

BUSINESS VIEW

March 2006

Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce

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2005 Gets Saskatoon Halfway to Chamber's Annual Job Growth Target Despite a Year End Slow Down

- provincial job declines continue at a troubling pace ... Saskatchewan has the worst job creation record of any province in Canada over the last 5 years

Business optimism and investment throughout the Saskatoon region in early 2005 resulted in 4,200 net new jobs being created in 2005 as compared to 2004 according to the 2005 year end Statistics Canada report for Labour Force Characteristics. There were 4,200 new jobs created in Saskatoon in 2005 based on the average number of jobs in 2005 compared to the average number of jobs in 2004. This is a high job growth rate on a provincial comparative basis, but still short of the Greater Saskatoon Chamber's 8,000 net new jobs per year objective. "Saskatoon likely would have met our objective of 8,000 new jobs in 2005, but there was a clear slow down in employment growth in the latter part of 2005," commented Kent Smith-Windsor, Executive Director. Comparing January 2006 to January 2005, Saskatoon lost 3,000 jobs, showing the extent of the year-end job creation slow down.

The Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce has targeted an objective of 8,000 additional jobs per year as the number necessary to arrest youth exodus from the Saskatoon region. "Our Chamber con-

tinues to be optimistic that 2006 will also see net job growth in the Greater Saskatoon region, but quick implementation of the first phase of the Provincial Government's Business Tax Review recommendations will be critical if this objective is to be realized," Smith-Windsor stated.

To improve the business climate in Saskatchewan, the Government of Saskatchewan's business tax policies formula must change. The Provincial Business Tax Review confirmed the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce's longstanding contention that Saskatchewan has the highest marginal effective business tax rates in Canada. "Our current provincial business tax policies are costing our province and our region investment, and consequently, jobs for our young people. This must change and change quickly because our job creation rate clearly slowed toward the end of 2005 and our city must regain momentum in investment and job creation," concluded Smith-Windsor.

Provincially, there were 3,000 fewer people working in Saskatchewan in Janu-

Continued on Page 3

New Chamber Board Sworn In See page 2 for details



Photo Courtesy of Stuart Kasdorf Photographics Inc.

The President's View

by Coni Evans



Congratulations to Jack Brodsky on a very successful year as Chamber President. He has done an amazing job and I am thankful he will still be around to provide his sage advice to the Board.

When I first joined the Chamber, I did so because I wanted to make a difference in this city. I wanted to help our business community create an environment people could thrive in. I remember thinking, "This can't be that hard!" It all made perfect sense to me. First, lessen business tax loads. Business would expand, hire more people, etc. Second, make our labour laws more business friendly, further contributing to the same end result. Again, business would expand, hire more people, and broaden the tax base. A strong and free economy as the backbone of effective social programming makes communities vibrant. This would create a snowball effect and would attract opportunity that, in turn, does not force our youth to move away to succeed. I haven't given up on my goals, although I know now that making these changes is not as easy as it should be.

The Chamber's Government Affairs committee has provided me with a keen awareness on many issues. From the education component of property taxes to the recent findings from the Vicq commission on business taxation, our Chamber knows it must maintain a very strong position on lowering business taxes to keep our economy vibrant. This committee has also worked very hard over the last two years challenging our Membership to think about capturing opportunities within the uranium industry. Such opportunities bring a potential reality to our community we could not have envisioned 10 years ago.

The Chamber has a responsibility to its members to meet these and other challenges without fear; we need to ensure all levels of government are accountable and productive. We need to ensure tangible results are provided and not forget that they work for us, not the other way around.

2006 is a Civic Election year. I look forward to pressing our civic government and its leaders on achieving the goal of making Saskatoon the Business Friendliest City in Canada.

2006 is also a year of celebration. It is Saskatoon's 100th birthday and we will be hosting the Annual General Meeting for the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. This is our opportunity to showcase the Saskatoon region and all the accomplishments of our business community and let others know why Saskatoon Shines!

I am honoured and excited to be President of the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce when so many positive things are happening in our region. We are truly on an upward swing; but we must keep this momentum going. As a Member of this Chamber know that you are in good hands. You have a hard-working Board with many new faces, each bringing a wealth of experience. With some old but also many emerging issues our business community must face, there will never be a shortage of work to be done. Our strong Board of Directors will make this work easier.

Saskatoon is also very fortunate to have the expertise of Kent Smith-Windsor along with the talented, dedicated and enthusiastic staff at the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce.

We are here to help, so please contact any of us if you would like to get involved or if you have any comments or concerns.

