

Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce
Board of Director Nominee Biographies:

AGM Wednesday January 17, 2018
Crystal Ridge Golf Course
Okotoks Alberta

Get tickets:
www.okotokschamber.ca
403 938 2848



Susan Baxter – Just a Little Help Professional Nursing Services (Incumbent)

I moved to Okotoks in 2005. I was born and raised in Rural Alberta on a Farming and Cattle Ranch. I have 4 other siblings with one being my Identical twin. As children, we were very involved in our community and that being Church, 4-H and other community events. I raised my two children who are now 27 and 30 years old now. I married my husband in 2013 and have been busy growing my business and building our dream cabin at lake Koochanusa where we spend most weekends throughout the year. Just this past summer I welcomed my first grandchild Scarlett. I am currently in my 32nd year as a nurse. 4 years ago, I started my own Home Care Business, Just a Little Help Professional Nursing Services. Being from Rural Alberta, I have always had a passion about community Service and 1 year ago became involved in The Okotoks and District Chamber of Commerce by putting my name forward for The Board of Directors after much urging of a fellow nurse I had worked with in Alberta Health Services.

My current positions of service with the Chamber of Commerce is with The Public Safety Committee with The RCMP and Bylaw Enforcement with The Town of Okotoks. I was also asked by our present president, Andrew Gustafson to sit on the Dementia Friendly Communities that is an Initiative of AHS, Brenda Strafford Foundation and Alberta Innovates. Both of these committees I have greatly enjoyed as they are a good compliment to years of service as a nurse in Rural Alberta. I am also very involved in Koochanusa Village Community Events with bringing this community of 75 homes together with recent event planning such as a progressive dinner at Christmas 2017, July 1st ,2017 Scavenger Hunt and a New Years Eve outdoor family party 2016.

I would like to ask for your support in continuing my service with The Chamber of Commerce. As a small Business in this community, I see the value of working with other business owners like yourself and making this a community that we all know is a perfect place for us to live at all stages of life with our neighbors and family. In Nursing, we always talk about patient and family centered care and I believe that community involvement is vital to a fulfilled and Healthy Life.

Warren Carriere, – Alberta Construction Rentals (Incumbent)

I am the president of Alberta Construction Rentals who supports Okotoks construction sites and homes with construction equipment rentals. I have been on the Okotoks and Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for 18 months. I am currently the chair of the marketing committee and consummate volunteer for all the events. I have a vast volunteering history as I have a social work background. I am also the president of the Canadian Rental Association Alberta Chapter and I am on the BILD Calgary region Cochrane Developer Committee. I bring a vast amount of experience and knowledge and would like to continue as a board member.

Harlene Day –WealthCo (Incumbent)

This is my second term as a Chamber Board Member. I think the past year has been an interesting one for me and I feel like we have a lot of unfinished business which will require commitment and knowledge to see it through. The new term will bring some new people and fresh ideas to the Board while at the same time I think it is imperative that there be a mix. I chaired the Christmas Party Committee and worked on all other events for the Chamber during my term. I have a lot of Board experience which I think this new board will need. At WealthCo, I work with my business clients to grow and protect their businesses and I see my commitment to the Chamber as a way to enhance that for other businesses in the community.

Gino De Paoli – The Eagle 100.9 (Incumbent)

In his first term as a director of the Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce, Gino has been a part of numerous committees including the Chamber's Golf Tournament, Trade Show, Special Events, Strategic Planning and has lent a helping hand to a number of Chamber Events whether it's being involved as a MC, guest auctioneer, moderator or just simply rolling up his sleeves to help set-up or tear down at events.

Born and raised in the Foothills, Gino is a dedicated worker that shares the goal of every local business of not just being successful and profitable but also making sure the community is receiving the best possible service and product available within the Foothills.

Gino has spent the last four years directly in the Okotoks business community as a reporter for The Eagle 100.9 and contractor for local businesses in and around the Foothills.

Gino spends his time either in the wood working shop, out on the construction site or following his biggest passion... Sports, you can find Gino at Seaman Stadium in the Summer doing promotions and PA announcing for Okotoks Dawgs games or he's at Pason Centennial Arena as the Voice of the Okotoks Oilers Junior 'A' Hockey Club.

