



Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board  
(RRDSSAB)

## 2007 Annual Report

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*As I reflect on 2007, I am proud of the services we have been able to provide for the citizens of the Rainy River District. We are fortunate to have a dedicated, intelligent and committed staff and Board who work hard every day to provide the best services possible to the most vulnerable among us. Thank you.*

### 2007 HIGHLIGHTS

#### Land Ambulance

- Successful transfer of the delivery of land ambulance services from the two hospital operators, ie. Riverside Health Care Facilities Inc and Atikokan General Hospital to the RRDSSAB, including 49 paramedic staff.
- As of year end, the service, known as Rainy River District Emergency Medical Services (RRDEMS) is certified by the Ministry of Health & Long Term Care for a three year period. Hats off to all of the staff who ensured a seamless transition.
- Transfer of the Atikokan area to Kenora dispatch, allowing the entire district to be under one dispatch centre for easier operational control & deployment.
- Installation/cut over to new Fleetnet radio system completed in December. The new system uses one channel for the entire RR District, allowing direct communication between all vehicles in the district and Kenora area.
- Ontario Heart & Stroke Foundation committed to purchase 25 automatic defibrillators which will be placed throughout the district.
- Our fleet was upgraded with the purchase of two 2007 van-style single stretcher ambulances for Atikokan & Rainy River and one 2007 dual stretcher for Emo, for a total of 12 vehicles across the district.

- Renovations were completed at 801 Scott Street in Fort Frances for a five-car ambulance base. Similarly, 32 Florence Street in Emo was renovated into a new single vehicle base with crew quarters. Our bases have been visited by many in the community, including the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care who have expressed their commendations for the new sites.
- Province agreed to fund automatic vehicle locating (AVL) technology in RRDEMS vehicles.
- Ministry adopted a new funding formula for First Nations, resulting in approximately \$250,000 in additional funding to our district.
- The Ministry of Health & Long Term Care made further adjustments to our base funding, bringing us closer to 50/50 cost sharing between municipalities and the province. With the addition of \$35,380 in December of 2007, the total new money for base funding adjustment totaled \$539,091.

### **Child Care/Best Start**

- RRDSSAB continues to support several prevention and early intervention programs, and specialized services for children with special needs throughout the district.
- The Best Start Network submitted the 2007/08 Best Start Community Plan to the Ministry of Community & Social Services highlighting the expansion of child care & long term vision of centralized "hubs" & integration of children's services. The Plan is available for viewing at [www.rrdssab.on.ca](http://www.rrdssab.on.ca).
- Fee Subsidy is financial assistance provided for families in need so that their children can attend licensed child care services or recreation programs, based upon income testing. In 2007, 160 children throughout the district benefited from fee subsidy, an increase of 49 children from the previous year. As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 97 children representing 60 families were receiving fee subsidy.

Total Current Children Receiving Fee Subsidy as at 31Dec/07		
Number of Children by Age Group		
Age Group	# of Children	%
Infant (0 - 18 mths)	1	1.03%
Toddler (19 – 30 mths)	17	17.53%
Preschool (31 mths - 4+ years)	33	34.02%
JK (3.8 to 5+ years)	21	21.65%
SK (4.8 to 6+ years) 8	8	8.25%
School Age (5.8+ years )	17	17.53%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Number of Children by Applicants Municipality		
Municipality	# of Children	%
Town of Fort Frances	54	55.67%
Town of Rainy River	3	3.09%
Township of Alberton	1	1.03%
Township of Atikokan	23	23.71%
Township of Chapple	1	1.03%
Township of Dawson	2	2.06%
Township of Emo	4	4.12%
Township of Lake of the Woods	1	1.03%
Township of LaVallee	7	7.22%
Township of Morley	0	0.00%
Township of Watten	1	1.03%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Homelessness Program

- The Province continues to provide 100% Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program funding to address homelessness with a budget of \$69,731. The funding this year was used to support district food banks, the Homelessness Prevention Program and Supportive Housing Program. At the end of the 2007 third quarter, 52 households at imminent risk of homelessness and 808 households at risk of homelessness had been served.

## National Child Benefit Strategy

- The National Child Benefit Strategy (NCBS) continues to target services for children from low-income families with an annualized budget of \$54,600. Various initiatives are supported including nutrition programs targeting low income/at-risk children, the Children's Creative Arts Program at the Atikokan Crisis Centre and the provision of financial subsidy so that low-income children can participate in early intervention and sports & recreation programs with their peers. The funding was accessed 3,889 times to the end of September, 2007 - annual statistics are presently being calculated. Thank you to our community partners who work so closely with us to ensure that no child is excluded.

## Ontario Works

- Several new important initiatives were introduced this past year including a regulatory change to provide another 2% increase to the OW rates effective 01 December, 2007. Municipalities will be required by the province to share in the costs of increases beginning in 2008.
- The new Ontario Child Benefit, an income-tested financial benefit available to eligible low- and moderate-income families with children under age 18, is being phased-in over five years, beginning with a one-time down payment in July 2007. This initiative is 100% provincially-funded. Social assistance benefits will not be reduced by the OCB amount to families. Regular monthly OCB payments to families will begin in July, 2008. Other changes to the National Child Benefit and the Working Income Tax Benefit will allow additional dollars for families receiving social assistance.
- New regulatory amendments are being introduced for Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) administration & cost sharing. Effective 2008, the province will assume 100% of the OW & ODSP costs of the Ontario Drug Benefit Program. The upload of administration costs of ODSP to the province will take effect 01 January, 2009. The upload of income support costs of ODSP will be phased in, reducing the current 20% municipal contribution to 10% effective 01 January, 2010, eliminating the municipal share completely by 01 January, 2011.

