



EDMONTON  
SENIORS  
COORDINATING  
COUNCIL

LINKING SENIOR-SERVING  
ORGANIZATIONS IN EDMONTON

FALL/WINTER 2008





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# CREATIVE AGE FESTIVAL

By Sheila Hallett  
ESCC Executive Director

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This newsletter is available online at [www.seniorscouncil.net](http://www.seniorscouncil.net) and online users can follow active links to get additional information in some areas.

Seniors Week 2008 entered the 'Creative Age' in Edmonton, thanks to the Creative Age Festival. About 1,000 participants took in various events during the week, including the festival launch, workshops, Arts Cafés, a film festival, a symposium, tea with the Mayor and the festival wrap-up party.

The festival began June 2, 2008 with a kick-off launch at City Hall and wrapped up during the evening of June 5 with two films in the theatre at the Glenrose Hospital. The festival highlighted the importance of the arts for older adults in relation to creative expression, lifelong learning, health and well-being. It also encouraged increased opportunities for seniors to participate in arts programs. We celebrated and showcased the artistic accomplishments of seniors and were thoroughly entertained.

The festival had five focus areas: visual arts/photography, theatre/performance, music/song, creative writing/literary arts, and film.

This was a first time event undertaken by a diverse committee of collaborators from the University of Alberta, the Edmonton Arts Council, the Edmonton Public Library, the Art Gallery of Alberta, the City of Edmonton, the Nina Haggerty Centre of the Arts, Capital Health and the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council. The response by funders was overwhelming and evaluations were positive so the group has agreed to have another Creative Age Festival in 2009. Timelines may change slightly to allow for a partnership between the Greying Nation Conference and the symposium part of the festival. Tentative dates are June 5-9, 2009. Stay tuned for opportunities to get involved!

**What does this mean to service providers?**

There are opportunities to expand arts programming by tapping into arts and aging resources identified through the planning of the Creative Age Festival. Training and development opportunities are part of the symposium and ongoing support may be established through local networks.



The Trocadero Orchestra Big Band provides the feature entertainment during the Creative Age Festival party.



A senior engages Mayor Stephen Mandel in conversation during one of the Arts Cafes that were part of the first Creative Age Festival held in Edmonton.



The audience during a Creative Age Festival Arts Cafe at SAGE expresses appreciation for one of the performances.

## TRANSPORTATION WORK UPDATES

By Sheila Hallett  
ESCC Executive Director

The Seniors Transportation Roundtable held in November 2007 was attended by more than 110 representatives from federal, provincial, and city government, together with private transportation providers, funders, seniors, researchers, and senior-serving organizations. This was the second Seniors Transportation Roundtable we hosted in partnership with the Alberta Motor Association (visit <http://www.seniorscouncil.net/content.php?id=202> to get information on the Roundtable presentations and report). At this event we looked at the broader ideas of urban planning and how transportation and community design must go hand in hand.

Our keynote speakers were from the Canadian Urban Institute (Glenn Miller) and ITNAmerica (founder Katherine Freund). ITN America is an assisted transportation model that functions as a social enterprise in about 14 cities in the United States. Presentations and dialogues were well received by the participants and the event helped to raise the profile of the issue and generate some 'buzz.'

Since the event, the Seniors Transportation Steering Committee has continued to meet and move ideas to action. There are sub-committees now on the topic of social marketing, and contacts have been made to

address regional issues. In the fall, a sub-committee will be struck to oversee the development of an assisted transportation model for our area.

Meanwhile, the ESCC has hired a summer project person to collect all the local seniors' transportation information and create a clearinghouse and communication tools. Param Bhardwaj is a University of Alberta student and he is making contacts during the summer, so you may get a call to collect information about the seniors' transportation services that you provide. The information will be available in a searchable database to allow for one-stop access.

### *What does this mean to service providers?*

You have an opportunity to advertise what you offer in terms of transportation to seniors. We know the demand is high and services can't keep up, which is why a model for assisted transportation is needed. We are exploring the idea of collecting statistics from service providers to help illustrate the local situation. This will assist with model development as well - by tracking the services available we will be able to see where the biggest shortfall is in rides available vs. demand for rides. The database will also house best practice information and research regarding seniors transportation.



