

ABORIGINAL HOUSING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



AHMA ENERGY CHAMPION



Kekinow Native Housing Society

"Providing affordable housing for Aboriginal People."

PROFILE

Dawn-Marie Hugh, Property Manager at KNHS, is from George Gordon's First Nation in Saskatchewan.

Dawn-Marie joined KNHS in November 2022. She has over 25 years of housing experience in the not-for-profit housing sector. She takes pride in working for an Indigenous organization and finds giving back to her community enriching.

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HOUSING SOCIETY

Kekinow Native Housing Society (KNHS) is in the traditional, unceded territories of the Katzie, Semiahmoo, Kwantlen, and other Coast Salish Peoples. KNHS is an Indigenous non-profit housing provider and AHMA member. The Society opened its doors in 1987 and has since developed 239 units across five complexes in Surrey and one in Chilliwack. KNHS aims to meet the growing need for housing by expanding its portfolio of culturally supportive homes for Indigenous people.

Alice Jeffrey, an Indigenous Artist of the Gitxsan Nation, designed KNHS's logo. The outer perimeters represent the Longhouse, which once housed many of the tribal nations of British Columbia. Within the Longhouse is the thunderbird drawn in bold black and red. Black represents Indigenous ancestors, and red is for our continuing bloodlines. The thunderbird is a mythical creature endowed with strength, swiftness, far-sightedness, and loyalty to its young. When met with adversity, it would alight the heavens with lightning and roaring thunder – a creature that is never defeated. The frog in the center symbolizes the artist, who is of the Frog Clan. Lastly, the beavers in the wings of the thunderbird represent the hard work and endurance of the Board of Directors and employees of KNHS.

ENERGY JOURNEY

In 2023, AHMA shared information about the Energy Conservation Assistance Program (ECAP) with KNHS's CEO, Rupinder Cheema. Staff contacted the program delivery agent, [Its On Electric](#), who helped them apply, provided free home energy assessments, and installed energy-saving products at one of their sites.

ABORIGINAL HOUSING MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

AHMA

AHMA is an umbrella organization composed of 55 Members that are each Indigenous Housing and Service providers. Our members represent over 10,000 Indigenous families living in urban, rural, and northern regions of British Columbia.

Created for Indigenous Peoples by Indigenous Peoples, we are the first Indigenous Housing Authority in Canada and only the second globally. We are direct partners with the Provincial government, and our mission is to advance the housing rights of all Indigenous Peoples living in BC.

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Several units received Energy Star fridges, weather stripping, in-unit thermostats, and LED lighting. Lighting was also upgraded in common areas, exterior grounds, and parking areas to promote safety. Dawn-Marie is grateful to the Its On Electric team. The technicians and coordinator were friendly and excellent to work with.

TENANT BENEFITS

ECAP allowed KNHS's staff to connect tenants with energy-saving products. The building service workers became aware of concerns in several new areas. For instance, a report of a lack of hot water led to the inspection and replacement of the hot water tank with an energy-efficient tank.

Both staff and tenants enjoy the increased lighting outside the complex, which adds security and makes the property look more attractive and well-maintained. Tenants were pleased to receive a new fridge and get weather-stripping installed, which limits the drafts inside their suites. Tenants also benefited from the newly installed thermostats. Initially, tenants were unsure how to set the temperature, but KNHS's dedicated staff provided instructions and support so that tenants could learn how to use them properly.

KNHS team believes knowledge sharing with tenants is vital so they can be stewards of their homes and understand the benefits of energy efficiency for themselves and Mother Earth.

ENERGY ADVICE

KNHS believes it takes everyone in a Housing Society: board members, executive leadership, all staff, tenants, and partners to transition to an energy-efficiency pathway. As an Indigenous Housing provider, KNHS sees how energy conservation work aligns with their Indigenous values. KNHS holds their hands up to everyone involved. Dawn-Marie said:

"We could not engage in this project without the Building Service Workers on site. They have been instrumental in gathering a higher response rate from the tenants."

Dawn-Marie acknowledges her team for supporting this project: Building Service Workers Anthony Merasty, Teusia Baleinamoto, Jose Cruz Reyes, and Property Administrator Lavonne Gucake.

