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SIX THOMPSON PROJECTS RECEIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE! INVESTMENT

THOMPSON—Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade Minister Scott Smith has announced that six projects in Thompson will share \$333,505 through the province's Neighbourhoods Alive! initiative.

"These projects will result in housing and homeless shelter improvements, park renewal and enhanced training and recreational opportunities for youth," said Smith.

The unique small grants fund that received \$50,000 allows the Thompson Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation to fund local community organizations for projects under \$5,000 that help build connections between neighbours.

"An excellent example of a funded project is the art program for children facilitated by a local artist which resulted in a mural being painted here in the school community room," said Water Stewardship Minister Steve Ashton, speaking at Wapanohk-Eastwood School here today on behalf of Smith.

The renewal corporation received an additional \$46,088 to renew the housing co-ordination project to educate homeowners, tenants and landlords about available resources, rights and responsibilities and to work to improve local housing conditions. The renewal corporation was instrumental in developing an initial 36-unit housing rehabilitation project and assisting homeowners and landlords in accessing financial support to improve their properties.

The corporation also received a total of \$18,114 for the redevelopment of Cliff Park. In partnership with the City of Thompson, this project has transformed an underdeveloped green space into a multi-use recreational resource for area residents. Improvements have included brush removal and the installation of new sod, lighting, picnic tables and other amenities.

The Thompson Homeless Shelter received \$31,000 for renovations to its facility. The renovations will include public washroom facilities, exterior landscaping and fencing that will provide greater accessibility and security for the shelter. The shelter accommodates up to 24 homeless people per evening.

The Thompson Boys and Girls Club received \$15,203 for recreational equipment and supplies to enhance its sports, music and craft activities. An average of 50 young people per evening participate in these activities.

Under Neighbourhoods Alive!'s Training Initiatives program, the Thompson Boys and Girls Club has also been approved for renewed funding in 2003 and 2004 totalling \$173,100 for its Youth Builders Program. Youth Builders develops the construction skills of Thompson youth who are unemployed, out of school and considered at risk. The 2004 program will provide training and classroom education to 20 youth. Out of 20 participants in the first year of the project, 19 found employment or re-entered the school system.

Neighbourhoods Alive! is a long-term, community-based, social and economic development strategy that supports and encourages community-driven revitalization efforts in specific neighbourhoods in Thompson, Winnipeg and Brandon. The strategy focuses on key areas such as housing and physical improvements, employment and training, education and recreation, safety, and crime prevention.

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