### SECOND EDMONTON SENIORS' TRANSPORTATION ROUNDTABLE

**PRESENTATIONS** Arlene Meldrum: Update on Transportation Initiatives for Edmonton Seniors

**KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS** Katherine Freund: ITN America  
Glen Miller: Bracing for the Demographic Tsunami

**KEY STRATEGIC UPDATES** Shaun Hammond, Dr. Richard Tay, Anastasia Sommer & Beth Espey, Margaret Dorey

**BREAKOUT SESSIONS** Age Friendly Design: Glen Miller, Greg Barker  
Driving Issues: Dr. Richard Tay  
Services for Seniors

## DIVERSITY WORK UPDATES

By Sheila Hallett  
ESCC Executive Director

The demographics in Edmonton and area show increased percentages of seniors in our population, as well as increased numbers of immigrants. This influences services for seniors by pointing to the need for more service capacity to meet increasing demand and the need for services that are culturally appropriate for our newcomers, many of whom are seniors.

The ESCC worked with partners from Catholic Social Services, the Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, the Multicultural Health Brokers and the City of Edmonton to host a Roundtable on May 15, 2008. Our aim (and our title) was "Mobilizing For Action: Culturally Responsive Pathways for Isolated Immigrant Seniors." The event attracted 120 people from various sectors. The focus of this event was to hear from immigrant seniors themselves, so that we would all have a deeper understanding of the barriers they face in accessing services. We had 14 seniors who have settled in Edmonton, but were originally from Columbia, South Africa, China, Ukraine, Yugoslavia, Burma, Afghanistan, Sudan, Pakistan, Vietnam, South Korea, Kurdistan, Argentina and India. Their stories illustrated the huge challenges they must overcome. They not only experience the challenges that go along with aging, they face barriers associated with language, with literacy and with cultural disruption that put them at risk for deeper isolation.

We featured a keynote address from Douglas Durst, a social work professor from the University of Regina, and we heard the findings from the University of Alberta's study "Finding Firmer Ground: Support Intervention for Immigrant Seniors." Many themes and actions were identified at the Roundtable, and participants were encouraged to consider how they offer services and how

that might be adapted considering the experiences they learned about from the immigrant seniors.

To further encourage service adaptations, we are working with the same community partners to develop a resource for agencies (database and directory) to use in order to understand more about the diverse cultures, local contacts within cultural groups, mapping information and statistics, best practice examples, and research. The resource will also give referral information for services such as translation of materials and cultural sensitivity training for staff. To oversee this project, the ESCC hired Luis D'Elia, a researcher who teaches at the University of Alberta from September to April. We are currently having cultural profiles written by cultural advisors for about 18 local communities, and these will be available in the fall.

### *What does this mean to service providers?*

There will be increased opportunities for you to connect to cultural communities to offer your services, and there may be demand that your services respond to differences in culture. If you work to reduce isolation, this segment of the population represents some of the most isolated people in our area. Much work remains to be done to meet their most basic needs.

### MOBILIZING FOR ACTION: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PATHWAYS FOR ISOLATED IMMIGRANT SENIORS

For more information on this article, visit <http://www.seniorscouncil.net/uploads/files/EmergingThemes-RoundTable-May18.pdf>.

# BROAD STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SENIORS SERVICES IN EDMONTON

By Sheila Hallett  
ESCC Executive Director

Executive Directors and Board Representatives meet every second month, and since early in 2008 they have been examining why it has been hard to collaborate and real progress is being made in joint planning. The group has decided to undertake a review of outreach services to seniors this fall with the help of ESCC. An application was made to the New Horizons For Seniors to facilitate this project.

More recently, the group decided a comprehensive vision is needed to help guide decision makers and service providers in the area of seniors services. On August 14, a few volunteers from the group met with representatives from the United Way, FCSS, City Community Services, the Glenrose Hospital and ESCC to begin development of a vision for seniors services in Edmonton.

Drafting vision statements was seen as a means of stimulating and focusing discussion among groups that are providing services to seniors in Edmonton and area. The starting point is to discuss what will make Edmonton an age-friendly city. This will help to identify key areas for which we (as a sector) can develop plans and actions. Outreach services will undoubtedly be a key part of how we can achieve goals we identify.

Once the vision statements are drafted, there will be opportunity for input by the sector at large, including seniors. This process will be organized for the fall of 2008.

