

# Seniors' Centres Funding Report

Presented by:



and



to

**The Minister of Seniors and Community Supports**

**Summer 2007**

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## Executive Summary

In late 2006, the Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and the Alberta Council on Aging worked together to learn about the financial status of seniors' centres in Alberta. Information was gathered through a survey mailed to all centres in the province and consultation sessions to which all centres were invited. Having heard from more than 50 per cent of the seniors' centres in the province, we're confident that we now have a clear picture of the financial situations that some Alberta seniors' centres enjoy and those that some find challenging.

### Who we heard from

We heard from seniors' centres from both rural and urban areas across Alberta. Of the 415 centres encouraged to complete the survey, 209 did so. Fifty-nine of the respondents are located in northern Alberta, 28 in the greater Edmonton area, 53 in central Alberta, 35 in the greater Calgary area and 34 in southern Alberta.

As the centres varied in location, so too did they vary in size. While more than half (53 per cent) had between 26 and 100 members, 13 per cent had 25 or fewer members, 21 per cent had between 101 and 250 members, five per cent had between 251 and 500 members and eight per cent reported memberships larger than 500.

### Seniors' Centres Revenue

Membership fees charged by all centres are modest. While the largest group of centres (40 per cent) charge between \$6 and \$10 for annual memberships, rates vary from nothing charged by five per cent of centres to more than \$31 charged by one centre. More than two-thirds of the respondents (68.9 per cent) reported that their membership fees have not changed in the last five years.

Beyond membership fees, most centres reported that they had at least one other source of revenue. Almost two-thirds report that they generate revenue through rental of their facilities to other groups/individuals and at least half reported revenue from individual donations, special events and gaming.

While the largest group of centres (32 per cent) reported that their total annual revenue has not changed in the last five years, 26 per cent reported that it has increased slightly and 12 per cent reported that it has increased considerably. On the other hand, 20 per cent reported slight decreases and 10 per cent reported considerable decreases.

### Seniors' Centres Expenditures

**Utilities** were identified as the **greatest expenditure** by 45.9 per cent of the centres that responded to the survey and as the **second largest expenditure** by 12.9 per cent. When asked what annual costs they were most concerned about, 34.4 per cent said they were **very concerned about utility costs**.

While 12.9 per cent of respondents said staff was their greatest expenditure, 68.9 per cent didn't identify staff as a cost at all. Similarly 12.4 per cent said rent was their greatest expenditure but 71.8 per cent didn't identify rent as a cost. **Facility maintenance** was identified as the greatest cost by 10 per cent of centres and an additional 24 per cent listed it as their second greatest cost. All other categories of expenditures were identified as the greatest cost by fewer than 10 per cent of respondents, with many saying these costs didn't apply to them at all.

Some centres are very concerned about overall annual costs (15 per cent), liability insurance (14 per cent), property insurance (12 per cent) and facility maintenance (11 per cent).

More than 70 per cent of centres reported increasing annual expenditures, with 31 per cent reporting that their total annual expenditure has increased considerably (26 per cent or more) over the last five years and 42 per cent saying that it has increased slightly (less than 25 per cent).

### **Financial Successes**

More than 160 of the 209 respondents said they were on a solid financial footing and described their greatest successes in generating revenue and managing expenses. The common themes reported by financially successful seniors' centres include:

- dedicated volunteers
- a variety of regular revenue-generating activities, most notably facility rentals and hosting of special events such as tournaments and meals
- revenue from gaming activities – a number of respondents specifically noted that participation in casinos is vital to their financial sustainability
- strong, mutually beneficial relationships with other groups in the community including municipalities who provide grants, provide facilities at low/no cost (including utilities and taxes)
- effective financial management including careful budgeting, prudent management of expenses and successful investment strategies

### **Financial Difficulties**

When asked about financial difficulties, 29 respondents reiterated that they are on a solid financial footing, have no financial difficulties or are holding their own, while 106 respondents described the financial difficulties they face. Some common themes expressed by those facing financial difficulties were:

- low and/or declining memberships
- aging volunteer base
- lack of funds for additional staff/adequate pay rates
- cost of operating, maintaining and upgrading aging facilities
- lack of stable Family and Community Support Services funding flowing to seniors' centres

A number of respondents suggested the provincial government provide financial assistance to cover/help cover the costs of insurance, utilities and rent for seniors' centres.

## Introduction

The Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta and the Alberta Council on Aging have been working together to gather information about the financial status of seniors' centers in Alberta to develop this report for the Minister of Seniors and Community Supports.

### Survey

They mailed a survey to all seniors' centers in the province in October 2006 and posted the survey on the Alberta Seniors and Community Supports website.

Recipients were encouraged to consult with the individuals in their organization who are in the best positions to accurately provide the requested information.

In total, we received 209 completed surveys: 189 were completed and submitted by mail or fax and an additional 20 organizations submitted their completed survey responses online. The responses to all surveys are detailed in the body of this report.

### Public consultation sessions

In addition to the survey, centre representatives were invited to six public consultation sessions:

- Grande Prairie – November 4, 2006
- Edmonton – November 8, 2006
- St. Paul – November 10, 2006
- Red Deer – November 14, 2006
- Brooks – November 15, 2006
- Calgary – November 22, 2006.

They were advised that if they wanted the information they shared at a consultation session to be included in the material collected for this report, they should be sure to bring a paper copy of their information to the consultation.

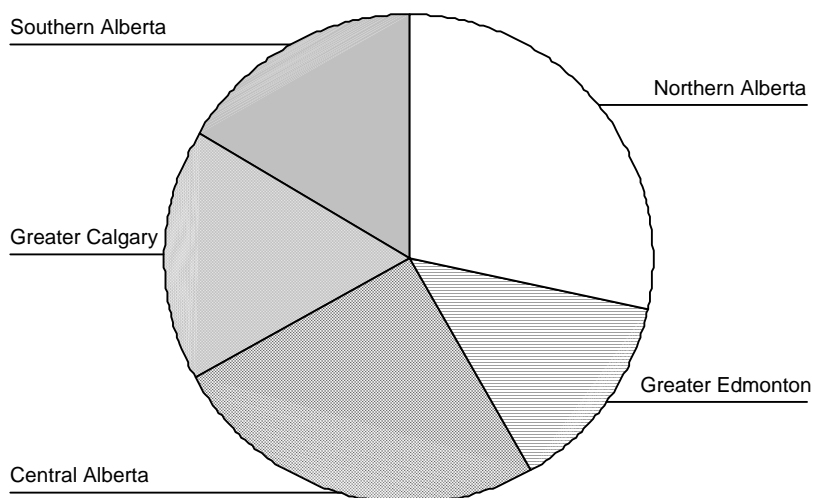
Due to the low number of registrants, only four of the six planned consultation sessions were held. The six written submissions received at the consultation sessions are included in Appendix B of this document.

## Findings

### Who we heard from

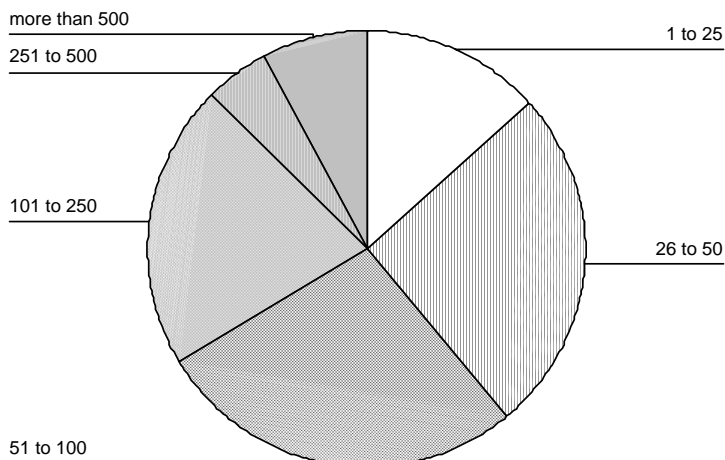
#### Where is your centre located?

	#	%
Northern Alberta	59	28.2
Greater Edmonton area	28	13.4
Central Alberta	53	25.4
Greater Calgary area	35	16.7
Southern Alberta	34	16.3
Total	209	100.0



#### How many members does your centre currently have?

	#	%
1 to 25	28	13.4
26 to 50	53	25.4
51 to 100	58	27.8
101 to 250	44	21.1
251 to 500	10	4.8
more than 500	16	7.7
Total	209	100.0

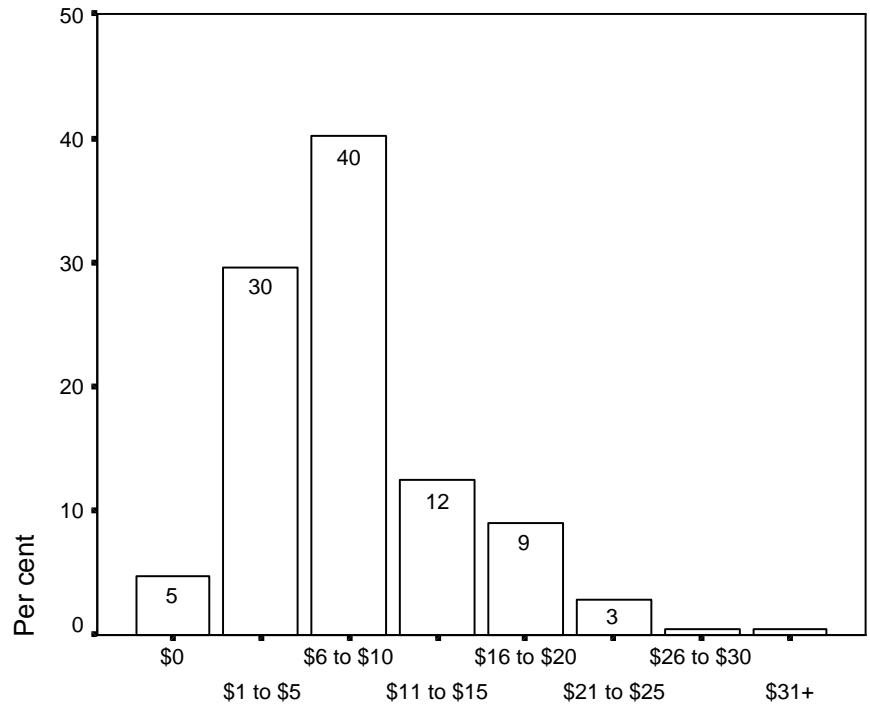


Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest tenth of a per cent.

## Seniors' centres revenue

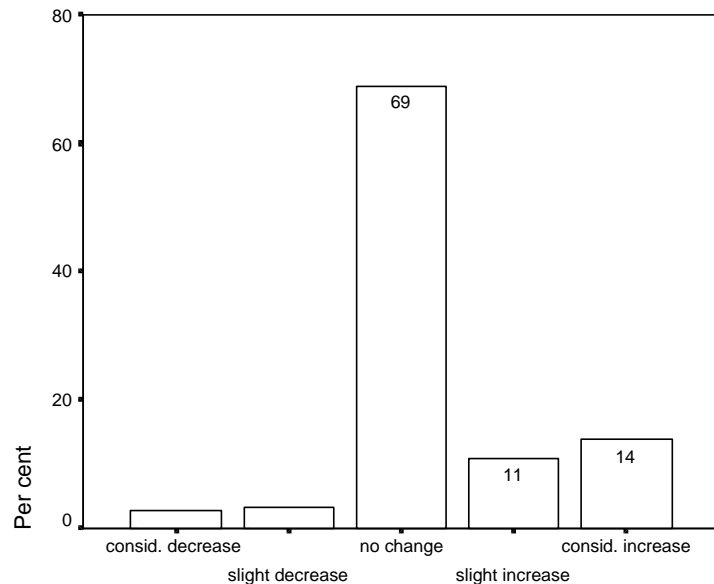
What does your centre charge for an individual annual membership?

	#	%
\$0	10	4.8
\$1 to \$5	62	29.7
\$6 to \$10	84	40.2
\$11 to \$15	26	12.4
\$16 to \$20	19	9.1
\$21 to \$25	6	2.9
\$26 to \$30	1	.5
\$31+	1	.5
Total	209	100.0



Has the cost of annual membership changed in the last five years?

	%
Yes, it has decreased considerably (26% or more)	2.9
Yes, it has decreased slightly (less than 25%)	3.3
No, it has not changed	68.9
Yes, it has increased slightly (less than 25%)	11.0
Yes, it has increased considerably (26 % or more)	13.9



Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest tenth of a per cent.

