



Chairs' Remarks – Claire Ryan

It has been my great pleasure to serve as the Chair of the Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce for 2017-18.

It's been an exciting year Chamber. As the voice of business for region, we have continued to build a very active advocacy agenda and events calendar to help our members make money, save money, and reduce risk.

We began the year joined by Perrin Beatty, President and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, to honour three of our member companies - G.E. Barbour's, Moosehead Breweries, and Source Atlantic - who were celebrating their 150th anniversary in conjunction with the Canada 150 festivities that took place across the country.

This was just the first of a many opportunities to celebrate success in business and interact with our members. It was another busy year for monthly Member Mixers and a dynamic slate of Distinguished Speakers Series presentations.

We continued to represent our members and advocate on their behalf on a number of key issues. Some of our most active and impactful initiatives include:

- Playing a key role in opposing the proposed changes to small business tax put forward by the federal government in 2017. We hosted a series of meeting between members and regional members of parliament on the matter, and was also invited to present to the Canadian Senate Committee on Finance during their national tour to study the issue, alongside six of our member companies. The Chamber also launched a national one-minute business strike that had participants from across the country, took part in a national letter writing campaign, and hosted two information sessions for members.

- Revamping the format for our Women in Business Forum, which has drawn in new participants from both the Chamber’s membership and the broader community. Since the beginning of 2018, the Forum has hosted a series of successful networking events. Females make up more than 60% of our members, so we’re particularly excited to be offering this kind of programming and creating opportunities for women to connect with one another.
- Uniting with five of our provincial Chamber counterparts on the “We Choose Growth” campaign leading up to the provincial election. By working together and being aligned on key issues, we hope to send a strong message to candidates and government about the role of government in creating a climate that attracts new business investment while allowing existing businesses to grow and thrive.

The Chamber represents close to 37,000 people that work for member companies, and we were successful in attracting many new members over the course of the year. Our successful advocacy efforts underscore the impact we can have when the business community speaks with a collective voice on the issues that matter to our members and the business community, and we’re pleased that local companies see the value in being a Chamber member, and the benefit of being part of the region’s largest and most active business networks.

Looking ahead, there continues to be a role for the Chamber to be at the forefront of emerging issues and opportunities to represent the best interest of members and the region.