The nine strategic areas and corresponding visions that were crafted by the group August 14 are as follows:

1. **Community-Based Services:** All seniors have access to services that enable them to be supported and engaged in their community.
2. **Communication:** All seniors can get the information they need through a centrally coordinated system available within their community.
3. **Social Participation and Engagement:** All seniors are valued and given opportunities to participate, contribute and engage in our society.
4. **Transportation:** All seniors have access to appropriate, affordable, safe, reliable public and assisted transportation.
5. **Healthcare:** All seniors have access to adequate, affordable, responsive, timely healthcare services.
6. **Safety and Security of Older Citizens:** All seniors are safe in their environment.
7. **Urban Design:** All seniors live in an environment that is safe, age-friendly and with a range of accessible services.
8. **Housing:** All seniors have safe and affordable housing suitable to their capacity and needs, with easy access to appropriate services.
9. **Income Security:** All seniors have an adequate income to meet their basic needs.

The group identified the gaps in a few of these

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areas and will get together again in September to complete the gap identification, give some priorities of where ESCC member organizations can have some influence and start crafting some action statements. It is the hope of the group that the action statements will be the catalyst for some sector initiatives and improvements.

## ***What does this mean to service providers?***

You have an opportunity to share your expertise and

make the needs of your clients known by giving input on the visions. There will also be opportunities for all of us to discuss how services can improve in order to realize these visions.

It is an exciting time to be involved in services to seniors and we can all have a hand in reducing barriers and reducing gaps in services for local seniors. Watch the ESCC Link-Letter for announcements of workshop/forum session(s) in the fall.

## SENIOR CENTRE PROMOTIONAL DVD



The ESCC is very supportive of seniors centres and the role they play in helping keep people connected to their communities through educational programming, recreation opportunities, meal provision, social events, and support services. There are 16 seniors centres in Edmonton and we want to showcase their good work and make sure that people know about the opportunities available locally. We felt a good way to do this was to produce a promotional video, "Come On In", that will introduce people to the various aspects of seniors centres, dispel myths, and welcome people to visit a centre and try some of the programs or amenities.

The video project was overseen by a committee of representatives from four of the local centres and ESCC staff, with the help of a local film producer, Tim Folkmann. We began work in the fall of 2007 and we recently received the finished product to distribute this fall (2008). In the video, seniors from local centres speak candidly about why they go to the centres and what benefits they recognize from their involvement. It's a very positive, feel-good 10-minute film and we are very proud of its professional quality. The seniors are all very eloquent (totally unrehearsed) and their testimonials are all heartfelt. We want their enthusiasm to pass to other people so they too can reap the benefits that follow from getting involved with a centre. Our plan is to get the video into circulation on local television and through seniors centres, doctors' offices, hospital waiting rooms, libraries, etc. We will have an official DVD release party early in October at Westend Seniors Activity Centre, so stay tuned for more details.



Call ESCC to obtain a free copy (for professional purposes) at 780.423.5635. Our special thanks to all the seniors who so willingly agreed to be filmed and to the representatives from the centres who helped with the video: Sabina Burgess - Westend Seniors Activity Centre, Elaun Cable-Lind - South East Edmonton Seniors Association, Brigitte Cormier - Northgate Lions, and Karen Spencer and Vina Locke - Calder Seniors Drop In Centre.

## SNOW ANGELS PROGRAM

By Sheila Hallett  
ESCC Executive Director

A number of factors -- the danger to seniors posed by shovelling snow from their walks in an attempt to comply with the city's regulation that this be done within 48 hours of a snowfall, the inability of some seniors to even undertake such a task, and the danger to the general public resulting from slips and falls on uncleared pathways -- prompted the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and the City of Edmonton to initiate a Snow Angels program in 2007-2008.

People were exhorted to "earn your wings" by shovelling the public sidewalk of someone not be able to do so, and beneficiaries of such services were encouraged to nominate their shoveller(s) as a Snow Angel. ESCC followed up on these nominations by sending the nominators a pin and a letter from the Mayor to present to the individual(s) who helped them out during the winter months.

Expectations for the first year of the program were modest -- organizers hoped for at least 60

nominations -- but the response from the public exceeded that projection by a wide margin. A total of 258 nominators submitted the names of 335 Snow Angels. The City provided a number of prizes to some of the Angels through a draw at the end of the season but the primary value of the program was clearly the manner in which it enabled seniors to express gratitude and appreciation, in a very tangible way, for a service they value highly.

