

Chamber Impacts Through the Summer

August 13, 2001

Energy

The time is now for an energy strategy in Nova Scotia and the Province must take substantive action. In July, the Chamber met with the Nova Scotia Energy Strategy Core Team to elaborate on our response to the Province's energy strategy discussion paper. The Chamber made several recommendations to the Province as a new energy strategy is developed: (1) It is important that energy is identified as a government priority, with a minister exclusively responsible for an energy portfolio; (2) Government must invest in the necessary resources to access the best and the brightest talent available; (3) In order to ensure Nova Scotia's long-term economic stability, government must adhere to a debt reduction plan. The Chamber's full submission with recommendations is available at www.halifaxchamber.com in the Policy Updates section.

Burnside Transit Survey

Responses to a transit survey of Burnside businesses indicate that increased public transit service is perceived as important to the future growth of Burnside Industrial Park. The Chamber's Burnside Committee has met with a Metro Transit representative to discuss the survey results and future plans for transit in the Park. The committee and Metro Transit will continue to work together and meet regularly on issues of common interest. A synopsis of the survey results will appear in an upcoming issue of *Business Voice*.

Chamber Events With Insight

In June, the Chamber hosted two luncheons with prominent speakers on key policy issues. Ralph Klein, Premier of Alberta, conveyed the steps Alberta took with the oil and gas sector to ensure its economy flourished. A strong Nova Scotia benefits all of Canada and Klein supports Premier Hamm's campaign to build a strong energy industry.

At a second Chamber event in the same week, Michael Phelps, Chairman and CEO of Westcoast Energy Inc., congratulated Nova Scotia on its new status as a major player in the North American energy industry, but cautioned that this position cannot be taken for granted. He says it is crucial to have a business climate that will foster the continued growth of the industry, and that Nova Scotia's energy policy should have a long-term focus.

On the Horizon: Health

Nothing is more important to a healthy economy than a healthy, well-motivated workforce. For this reason the Chamber struck a task force to undertake a study of Nova Scotia's health care system. As a province, we need to set some health-focused objectives and put more focus on our health and less on the health care system. A full report of the Chamber's Health Task Force is expected this fall and will be available on the website at www.halifaxchamber.com.

FYI

The Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Department of Environment and Labour is reviewing the Fall Protection and Scaffolding Regulations. If you would like further information on this initiative, or have any questions about the current regulations, contact the Department of Labour at 1-800-9LABOUR or 424-5400.

The Province is undertaking a comprehensive review of the *Workers' Compensation Act*. For more details, contact the Department of Environment and Labour at (902) 424-2575 or visit www.gov.ns.ca/enla. To convey any specific WCB comments or concerns that the Chamber can forward to the Department on your behalf, please email info@halifaxchamber.com.

Your investment in the Chamber ensures we can continue to raise concerns and offer input to government on issues that affect our community's ability to retain and attract business.

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