New Chamber Board Elected for 2006

The 2006 Board of Directors for the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce were sworn in during the Annual General Meeting March 9th at the Western Development Museum.

Your new Board will consist of:

President:

Coni Evans, *Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation*

1st Vice-President:

J. Blair Knippel, *Deloitte & Touche LLP*

2nd Vice-President:

Marion Ghiglione, *Handy Special Events*

Past President:

Jack Brodsky, *Saskatoon Blades Hockey Club*

Executive:

Brian Chalmers, *FirstSask Mortgages*

Jamie McIntyre, *Cameco Corporation*

Board of Directors:

Judy Harwood, *OBASA Premier Suites*

John Hyshka, *Phenomenome Discoveries*

Mike Jenkins, *Saskatoon Blades Hockey Club*

Monica Kreuger, *Global Infobrokers Inc.*

Ken McFarlane, *CJWW / Magic 98.3 / Hot 93FM*

Rob Norris, *U of S - Office of the Secretary*

Douglas Osborn, *MacPherson Leslie & Tyerman LLP*

Raj Randhawa, *Horizon Computer Solutions Inc.*

Jill Sauter, *Jill Sauter Marketing & Communications*

Calvin Sonntag, *Philom Bios Inc.*

Congratulations!

University of Saskatchewan Board Gives InterVac Green Light

The University of Saskatchewan International Vaccine Centre (InterVac), a proposed research facility dedicated to protecting human and animal health from the threat of emerging diseases, has been given the go-ahead by the Board of Governors to move to the next stage of finalizing the design, financial support and governance structure.

Assuming all goes as planned, construction will begin in spring 2007, with completion slated for 2009. InterVac, to be built on vacant land next to the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO), will be part of a national infectious disease research network and will benefit infectious disease research across campus.

Due to unforeseeable design and construction considerations, the cost of this unique and complex project has risen to \$110 million, of which more than \$70 million has been committed from a variety of government and other sources. The University has very clear signals of funding commitments for the remainder. A contributing factor in the cost increase has been the unprecedented construction activity in Western Canada which has led to shortages of labour and materials, prompting the University of Saskatchewan to now require that an escalation factor be applied to all University of Saskatchewan capital construction projects.

Source: University of Saskatchewan Research News
January 27, 2006, Issue 17

Job Growth Target

Continued from Page 1

ary 2006, as compared to January 2005. In fact, Saskatchewan was the only western Canadian province showing job losses on a year over year basis comparing 2004 to 2005. Hence, provincial population loss continued. *“Provincially, our Chamber believes that Saskatchewan should be striving for 18,000 net new jobs per year to match our graduation rate. The continued job losses in Saskatchewan in the face of high levels of resource investment and activity underlines the necessity of significant changes in provincial government business climate policies in order to enhance the ability for the Saskatchewan business community to attract the investment needed to drive our job creation rate and reverse our province’s youth exodus,”* concluded Smith-Windsor.

Unfortunately, Saskatchewan has the worst provincial job creation record in the country over the last 5 years with 400 new jobs being recorded over the 5-year period compared to 4,500 net new jobs in Prince Edward Island over those 5 years. Prince Edward Island holds Canada’s next lowest provincial job creation rate position based on a five year comparative from 2000 to 2005.

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Cook's Consulting
CR Construction Inc.
Fulcrum Editorial
Get it Pages
Larson & Associates Recruitment Services
Living Skies DMC
Maternal Source
Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy # 203
PennCorp Life Insurance
Patrick W. Pitka, FCA
Shark Club
Simona's Home Ltd.
Western Institute of Aromatherapy



Food for Thought

by C.M. (Red) Williams

Labour Crisis

Douglas McArthur, former provincial Minister of Education, and everybody's expert on matters of lifelong education, was presenting a summary of the report "The Training System Review Panel" recently. You would have to read the whole report to appreciate his recommendations for improving the training climate in Saskatchewan, however his introductory remarks has his audience shaking their heads.

To begin with, he indicated that Saskatchewan will need 30,000 more skilled workers in the next five years to maintain its economic momentum. There are many ways to obtain these people but the main one is to train our own high school leavers, and that is where his recommendations come into play. In summary, let it be said that he recommends that our current system must become much more flexible.