Emergency Medical Services report a dramatic increase in calls for cardiac illness and arrest on days with heavy snowfalls. People who don't clear their walks in a timely manner are subject to an \$85 fine. And unshovelled walks pose the danger not only of falls resulting in potentially serious injury, they also make the work of emergency response personnel, letter carriers and waste collectors difficult and dangerous.

The Snow Angels program will therefore run again in 2008-2009, beginning with the first snowfall.

The Mayor is to meet with the Minister during the last week in August. Two motions were passed at the July 14 Community Services Committee.

3. That Administration report back to the Community Services Committee in early 2009, outlining how to integrate the issue of Aging in Place within the Great Neighbourhoods Strategy.
4. That Administration prepare a report on approaches and best practices to integrate Aging in Place principles in new and infill community planning, and report to the Community Services Committee at the same time as the report outlining how to integrate the issue of Aging in Place with the Great Neighbourhoods Strategy.

### *What does this mean to service providers?*

It means that while the City of Edmonton acknowl-

edges the special needs of the frail older adults, it is looking to the Province to take the lead in initiatives. The Province of Alberta, meanwhile, has struck the Demographic Planning Commission to look to the future and advise government about future directions. The Commission's report will be presented to the Minister this fall, but may not be made public for several months thereafter. You can give your opinions about the supports that will be needed as the Baby Boomers age. The survey is available until the end of August at [www.TomorrowsSeniors.alberta.ca](http://www.TomorrowsSeniors.alberta.ca), or you can call toll-free 1-800-642-3853 to have one mailed to you.

For more information on this article, visit  
<http://www.edmonton.ca/CommPeople/AgingIn-PlaceStudy20071231.pdf>

## RESIDENCES STRUGGLING TO COPE WITH SENIORS SCOOTERS

By Rich Gossen  
ESCC Communications Coordinator

Seniors who are considering buying or renting a three or four-wheeled scooter may find the information they're getting from usually reliable sources is somewhat disconnected from the "reality" they'll discover in their communities.

The Public Health Agency of Canada's "guide to choosing and using assistive devices", for example, focuses on empowering information that will help seniors, veterans, individuals with a disability and their caregivers find "the right solutions".

The guide is full of emphatic statements such as, "This process is about your life, your activities and your lifestyle!" "Don't believe your troubles can't be solved. They can!" "Never just accept things as they are. Almost anything is possible today!"

"Don't think you must accept a solution if you don't feel it's the right one," the guide goes on to say. "You're the only person who knows what's right for you."

The benefits of assistive devices include maintaining independence, conserving energy and reducing dependence on family and caregivers, the guide points out.

"Yours and others' perception of your disability and of assistive devices has an impact on your self-confidence, your social relations and your ability to cope with activities."

This view is reinforced by other organizations such as Alberta Easter Seals. It received a \$33,000 grant from a foundation in Calgary last year to purchase scooters

## AGING IN PLACE UPDATE

By Sheila Hallett  
ESCC Executive Director

The City of Edmonton Community Services "Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Strategy" was discussed at the Community Services Committee meeting July 14, 2008 and taken to City Council July 23. While the strategy did not get the go-ahead it needed from City Council, the following motions were passed:

1. That the Mayor, on behalf of City Council, meet the Minister of Seniors and Community Support with the intent of outlining a

possible Provincial/Municipal Partnership in funding and delivering an Aging in Place Strategy, and report back to the September 8, 2008 Community Services Committee meeting.

2. That Administration, following the Mayor's meeting with the Minister, follow up with all relevant Provincial departments and report back to a Community Services Committee meeting in January 2009.

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for 14 seniors with disabilities. Without this gift, these seniors would be isolated from their communities, the January 2007 Easter Seals eNewsletter states.

“Scooters can be the only means of mobility for many people, providing freedom and independence. (Scooters) allow people to access community services and social activities, engage in volunteerism and family outings, and add to their greater health and mental well-being.”

One recipient talked about her scooter enriching her life by enabling her to get groceries on her own, do her personal banking, see more of her neighbourhood and spend time in nearby parks.

