

Community Outreach Committee Annual Update 2007-2008

Mandate

As a standing committee, Community Outreach provides the Timmins Chamber of Commerce with the opportunity to express its vision and carry out its mission to community members who are not our usual audience. Through community outreach, we strive to increase awareness and interest and to create opportunity for community enrichment. We extend the Chamber's expertise and resources to our broader community, including those living and working further afield through education, participation, and events.

Members

Suzanne Pettigrew, *NorthernTel* – **Chair**
Mike Metatawabin, *Five Nations Energy Inc.* – **Co-Chair**
Micheal Miller, *Mamo-Nuskomitowin* – **Co-chair**
Joel Bergeron, *BMT Insurance and Financial Services*
Bruce Cowan, *The Daily Press*
Barry Martin, *B.H. Martin Consultants Ltd.*
Julie Racette-Belanger, *Grand & Toy*
Diane Riopel, *Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre*
Marilyn Wood, *Mikro-Tek Inc.*

2007-2008 Year in Review

- Investigated the potential for an Aboriginal Customer Service Workshop to educate businesses with regards to status cards (October 2007);
- Investigated the potential for an Aboriginal Employment Workshop in Timmins;
- Monitored the development of an Aboriginal Entrepreneurial Centre at Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund (NADF);
- Monitored the initiatives of the Francophone Strategic Plan Group, which aims to promote the advantages of offering francophone services (ongoing);
- Investigated the existence of an Aboriginal Outreach Strategic Group sub-committee (January 2008);
- Researched the City of Timmins' Emergency Readiness Plan (November 2007);
- Directed the development of Charter Bags, orientation packages which are distributed to members of coastal communities who travel to Timmins to complete holiday shopping (December 2007);
- Issued a letter to Michael Bryant, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, regarding the removal of retailer responsibility in the RST exemption process (January 2008);
- Issued a letter to Grand Chief Stan Loutitt to request a meeting with him to discuss the RST draft policy (January 2008);
- Issued a letter to Mayor Tom Laughren, encouraging City Council to develop a policy to use bilingual signage when replacing (English-only) signs throughout the city (February 2008);
- Received presentation from Timmins Fire Chief Mike Pintar regarding community outreach to Kashechewan. Discussed evacuation procedures during the flooding of coastal communities, the City of Timmins emergency readiness plans and its capacity to welcome evacuees (April 2008);
- Supported the Building Bridges Conference, held in June at Building Bridges (June 2008);

- Created and distributed an Aboriginal Toolkit at the Building Bridges Conference with information for employers and potential employees including Aboriginal employment services. (June 2008);
- RST Policy – Lobbied to take retailers out of the RST exemption process and investigated ways to educate the membership on the issue. Monitored for any updates on the issue (ongoing);
 - Distributed Ministry of Revenue-issued “Tax Tips” paper intended for retailers to use as a guideline for completing tax-exempt transactions (April 2008);
- Investigated the creation of a multicultural (all local languages) Chamber door-cling. (ongoing)

Key Issues

- Outreach to the First Nations community in order to increase the Chamber’s presence within the Aboriginal community;
- Outreach to the francophone community in order to increase the Chamber’s presence within the community;
- Identify and implement programs that promote Aboriginal awareness in the business community;
- Monitor the development of an Aboriginal Entrepreneurial Centre and support the funding application for an Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Centre to provide more support, coaching and exposure to this demographic;
- Identify new potential audiences for Chamber-engagement;
- Identify and pursue opportunities that increase the Chamber’s ability to extend its reach to groups within the community;
- Increase the awareness of business-related and economic issues within the community;
- Increase the awareness within the community regarding the role that business plays in community development and sustainability;
- Lobby other Chambers of Commerce to get involved with regionalization through partnering efforts with the Northeastern Chamber of Commerce.