

# BUSINESS VIEW

December 2005

Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce

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## The Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce Applauds the Work of the Provincial Business Tax Review Committee

*"The Provincial Business Tax Review Committee clearly worked hard, and listened",* stated Kent Smith-Windsor, Chamber Executive Director, *"If the Provincial Government wants to arrest Saskatchewan's youth exodus, then the adoption of the complete set of the Tax Review Committee's recommendations would go a long, long way to that objective."* Smith-Windsor observed. *"Further, if the Provincial Government has the resolve to undertake and implement the sales tax harmonization review recommended by their committee, along with the Boughen's Commission work on Education Property Tax combined with a competitive resource royalty structure and competitive business electrical power rates, Saskatchewan could realistically expect to repatriate a significant portion of the youth that left this province over the past decade."* Smith-Windsor asserted. *"Now that would be a Centennial Celebration!"* Smith-Windsor concluded.

### Business Tax Review Committee Recommends Major Tax Reform Plan

The Business Tax Review Committee (BTRC) presented Saskatchewan's Fi-

nance Minister its final report on provincial business taxes.

The report offers key recommendations to improve the climate for business investment and job creation in the province, such as phasing out the general Corporation Capital Tax (CCT) rate, reducing the general Corporation Income Tax (CIT) rate to 12%, and increasing the small business limit to \$500,000.

*"Our report considers the views and recommendations of a broad range of Saskatchewan residents from all parts of the province including business owners, labour leaders, economists, tax professionals and private citizens,"* said Jack Vicq, Chair of the BTRC. *"Strong public interest in this process resulted in a number of creative ideas coming forward."*

*"A consensus emerged during our consultations that Saskatchewan's business tax structure was clearly uncompetitive and outdated,"* added Vice Chair Charlie Baldock. *"Our over-dependence on corporate taxes – highlighted by the highest provincial general tax rates on corporate income and capital – is a major disincentive*

*Continued on Page 3*



Photo Courtesy of Stuart Kasdorf Photographics Inc.

# The President's View

by Jack Brodsky



"Dare to Lead". This was the title for this year's 2020 Health Vision Conference. Your Health Opportunities Committee did an outstanding job once again in putting together a conference that took a hard look at what opportunities we think exist in our region and province when it comes health care. The conference started out with a superb presentation from LGen the Honourable Romeo Dallaire. He spoke about his experiences in our military and the changing face of war. He did a great job of tying in the conference's leadership theme with his talk.

The conference held workshop groups relating to the four areas of focus for the day: Aboriginal Health Opportunities, World Class for Life (lifestyle and health for an aging population), Medical Mile (a geographically focused critical mass of medical related activity), and Medical Imaging (opportunities created by the CLS Synchrotron). The conference identified many benefits that would accrue to our citizens from our pursuit of these opportunities.

John Cross of Philom Bios concluded the conference with a stirring challenge to Saskatchewan to stop looking at ourselves as incapable of doing great things, and to move forward unlocking the incredible value that we own in our province in the area of healthcare as well as many others. The real challenge here lies in the conference's most appropriate title, as reiterated by Mr. Cross. Will our politicians and citizens "Dare to Lead" and work with the business and healthcare communities to move these ideas forward? Congratulations to everyone involved in this wonderful event. For a copy of the presentations, please log onto [www.eboardoftrade.com](http://www.eboardoftrade.com) – "Dare to Lead".

I attended Jack Vicq's Business Tax Review Committee report to the government and the public. Your Chamber fully supports the findings of the Committee and urges the government to move forward quickly with all of the recommendations. As a package, the recommendations would send a powerful message to the world that we are serious about attracting investment to our province and creating jobs for all of our youth. Let's hope there is the political will to move forward without picking and choosing only some parts of the recommendations and destroying a great opportunity for our province. Mr. Premier and all members of our government, please send a message to the world that "We Mean Business!"

I promised some months ago to continue my commentary on your Chamber's committees and their work. The Aboriginal Opportunities Committee is Co-chaired by Brian Chalmers and Al Felix. This group is looking at ways to promote business opportunities in the Aboriginal community. There is a huge potential here and the existing successes need to be celebrated.

The Knowledge Industry Opportunities Committee is headed up by Rob Norris. His group is looking at uncovering opportunities that lie within the Knowledge Industry. We need to broaden our outlook on this sector and consider what potential there is to improve our education system, and to provide new private sector opportunities in this area.

