

ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
ANNUAL UPDATE
2007-2008

MANDATE:

The Economic and Business Development Committee is a standing committee of the Timmins Chamber of Commerce. It serves as the “Voice of Business” in developing advocacy positions to remove barriers to doing business, as well as acting as a catalyst for developing and implementing policies that will create a more appealing, self-sustaining and healthier business climate for the membership. The committee seeks to achieve its mandate through partnership with various organizations and examining all levels of government policies and/or legislation (local, regional, provincial, and federal).

MEMBERS:

Rob Galloway, *Galloway & Galloway Executive Services* – **Chair**
Ken Rivers, *Porcupine Air and Electric Tool Repairs* – **Co-Chair**
Amina Aziz-Fasciano, *Royal Bank*
Phil Barton, *Algonquin Business Computers*
Syl Belisle, *Highgrader Magazine*
Joel Bergeron, *BMT Insurance*
Remi Boileau, *Therault Plumbing*
Joshua Bond, *Riopelle Grenier Professional Corporation*
Rick Briand, *HSBC Bank Canada*
David Bucar, *Porcupine Gold Mines - Goldcorp*
Dan Charbonneau, *Gord's Rentals*
Bruce Cowan, *The Daily Press*
Anita Damini, *Downtown Timmins (BIA)*
Matt Duquette, *Bank of Nova Scotia*
Mike Feldman, *Personal Member*
Suzanne Gauthier, *CIBC*
Fred Gibbons, *Northern College of Applied Arts and Technology*
Joanne Groulx
Tori Hanson, *Northern College of Applied Arts and Technology*
Steve Kidd (*Past President 2003-2004*)
Elizabeth Lake, *The Healthy Hive*
Mayor Tom Laughren, *City of Timmins (Past President 2005-2006)*
Marc Leroux, *Realty Networks Inc.*
Nancy Mageau, *CIBC*
Gary Marriott, *NorthernTel*
Rodney Martin, *TechKnowledge Solutions Ltd. – Xerox*
Lorenzo Melchiorre, *Xstrata Copper*
Ken Petersen, *Petersen Consulting*
Julie Racette-Belanger, *Grand and Toy*
Robert Riopelle, *Riopelle Grenier Professional Corporation*
Martin Rupnik, *Xstrata Copper*
Gary Scripnick, *Weed Man*
Louise Straatman, *Ministry of Northern Development and Mines*
Cheryl St-Amour, *Timmins Economic Development Corporation*
Yanick Tremblay, *Topper's Pizza*
Marilyn Wood, *Mikro-Tek Inc.*

2007-2008 YEAR IN REVIEW:

- Held information session with Mark Jensen, City of Timmins Development Department regarding business attraction and municipal services provision, such as the Community Improvement Plan, infrastructure challenges and capacity requirements (October 2007);
- Attended and monitored the Northern Leaders Economic Summit held during Small Business Week (October 2007). Organized by the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM), the Northern Summit is intended to develop strategies and initiatives by which northern Ontario can gain more authority to better control its own economic, education and social development.
- Researched the feasibility of implementing a business-recycling program in Timmins (October 2007);
- Created a new member resource booklet entitled *Access to Financing and Capital Funding* to be used as a point of reference for businesses seeking funding assistance. Booklet launched to membership on May 15, 2008);
- Developed policy: *Creating a Fair Paper Procurement Policy in Ontario*, recommending that the government adopt a policy requiring the Ontario government's paper come from forests certified by any one of the three standards they endorse (October 2007-March 2008). The policy was presented at the Ontario Chamber of Commerce AGM, wherein delegates voted to support the resolution (May 2008). The provincial chamber will now join the efforts of our local chamber to lobby the Ontario government to amend the newly created paper procurement policy, which causes a competitive disadvantage for some Ontario paper manufacturing companies.
- Developed draft policy with regards to government liens on derelict properties (March 2008); policy will be submitted as a proposed resolution to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce at their AGM in October;
- Lobbied the Ministry for the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor) to alter Ministerial Advisory Board composition to proportionately represent northern Ontario (December 2007);
- Lobbied the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) to include a representative from Timmins (a significant municipality within the Cochrane District) on the Board of Directors; the Cochrane District was the only region that did not have a representative on the Board a commitment stated by the Public Appointments Secretariat. (December 2007);
- Developed position paper regarding the minimum wage increases in 2008, 2009 and 2010 and the significant burden mandatory wage increases continue to place on Ontario businesses (December 2007);
- Developed position paper and submitted a letter to the editor regarding Family Day, a new statutory holiday which places increased fiscal pressure on private and public enterprises. Efforts included improving public awareness and recognition of employers as the agents who absorb the costs associated with Family Day (December 2007-February 2008);
- Provided input for the 2008 Provincial Budget via the Chamber's presentation to the Standing Committee on Financial and Economic Affairs (January 2008);
- Drafted position paper advocating for the implementation of a revenue sharing model enable GST revenue to go to municipalities for infrastructure (January 2008);
- Investigated the potential for combining PST with GST into one harmonized tax system to reduce administrative costs and the tax burden on businesses;
- Monitored the city's adoption of a Procurement By-law to ensure that the by-law's implications provide fair and adequate opportunities for regional businesses to engage the City of Timmins in business dealings; (February 2008)
- Monitored the prospective hydro development of Grassy River/High Falls area in the region and sought input from various special-interest groups (March 2008);

- Investigated the implications of a fair wage policy, and the recent implementation of a such a policy in Sudbury, Ontario (March 2008);
- Continued to lobby on behalf of retailers serving as point of sale tax collectors for the government and clarifying the process through which retail sales tax exemption may be granted. Provided input for the Ministry of Revenue's "Tax Tips" Bulletin, a tool created to assist vendors, customers and auditors in clarifying their respective responsibilities;
- Investigate northern Ontario's true Gross Domestic Product and provincial/federal contributions.

KEY ISSUES:

- 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;
- Monitoring and participating in the strategic initiatives developed through the Northern Leaders Economic Summit;
- Monitoring municipal water and tax rates: supporting a revenue neutral and self-sustaining system that will adequately address the City's depleting infrastructure while reflecting the price;
- Monitoring the City of Timmins business attraction and municipal services provision items such as infill opportunities, derelict properties, the Community Improvement Plan, land disposal and acquisition;
- Providing annual budget depositions to city council to ensure that the needs of businesses are adequately represented and met;
- Ensuring the City of Timmins' adoption and subsequent implementation of a procurement policy is to the benefit of all parties and prospective suppliers;
- Monitoring and researching causes of increased energy prices in the region (gasoline, electricity) and lobbying relevant agencies to adjust prices fairly;
- Ensuring that government policy is fair to business owners, conducive to regional economic development and sustenance;
- Ensuring that the respective responsibilities of the vendor, customer and auditor (as a government agent) are known consistently amongst each aforementioned body;
- 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 and investigating the potential for new tax structures, laws and by-laws to be implemented in our region based on the provincial landscape (such as a fair wage policy or land-transfer tax);
- Monitoring the outcome of the provincial government-ordered review of its fair wage policy;
- Monitoring the implementation of the Provincial Accessibility Act and providing best practice information to businesses regarding act compliancy;
- Maintaining accurate information regarding northern Ontario's provincial and federal economic contributions;
- 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.