



2010 Annual Report

Every year, when I have the opportunity to write the RRDSSAB's Annual Report, I feel a deep sense of pride for the work performed by the employees of this organization. It is overwhelming at times to see or be reminded of all the efforts that have been made to provide for the basic needs of children, seniors and low-income families residing in our communities. Without those efforts, many people in our District would be without a home, food to eat or the ability to find and retain a job. Each and every person working in this organization has a valuable part to play and all of them are focused on the best interests of the individuals and families we serve.

We were very fortunate in 2010 to receive extraordinary amounts of 100% provincial funding dollars to address many areas of need in our District: our deteriorating housing stock; the health and safety needs of our seniors & low-income families living in homes in need of repair; the desire to keep our seniors in their home communities close to family & friends; the early learning needs of our young children; the wish to keep our loved ones out of long term care facilities; our need to respond quickly to emergency situations; the need to prevent homelessness; and the difficult choices some families must make in our District between monthly payments and essential needs such as groceries.

Having worked in social services for thirty years, I recall a supervisor once telling me that what we see is 'often the tip of the iceberg' and that there are many others out there struggling to do it on their own, without formal government intervention or assistance. I believe she was right.

Most of us are grateful for the social & community health services provided by the DSSAB. We may have family members or friends who have benefited from social housing, child care or social welfare services. Most of us have seen the benefits of having a District-wide professional ambulance service. Many of us could not function without the supports received from one or some of these services.

We recognize that a balance must be maintained between cost and service, and that sometimes that can be extremely difficult to achieve. Fortunately, we have a staff and Board who work very hard to achieve that balance without causing undue harm to those who rely on the social and community health services we provide.

I wish to personally thank my staff – 'thank you' seems so inadequate at times, as I have witnessed unbelievable commitment to the DSSAB and its services over the last 12 years.

I also want to bid farewell to those Board Members who have served with us since inception, and who have been a tremendous support to the staff, wonderful ambassadors for their municipalities and areas, and advocates for our clients (our neighbours, our friends, our family members).

As a strong proponent for the *integration* of services, I wish to share these words from Robert F. Kennedy:

Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total; of all those acts will be written the history of this generation.

Happy New Year & may you enjoy a healthy, joyful 2011!

Respectfully Submitted by:
Donna Dittaro, CAO

2010 HIGHLIGHTS

Land Ambulance

"First There, First to Care"

- Three Emergency Support trailers were placed into service, replacing one Emergency Support Unit in the community of Fort Frances. These trailers improve the distribution of emergency supplies across the District, with trailer placement in Atikokan, Rainy River and Fort Frances, and decrease our operating costs.
- Three new dual stretcher ambulances replaced fleet ambulances which were moved to supervisor's vehicles. The older supervisor vehicles will be sold or transferred to another RRDSSAB department in 2011.
- The Rainy River Ambulance Base renovations were completed on time and within budget (~\$96,000). The renovation created one additional bay and storage area.
- 12 new defibrillators were purchased to replace our eight year old defibrillators and now include automatic blood pressure and pulse oximetry, an improvement to patient care. New airways were distributed.
- An additional 13 automatic public access defibrillators were placed in nine First Nation communities and four fire departments in Pinewood, Morson, Fort Frances, & Atikokan, funded 100% by the Ontario Heart & Stroke Foundation.
- An International Cross Border Committee was developed to deal with the sharing of resources across the international border and the provision of emergency services.
- The CUPE contract with land ambulance employees was ratified. The four year contract runs from 29 September, 2009 to 31 December, 2013, having been aligned with the RRDSSAB budget year. Wage increases include:

