



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD

Helping Build Strong Communities in the District of Thunder Bay

2009

Annual Report



Chair's Message

Dear Colleagues,

As Chair of The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) I am pleased to report to our funders – the property tax payers of the District of Thunder Bay – the accomplishments of your Board and Staff in 2009.

This year marked our first full year as the employer for program management and delivery personnel (formerly City of Thunder Bay, Greenstone, Schreiber and Manitouwadge staff), a transition that has improved operational efficiency and facilitated client access to services. The Thunder Bay District Housing Corporation joined us as employees of TBDSSAB effective April 1, 2010. This past year also yielded much progress towards the design and planning of a new TBDSSAB building which will facilitate improved integration and delivery of social services upon completion in Fall 2011.

2009 was a challenging year for the planning and delivery of social services. As of December 31st, 2009 the Ontario Works caseload was at its highest point in the past seven years and has grown by 22% in the past three years alone. Since 2007 applications for social housing have increased by 30% and our centralized wait list has grown by almost 85% since 2008. Perhaps the most striking indicator of the increasing demands on social services over the past year is food bank usage. Thunder Bay food banks experienced the largest year-over-year increase in usage in the entire Province. To help meet this great need TBDSSAB distributed \$137,000 to the Regional Food Distribution Association and food banks throughout the District in 2009.

In the face of increased demand on social services TBDSSAB has been able to maintain exceptionally high standards of efficiency and effectiveness in program administration. We have reduced overpayments in Ontario Works by over 65% from 2008. Our Housing Services Division has worked tirelessly to distribute millions of dollars to renovate and retrofit new and existing affordable housing. The Children's Services Division has worked closely with the provincial government, regional Best Start Networks and individual school boards to prepare for the planned full-day early learning program as it begins implementation this fall.

In summary, 2009 saw increased pressures on social services in the Thunder Bay District as the effects of the economic downturn continued to resonate. TBDSSAB will continue to adapt to these conditions as they evolve to deliver responsive social services within the principles of equity and efficiency. On behalf of the entire Board and staff, I would like to thank our many community partners for their hard work and collaboration towards meeting the needs of our communities, and we look forward to continued success in the year ahead.

Sincerely,



Councillor Iain F. Angus
Chair



TBDSSAB Board & Management

Top row (L-R): Councillor Larry Hebert, Councillor Aldo Ruberto, Carmen Wheeler – Manager, Ontario Works, Karen Bradica – Manager, Housing Services, Councillor Andrew Foulds, Mayor Mike King, Sandy Isfeld – Manager, Children's Services, Councillor James Foulds, Bill Bradica – Manager, Finance, Don Tront – Manager, Property Management Services, Bob Katajamaki – Territories Without Municipal Organization

Seated (L-R): Mayor Lynn Peterson, Councillor Elaine Mannisto, Mary Lucas – CAO, TBDSSAB, Councillor Iain Angus (Chair), Councillor Joe Virdiramo, Councillor Maureen Schmidt, Councillor Donna Jaunzarins

Ontario Works

Employment Outcomes

- 20,446 visitors accessed services at the Ontario Works (OW) Employment Resource Centre (ERC). 2,593 social assistance recipients participated in employment programming, receiving 3,705 hot lunches to support their learning.
- 9.4% of OW participants reported employment earnings. Average monthly earnings increased from \$707 to \$723 over the past year.
- Almost 19% of social assistance recipients are exiting OW for gainful employment. Average monthly employment income of those leaving OW increased from \$930 to \$967 over the past year.



Community Social Reinvestment Program

- Over 11,000 individuals and families were assisted with access to school and community-based nutrition services, improved child recreation opportunities, and assistance with extraordinary needs. Over 7,600 children of recipients of social assistance benefited from this program.
- In 2009 the Board distributed funding of \$137,000 to food banks throughout the District, ensuring that over 980 individuals and families per month had access to nutritious food, hot meals, and infant supplies.

Ontario Works Applications & Caseload

- 4,809 applications were received of which approximately 23.3% did not continue with their application, 19.3% were deemed ineligible, and 57.4% were granted assistance.
- As of December 31st the caseload was at its highest point in the past seven years with 3,036 cases, an increase of over 22% since 2007. The largest increase was observed for the Thunder Bay delivery site, and the largest relative increase over 2008 levels was experienced by the Schreiber delivery site.

A recent graduate of the Lakehead Board of Education *Mothers in Search of Learning/Learning Earning and Parenting* (LEAP) program shares her experience: "The LEAP program helped me more than anything. It helped me to get grade 12 and still having my daughter with me as a single parent. I had daycare and school available to me. I accomplished my goal to finish high school. I am relieved, a lot less stressed and happy knowing I accomplished this goal."