The Agri-business Opportunities Committee is Co-Chaired by Ben Voss and Jill Sauter. The committee recently hosted a luncheon featuring Jason Skotheim who is starting up a high end pet food operation in Rosthern. Jason spoke about the opportunity he sees in this area and about the pitfalls that lie within our province's tax regime for start up businesses like his. The committee will continue to host events that look at the potential for agribusiness ventures in our region.

I will discuss the Celebrate Success and Government Affairs Committees next month. Once again, I want to invite anyone who has any interest in any of the committees to contact me or any of the committee chairs to express that interest. I can only speak for myself but I know that my experience serving on committees has been very educational and has provided me with an opportunity to get to know some excellent and influential people in our region. Most importantly, the committee work provides you with an opportunity to help build our community.

Your Chamber is all about community building. Another group that talks about community building is the Saskatoon United Way. This organization raises money and provides funding for many worthy causes in and around Saskatoon. What many people do not know is that this group was borne out of the Saskatoon Board of Trade and the City of Saskatoon years ago. We met with Executive Director Christine Smillie and some of her staff and volunteers recently and want to wish them great success with their current campaign. Community building comes from a variety of areas and together we strive to make our region the best that we can be. During this holiday season, please support this worthy cause.



The Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce would like to express our gratitude to our investors, sponsors and tireless volunteers for your support, time, efforts and commitment throughout 2005. We also thank all who attended the various Chamber events throughout the year. Your support is greatly appreciated.

**We wish you all a joyful holiday season,  
all the very best for 2006!**

to investment and job creation in the province.”

“We were fortunate to have so much assistance for our review,” said the Committee member Cheryl Shepherd, adding that “all participants in our review can take a large measure of credit for our results.”

The BTRC recommendations are as follows:

- The general CCT rate of 0.6% be phased out by July 1, 2008, beginning with halving the rate on July 1, 2006;
- The CCT Resource Surcharge imposed on larger resource companies be transferred, on a revenue neutral basis on July 1, 2008, to the resource royalty structure;
- The general CIT rate be reduced from 17% to 12% by July 1, 2008, beginning with a reduction to 14% on July 1, 2006;
- The small business limit be increased from \$300,000 to \$500,000 by July 1, 2008, beginning with an increase to \$400,000 on July 1, 2006; and,
- The existing Investment Tax Credit (ITC) be made refundable for future M&P capital acquisitions, and the time frame for applying past unused ITCs be extended from 7 to 10 years.

The Committee strongly believes all the recommendations in the corporate tax reform, including transitional provisions, should be legislated during the 2006-07 Session of the Saskatchewan Legislature.

The Committee also strongly supports the harmonization of

the PST with the Federal GST, as it would significantly improve the competitiveness of the provincial tax system. About \$500 million in PST is currently paid annually on business purchases, which discourages business investment in the province.

*“The introduction of harmonization should follow the completion of further public consultations and the achievement of a sustainable fiscal context in which harmonization can be successfully implemented”, said Vicq, adding that “we recommend that the basis for harmonization would be the acceptance of the GST base applied at a rate of 5%, resulting in a combined federal-provincial rate of 12% in Saskatchewan”.*

*“Saskatchewan’s business tax structure is outdated and poorly suited to deal with the competitive challenges of today and the future,” Vicq concluded. “Our heavy reliance on the taxation of business capital and income sends the wrong message to prospective investors. We believe that our recommendations will send a strong signal to the business community that, indeed, The Future is Wide Open in Saskatchewan.”*

**The Saskatchewan public can access the report at <http://www.gov.sk.ca/btre/>**

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# Food for Thought

by C.M. (Red) Williams

## Regionalizing

The astute observer of rural issues in Saskatchewan will have noted a definite shift in opinion about the need for and possible implementation of some system of regional governance in support of economic development. The studies by Stabler and Olfert are now being used as the acceptable basis for debate. Joe Garcia's report is getting nodding approval despite the drubbing he took in many community meetings. SARM and SUMA are making common cause.

This came to me as I listened to a presentation recently by Professor Rose Olfert. She had several important points to make: The future economic development of rural Saskatchewan will be driven by the urban centers. About 87% of the rural populations live within 100 km of one of the six largest centers. It takes a city of 500,000 to be self sustaining. We do not have a four-lane truck connection to the US Interstate system, nor a direct rail link either. And finally, the provincial legislature, the city administrations and the rural municipalities collectively leave a void at the regional level in government of the rural economy. She left us with the question; which Reeves are going to step forward and shed some of their authority in order to establish a regional structure with the power and taxing authority to take actions?