Pam Done, - RBC

Pam is an experienced Community Manager with a 21 year career with RBC. Her history in the banking industry and volunteerism has built her skills to guide nonprofit organizations, provide advice and council to small business, commercial business markets and personal clients. For 10 years within her career Pam has held a specific focus on business markets, assisting owners across various industries for their credit, investment and succession planning needs. Pam holds a vast leadership scope and is committed to empowering others to achieve their best thru commitment to community. Pam is a past board member of the Distress Centre, she is currently on the steering committee of the RBC Employee Resource Group Mosaic that highlights diversity and inclusion in the workplace, in addition to various other initiatives. Pam's goal is to be a part of the Okotoks Chamber of Commerce to help grow and develop the community for today and for the future.

Andrea Glowatsky – Koch Safety Services (Incumbent)

I have served on the Okotoks Chamber Board as a Director for the past 3 years and would like to continue my service for another year. I own and have successfully run my own business, Koch Safety Services, for the past 4+ years. When I first started as a board member it was a goal of mine to bring back the Annual Chamber Golf Tournament and with that accomplishment, have chaired that committee and profitably run that event for the past 2 years. With this event, I have also been able to maintain the 2 High School Business Scholarships that the Chamber funds each year and keep those in place. I also sit on the Marketing Committee and the BizLink committee and have helped out on numerous other events run by the Chamber such as the Trade Show and Business Excellence committee.

As a past employee of Okotoks Living my connections have proven extremely valuable to the Chamber. As a single Mom to my daughter Emma, community involvement is very important to me. For the past 4 years I have been the President of the volunteer run organization, Okotoks Synchro Sea Queens. I have also been a Director on the BILD Safety Advisory Committee for 3 years and this past summer ran a Safety BBQ here in Okotoks which was well attended by local trades & builders as well as local media, the Mayor and other Council members in conjunction with the Fire Department and Municipal Enforcement and OH&S.

If re-elected, I will work hard for the local business community to support initiatives that keep our local economy strong and provide support to its members.

I would be honoured and humbled if I could serve another term for the Okotoks Chamber of Commerce

Dawn LeMaistre – Okotoks Oilers JR A Hockey Club (Incumbent)

I have had the pleasure of being involved as a Chamber Director for the last year and a half and I am hoping to continue working with this group of business minded individuals and their companies for the better good of our Town.

The Chamber creates an opportunity for many different businesses to come together to create a single voice that promotes the community and the businesses operating within its boundaries and others in the surrounding areas. I would be honored to represent the non-profit/athletic team category of business as part of this voice.

With an extensive background in small and large event planning, currently working for a business with a similar business structure as the Chamber, and having past experience as a Town Employee, combined with many years working on various boards and committees, I do feel I bring a strong understanding of processes and the ability to work for the businesses of Okotoks and can help make change should it be warranted. Currently I hold my Director position with the Okotoks and District Chamber of Commerce, I am the School Council Chair for St. Francis of Assisi Academy, and I am a Director for The Friends of the Young Canadians of the Calgary Stampede. I have been involved at many different boards and executive positions over the years and was a part of the Emergency Response Team for the Town of Okotoks during the flood of 2011. Being an active face in our community and having sat on the Chamber Committees for the Trade Show, Business Excellence Awards, and Chamber Christmas Event during my time as a Director, I look forward to continuing my role with the Chamber and making these and other Chamber events bigger and better with each passing year and being a voice for local businesses in our community.

Robin Mitchell – Ram Accounting & Consulting

I am Robin Mitchell, CPA, CA, CAFM. I am the owner and sole practitioner of RAM Accounting & Consulting in Okotoks. I have been running my own Chartered Accounting firm since January 2013. I am a fully registered Public Accounting Firm with CPA Alberta. I received my Chartered Accountant designation in 2007. I then subsequently received my CAFM (Certified Aboriginal Financial Manager) designation from AFOA Canada (Aboriginal Financial Officers Association) in 2011. In 2015 I received my Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) designation as part of the unification of the CA, CMA and CGA designations.

In the course of my career I have worked as the audit manager of multi-million dollar oil & gas operations, their acquisitions and consolidations, audit manager of the corporate arm of the Siksika First Nation and the audit manager of the Tsuu T'ina First Nation, including the Casino portion. I have also been involved as the external accountant with organizations as small as local sports organizations and an Indigenous Youth Group in Calgary. Upon leaving public practice in March of 2010, I became the Chief Financial Manager of the corporate arm of the Siksika First Nation. I then was forced to leave that position due to a maternity-related disability. In December 2012, I began consulting with Tsuu T'ina Nation providing assistance in preparing for their audit and setting up internal efficiency processes. It was during this time that I also started to get my own clients and began working with multiple small businesses, mainly in High River, Okotoks and the surrounding Foothills.

