

In the first step of moving Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) hearings out of the Provincial Court System, Service Alberta announced that as of March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 Landlord and tenant dispute services will be available to an additional 80,000 Albertans, through the Residential Tenancy Dispute Resolution Service (RTDRS).

### **RTDRS will now hear RTA disputes for landlords and tenants throughout Alberta**

Landlords and Tenants who resided in Southern Alberta and who had claims or disputes under the RTA, previously had no option but apply for a hearing through the Provincial Court System or through Court of Queen's Bench. While landlords and tenants located in the Calgary Judicial system or anywhere within Northern Alberta were eligible to have their claims heard by an RTDRS Hearing Officer either in person or over the phone, depending on the location of the landlord/tenants.

RTDRS provides an easier and less expensive option to landlords and tenants to have their disputes heard and ruled upon. Seventy five dollar filing fee and neither party need to have legal representation. Most RTDRS hearings can be completed and a ruling granted usually within 2-3 weeks from start to finish.

### **Excerpt from Service Alberta's Announcement dated February 25, 2015:**

*"RTDRS is a quasi-judicial tribunal created in 2006 as a quicker, more affordable system to help tenants and landlords resolve disputes over issues such as security deposits, rent debts, tenancy terminations, and damages. RTDRS operates similar to a court and uses the Residential Tenancies Act and its various regulations as a reference. Since its inception, RTDRS has diverted more than 55,000 matters from the courts."*

*"Expanding the dispute resolution service increases access to justice for Albertans and frees up needed court resources to deal with other matters."*

*Jonathan Denis, Minister of Justice and Solicitor General*

### **RTDRS Claim Maximums**

As per the small claims maximum, RTDRS hearing officers can hear and rule on any claims up to \$50,000. All rulings are binding on both parties. If one of the parties wishes to appeal an RTDRS ruling, the appeal must be heard by Court of Queen's Bench.

### **RTDRS Hearing Services**

Consolidated is pleased to offer RTDRS hearing services to landlords who would prefer to have an agent attend on their behalf in the hearing. Consolidated maintains a 100% success rate for RTDRS hearings and is looking forward to assisting landlords throughout Southern Alberta as well as our current clientele.

If you have any questions on how we can assist your clients with their RTDRS needs or with the enforcement of an order obtained from RTDRS, please do not hesitate to contact our offices.

**Patricia Wilson**

Director, Civil Enforcement