

## **Fire Risk Assessment Document #3**

### **SENIORS:**

*Source: Fact Sheet: A Portrait of Alberta Seniors .August 2005. Alberta Seniors and Community Supports.*

#### **Shifting Demographics**

- Seniors currently make up 10% of Alberta's total population. It is anticipated that by 2026, one in five Albertans will be a senior. This means that the seniors population will double to ~700,000 in 2026 from the current ~330,000 in 2005.
- The seniors population is growing at a faster rate than the rest of the Alberta population, resulting in an aging population. The aging of the population should be relatively gradual until 2011. The rate of growth will then accelerate, as baby boomers will begin to turn 65.
- Alberta attracted the second highest number of senior inter-provincial net migrants after British Columbia from July 2003 to June 2004. Since 1984, more seniors have moved into Alberta from other parts of Canada than moved out.
- In 2001, female seniors accounted for 56% of the seniors' population, whereas males made up 44% of the population. Female seniors are more likely to be single than men because they have a higher life expectancy and therefore outlive their husbands.

#### **Living Arrangements**

- The majority of seniors live in urban areas. As seniors age, the percentage that live in urban areas increases.
- Most seniors own their homes (78%). Approximately four out of five seniors who own their own homes have paid off their mortgage.
- Approximately 11% of seniors are renters, 7% live in provincial housing programs and 4% are in long-term care.
- In general, seniors live in smaller and older homes but are more likely to assess their dwellings as requiring only regular maintenance.
- Approximately 13% of Alberta households headed by a senior have children living in the home.

#### **Income and Expenditures**

- Seniors families' average pre-tax income went up from 2002 to 2003. Despite this recent increase, seniors' incomes have remained relatively stable in the last decade.
- According to the 2001 Census, seniors' average income was \$26,336 in 2000. This is approximately \$5,000 lower than the average income for Alberta's population in general.

- Seniors receive income from a variety of sources. Almost all Alberta seniors receive some income from government transfer payments but the majority of seniors' income comes from non-government sources.
- Alberta seniors' spending patterns are different than those of the overall Alberta population. For instance, in 2003, seniors spent an average of \$1,166 per person on health care. This is approximately \$440 more per person than the amount spent by non-seniors.

### **Heritage**

- Seniors are more likely to have been born outside of Canada than the Alberta population in general. This is particularly true among those aged 90 and over. Seniors who were born outside of Canada come from many parts of the world.
- The mother tongue of almost one-third of Alberta seniors is neither English nor French, however the vast majority are able to converse in English.
- There are over 5,000 Aboriginal seniors in Alberta. Overall, Aboriginal seniors are younger than the general senior population with a higher percentage in the 65-69 age category and a lower percentage in the 70-84 age category.

### **Labour and Education**

- In 2003, 11.2% of Alberta residents over the age of 65 participated in the provincial workforce. Alberta seniors are more active in the labour force than other Canadian seniors. Employed seniors are more likely to work in the farming industry, part-time, from home and be self-employed than other Albertans.
- Just over half (55.5%) of seniors have less than a high school education. Almost 5% (4.6%) of seniors have trade credentials, 8.2% have a college certificate or diploma and 9.9% have university qualifications. In all, 25.8% of seniors have qualifications beyond high school. Educational outcome varies by gender.

### **Health and Community Involvement**

- The majority of seniors rate their health as "excellent", "very good" or "good." It is believed that today's seniors are healthier than previous generations of seniors.
- Seniors are involved in their communities. Approximately one in five seniors participated in some form of volunteer work in 2000 and over 80 percent made financial donations to charities in 2000.
  - Smoking and drinking are less common among seniors. Approximately 12% of seniors considered themselves daily or occasional smokers, compared to 23% of the total provincial population
  - In 2003, 39% of Alberta seniors were physically active or moderately active and 53% were inactive. 40% of senior men and 37% of senior women reported that they were physically active. The percentage of Alberta seniors reporting low social support increased from 1.4% in 1996 to 4.6% in 2000.

### Prevalence of Disability

PALS 2001 data is the most current source of disability statistics currently available in Canada and is used by governments, researchers/academics, service organizations, and the public.

- Total Alberta population: 2,243,970
- Total Alberta population with disabilities: 331, 760 (14.8% of total pop.)
- Nearly half of all Alberta seniors (45.7%) reported having disabilities. This is a total of 122,290 seniors.
- Prevalence was 3.4% higher for females aged 65 to 74 than for their male counterparts (37% and 33.6% respectively).
- Prevalence became slightly higher for males aged 75+ than for their female counterparts (56.7%, 55.5%).

### Total Number of Alberta Seniors with Disabilities by Type\*

Disability	Total Number
Hearing	51,530
Seeing	22,330
Speech	8,320
Mobility	89,830
Agility	81,910
Pain	79,240
Learning	4,500
Memory	14,540
Developmental	N/A
Psychological	6,520
Unknown	4,190

**Source:** Alberta Human Resources and Employment, *Alberta Profile: Persons with Disabilities in the Labour Force*, January 2004

**\*Note:** that when added up, the totals will not equal the total number of seniors with disabilities. This is because individuals may report more than one disability.

Of Albertans living in households 12.5% were reported as having activity limitations or a disability rate of 12.5% in 2001. The disability rate increases with age. Survey results confirm that the disability rate gradually increases with age. From 3.3% among children aged 0 to 14, it rises to nearly 10% among adults aged 15 to 64 and climbs to more than

40% among persons aged 65 and over. In fact, more than half (53.3%) of persons 75 and over report having a disability. Within the population aged 15 to 64, this gradual increase is reflected in a rate of about 4% among young adults 15 to 24 years of age, compared to 7.1% among persons aged 25 to 44 and 16.7% among those aged 45 to 64.

**Disability related to mobility affects the greatest number of adults** Mobility problems are the type of disability most often reported by adults aged 15 and over. In 2001, nearly 2.5 million or 10.5% of Canadians had difficulty walking, climbing stairs, carrying an object for a short distance, standing in line for 20 minutes or moving about from one room to another. For all age groups, women were more likely to have mobility problems than men. Indeed, among adults aged 15 and over, there was a significant difference in the overall proportion of women (12.2%) and men (8.6%) with a mobility-related disability. **Disability among Persons Aged 65 and Over Mobility problems affect eight in ten seniors with disabilities** Mobility problems affect more than 1,1 million persons aged 65 and over, or nearly eight persons in ten with disabilities. Nationally, 23.3% of adults aged 65 to 74 reported having mobility problems, and the rate climbed to 42.9% for those 75 and over. **Mobility problems more common among women 65 and over.** Women are more likely to have mobility difficulties. Among those with a disability, nearly 84% had difficulty moving about. By comparison, 70% of men with disabilities aged 65 and over reported having mobility problems. Notwithstanding the fact that the average age of women is certainly greater than that of men in that same age group, there is a substantial difference between the sexes. **Memory problems: the less visible disability most widespread among adults aged 65 and over .** *Source:* Catalogue no. 89-577-XIE **A Profile of Disability in Canada, 2001.**