## What other revenue does your organization receive?

	<b>% of respondents that receive this type of revenue</b>
Rental of your facility to other groups/individuals	65.9
Donations from individuals	58.7
Revenue from special events you host	56.0
Revenue from gaming (i.e. Bingos and/or casinos)	52.6
Grants from your municipality (including FCSS funding, covering utility costs, waiving of taxes)	44.0
Fees for the programs you offer	32.1
Grants from the provincial government	27.5
Donations from service clubs or foundations	26.3
Catering revenue	21.5
Other (please specify)*	11.1
Grants from the federal government	5.7
Grants from United Way	2.9

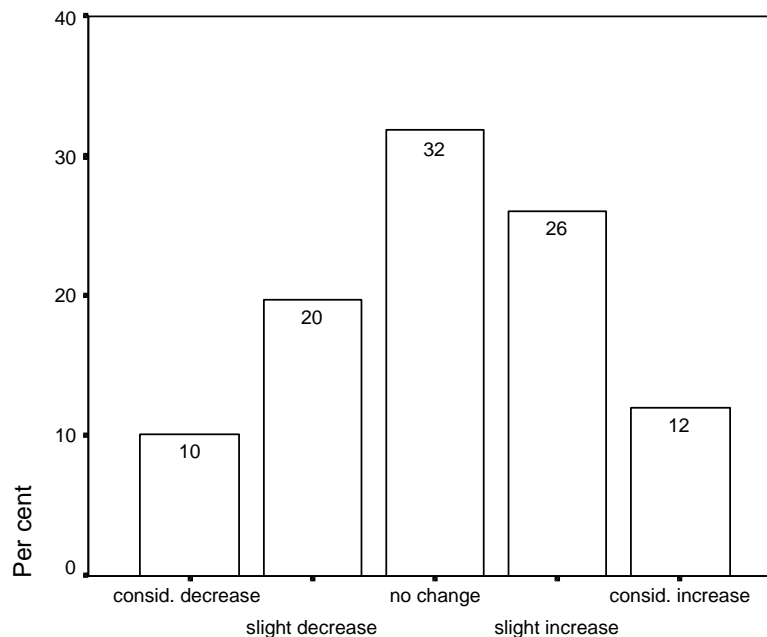
\*Respondents identified their other sources of revenue as being:

- grant from County Recreation Board
- investments
- cookbook
- teas
- daily coffee/coffee money revenue/coffee money two mornings a week (mentioned four times)
- coffee fee & card table rent
- municipal government grant for volunteer time spent working the tourist booth for July and August
- sit at tourist information booth for town
- annual craft sale
- county grant for travel
- provision of outside services
- self-generated from “social enterprises”
- thrift shop
- tax base – municipal operation
- our MLA provides for local telephone calls
- occasional donations from other clubs
- fundraisers such as Seniors Work Campaign, Websites, Life Line, selling baked goods
- raffles, selling garden bulbs and other fund raising activities.

Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest tenth of a per cent.

## Has your total annual revenue changed over the last five years?

	%
Yes, it has decreased considerably (26% or more)	10.1
Yes, it has decreased slightly (less than 25%)	19.8
No, it has not changed	31.9
Yes, it has increased slightly (less than 25%)	26.1
Yes, it has increased considerably (26% or more)	12.1



## Seniors' centres expenditures

What are your centre's greatest expenditures?

	Greatest	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	Smallest	Did not list as an expense
Utilities	45.9	12.9	4.8	4.3	1.9	1.0	0.0	0.5	1.0	27.8
Staff (including full-time staff, part-time staff and programming staff)	12.9	2.4	4.8	3.3	1.9	0.5	1.0	1.0	3.3	68.9
Rent	12.4	4.3	1.4	1.4	0.0	1.0	1.4	2.4	3.8	71.8
Facility maintenance	10.0	24.4	13.4	6.7	4.8	2.9	2.4	1.9	0.5	33.0
Property insurance	8.6	19.6	20.6	10.0	3.3	5.3	1.9	1.0	1.4	28.2
Liability insurance	4.3	12.9	15.3	12.0	7.7	2.9	2.9	0.5	1.4	40.2
Costs associated with the programs you offer (not including staff)	3.8	4.3	7.7	8.1	4.8	5.3	1.0	1.4	1.9	61.7
Other (please specify)	2.9	1.0	1.0	1.4	4.8	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.9	83.7
Property taxes	1.4	1.4	0.5	0.5	1.9	0.0	1.9	3.8	2.4	86.1

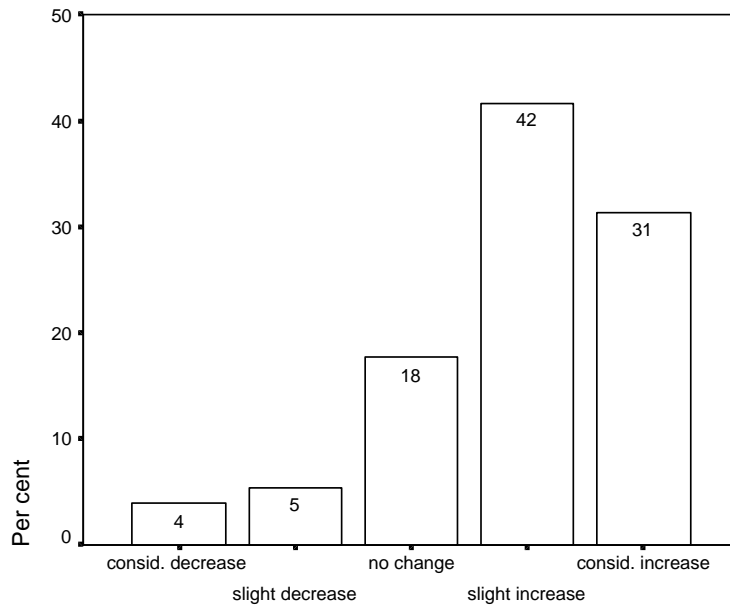
Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest tenth of a per cent.

Respondents noted these “other” expenditures:

- charitable donations/annual donation to community association/donations to groups and members (mentioned five times)
- office supplies/office expenses (mentioned twice)
- supplies for kitchen (mentioned twice)
- food, paper towels
- some catering items
- food service
- audit fee, mortgage
- supplies, repairs, equipment
- travel & entertainment
- equipment lease, equipment and computer maintenance
- we need to enlarge our building to accommodate members and host tournaments
- user fee to community league
- to share cost of facility upkeep
- mileage expenses

**Has your total annual expenditure changed over the last five years?**

	%
Yes, it has decreased considerably (26% or more)	3.9
Yes, it has decreased slightly (less than 25%)	5.4
No, it has not changed	17.6
Yes, it has increased slightly (less than 25%)	41.7
Yes, it has increased considerably (26% or more)	31.4



Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest tenth of a per cent.

### What annual costs are you most concerned about?

	<b>Did not list as a concern</b>	<b>Not at all concerned (1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>Very Concerned (5)</b>
Utilities	25.8	13.9	6.2	10.0	9.6	34.4
Overall annual costs	57.9	10.0	6.7	6.2	4.3	14.8
Liability insurance	40.7	3.3	9.1	18.2	14.4	14.4
Property insurance	36.8	4.3	12.4	17.7	16.7	12.0
Facility maintenance	36.8	5.3	12.4	16.3	17.7	11.5
Staff (including full-time staff, part-time staff and programming staff)	70.8	8.6	4.8	3.3	3.8	8.6
Rent	75.1	9.1	2.4	1.0	5.3	7.2
Costs associated with the programs you offer (not including staff)	67.0	13.4	3.8	5.3	3.8	6.7
Other (please specify)	92.3	2.4	1.4	0.0	0.0	3.8
Property taxes	82.8	12.4	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.4

Respondents expressed concern about these “other” costs:

- upgrading building/building extension/renovating (mentioned three times)
- capital costs (mentioned twice)
- kitchen and office supplies
- bus trips
- provide lunch, occasionally dinners, cards & visits to sick and bereaved
- having enough members paying \$10 each per year to cover our donation to the community association
- to effectively share cost of facility
- the need to replace the diminishing volunteer pool with paid staff.

Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest tenth of a per cent.

## **Financial successes**

***If your centre is on a solid financial footing, please tell us about your greatest successes in generating revenue and managing expenses***

### **Dedicated volunteers**

- Our greatest success is due to the dedication of a few volunteers who keep the place going and operating within budget.
- We raise over \$1000 each year, because a senior over 80 years of age collects, stores and sorts our bottles.
- Prior to this year - we have been able to save funds by having volunteers take on staffed positions such as cook, caretaker and even janitor.
- Very committed volunteers with ownership in the facility and the activities.
- Our centre is doing well financially. We rent our centre and with our volunteers doing the majority of the work to maintain the centre, it really cut back on expenses. In the last year we have hired a janitor because the work has become too much for our volunteers as they are all aging.
- If not for a combination of dedicated volunteers reducing our expenses and gaming revenues, this organization would be non-existent.
- We have a solid financial footing, because of the funding we receive from FCSS and other fundraisers (casino). With this support we are able to staff a fully operational office. A lot of our programs are volunteer based. If we had to hire staff to operate some of our programs we would not be able to afford the wages. So we are very fortunate to have a great bunch of volunteers.
- All work, maintenance, grass cutting, janitorial is all done by volunteers.
- Use of volunteers
- All volunteers – casino covering utilities – during construction phase: Alberta Government and MD of Rockyview – MD major contributor during start-up.
- Bingo revenue as well as hall rental & catering services as all work is done by volunteer members!
- Totally voluntary work.
- Good volunteer base of seniors & community that makes donations of food & time. Good support by United Way for programming & staffing.
- Rent out main auditorium & lower floor meeting room. Volunteer ladies prepare and serve one dinner per week. Caretaker is only paid help. Most routine maintenance done with volunteers. This organization is totally volunteer run with the exception of our caretaker/booking agent.

### **A variety of regular revenue-generating activities**

- Our major income is from rental fees and catering for dinners.
- Renting out our property has been very successful in helping raise extra funds.
- Our best success in generating revenue has been the Old Time Music Jamboree, which we held Spring & Fall – attendance averaged 250+ (musicians & spouses free), admission \$6 per person. We had to move from Eaglesham Hall to Tangent Hall which seats 300 but rent is higher (\$350). However, Fall 2006 we were unable to hold the Jamboree so the

revenue from this source is down. This Birch Hills County Recreation grants help with the operating expenses – but the availability of it is uncertain. So far we are able to hold our own even though our bingo and Nevada revenue are down. Much of our maintenance is done by volunteer work.

- Our center's success on a solid financial footing is the fact that our hall is the only small facility in our town so it is rented out most of the time.
- Chinese Auction, Bazaar & Bake Sale – Centre holding its own expense wise.
- We cater to funerals, tournaments, we host tournaments (i.e. floor curling, billiards, cribbage, carpet bowling). Donation of time by members.
- The rent we receive from other groups, craft sales, suppers etc., entertainment groups
- Strawberry Tea, Fall Luncheon Tea, Xmas Supper
- Our facility is in fair financial standing. We continue to receive the casino monies & rentals, which sustain us.
- Working at casinos, work at Calaway Amusement Park, raffle ticket draws, special events (craft sales, breakfast & lunches)
- We are working hard to raise funds – fashion shows, teas, rummage sales, raffling quilts donated and made by seniors. We own the building so have no rent.
- Our local is in fairly good financial situation due to the fact that everybody helps. Every Saturday we make a small draw and this brings enough money to help pay for the upkeep. We do rent the local to small groups.
- Years ago, bingo revenues were quite good. That, coupled with successful casino revenue (every 2<sup>nd</sup> year) has provided us with secure financial footing. Now bingo revenue has diminished to the point of our organization cancelling participation in this fund-raiser, however, casino revenue has increased and we budget accordingly. We are also fortunate to rent our premises at a very decent rate. Should we ever lose this rental arrangement, our financial situation may change drastically.
- We hold annual bake sales and flea markets
- Generating – casino, bingo, special events, activity fees (\$1 per activity, includes coffee), day trips (own our own bus). Managing – our association is stable due to the board being fiduciary responsible for the club's finances with the assistance of the Administrator.
- Bingos & hall rentals – no financial difficulties
- We do perogy suppers, rent the centre when ever possible, hold floor curling bonspiels. All work is voluntary but it is very hard to get help as most of our members are too old and it leaves it up to 4-6 people. Can't get younger people interested. We turn our heat as low as possible.
- We are quite financially sound with no liabilities. Our success is due to volunteerism and keeping track of the pennies. We offer the best recreation for seniors in town and we all take part. The place is active.
- We are adequate financially but since we are a small organization we get by through donations, card parties, monthly collections, etc.
- Expenses managed by voluntary labour except janitorial. Annual casino, hall rental income, catering to spring & fall supper and monthly pancake breakfasts.
- Most activities provide coffee and lunch donated by members & this generates good income from lunch fees. 50/50 raffle also provides good income.

