News release

June 29, 2009

Tenant-landlord dispute resolution service expands to central Alberta

Edmonton… Tenants and landlords in central Alberta now have access to a fast and inexpensive way to settle disputes outside the courtroom.

The Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution Service (RTDRS) is expanding to more than 200 communities in the region including Red Deer, Drumheller, Stettler and Rocky Mountain House.

“This program has proven to be a valuable resource for both tenants and landlords in communities where it was introduced,” said Service Alberta Minister Heather Klimchuk. “It saves people time and money by avoiding a formal court process for disputes and frees up the court system for other matters.”

Tenants and landlords can apply to the service to resolve disputes such as security deposits, rent arrears, evictions and damages. A tenancy dispute officer holds a hearing and considers evidence from tenants and landlords, similar to court proceedings. Decisions by officers are legally binding on both parties.

RTDRS hearings in the central Alberta region will be conducted by

teleconference, allowing tenants and landlords to participate in hearings from their own home or office. The fee for service is $75 and the entire process takes between seven and 10 days for most matters.

“Holding hearings by telephone means people in remote communities can have their disputes heard faster without having to travel long distances to a larger centre,” said Klimchuk.

The provincial government initially established the service in 2006 as a one-year pilot project in Edmonton, where it helped reduce court time for tenant-landlord disputes to a half-day per month from two days a week. Based on the success there, RTDRS expanded to northern Alberta communities and Calgary, and has handled more than 11,000 cases. The government plans to expand the service to the rest of Alberta later in 2009/10.

More information on RTDRS, including a full list of communities where the service is available, can be found online at www.rtdrs.alberta.ca or by calling toll-free 310-0000 then dialing 780-644-3000.

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Backgrounder: Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution Service coverage

Media inquiries may be directed to:
Mike Berezowsky
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780-415-6051

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

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