

# Chamber Impacts Through Q4/02

December 23, 2002

## Regional Planning

A strong business climate and a healthy, growing community go hand in hand. Accordingly, a key Chamber goal is to "demonstrate leadership in planning a city by design for HRM", which guided our participation in the regional planning process. The Chamber identified the following principles as those we strongly recommended be included in the regional plan: competitiveness, efficiency, sustainability, balance and integration, and measurement. Now and in the future, as priorities are set, principles governing the regional plan must be at the forefront.

## Air Access

The Chamber believed in a need for ongoing, viable competition in the Canadian airline industry. The key principle of sound public policy should be to develop and encourage a freely competitive market and focus much more on consumers of air services. This message was taken to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and adopted as policy at its Annual General Meeting. The Halifax Chamber continues to advocate the need for improved air access at municipal, provincial and federal levels.

## Federal Finance

In October, the Chamber appeared before the federal finance standing committee to voice our top three issues: fiscal restraint, debt reduction and tax reduction. Any new spending should come from existing programs that are scaled back or eliminated. Real, consistent and aggressive spending control strategies are required for fiscal flexibility. While the Chamber was pleased with the announcement that \$8.9 billion was being paid to debt, the implementation of a strategy identifying a firm commitment to debt reduction is still required. Canada has not yet turned the corner on our national debt problem.

## Smoke Free Places

Throughout 2002, the Chamber spent considerable energy working to promote a healthier workforce in Metro Halifax. The Chamber sup-

ported a total smoking ban in all indoor public places in Nova Scotia out of concern for employees working in unhealthy conditions. The Chamber undertook many initiatives to advance support for smoke-free indoor public places. The Chamber pushed for legislation to protect the health of employees at the municipal and provincial levels. The implementation of an effective smoking ban is critical to a healthier population and business environment in Nova Scotia.

## Skills Nova Scotia Framework

In response to the provincial department of education's request for input on "Skills Nova Scotia - Strong Workforce Bright Future" working paper issued in June 2002, the Chamber provided perspectives on the development of a skills strategy and framework for the Province. The Chamber continued involvement by subsequent participation in a strategic planning process for the Skills and Learning Branch of the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

## Deregulated Store Hours

The Chamber continues its campaign to press for the deregulation of store hours. The provincial government should not be in the business of regulating store hours. The Chamber stands firm in the conviction that our region must deregulate shopping hours if we are to be a truly competitive province. Individual business must have the right to open as the market dictates, and to make autonomous operating decisions. With strategic, long-range planning, Nova Scotia has the potential to become independently prosperous. Nova Scotia needs a more progressive approach with regards to Sunday shopping.

More information on these and other Chamber policy initiatives can be found on the web at [www.halifaxchamber.com](http://www.halifaxchamber.com) under the heading policy updates.

*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. Thank you for your ongoing support, and season's greetings.*



**METROPOLITAN HALIFAX  
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