29 Sept/09	1.5%
1 Jan/10	1.25%
1 Oct/10	1.25%
1 Jan/11	1.5%
1 Oct/11	0.75%
1 Jan/12	1.5%
1 Oct/12	0.75%
1 Jan/13	1.5%
1 Oct/13	1.0%
- Roger Wilson, Paramedic, retired after many valuable years of service. Congratulations, Roger!
- Brett Resources, now known as Osisko, assisted in the development of a heliport at their proposed mine site north of Atikokan.
- As one of the last designed delivery agents for land ambulance to address the issue, the RRDSSAB has restricted non-emergent transfers, in order to meet response times for emergency calls and contain costs.
- Ambulance staff participated in a table-top disaster exercise with the Town of Fort Frances airport and an Emergency Measures Ontario sustainability exercise.
- Two full staff training and meeting sessions were held to introduce new equipment, vehicles and policies, including the updated harassment policy which forms part of the RRDSSAB's Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention Program, a legislated requirement.
- Annual retraining of all staff in Advanced Life Support Skills was completed successfully.
- A Provincial Service Review was completed in September, 2010 involving nine inspectors. As a result of the Review, the RRDSSAB was granted a certificate to operate the ambulance service for an additional three years. The draft report has been received and Dan McCormick, Health Services Manager and his staff are currently preparing a response. A final report is expected within six months. The Provincial Service Review is one method of quality assurance used by the local service to maintain a high level of care in the District. Many thanks to the staff who participated in the review process
- RRDSSAB land ambulance responded to 2862 calls in 2010: 317 Code 1 (deferrable), 701 Code 2 (scheduled), 569 Code 3 (prompt) and 1275 Code 4 (urgent). These numbers reflect the actual patient contact/carried calls and do not represent the total number of calls to which an ambulance is dispatched.

Child Care/Best Start

“Opening the Door to New Opportunities”

- The full-day JK/SK Early Learning Program was implemented in Atikokan at North Star and St. Patrick's Schools, beginning in September. With the introduction of full-day JK, there has been a significant decrease in enrollment at Rainbow Centre, the Child Care Operator. We are working with the Atikokan Non-Profit Day Care Board and staff to monitor the impact of the Early Learning Program. As full-day learning becomes fully implemented over the next three years, Child Care Operators must evaluate the services currently being provided and focus services on children aged 0 to 4 years.
- Neither North Star or St Patrick's Schools will be offering an extended day component for families, as there was no or limited interest from parents.
- In September, 2011, two classrooms at Robert Moore and one at St. Michael's School will be designated as Early Learning classrooms. The extended day component has not yet been determined at these sites.
- *Bill 242 Full Day Early Learning Statute Law Amendment Act 2010* was passed which allows the Province to enter into agreements with DSSABs to administer fee subsidies related to the extended day program. The RRDSSAB has managed fee subsidy since 2000. Under the *Bill*, School Boards may enter into agreements with third-party service providers to operate programs for children aged 6 to 12 years. The latter could affect our current Child Care Providers. Finally, School Boards may enter into agreements with Child Care Providers to provide service on professional activity (PA) days, school holidays and summer breaks.
- Child Care Services for children 0 to 12 years transferred to the Ministry of Education (MEDU) from the Ministry of Children & Youth Services (MCYS), therefore, our 2011 contract will be with MEDU. We look forward to working with the new Ministry. Our Best Start funding remains with MCYS.
- We were able to secure an additional \$36,500 for operating and \$2300 for capital from the Province to support Child Care sites affected by Phase 1 of the Early Learning Program. The funds are being used to refocus Child Care services on children aged 0 to 4 years, as the 4 and 5 year olds move to the Early Learning Programs.
- We have been advised that the Province may reinstate \$120,585 in Best Start funding that was reduced in our 2009 allocation. We look forward to the formal announcement.
- Following the 2009 report from Dr. Charles Pascal, the Premier's Special Advisor on Early Learning, Best Start Hubs have been created across the Province to provide support services to children and families. The Best Start Hubs in our District are situated in Fort Frances, Atikokan, Emo, Stratton, and Rainy River in previous Resource Centre locations. As of 01 September, 2010, toy lending services were discontinued across the Province and replaced with more community outreach, planning and Best Start program development.
- The Rainy River District Best Start Network continued to meet in 2010, with representatives from all children's-related services.
- In October, the Best Start Network sponsored a successful Children's Services Fair which was held at J. W. Walker School, hosted by the Coming Together for Kids Coalition.
- The RRDSSAB is hosting the RR District's Best Start website www.rainyriverdistrictbeststart.ca and have a formal agreement with the Kenora Best Start Network to host the website for them as well. Administrative services for the RR District Best Start Network are also provided by the RRDSSAB.
- The Outreach Program at 6th and Webster Avenue in Fort Frances has been operational since June, 2009 focusing on the families and children residing in RRDSSAB housing at that location. In partnership with various community organizations, we continue to offer services which support children who may be 'at risk' resulting from the socio-economic status of their families. It is truly an early intervention program which RRDSSAB staff is committed to.
- In 2010, 49 new family Child Care Fee Subsidy files were opened to serve 62 additional children. In total, we provided fee subsidy to offset Child Care expenses for 139 families representing 189 children in the Rainy River District; this is a marked increase over last year, when we served 90 families representing 127 children. Fee subsidy allows parents to attend school or work.
- Cheryl Bodnar has done an excellent job as Acting Children's Services Manager, replacing Mildred Beck who has been on an extended leave.