Once I started operating my own business, I felt that it was a goal and a milestone to work towards becoming a member of the Chamber of Commerce. We moved from High River to Okotoks in August 2015 and since then, my business has quadrupled what it was when we were in High River. It was a great feeling when I finally became a member of the Chamber of Commerce in 2016 and I felt that it was a huge step in legitimizing my business and my standing as a business-owner in Okotoks. Growing up, my parents always spoke of the members of the Chamber of Commerce and the group itself with such reverence that I felt that once I became a member of the Chamber, I felt like I had achieved success.

I feel that as a Director of the Board of the Chamber of Commerce I can contribute not only my education and expertise, but my years of knowledge in various industries and at multiple levels. I also have knowledge and experience with municipalities and not-for-profits that can aid me in working with the Chamber.

I look forward to working with all of you, in any capacity, and seeing the success of the Chamber, its member businesses and the Town of Okotoks in growth and many years of continued operations.

Cheryl Olson –The Okotoks Dawgs

Cheryl Olson is the Operations Manager for the Okotoks Dawgs Baseball Club. After spending nearly 15 years in Human Resources at a major bank, Cheryl followed her passion for baseball and working with the public and joined the Dawgs in December of 2016.

Having lived in Okotoks for over 25 years, Cheryl has been part of the Foothills Minor Ball Association's executive committee for the past 2 years, was previously part of the Okotoks Block Parent Association's executive, has experience as a fundraising coordinator for a local dance school and volunteered for the Okotoks Hospice and the Calgary Humane Society.

Cheryl is also very familiar with the world of small business having owned and operated a local coffee shop in 2008-2011 in Okotoks where she was able to bring her love of coffee together with her love of getting to know her customers.

Cheryl can be found most days at the ball park whether getting ready for the summer collegiate season, working on ways to improve the fan experience or just enjoying the game itself. On days when she isn't at the ballpark, Cheryl enjoys watching her own son play competitive baseball or watching her daughter compete in Irish Dance.

Clint Pigeon – Two Birds Furniture

Clint Pigeon of Two Birds Furniture is a local Okotoks business owner that established the business in 2013 with his wife Robyn Pigeon. Both Clint and Robyn were raised in rural Alberta, developing an understanding of the importance of hard work and a quality product. Being active within the local community and having an appreciation for Alberta's heritage sparked an initiative that this couple is very passionate about.

After numerous requests from friends and family for custom barn wood decor, the newly married couple decided to make something of their little at-home shop products. Building came naturally to Clint and business was a passion of Robyn's, together the two "birds" created a start up and Two Birds Furniture was born.

Clint's goal within the Okotoks & District Chamber of Commerce is help local businesses like himself achieve their highest potentials and help expand their client bases within the local community through quality, ethics and personal touches that make each business unique. Clint would like to help the community and all of Southern Alberta recognize Okotoks as leader for small business development, longevity and a place to be when starting a business. He also wants to promote small business networking, cooperative business initiatives as well all local hiring and training programs for the unemployed or those who want to create their own local business. Clint spends his time wearing multiple hats while running a small business as any business owner does. Whether it's in the woodshop, on a building reclamation project or expanding the business brand through marketing plans and networking events with potential investors and clients. Clint and Robyn work within the community and recently were apart of the Charity Checkstop before Christmas this year. Outside of work you can find Clint and Robyn outdoors with their dog Hank or taking time away traveling to hiking destinations such as Alaska, Victoria and Hawaii.

Anna-Marie Plante, - Servus Credit Union

Hello, my name is Anna-Marie Plante.

I am currently the Commercial/Ag Relationship Officer for Servus Credit Union working out of both the High River and Okotoks branches.

I was born in rural Manitoba and then moved across the Prairies to Kimberley BC with my family where I was raised. My late husband and I moved to Calgary in the 1985 and High River in 1990 and I have been here since. I have worked in the credit union system for over 33 years in Kimberley BC, Calgary, and High River/Okotoks (from front line teller to commercial lender and every role in between). I was part of the opening of the Servus Credit Union branch in Okotoks in 2004 before moving into the Business Banking side of things in August 2007.

I am very active as a volunteer and currently sit on the board of directors for Literacy for Life and Rowan House Society as well as the 10th anniversary committee for Abbeyfield House Society. I like to keep busy within my communities, strong believer in the "shop local" concept and I am committed to life-long learning.

