



CITY OF  
*Lethbridge*



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**CITY AND PROVINCE FOCUSED ON ENDING HOMELESSNESS**

**Lethbridge, Alberta** – Social Housing in Action and the City of Lethbridge through Community & Social Development has just completed the 2007 Homeless Census. The preliminary results show homelessness has increased in Lethbridge by 47% from 2005 with a 28% increase from last year's Homeless Census. A total of one hundred and sixty three (163) individuals including 14 families and 24 children were identified as homeless. Research has also shown that at least 80% of the total homeless population is not visible in the community; resulting in a total count of 815.

"The Premier's announcement of a 10 Year Plan to End Homeless is welcomed and timely given the current situation in our community and the continuing migration to Lethbridge and Alberta", says Mayor Tarleck, "It also confirms the need for the collective efforts of all levels of government and communities to embrace a provincial and systemic approach to ending homelessness. We must be strategic and provide adequate homes that are safe, attainable and available with the right supports for people to be successful in meeting their needs. The current situation definitely confirms the need for continued support of the City's and SHIA's efforts to end homelessness in our community. Lethbridge is well positioned to support and participate in the provincial Secretariat."

Homelessness has worsened as the result of the short supply and availability of safe and affordable homes. Lethbridge is no exception and currently experiences a 0% vacancy rate. That is why the City of Lethbridge and the people leading the "Bringing Lethbridge Home" initiative **are** so excited about the provincial commitment to a 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness in Alberta. This provincial announcement not only supports our plan, but also the recommendations provided by the City of Lethbridge and SHIA to the Affordable Housing Task Force in February, 2007.

"We are so appreciative of the leadership of over 80 dedicated community leaders who assist us with the "Bringing Lethbridge Home" Strategic Plan to "end homelessness" in Lethbridge. The results of the Homeless Census however, indicates a more aggressive and significant local and provincial initiative will reduce a fragmented approach" says Dr. G. Bowie, Chair of Social Housing in Action. "The 7 goals outlined in Bringing Lethbridge Home provides us with the direction, capacity and resources to not only meet current emergency shelter needs, but more importantly, focuses on getting people into secure and sustainable homes."

"Homelessness is all-inclusive. It does not discriminate and can effect anyone of any age, race, sex or income level", says Diane Randell, Manager of Community & Social Development. Homelessness has a significant economic and social impact on communities and the people. Ending Homelessness programs are successful in many cities across North America and we are well prepared to fulfill our strategic goals in Bringing Lethbridge Home".

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For more information contact:

Office Of The Mayor – 320 - 3823

Dr. G. Bowie, Chair, Social Housing in Action, 327-4702

Diane Randell, Manager, Community & Social Development 320-3917

## Backgrounder

The issue of homelessness is one that cannot be ignored in Lethbridge. Homeless Census' conducted over the past four years have shown an ever increasing population of people in Lethbridge are living in places that are not permanent, healthy and/or sustainable. The complexity of this issue requires a comprehensive approach to 'end homelessness'. This approach should focus not only on charitable volunteerism, but also on support and contributions from every facet of society: all levels of government, citizens, as well as the public and private sectors.

The 2007 Homeless Census is a tool used to assist Social Housing in Action (SHIA) to further implement Bringing Lethbridge Home, a Strategic Plan to 'end homelessness' in Lethbridge. [www.bringinglethbridgehome.ca](http://www.bringinglethbridgehome.ca).

As outlined in "Bringing Lethbridge Home" (2007), this census provides a comparative "snapshot in time" of the homeless situation in Lethbridge. In this effort, SHIA can continue to use a comprehensive approach to eliminating and preventing homelessness in our community,

**"Bringing Lethbridge Home"** outlines the strategy SHIA and the City of Lethbridge are undertaking to end homelessness in Lethbridge. SHIA is charged with the duty of implementing and monitoring the progress of the implementation of this plan. In response to this duty, SHIA has created a housing continuum to create a better understand the process involved in ending homelessness:



In addition, the strategic plan focuses on 7 Strategic goals in addressing homelessness in Lethbridge. These include a systemic and purposeful approach:

1. Develop and increase housing opportunities
2. Increase awareness and education and reduce NIMBY (Not in my back yard) through positive neighbourhood relations
3. Develop and implement a Lethbridge based "housing first" strategy for the community
4. Provide coordinated outreach support services
5. Ensure access to appropriate emergency shelter and transitional housing
6. Continue to enhance service delivery and increase agency capacity and sustainability
7. Implement systems improvement