

June 20, 2015

Report on Chamber Activities -Town/County Presentation

The St. Paul & District Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) has a rich history of involvement in the community since its incorporation under the *Board of Trade Act* in 1929 (also incorporated under the *Alberta Societies Act* in 1994). However, as times change the Chamber needs to be responsive to the needs of the membership and the community and develop a better understanding of its role amidst an age of multi-media and duplicity of services.

The mission of the St. Paul & District Chamber of Commerce, as a volunteer organization, is to promote commercial, industrial and civic well-being in our community.

The Chamber is scheduled to conduct strategic planning activities, however in anticipation of that session, the Chamber has chosen to focus on the following activities:

- To develop and foster a greater understanding of the needs and wants of the membership and the business community;
- To increase visibility and engagement by the Board and staff within the business community;
- To create sustainable activities, programs and events which engage the business community and support their efforts.

In support of the areas identified, the Chamber has been involved in the following activities:

Committees, Partnerships & Community Support

- Town of St. Paul/Town Marketing Committee - The Chamber is an active member of the Town Marketing Committee, recently assisting the Town by compiling a Town Security Questionnaire and providing feedback. Other projects/items include: Communities in Bloom, Town/Chamber signage and the 2014 Wild Pink Yonder.
- Champions for Change Downtown Revitalization Committee - As part of the Downtown Committee the Chamber has been involved with planning and preparations for the Shiver Fest, Canada Day, Street Art Project, Communities in Bloom, and Party in the Park. In addition, the Chamber has brought to the Committee the Canada 150 Project and the Christmas Super Saturday event.
- Adult Learning - The Chamber sat on the Committee organizing the Health & Wellness Expo held in May of 2015. In planning for the 2016 Health & Wellness

Expo, there is thought that the Chamber may be able to expand the event hosting a trade fair to run concurrently with the Expo.

- Canada 150 Committee - The Chamber is heading the Canada 150 Committee with initial partnerships with the Town, Journal, and Downtown Committee. Additional organizations and individuals have been invited to take part in the planning of Canada's 150th birthday celebrations in 2017.
- HUB, AB Works, Jobs Skills Training & Labour, Town of St. Paul and Community Futures (CF) - The Chamber partners with these agencies to bring Employee Attraction and Retention Network (EARN) Events to the community. In addition, the partnership also funds and supports the Finding Work Series Profiles generated for St. Paul & District businesses, with the Chamber taking on the role to collect data and compile the Profiles. The partnership has also indicated support for the Chamber's the Small Business Week event in October.
- Ag Society - The Chamber takes part in the LRA Rodeo Finals, hosted by the Ag Society, by holding a Rodeo Kick-Off Supper and managing the event schedule. In the past the Chamber also assisted in the parade preparations and continues to provide the parade manual and information regarding the parade.
- Community Futures - The Chamber works with the CF to provide workshops and initiatives. Initiatives include: Stop the Insanity Workshop, Small Business Week and Motorcycle Tourism. The CF has also invited the Chamber to sit on the North East Food Sector Group initiative encouraging the production, promotion and marketing of local food.
- Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) - The Chamber attends DMO meetings to provide input and disseminate information to Chamber members as requested/required.
- Telus - The Chamber partnered with Telus to host the Telus Innovation Bus which provided education on resources available through James Bond style tours to business owners/managers. Telus has also been a past sponsor of the Chamber's Rodeo Kick Off Supper.
- ACFA - The Chamber attended and provided support to the Concerto Celebration welcoming St. Paul into the Concerto network.
- Portage College - The Chamber took part in the Advisory Committee meetings hosted by the Portage College St. Paul campus.
- St. Paul Education Regional Division (SPERD)- The Chamber was invited to take part in the SPERD strategic planning session. The Chamber was unable to attend due to other commitments.

The Chamber, on a yearly basis, provides scholarships for SPERD students graduating from high school. This year the Chamber has approached scholarship organizers about increasing visibility of scholarship presentations and increasing scholarship opportunities to students.

- Cold Lake/Bonnyville Chronic Labour Shortage Coalition - The Chamber attended meetings of the Cold Lake/Bonnyville Chronic Labour Shortage Coalition and related Temporary Foreign Worker program. The Chamber also disseminated information from the Coalition and the cause to Chamber members.