### CLAIMS

Which brings us back to the disconnect between those who point out the benefits and advantages of scooters and those who express concern for safety in environments in which scooters share space with other pedestrians.

Mike Caverhill, special project coordinator for driver programs and licensing standards with Alberta Transportation, notes that persons using mobility aids are classified, under the province’s Traffic Safety Act, as pedestrians.

“There are no requirements for an operator’s licence, registration, insurance, helmet or vehicle equipment.” Operators must follow all restrictions that apply to pedestrians but beyond that do not require training.

“To the best of my knowledge,” he says, “there isn’t an active review of the mobility aid issue.”

While incidents such as the death of an elderly Victoria-area man last year, who was caught under the wheels of a dump truck while driving his new scooter, make the headlines, safety issues of a less dramatic nature concern the managers of at least some seniors residences in Edmonton.

### CONCERNS

Meadowcroft Seniors Residence banned scooters effective July 31 and took a lot of flack for doing so,

says director Reg Appleyard. Nonetheless, he stands behind the assertion that scooters are dangerous.

Even if the injuries caused aren’t life-threatening, having your toes run over isn’t any fun. This happened to quite a few people, he says, and it reached the point where some residents were living in fear and staying in their rooms rather than risk attending social events and activities.

When you have 450 residents and only 10 have scooters but are affecting the quality of life of everyone else, something has to be done, Appleyard points out. Meadowcroft doesn’t take issue with residents who require mobility aids for health reasons, but the people who enjoy scooters as a “toy” tend to do so because the devices accelerate quickly and travel at high speeds. And it’s these very qualities that increase the danger associated with their use.

Scooters track in mud, wreck carpets and bang into walls, Appleyard says, but these are minor irritants that can be fixed. It’s not nearly as easy to “fix a person” who has been hit or run over.

Seniors apartments such as Meadowcroft come under the jurisdiction of the Residential Tenancies Act, he adds, and it places the primary responsibility for ensuring the safety of residents on the landlord. Failure to act responsibly could result in penalties.

Meadowcroft promises its tenants a safe, independent living experience and allowing scooters to jeopardize these good intentions can’t be tolerated.

### SPACE

Kiwanis Place Retirement Homes, which is classified as a lodge rather than an apartment, does allow scooters, says assistant manager Mary Hillman, but only after the resident has obtained permission.

“We want to make sure that people actually need them,” she says.

Safety is a factor, and operators are advised they must handle their scooters responsibly and with respect for others, but the main issue the lodge

faces is lack of space. Residents who need scooters must store them in their rooms, even though these are relatively small, because fire regulations do not permit hallways to be blocked. Smaller lodges have sometimes had to decline residents who require mobility aids simply due to lack of space, she says.

Kiwanis Place doesn’t have room for scooters in its dining area and driving scooters off of elevators sometimes creates problems, particularly if the operator isn’t careful enough about checking for people who are waiting to get on. The lodge doesn’t have a garage or covered area outside where operators can park their scooters and this sometimes factors into the decision not to buy one, Hillman says. Most rooms are bachelor apartments, which makes them susceptible to damage if operators don’t exercise caution.

One resident put his scooter through his closet doors while he was learning to operate it and he had to pay to have the doors replaced. The lodge now has a clause in its tenancy agreement covering scooters and the damage they cause.

Renate Sainsbury, with Lifestyle Options, hasn’t noticed a dramatic increase in the number of people wanting to use scooters to maintain their independence but those that do must abide by an agreement that is part of their lease package. The agreement looks at risk and liability, and requires that scooters be operated safely.

Residents may have to submit to an assessment by an occupational therapist if deemed necessary.

“We have suites that can accommodate scooters, as they have storage (spaces) that hold a scooter, and also our dining rooms are being made larger to accommodate scooters and electric wheelchairs.

“We can deal with issues, as we have made the agreement part of the lease package.

“We also let people know that they can park (their scooters) downstairs in the winter months.”

### STUDY

The emerging issues of older residences struggling to deal with newer forms of conveyance that require more space than is available, and of all

residences wishing to protect their residents from danger, point to the need for more study.

An indication of how little the issues

have been studied comes from the director of the University College of the Fraser Valley’s Centre for Education and Research on Aging.

Dr. Pieter Steyn believes that UCFV researchers initiated the first study of its kind in Canada when they began looking at safety issues related to three and four-wheel scooters late last year.

