

## **Building a Stronger Economy and Stronger Community**

### **Introduction**

A stronger economy starts at home, in our province, with our greatest assets - our people and our natural resources. We have what it takes to compete internationally and we have a diversity of exports that the world is demanding. Together we can build a stronger economy and future. However, we have assets we are not developing to their full potential, a short sighted view of our economy and we need to mitigate our province's boom-bust cycle.

### **Carbon Capture Technology**

We did it FIRST! Why doesn't everyone know that and why are we not getting the provincial and federal recognition that deserves? Carbon Capture Technology is one of the hot topics in the climate change discussion and we should continue its development. We have the technology to capture CO<sub>2</sub> and we should be capturing MORE!

How does our province benefit from CCS technology? First, it provides the advantage of moving coal generated power from fossil fuel generation to a carbon neutral power generation. That is a huge distinction that is not understood. Secondly, this technology can be used on natural gas power plants and will have to be developed in this area if our provincial power generation is to avoid high Carbon Pricing penalties. The province needs reliable base power generation and with CCS we can achieve that, still move to a carbon neutral province and avoid Carbon Tax penalties. The proposed investment is far outweighed by the technological advances and financial savings it will generate.

The potential for the development of uses for the CO<sub>2</sub> by-products should not be overlooked. The revenue the province generates from enhanced oil recovery is only one example. CO<sub>2</sub> is also used for the production of chemicals, in fire extinguishing systems, for freezing food products, water treatment, for soft drinks and even for greenhouse supplementation for plant growth. Have we fully developed the revenue generation side of the CCS facility or is it another Saskatchewan asset that has not been fully developed?

### **Renewable Power Generation**

Saskatchewan has two amazing assets in wind and sun. Capitalizing on these assets and developing these technologies further should continue to be a focus. Importing hydro power from Manitoba may be an important way to secure low cost alternative renewable power but we must be cautious that it does not come at the cost of furthering innovation in our province

and at a loss of Saskatchewan jobs. Energy for our province should be supplied by our province with our province's workforce.

### **Formation of a Saskatchewan Energy Centre**

The community of Estevan would like to set forth the proposal for a *Saskatchewan Energy Centre*. We are the "Energy City" and are already, unofficially, the centre of energy production for our province. In our area, we have vast oil and gas production, coal production, the first large scale geo thermal project in our country, the first large scale CCS project in the world, some of the highest sunlight hours in our nation, and yeah, we've got wind. The Petroleum Technology Research Centre already does a lot of work in our area, we have an outstanding local college and we have an innovative community that is ready to take on this new challenge. We could be for the energy industries what the "Protein Industries Super Cluster" is for Agri-Food development.

### **Exports**

For decades, perhaps even a century, Saskatchewan has recognized that we produce raw material in abundance but we continue to lack value added processing and exports. Usually the focus is on the Agri-Food Value Added Chain but we need to recognize that Agri-Value Added encompasses so much more. We need to develop the industry we know best in every aspect. Farming and equipment technology, livestock food supplement development, animal breeding stock, plant genetics, chemical and fertilizer development and application processes, the list is endless.

This development of industries that we know best also extends to the oil and gas sector, mining, forestry, and so many more. We have a multitude of core industries that we have built our province upon. We now need innovative programs to continue to develop them and export that to the world.

We must not forget the emerging industries that are new to us. Development within our province in these industries needs to come from attracting new talent to our province or looking at ways to develop the talent within our province and keeping it here. We must continue to recognize that one of our most valuable exports is our people. The development of centres of excellence, whether it be "Protein Industry Super Clusters" or a "Saskatchewan Energy Centre" will assist in attracting talent to our province but perhaps more importantly, develop and retain our own talent.

## **Property Assessment Process**

The Property Assessment Process is broken and there does not seem to be a willingness to look at effective ways to re-vamp the system or even gather constructive feedback. Estevan residents have experienced tax increases of 200% to 400% from one assessment period to another. There is no effective way to launch a complaint or provide constructive feedback to get meaningful results. The Estevan Chamber has tried, the City of Estevan has tried, the RM of Estevan has tried and we have been ignored. Our local area, along with other communities in the province that experience volatile boom-bust cycles, continue to suffer unreasonable tax fluctuations that jeopardize the financial health of property owners and therefore our province. There needs to be a way to flag these cases, account for these fluctuations and mitigate unnecessary financial burden from an ineffective assessment system.

## **Water Management**

Saskatchewan may be land locked but that does not mean we lack water - overall. However, many communities in our province are limited by their lack of water resources when it comes to developing their local economy. That is not the case in Estevan, however, we have an abundance of water in our area that we could develop further and we have vast flood plains that we could potentially use to “harvest” flood water to better manage crop production, develop irrigation, food processing systems, and livestock management.

We need to take a look at the initial Lake Diefenbaker project and all our water resources to develop a provincial plan for water sustainability. As we experience changes in our climate, we need to thoughtfully look at how we can successfully manage this new reality.

## **Boom-Bust Community Stability Plan**

The boom-bust cycle is not exclusive to a city or to an industry. Saskatchewan residents experience this throughout the province whether it is the closing of a uranium mine, a coal mine, a forestry project or a drop in potash prices. For communities that generate so much wealth for this province and then are decimated by the collapse of an industry, it feels like they are forgotten. It feels like they are there to exploit for financial gain and then left to figure things out on their own. It feels like they have no voice, no government representation and no path to follow to forge a new future.

We have got to do better. We have experienced so many historical boom and bust industries and cycles and yet we do not have any system in place to transition communities or industries. Estevan should not be scraping together whatever means it finds available to try to come up

with a self-guided plan for the future. There should be experts in place to consult with, best practises well documented to draw strategic plans from, and innovative quick start projects to initialize immediately. There should be a clear priority for that constituencies' member of the legislative assembly to make sure they have the time and resources available to assist their riding.

### **Conclusion**

The Estevan Chamber of Commerce is grateful for the opportunity to be invited to provide feedback in writing on the top priorities for building a stronger economy and building stronger communities. Much of what has been written here has already been put forth to our government representative and in the work we do on many levels. There is always more to be done. There are always lessons to be learned. It is our hope that you will find this input valuable in shaping the plan for our province's futures.