
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
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March 8, 2007

Ministry of Forests and Range and Minister responsible for Housing
Ministry of Health
Vancouver Island Health Authority

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS ON AYRE MANOR LODGE IN SOOKE

SOOKE – Representatives from BC Housing, the Vancouver Island Health Authority and the District of Sooke today celebrated the official groundbreaking of the Sooke Elderly Citizens' Housing Society's Ayre Manor Lodge, a new \$16-million, 57-bed and unit elderly care development in Sooke.

“Sooke residents will soon have more options available in their community to support their long-term needs,” said Health Minister George Abbott. “These new residential care beds and assisted living units will create a campus of care, a unique model that allows people to stay in the same location even as their care needs change over time. They are part of the government's commitment to build 5,000 new residential care beds, assisted living units and supportive housing units with home support by the end of by 2008.”

Ayre Manor Lodge will have 25 assisted living units and 32 residential care beds. The Province, through BC Housing, will provide ongoing subsidies for housing and hospitality for 10 of the assisted living suites, under the Independent Living BC (ILBC) program. Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) will provide annual funding for 30 of the 32 residential care units.

“Enhancing access to seniors' care is a top priority for the Vancouver Island Health Authority, particularly in communities like Sooke that are growing and have an aging population,” said Jac Kreut, VIHA board chair. “By working in partnership with the community, local government and the Province, we are significantly increasing our community care capacity, which will help reduce pressure on our hospitals, and the emergency departments in particular.”

Once complete, Ayre Lodge will become a Campus of Care, a model that offers complex care, assisted living and independent housing all in one location. Campuses of care embrace the philosophy that individuals should age in one place – moving through a continuum of care as their needs change, without ever having to leave their home.

“Breaking ground for Ayre Manor Lodge today is very rewarding, as we've been providing support to the Society for this range of housing and care in Sooke,” said Sooke Mayor Janet Evans. “Finally Sooke will have a community of care, so that our seniors can continue to age in their own community.”

“The Capital Regional Hospital District is pleased to have assisted the Society by providing the recoverable development funding for this project and participating in the initiation and development of the plan and concept for Ayre Manor Lodge,” said Chris Clement of the Capital Hospital District.

The new assisted living units will provide residents with personal care, hot meals, housekeeping, laundry services, recreational opportunities and a 24-hour response system. The residential care component of the new facility will offer private rooms and provide 24/7 health-care services for individuals with complex care needs. The Sooke Elderly Senior Citizen's Society currently operates 18 independent living cottages for seniors at the same location.

Ayre Manor Lodge will be operated by the Sooke Elderly Citizens' Society in partnership with Beckley Farm Lodge Society, an existing not-for-profit seniors' care provider that operates Beckley Farm Lodge in Victoria. The facility will be operated under a service agreement with VIHA and BC Housing.

"With the support of our partners, we are so happy that this project is finally coming together," said Bill Rumbsy, president of the Sooke Elderly Citizens' Housing Society. "This campus of care will meet the needs of seniors in the community, and it is a vision our society has been working towards for 40 years."

In January 2006, VIHA sought proposals from not-for-profit and private operators to build and operate 1,230 residential care beds and assisted living units throughout the health authority. This included approximately 930 additional net-new beds and units by 2010 (727 of those to be completed by December 2008) as well as flexibility for approximately 300 replacement beds in the future. The Sooke Elderly Citizens' Society submitted a successful proposal under this RFP.

The Province of British Columbia, through ILBC, is committed to providing more than 4,000 affordable assisted living apartments for B.C. seniors and persons with disabilities. ILBC is an innovative housing-for-health partnership that meets the needs of lower-income seniors and people with disabilities by providing a middle option between home support and residential care. To date, more than 3,900 units have been allocated in communities across the province. The Province's budget for affordable housing and shelters is \$328 million – nearly triple what it was in 2001.

1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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BACKGROUND

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AYRE MANOR LODGE

Ayre Manor Lodge, located at 6744 Ayre Road in Sooke, will combine 25 assisted living apartments and 32 residential care beds into a campus of care within the same development for a total of 57 new beds and units. Construction is expected to begin this month with anticipated completion in June 2008.

Ten of the 25 assisted living suites will be funded through the Independent Living BC (ILBC) program. The assisted living units are all one-bedroom units. Eligible residents pay 70 per cent of their after-tax income for their units and services, which include weekly housekeeping and linen services, 24-hour response, personal care services, and social and recreational opportunities.

Thirty of the 32 residential care beds will be funded through VIHA. The beds are built to current complex care guidelines, meaning they are single occupancy rooms with a private washroom facility. Beckley Farm Lodge will operate and provide the care services upon opening. The beds are supported by 24/7 registered nurse care as well as other health support services aimed at providing the high level of health-care services that are required by individuals with complex care needs.

The three-storey building will have two hospice units, dining rooms, meeting rooms and courtyards. There are 18 pre-existing independent living cottages, which will bring the total number of care beds in the campus of care to 75. Four levels of care will be offered on-site, including independent, assisted, hospice and complex.

Partners and Funding:

Total capital cost of this project is \$16,090,000.

- The Province will provide \$3.1 million in interim construction financing, a \$15,000 project development grant, and approximately \$4 million in housing and hospitality subsidies for the assisted living units over 35 years.
- Vancouver Island Health Authority is providing annual funding of \$2 million for the 30 residential care beds.
- The Sooke Elderly Citizens' Housing Society will provide the land, valued at \$2.89 million.
- The District of Sooke is providing \$180,824 in municipal reduction of levies and has waived property taxes since 1997.
- The Capital Regional District is providing \$22,959 in municipal reduction of levies as well as a \$63,000 loan for project development funding.
- The Sooke School District also provided \$35,796 in municipal reduction of levies.

Sooke Elderly Citizens' Society

Founded in 1968, the Sooke Elderly Citizens' Society provides a range of housing and care options on the Ayre Manor property, primarily to allow the residents of the Sooke region to age in place, surrounded by friends and family. The society currently operates 18 independent living cottages for seniors at the same location.

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