

THE WINNIPEG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008





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Our Mission

To foster an environment in which Winnipeg business can prosper

Our Vision

Winnipeg, at the centre of North America...

- a cost-competitive, technologically innovative city with a skilled labour force and modern infrastructure to support existing and emerging industries
- a city where citizens take personal responsibility for and pride in community development
- a city with a bright economic future

Our Role

Public Policy Influence - initiate and effect change in government policy and practices to support a growing and thriving business community

Member Business Support - provide programs and services that create a competitive advantage for individual business members

Community Leadership - serve as a catalyst for a healthy and prosperous community that offers a strong foundation for business location and expansion



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CHAIR'S REPORT



It is difficult to put down into words what the past year has meant to me. It has certainly gone by far too quickly, but at the same time has been one of the most personally fulfilling years I have experienced in my business career.

It was a year filled with tremendous Chamber accomplishments culminating in a renewed sense of focus. It marked the conclusion of the previous three-year strategic plan and the creation of an exciting and ambitious new one. The membership level is at an all time high which by itself speaks volumes about the energy within the organization. However, it also leverages the Chamber's credibility and respect as the "pre-eminent voice of business" in this city.

This past year also provided me with the opportunity to preside over one of the finest Boards of Directors I have ever been associated with. Their level of participation has been outstanding with every single director displaying their passion for the Chamber and its many initiatives. Their input and governance was invaluable.

I know I may be repeating the sentiments of many of the Chairs before me but it needs to be said again – the staff at the Chamber, under the visionary leadership of Dave Angus is absolutely second-to-none and it is through their efforts that the Chamber has developed into such an amazing organization. They continue to be inspired and empowered to be the best they can be, and it shows.

The world continues to evolve and with new global markets and their related logistical challenges Winnipeg finds itself once again positioned to become a major transportation centre within North America. Initiatives such as the Inland Port have the potential to significantly reposition the city and province and take our economy to the next level. I am very proud that the Chamber has been identified as an integral driving force behind such initiatives. It validates the importance of the Chamber to the business community and to the city.

As I hand off the Chairman's gavel I leave with mixed feelings; feelings of intense pride in our accomplishments tempered with regret that my role as Chair is at an end. To be associated with this organization is truly an honour and the privilege of Chairing the Board of Directors has been more rewarding than I could have imagined.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Ken Jones
Chairman of the Board
The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

It started innocently enough with a remark by Larry McIntosh, our then chair, who thought it would be a great idea to target 2,008 members by 2008.

It sounded simple, but it got us looking inward at our whole organization. We asked ourselves how we could best provide value to our members, so we could grow.

It also got us looking at our community and our role in it.

The result was an exciting year, which also happened to mark our 135th anniversary.

Over 135 years, we have had many great years, but this one was a little extra special and I want to congratulate the membership. We finished our three-year strategic plan with a bang. Together, we reached the most aggressive membership target in our history. At the beginning, we thought it would be impossible. Reaching 2,008 members by 2008 was a catchy promotional phrase, but an intimidating target. Through the efforts of the board, our dedicated volunteers and our motivated sales team, we exceeded the target in May, one month early.

I could not be more proud of our staff, who grabbed onto the enthusiasm of our board and aggressively spread the word about the value of The Chamber. The business community responded – some looking for networking opportunities, others for information and still others to be part of our voice. But I especially appreciated those who joined because they believe it's important to support a private-sector organization. And while some of them may not have had the time to contribute, they strongly believed in our community and the important role The Chamber plays.

I also want to thank Devon Kashton, our vice-president of membership and marketing, for his untiring efforts in membership development. Devon left The Chamber to pursue another great opportunity, but leaves us with a legacy of growth and excellence.

I also want to thank all Chamber members, who continue to show confidence in the organization and our community.



