



## CEO Remarks – AGM 2018

David Duplisea

Good morning everyone, my name's David Duplisea and it's my pleasure to serve as the CEO of this dynamic, and historic organization. Today we launch our bicentennial year. We're the second oldest Board of Trade/Chamber of Commerce in Canada, with Halifax being the oldest.

We were first formed as result of a meeting organized by the Hon. William Black at Codys Coffee House, located where the Bank of Montreal now stands at the foot of King St. We were known as The Saint John Chamber of Commerce. It was in 1872, after a reorganization that we became The Saint John Board of Trade. Through a partnership with the KV Chamber of Commerce, the River Valley Chamber of Commerce and the West Saint John Business Association, we became the Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce in 2014.

During our early history, Saint John was Canada's major shipbuilding and transportation centre. Much of our focus was on promoting ocean traffic for the port and the development of port facilities. We were successful in encouraging manufacturing, commercial and financial firms to locate in the city. In later years, we actively lobbied for the development of tourism, the establishment of the Maritime Board of Trade, The Maritimes Transportation Commission and The Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

Through our efforts and lobbying, we became an important voice in the Maritime Union. Our activities were numerous and varied. We promoted and helped establish a city program for equal opportunity, an independent water commission for the city, a provincial mental health Services Committee and a Provincial Industrial relations Committee.

We were active in promoting the amalgamation of the municipality of Portland and the city of Saint John, we worked on ways to improve railway and harbor facilities which aided in the transportation of goods in and out of our city. We established the United Fund which later became The United Way, we recommended the establishment of an international airport between Fredericton and Saint John, an idea which surfaces on occasion even today, and finally, we lobbied for the development of UNBSJ.

These are just a few of the many initiatives that our organization has led. Many things have changed since we formed in 1819, but one thing has remained the same: our commitment to advocate on behalf of the businesses in our region. We're grateful for your support.

As we've just heard from Claire Ryan and Donna Mazerolle, we've focused in recent years on enhancing the value of your membership. We've advocated strongly on more issues and increased municipal, provincial and national visibility for our region. We've hosted notable folks at more events, and we've



engaged more people through an enhanced social media presence, commentaries and member success stories.

Today we have the distinct pleasure of launching our bicentennial year.

In a few moments, we welcome Jim Irving as keynote speaker at our AGM luncheon. What a wonderful way to celebrate as we enter our 200<sup>th</sup> year. A member for decades, J. D. Irving, Limited is a testament to the vision and fortitude that is so much a part of our history. They've been an integral part of our community for so long, they are "family".

So today we celebrate much. We gather on the traditional lands of the Mik'maw and Maliseet peoples, and where the loyalists first landed in 1783. The ties that join us together and the story we have to tell are unique.

It's my honour to help to tell it.