I have seen the Okotoks Chamber grow and develop into a vibrant meaningful organization that is truly committed to assisting, not only the business sector in Okotoks but the community as a whole. I want to be a more active part of this adventure and feel by being part of the board of directors of the Chamber, I can assist in making Okotoks be the best "big small town" in the Foothills. Okotoks is growing but is still maintaining its small town spirit and sense of community.

Viktorija Steele, - Okotoks Western Wheel

Viktorija Steele has been working at the Western Wheel Newspaper as an Advertising Consultant for the past 3 years. I enjoy the interaction with customers and co-workers that is part of the job that I do. I've worked in the advertising and retail industries for the past 27+ years.

As an Advertising Consultant, my goal is to help local businesses be successful and present themselves to potential customers in a positive way. I'm eager to continue serving on the Okotoks Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors as these goals closely align with the objectives of the Okotoks Chamber of Commerce. I hope to provide my expertise to the Board in this regard, and be able to bring new clientele to the Chamber.

I've lived in Okotoks for the past 12 years and love the people who live here, the small town feeling and the community spirit. I'm married to my grade school sweetheart and have been for the past 45 years. If you can believe it we were born at the same hospital on the same day! No, we're not twins, Lol.

I have three beautiful children and 2 grandchildren. My grandchildren are twins! Lol

Adam Stepa – Infinite Chartered Accountants

I moved to Okotoks with my parents and younger sister, Sara, in 1999. I attended Okotoks Junior High School and later graduated from Foothills Composite High School in 2003. I then moved to Calgary to attend the University of Calgary. In 2008, I graduated from U of C and obtained my Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting along with a Bachelor of Science in Actuarial Science, both with distinction.

Throughout my university days I worked at various small oil and gas companies downtown Calgary. After graduating from university I articulated with Collins Barrow Calgary where I obtained my Chartered Accountant designation in 2011. Later in 2011, I returned to Okotoks to work for Thompson Darrach Chartered Accountants, which is now Infinite Chartered Accountants, and on January 1, 2015 I was admitted as a partner.

In the fall of 2013 I moved back to Okotoks with my now wife, Megan, and in September 2017 we welcomed our daughter, Azlin, to the world. We also have two dogs at home, a Chiweenie named Luna and a Great Dane named Lincoln.

Since being back in Okotoks I have taken on a few different positions in the community. Since 2012, I have served on the board and been the treasurer for the Foothills Centennial Centre. I recently stepped down from this position to pursue other opportunities. I am however still working with the board at the Centennial Centre as they search for a new treasurer. Since 2014, I have served on the board and been the treasurer for the Foothills Country Hospice. I plan to continue in my role at the Hospice as it has been a very rewarding and challenging experience to date. I have been a part of many changes and projects at the Hospice that have helped me to develop my skills set in being an effective board member.

I believe my volunteer experience, along with my professional background, give me a solid knowledge base and ability to be a strong board member, and potential treasurer, for the Okotoks Chamber of Commerce.

Kathy Thirsk – Most Wanted Real Estate (Incumbent)

First of all thank you for giving me the opportunity to being part of the Board of Directors of the Chamber of Commerce and most currently...in the position of Chamber Secretary. I love giving back to the community and I love being part of such a great group of entrepreneurs that represent Okotoks. We are always working hard to listen to the needs of the community and you as fellow Chamber members in making good positive changes for moving forward with all of your best interests at heart. I believe our Chamber has never been stronger...with more and more plans for a bright future for all of us. I do believe that the best is ahead of us in 2018 and I would be honoured in representing you as Secretary for another term. I thank you in advance and do appreciate your vote!

Jim Zang – Okotoks Living

Jim Zang is the Associate Publisher and Sales Manager for Source Media Group – a publishing and multi-media communications company with 12 full-time staff – as well as the hands-on Editor of Okotoks Living magazine.

Jim has a BA in Sociology from U of C and a Diploma in Public Relations from Mount Royal College (now University). He has worked in the communications industry for more than 30 years, working at public relations agencies, The Calgary Herald, and Avenue magazine before joining Source Media in 2004.

Away from work, Jim enjoys spending time with his two grown children and their spouses, playing golf and hockey, rollerblading, and going to live music venues. He vacations annually in Kelowna and Palm Springs, where he is a regular contributing writer for Canada South, a Palm Desert-based magazine for snowbirds. He's an avid reader, currently halfway through the entire Carl Hiaasen library of dark comedy crime fiction novels.

Jim's expertise is new product launches and finding creative solutions to everyday problems, including revenue generation. He brings to the table his many years of communications and business experience, writing skills, work ethic and natural team-building and leadership abilities.