- Our centre is on a fairly solid financial footing. Our greatest success in generating revenue is pool tournaments & crib tournaments. We also depend on grants. In managing expenses we don't waste.
- We have fundraisers – such as pie & bake sales – an annual harvest supper which is our biggest fundraiser.
- This is a small centre operating mostly on donations & grants.
- Our centre's financial situation is under control. We've just applied for a few bingos to cover the increased costs especially for utilities & maintenance.
- Rentals for funeral luncheons, anniversaries, birthdays, weddings, conventions, etc. All our groups, such as floor curlers, pool players, drama club, choir all contribute to finances. Members do as much maintenance as we possibly can. Ladies often do funeral lunches and others. In addition to the previous remarks, we also coordinate the Meals-On-Wheels out of our centre daily. The meals are ordered from the hospital and then delivered by our volunteers. We also run the taxi voucher system for the seniors and handicapped out of the centre as well. The town subsidizes \$1 per voucher for these people and we look after this for the taxi services.
- We are a 50 Plus Club meeting each Wednesday afternoon at the Haysboro Community Centre. We are independent of the association with money gathered from sale of coffee, card table rental and annual fee per member. At present, we are able to meet our expenses.
- We are fine with our donations and a Pot Luck dinner every month, plus money from coffee.
- Our greatest revenues come from food services & gaming & floor curling revenues and our expenses are managed by a small group of dedicated board members.
- Our situation is quite good. We have a steady income from senior weekly dance, monthly bingo (worked at a larger centre), casinos every 2 years, and a regular flow from card games, floor curling, etc. as well as some catering and the renting out of our new centre.
- Our centre is rented out to other individuals. We increased the charge of venues by 25%.
- We are holding our own because we are experiencing good turn out to our functions. This year our loss was 79 cents.
- We are fairly solid financially due to our members creating fundraisers (i.e. silent auctions, dinners, etc.) and working diligently for our survival.
- Potluck dinners, bake & craft sales, membership fees.
- Our centre is programming a hot school lunch monthly, and hosting ASCSRA functions as well as our small local functions, which generate revenue.
- Holding monthly dinners with donated home cooked meals. Bake sales.
- Our greatest success is in having a turkey or ham bingo. Floor curling bonspiels.
- 1-revenue from bingo, 2-memberships, 3-hall rentals, 4-investment interest
- Along with a monthly supper we have, in the last couple of years, started having musical jamborees, which has increased our supper sales. We also have good revenue from 2 annual craft/bake/yard sales. As well, we have a regular rental of our facility to the local health unit. To help with the cost of replacing our furnaces we have accessed a provincial grant.
- Our centre manages to keep afloat due to the catering & rent of our facility for funeral lunches, small meetings, etc. The bingos help with some utilities & maintenance.

- The Friendship Bridge Club – an adjunct to the Hardisty Social Club has 2 very successful tournaments each year (spring & fall). We also received a grant from Wild Rose Foundation to apply to furnishings, upgrading our facility. More rental income resulted.
- Our revenue is derived from donations for coffee & cookies \$1 or so when they visit us.
- We raise funds by hosting tournaments and by raffles, building rentals and catering as well as sub-letting. Access to FCSS and Lottery funds have been our main source of income. Expenses are carefully monitored.
- We are fairly well financially OK. We served coffee for works in the AM, we have a bingo once a month, rent our facility out & we also put on a strawberry tea & bake sale. Can now use our casino money for maintenance & repairs.
- Our greatest successes have been generating revenue from rentals. We have some organizations that rent our facilities on a regular basis (church on Sunday, Farmers Market, dance group, funerals). We also have a raffle once a year. We do some catering, weddings, Christmas parties.
- Fundraising is our greatest success.
- Our financial situation is not great, but we have been having enough fundraisers & rentals to keep our balance respectively steady.
- In addition to annual fees, making a daily charge for using the games room, as well as charging for all functions held. Outside rentals also supplements our income.
- We are trying to raise funds to expand our building. We need to enlarge our building to accommodate members and host tournaments.
- Membership fees, Strawberry Tea.
- Suppers, crib games, coffee, donations.
- Selling Nevadas, floor curling events, hall rental.
- Not counting working the casino, which is controlled income, we produce suppers once a month. This income pays food expenses as well as telephone & cleaning.
- We host a weekly lunch, which is staffed by volunteers and most of the food is donated.

### **Revenue from gaming activities**

- Revenue from Casino participation but getting very difficult to play an active money earning part.
- We have been able to meet our expenses from income generated by working a Casino.
- Since we've been doing casinos we have no financial problems.
- Steady – in years without casino a struggle – annual telethon revenue has been declining 5 years still brings in \$15,000. Without gaming revenue we would not survive.
- We were left a large amount from an estate. We work the casino and get around \$30,000 every 3 years.
- Working a casino every 2 years.
- Our centre worked our first casino in October 2005. Had we not been given that opportunity, we would have trouble keeping ahead financially. Most members wish we did not have to turn to casinos for revenue, but we feel we must.
- Success is working the casino. Without casino funds we could not operate.
- Our centre is managing well due to participation in Casino pooling. If the gaming laws are changed, we could be struggling if casino money were no longer available.

- Our greatest revenue is from gaming. We have had no problem “so far” in handling expenses.
- We work at the Great Northern Casino in Grande Prairie approximately every 3 years – we have an annual municipal grant.
- We are able to host a casino approximately every 3 years. Expenditures are kept to a minimum. Careful use of utilities, etc.
- We have limited funds in GIC but are having to draw on it. More going out than coming in. It was bingo!
- Bingo.
- We remain on solid financial footing. Currently the largest amount is derived from casino funds. The membership is involved in making decisions on expenditures.
- Our greatest revenue is from the Casino, which we work about every three years.
- Our most success is from revenues from casinos. Greatest concern is extended waiting time. Rental to other organizations – concern cost of maintenance.
- Members of the centre have been working at casinos on two occasions, providing funds for major replacements (e.g. 2 furnaces, new carpeting, dishwasher, entrance door, refinishing floor curling floors).
- We are OK at the moment – due to casino revenue.
- Our centre is on solid financial footing because of our casino every two years. We shop for things we need carefully.
- We raise funds through bingo and casino. Our other main source of income is rental of the facility. This year we have applied for grants to cover some costs.
- We are able to maintain our facility due to casino revenue.
- Getting the revenue and support from gaming commission and membership fee. Some sponsorship money from individual donors to achieve the goals & objectives of society.
- Our greatest revenue is going to the casino.
- Work at casino.
- Bingos.
- Grey Cup Raffle, renting, casino every 3 years.
- We have casinos.
- The casino funding meets our needs as this is the only outside source of revenue.
- We are now financially solid as long as gaming revenues can be used for utilities and operational costs. Working casino in Grande Prairie is also very good for us.
- Casino.
- Our centre worked casino 2 years ago and has helped with our finances.
- Our centre isn't on solid financial footing but we worked at a casino in 2005. This has helped us with upkeep on our building, replacing windows, new furnace, fixing cement along building to keep water out of the basement, etc. We hope to work at another casino in 2007 to help with rising utilities, taxes, insurance, etc.
- Casino, rent (centre rented out for birthdays, anniversaries, family dinners, etc.). Without casino revenue this centre would have a tough time surviving.
- We generate all of our funding through casinos and bingos. We have a very good executive and are very frugal.
- We rely on a small bingo to survive (20-35).

### **Strong, mutually beneficial relationships with other groups**

- Our finances remain fairly consistent thanks to the BHCL, they allow us to use the centre 4 days per week with only a minimal user fee for the year and the seniors do volunteer work for them.
- Three Hills businesses make a loan of \$5000 from WREC. This \$5000 comes to Seniors Outreach, which helps us to buy our new bus. In return our seniors volunteer 22 hours a month to these businesses. The businesses then pay back their loan at \$150 a month to WREC (as the wages). The businesses get Advertising in Motion as they get signage on the bus for the duration of the program, which is three years.
- Fortunately our municipality (Starland County) has granted us an operating grant in the past, which helps to pay insurance, and taxes but we cannot be sure of receiving this every year.
- We have no rent or taxes to pay – facility leased from the Town of Gibbons for one dollar a year till 2015. Utilities are a flat \$125 a month to Sturgeon Foundation.
- We manage with a recreation board grant.
- Our Senior Group has moved into local community association hall. We now share the hall for all of our functions. This has helped us financially and is working really well for all of us. We are holding our own in our financial matters.
- Our centre is on a solid financial footing only because we are under the auspices of the Heinsburg Community Club. Our only expenses as indicated above are an annual payment for utilities to the Community Club and quarterly sewer pump-outs. Our greatest successes in generating revenue are catering and hall rental.
- The church where we are located supports our group (rent, facilities, coffee, tea, name tags, mailings, etc.) so our membership revenue goes directly to program costs.
- Our centre is on very solid financial footing. This is due to the cooperation we receive from the Village council and the local recreation board. We also take part for two days at the Casino.
- Donation from individual – funding from church.
- We have clear title to our building. Land is leased to us by Darwell Agricultural Society for \$1 per year. Income from hall rentals.
- Community support, donations from Shell and individual donations.
- Up to now we were leasing a building. Now we are renting a floor in Community Hall.
- We use a room in our community hall and are not charged for its use. Our only income is from an afternoon tea for seniors in our district and from a bake sale table at the community craft sale. All of our income is distributed to needy causes within our community and city.
- We have no expenses – community donated hall.
- We “share” the legion building with the Legion #146.
- Central Lions Senior Citizens Recreation Centre is operated in a very successful partnership between the City of Edmonton Community Services Department and The Central Lions Seniors Association (CLSA). The City provides basic operating costs (e.g. utilities, maintenance, supervision) and the CLSA funds all expenses associated with the delivery of recreational and social programs, activities and services offered at the Centre. Membership in the Northgate Senior Citizens Association is over 1,700 and more than 500 recreational, social, educational and health-related programs, activities and events are

offered to seniors and the community each year for an attendance of almost 70,000. The Centre is also heavily used by the community (36,000 attendance) for programs, workshops, meetings and social functions on a rental basis. Members of the CLSA provide over 200 volunteers and 12,000 volunteer hours per year. In 2007, the City will be renovating and expanding the Centre to meet the needs of the rapidly increasing seniors population in Edmonton. The CLSA receives no direct funding and without this collaboration and the City funding, the Centre would not be able to stay open nor run as efficiently as it does.

- Our centre is attached to the local community hall and we pay utilities every month and help look after the hall. We only have one room.
- Mainly from member donations and Tees Ag Society.

### **Effective financial management**

- We are a relatively young, small agency, which manages expenses in relationship to funds received. i.e. when able, we hire a summer student to assist the two paid staff but some years we are unable to do this.
- Previous boards left us in a solid financial position. We try to keep expenditures equal to or less than income. Breakdowns and maintenance are sometimes unpredictable, but we have funds to cover things that happen, at least so far.
- We are not revenue productive. We have held several GICs for a number of years and are reluctant to spend the principal portion. We only do maintenance as necessary.
- We try to maintain user fees at a level that covers our basic expenses. We hold musical jam sessions weekly and gospel concerts monthly that provide us with good income. We have no financial difficulties at this time. Our general income has been covering our expenses and we have funds invested to cover any major maintenance that may be required in the future.
- From our beginning it has been our endeavour to provide a centre for all seniors in the area. We have had some generous contribution from estates toward future expansion. We have guarded this, added to it when possible. Watch the dimes and nickels - the dollars look after themselves.
- Although we do not have much money we do not owe money. Most work is done by volunteers.
- Finances are stable. No change last 5-10 years. All activities are paid with entry fee covering prizes & food with small profit. Tournaments held with \$5 entry charge covering prizes & snacks, etc.
- We are holding our own nicely.
- Careful budgeting and enough seniors as members.
- We have an apartment that is rented to an individual, on the top floor of our building. We also try to curb our spending.
- Operate as economically as possible and monitor revenue & expenses very closely.
- Due to good management and having three successful money-making projects we are able to continue to have a good financial footing so far.
- Years back from many grants and high interest received.
- Catering revenue has increased. We have a “nest egg” of money that generates interest income. The nest egg of \$8,000 is a hedge against major repairs (it came from memorial gifts).

