



SAINT JOHN REGION

THE CHAMBER

CHAMPIONS FOR BUSINESS

Annual Report
2020

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**200 YEARS
STRONG**

CHAIR'S REMARKS – DEIRDRE WADE



As we come together this morning albeit virtually, we have the incredible opportunity to reflect upon the accomplishments and celebrate the success of the Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce and our members during 2019. Our bicentennial year was one that presented significant opportunities and our accolades over the past twelve months are truly the successes of our members and our business community as a whole. While we currently find ourselves in challenging and unique circumstances, we must not let this define what can easily be considered, one of the most successful years in our history.

Last year's AGM on April 5th occurred exactly 200 years to the day that a group of local business leaders met at Cody's Coffeehouse on the southeast corner of King and Prince William Streets to form an association to correspond with similar groups in other parts of Canada and in England. Following the 200th AGM we were pleased to showcase the extensive history of the Chamber in the Saint John Region and to have Premier Blaine Higgs address our celebratory luncheon.

In September, we welcomed the representatives of the many chambers of commerce from across the country, as the Saint John Region Chamber hosted, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's Annual General Meeting and Convention. This unique opportunity for the Chamber brought nearly



four-hundred delegates to the Saint John region and contributed an estimated half a million dollars in economic benefits for our local businesses. Without a doubt, this year's conference was a major success for the Chamber, our members, and the region as a whole. We were incredibly honoured in October when the 2019 Canadian Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting was awarded the "large convention of

the year award", by Hospitality Saint John. The CCC Annual General Meeting was also the setting for the Chamber's 200th Anniversary Gala celebration evening; a glamorous well attended event showcasing the Chamber's 200 years of service to the business community.

This year, the Chamber was re-accredited with distinction by the Chamber Accreditation Council of Canada. Accreditation is a formal acknowledgement that the member chamber has met rigorous standards of policy, service, and performance, as established by the Chamber Accreditation Council of Canada. We consider this accreditation as a significant vote of confidence in the work of the Chamber, over the past number of years.



Throughout our bicentennial year, we were incredibly delighted to welcome eighty-five (85) businesses as new members of the Chamber; a record-setting yearly increase. We think it is also important to highlight the fact that nearly 94% of our members come from small businesses being businesses with 1 to 99 employees.

Among our many guests this past year I would highlight presentations from Alberta Premier Jason Kenny, Canadian Consul General and former Premier David Alward, the US Consul General Kevin Skillin, Minister of the Environment and Local Government Jeff Carr, Minister of Service New Brunswick Sherry Wilson, the Leader of the Official Opposition Kevin Vickers, Mayor Don Darling and New Brunswick's Auditor General Kim MacPherson.

Throughout this past year the Chamber facilitated regional dialogue in playing an important role in promoting collaboration and long-term solutions for the good of the greater Saint John region. The Chamber advocated and continues to advocate that the Greater Saint John area must work together to outwardly and inwardly demonstrate we are a smart, innovative community. Success in this initiative will take time and the commitment of residents, businesses and government working together with a common goal in mind.

As our 200th anniversary year comes to a close I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to our departing Board members, Rob Connelly, Rob Hutton and Cynthia Goodwin and extend a warm welcome to our new Board members Christine Gilliland from Way Up Strategic Solutions, Chris Hall from Port Saint John and Ray Robinson from Saint John Energy.

While we celebrated many successes over the past year, we would not be able to accomplish any of them without the incredible team of individuals working behind the scenes at the Chamber. David, Dylan, Carole, and Randy, without your hard work and dedication, none of the incredible successes that helped to shape our bicentennial year would have been possible. On behalf of the Board of Directors and our members, I want to say an enormous “thank you” for everything that you have done and will continue to do! The four of you truly helped to make this historic year, everything that it was.

The last few months have been challenging for all of us and the Chamber understands that your interests, needs and priorities have been impacted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have all been forced to adapt our operations to these ever-changing times, and we have been inspired by the creative methods by which members have adapted to the current situation. We take our responsibilities to our members seriously, now more than ever. As we continue to navigate these ever-changing times, know that the priorities of the Saint John Region Chamber will always remain the same and that we will continue to always support and advocate for our membership.