2010 Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program

- The Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program budget of \$68,372, which is 100% Provincially-funded, was used in 2010 to support District food banks and services, and the Homelessness Prevention Program. At the end of the 2010 third quarter, 77 households experiencing homelessness, 200 households at imminent risk of homelessness and 906 households at risk of homelessness were served. *Risk Definitions* for homelessness are: *Experiencing Homelessness*: households that are homeless obtain housing; *Imminent Risk of Homelessness*: households in danger of eviction remain housed, and *At Risk of Homelessness*: households at risk of homelessness are stabilized.

Ontario Works

"Creating Opportunities & Independence"

- The Ministry of Community & Social Services (MCSS) is introducing a new technology solution to replace the existing Service Delivery Model Technology (SDMT) used by the Ontario Works (OW) Program. The Province is assuming all costs for development, implementation and roll-out of the new system.
- In February, the Province announced a change to the OW Incentive Funding combining funding for the Consolidated Verification Process (CVP) and Enhanced Family Support Initiative (EFSI). Beginning in 2011, this funding will no longer be funded 100% provincially and will be cost shared 50/50 with the municipalities. The RRDSSAB registered its opposition to this announcement through a formal Board Resolution and correspondence with Premier Dalton McGuinty and Minister Madeleine Meilleur.
- In the fall of 2010, basic needs and shelter allowances for OW clients increased by one percent (1%) and various 'rule changes' were introduced by the Province.
- In Atikokan, ten OW clients successfully completed the Basics of Mining & Construction Technology, Workforce Essential Skills, Miner Common Core, and Chainsaw Safety Awareness Courses! Three participants were able to secure full-time employment, as a result.
- In Fort Frances, 13 OW clients successfully completed the Preparation for Office Administration Course. Two participants found full-time employment. The majority of participants had been on social assistance for lengthy periods of time and had significant barriers which prevented them from either obtaining or keeping full-time employment. We are extremely pleased that they all saw the course through to the end. Well done!
- In January, a Social Assistance Review Advisory Council was formed by the Province which, after several months, recommended that a comprehensive review of all income security systems take place. The Council also proposed several changes to the OW Social Assistance rules; as of this date, only four have been implemented.
- The RRDSSAB submitted a proposal to the Provincial Social Services Solutions Modernization (SSSM) Project to serve as a pilot site for on-line social assistance applications. Unfortunately, we were not chosen as a pilot. A report has now been released regarding the pilot project indicating that 95% of participants indicated that they would use the online application process again, if available.
- Using our Enhanced Employment Services Fund for Vulnerable Persons from the Province, we were able to contract with Confederation College to offer Preparation for Trades training for our OW clients. Of the 15 participants, 10 successfully completed the Program. Of those 10, four have started full-time employment and one individual has decided to continue his education in a trades field.
- Working with Equifax, the Province has developed a system which identifies anomalies between information on the OW technology system and Equifax data, including changes in credit activities. The RRDSSAB is participating in the Test Phase Group. It is expected that the new model will double the rate of identifying eligibility changes.
- As a means of ensuring quality of service, Shelley Shute, OW Manager and her staff developed and distributed an OW Employment/Community Placement Customer Satisfaction Survey in the fall; results are being compiled.
- In November, the Province announced the government's next steps in welfare reform. The Province has decided not to proceed with the elimination of the Special Diet Allowance and has agreed to move forward with a review of the social assistance program. A proposed new system would integrate municipal, provincial