- Average of 34 new Intake Screenings per month.
- Budget is now based upon achievement of employment targets, i.e. how many individuals leave for employment and/or have employment earnings.
- The average monthly # of participants for OW was 244.
- 10.6% of the caseload received employment income.
- The percentage of caseload exiting OW to employment was approximately 19.65%.

## Social Housing

- The RRDSSAB is responsible for the delivery of the RRDSSAB Housing portfolio (properties owned and managed by the RRDSSAB), as well as overseeing the delivery of various Non-Profit Housing projects throughout the District (separate Boards of Directors). In 2007, we housed 55 new tenants in RRDSSAB-owned Housing.
- Operational Reviews, which monitor the providers' compliance with provincial legislation and local policy and assists with long-range capital plans, continue to be completed with our various Non Profit providers. In consultation with the provider staff and boards, we work closely to develop individualized plans for their facilities.
- Our custodial and maintenance staff continue to ensure that RRDSSAB and RRDSSAB-managed buildings are in good condition and repairs are completed in a timely manner. Preventive maintenance takes place throughout the year so that high repair costs are avoided and tenants are assured a safe, healthy environment.
- RRDSSAB staff continue to provide management & maintenance services for various Non-Profit providers, in addition to RRDSSAB-owned housing. We continue to manage Fort Frances Municipal Non-Profit Housing, Faith Housing and Atikokan Native Urban Housing, and provided maintenance services for most of the year to Columbus Place. Centralizing administration results in cost efficiencies, uniformity of service and assurance of compliance. A formal agreement to manage & provide maintenance services for Columbus Place begins in January of 2008.

- We have continued our partnership with Northern Independent Living Services (NJLS) for support services at Lady Frances Place in Fort Frances for 10 non-senior single apartments. In 2007, services were increased from four hours to eight hours per day/seven days per week. At this time, we are working on the modification of a single unit at that location.
- The Provincial Rent Bank Program Grant of \$24,000 was utilized throughout 2006/07 to assist families who had no more than two months of rental arrears and are being threatened with eviction. At this time, we are unaware of ongoing funding for 2008.
- A new Social Housing Management System is being set up with the Non Profit Housing provider.

To build on the success of municipal delivery of housing for low income households, the province has allocated a one-time capital grant of \$350,000 to the RRDSSAB for distribution to RRDSSAB housing and district Non Profits for capital improvements.

We are participating in a province-wide rent arrears database.

1. RRDSSAB promoted Ontario's new \$185 million housing allowance, Rental Opportunity for Ontario Families (ROOF), which is a financial supplement provided directly to tenants to assist with rent payments. Beginning in January of 2008, families may receive \$100/month, if eligible.
2. The RRDSSAB was awarded funding for the Affordable Housing Program, Homeowner Repair Component, which is 100% provincially-funded. This Program allows lower-income individuals and families to repair their homes to acceptable standards so that they can stay in their own homes and communities as long as possible. We have contracted with the Metis Nation of Ontario to act as our third party delivery agent. Eighteen applications have been received to date.
3. A new process to engage tenants has been introduced, including regular communication through tenant meetings.
4. A complete review of the Social Housing Department took place in 2007 and several plans made and changes implemented to benefit applicants and tenants throughout our District. A new 'grass-roots' philosophy was introduced which engages applicants & tenants in a more meaningful way. Staff are actively working on improving services and accountability throughout the District, including a review of our maintenance processes and procedures.

5. Sandra Weir was hired as our Non-Profit Housing Manager and Dianne Faragher as our RRDSSAB Housing Manager, bringing forward a wealth of enthusiasm, positive energy and ideas for service improvement. Bob Klaas has joined us in the short term as Maintenance Supervisor as a parental leave replacement, providing us with a review of current practices. We look forward to having a Confederation College student join us in the new year to assist us in developing programs for families and seniors residing in our housing units.

6. During the year, Ross Donaldson, Maintenance Supervisor presented the following information to the Board:

- ▶ the RRDSSAB Maintenance Department is responsible for 300 RRDSSAB-owned units, 10 units at FF Municipal Non Profit Housing, 24 at Faith Housing, 17 at Atikokan Urban Native Housing and 30 at Columbus Place = total of 381 units. This represents 600 toilets, 3800 doors and 20 acres of lawn!! We average 75 move-outs /year with a 2 week turnover for inspection, painting, repair and cleaning. We have a 24 hour emergency call system for fire alarms, water leaks, heat problems, lock-outs etc, in addition to our preventive maintenance, regular maintenance and capital work.

### **Accommodations**

The main office relocated to a newly-renovated/constructed building at 450 Scott Street at an estimated cost of \$1,680,000. We look forward to inviting district residents to visit us in the new year, once we are fully accessible.

Once again, thank you to the Chair, members of the DSSAB Building Committee, Board and staff who have worked on the project.

## 2007 Budget Summary

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2006</b>
Bd Admin	54,800	54,800
DSSAB Admin	104,527	83,500
Ontario Works	7,899,297	7,351,810
Child Care	1,354,060	1,368,064
Best Start	340,149	810,418 100% Prov.
Victims Services	137,635	55,825 100% Prov.
NCBS	54,600	52,000
Homelessness	63,036	61,800 100% Prov.
Land Ambulance	5,428,092	4,725,447
Rent Bank Fund	18,828	18,928 100% Prov.
Social Housing Affordable Housing Program	2,810,467 691,970	2,753,706 0 100% Prov.
	18,957,461	17,336,298

\*The overall budget increase for 2007 was 9%, however the actual Municipal increase for 2007 was only 2.93%. The Municipal share increase was less, due to 100% Ministry-funded budget increases and an increase in provincial funding for land ambulance.

Respectfully Submitted by:  
Donna Dittaro, CAO