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Chamber of
Commerce

abbotsford

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ABBOTSFORD

Our Chamber Committees - the Voice of Our Members

The Chamber is a member-driven, volunteer-led organization created to provide leadership and advocacy for a healthy business environment. We are part of the largest, strongest and most influential business network in the country and, collectively, we work together advocating to all levels of government to make our community, province and country a better place to live, work and play.

We speak on behalf of our members on issues and concerns that directly affect them and the business sector at large. We build relationships of trust with government and other bodies who set policy and regulations that impact business, in order that we may bring productive and valuable commentary to the decision making process. We seek out opportunities to present the needs and opinions of business in a way that will benefit our economy and our prosperity.

At the heart of this is our Chamber Committee structure which creates a process for our members to identify key issues, provide valuable input, discuss solutions and then influence the policy recommendations that we make to government. Our Committees also identify programs and action that our Chamber can initiate to provide knowledge, opportunities and services to our members.

Our Chamber is a member of several City of Abbotsford Committees and actively participates in local initiatives such as the Official Community Plan, AgRefresh and the numerous events arising from the City's Plan 200K process. Annually we bring forward policy resolutions with recommendations for government action to both the BC and Canadian

Chamber of Commerce Policy conferences.

This past year our Chamber has been particularly active in responding to a variety of tax changes proposed by the Federal government which would have a significant impact on business. We engaged our members in expressing their concerns to their MPs and directed specific comments and observations to the Federal Finance Minister.

The content and substance of all these activities above are driven by the invaluable input that comes from our Committees.

We currently have three standing Committees:

- Government Affairs - to identify, analyze and discuss current issues affecting the Abbotsford business community. Make recommendations to the Board on issues that require a policy position or other action by the Chamber. Receive presentations on issues of importance to local business. Conduct All-Candidate meetings for Municipal, Provincial and Federal elections.

- Agriculture - to identify, analyze and discuss issues of importance to build, promote and protect our local Agriculture sector. Make recommendations to the Board on issues that require a policy position or other action by the Chamber. Conduct an annual event to promote the Agriculture sector in Abbotsford.

- Not For Profit - to identify the needs, assess resources and recommend action to better respond to the needs of the Not For Profit business sector.

In addition we have Operational Committees that assist Chamber staff with events and activities

delivered to Chamber members. From time to time we may also strike a Task Force or short-term Sub-Committee to address a specific issue or event that may arise.

Participation in Committees is open to all Chamber members and we rely on our strong base of active volunteers who step forward to contribute their time and expertise. It may be a specific issue that provides the incentive to attend a Committee meeting or it may be a desire to give back to the community in which the

member does business. Whatever their reason for participating, we encourage our members to attend and discover the active role our Committees play in shaping our advocacy activity.

For more information about our Committees go to our website at abbotsfordchamber.com or for information about attending or participating in one of our Committees please contact the Abbotsford Chamber office at (604) 859-9651.

CANADA'S

PLAN

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

With the City in the midst of planning its 2018 budget, it's time to look at reducing the tax burden faced by Abbotsford business.

The City raises revenue primarily through property taxes. Currently Abbotsford business pays property tax at a rate of 2.78 times that of residents—this is the Business Tax Ratio. That means for a commercial property of the same market value as a residential property, the commercial property will pay 2.78 times as much property tax. For 2018, the City is proposing a budget increase of 2.47% but has not yet approved the tax rates for all property classes.

The Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce calls for the business tax ratio to be reduced, firstly because it benefits the whole city. In British Columbia 98% of all businesses are small businesses. This means it is mostly small, local, "mom

and pop" businesses which occupy commercial property and pay taxes. Every tax dollar is a cost to these local businesses, which in turn reduces their ability to hire local employees and contribute to the community. Keeping the ratio low helps our local economy.

Further, businesses already pay more than their fair share. In addition to paying their own utilities, businesses also pay for other costs such as business licences, commercial garbage pick-up, and recycling. Considering costs/benefits to the City, there is a fairness argument that businesses should pay less tax not more.

Finally, we need to ensure that Abbotsford remains a competitive place



Mark Warkentin, President

for business. Surrey, Langley, Mission and Chilliwack are all competitors seeking to attract businesses. The higher our ratio is, the harder it is to retain solid businesses in our community. Reducing the ratio makes Abbotsford truly an attractive place for business.

The first cornerstone of the City's 2015-2018 Strategic Plan calls for a "Vibrant Economy". We would call on the City to make good on this goal by improving the Business Tax Ratio.

Non-Profit Boards That Work

The Abbotsford Chamber will be holding a full day, interactive and hands-on learning experience for non-profit boards, executive directors, and those who work with non profits so they can carry out their work with excellence and in line with best board practices.

Tuesday, February 6, 2018

9:00am-3:30pm

Cascade Community Church (35190 DeLair Road, Abbotsford)

\$65 per person includes coffee breaks and lunch

Register at www.abbotsfordchamber.com



NEW BUSINESSES:

The Abbotsford Chamber would like to welcome the following businesses:

Becoming a member of the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce provides substantial benefits to generate more business and reach the heart of your community.

- Planet Fitness – McCallum Road Location NOW OPEN
- All Spa Repairs – 604-807-1586
- Abbotsford Executive Offices – 604-359-8777
- Hub International Barton Insurance – 604-857-7802
- Coastal Bins – 604-309-1616
- Titan Real Estate Team – 604-309-1111
- Hip Mama Sales – 604-866-7200
- Hemlock Harling Distribution & Mail Services – 604-333-5537
- Lighthouse Realty Ltd – 604-866-1933
- Ofelia's Mexican Magic Tours – 604-615-2059
- PixaLere Healthcare Inc. – 604-217-0333
- 4 Pillars Consulting Group – 604-866-7895
- I'm Blessed Silkscreening – 604-859-5250
- Telus – 604-250-2364
- Talbot Marketing – 705-791-9958

UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS

BUSINESS AFTER BUSINESS

DATE: **Thursday, January 25**

LOCATION: **Marketplace by MCC**

TIME: **4:00pm-6:00pm**

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROVINCIAL BUDGET WITH MICHAEL DE JONG

DATE: **Friday, February 23**

LOCATION: **Quality Hotel & Conference Centre**

TIME: **11:30am – 1:30pm**

FRASER VALLEY CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE BUSINESS SHOWCASE

DATE: **Wednesday, April 18**

LOCATION: **Quality Hotel & Conference Centre**

TIME: **2:00pm – 6:00pm**