



# CHAMBER IMPACTS

News and views from the Metropolitan Halifax Chamber of Commerce

August 7, 1998

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Your Chamber has been working hard to ensure that a competitive environment for business is maintained in our community, and we continue to be the voice of business for the Metro area. Through the hard work of our many dedicated volunteers and other partners in the community, we are making progress ensuring continued economic development for the local business community. In the second quarter of 1998 we have had an impact in the following areas:

## ***Workers' Compensation***

**ISSUE:** The Chamber's Small Business Committee is continuing to advocate reform to the Workers' Compensation System to make it more effective and efficient. Over the last two years we have monitored the operations of the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB), spoken with representatives of the WCB about amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act which have been implemented, and lobbied for further changes and improvements.

**IMPACT:** The WCB has recently announced plans to move forward with a pilot project for billing WCB premiums on a quarterly, as opposed to the current annual, basis. The Small Business Committee has been invited to nominate several member companies to take part in this pilot project.

## ***Occupational Health & Safety***

**ISSUE:** In the spring of 1998, the province proposed new regulations relating to violence in the workplace requiring the employer to perform violence assessments on a regular basis. The Chamber's Occupational Health and Safety Task Force expressed concern about the wording of the regulations which could see multiple assessments on a daily basis which would add little or nothing to the level of workplace safety.

**IMPACT:** The Department of Labour has now put forward revised Violence Regulations which attempt to address this concern. The new rules will create flexibility for companies who have multiple job sites or, employees who spend a great deal of time at other employer's work places.

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**METROPOLITAN HALIFAX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

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***This Update is also available on our website ~ [www.halifaxchamber.com](http://www.halifaxchamber.com)***

## ***Transfer of Halifax International Airport***

**ISSUE:** The Chamber has been an active participant in discussions for the transfer of the Halifax International Airport to private operators. We have three representatives on the Halifax International Airport Authority Board; members of our Executive have met with federal transportation Minister David Collenette, Premier Russell MacLellan and other key stakeholders to discuss the issues surrounding the airport; and the Chamber, in partnership with the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia and the Hotel Association of Nova Scotia, launched an awareness campaign earlier this summer to promote community support for the efforts to secure a fair deal for the transfer of our airport to community control.

**IMPACT:** Minister Collenette has now tabled a revised federal offer which includes some measures to address the historical under funding and other site specific issues. These measures include adjusted long term rents, allowance for greater up front federal infrastructure investment and acceptance of responsibility for existing environmental hazards at the site. The Chamber's representatives on the Halifax International Airport Authority Board will be involved in reviewing this offer to determine if it effectively deals with the concerns at hand. Watch for more details or a call to action once the Airport Authority has completed its review of the new federal offer.

## ***Port Development***

**ISSUE:** In 1996 the Chamber's Task Force on Port Related Opportunities put forward a vision for the Port of Halifax which was focused on the need for growth and expansion of port facilities and port traffic. The Task Force concluded that the "Status Quo is not an option".

**IMPACT:** In June of this year the Halifax Port Corporation took the lead in responding to a request for bids to build a super container terminal to service the East Coast traffic of a consortium of two container lines - Maersk and Sea-Land. The direct and indirect spin offs of this project could amount to 6,800 new jobs and over \$450 million per year added to our provincial gross domestic product. A special Chamber Task Force has been struck to coordinate our activities in support of this bid. We are pleased to report that the Halifax bid has now entered the second stage of consideration and that the entire community is on side and working hard to bring this opportunity to Halifax.

***Editor's Note: Chamber Impacts will be faxed and E-mailed to members on a quarterly basis, and will also be included in Business Voice.***