## Others

- As with all not-for-profit organizations we are never on solid ground financially, despite providing many years of services to Calgary's most vulnerable sector we are constantly forced into a begging mode and one of having to justify our very existence. Neither the City nor Provincial authorities support wholeheartedly in any way whatsoever. Our best event is casino as it is quick and with a great return.
- Seniors Outreach is a non-profit Agency that assists seniors with all their needs. We receive our funding from FCSS, United Way, donations. We are in a city that is growing so fast. We are competing for funds along with all other agencies in the community. We all have strong needs. We are pleased to say that we are able to maintain services by having staff.
- Yes – at the moment – maintaining the status quo. No great revenue generation.
- O.K. for 2006-2007
- Sound – has been for 20 years
- Our greatest success is being able to continue to deliver our services after losing FCSS funding. There has been a slight increase in casino revenue but a tight fiscal performance is our answer, however, it curtails creativity and threatens sustainability.
- Our annual financial statement shows a loss of approximately \$100 the last three years but we have money in GICs that balance it. The daily money we receive for coffee, plus donations, special functions pays for monthly expenses.
- We are on solid footing. Our members are great volunteers and we are able to be solid. Our biggest worry is lack of new members.
- We are barely managing to break even. This entails overworking our staff to the point of burnout in the face of escalating demands for service. Our furnishings are threadbare. We are very thrifty. We invest in short term instruments if money is paid quarterly.
- As seniors, the community collects an annual fee. Seniors are given a \$200 grant. This is used for speakers & entertainment.
- We were okay until we had to redo the entire flat roof.
- We as a club do not own our own building. We only rent this facility per annum. No income from any other source – only membership.
- We do not have great expenditure costs.
- Solid financial standing.
- Centre is on solid financial footing.
- Our financial situation is beginning to stabilize although we are still running a deficit & we have no reserve fund. We have taken on some long term leases & our cafeteria/lounge is now being managed by an outside contractor.
- We rent space in the Family Leisure Centre facility.
- Rentals to other organizations.
- The Senior Centre itself is financially sound but the building is owned by the Agricultural Society and they are having financial difficulties as are all organizations due to high operating expenses, wages, insurance, utilities, maintenance, etc.
- Core funding was discontinued for 2006 fiscal year. Operating with bequests that were held in reserve. New board and executive director working hard to have funding reinstated. Funding from FCSS precludes successful application elsewhere.
- We are a non-property club so our funds are small.

- We are financially stable due to extra funds accumulated by way of donations while in the process of purchasing our own building.
- Donations, programs.
- We have been very busy raising money for our building expansion. This is now all been approved and construction will be underway in the spring.
- We are a non-profit social club for seniors to floor curl and card games. Our municipal grant helps cover the cost of travel to other towns for floor curling and partial cover of some day-long travel trips.

## **Financial difficulties**

***If your centre faces financial difficulties, please tell us about the greatest causes of those difficulties, what impact those difficulties have on the operation of your centre and the programs you offer, and what recommendations you would suggest to enable you to continue to serve Alberta seniors***

### **Low and/or declining memberships**

- A low membership is our greatest difficulty – if we lost the casino funding our Senior Centre wouldn't be able to maintain the building.
- Membership declining at this time. Cost of everything has risen but income to Centre has dropped. Trying to find new ways to increase membership and have new fund raising activities to generate funds.
- We will be facing financial difficulties if we can't get help from volunteers because we will have to start paying people for work. It would be very helpful if centers could get grants to cover wages or part of wages.
- Seniors' drop-in centers are very important in smaller communities, as they are often the only entertainment for those on fixed/limited income. Since many organizations in our community are fundraising, it is somewhat more difficult because the same families are being called upon often. Since our member numbers are few, help in the form of grant monies would help cover the additional costs in utilities and insurance.
- The church congregation will not be feasible in the near future due to its members dying and therefore the group will eventually cease to exist.
- Lack of membership. Not enough of us do fundraising (only 5 active members)
- If our membership declines our bank account will be reduced. We have expenditures, such as replacing card tables, keeping the kitchen supplied, stationery and stamps, cards rent out, donations to Mustard Seed, Calgary Hospice Society. We hold special events such as Christmas party, summer picnic which are offered free of charge to members.
- Declining membership.
- Falling memberships.
- We are a small centre. We have lost some members (death and moving away). We are all seniors mostly and aging. We do casinos with help. We might not be able to do this much longer – due to health reasons. Most of our income comes from this. It would be nice to have someone to turn to for help if we run into financial difficulties.
- Declining rentals – declining memberships, loss of members due to old age. Lack of interest by younger generation.

- One of our major difficulties was the rising cost of property and liability insurance, We are now getting insurance through an agreement with the local Municipal District (MD 124) and this has reduced the cost to a manageable level. We still have difficulty attracting members and so there are a few people who need to work very hard to carry on our program and activities.
- Our financial situation is gradually declining. The bus tours seem to have declined. We are brainstorming to see what we can do in 2007. Our greatest problem is a decline in membership. Many of our members have died and others moved away.
- Our centre is not on a solid financial footing. We do not have enough members to do many projects to raise money. Our Golden Age Centre was built under one roof with the Big Knife Villa, which consists of 10 apartments and 21 lodge rooms, in 1986, a pilot integrated project, which is governed by Flagstaff Regional Housing Group. Our financial contract was made in 1986. We pay 15% of the whole in utilities and maintenance, which we are finding a burden to pay. Our membership has slipped from 120 to 43 members. Our membership has gone down because of health and age as well as death. We only have 14 members from the Big Knife Villa side out of 31 people (some of these are of course older). Our utilities and maintenance expenses from the Big Knife Villa accounts for approximately half of our total expenses. The feeling when this building was built was that the residents from the other side would be able to come to this part so easily – but only 14 are coming and the expenses are getting us down. Our expenses are determined from the Big Knife Villa expenses – there are times when we question certain expenses that are put on our expenses but sometimes we do not get a clear answer as to why we are to pay the amount – especially in the maintenance area.
- It's hard to get new members. Everyone is getting older, many have passed away and many moved into lodge and no longer come.
- Membership is going down. Older ones are passing away and younger ones are not joining.
- Our biggest problem is members, then transportation is a problem. We are 4 blocks from City transportation. Many people no longer drive, so they stay home.
- Rental of facilities, decreased revenue, fewer members. We expect expenditures to overtake revenue within next 12 months.
- We need more funding to outreach to new members to sustain our group. Presently, our average age is around 70+ and some gone back to Heaven.

### **Aging volunteer base**

- Stress of getting volunteers and very few trying hard to acquire more members.
- The Ardmore Community Society receives grants and they were paying our utilities, however they no longer do that and the MD no longer pay our taxes therefore we are having financial difficulties. Volunteer help is very limited, as many of our seniors are at the age they are unable to help, but they do enjoy functions at the centre.
- With rentals, grants, bingos we are managing but our building is getting older and needs (will) further repair, etc. Our biggest problem is having people to fill the various positions on the executive and volunteer groups.
- The greatest cause of these difficulties is a membership of people age 78 average.
- Volunteers are aging. Increasing cost of staff wage increases. Having enough money to buy food (meals are offered at no cost).

### **Lack of funds for additional staff/adequate pay rates**

- Lack of funds to hire additional staff keep up with demand for our senior outreach programs. Lack of space to keep up with needs of programs. Provide funding directly to centres so we can use the money where we best see fit.
- It is very difficult to pay for staff cost and keep them to work for us due to keen competition. Maintenance costs are another big expenses.
- Financial resources are limited. Medicine Hat's population is at 17% for 65+ and aging rapidly. We are struggling to maintain service levels without increased funding to expand. We need provincial support to assist with financing staff to address elder abuse and we need the provincial government to accept responsibility for their services such as administration of Alberta Seniors Benefits forms.

### **Cost of operating, maintaining and upgrading of aging facilities**

- More funding would enable us to enlarge our facility and provide more space to increase membership and recreation (games) etc.
- Our utility bills are very high, as is liability insurance. Most revenue we generate is used to pay these bills. We only have about 35 members so we don't get much revenue from memberships. If we don't receive donations or municipal grants we would not be able to keep the Centre open.
- We are facing having to replace our roof in the spring. Hopefully, we will be able to do so from the proceeds of a Casino we will be working in April 2007. We also have approximately \$10,000 saved toward this expense.
- Our largest expenses are power and heating which depend on the weather conditions – average yearly cost \$3,000, insurance \$1,405, maintenance \$850, secretary/treasurer honorarium \$1,000, Telus \$468, water, sewer and garbage disposal \$575.45 (and other smaller expenses. Peace Country Health hold a Baby Clinic the first Wednesday of each month; a Seniors' Wellness Clinic for blood pressure check and foot care every second month; flu immunization, preschool dental clinic once a year. They do not pay rent for the use of the Centre. This service would not be offered if we charged rent – approx 20 days = \$550. Discounting the Peace Country Health Services would really hurt as Seniors and others would have to go to Spirit River, Falher or elsewhere. A grant towards expenses would help immensely as that would enable us to keep the Centre operating and have Seniors remain active in the community. The purpose of the Senior Social Centre organization, which was incorporated in 1974, is to maintain a smoke free facility to be used by Seniors and the community for meetings, social activities (a monthly potluck supper and recognition of birthdays and anniversaries for the month) wellness and baby clinics, workshops, Tuesday afternoon card games. A Friday night bingo with Nevada ticket sales to generate funds, the Old Time Music Group play for one hour prior to the Bingo are held except during July. The Centre is also used as a polling station for the Provincial and Federal elections and bridal and baby showers and birthday and anniversary gatherings. Some of our seniors leave to be where there is immediate medical attention and new members are reluctant to join - even though our membership starts at 50 years, they don't seem to think of themselves as seniors until after 65!
- Utilities is our big concern – to avoid financial difficulties our seniors serve coffee at our hall (5 days a week Monday to Friday \$1 a cup) to help defray utilities costs.

- This facility is over 50 years old and will need some repairs soon – of greatest concern are the old furnaces that will need to be replaced sometime soon.
- The new Alberta legislation on insurance has increased that cost by approx. 60% for 2007.
- Our greatest concern is the cost of utilities and insurance. At present, we are not having enough income to maintain our building. Our members contribute in money and kind to keep it going and with the small reserve we have we are still able to keep our centre open.
- Utilities, insurance
- We are financially still doing good, but if our utilities keep increasing we will be in trouble especially power and gas has increased beyond reason. Liability insurance is getting unaffordable too.
- Help with insurance seems so high. It's a municipal building but we were informed we had to carry our own insurance on contents.
- We may have to obtain a new centre and that would cost tremendously. The old school we meet in now may be dismantled.
- Our biggest concern is the upkeep and building improvements to be able to rent to community.
- Over the past 2 years we have seen our operating account decline due to the high cost of insurance and utilities. Government assistance in these areas would be greatly appreciated.
- Upgrading the building so that we have better bathrooms is our major concern.
- We are presently applying for casino funding and we hope to use this funding to upgrade and maintain our facility in the future. Building repairs will be expensive. Volunteers are difficult to replace but so far so good.
- The cost of utilities have increased considerably and the cost of groceries have also increased giving us a smaller profit. As for recommendations, I don't know. We all volunteer at this centre, so that alone is a great benefit to our organization. Maybe some grants would ease the burden of increased costs.
- The cost of utilities had depleted our resources. We are in a 35 year old building – we own it, we pay no taxes but the cost of maintenance is staggering. We are presently redoing the flat roof \$23,000 with the help of CFEP and we've borrowed from our members by debenture which we will have to pay back sometime. Our furnaces are old and probably inefficient. The carpet is worn and dirty. We are approved to work a casino the first quarter of 2009 but we have to get through 2007-2008!! Our membership is average age of 74. We cannot afford a janitor so some of us younger ones (70+) volunteer. We work the tourist booth for July & August – the town of Sedgewick gives us \$2,000 for our volunteer time. We raise money through memberships, floor curling dues, whist, bridge and cribbage. We hold occasional tournaments for an entry fee and invite neighbouring seniors. All of the lunches are donated by our members and a nominal fee is charged. We need an operating grant, a break on the gas prices (rebate) – it would really help.
- Rising cost of utilities, maintenance and insurance is a great concern.
- Utilities and insurance costs have increased, and we cannot charge much more to various groups to rent out our facility. Our facility has needed various updates recently (i.e. new fridge, stove & hot water tank).

