-op housing member, died recently at age 81. For decades, Norm was a key leader in the housing movement in Ontario. He helped create the first tenant protection and rent control laws in Ontario in 1975 and was active through the years in organizing tenants. He remained active in recent years, serving as president of his housing co-op.

“While I, like many others mourn his loss, I prefer to celebrate his life,” says **Bill Morris**, the former Manager of Government Relations for CHF Ontario Region. “Norm was the quintessential mentor, particularly in the housing rights movement. He had an innate ability to connect with people on a human level, regardless of their experience, background or social standing.”

“Norm was the quintessential mentor, particularly in the housing rights movement”

Bill Morris, former Manager of Government Relations for CHF

“Like countless others, I myself witnessed this first hand. Many years ago, Norman was able to get me to stand up and fight my landlord who was then attempting to evict me,” says Morris. “While I lost that battle, Norman’s ever-positive attitude and encouragement soon led me into a totally unintended career as a housing advocate.”

“In spite of recent setbacks, and the apathy or hostility of our current government towards housing issues, Norman’s legacy lives powerfully on,” says Morris. “It does so in the rights people still enjoy, in the legal services they can avail themselves of, and most eloquently in the many thousands of affordable homes that exist today. These are, in large part, a result of Norman’s efforts, as well as the many people he so inspired.” ★

Clement appointed housing minister

Tony Clement was formally appointed as Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in a mini-shuffle of the Ontario cabinet in the first week of March. For the past six months, Minister Clement was interim housing minister, but was also the Environment Minister. His environment portfolio has been transferred to Dan Newman.

“We’re glad that Ontario finally has a full-time housing and municipal affairs minister,” says **Joyce Morris**, President of CHF Canada’s Ontario Council. “There’s a huge amount of important work facing Minister Clement which demands the undivided attention of a dedicated minister.” ★

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