In the period until the provincial government determines that there is sufficient support some move to regional structures, some communities made up of several towns and RMs are forming clusters to make plans. They don't have the financial resources to move very far but they do have the will and are showing some progress.

## Members in the News ...

**Bellamy H20 / DBA: Saskatchewan Clear** opened their water bottling expansion In November. Saskatchewan Clear is a locally owned bottling water facility and have been operating for 5 years. In 2004 and 2005 they won Bronze at an international water tasting contest at Berkley Springs, West Virginia. In June of 2005 they began to manufacture bottles in many different sizes.

**VCom Inc.** announced that it has filed a final prospectus with the securities regulatory authorities in each of the provinces of Canada in connection with the initial public offering of its common shares. The company will issue 3,335,000 common shares at \$7.50 per share for gross proceeds of \$25,012,500.

The **Saskatoon Airport Authority** has joined the "**Heart Safe Program**" by purchasing and installing an Automated External Defibrillator in the air terminal building. The Airport Authority has trained and certified certain Airport Authority and contracted Security Services personnel.

## Welcome New Members ...

- 1-800-GOTJUNK?
- Booth Burnett Insurance Ltd.
- Budget Inn Express  
(Prince Albert & Regina)
- The Copper Mug
- Days Inn  
(Prince Albert & Moose Jaw)
- Drake Venture
- Dramashare
- Elaine Millions, CGA
- Holiday Inn (Regina)
- Michelle Winkler Impey
- Interlink Research Inc.
- TLDS Holdings Inc.  
Ladies Workout Express  
Saskatoon East
- Smiley's
- Smiley's Express
- Victoria Park Motor Inn Ltd.

## The United Way of Saskatoon

For more than 45 years, United Way of Saskatoon has served our community and taken a leadership role in ensuring the social well-being of the people living here. Many think of United Way as simply a funder of local non-profit organizations. In fact, we are the largest non-governmental funding source to human care agencies in Saskatoon. And that's just one aspect of what United Way is all about.

United Way is a community-building organization, bringing people from all walks of life together to find long-term solutions to the community's most pressing social issues. Issues such as at-risk youth and stressed families, poverty, lack of affordable housing, crisis intervention and neighbourhood crime.

Through United Ways, a vision for Saskatoon has been created, and people are seeing the powerful results of collective action all around them.

For more information on the United Way, please call them @ 975-7700.

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Cost Plus is a proven tax-effective means of supplementing Health, Dental and Vision items not eligible under your Chambers Plan. Some of the most common uses include amounts over any limits in your current group plan, and specific treatment such as orthodontic dental work. The program covers all supplies and services considered eligible medical expenses under the Canadian Income Tax Act. Consider the following example of how Cost Plus is tax-effective. Say an owner in the 50% marginal tax bracket has \$3,000 in orthodontic expenses. He or she would have to draw \$6,000 in wages from the business to pay the \$3,000 bill. Cost to the company: salary expense of \$6,000. With Cost Plus, the company issues a cheque for \$3,133.75, writing off that amount as an employee benefit deduction. Savings to the company and business owner - \$2,866.25.

## More advantages

Besides allowing you to supplement your existing group coverage, Cost Plus offers the following advantages:

- With an Extended Health and Dental benefit with the Chambers Plan, the **administration fee is only 5%** of the claimed health or dental expense up to a maximum of **\$125 per claim**.
- **Cost Plus coverage is paid with pre-tax business funds - not personal disposable income.**
- The full benefit amount, including the administration fee, is **tax deductible as a business expense**, and the actual benefit received is not taxable to the employee. There are no monthly premiums.

### For more information contact:

Andrea Hansen @ Wiegiers Financial

Phone: (306) 244-0949

## Figuratively Speaking ...

*Compiled by John MacIntyre*

- Percentage of people who say word of mouth is the biggest influence in determining what they buy, according to a survey by BIG Research: 26.7
- Percentage who say newspaper inserts: 20.3
- Percentage who say in-store promotion: 18.9
- Percentage of CFOs who said they considered the cell phone to be their most indispensable, portable, technology device, according to a survey developed by Robert Half Management Resources: 44
- Percentage of CFOs who said the laptop: 39
- Percentage who said wireless handheld: 8
- Percentage of small business owners who feel increasing productivity is a 'major priority' for their business, according to a survey of small business owners conducted on behalf of Microsoft Canada: 73
- Percentage who agree that adopting technology is the key to increasing their company's productivity and competitiveness: 82
- Percentage who say that technology is already helping their business become more flexible and mobile and they no longer feel chained to their businesses: 66

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# Synchrotron News ...