- At present we aren't having many financial difficulties. We hope to enlarge our facility in the near future.
- The cost of running our brand new \$850,000 centre is a lot higher than our previous set up. We just started using it in Feb. 2006, and do not yet know the full impact of cost and insurance, etc., etc.
- Our biggest expenses are utilities. Insurance is always on the rise as well.
- Our concern is that our building is very old and we are constantly looking at repairs. We replaced our windows with a grant and now we are facing repairing our floor in the kitchen.
- I think the government should be paying at least ½ the utility bills for all senior centre community halls, curling rinks & skating rinks because the population isn't big enough in smaller centers to afford it.
- Until five years ago we did not have to pay for utilities (supplied by town). We are advised that commencing January 2007 we will have to provide liability insurance. "Discontinuation" of travel grant from town has caused drop in membership.
- The high cost of utilities has increased so much the seniors contribute more to have our seniors' place to meet. Reduce the cost of gas and power in order for us to have a good centre to meet and socialize which is so important for seniors today.
- One of our financial difficulties was when we had a water pipe break upstairs and we had to redo the whole basement. We did have insurance.
- Our high insurance fees (town used to have a blanket insurance policy – no longer - centre will have to pay insurance), high power bill, high maintenance.
- We live in a growing community. 14 new houses in 2006. We expect many more next year. Our present facilities are at maximum use now. With the growth of the community we are very concerned about how we can expand our ability to accommodate more members. If the building was enlarged, we could possibly rent out space to others, enlarge our programs, and be an enhancement to the village. The question is "Where can the money come from?"
- Without casino revenue we would not be able to maintain our property. The town owns the property but does not contribute to insurance or maintenance.
- Help us with "UTES" – gas, power, telephone. We don't pay land taxes.
- Increasing utilities costs are our biggest concerns.
- Our greatest concern is the high price of electricity and gas.
- At present, we are facing necessity of replacing the roof on our centre with estimates of \$18,000 to \$25,000. We have funds for a good proportion of this cost but may need some specific help.
- Only money makes we have is weekly bingo. Since we introduced no smoking, attendance has been cut in half. We do not have enough income to meet monthly bills - let alone upkeep on building. Any suggestions?
- Our centre meets its operational expenses mostly using Gaming revenue. We find that we must sacrifice needed spaces that could be otherwise used for various senior programs & recreational activities because the centre must keep a great number of tables set up for our regular bingos (which are necessary to our survival as a centre). Our only option would be expand the premises to allow other forms of activities, which would make the club more available for other services. We are hoping, with casino revenue, that we might some day in the future look into that possibility.

- We are considering applying for a grant to help us maintain the upkeep on our hall and make renovations to improve our hall's standards and make it more adaptable to rentals.
- Higher utilities are the greatest concern right now. With the aid of government grants to upgrade furnaces, etc., we should be OK. Getting more new members would be a great asset. Lack of bingo players caused us to cease bingo for the present time.
- Although we are able to keep up with our expenses, if we need new appliances, e.g. stove, fridge or replace carpet in centre or major renovations, rising utilities, insurance, taxes, we'll have a problem meeting our expenses.
- We are draining money from our term deposits as utilities have gone up considerably. 75% of our members are over 80 years old. They seem to be interested only in cards. And our occasional big meals (pot luck). It is difficult to put on any programs. Our building needs a facelift – new tables and chairs. Our funding is at a standstill so we make do with what we've got.
- If we were to have anything major go wrong, we could not afford to fix it and would have to have help from the Hall (community hall to which the centre is attached).
- Utilities, property insurance, liability insurance. We would suggest different formula for dispensing casino revenue (requirements).
- Our insurance cost increased 100% last year. Utility costs continue to increase and can skyrocket out of control. No work can be done on our centre's roof at present yet it is needed! Where is the government support?
- The difficulty we have is that our centre is one room and we need help to divide it as well as enlarge our kitchen and add at least 2 more bathrooms. A grant to help with this would ease the pressure.
- Maintenance and upkeep is of major concern now. Part of our building is 30 years old and in need of 5 new windows and new flooring.

### **Lack of FCSS funding flowing to seniors' centres**

- We once were FCSS-supported, not any more, but still have the same needs. We were set up as a CAP site by Industry Canada but no longer get sustainability funds. Our difficulties include not being able to pay for qualified instructors, in being limited to time served activities. We must find a way to replace the volunteer core that is tired and not being replenished. We have a responsibility to continue to deliver our services. Perhaps some kind of practicum programme, using Mount Royal College Not for Profit faculty students might help. Must have qualified/nice facilities – would like to capture new seniors but can't without sophisticated programs and facilities.
- FCSS deficit funder is totally ridiculous in the 21st Century as well, CSRS is required to have registered social workers for all outreach positions and we are simply training them for the Health Region who has the resources to pay proper salaries. Municipal/Provincial authorities need a wake up call as to what is appropriate financial support for seniors and more money needs to be redirected away from City run programs to arm's length contracting not-for-profit orgs. FCSS needs to be audited for policies and practises by an outside independent auditor. As well the Minister of Seniors needs to show interest in what orgs are doing who are supporting seniors; communication is never replied to or initiated from that sector.

- Our centre has grown over 31 years, to be the largest senior centre in all of Alberta. Unfortunately, FCSS funds have not grown accordingly and we do not receive funding from any other levels of government.
- FCSS has provided funding for a part-time coordinator for the last 20 years. December 31st FCSS will no longer fund this position. Westside will be shutting its doors to the lonely seniors who have found us to be a great community for them. We will no longer be able to afford the coordinator and rent to maintain our programs. We have a group of younger seniors willing to volunteer helping the older seniors, but we need someone to coordinate this. Financing this should be done by our provincial government and FCSS. These seniors wish to volunteer for their community and not spend all their time fundraising. Their focus is to help the lonely and isolated seniors. It will be a sad day when we close our doors to these seniors, and in return have created some more lonely and isolated seniors.
- I recommend greater government contributions to FCSS. We pay in excess of \$10,000 to utilities alone. It is very difficult to fund raise for operating costs – if I have to take additional money out of my programs allotment, all of my programs and services will suffer.

#### **No financial difficulties**

- We have no financial difficulties.
- For the time being, we have no financial difficulties.
- No difficulties.
- No difficulties experienced at this time.
- We presently are in a good financial position.
- So far we have found no difficulties with our financial situation – a drop in membership could create one though.
- Our center does not face financial difficulties at this time, however if the Community Club folded we would be unable to exist independently.
- Does not apply to seniors.
- We the centre have no difficulties because we are being subsidized by the Agricultural Society who are having difficulties.
- N/A (mentioned four times)
- No financial difficulties. Maintain prudent budgeting. Provide those services most desired by members (volunteers).
- No financial difficulties at this time.
- At this time we have sufficient funds – foresee difficulty in the aging of membership and lack of interest in younger seniors.
- We really do not have a financial problem as long as we get to work at the casino every two years.
- Holding our own.
- We have received substantial funding from casinos. We have also received considerable revenue from renting the two halls on our premises for social and commercial purposes.
- Casino and bingo operations, grants.
- Living in a small community we do not have paid staff or programme costs. All work is done voluntarily. We also do not pay rent or property taxes. Therefore we manage to stay afloat. The utilities & maintenance are our greatest concerns.

- We can get by with funds that we get from the club.
- We're managing due to we pay no rent.
- None at present time.
- No difficulties so far.
- As long as we don't have any major upkeep expenses, I think we'll be on solid financial footing.
- So far we have no financial difficulties. Although our utilities are quite high.
- We have no financial difficulties at this time.

## Others

- We rent our space in a community centre and our hours are limited. We are not able to offer more programs and we can only have 4 weekends a year to fundraise. The provincial government needs to put in more money for non-profit programs and look at each program individually to see why they cannot fundraise as well as other organizations. We have wonderful older volunteers, but they can only provide so much.
- At this point in time we are on safe footing. However, we dip into our savings annually. Meaning that in seven years our savings shall have dried up.
- Our senior centre has experienced doubling of growth in membership in the last year! We currently serve over 1,500 seniors. Many of these seniors are on fixed incomes - and although recognize the need to decrease their isolation - have limited resources to contribute to the sustainability of the senior centre. We know that our Outreach program in particular - saves the province a great deal of money - as we seek out and support those seniors who do are frail and isolated. We provide services to them, including meals, companionship, information and activities that will contribute to their wellbeing. In the last year, utilities, insurance and the need for more staff to respond to this increased demand-has caused our expenditures to seriously increase. Senior centres may be able to access project funding - but cannot receive funding for core operations (such as maintenance, utilities and insurance). With an aging population, senior centres need to receive provincial support.
- Approximately 50% of funding comes from FCSS and a similar amount from our own fundraising including casinos. Without core funding (FCSS or other source) this agency would not exist. As it is, additional core funding is required to increase services (in-home outreach to isolated, low income seniors, at no cost, by Registered Social Workers) to keep up with the increasing demand. While encouraged to do so by staff, most of our clients do not participate in programs offered at seniors' centres. Our clients are often "unseen and unheard," and many have troubles accessing appropriate and affordable transportation and resources. Additional barriers faced by these seniors can be a lack of nearby family and/or friends and health issues. Agency staff initiate plans to assist seniors in achieving ongoing independent life styles and offer ongoing support when required. We often "fill the gaps" in services available from other organizations. To increase services, increased "core" funding is required.
- Seniors Outreach is a "One Stop Shop" for seniors. We help seniors with whatever need a senior may have. We are no longer housed in our "Seniors Centre" we have grown so rapidly, that they no longer have room to house us. We now are paying rent in the community. We still refer many of our clients to the social programs that our Seniors Centre offers. With seniors living longer and staying in their own homes longer the need

to help keep them independent has grown rapidly in this area. Seniors Outreach offers the supports needed to do that. We assist seniors in applying for and making sure that they receive all the benefits available to them and that they are linked to all community supports available to them. We are there to make sure that they are understood and the needs that they have are taken care of. That may be financial, housing, health. We are a non-profit agency that has been running since 1983. We now have over 4000 clients. We compete for FCSS funds with all agencies.

- We would like to be able to take some trips. Some of our seniors are shut-ins and we could help them out. They do not drive so bus trips would be good.
- We are in deficit in last 3 years. Cannot secure ongoing funding. Project X program usually run one year by a year. There's no stability & sustainability for staff and clients.
- This is not Marlborough Park Centre – Loma held there. This does apply to the Loma Wed. and Fri. Senior Clubs. If we had funds, we could improve our social activities for these seniors who range in age from 50 to 93.
- The monies for philanthropy in the community are going to organizations that have large banks of fundraisers and public relations staff (e.g. University of Calgary, Mount Royal College, Calgary Health Foundation, SAIT, the Zoo, the cancer causes, etc.). We need access to capable fundraisers. We are not fiscally competitive in securing well-qualified fund raising talent.
- Increase in rent, utilities, taxes and staffing and a drop in income due to decreased gaming income such as casinos has placed the downtown house in a running deficit position. Raising costs to individuals, especially members, also appears to have an effect on income as individuals have less spare money. Increasing demands on other sources of income for nonprofits is also dropping as more of them become dependent on grants, gaming income and private donations.
- With the casino funds, presently we have no financial difficulties. Without those funds, the center would fold.
- We rent our center from the Town of Picture Butte. Two years ago our rent increased 14%. This coming year it has been suggested the Town may increase it by 20%. Our sources of revenue cannot keep up with increases of this magnitude. Our suggestion: Easy access to Provincial grants that would cover some portion or even all facility user costs.
- Our biggest concern is paying the rent and other things to keep it going like kitchen stuff, cleaning supplies. Create very little from bingo to survive and donations.
- Our main concern is due to lack of transportation to our meeting place. We as a club come from different localities and those being our age are unable to drive to our club meetings. If we cannot get any help in transportation, our club will slowly disappear. What suggestions do you have? Our membership age consists from 65-94.
- Because of declining attendance and workers, we had to discontinue Bingo games June 8, 2006. It did pay all utilities until this year. We are going backwards without much cushion in the event of breakdown on maintenance repairs.
- Our main activity is providing volunteers to the Family Leisure Centre in fundraising activities to support the facility.
- One of the difficulties we may have – our club now goes to 5 or 6 dinner theatres in a year. We hire a bus and the costs have gone way up. We charge the members 1/3 of the cost but this may have to be increased.