and federal programs, simplify the system, and be more efficient, financially sustainable and accountable to taxpayers. The review is expected to take until mid-2012 to complete.

- We are anticipating a significant change to the funding formula for OW in 2011 which could have a major impact on OW and other RRDSSAB-managed programs. We await the Province's formal announcement.
- 355 intakes were completed for OW in 2010. Of those, 315 were granted.
- The average monthly District caseload for OW was 230 cases.
- The average monthly caseload in Atikokan was 65, however the December statistics report a significant drop to 49 cases which is reflective of the upturn in the economy.
- Over \$55,000 was collected from the Family Responsibility Office and Private Agreements through the efforts of our OW Family Support Worker (FSW)/Eligibility Review Officer (ERO), Myrna Beachy.
- 32 new referrals were accepted for investigation by the OW FSW/ERO. Of those 32, we proceeded with overpayment collections from eight clients, made four referrals to the police and pursued four active court proceedings. 21 cases continue to be investigated.

Social Housing

"Beyond Bricks & Mortar"

- Under the leadership of Sandra Weir, Housing Manager, RRDSSAB is currently managing 417 units, including 296 RRDSSAB-owned units, 109 RRDSSAB-managed Non-Profit units and 12 Rent Supplement units.
- RRDSSAB manages property for five Non-Profit Housing Providers, including Atikokan Native Non-Profit Homes Corp, Flinders Place, Faith Non-Profit Housing Corp, Fort Frances Municipal Non-Profit, and Columbus Place Inc.
- The Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing (MMAH) introduced a new Short-Term Rent Support Program to provide monthly subsidies to rental households in need. The funds are available over the next three years, with first payments planned for January, 2011. The RRDSSAB has received \$49,530 to be divided over the term of the project. The Program is 100% provincially-funded.
- In April, the RRDSSAB received new provincial funding under the Northern Home Repair component of the Affordable Housing Program. \$375,000 was allocated for 15 units – we were able to meet our targets by year end. The RRDSSAB cancelled the administration/inspection contract with the Metis Nation of Ontario and are now providing those services in-house. This Program is 100% funded by the Province.
- In February, the governments of Canada and Ontario introduced energy efficient upgrades for Affordable Housing, as part of Canada's Economic Action Plan. The initiative provides funds for renewable energy systems that are capable of generating energy & selling surplus energy back to the electrical grid. The RRDSSAB had two projects approved: \$104,998 for Queen Street Manor in Emo and \$87,604 for the Rainy River Women's Shelter in Atikokan for installation of solar photovoltaic systems. The Program is 100% provincially-funded.
- \$7,500 was received from the Province for the Rent Bank Program which is used to assist those who are no more than two months in rent arrears, in order to allow them to remain housed. The fund may be used by individuals/families receiving social assistance but not rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing. This Program is 100% provincially-funded.
- The RRDSSAB received additional funding for Year One of the Social Housing Renovation & Retro Fit Program (SHRRP) increasing the allocation for the first year from \$739,603 to \$745,142. Year 2 funding was received in April in the amount of \$568,245. Funding was allocated to various projects including FF Native Urban Housing, Morley Municipal Housing, Atikokan Municipal Housing, 6th and Webster in Fort Frances, Armit Avenue in Fort Frances, Queen Street Manor in Emo, Golden Age Manor in Emo, and Fotheringham Court in Atikokan.
- Housing staff participated in several training events including privacy, duty to accommodate, harassment, asbestos management, tenants with mental health issues, accessibility & accommodation, WSIB, Power of Attorney, independent living services, various pieces of legislation, and renewable energy, etc.
- Housing staff continue to assist with the Outreach Program at 6th and Webster in Fort Frances. Michelle Jewell, Tenant Liaison Officer, has been instrumental in the development of this very worthwhile project.
- Staff participated in the Strengthening Families Program, offered in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association, Family & Children's Services, RR District School Board, Centre of Addiction & Mental