## Eighth Annual Users' Meeting

"One of the best user meetings ever!" was a frequent comment of participants at the Canadian Light Source's Eighth Annual Users Meeting. Over 300 participants from the Canadian and global synchrotron communities attended the gathering that took place November 19 at the University of Saskatchewan.

Executive Director Bill Thomlinson addressed the facility's many achievements and challenges as the CLS grows towards full user operations. This includes the coordination of the commissioning of seven Phase I beamlines with the design and construction of seven Phase II beamlines.

## eScience workshop

The recently held eScience workshop, at the CLS, brought together researchers and engineers from a number of Canadian and international big science projects to focus on networking, data acquisition, analysis, processing, remote access-control and distribution (collectively known as cyber-infrastructure) as an essential part of big science and a significant portion of the overall cost of these projects.

## 20/20 Health Vision Conference

A workshop on "Medical Imaging at the CLS" was well attended at the Chamber sponsored "20/20 Health Vision" conference. Several exciting ideas relating to making synchrotron biomedical imaging a vital part of Saskatoon's state-of-the-art health infrastructure were presented. Speakers included experts from the Australian synchrotron team in Melbourne.



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Members of the Saskatoon & District Chamber of Commerce receive a 15% discount when purchasing any of WCBC's annual salary/compensation surveys.

## Spend your HR money wisely

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- Creating a new position?
- Preparing your HR budget?
- Needing access to reliable salary adjustment forecasts?
- Managing the rising cost of benefits programs?

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Our regional surveys listed below provide overall data, along with data specific to the Saskatoon area.

- Clerical/Administrative Support
- Middle Management & Professional
- Information Technology
- Marketing & Sales
- Engineering & Technical
- Production & Distribution

Also available are our national surveys which include:

- Executive Compensation
- Board of Directors Compensation
- Compensation Policy
- Employee Benefits/Employment Practices

## Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce - Committee Chairs

							
<b>Aboriginal Opportunities</b> Brian Chalmers FirstSask Mortgages	<b>Aboriginal Opportunities</b> Alan Felix Nu Fab Building Products	<b>Agribusiness Development</b> Pat McNeil Royal LePage Real Estate	<b>Agribusiness Development</b> Jill Sauter Superior Cabinets	<b>Agribusiness Development</b> Ben Voss	<b>Celebrate Success!</b> Laura Small Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc.	<b>Celebrate Success!</b> Doug Osborn MacPherson Leslie & Tyerman LLP	<b>Celebrate Success!</b> Jill Sauter Superior Cabinets

**“Chamber on Business”  
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**Mayor Don Atchison**

"State of the City" Address

Wednesday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Hilton Garden Inn

**Lorne Babiuk**

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"Saskatoon as a Life

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How can we make it happen?"

Tuesday, January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2006

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**President's Celebration  
& Annual General Meeting**

Thursday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Western Development Museum

Cocktails: 6:00 pm

Dinner: 7:00 pm

Programme: 8:00 pm

Thank you to Jack Brodsky, President 2004  
Swearing in of Coni Evans, President 2005

**Celebrating our past, and  
dreaming big for the future.**

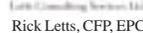


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# DirectResults

**“DirectWest has played a large part in our ability to improve revenue by at least 30%.”**

As a small, independent business in a highly competitive industry, Travel Inn Regina and Saskatoon was looking for a way to increase brand awareness without having to greatly increase their advertising dollars.

**“Our main source of advertising is the Regina and Regina District SaskTel Phonebooks,”** said **Shawna Lowenberg, Manager, Travel Inn, Regina.** **“If we didn’t advertise in the SaskTel Phonebooks, we would lose many advance booking opportunities.”**

Travel Inn has been able to build on the level of brand recognition created by their phonebook advertising by taking advantage of several additional DirectWest business opportunities.

The first was a new, stylish, professional Web site that has streamlined operations and improved customer service, while generating additional business through an online reservation system.

**“Putting our hotel online has helped to expand our business and has helped us become more visible in a very competitive industry,”** said Lowenberg.



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Travel Inn has increased awareness of their Web site through banner advertising and a Web site link on [mysask.com](http://mysask.com). Meanwhile, Travel Inn locations continue to receive increased brand recognition through continued phonebook advertising and DirectWest’s Hotel Program.

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