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message from the chair

Gerald Rougeau, BC Kinsmen Housing Network

Welcome to the November 2009 issue of *Registry Insites* and my last message to you as Chair of The Housing Registry Council. While I continue to strongly believe in The Housing Registry, for personal reasons I made a decision not to run for council in 2010. Starting January 2010, I will take a break from the council with confidence that there are many capable individuals at the council table who will continue to move The Housing Registry forward.

The past year has seen tremendous growth. The Housing Registry now has 74 members. Of the total membership, 61 are housing providers managing over 20,000 units in 58 communities across the province.

If you are not a member of The Housing Registry yet and want to see the system in action, the council will be presenting a Housing Registry workshop at the BC Non-Profit Association conference at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel in Richmond on November 16-18, 2009. Information on conference registration can be found at www.bcnpha.ca.

For the members out there reading this, I hope that you will be able to attend our Annual Meeting of Members on Monday, November 16, 2009 from 5:40 p.m. to 6:40 p.m. also at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel in Richmond.

I have been involved in The Housing Registry ever since the first “steering committee” was struck back in 1996. I have enjoyed my time on the council and my period as chair and vice chair. I want to thank everyone who has played an active part in developing The Housing



Registry. I am proud of the product that has been created and believe the services provided through The Housing Registry are beneficial to applicant and housing provider alike.

The future looks bright for The Housing Registry and, while I may not be on council next year, I will continue to be The Housing Registry's biggest (well, at least the tallest) cheerleader!

Sincerely,
Gerald
604-530-2100

articles

Annual Meeting of Members

The Annual Meeting of Members is happening on Monday, November 16, 2009 at the BC Non-Profit Housing Association conference. If you are attending the conference or if you are located in the Lower Mainland, come join us from 5:40 p.m. to 6:40 p.m. at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel in Richmond.

While at the conference, take a look for Housing Registry council members who can be identified by The Housing Registry logo on their name tags!

2009 Elections: The Housing Registry Council

The Housing Registry Council is a body made up of elected and appointed council representatives who advise on the operations of The Housing Registry. In July, a call for nominations was mailed out to all Housing Registry members. Nominations were being sought from membership for council representatives to serve on the Housing Registry Council for a two-year term starting January 2010.

Nominations were being sought for representatives as follows:

- 2 (two) large housing provider members;
- 1 (one) small housing provider;
- 1 (one) community agency.

Nominees were received as follows:

- Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation (large housing provider)
- Capital Region Housing Corporation (large housing provider);
- Nanaimo Affordable Housing (small housing provider);
- Ishtar Transition House (community agency).

Based on available seats and nominations at the September meeting of The Housing Registry Council, a motion was passed to appoint all nominees by acclamation. The current council will continue to sit until the first meeting of the new council early in the new year at which time the council representatives will elect the council officers for 2010.

Welcome to both the new and returning council representatives.

Housing Income Limits

Effective January 1, 2010, the Core Need Income Thresholds have been renamed Housing Income Limits (HILs). The HILs represent the maximum income for eligibility to be a rent geared to income tenant.

While the HILs have no impact on existing tenancies, they need to be utilized when reviewing new applicants for housing in order to determine eligibility for subsidized units. The January 2010 HILs have been entered into The Housing Registry database, Housing Connections, and the system will automatically apply the new income limits based on location in the province and units size required.

Copies of the new HILs were mailed to housing providers in September 2009 as part of updates to the rent calculation manual published by BC Housing.

Survey results

The Housing Registry Council wants to ensure that membership in The Housing Registry provides tangible benefits to housing providers while ensuring a transparent and streamlined application process for British Columbians in need of affordable housing.

To assist with planning for the future, the council administered two surveys in July 2009. The results of the surveys will assist the council in identifying priority areas for changes and enhancements that will result in a service that is responsive and inclusive to a wide range of housing providers with diverse mandates located in communities across the province.

“I love love love the Housing Registry- it is THE best tool we use! It is efficient, time saving, and user friendly. Also being in a smaller community away from the mainland we feel more connected and a member of the "team".”

This quote is one of the council’s favourites from the survey completed by existing Housing Registry members. It shows how the power of an internet-based system can serve providers in both large and small communities across the province; over 50 per cent of non-members responding to the survey stated that one of the reasons they have not joined is because they are located outside the Lower Mainland. This tells us that there is still work to be done in ensuring that all providers regardless of size or location understand how The

Housing Registry can provide benefits while simplifying the process of applying for affordable housing.

Member profile: 43 Housing Society

The 43 Housing Society, a sister organization to [Share Family & Community Services Society](#), operates four housing developments in Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam. The sites offer affordable housing to families, seniors and people with disabilities. The society joined The Housing Registry in January 2005. In almost five years of membership, staff have found the registry makes it easier to manage the volume of applications they receive and also feel the registry does an excellent job of filtering for tenants who are eligible for the society's developments.

Housing Supervisor Lynne Dube has been with 43 Housing Society for a little over a year. "Not having to collect the paperwork alone that comes with applications is a huge efficiency for us," she said. "We don't have to worry about following up with applicants, looking for their immigration papers or any supplemental forms. All these files are available to us in a centralized system. Now that we don't keep our own wait list we simply refer people to The Housing Registry. That saves us time and we know all applicants are treated equally, with no preferences or biases."



Lynne Dube outside 43 Housing Society's Friendship Manor, non-profit housing for seniors and people with disabilities in Coquitlam.

Lynne sees the service provided by The Housing Registry as beneficial to applicants. "Having a centralized system is much easier for someone looking for housing than going to each individual site," she said. "They just need to apply and provide the supporting documents once, which saves them time."

When Lynne joined 43 Housing Society, she took The Housing Registry's introductory training. She attended sessions offered at last year's BCNPHA conference which helped her fine-tune her knowledge of the Housing Connections database. She finds the comments section about various applicants to be an especially useful feature. "It's easy to put in our needs and get a match right away while still making decisions about who we want to interview."

Call for stories

Do you have a unique housing story you would like to share with others?

Do you know of someone who has benefited from affordable housing or perhaps you have been helped by someone in obtaining suitable housing.

Or perhaps you are a Housing Registry member and you wish to share your experiences with The Housing Registry.

If you do, we would like to hear about it. Please [e-mail us](#) at and your story could be published in a future issue of *Registry Insites*.

www.bchousing.org

Feedback? Questions? Story ideas? Contact the editor.

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