

## **2005 Federal Budget Notes from the Chamber**

Timmins – February 23, 2005. Today's federal budget took welcome steps to implement some fiscal measures, however Canadians will have to take a wait and see approach for most savings. The positive initiatives that will enhance our productivity, capacity and provide a welcome boost to our competitiveness in our region, include the reduction of the Air Traveler Security Tax, making travel to and throughout Northern Ontario less of a financial barrier, an increase of \$88 million in FedNor funding over the next five years, increased funding for First Nation Communities and the Municipal Gas Tax Sharing Plan, were well received by the Timmins Chamber of Commerce.

“We are very pleased to see consideration for the municipalities, which have suffered greatly at the expense of downloading,” declared David Roberts, President of the Timmins Chamber of Commerce. “The announced Gas Tax Sharing Plan doesn't have any details on how the proposed \$1.8 billion Ontario share will be allocated to communities. The Timmins Chamber will support the City of Timmins at the table as partners to ensure Timmins gets its fair share. Increased funding into our municipality can only mean lower taxes for our businesses and residents”, added Roberts.

The Timmins Chamber noted that many of the items dealt with in the announced budget are issues that the business advocate group has been working on for a number of years including increased FedNor funding, the Air Traveler Tax Reduction, and Climate Change funding. “This budget tells our Chamber that we, as a business group, have been heading in the right direction with our work in Climate Change. Our Sustainable Energy Committee will be able to leverage this new funding for our community by creating and promoting Climate Change Programs for our businesses.”

The Timmins Chamber commends the federal government on its \$11 billion dollar program reallocation efforts stressing that this type of services review must continue, “Governments of all sizes need to look at their spending and find efficiencies,” said Roberts. “The Federal Budget poses the question, Are all levels of government capable of finding savings to fund new spending within a balanced budget? This needs to become standard practice for governments as it is in business.”