Health, Northwestern Health Unit and the Gizhewaadiziwin Health Access Centre. The Program focuses on reducing factors which put families at risk and enhancing factors which support families. The Program has been extremely well received by families in our area.

- Staff ensures that communication with tenants is a priority. Four Housing Newsletters were distributed to all tenants in 2010. 18 Tenant Meetings were held and the Tenant Satisfaction Survey went out to all senior and family tenants.
- \$156,002.82 was recovered from past and current tenant arrears in 2010 by Gary Godin, ERO/FSW. Another \$14,060 was collected from Private Agreements for family support.
- The RRDSSAB, as designated Service Manager for Social Housing, must ensure that all Housing Providers funded by the RRDSSAB are in compliance with relevant legislation, operating agreements, and provincial and RRDSSAB policy. In order to ensure compliance, the RRDSSAB completes formal Operational Reviews with the Providers. An Operational Review completed for Columbus Place Inc (CPI) identified that CPI is in breach of the *Social Housing Reform Act* and regulations, and other relevant legislation. The RRDSSAB has assumed responsibility for managing the property and is awaiting Ministerial Consent relating to Board composition.
- We received \$436,000 in January from the Province, under SHRRP, to complete renovations at Riverview Manor in Rainy River to make the building more accessible. Renovations included two partially-modified two-bedroom units, two fully-modified one-bedroom units, elevator installation, laundry room modifications, energy efficient appliance upgrades, and balcony repairs. The Grand Opening was held on October 26th. The project was 100% provincially-funded.
- Just before Christmas, the RRDSSAB was notified that funding had been received from the Northwest Local Health Integrated Network (NWLHIN) for support staff at Riverview Manor in Rainy River. (A proposal had originally been submitted to the NWLHIN three years ago.) Base funding in the amount of \$120,000 annualized will be provided to the Northwest Independent Living Services (NILS) to offer on-site personal support services. This funding will allow NILS to provide 'assisted living' services in the Manor. The Mayor & Council of Rainy River and Howard Hampton, MPP were instrumental in securing this service for the Town of Rainy River.
- Michelle Shute, Assistant Housing Manager and the Maintenance Team are responsible for maintaining all RRDSSAB-owned and -managed properties. In 2010, the following was completed by our staff, under the guidance of Rick Bliss, Maintenance Coordinator:
 - painted common room & hallways at Queen Street Manor
 - reset patios, replaced walkways, replaced sign & patio screens, and repainted balcony railings & benches at Queen Street Manor
 - reset patios at Fotheringham Court
 - poured slab, framed in & enclosed maintenance workshop
 - repaired bathroom fans in a number of family units
 - repaired & resurfaced balconies and repainted balcony railings at Riverview Manor
 - cycle painting in 4 seniors units
 - replaced 10 toilets at Riverview
 - repaired & painted benches at Fotheringham Court
 - patio reset at Flinders
 - replaced treated materials & painted patio dividers at Fotheringham Court
 - replaced 12 door closers & reconnected 60 to meet Fire Code requirement
 - painted privacy screens at Riverview
 - preparing specs for capital projects
 - ~ 400 unit inspections completed, including the follow-up maintenance
 - many electrical repairs at various units, based on ESA inspections
 - annual fire drills at all Senior Manors
 - annual smoke detector testing in all units
 - 561 formal Maintenance Requests were completed by staff. This does not include the Repair Lists posted on bulletin boards at each Senior Manor, including Flinders Place.
- There were 69 move-outs and 71 units were readied – the majority of those units required extensive repair, based upon unit inspection findings. (These numbers do not include Atikokan Native Non-Profit Housing and the four renovated units at Riverview Manor.)

