



October 1, 2009

**WINNIPEG BECOMES NEWEST MEMBER OF PROVINCEWIDE INITIATIVE THAT AIMS TO
BOOST QUALITY OF LIFE FOR SENIORS: IRVIN-ROSS**

October is Seniors' and Elders' Month in Manitoba

Winnipeg seniors will be able to lead more active, socially engaging and independent lives as the city joins 70 other communities across the province with the Age-Friendly Manitoba initiative, Healthy Living Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross, minister responsible for seniors, announced today during a Seniors' and Elders' Day celebration at the Franco-Manitoban Cultural Centre.

"I am pleased to welcome Winnipeg to the province's Age-Friendly Manitoba initiative, which has been improving the health, independence and well-being of older Manitobans across the province," said Irvin-Ross. "The timing couldn't be better as we proclaim October as Seniors' and Elders' Month in Manitoba, a time to celebrate Manitoba seniors and their accomplishments."

This year, the Seniors' and Elders' Day Community Planning Committee chose the theme Celebrating Age-Friendly. Manitoba has developed the Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative to support seniors in leading active, socially engaged, independent lives that contribute to healthy aging. This provincewide initiative works together with communities to enhance many programs and services to enhance the health, independence and well-being of all Manitoba seniors. The goal is to make Manitoba the most age-friendly province in Canada, said Irvin-Ross.

"I'm proud to announce that Winnipeg is recognizing the contribution made by older people by joining the Age-Friendly initiative. The Mayor's Seniors Advisory Committee has played a crucial role in creating the opportunity for Winnipeg to become an age-friendly city," said Mayor Sam Katz who attended today's event. "I've always said that our seniors' community is definitely one of our city's biggest assets."

The City of Winnipeg is joining the ranks of other Age-Friendly Cities around the world such as London, Moscow, Melbourne and Tokyo.

The Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative continues to gain momentum throughout the province with almost 70 communities engaged in the Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative, said the minister.

She also announced the province will once again provide \$132,000 to six key seniors serving organizations for age-friendly related projects. Since 2003-04 the province has supported senior organizations through its Advancing Age and Age-Friendly program with a total of \$676,000.

This funding supports projects which provide lifelong learning, transportation, intergenerational activities, nutritional information and opportunities for physical activity. Funding recipients

include the Aboriginal Seniors Resource Centre, Age and Opportunity, Creative Retirement Manitoba, la Fédération des aînés franco-manitobains, the Manitoba Association of Multi-Purpose Senior Centres and the Manitoba Society of Seniors.

Many communities in Manitoba are participating in Seniors' and Elders' Month by hosting an event to celebrate seniors. Events highlight intergenerational relationships, recognition of volunteers and promotion of active living. The online calendar of events can be viewed at www.seniors.cimnet.ca/cim/19.dhtm.

Seniors are one of the fastest-growing age groups in Canada with approximately 14 per cent of the population over 65. With 166,500 seniors, Manitoba has one of the highest per-capita populations in the country. Over half or 98,683 reside in the City of Winnipeg.

More information about Seniors' and Elders' Month is available at the Seniors' Information Line at 1-800-665-6565 or in Winnipeg at 945-6565.

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