Eligibility Review

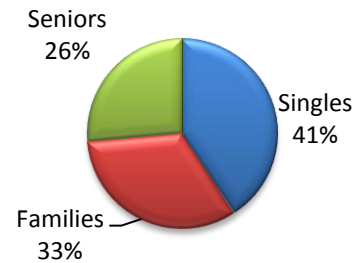
- Of the 106 allegations of fraud or abuse of social assistance that were investigated, nine criminal charges and two convictions were handed down. Payment for six restitution orders totalling \$77,401 was outstanding and the total amount of overpayments arising from investigations dropped over 65% from \$105,182 in 2008 to \$36,356 in 2009. The total combined outstanding restitution orders and overpayments represent 5% of the 2009 social assistance budget.

Housing Services

Social Housing Applications & Waitlist

- As of December 31st, 2009 there were 1,127 applicants on the centralized wait list. Since 2006, applicants qualifying as singles/couples represented the largest increase, followed by family and senior applicants.
- Applications to social housing have steadily increased by 30% from 2007 to 2009. The largest increase is observed among those applying as single or couples, with a 68% increase in applications in just three years.

Housing Centralized Wait List, by Applicant Category (as of Dec. 31, 2009)



- Seniors are being housed in increasing numbers since 2006, while the number of singles/couples housed has declined each year since 2006. Property Management Division is actively working with landlords to increase access to one-bedroom units to meet the demand.

Social Housing Capital Repair Program

- TBDSSAB was allocated \$1,527,130 to address urgent capital repairs to social housing stock, including energy efficiency improvements. Over \$12 million in submissions were received, resulting in 16 social housing providers throughout the District receiving funding for improvements.

Provincial Rent Bank

- The Provincial Rent Bank Program provides financial assistance in the form of a grant to low income households to pay rent arrears to avoid eviction and prevent homelessness. In 2009, 24 households were assisted with total issuances of \$20,530. The Province increased funding to \$58,227 and the program will be funded annually.



Housing Services

Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program (AHP) Extension, and Social Housing Renovation and Retrofit Program (SHRRP)

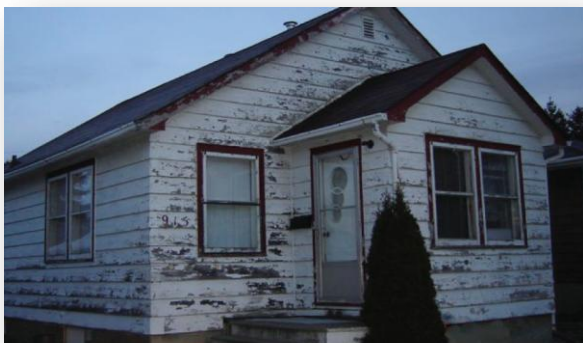
Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program (AHP) Extension (2009)

- Under the Northern Home Repair Program (NHRP), low-to-moderate income homeowners receive forgivable loans to make urgently needed repairs to address home health and safety issues or modifications to accommodate residents with disabilities. To date, 290 homeowners have benefited from this worthwhile initiative, workers in various trades have been employed, and homes throughout the District of Thunder Bay have been revitalized.
- TBDSSAB secured \$150,000 of Homeownership funding and has partnered with Habitat for Humanity Thunder Bay in providing down payment assistance to three (3) qualifying Habitat families.
- TBDSSAB received an allocation in the amount of \$6.6 million from the Province for the development of a seniors' supportive housing project in Thunder Bay. St. Joseph's Care Group will begin construction of a 132 unit apartment building in 2010. The project will include self-contained apartments and offer onsite support services including homemaking and personal care.

Mayor Mike King of Terrace Bay recounts the sentiments of one of his constituents who participated in the Northern Home Repair Program: "She told me with a lot of pride how people had phoned her or talked to her downtown about how nice her home looked. She got a new roof, all new windows and doors, and a new furnace. She said her house is much warmer now and that her oil bill is lower. She also said the inspector was very helpful and the contractor did a really good job."

Social Housing Renovation and Retrofit Program (SHRRP)

- TBDSSAB received a notional allocation in excess of \$9.4 million for the repair and regeneration of eligible social housing projects in the District of Thunder Bay over a 2-year period. Twenty-four (24) social housing providers have benefited from the Program funding and approximately 135 construction projects are in various stages of construction or have been completed.



Before and after pictures of a home renovated through the Northern Home Repair Program

Children's Services

Families and Children Receiving Services



- In 2009, almost 1,500 families received subsidized child care services for over 1,800 children in the District of Thunder Bay.
- As of December 31, 2009, over 70% of single-parent households receiving subsidized child care earned under \$20,000 per year. Over 40% of two-parent households receiving fee subsidy earned under \$20,000 per year.
- The majority of children receiving subsidized child care come from single-parent households of 1-2 children per household.
- Over half of all applicants for fee subsidy are requesting child care services due to employment, with one quarter requiring child care in order to pursue educational goals.