Our bicentennial year has been one which has been dominated by the successes and accomplishments of our organization and our members of a whole. As we celebrate these successes of the past year, we should always remember that these accolades are a benefit to the region that we call home and will help to sustain and grow our communities, for decades to come.

TREASURER'S REPORT – DEAN MULLIN

The Saint John Regional Chamber of Commerce's financial goal is to ensure sustainability, growth, and financial security. Success in these goals allows the Chamber to provide services that increase value for you, the members.



With this goal always in mind and focusing on getting more out of every dollar spent, 2019 saw increased pressure on the Chamber to ensure that events are well planned, new opportunities are capitalized on and existing models adjusted as David so often says, many groups are now in our sandbox and we need to ensure events are timely for our members, efficient in their delivery and meaningful in their impact.



Our external auditors, Teed Saunders Doyle, have completed an audit of the 2019 financial statements and have issued an unqualified audit opinion.

With respect to 2019 direct activity, the Chamber experienced a small operational surplus of \$6,448. This is a decrease from 2018 of \$27,894. This is primarily related to a decreased level of contribution earned from our events as compared to 2018. However, because of our continual efforts to ensure our reporting is accurate and on a switch to a new accounting system, certain amounts were identified as not being properly removed in prior periods. As a result, the 2019 FS reflect a cumulative adjustment in 2019 of \$26,505, which results in an accounting loss for 2019 of \$20,057.

The Chamber generates its revenue primarily from two sources: memberships and special events. The membership revenue has decreased slightly to \$204,000 but our special events increased to \$450,000, a \$24,000 increase. Obviously, our events are an important part of what the Chamber does and how it continues to provide meaningful support to our members. I would encourage every member to take advantage of the events and contact the office should you have any suggestions for new events.

With respect to costs, staff continue to monitor and reduce expenses whenever and wherever possible, without impacting the services provided to members, which allows us the ability to capitalize on opportunities to better our members.

The Chamber, at the end of the fiscal year, had cash and investments of approximately \$194,000. Of this amount, \$40,000 is internally restricted to ensure the financial stability of the organization. The remaining \$154,000 is unrestricted and available to the organization for its general operating needs and assists in its ability to capitalize on future opportunities.

This is my final year as Treasurer of the Chamber and would like to thank the staff for their dedication to ensure every dollar is spent in the best way to improve the services of the Chamber to its members and to the Board for its support and its role in the financial oversight of the Organization.

CEO'S REMARKS – DAVID DUPLISEA



As we have heard from Deirdre and Dean, it really has been an unprecedented year here at the Chamber.

We have had numerous successes, some of which you heard about this morning, some you may have read about in the various media stories, and still others that are part of the collective experiences that we have all shared.

2019 represented a milestone not only for us, but for the entire Chamber of Commerce movement as well. As one of the oldest Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade in the entire country, we have survived because we have been able to remain relevant in uncertain times with challenging economic conditions. This was no easy task as you can imagine.

We have survived because our members have survived and are making their mark on our city, our province and the rest of the world.

This became even more evident as when we began our research into the story of our 200-year-old chamber. We spent many hours going through files, newspaper clippings, minutes of meetings, publications and our archives that are stored at the New Brunswick Museum.

When Lauchland Davidson first met with other local businesspeople at Cody's Coffee House to form our association, I wonder if they would have been able to imagine that we would still be here two centuries later. Whether it was creating Canada's first Chartered bank, or the invention of the world's first steam whistle at Partridge Island, we are a city and a region of innovators and believers. When Saint John's very own Mabel Thompsoin became Canada's first female golf champion in 1902, and when Robert Mawhinney invented the hydraulic system for dump trucks in 1920, they persevered because of the very same spirit and drive that fuels an entrepreneurial culture that exists to this very day.



