

**ECONOMIC & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**ANNUAL UPDATE**  
**2008-2009**

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**CHAIR: FRED GIBBONS**

**CO-CHAIR: SUE GAUTHIER**

The Economic and Business Development Committee is a standing committee of the Timmins Chamber of Commerce. The committee meets to discuss issues creating barriers to existing businesses and develop lobby actions and create projects that will encourage new business development. As the primary advocate for Chamber members and their business growth, this committee examines government (municipal, provincial & federal) policy and factors affecting business today, to determine a course of action to create a business climate where Chamber members can operate their business successfully.

**MEMBERS**

Phil Barton	Nancy Mageau
Remi Boileau	Gary Marriott
Josh Bond	Bill McMillan
Rick Briand	Lorenzo Melchiorre
Dan Charbonneau	Julie Racette-Belanger
Anita Damini	Cheryl St-Amour
Rob Galloway	Yanick Tremblay
Sue Gauthier	Marilyn Wood
Fred Gibbons	Steve Kidd

**2008-2009 Year In Review:**

- Struck Municipal Affairs Task Force to address municipal concerns and questions, Chaired by Sue Gauthier (October 2008);
- Monitored policy diary updates (ongoing); added sunset clauses to each Chamber policy (October 2008);
  - Monitored progress & provided input to the Chamber's Municipal Budget Presentation (November 2008-January 2009);
  - Monitored/shared progress with committee's efforts on municipal procurement policies & practices (February – May 2009);
- Directed advocacy initiative for Federal Liens Removal Policy: mailed copy of policy to every MP in Canada & monitored responses, follow up (March 2009);
- Investigated funding patterns, organizational structure & accountability, history, Ministerial Advisory Board and adequate Timmins representation within FedNor (October-May; ongoing);
- Monitored parliamentary progress of private-member's Bill C-309 *An Act establishing the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Region of Northern Ontario* (March-May 2009);
- Researched insurance laws: the requirement for health insurance policies to pay out before automobile insurance policies and the implications this has for employee group insurance health plans (January-April 2009);
- Received presentation from Joel Bergeron regarding health & auto insurance law; submitted letter outlining issue and business concerns to Minister Dwight Duncan, Minister of Finance and Chair of Management Board of Cabinet (April & May 2009);
- Monitored progress of the Northern Ontario Growth Plan; drafted correspondence to Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Michael Gravelle, asking for progress update and promoting the

- Chamber's position that the process should be open and inclusive to all stakeholders (November 2008);
- Monitored government action on the harmonization of PST with the GST (October 2008 – January 2009);
  - Submitted public awareness piece to the Daily Press outlining suggestions and best practices to prepare hopeful entrepreneurs to increase their chances of succeeding, obtaining funding, etc. (January 2009);
  - Created awareness piece for members regarding new chip technology being implemented in debit and credit cards and its implications for consumers, businesses, their employees and their point of sale equipment (January 2009);
  - Collaborated/shared knowledge regarding Natural Resources Committee "Fuel Tax" policy (November 2008-February 2009);
  - Investigated the insurance requirements for businesses wishing to obtain NOHFC funding.
    - Drafted correspondence to local NOHFC Chair requesting clarification (February 2009);
    - Held meeting with Aime Dimatteo, NOHFC Executive Director to discuss (April 2009);
  - Monitored changes with MPAC municipal property assessments; monitored City of Timmins position & action on the topic (March-May 2009);
  - Chamber Woodflow policy: discussed creating policy with larger scope, encompassing effective local use and economic development with all useable biofibre sources (February 2009);

**Key Issues:**

- Reviewing Chamber policy development and keeping up to date with respect to policies developed by other Chamber committees;
- Ensuring that Timmins and northern Ontario has adequate representation on provincial and federal agencies designed to encourage the region's economic development, diversification and prosperity;
- Ensuring that government policy, programs and agencies are fair to business owners, conducive to regional economic development and sustenance, and accountable to northerners;
- Monitoring and participating in strategic planning initiatives, such as the Northern Ontario Growth Plan;
- Monitoring municipal economic and business development issues, such as municipal purchasing, municipal taxation and budget, strategic planning;
- Identifying barriers to business development;
- Identifying current or forthcoming policies or laws that place businesses at an unfair disadvantage; monitoring new costs and their respective effects on private and public enterprises (such as costs associated with Family Day, minimum wage increases), and lobbying appropriately;
- Monitoring progress of harmonization of PST with the GST;
- Monitoring regulatory and taxation issues to ensure that laws are conducive and favourable to economic investment within the city and province;
- Ensuring the Chamber's advocacy role is well-known and highlighted within the community;
- Monitoring subsequent developments surrounding existing policies; tracking progress made by fellow organizations, such as the Ontario and Canadian Chambers of Commerce.