Most employers will tell you how difficult it is to hire and keep staff now, and the economic boom is just warming up. But McArthur suggests that our economy will grind to a halt without immediate attention to training skilled and semi-skilled workers. This means starting in the public school system preparing students to make choices, and paving the way for their easy entry into further training and employment. This involves the educators, but also the government, the labour movement and the future employers. It obviously will require a review of starting wage scales and advancements, a streamlining of the apprentice system, on-the-job training, and getting youth into paid work experiences. Those who recognize Saskatchewan's immense opportunities had better do some hard thinking about their part in making it attractive for new workers to join them.

Cities Have Adequate Tax Powers to Fix Finances

Canada's cities already have adequate taxation powers to put their finances in order, says a new Commentary by the C.D. Howe Institute. Rather than resorting to new tax fields to raise revenue, cities should make greater, smarter use of existing fields like property taxes, user fees or excise taxes, says the Urban Issues study, "Running on Empty: A Proposal to Improve City Finance."

Written by Jack Mintz, President and CEO of the Institute, and Tom Roberts, C.D. Howe Fellow for 2004-05, the study appears amidst continued debates between cities and other levels of government over how best to resolve municipal funding shortfalls. "While cities shouldn't expect provinces to off-load social services onto them, neither should cities off-load financial responsibilities onto other governments, since they can make better use of property taxes and user fees," commented Jack Mintz.

The study notes that as cities rise to a new threshold of prominence, their resources have not kept pace with their responsibilities. While the 2005 federal budget committed Ottawa to sharing part of its fuel tax revenue with Canada's municipalities, pressure remains on Ottawa and the provinces to find new ways to give cities access to a richer revenue stream.

How to relieve the pressure? Various options have been suggested, including giving cities a share of sales and income taxes, raising property taxes or relying more on user fees or excise taxes on hotels and fuel.

The authors find that an additional tax field for municipalities is generally not warranted, although it is important to provide municipalities with greater flexibility in financing their expenditure responsibilities. They argue that current tax fields are adequate, since in most provinces, more revenue could be generated from residential property taxes or user fees. Cities have yet to make a convincing case that new revenue sources are required.

A sensible approach to municipal funding problems would be to: (i) shift most social service costs to the provinces; (ii) pursue municipal property tax reforms to reduce the scope for tax competition and exportation; (iii) raise more municipal revenue from user fees where reasonable; and (iv) reduce provincial transfers to municipalities.

One effect of this fiscally neutral proposal would be improved political accountability, because taxpayers would clearly see where their money is spent and who spends it.

Ontario and Alberta may be special cases, for differing reasons, where further alternatives could be considered. While the authors maintain that the residential property tax should be better exploited in these provinces, additional flexibility in taxing powers might be considered. One option is a novel tax field; an earned income tax on residents, to be applied to the employment and self-employment earnings of municipal residents and collected through the income tax system.

The study "Running on Empty: A Proposal to Improve City Finances," is available at www.cdhowe.org

Source: C.D. Howe Institute Media Release, February 23, 2006

Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce - Board of Directors



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Canadian Chamber Update ...

Courting the Dragon: Keys to Success - Emerging markets and dynamic economies, especially China, will play a significantly greater role in Canada's near and long term prosperity. Canada's trade and investment engagement with China is not keeping pace with our economic partners. Why? What is standing in Canada's way of a better performance? What is needed for Canada to dramatically increase our two-way trade and investment with China? These questions and more, will be addressed as the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, hosts a forum in Calgary on April 18th to help business identify barriers in both Canada and China that are impeding growth and restraining potential. Participants will be challenged to come up with views that will help shape the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's China strategy.

Confirmed speakers for this half-day forum include **Lindsay Gordon**, President & CEO, HSBC, **Dr. Stephen Poloz**, Senior Vice-President and Chief Economist, Export Development Canada, **Ching-Wo Ng**, Partner, King & Wood and **Philippe Johnson**, Partner, Davies Ward Phillips Vineburg, both specialists in international commercial transactions with emphasis on Asia, **Doug Horswill**, Senior Vice-President, Environment & Corporate Affairs, TeckCominco, **Dr. Wenran Jiang**, Acting Director, China Institute, University of Alberta, **Scott Galloway**, Director Trade Development, Vancouver Port Authority and **Nancy Hughes Anthony**, President & CEO, Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Watch for further details and registration forms on the Canadian Chamber's Website www.chamber.ca.

Figuratively Speaking ...