- No accountability to funder or other stakeholders for past number of years. Ineffective board and executive director. Funding terminated. Programming decreased – one full-time staff member (executive director). Hope for recognition of work of new board and executive director to rebuild centre from ground up.
- “Rent of meeting space” clubs have had to close due to increases in rent. Community centers have difficulty keeping their rents reasonable. We rent facilities at \$3,000 per year + GST, also pay a membership in the community association of \$11.25 per member.
- We have to manage with what we have, but a few lessons, gymnastics, singing, dancing or even a little trip occasionally would be appreciated – these are just a few of our interests but most of our members are eager to learn.
- Bingo & casino is down quite a bit compared to 5 years ago. If we had more funding we could offer more programs.
- Casino and rental.
- Our centre is run completely by volunteers.
- We meet at Citadel Pointe Club rooms (a townhouse complex) and because the writer is a member of the Board we get very reasonable rent. We meet every Thursday afternoon for 10 months and charge \$25 per year for membership. We operate on membership money and could not meet if we did not have this facility. We have no funds left over from year to year.
- We would like to be able to subsidize the use of a bus to take members on outings.
- The City’s budget for our Centre has been cut back considerably over the years. City staff time has been reduced and some staff are shared between the two Lions Seniors Recreation Centres. The Central Lions Seniors Association has had to increase fees and to spend thousands of volunteer hours on fund-raising to cover the deficit in funding. Because of its recreational focus, the Central Lions Seniors Association does not qualify for FCSS funding and therefore outreach and social support programs are not available at our Centre. Our suggestion would be a cost-sharing between the provincial and municipal governments and seniors organizations to ensure the long-term viability of senior centers and the provision of recreational programs and social support services at all the centers.
- Number of people attending bingos is down. We have applied for a casino date.

## Appendix A - Organizations that responded to the survey

(those organizations that submitted their responses online are indicated with an asterisk (\*))

(those organizations that submitted their responses both in writing and online are indicated with two asterisks (\*\*) – where online responses differed from the written responses received, the written responses were given precedence.)

- Abbotsfield Stop In Centre (Edmonton)
- Acadia Valley Sunset Club
- \*Acme Seniors' Association
- Airdrie Over 50 Club
- Alberta Pioneer Association of Hanna & District/Hanna Senior Circle
- Amisk Senior Society Centre
- Ardmore Senior Citizen Step-in Centre
- \*Ardrossan Seniors Association
- Ashmont Senior Citizens Club
- ASSIST Community Seniors Centre (Edmonton)
- Athabasca & District Senior Citizens Society
- Banff Trail Seniors
- Barrhead & District Senior Citizens Society
- Beacon Heights Seniors Club (Edmonton)
- Beaverlodge Senior Citizens Association
- Bellecrest Seniors
- Bellis Golden Age Club
- Berwyn Golden Age Club
- \*Beverly Active Seniors Society (Edmonton)
- Big Horn Golden Age Club
- Big Valley Drop-In Centre
- \*Blackfalds Seniors Citizens Cheemo Club
- Blackfoot & District Golden Slipper Association
- Blairmore Seniors Club
- \*Bow Cliff Seniors (Calgary)
- Boyle & District Seniors Association
- Brooks & District Seniors Outreach Society
- Bragg Creek Snowbirds Seniors Fellowship
- Breton Golden Age Club
- Bruderheim Senior Citizens Club
- Buck Lake Senior Citizen Drop-In Centre
- Burns Senior Centre
- \*Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Association
- \*Calgary Seniors Resource Society (CSRS)
- Calmar & District Senior Citizens Club
- Camrose Senior Centre
- Canmore Seniors Association
- Carbon New Horizons Group
- Caroline & District Senior Citizens Drop In Centre
- Carstairs & Community Half-Century Association
- Castor Golden Circle

- Centennial Senior Citizens Club (St. Paul)
- Central Lions Senior Citizens Recreation Centre (Edmonton)
- Cereal Golden Centre Group
- Champion Pioneer (Over 50) Club
- Chauvin Seniors Drop In
- Cherry Grove Senior Citizens Club
- \*Circle of Red Deer Seniors Society
- Citadel 55+ Club
- Clairmont and Area Seniors Club
- Clandonald Friendship Centre
- Claresholm Senior Citizens Drop In Centre
- Clive Senior Circle
- Club 60 Roses (Legal)
- Club Alouette Falher
- Club des Pionniers (Donnelly)
- Club du Bon Temps (St. Isidore)
- Coaldale Senior Citizens Centre
- Coalhurst 55 Plus Social Society
- Confederation Park Senior Citizens Centre (Calgary)
- Coronation Town & Country Golden Age Club
- Cremona Gold & Silver Society
- Crooked Lake Seniors
- Crossfield Golden Key Club
- Daysland Senior Center
- DeBolt Pioneer Centre
- Delburne Drop In Association
- \*Delia and District Senior Citizens
- Dewberry Senior Citizens Association
- Didsbury Seniors Support Services
- Donalda Coulee Friendship Club
- Downtown Friendship Centre (Calgary)
- Eckville & District Friendship Club
- Edmonton Chinese Alliance Church Senior Ministry
- Elk Point Pioneer Circle Seniors
- Elnora Pioneer Club
- Endmoor Drop In Society
- Entwistle Jubilee Seniors
- Evansburg Senior Citizens Society
- Family Leisure Centre Seniors Club (Calgary)
- Fairview Golden Age Society
- \*Fort Assiniboine Friendship Club & Museum
- Fort MacLeod Senior Citizens Welcome Mat
- \*Fort McMurray Golden Years Society
- Galahad Seniors Centre
- Gibbons Seniors Twilight Club
- Golden Age Club of Forestburg Alberta

- \*Grande Prairie & Area - Seniors Outreach
- \*Greater Forest Lawn Senior Citizens' Society (Calgary)
- Griffith Memorial Centre (Calgary)
- Grimshaw New Horizons Drop Inc Center
- Hardisty Social Club
- Haysboro 50 Plus Club (Calgary)
- Heisler Senior Friendship Club
- Heritage Seniors (Calgary)
- Heritage Seniors Stop-In Centre (Edmonton)
- \*\*Hinton Good Companions
- High River Senior Friendship Centre
- Highwood Seniors
- Holden Seniors Club
- Huddlestun Senior Centre
- \*Hungarian Seniors Club (Calgary)
- Hythe Golden Age Craft Centre
- Inca Senior Citizens Society
- \*\*Inglewood Silver Threads (Calgary)
- Interlake Golden Age Club
- Islay 50-100 Club
- Kerby Centre (Calgary)
- K.I.K. Senior Citizen Club
- Kozy Korner Community Centre (Lacombe)
- Lamont New Horizons Drop In Centre
- Le club de l'amitié (Calgary)
- Leslieville Leisure Club
- \*Lethbridge Senior Citizens Organization
- Linden Care & Share Society
- Linaria Senior Citizens Association
- Little Beaver "Hi-U" Senior Centre
- Live Wires Senior Club (Calgary)
- Loma 50+ Club
- Loughheed Senior Welcome Club
- Luther Place Seniors (Edmonton)
- Manville Senior Citizens Golden Age Club
- Marwayne Seniors Society
- Milk River & District Senior Citizens
- Mirror Jolly Seniors Society
- Morinville Seniors Rendezvous Centre
- Mulhurst Bay Seniors
- Mundare Senior Citizen Club
- Myrnam Senior Citizens Club
- Nampa Golden Pioneers
- Native Seniors' Centre (Edmonton)
- Northgate Lions Senior Citizens Recreation Centre (Edmonton)
- Onoway Golden Club

- Operation Friendship Seniors Society (Edmonton)
- Oyen & District Senior Citizens Association
- Parkside Manor Seniors
- Peace River Senior Citizens Club
- Picture Butte & District Happy Old Timers
- Pioneer House Club 50 (Edmonton)
- Plamondon Pioneer Club
- Polish-Canadian Seniors Club
- Ponoka Drop In Centre
- Prairie Pioneers
- Provost Seniors Drop In Centre
- \*Raymond & District Seniors Club
- Readymade 50 + Club
- Rimbey Drop In Centre
- Riverview Senior Citizens
- Rosalind & District Seniors Society
- Rosedale Seniors & Bridge Club
- Rosemary New Horizons
- Rycroft Merry Pioneers
- Ryley Sunshine Club
- Seba Beach Seniors Golden Age Club
- SAGE (Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton)
- St. Paul Seniors Club
- Sedgewick Seniors Club
- Senior Citizens Club 55 of Edmonton
- Senior Citizens' Club of Drayton Valley
- Senior Citizens Opportunity Neighborhood Association
- Senior Citizens Society of Stony Plain
- Senior Citizens Star Centre
- Senior Citizens Welcome Mat (Fort MacLeod)
- \*Seniors Outreach
- \*Seniors Outreach Network Society (Edmonton)
- Senior Social Centre Club of Eaglesham
- Sherwood Park 55 Plus Club
- Slave Lake Pioneers
- Smith Half Century Plus Association
- Southwest Seniors Club (Calgary)
- South-west Seniors' Outreach Society (Edmonton)
- Springbank Heritage Club (Calgary)
- Stavely Golden Age
- Stirling Seniors
- Strathmore Happy Gang Society
- Strome Senior Citizens' Club
- Sundre West Country Centre
- Sun Valley Pioneer Drop-In Centre
- Sylvan Lake Seniors Association

- The Drumheller Pioneer Trail Society
- The Hussar Sundowners Senior Centre
- The Red Deer Senior Citizens Downtown House
- The Tees 50+
- Thorhild Golden Age Drop In Centre
- Thorsby Senior Citizen
- Tilley Friendship Society
- Tofield Golden Club
- Trochu & District Seniors Drop-In Center
- Twilight Club of La Glace
- Veiner Centre (Medicine Hat)
- Vermilion Senior Citizen Centre
- Viking Senior Citizens
- Village Square Seniors
- Wainwright Prairie Rose Seniors Association
- Wandering River Senior Citizens Drop-In Centre
- Warburg Senior Citizen's Centre
- \*Westend Seniors Activity Centre (Edmonton)
- West Hillhurst Go-Getters (Calgary)
- West Jasper Sherwood Senior Citizens Club (Edmonton)
- \*Westside Seniors Service Centre (Calgary)
- Wetaskiwin Senior Citizens Society
- Wild Rose Seniors
- Willingdon Senior Citizens Association
- Youngstown 50 Plus Club

In addition to the completed surveys from 202 identified organizations, seven completed surveys were received from individuals who chose to identify neither themselves nor the organizations they represent.

## Appendix B - Written submissions received

### Senior Advisory Council Meeting on Funding of Senior Centre

*Presented by Brenda Wong (Seniors Coordinator)*

*Community Services Department*

*Edmonton, Alberta*

*Nov 8, 2006*

1. The City of Edmonton has been a strong support of senior centres for many years. As stated in numerous federal and provincial reports, senior centres provide an important role in:
  - *promoting the health and well-being of seniors;*
  - *act at a "community hub" to provide and link seniors and their families to services;*
  - *provide necessary supports to allow seniors to age in place/ remain in the community and;*
  - *greatly contribute to seniors' quality of life.*They currently provide a wide range of services including recreation, health and social services. The mandate of senior centres has evolved and expanded over the years to respond to community needs. They are an important service in the community and will continue to be as the population of older adults' increases and senior remain in the community.
2. The urgent funding needs of senior centres have been recognized by the City of Edmonton for more than 2 years. A significant concern is the increasing operating costs of senior centres. These rising costs have created "hardship" for many of the senior centres in Edmonton. These costs include utilities, telephone, repairs/ maintenance, insurance, rent, janitorial service, leasehold improvements and amortization.
3. To address the needs in 2006, the City of Edmonton provided an interim grant of \$80,000 for Senior Centres (for utility/ insurance costs) and conducted two studies. We are willing to share the information we have collected with you today and have provided copies of the two reports.
4. We feel that a long term funding strategy for Seniors Centres is required. We support your efforts to address the funding needs provincially through the survey and this meeting today. We are interested in working with you, hearing the results from the consultation process and learning about your recommendations.
5. Other provincial governments are implementing programs to support aging in place (i.e. B.C. grant program). It may also be timely for the provincial government to explore a similar program in Alberta to encourage community-based innovative projects.
6. On behalf of Councillor Sloan (who oversees Edmonton's City Council's Seniors Portfolio), She would like to stress the urgency to establish grant program for Senior Centres now.

#### Two Attachments:

- Community Services Department "Senior Centres Building Operating Costs Funding Strategy", July 2006.
- Hargreaves and Associates, "Edmonton Community Services Seniors Centre Funding Strategy", June 2006

**Subject: Funding for Seniors Centres**

Hello,

I would like to support many peoples' opinions that seniors centres need more funding to properly pay staff, have up to date computers and available, flexible meeting space for the older adults who live in their neighborhoods. The centres that serve areas with culturally and linguistically diverse populations need more and specialized staff than the centres who don't have these characteristics.