He raises the question of whether scooters should be driven on a sidewalk or in a bike lane. “And who has the right of way: the cyclist, the pedestrian, or the scooter? “There are issues with safety, driver fitness, and even insurance,” he adds.

The UCFV study will examine whether scooter users should be assessed before they purchase one, whether scooters need to be registered, the speed they travel at, and whether they should be insured in some form.

“From a research point of view we want to have a very good understanding of where people go with these, why they go somewhere with a scooter, whether it’s their only way to get around, and whether they use these at night or in inclement weather.”

Steyn hopes that CERA can eventually develop recommendations and draft guidelines that will establish policy framework and educational programs related to use of mobility scooters.

“Safety is a factor, and operators are advised they must handle their scooters responsibly and with respect for others...”

## PUBLIC EDUCATION THE FIRST STEP IN ADDRESSING ISSUES, SAYS SENIORS ADVOCATE

By Rich Gossen  
ESCC Communications Coordinator

Lise Storgaard is well aware of the advantages provided by scooters for persons with mobility issues.

The Seniors United Now representative on Edmonton's Seniors Transportation Steering Committee became an advocate on issues related to scooter use years ago following an accident that temporarily incapacitated her daughter.

Now that Storgaard is trying to deal with her own medical issues and has been advised to consider getting a scooter to help her get around, she is finding that there still isn't much understanding and acceptance of these mobility aids in public places.

### RESISTANCE

Though, from the operator's standpoint, scooters have become potentially more comfortable and more stable (less prone to tipping over), thereby making it easier for someone like herself to shop and travel greater distances than would previously have been possible or advisable, these advantages are counterbalanced by the "nightmare" of trying to navigate grocery store aisles crowded by displays of merchandise and the lack of acceptance of scooters by many seniors residences.

Hardly any seniors lodges welcome scooters, she says, and even those that do require a lot of consultation before providing consent.

Then there's the problem, in older buildings, of finding parking spaces for scooters. Rooms are

often small and, if the scooter is left outdoors, the owner has to worry about theft and vandalism.

Scooters can't be parked in residence hallways because of fire regulations.

Some coffee shops appear to try and get rid of customers on scooters because of the amount of space they take up, and some store owners don't even want scooters left on the sidewalk in front of their place of business.

Newer lodges, and those that recognize the benefits of walkers, wheelchairs and scooters for their residents, make efforts to accommodate them even though they take up a lot of space. The newer walkers are wider and deeper than the earlier models, Storgaard points out, and wheelchairs have more padding than was once the case, making them bigger as well.

This makes them more comfortable for users and also provides benefits for the residences, since more padding makes it less likely that walls will be scratched or other forms of damage will occur, but often the "disadvantages" are given more weight in public opinion than the "advantages".

### SAFETY

Safety considerations, on the other hand, still aren't getting much attention, Storgaard says. Increased availability of scooters and more purchase options

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haven't translated into driver training. Many seniors are simply advised to take their scooter out and "play with it" until they're comfortable with its use. With common sense often in short supply, safety becomes a financial issue, she points out. While lawsuits over collisions with other scooters or pedestrians aren't widespread, they're not unheard of either.

Some residences attempt to minimize the potential for collisions and other mishaps during peak periods such as meal times by providing "valet parking". That is, staff remove walkers and scooters from the dining area after seniors have taken their place at the table, parking the aids in a safe place in the centre or at the edges of the room, and bring the devices back to their owners after meals are completed.

But potentially more serious collisions can occur when scooters are operated outdoors. Storgaard points to an incident in Edmonton a little over a year ago in which an operator was hit in a crosswalk by a delivery truck backing up to exit a parking lot. The incident resulted in the death of the scooter operator after he was caught under the truck's wheels and dragged.

### SOLUTIONS

*So what's the answer to addressing these issues?*

It starts with more education leading to greater awareness and acceptance of the needs of others, Storgaard says.