Compiled by John MacIntyre

- Percentage of Canadians who say they usually keep the bills they receive 'in a file or filing cabinet, a specific place just for bills,' according to an Ipsos-Reid/epost survey: 65
- Percentage of Canadians who say they keep their bills 'in random piles around the house': 14
- Percentage of Canadians who say they keep their bills 'in a junk drawer or storage container with other items': 10
- Percentage of Canadians who say they keep their bills 'posted on the fridge or bulletin board': 7
- Average amount of time each day office workers spend organizing their work areas, according to the Steelcase Workplace Index: 20.1 minutes
- Percentage of information that is stored only in electronic formats: 44.6
- Percentage that is stored only on paper: 34.4
- Percentage that is stored both on paper and electronically: 20.9
- Percentage of companies that underwent significant financial damage as a result of systems failure in the past 12 months, according to a global survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit: 60
- Percentage that experienced financial damage as a result of cyber-crime such as hacking and phishing over the same period: 33
- Percentage of executives surveyed that now see IT risk as a high or very high risk to their business: 48
- Percentage of respondents that say the biggest challenge companies face in tackling IT risks is the growing sophistication of hackers and other cyber-criminals: 55

Minimum Wage Board Reviewing Two Regulations

Saskatchewan's Minimum Wage Board has announced it will conduct a review of provincial regulations dealing with the minimum age for employment and the requirements that transportation home be provided for certain employees. The Board will also consider issues related to the employment sectors to which the regulations will apply. The Board will review written submissions from February 15th to May 1st.

In Saskatchewan, the minimum age for employment in hotels, restaurants, educational institutions, hospitals and nursing homes is 16 years of age. As well, employers must provide employees in those workplaces who finish work between the hours of 12:30 am and 7:00 am local time with transportation home. The Minimum Wage Board will receive written submissions from employers and workers about whether these regulations should be changed.

The Board expects input on issues such as whether there needs to be any minimum age for employment, whether employers should have to provide transportation home for late-night employees and whether the types of workplaces to which these regulations apply (hotels, restaurants, educational institutions, hospitals and nursing homes) should be increased, reduced, or left the same.

Submissions to the Minimum Wage Board can be e-mailed to: minimumwageboardreview@lab.gov.sk.ca or mailed to: #400-1879 Albert Street, Regina, SK S4P4W1.

Source: Government of Saskatchewan Media Release, February 10, 2006

Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce - Board of Directors



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Saskatoon Blades
Hockey Club



Monica Kreuger
Global
Infobrokers Inc.



Ken McFarlane
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Saskatoon John G. Diefenbaker International Airport host site to the Saskatchewan Aviation Hall of Fame

The Saskatoon Airport Authority is pleased to announce that they have joined with the Saskatchewan Aviation Council to make the Saskatoon John G. Diefenbaker International Airport a host site for the Saskatchewan Aviation Hall of Fame.

The Saskatchewan Aviation Hall of Fame is a montage that paints a picture of the province's rich aviation history and is proudly located at the airport, directly across from the airlines ticket counters.

Bill Restall, Saskatoon Airport Authority's President & Chief Executive Officer says, "The Saskatoon Airport Authority is very pleased we were able to provide an Aviation venue where

we are able to showcase those individuals who have helped develop aviation in Saskatchewan."

Janet Keim, President of the Saskatchewan Aviation Council remarks, "Too often, Canadians fail to celebrate our heroes. I am very proud of this display that commemorates the honour and achievement of Saskatchewan aviation pioneers."

The Saskatoon Airport Authority is proud to work with our community and business partners, ensuring the Saskatoon John G. Diefenbaker International Airport is a destination that reflects the dynamic and growing city where we live.

Source: Saskatoon Airport Authority Media Release, February 6, 2006



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*President & CEO,
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Laurie Beth Jones

"The 4 Elements of Success!"
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Watch for more details!

Committee Chairs



**Health
Opportunities**
John Hyshka
Phenomenome
Discoveries



**Knowledge
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Rob Norris
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Awards Gala

May 9th, 2006

TCU Place

(Formerly Centennial Auditorium)

Cocktails 6:00 pm ... Dinner 7:00 pm ... Awards 8:00 pm

Tickets:

\$95 + GST / person
\$750 + GST / table of 8

For more information visit: www.eboardoftrade.com
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Chamber of Commerce**

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Refer your leads to:

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Phone: (306) 664-0713

E-mail: jzach@eboardoftrade.com
OR

Derek Crang

Director of Investor Relations

Phone: (306) 664-0702

E-mail: dcrang@eboardoftrade.com



*Wednesday,
June 7th, 2006*

Saskatoon Golf & Country Club

*Shot Gun Start: 1:00 pm
BBQ: 6:30 pm*

*Sponsor a Hole
Sponsor a Prize
or Golf a Round*

*For more information call:
(306) 244-2151*

BUSINESS VIEW

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