I am a public health nurse working in the health promotion field with seniors in the multicultural east area of Calgary. I work in partnership with other agencies that serve seniors. We help seniors make connections to each other and to existing resources and services.

Most of the seniors we work with are immigrants and they do not speak English or have knowledge about our health and social systems. They want to meet together in their neighborhoods to learn English, exercise, socialize, hear about improving their health and do all the things that other seniors want to do. Most have very little income. It is difficult to find suitable, low or no-cost places for them to meet.

There is only 1 seniors centre north of 50 Ave. SE ( Greater Forest Lawn) and it has recently been opening it's doors ( with our encouragement) to some of the immigrant seniors that live in the neighborhoods around the centre. However, they have limited space and staff to meet their needs.

Some of the barriers that I have noticed include:

- the centre does not have an outreach worker that speaks a language other than English;
- they do not have funds to engage even a part time or casual outreach worker that speaks the languages needed;
- the current outreach worker does not have access or funds for interpretation;
- there is not enough space for the various groups to meet as all of the spaces are booked for pre designated programs. Some of these programs would be suitable for non-English speaking seniors but there would need to be some mentoring first, on both sides, regarding reciprocal integration;
- the existing staff are too busy and inexperienced to do this mentoring, although they try.

Please consider the needs of the population that the centre is meant to serve and fund the appropriate resources. Some fund raising by the centre could still be done for extras but should not be expected for funding essential resources.

Thankyou for soliciting our ideas and opinions to improve services for older adults through seniors centres. I will send this same memo to the MLA's in the areas I serve.

Sincerely,

Jill Sharpe  
Seniors Resource Nurse

Dear Honourable Yvonne Fritz:

The Alberta Council on Aging held an open dialogue about the function and funding of Seniors Centers in Calgary. I am writing this letter to advocate for more funding in order that these Seniors Center have the capacity and the resources to work more effectively and efficiently with our growing senior population and in particular our aging immigrant and refugee population.

My role as a community social worker is to assist immigrant and refugee seniors in accessing resources in the community and for them to develop a greater knowledge of the services available in Calgary.

We recognize the need for Seniors Centers and the importance of being inclusive for all seniors. However, at the Greater Forest Lawn Senior Center there are a number of limitations to the services provided for immigrant senior, keeping in mind the limited resources they have. Some of the challenges and barriers that I have seen in the past few years are as follows:

1. The Greater Forest Lawn Seniors have tried to be open and welcoming to many of our immigrant and seniors from different cultural backgrounds. However, they do not have funds for interpretation and translation. Not having interpretation means that the immigrant seniors do not feel their needs can be addressed in a meaningful way.
2. The Outreach worker in the past feels she cannot reach out to the different senior cultural groups because of language and cultural barriers.

In order to support this Center we have to help build the capacity of these organizations so that they can respond actively to the growing ageing population from diverse cultural background in the community. Very little effort has been made to address the other side of the equation which is building the capacity and funding of ethno-specific services to provide response and professional services.

Please call me at 974-3128 if you would like to discuss this further.

Sincerely

Sybil Braganza  
Community Social Worker

## **Submission to the Seniors Advisory Council – November 2006**

Thank you to the Seniors Advisory Council for taking the time to analyze the situation with Seniors Centres.

My name is Janice Monfries and I am the Exec. Director of Westend Seniors Activity Centre – a large senior centre in Edmonton which has been in existence for almost 30 years.

Three years ago I was elected to represent large senior centres in this region on a committee that the ACA received funding for entitled SCAN (Senior centre advisory network). This committee began with great hopes because there was at that time representatives on the committee from Medicine Hat, Red Deer, Camrose, Lethbridge, Wetaskewan, Calgary, Edmonton etc. Unfortunately due a lack of clear structure and direction – many of the larger senior centres' Executive Directors' withdrew from this committee, however I remained on with a personal commitment to utilize this opportunity to increase awareness and therefore support for senior centres in Alberta. One of the first things I did in this respect, was write a submission to the Minister of Seniors entitled "Senior Centres – Serving the Needs of Alberta Seniors" which was adopted by the ACA and then submitted to the Minister early this year. As well, another initiative that my staff and I (which included a Gerontologist) also prepared, was a survey which was distributed throughout Alberta by the ACA which addressed concerns regarding senior centre's sustainability.

At the meeting I attended with ACA and the Minister, Minister Fritz indicated that she would ask the Seniors Advisory Council to look into this issue – and so I am grateful that the Seniors Advisory Council is now reviewing this issue. It is timely because at this point there no longer a SCAN committee – and so many senior centres I have spoken with feel that the Seniors Advisory council is now the most effective means to provincially represent our concerns to the Minister of Seniors.

At the time I wrote the submission to the Minister – my agency was in the midst of raising money to build a senior friendly larger activity centre for seniors. I'm happy to share with you that we were able to achieve that goal and just celebrated our first year in our new building.

We built the building – and the seniors have come. In the last year alone we have doubled our membership – and now have up to 2000 seniors registered with us. Just yesterday – we had 1000 seniors at our centre – coming to get a flu shot – having some lunch at our cafeteria and connecting with other seniors.

Our agency has doubled the services offered to seniors – and in response the number of seniors we serve has over doubled

Unfortunately – our funding is the same as it has been for years. The only funding senior centres get is a grant from the City of Edmonton for our Outreach program (which includes money to pay for the hiring of a Social Worker) and a small operating grant in the amount of \$15,000.

Our cost of operating our building – just for utilities and maintenance is up to \$100,000./year (\$25,000 for utilities, \$11,000 insurance, \$525,000 for general maintenance). We cannot even afford to hire a fulltime caretaker – so a mentally handicapped senior has offered to come in 2 days/week to help us with equipment set up and light mopping etc.

We have relied heavily on volunteers to operate our centre – in fact I have at least 6 unpaid staff persons (which are seniors) who are responsible for reception, bookkeeping, hall rentals, cafeteria maintenance, and caretaking.

Unfortunately as the seniors age – their ability to commit to “unpaid” staff positions become severely limited and in reality it is not reasonable to expect to seniors to commit to unpaid staff positions.

At the same time – it is very difficult for me to recruit and maintain staff – because the funding is so limited – and so I cannot compete with the private sector.

Historically we know that in times when the Province is in an economic boom – Social service agencies take the biggest hit – especially because we cannot compete in the areas of staffing and wages.

And I can't charge more for our services to the seniors – because as our operating costs of sky rocketed – so have the costs of living for seniors. Seniors on fixed incomes are trying to cope with their increased expenses and so they cannot afford to pay more for the services we offer.

And yet– a senior centre can play a critical part in a seniors life. A senior centre – if effectively operated – is a hub for seniors. This is a place where seniors can feel welcome and safe– and know that they can connect with other seniors, They can come to our centre and learn information about services to seniors – or participate in activities that encourage the sustainment of their wellness. This includes physical and mental activities. Our MOTO is Active For Life”. And we focus on the 5 E's for seniors – Engagement, enjoyment, enhancement, extend, energize - This is a place where seniors can feel connected – at time when they are coping with serious changes in their life status – such as leaving the work force – losing family members – finding themselves alone.

In our centre – we try to provide many supports for seniors including support groups for caregivers, for grieving, for isolation. We also operate a registry of home maintenance assistance where we try to coordinate volunteers to help seniors with yard maintenance – and even transportation issues

We also run a Collective kitchen program – because we identified the fact that many seniors on a fixed income and living alone – suffer serious nutritional deficits –so we bring them to the centre – and collectively they cook 7 meals that they can take home and freeze – but also our Social worker can support those seniors who have lost motivation to cook for themselves.

We have DATS dropping off seniors for the day – and these seniors spend their day with us – either volunteering, socializing or participating in structured activities.

Studies have proven that individuals need to feel connected. Throughout a life time – a person is connected through the school systems, work systems and when they retire – many seniors feel disconnected and unsupported – and this contributes to their unwellness and their reliance on the healthcare system – a very expensive support – for their ability to cope.

A senior centre can increase the wellness of seniors – this has been proven. If I had time I could share the most amazing testimonials for you of how effective a senior centre can be in increasing the wellness of seniors. Everything from helping seniors who feel lost and depressed finding a new meaning and purpose to their lives – to actually witnessing physical and mental improvements in seniors who became involved at the centres. Without a doubt, effective senior centres can save the Province enormous money and can lessen the strain on our healthcare system.

As we move into an aging population – the Province must revisit their priorities in supporting programs and services that are community based and that encourage the sustainment of wellness and independence amongst seniors.

In the year 2000 I wrote my first Open Letter to the Capital Health Authority – to try to increase awareness particularly in terms of acknowledging the many health support programs being offered at Senior Centres. I would like to submit that to you today as well, because although that paper is 6 years old – in reading it – not only does it highlight today's reality – but the fact that the numbers of programs and services that we offer – is now double what we offered 6 years ago – should emphasize how the role of Senior centres has expanded in the past years

Imagine how much more effective Senior Centres can continue to become in supporting seniors – if the Province begins to financially support their existence in the communities?.

In sum, Senior centres are the ideal vehicles for the delivery of seniors wellness programs. To save money - the Province needs to spend money by empowering community based senior centres through the provision of financial support.



**EDMONTON  
SENIORS  
COORDINATING  
COUNCIL**

Nov. 8, 2006

Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta  
Ad Hoc Committee Reviewing Alberta's Seniors Centres  
c/o Alberta Seniors and Community Supports  
600, Standard Life Centre  
10405 Jasper Avenue N.W.  
Edmonton, AB  
T5J 4R7

Attn: Diane Caleffi, Committee Chair

Dear Ms. Caleffi:

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) represents senior-serving organizations in Edmonton by addressing priority issues through shared planning, coordination and collaboration. One such priority issue is the ability of senior centres to financially sustain their operations. The ESCC coordinated the efforts of several senior centre executive directors to prepare the attached submission which will serve to inform the committee on the challenges that senior centres are facing and to urge the Province to take a more active role supporting these community hubs. The group discussed and endorsed several concepts which represent a collective view of the situation faced by senior centres and there are recommended solutions. On behalf of the group, we are pleased to submit this to the committee for your consideration.

The attached submission presents the views of the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and those Edmonton Senior Centres who have signed on the attached page.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheila Hallett, Executive Director  
Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council

#308, 10310 Jasper Ave, Edmonton, AB T5J 2W4 P: 780-423-5635 F: 780-428-1930  
executivedirector@seniorscouncil.net memberservices@seniorscouncil.net

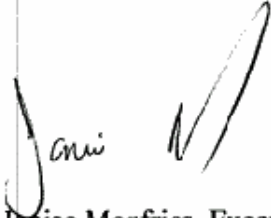
**www.seniorscouncil.net**



Ursula Altmann, Executive Director  
Edmonton Seniors Centre



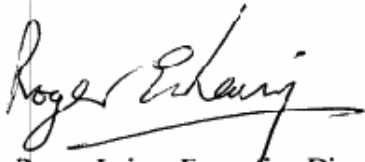
Mary Anne Jaedicke, Executive Director  
South East Edmonton Seniors Association  
(SEESA)



Janice Monfries, Executive Director  
Westend Seniors Activity Centre



Donna Watson, Executive Director  
Calder Seniors Drop-In Society



Roger Laing, Executive Director  
Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton  
(SAGE)



Gail Sopkow, Executive Director  
Operation Friendship



Cathy McLean, Executive Director  
Senior Citizens Opportunity Neighborhood  
Association (SCONA)



C.W. Jefferys Allen, Executive Director  
Strathcona Place Senior Citizen Centre

### **Senior Centre Funding in Relation to the Province of Alberta**

This past year, a number of studies have been completed addressing the needs of Seniors Centres including the City of Edmonton Community Services report on Senior Centres, the Alberta Council on Aging-Senior Centre study; the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council review as well as the Seniors Advisory Council – review in progress.

On Oct. 11, 2006 a meeting was held in which Executive Directors from Senior servicing agencies were invited once again to discuss current issues regarding sustainability of senior centres as defined by the City of Edmonton (Public facilities providing services targeted to persons over 55 years of age, established for the purpose of offering social and/or recreation activities). The recurring agreement is that Senior Centres are hubs in their communities—offering programs, services and educational opportunities which all combine to support seniors and enable them to remain in their community.

In addition, it was also acknowledged that the roles of senior centres throughout the Province of Alberta, have expanded in direct response to the increased numbers of seniors in the community. In fact many senior centres have become vehicles for the delivery of health and wellness programs as well.

This enhanced program delivery model for senior centres fits in well with the research that the Province of Alberta has completed with regards to the needs of seniors. As reflected in the 1999 Broda report entitled "*Healthy Aging: New Directions for Care*", one of the key recommendations was to "Establish healthy aging as a priority for government with a greater emphasis on promoting healthy lifestyle, prevention of illness and injury and empowerment and engagement of seniors".

