

# Social policy think-tank to close its doors

BY KATHRYN MAY, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN    OCTOBER 27, 2009

OTTAWA — One of Canada's leading social policy think-tanks is closing its doors because lack of funding.

The well-respected Canadian Policy Research Networks announced on its website Monday that it plans to close at year-end, ending 15 years of independent public policy research and evidence gathering to support Canada's decision and policy-making.

"This is a sad day for Canada," said CPRN president Sharon Manson Singer. "Independent research is an essential component of good policy-making. Canada cannot afford to lose this capacity which has been declining in recent years."

Many say CPRN never recovered financially after the Harper government cut the agency's \$3 million a year funding in 2006. CPRN's closing is a major blow for Canada's think-tanks and research institutions, which are feeling the double whammy of the economic slowdown and a political climate that shows little interest in research and gathering hard data on public problems.

Frank Graves of Ekos Research Associates said CPRN's closing is a "further withering of an already impoverished research capacity" in Canada. He said government interest in research has never been so low, compared to the U.S., where generously funded think-tanks are "exploding with intellectual inquiry." He attributed part of the problem to minority governments, which are more focused on political survival than long-term policy-making.

CPRN was founded by Judith Maxwell, the former chair of the Economic Council of Canada and began operation in 1994 with a long-term funding commitment from the federal government, along with project funding from other levels of government.

"Unfortunately, in these tough economic times, without a steady and long-term financial commitment, an independent, non-partisan organization like CPRN is no longer viable," said Manson Singer.

CPRN, which employs 22 full and part-time staff and has a networks of 16 research associates and fellows across the country, plans to close Dec. 23.

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