*Should seniors on scooters be accommodated on bike paths?*

*Do high pedestrian areas such as 82 Avenue, as well as sporting events and parks, need to set aside areas for scooter parking?*

*Do we need to look more closely at Alzheimer's and dementia as these conditions apply to use of scooters?*

*Are individuals with these conditions able to recognize the dangers of turning too sharply or veering too far left or right and hitting other people or objects?*

*Should scooters be considered motorized vehicles, thereby requiring operators to pass a driving test and perhaps get insurance, or should operators be considered pedestrians, as they now are in the Province of Alberta?*

Edmonton aims to become a more walkable community and yet it doesn't seem to recognize the needs of seniors who wish to continue "walking" as long as possible by using mobility aids, Storgaard says.

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Lise Storgaard talks with Healthcare Solutions president Brian Scherba about scooter purchase options during a visit to the store's southside location at 5405 - 99 Ave.

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*What policies are going to be put in place to address, and encourage others to address, mobility issues?*

*How is the need for scooter parking areas in public places going to be accommodated?*

Very few people are even asking these questions, she says.

Yes, seniors sometimes create their own problems through inappropriate actions, she acknowledges. There's even a term for it: "senior bullying". Seniors can be too aggressive with each other even with walkers, let alone scooters.

And yes, in order for lodges and other residences to accommodate scooters, staff may be inconvenienced by a shift in job responsibilities.

But mobility is a right, Storgaard says: a right that needs to be regulated so that mobility occurs in an orderly fashion and a right that needs to be pursued with consideration for others, but a right nonetheless.

Residences shouldn't be allowed to refuse potential clients due to their use of mobility aids (waiting lists are "phenomenal" at the best of times, she notes, and no one should be placed at an additional disadvantage).

*Where's the sensitivity to the needs of others, she asks. And where's the recognition by those who enforce rules and procedures that they, in the not too distant future, may well require mobility aids themselves?*

Managers and caregivers need help in dealing with the issues, developers and builders need to recognize the new reality of space requirements and movement patterns, and legislators need to look at revising codes and regulations in response to the realities of the new millennium.

Making laws and regulations universal will help to make things easier for everyone, Storgaard says.

## ESCC THREE-YEAR EVALUATION

By Sheila Hallett  
ESCC Executive Director

We have learned a great deal through the ESCC three-year evaluation that is just in its final stages. Overall we are encouraged that senior-serving agencies and stakeholders are seeing the value of the ESCC and can see collaborative action and results. We've heard examples from stakeholders of strengthened connections, increased capacity within the sector, action on issues as a result of focused efforts and reduced mistrust. The qualitative review will be handed over to the ESCC Board at their September 29th

meeting and will be posted on our website shortly thereafter.

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine what difference ESCC has made to senior-serving agencies, to understand people's experience of collaboration, determine whether the goals and desired outcomes are being achieved, and formulate some action-oriented recommendations for operational improvements of ESCC. The three-year evaluation was completed with the help of an in-

dependent consultant (Alana LaPerle Consulting) and assistance from an evaluator in the Innovation Section of the City of Edmonton.

*"The three-year evaluation will help us focus our efforts on what members are finding beneficial and will also guide us in making improvements to other areas."*

The evaluators were guided by a team of ESCC Board and Staff and they conducted more 37 interviews with stakeholders and collected a few completed questionnaires that were accessed from our website.

Since the mid-term evaluation was completed in the fall of 2006, a program logic model and a strategic plan have been developed to guide the ESCC's work. The model divides our work into four categories: communication, internal organizational development, representation, and community development. The three-year evaluation will help us focus our efforts on what members are finding beneficial and will also guide us in making improvements to other areas.

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council was set up following the final report of the Edmonton Task Force on Community Services for Seniors released in late 2003. The Council was formed late in 2004 with the help of a Transition Team and the ESCC has now been operating for more than three full years.

The ESCC was established to provide a mechanism for coordinating the efforts and resources of senior serving organizations in the City of Edmonton to meet the demand for services presented by the demographic shift in our population.

Thank you to all who took the time to share your thoughts and ideas.



### BROCHURE CREATION AND WEBSITE IMPROVEMENTS UNDERWAY

The ESCC will soon have a brochure to reflect our visual identity and provide information about our organization.

This will help us to increase our visibility and raise awareness about our work. We will also be re-vamping our website slightly to include a transportation database and a database on cultural information.

Our website will also reflect our visual identity, and it will continue to provide all the information you have come to expect and more.

Watch the Link-Letter for announcements of the website redevelopment and let us know if you are having any trouble finding information or making links.



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