



Chamber Impacts Through the Spring

June 24, 2002

Seeking Stronger Pro-Health Legislation

As part of our strategic planning in 2001, the Chamber developed a new long-term goal that focuses on promoting a healthy workforce. A healthy workforce is more productive with fewer days lost to illness, ultimately leading to a stronger business climate, and it will reduce the demands on Nova Scotia's health care system. Accordingly, the Chamber will continue to encourage the Province to implement a total smoking ban in all workplaces in Nova Scotia. This will be a proactive way to reduce future health care costs to the taxpayer. While the Province's *Smoke Free Places Act* shows that it is serious about preventative health initiatives for Nova Scotians, the Chamber believes that in order to operate competitively, businesses need a level playing field. A total ban on smoking in all indoor public places, including bars and restaurants, is the only option to ensure this. Fairness to business and a healthy workforce could be achieved simultaneously by a total smoking ban in all indoor public places.

Calling for Better Airline Access to Halifax

In April, the Chamber released its Air Access Task Force Report, calling for initiatives to improve the Halifax's access to air travel, as defined by flight frequency, connectivity and competitive pricing. Highlights of the report's recommendations include: the Chamber will support a new style of national air policy focused on consumers rather than providers; the national air policy on anti-competitive behaviour needs to be improved to be more effective, timely and efficient; while Transport Canada should not consider re-regulating the air industry, work should be done to equalize the market, allowing competitive access by regional carriers to national carriers; the Chamber is keen to support marketing efforts by others within the community that would attract more airlines to Halifax International Airport.

HRM Boundary Review

In May, the Chamber wrote to HRM's District Boundary Advisory Committee, urging that the

boundary review process consider: 1) Is the existing structure with 23 councilors the most efficient and effective governance structure? If not, how could it be improved? 2) What is the role of community councils as a part of the governance structure and should this be reviewed at the same time as the boundaries? 3) What is the appropriate average population (or electorate) per district, giving due consideration to not only the balance between districts, but also the overall functioning of council? What have similar and larger municipalities done? In an environment of fiscal restraint, the Chamber strongly believes that the boundary advisory committee's recommendations must be weighed carefully, especially as they have potential to increase the municipality's administrative costs. Absent analysis indicating otherwise, a smaller Council would be more effective in decision-making and cost efficient, without risking parity among electoral districts.

Input on New HRM Regional Plan

The Chamber recently wrote to Anne Muecke, HRM's project manager for its regional plan, outlining key areas for consideration as a new plan is developed. The Chamber believes that the regional plan be broadened to consider more of the business community's needs. The Chamber's recommendations call for a regional plan that: efficiently manages our region's infrastructure, including transportation, environment, utilities, schools, oil and gas and technology elements; balances the needs of our business and residential communities; ensures economic and environmental sustainability; contains measurements and accountability; ensures our region is competitive at local, regional, national, and international levels; fosters integration and cooperation between public and private sector, and considers short-term critical areas that need to be addressed, as well as long-term growth.

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.

**METROPOLITAN HALIFAX
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
Strong Business. Strong Community. Since 1750.

P.O. Box 8990, Halifax,
Nova Scotia B3K 5M6
Telephone (902) 468-7111
Fax (902) 468-7333
www.halifaxchamber.com