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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

Maurice Vellacott, MP
Saskatoon-Wanuskewin

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Canada's New Government assists homeless Aboriginal people in Saskatoon

SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN, April 27, 2007—Maurice Vellacott, Member of Parliament for Saskatoon–Wanuskewin, on behalf of the Honourable Monte Solberg, Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, today joined the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre (SIMFC) to celebrate renovations accomplished with \$47,000 provided by Canada's New Government. The funding enabled the Friendship Centre to undertake kitchen renovations and upgrades to support the SIMFC's food services and meal programs.

“Canada's New Government is proud to work with the Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre to prevent and reduce homelessness among Aboriginal people,” said Mr. Vellacott. “This upgraded kitchen will enable the Friendship Centre to improve the help they give to more than 60,000 people who come here every year.”

Federal funding was used for renovations of the existing kitchen and the purchase and installation of commercial kitchen equipment and a fire suppression system. The upgraded kitchen enables SIMFC to provide food services to homeless Aboriginal individuals in urban areas and allows SIMFC to collaborate with other community organizations by making food preparation facilities available for their use.

The Homelessness Partnering Strategy came into effect on April 1, 2007, and replaced the National Homelessness Initiative.

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Canada

The new Homelessness Partnering Strategy will provide \$270 million over two years to help communities across Canada combat homelessness more effectively. The Strategy focuses on a housing-first approach to homelessness, recognizing that housing stability is essential to self-sufficiency and full participation in Canadian society. With its clear goals of improved partnerships, enhanced sustainability and tangible results, the new Strategy will provide concrete, meaningful and lasting results for Canadians in need.

For more information on the federal government's Homelessness Partnering Strategy, visit www.homelessness.gc.ca.

This news release is available in alternative formats upon request.

For more information (media only):

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Backgrounder

Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre

The Saskatoon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre (SIMFC) is a non-profit organization whose mandate is to improve the quality of life of Aboriginal people in an urban environment by supporting self-determined activities that promote Aboriginal cultural distinctiveness, and that respect equal access to and participation in Canadian society. SIMFC delivers a variety of programs and services designed to meet the needs of Aboriginal people living in the City of Saskatoon or migrating to it.

SIMFC currently receives more than 60,000 visits per year from homeless and at risk individuals. Approximately 4,000 clients a year participate in a hot supper program attached to evening group counselling sessions, and another 12,000 drop-in clients receive light meals during the day.