

# Red Deer, Rocky snag supportive living grants

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Red Deer and Rocky Mountain House are getting some of the \$68.3 million in grants the province is handing out to build new supportive living facilities.

In Red Deer, \$10.2 million is being split between two projects — a 60-space project by Points West Living on Taylor Drive at 69th Street, and a 60-space project by Christenson Communities Ltd. in Timberstone Village off Hwy 11 east.

Each project will provide 40 supportive living level-four spaces, the highest level for supportive living, and 20 supportive living spaces for people with dementia.

In Rocky Mountain House, a \$3.2-million grant is going to Christenson Communities Ltd. to build 40 new supportive living spaces, 10 for dementia and 30 supportive living level four.

“Alberta Health Services has identified Red Deer as one of the communities that we need to pay attention to. The population here is aging and there are services that we know in the future will be missing,” said Seniors Associate Minister George VanderBurg, who was at the Golden Circle Seniors Centre on Wednesday to announce the Red Deer projects before going to Rocky.

“People are coming into our facilities now at about an average of 85 years old. They are coming into the facilities needing a higher level of care than we’ve seen in the past and that’s exactly what these new facilities will offer.”

VanderBurg said he will be back in two years to attend the grand opening of both facilities.

The \$68.3 million in Affordable Supportive Living Initiative grants will help build 920 new supportive living spaces in 10 projects across the province.

When asked if the spaces were coming to Red Deer because of the closure of Michener Centre, VanderBurg said he was sure the overall need in the area was taken into account.

“All of the spaces we build aren’t limited to people that are 65 and older. People with disabilities and seniors are our target clients here.”

Supportive living is for people whose care needs mean they are no longer able to stay in their own homes. They are provided private rooms, meals, housekeeping and 24-hour nurses care, depending on residents’ assessed needs.

Christenson Communities’ \$7.2-million housing project in Red Deer is a partnership with Laebon Homes with future phases planned.

Points Living West is building a \$22-million, five-storey building with the first three floors designated supported living, with the potential to expand to 80 spaces if needed.

“We’re working with the city right now and hope to be in the ground sometime this fall. It’s important to get the concrete in the ground before winter hits,” said Doug Mills, CEO of Points Living West.

Mayor Morris Flewwelling said the projects were good news for Red Deer and area and its growing seniors population.

“Red Deer is a large and vital community in all of Alberta. Most people don’t realize we serve an immediate population of 320,000 people,” Flewwelling said.

Doug Janssen, vice-president of the Central Alberta Council on Aging, said \$10 million is a lot of money for the province to spend when the former publicly-operated, long-term care facility Valley Park Manor sits empty.

“It’s with mixed feelings that I’m listening to the announcement. It’s great that we’re getting 100 beds in the area. We’ve got 100 beds at Valley Park Manor. They were long-term care beds and that’s where the growing need is,” Janssen said.

Instead, the province is putting money into P3 facilities and into the pockets of developers, he said.

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