Dave Angus
President & CEO



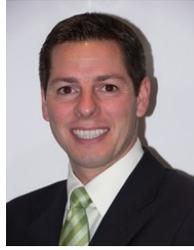
BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2007-2008



John Alho
University of
Manitoba



Michel Audette
Junior Achievement
of MB
(Assiniboine Credit
Union)



Brian Bowman
Pitblado LLP



Indu Brar
The Fairmont
Winnipeg



Darrell Brown
Kisik Inc.



Greg Dandewich
Destination
Winnipeg



Ron Diduch
Sequoia Energy Inc.



Marci Elliott



Brian Gagnon
First Glance Print
& Service Ltd.



Shane Hartje
Junior Chamber
of Commerce
(Clear Concepts)



Jeff Hartry
Cangene Corporation



Alain Laurencelle
St. Boniface
Chamber
(Taylor McCaffrey
LLP)



Judy Mathieson
Scotiabank



John McFerran
People First HR
Services Ltd.



Larry McIntosh
Peak of the Market



Bill Morrissey
Standard Aero



Judy Murphy
Meyers Norris
Penny



B.J. Reid
Investors Group



Michael Rodyniuk
Winnipeg Airports
Authority



Brian Scharfstein
Foothealth Centre



Trevor Sprague
Meyers Norris
Penny



Scott Stirton
Smith Carter



Marnie Strath
The Winnipeg
Free Press

CHAMBER STAFF

Dave Angus	President & CEO
Catherine Holder	Executive Assistant
Darcey Neufeld	Receptionist & Administrative Assistant
Cheryl Baldwin	Vice-President, Economic Development and Operations
Karen Weiss	Director of Information Systems
Ellen Kornelsen	Communications Coordinator
Lisa Newcombe	Information Coordinator
Devon Kashton	Vice-President, Marketing & Membership
Art Alexander	Membership Sales Representative
Erin Gudmundson	Membership Sales Representative
Amy Rondeau	Membership Sales Representative
Christine Ens	Sponsorship Sales Representative
Nancy Militano	Program Coordinator
Chuck Davidson	Vice-President, Policy & Communications
Wendy Stephenson	Research & Communications Coordinator

Chamber staff take part in the Manitoba Dragon Boat races in support of CancerCare Manitoba



2007-2008 Annual Report



*Leslie Dornan and
Dave Angus present the results
of the Manitoba Business
Leaders Index*

Overview

When The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce launched its three-year strategic plan in 2005, one of the key commitments we made was our goal to increase our membership numbers to 2,008 members by 2008. This was an extremely aggressive goal, but one that The Chamber board of directors and staff were confident could be achieved.

We are extremely proud to say that not only did we achieve it, we surpassed it!

As of our 2007-2008 year end, Chamber membership sits at 2,016 – the highest level in the 135-year history of The Chamber. This growth is a testament to the hard work of The Chamber board and staff in addressing issues of importance to the business community. Whether it is through networking events, services The Chamber provides or the credible positions we take on issues, members continue to find value in The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce.

Public Policy Influence

Over the past year, The Chamber has been extremely active in ensuring that the voice of the business community has been heard on a variety of issues.

Manitoba Business Leaders Index

In mid-December, The Chamber and Meyers Norris Penny released the results of the Fifth Annual Manitoba Business Leaders Index. This survey, done in conjunction with Probe Research, is the only scientifically valid survey of the Manitoba business community. This year's MBLI revealed the continuing challenges that the workforce shortage is having on Manitoba businesses. In addition, results provide valuable information on government performance, downtown Winnipeg and the impact of the Canadian dollar.

Manitoba/Canadian Chambers of Commerce

On an annual basis, The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce attends both the Manitoba and Canadian Chambers of Commerce Annual General Meetings and takes part in various discussions as well as policy development.

In the past year, Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce policies on set election dates, Manitoba's dependency on equalization payments and provincial government spending were all passed unanimously at the Manitoba Chambers AGM in Elkhorn, Man.

