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June 8, 2005

## **SMITH ANNOUNCES LONG-TERM SUPPORT TO BOLSTER SUCCESSFUL NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE! INITIATIVE IN BRANDON**

BRANDON—Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Scott Smith today marked the five-year anniversary of the Neighbourhoods Alive (NA!) program by renewing core-funding support for the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation which will allow long-term planning and development of future community projects.

"I am proud of the work that we have been able to accomplish here in Brandon's core area through the NA! program," said Smith. "With every house that is refurbished and every playground that is upgraded we see an entire area rejuvenated in physical appearance and in spirit."

Building on the success of the NA! model Smith announced that:

- to date, the province has committed over \$1.3 million for 52 community projects and over \$2.7 million has been committed to rehabilitate or construct 295 housing units in Brandon;
- core funding support for the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation will be renewed for a further five years; and
- four new projects will receive \$71,740 in NA! funding including the Home Repair Program and four new community gardens.

"The Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation has played a key, catalyst role in bringing together residents, community organizations, city planners, private developers and businesses to affect community change," Smith said. "This is an example of a dynamic partnership that ensures local needs are made a priority."

First launched in June 2000, the NA! strategy supports and encourages community-driven revitalization efforts in specific neighbourhoods in Brandon, Thompson and Winnipeg. NA! involves the multi-department co-ordination of six funding areas including the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, Neighbourhood Housing Assistance, Neighbourhood Development Assistance, Lighthouses, Community Initiatives and Training Initiatives.

Residents, community groups, schools, businesses and various local organizations can access support from a range of programs aimed at community renewal.

Areas of support for NA! projects include:

- rehabilitating housing,
- building community leadership,
- enhancing neighbourhood parks and facilities,
- establishing safety and wellness initiatives,
- supporting employment training, and
- sponsoring after-school recreation programs for children and youth.

More information on the NA! program is available on the Internet at <http://www.neighbourhoodsalive.mb.ca>.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ATTACHED

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## Brandon NA! Highlights

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- 52 NA! projects totalling \$1,323,360 have been approved.
- \$2,735,342 has been committed to rehabilitate or construct 295 housing units.
- NA! has invested \$432,940 in parks, playgrounds and green-space projects that have greatly enhanced the quality of life in Brandon's core area.
- The NA!-funded Front and Paint program has provided grants to over 100 property owners for exterior improvements to their homes, resulting in significant homeowner investment and increased community pride.

### Project Highlights

- **Welcome to Brandon: A Video Resource for New Immigrants.** The Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation will receive NA! funding of \$10,860 to support the production of a video designed to inform recent immigrants to Brandon of the local health, social, educational and financial services available.
- **Coming Together Through Community Gardening.** Samaritan House Ministries will receive NA! funding of \$22,000 to help establish and maintain four community gardens in central Brandon. The project will also provide local residents with training in gardening techniques and develop a student gardening program in concert with the Brandon School Division.
- **Home Repair Program 2005.** The Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation will receive NA! funding of \$23,880 to support the continuation of a successful home-repair program which provides participants with hands-on training and reference materials on home repair/maintenance, tool use/safety and hiring professional tradespeople.
- **YMCA Climbing Wall.** The Brandon Family YMCA will receive NA! funding of \$15,000 to support the purchase and installation of industry-approved wall climbing equipment in the Brandon YMCA building including the necessary related renovations.

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## Neighbourhoods Alive! Highlights

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- Neighbourhoods Alive! has committed over \$26.5 million for revitalization activities in urban neighbourhoods in need:
  - \$16.6 million has been allocated to support almost 400 community projects, and
  - \$9.9 million has been committed for the repair, rehabilitation or construction of over 1,700 housing units.
- NA! has funded over 75 recreation programming and enhancement projects totalling over \$2 million including playground rehabilitation/construction, community centre enhancements, athletic programs (e.g. Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre) and arts and cultural programs (e.g. Art City).
- NA! has supported 21 crime and safety projects totalling over \$925,000 (e.g. the North End School Resource Officers program).
- NA! has funded 15 health and wellness projects totalling over \$450,000 (e.g. the Good Food Box food security project in West Broadway).
- With NA! support totalling almost \$3 million, more than 300 people in the designated neighbourhoods have receiving training for career-oriented jobs (e.g. family-support workers).
- 32 NA! Lighthouses sites have been established throughout the province with an investment of over \$1.5 million. These community-based partnership keep the doors of community facilities and schools open to provide recreational and social programming to at-risk youth.
- Preliminary findings indicate that NA! investment in neighbourhoods in need is having the intended results:
  - the collapse of inner-city housing values by 1999, particularly in Winnipeg's north end, was a major impetus for NA!. The most recent available data indicates house prices have risen by 45 per cent in the north end since 1999.
  - NA! was also part of a multi-faceted, intergovernmental response to an alarming increase in inner-city arsons. Between 1999 and 2003 (most recent data available), the arson rate in the north end dropped by 40 per cent, by 48 per cent in the Spence neighbourhood and by 35 per cent in the West Broadway area.
- A recent survey of community stakeholders has found that:
  - 86 per cent of respondents observe positive neighbourhood change in all NA! neighbourhoods, with housing as the most commonly cited example of improvement.
  - 83 per cent intend to remain in their neighbourhood for the foreseeable future.
  - there is an increase in community pride in all communities, as well as a noted increase in the capacity of community residents.
  - residents in all NA! neighbourhoods recognize and value the work of their local neighbourhood renewal corporation (NRC).
  - the community-led model supported by NA! is viewed as enabling the NRCs to undertake work that no one else has been doing in their neighbourhoods, and as a positive vehicle for change.