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## **Improving Albertans' quality of life**

*October 18, 2007*

# **Michener Centre building turned into affordable housing facility**

*Red Deer...* More than 40 people will be provided with affordable housing at the Gaetz Apartment Building at Michener Centre through an agreement between the Alberta government and a community organization in Red Deer.

The Government of Alberta owns the building and will provide a 30-month lease at no cost to Heritage Family Services, which will operate the building as a transitional housing facility. The City of Red Deer is providing funds to renovate the building, and the Alberta government will cover operating costs.

"The use of a vacant building on the Michener Centre site for transitional housing will give the working homeless access to affordable housing," said Premier Ed Stelmach. "Our province is growing fast and all Albertans need to know that they can also benefit from that growth."

The Government of Alberta will also continue to pay utilities - about \$75,000 per year - and will retain responsibility for long-term maintenance of the facility. Any renovations or code upgrades to the building will be the responsibility of Heritage Family Services and subject to the approval of the provincial government.

"I have been campaigning wholeheartedly for this project to support those who have difficulty accessing affordable housing in my constituency," said Mary Anne Jablonski, MLA for Red Deer North. "I am glad this facility has finally become a reality."

Through a government grant, the City of Red Deer is providing a one-time contribution of \$200,000 to help Heritage Family Services pay for the renovation costs. The City has also agreed to exempt the organization from paying municipal taxes for the duration of the 30-month lease.

Providing affordable housing is one of the key actions under Premier Ed Stelmach's plan to improve Albertans' quality of life. Other priorities for the government are to govern with integrity and transparency, manage growth pressures, build a stronger Alberta and provide safe and secure communities.

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