Full Day Early Learning for 4 & 5 Year Olds

- Following the Provincial report *With Our Best Future in Mind: Implementing Early Learning in Ontario* by Dr. Charles Pascal, the Premier of Ontario announced the roll-out of full day early learning for 4 & 5 year olds through the Ministry of Education. Parents will have the option of enrolling their 4 & 5 year olds in elementary schools offering the early learning curriculum for no charge between 9 AM to 3:30 PM. An extended day program will be offered for a fee to provide care for children from 7 AM to 9 AM and 3:30 PM to 6 PM if sufficient demand exists. The program will be gradually implemented in phases beginning in September 2010, with full implementation targeted for 2015.

The following schools have been selected as early learning sites for phase one in the District of Thunder Bay:

- McKellar Park Central Public School
 - Sherbrooke Public School
 - Westmount Public School
- Algonquin Avenue Public School
- Vance Chapman Public School
 - St. Vincent School
 - Corpus Christi School
- Ecole Catholique Franco-Superieur
 - Holy Saviour School (Marathon)
- Margaret Twomey Public School (Marathon)

Property Management Services

(Thunder Bay District Housing Corporation)

Fiscal Responsibility

- In 2009, operations of Thunder Bay District Housing Corporation (TBDHC), the wholly-owned subsidiary of TBDSSAB, generated a net surplus of \$264,941 from efficient and effective management of six (6) portfolios of housing programs administered by the Corporation.
- Savings were achieved mainly from decreased expenses in administration, building maintenance, and salaries and benefits. Other savings were realized as a result of decreased turnover of rental units during the year.



Capital Improvements

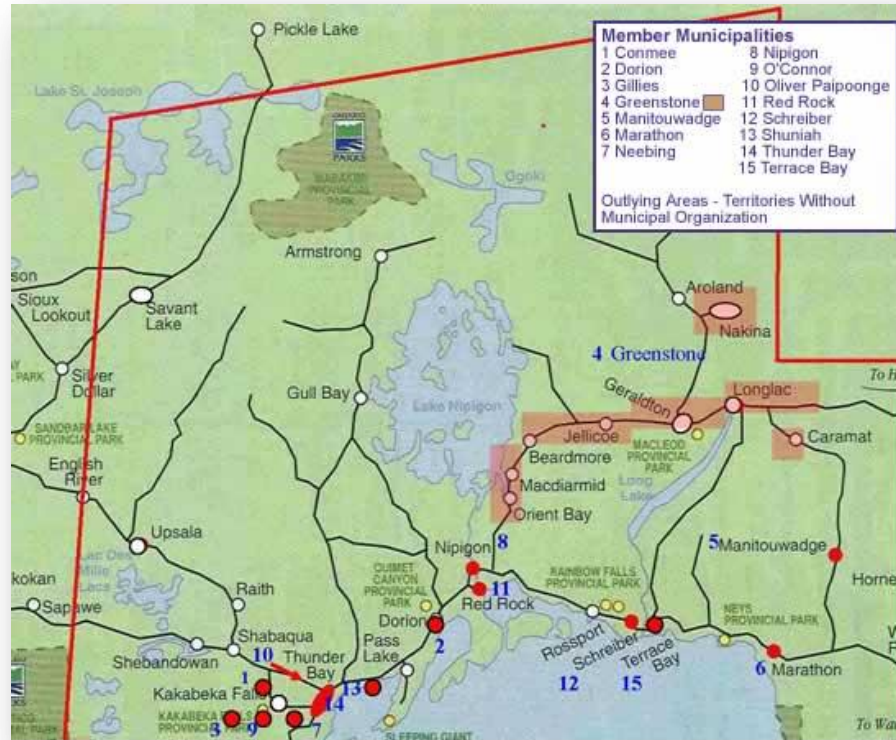
- Investment in TBDHC properties of \$965,188 under the Social Housing Capital Repair Program and \$2,674,743 of planned capital improvements in 2009 totalled \$3,639,931 in capital enhancements.
- There were 227 capital projects in 2009 fulfilled through tenders employing local businesses as a part of both the Provincial and Federal strategies to stimulate the economy. Assets of TBDHC benefited from extended longevity and modernization of the facilities in which approximately 2,600 households reside in safe and affordable homes.

Commemorative Dedication

- 9 Regent Street was renamed Clark Towers in memory of Kent Clark, former Housing Manager/Chief Executive Officer of Thunder Bay District Housing Authority/Corporation. Mr. Clark was employed in the Social Housing Sector for 26 years. His contributions as a builder and leader in the industry were acknowledged in a ceremony held September 18, 2009 attended by family, officials, friends and staff.



34 North Cumberland Street - 4th Floor - Thunder Bay, Ontario - P7A 8B9
Phone: (807) 766-2111
Toll Free: 1-877-281-2958



TBDSAB Service Area



2009 TBDSAB Employee Years of Service & Attendance Award Recipients