Therefore in order for senior centres to be able to respond to this increased demand – it is necessary for the Government of Alberta to put forth a strategy that sees seniors centres receive direct funding support from the Province of Alberta. By enabling these agencies to support the healthy aging process of seniors, it is anticipated that the Government will also experience reduced demand on the health care system.

In summary, the following concepts were discussed and endorsed:

- 1) **That** Seniors' Centres are defined as public facilities providing services targeted to persons over 55 years of age, established for the purpose of offering social, recreation activities and continuing education programs and support services
- 2) **That** the number of seniors in the province is growing daily.
- 3) **That** Senior Centres serve as hubs in their communities providing social, recreational and continuing education programs and support services to seniors which empowers seniors to remain independent and self-reliant ;
- 4) **That** Senior Centres are increasingly being called upon to provide their buildings for community centered support services i.e. community health

programs such as flu immunization sites and neighborhood chat programs, continuing education classes for all ages, and community recreational programs

- 5) **That** Senior Centres are increasing the services that they provide in response to the evolving needs of the senior population but are facing challenges in maintaining staff with the limited financial support they currently receive. This puts an added burden on seniors who volunteer at these centres who are often filling in for paid positions which cannot be filled
- 6) **That** Senior Centres are facing increased operating costs (utilities, janitorial, maintenance, audit and insurance costs) deficits.
- 7) **That** the Province needs to take a more active role supporting provincial recommendations such as those cited in the Broda Report of 1999 entitled *Healthy Aging: New Directions For Care*.
- 8) **That** the demand on long-term care facilities and health services can be positively affected by the increased role of Senior centres – thereby saving the Province money.
- 9) **That** a provincial strategy be initiated to directly fund Senior Centres for their operating costs thereby allowing Centres to continue to provide the social supports that help seniors stay in the community. A model for this proposal could be the Alberta Agricultural Initiative Program which provides funds to not-for-profit agricultural societies to encourage quality of life in the agricultural community.
- 10) **That** an outcomes model be designed to help measure the benefits of providing support services to seniors in the community.

**Presentation  
to**

**Seniors Advisory  
Council for Alberta**

**Alberta Council  
on Aging**

**Public Consultation  
Calgary  
November 22, 2006**

**Prepared by  
Frank Hoebarth  
(403) 282-7986**

**Information Provided  
by Seniors and  
Senior's Centres  
November 14, 2006**

## Executive Summary

### Recommendations:

- Staff Costs
  - Operating costs
  - Capital investment
  - Criteria
  - System
1. That immediate Provincial support be made available to seniors' centres specifically for staffing. This support should include funding for staffing both to enhance existing salaries and benefits and develop new programs
  2. That immediate Provincial support be made available for general operating costs of senior centres. This support should take the form of a general sustaining grant as well as operating allowance for specific programs.
  3. That the Provincial Government provide capital investment funds to senior centres. These funds should be available to meet both large and small capital needs of senior centres.
  4. That the Seniors Advisory Council and the Alberta Council on Aging work jointly with senior's centres to develop a funding model which enhances the operation of senior's centres without negative impacts on other current funding.
  5. That the Seniors Advisory Council and the Alberta Council on Aging work jointly with senior's centres to develop simple program criteria for funding of centres.

### 1. Background

- A common expression of concern and solution

### 2. Values

- wisdom of seniors
- guardians of community values

### 3. Cost Benefit

- benefits to seniors and the community demonstrate a positive return on investment due to the use of volunteers, donations and fundraising

### 4. Benefits

- social/emotional; needs of seniors are met through centres
- health system needs are met or reduced through centres
- general public often receive benefits at centres

### 5. Opportunities

- Provincial Government can demonstrate equity among currently funded programs
- Provincial government can demonstrate its recognition and valuing of senior citizens
- Provincial Government can promote long term planning and stability for seniors centres

### 6. Priorities

- Centres need funds for
  - o Staff wages and benefits
  - o Operating, developing and sustaining programs

o Capital costs

7. **Delivery Systems**

- FCSS is a current funding mechanism but is limited in several ways
- Third party, such as Alberta Council on Aging, avoids a major limitation on FCSS creates an input mechanism for seniors centres
- Direct provincial grants may place current FCSS funding at risk simply exchanging one form of funding for another

8. **Criteria**

- Criteria for any funding system need to be clear and simple
- A registry of eligible seniors centres needs to be put in place
- Per capita funding was mentioned but not fully discussed

Presentation to  
Seniors Advisory Council for Alberta  
Alberta Council on Aging  
November 22, 2006

**Background**  
A common  
expression of  
concerns and  
solutions.

I am Frank Hoebarth. I am presenting on behalf of many senior centres and seniors who met on November 14, 2006, to discuss their concerns and needs. The centres are confronting a growing seniors' population and an awareness of a future marked by a more competitive funding environment. Thank you for your commitment to hear from seniors what their centres' needs are. Please ask questions as you wish during the course of the presentation.

It is not necessary to highlight the growing seniors' population as the "baby boomers" are entering this population group. The seniors' population is noted for its commitment to the democratic process through its voting record and yet often lacks the support of democratic institutions as centres confronts numerous and growing demands for service.

**Values:**  
• wisdom

Why then should senior centres be funded as important community facilities?

• guardians of values  
• community values

Let me begin with a brief quote from the late Pope John Paul II. He stated that:

"Elderly people help us to see human affairs with greater wisdom, because life's vicissitudes have brought them knowledge and maturity. They are guardians of our collective memory, and thus privileged interpreters of that body of ideals and common values which support and guide life in society."

By extension, the same values of wisdom and knowledge tempered with experience find a community expression through senior's centres. In turn, through support of these centres, the community expresses its recognition of its ideals and values.

**Cost/Benefit**  
• voluntarism  
• donations  
• fundraising

These values are also expressed through the voluntarism and financial commitments of seniors contributing to their centres. Centres would not operate without the valuable volunteer work of seniors looking after seniors through programs such as grocery shopping. These volunteer hours are a hidden benefit for centres which should also be costed out. The questionnaire (Q5) asked about donations from individuals but needs, as well, to value "donations in kind" to recognize the total contributions to operation of a centre.

To meet their needs centres engage in a variety of fund raising activities, many of which are noted in your questionnaire. These fund raising activities are labour intensive. Many application processes are complex. The applications often do not produce results, leading to frustration and a feeling of helplessness on the part of the applicants. Fund raising has become increasingly competitive given the number of groups now trying to meet the needs of shrinking publicly supported benefits and the increasing

size of deficits experienced by centres as a result.

When looked at in the context of voluntarism and private fund raising compared to public contributions the return on investment is a significant benefit to the community and seniors specifically.

**Benefits:**

- social/emotional needs
- health system
- general public

The benefit to seniors takes a variety of forms. While the physical facility and human resource costs are usual financial considerations, as noted in question seven, the benefit is less obvious. The non-physical aspects of a centre are its heart and soul. Programs provide a place for companionship and human interaction which helps combat loneliness and depression while challenging the human spirit to extend itself. It is almost counter intuitive but centres do assist seniors to remain independent and thus lower the costs associated with other public institutions such as health care. Centres often provide services such as flu and foot clinics and education courses that may benefit non-members or non-seniors. Kerby Centre, for example, with a membership of three-to-four thousand serves upwards of 30,000 in a given year. Its facilities are used by a variety of community organizations including some in the multi-cultural community.

**Opportunities**

- equity of Provincial programs
- Provincial recognition and valuing of seniors
- Stable and long-term planning

The current consultation provides an opportunity for the Provincial government to review the costs and benefits and return on investment of seniors centres. It is also an opportunity to place the funding of seniors centres in the same context as other organizations such as agricultural societies which are recipients of direct funding. It is an opportunity for the Provincial Government to recognize the value of senior centres to the seniors and the community. There is an opportunity to support centres in long term, rather than year-to-year planning and create some level of stability and sustainability.

**Priorities**

- capital
- staffing
- operating

The above highlights a number of the concerns and values placed on seniors' centres and outlined by the group of seventeen assembled on November 14. A brief priority setting exercise led to a list of concerns remarkably similar for both urban and rural centres in attendance. While it is tempting to create a top-ten list, I will focus on three areas.

Capital funding is a concern for most centres. Even though many centres are owned by third parties, centres have capital needs for equipment. Computers, office equipment and program equipment often fall within the capital category. While the Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) may assist with a limited amount of operating costs it is precluded from supporting capital expenditures.

Staffing also is a major and indeed the primary priority. Centres operate in a competitive environment and frequently lose staff to more lucrative positions outside the seniors social service network. Centres are non-profit entities and, as in the case of most non profits, generally offer lower than average salaries. Loss of staff forces the centres to expend scarce resources in recruitment and hiring. In addition to wages/salaries, the centres are not able to offer attractive benefits packages. Training also becomes an issue both to maintain and enhance ongoing competence.

A growing need was identified for increased staffing in order to both develop and implement programs for the new generation of seniors. Centres recognize that the baby boomers will impose new demands for programs for which centres are currently ill equipped to offer.

Operations is another area where funds are desperately needed. Costs for utilities and insurance, including liability insurance, have increased dramatically over the past several years leaving centres scrambling to offset those expenses. Maintenance costs also are increasing especially in a tight labour market.

Delivery systems  
- FCSS limits  
- third party  
- direct provincial grants

There is an argument for provincial funding of seniors' centres. The group also felt that consideration needs to be given to how funds could be provided to centres. Three models were discussed all of which have strengths and weaknesses.

Currently, many centres receive some level of FCSS funding. This has proved to be a benefit to the centres and the community. FCSS has the benefit of being an existing system with regulations and procedures already in place. However, there are limits and concerns about FCSS funding. FCSS priorities are determined at the local level and must respond to a wide variety of demands from the community. Therefore, the Province is limited in setting priorities. The FCSS funding base is limited by two levels of government and is usually fully committed which places limits on the creation of new programs. FCSS also does not allow duplication of funding provided by another level of government.

As noted earlier, FCSS cannot provide for capital expenditure. Centres expressed concern that additional funding not adversely affect their current FCSS funding but rather supplement that funding and meet specific priorities as noted above.

In part to avoid the risks of loss of FCSS funds if costs currently covered by FCSS were also funded by the Province some consideration was given to the use of a third party. In Calgary this has been called a "fiscal agent". In this concept funds would flow through a third party such as the Alberta Council on Aging (ACA) and would not be directly attributable to the Province. This concept would also have the benefit of supporting ACA as a voice of and for seniors in partnership with the Province. This concept is similar to the FCSS program which has the Province working with the local community through the FCSS Boards. Difficulties with the concept include concerns of equity and availability of funds.

The third system considered was direct Provincial Government funding. As noted earlier this could be done in a way similar to the funding of agriculture societies with concomitant benefits to the four hundred + or - seniors' centres in the province. Direct funding does run the risk of duplicating FCSS funding and increasing costs related to establishing and vetting an application process.

**Criteria**  
• clear  
• simple  
• registered seniors' centres  
• per capita

There was some discussion as well about the need to have clear criteria for any funding system proposed. Any application process should be simple and user friendly, obviating the need for extensive time investment from already busy individuals. It was felt that a registry of seniors' centres would also need to be created and that some accountability/evaluative mechanism should be put in place.

There was only a brief discussion of a per capita criteria being utilized. This concept did not get broad exposure nor support.

**Recommendations:**  
• Staffing costs  
• Operating costs  
• Capital investment  
• Criteria  
• System

The group proposes the following recommendations:

1. That immediate Provincial support be made available to seniors' centres specifically for staffing.

This support should include funding for staffing both to enhance existing salaries and benefits and develop new programs

2. That immediate Provincial support be made available for general operating costs of senior centres.

This support should take the form of a general sustaining grant as well as operating allowance for specific programs.

3. That the Provincial Government provide capital investment funds to senior centres.

These funds should be available to meet both large and small capital needs of senior centres.

4. That the Seniors Advisory Council and the Alberta Council on Aging work jointly with senior's centres to develop a funding model which enhances the operation of senior's centres without negative impacts on other current funding.

5. That the Seniors Advisory Council and the Alberta Council on Aging work jointly with senior's centres to develop simple program criteria for funding of centres.

Thank you for your courage in moving forward on this issue of funding for senior's centres. It has taken both initiatives and foresight to reach this stage. It will require commitment and diligence in the future to ensure adequate and equitable funding of seniors centres. On behalf of the gathering in Calgary, I thank you.