Projects/Initiatives providing “Value Added”

- Workshops: EARN, RABC Workshops (Marketing on a Budget), Stop the Insanity, Dealing with Donations, Social Media Workshop, Wages at Work, Canada Alberta Job Grant Presentation, Lunch & Learn: Chamber Plan.

Chamber works toward the coordination and delivery workshops that have been identified as supportive and/or of value. This information is gathered through business visits and feedback from the members.

- Chamber Group Insurance Plan - The Chamber works with their new Chamber Group Insurance Provider, Michelle Poirier, to provide benefits to small businesses. The Chamber Group Insurance Plan provides services to medium-small business (including home based and farming operations) and is a revenue generator for the Chamber.
- Rodeo Kick Off Supper - The Rodeo Kick-Off Supper has been the Chamber’s largest fundraiser in the past. This year the Chamber will explore other revenue streams and will downsize the Supper to focus on the Rodeo and events taking place during the rodeo week.
- Small Business Week - The Chamber will partner with other agencies to host a Small Business Week event the third week in October. The intent is to host a supper with a guest speaker. The event is in the planning stages.
- Christmas Super Saturday - The Christmas Super Saturday event has taken place the past couple of years, however the intent for 2015 is to increase the activities during the event and draw more business participants and people into town. The Chamber has approached the Downtown Committee to assist in creating a fantastic event.
- Political Forums - As required, the Chamber has organized and hosted political forums on a municipal, Provincial and Federal level. The Chamber has tentatively selected October 6, 2015, to host the forum for the 2015 Federal election.

- SPERD Scholarships - The Chamber will work with SPERD staff to increase visibility of the SPERD scholarship program to acknowledge both students and business sponsors.
- Logo Sign Project - The Chamber manages and coordinates the Logo Sign Project with the provincial contractor to provide advertising to businesses on the large blue signs on highway 29 coming into St. Paul East and Westbound.
- Value Added Programs/Member to Member Discounts - The Chamber provides a number of Value Added Programs through the Alberta Chamber of Commerce to members in the areas of: gas discounts, banking discounts, insurance, energy discounts, etc.

On a local level, the Chamber is endeavouring to create a Member to Member Discount Program. To date, benefits through the program include a Chamber/Spur Radio advertising discount and the Sign Logo Program at a discount to members. The Chamber is currently working with other businesses to provide additional member benefits as well as a Grand Opening or Celebration Package geared at members.

- Trade Fair - The Chamber continues to investigate the interest and/or need by businesses to host a trade fair. An opportunity with Adult Learning, in conjunction with the Health & Wellness Expo, may be present but would have to further explored.
- Business Awards - The general feedback from membership has not been favourable towards having the return of business awards. However, the Chamber does feel it is important to acknowledge the accomplishments of its members and is currently looking at a “rewards” option. This option may be explored along with the Small Business Week event, wherein business and community have an opportunity to identify or self identify any achievements they or their employees may have (ie. awards from association or donations made to community).
- Networking Opportunities - The Chamber has hosted a number of meet and greet opportunities and will continue to work with members to engage in and encourage networking. Despite members indicating they want to network, attendance at the meet and greet events has been low.

Advocacy

- Local - The Chamber works to improve the local business climate, promote trade and commerce and foster a better understanding and appreciation for the opportunities, advantages and assets of the community, as well as speak to the disadvantages or threats. The Chamber works with regional Chambers, the Alberta Chamber of Commerce (ACC) and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce

(CCC) on behalf of the local membership and through an understanding of the issues at a higher level, provides input from a local perspective.

- Provincial - The ACC reviews and assesses new legislation or amendments to existing acts and appries its members of potential concerns. The ACC coordinates the voice of its 126 members to increase its advocacy efforts and assists members who may be having difficulties dealing government and beaurocratic operations.
- National - The CCC is the only national organization that speaks for 200,000 businesses on a national and international level. The CCC's views, the views of those represented, are sought after and respected by the government, business and media.

The value of the Chamber is evident in it's long history, however the Chamber cannot live on those credentials alone and must move into a role that continues provides service, support and value to the membership and the community. Together, through partnerships and strong working relationships with the municipalities, agencies (NFP and other) and membership, the Chamber can carry out its mission of promoting well-being at all levels within the community.

Board of Directors
St. Paul & District
Chamber of Commerce