- 89 quotes/tenders were processed, including purchases of the following goods:
 - replaced 11 washers and 10 dryers
 - replaced 64 fridges at various units
 - replaced 6 stoves
 - replaced 1 carpet cleaner
 - replaced exterior signs at Riverview Manor and Heritage House

2010 Budget Summary

	2010	2009	
Bd Admin	48,300	54,800	
DSSAB Admin	302,784	298,724	
Ontario Works	7,034,211	6,946,096	
Child Care	1,382,326	1,380,944	
Best Start	735,299	1,215,506	100% Provincial
Homelessness	68,372	66,097	100% Provincial
Land Ambulance	5,774,092	6,332,357	
Rent Bank Fund	14,550	13,514	100% Provincial
Social Housing	3,425,736	3,013,782	
Affordable Housing Program	400,427	529,965	100% Provincial
Hsg Reno & Retrofit Program (new)	1,293,275	0	100% Provincial
	<u>20,479,372</u>	<u>19,851,785</u>	

*The overall budget increase for 2010 was 3.16%, however the Municipal share decreased by 5.95%, due to the use of Reserve Funds and Provincial uploading of costs in the amount of \$400,000.33 for the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and the Ontario Works General Assistance (OWGA) and Employment Assistance (EA) Programs.

The Municipalities cost share Program costs for ODSP and the above-named OW Programs (80% Provincial/20% Municipal). The Provincial upload in 2010 was 50% of the Municipal 20% share for ODSP and 1.6% of the Municipal 20% share for OWGA and EA.

Administration

- The move to public sector accounting board (PSAB) was completed this past year, following extensive work by our Finance Department. Jon Evans, BDO Dunwoody, commended our Finance staff for their excellent work in this area and overall. Congratulations to Dawn Galusha, Acting Manager of Finance and the Finance Team!
- We have begun to develop our formal Workplace Violence & Harassment Prevention Program, per *Bill 168*, an amendment to the *Occupational Health & Safety Act*. All staff has been trained on harassment, and our risk assessments and surveys completed, with the intent of completing our formal Workplace Violence Program in the new year.
- Social Housing and Ontario Works staff met to develop a *Staff Safety Procedure Handbook* which includes information on home visits, desk-side interviews, emergency situations, incident/accident reports, and the panic alarm system. Great team work!

- Policies and procedures for all RRDSSAB Programs including Land Ambulance, Social Housing, Ontario Works and Child Care have been developed/updated. Thank you to all of the staff who assisted with this labour-intensive project! Well done! Again, great team work!
- The Board's procedural by-law (*By-Law No. 1*) was revised and received formal Board approval.
- We continue to widely distribute our quarterly *RRDSSAB Newsletter*.
- We have begun the process of producing and sharing *Program Fact Sheets* with our municipalities and unincorporated areas. Wanda Norton, Customer Service Representative assisted in the preparation and distributed our first *Fact Sheet on Social Housing* in December.
- Staff donated their Dress Down Days funds to Jodi Hamilton, Paramedic for her volunteer work in Nicaragua and the Salvation Army Food Bank, and participated in the "stuff a cruiser" campaign and the Women's Health Symposium. Several of our staff continue to volunteer their own time to better our communities through their participation in various community groups.

RRDSSAB Board Member List

2010 RRDSSAB Board Members and Area of Representation, as at 31 December, 2010

Linda Armstrong, Dawson

Dennis Brown, Atikokan

John Callan, Rainy River Central

Wade Desserre, Rainy River West

Ross Donaldson, LaVallee

Deb Ewald, Rainy River

Mike Ford, Alberton

Gary Gamsby, Morley

Gary Judson, Emo

Michael Lewis, Rainy River East (Chair)

Rick Neilson, Chapple

Valerie Pizey, Lake of the Woods

Sharon Tibbs, Fort Frances (Vice Chair)