Fast forward to 2019, and we see members continuing with this tradition of excellence. National Bank performed a major upgrade to their facilities on King Street, Port Saint John and the Saint Airport saw infrastructure improvements, and Irving Oil welcomed employees to a brand-new home office in the heart of uptown Saint John. Long time member Angus Miller Insurance celebrated their 100th anniversary, FCS Flooring and Concrete solutions celebrated 65 years, Canaport LNG celebrated 10 years in Saint John, Natasha's Weddings and Events expanded their portfolio of venues, and Italian By Night was featured on the cover of Costco's national publication. As we enter our 201st year in business, never in my wildest dreams would I have ever guessed that I would speaking with you over the internet through our first ever Virtual AGM. But this is not the first time that the Chamber, or Board of Trade has entered a new with year with such uncertainty. We have survived 2 world wars, played a major role in confederation and maritime union discussions, and saw the building of our nations railway system. And this too we shall survive.

We will continue to represent and be champions for business in our region. We will continue to press all levels of government for policies that help our members survive and grow. And finally, working with our partners and stakeholders we will continue to play a major role in the economic and social well being of our vibrant region, We have already seen many of our members pivot and reinvent themselves in a positive way in order to adapt. In fact, one such members, Rogue Coffee has just this week won the Canadian Chamber resilience grant of \$10,000. It is this kind of creativity and drive that will help our members evolve to whatever the new normal will become. Thank you for your continued support, we are all in this together.

COMMITTEE REPORT

200th Celebration Committee

Canadian Chamber AGM & Saint John Chamber 200th Celebration Committee - two task forces were established to host the Canadian Chamber of Commerce AGM in Saint John and to celebrate our 200 years strong. Securing sponsors for this major event as well as planning a gala evening for over 300 delegates was certainly a major undertaking. The Sponsorship task force managed to achieve their goal due to the support of our members. Thank you to all our sponsors: Acadia Broadcasting, FCC Construction, Source Atlantic, Opportunities NB, Stewart McKelvey, ACOA, Irving Oil, JD Irving Limited, Port Saint John, Teed Saunders Doyle, Saint John Airport, Delta Hotels by Marriott Saint John, Cooke Aquaculture and Fairville Shooters



Our annual Golf Committee held another highly successful golf tournament and online auction in 2019. We were excited to announce we had our very first hole in one since the tournament's inception! The event took place at Rockwood Park Golf Course. Golfers had a great time and were treated to a delicious meal at Brits. Thank you to all our sponsors for making it happen! A big thank you to our member businesses that donated items for our silent auction and of course a big thank you to all the members of the Task Force for all their hard work.

The Outstanding Business Achievement Awards were held on October 10, 2019 to a sold-out crowd at the Saint John Trade & Convention Centre, who were part of a live studio audience featured as part of The Boiling Point Podcast. Last year's award winners were: Chairs Award, **Area 506**; The Bob McVicar Heart Award, **Canaport LNG**; Young Entrepreneur Award, **Joe MacKay, Owner of Yip Cider**;

Business Excellence Award, **Thandi's Restaurants**; Emerging Enterprise Award, **Saint John Tool Library**; Entrepreneurial Achievement Award, **Duke Creative Collective Inc.** Developer Award was presented to **Cooke Aquaculture**. Thank you to our presenting sponsors: **Stewart McKelvey** and



Economic Development of Greater Saint John. As well a big thank you to our award sponsors, outstanding sponsors, and generous sponsors.



For 18 years The Chamber has held an **Annual Bare Necessities Campaign**. Throughout the year members and non-members have collected and donated toiletries and hygiene products to help the most vulnerable citizens to have access to basics especially during the holidays season. This year, it was once again an overwhelming success to more than 15 community organizations in the region received boxes. Chamber staff personally hand delivered them to

all the organizations to help ensure they benefited during the holidays.

Finance Committee - The Finance Committee has worked diligently to ensure that our organization is at peak fiscal strength. The finance committee is actively involved in the creation of new policies, processes and systems that help to ensure smooth operations and reporting.

Communications Committee - The Communications Committee members provides leadership and expertise to ensure The Chamber effectively communicates policy positions, on issues of importance to the business community, to its members and other publics. It develops and implements an internal and external communications strategy and ensures activities, events, services, and member benefits are communicated effectively.