The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce also had two of its policies adopted unanimously at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting in Markham, Ont. Winnipeg Chamber policies on "Improving Canada's Standard of Living and Quality of Life" and "Employment Insurance Program" are now current Canadian Chamber of Commerce policy.



Past Chamber Chair Trevor Sprague speaks at the Economic Opportunity news conference

Expansion of Workers Compensation Board Coverage

In a written submission to the Workers Compensation Board, The Chamber opposed the expansion of coverage to low-risk workplaces, suggesting it would increase the financial burden on smaller businesses and organizations, especially where the risks of injury are minimal. Instead, The Chamber suggested the consensus recommendation in the 2004/2005 Workers Compensation Act Review be adopted, which would result in a vigorous program being developed to encourage low-risk workplaces to voluntarily "opt in."

Bills 37 & 38

The Chamber spoke before two legislative committee hearings in late May on Bills 37 and 38.

Bill 37 would amend the Elections Finances Act to allow taxpayer dollars to be used to fund political parties through an annual allowance of \$1.25 per registered vote, to a maximum of \$250,000. It would also establish a Lobbyists Registration Act. The Chamber does not oppose the Lobbyists Registration Act, but believes there is need for clarification. It is opposed, however, to the annual allowance because it would create an unlevel playing field for political parties.

Bill 38, intended to replace Balanced Budget Legislation, would change the definition of the year-end balance. Under the new legislation, the balance is a multi-year test on the summary financial statements compared to the single-year test on core government operations. The Chamber expressed concern that the government could increase its debt by running an operating deficit on an annual basis, while still living within the summary balanced budget legislation.

Business Tax

The Chamber addressed the City's Executive Policy Committee to express its concern that despite the recommendation of the Mayor's Economic Opportunity Commission to phase-out the business tax within six years, the 2008 operating budget did not start this process nor were there any projected reductions in 2009 and 2010.

Hotel Tax

The Chamber supported the Manitoba Hotel Association in proposing a compromise between a five per cent hotel tax introduced in the City's 2008 operating budget and a voluntary two per cent destination marketing fee to be collected by the hotel association.



The Chamber hosted a design charette for the Broadway area

The compromise would have seen a three per cent levy that gave the hotel industry input on how it was collected and spent. However, the City introduced the five per cent tax, effective June 1.

Term Limits for City Councillors

The Chamber backed Councillors Brenda Leipsic and Scott Fielding, who introduced a motion in November 2007 to limit councillors to serving a maximum of three consecutive four-year terms in office. The motion was defeated.

Set Election Dates

The Chamber has been lobbying for the Manitoba government to set fixed election dates, similar to B.C., PEI, Ontario, Newfoundland/Labrador and New Brunswick. In the last session, legislation was introduced to hold provincial elections every four years on the second Tuesday in June beginning in 2011.

Minimum Wage

Concerned that there was a lack of consultation in raising the minimum wage to \$8.50 per hour effective April 1, 2008, The Chamber spoke with Manitoba's minister of labour and urged that the minimum wage be reviewed every three years, that employers be given six months notice prior to it going into effect and that the province consider a two-tier minimum wage (a general minimum wage and a wage for industries with gratuities).

Graffiti By-law

On behalf of Canadian Tire, The Chamber met with city officials in regards to a new graffiti-control by-law, which prohibits the sale of spray paint to persons under 18 and restricts the way retailers display and sell spray paint. As a result, the by-law will be interpreted to allow store owners to bypass having to lock up spray cans if they can show the products are otherwise secure.

Downtown Development Committee

Over the past eight months, The Chamber's Downtown Development Committee met to develop policy with regard to creating an attractive, vibrant and thriving downtown by addressing six specific areas of concern: people, business, safety, transportation, image and amenities.

Workforce Committee

Over the past eight months, The Chamber's Workforce Committee met to develop policy with regard to critical workforce shortages and how the issue could be addressed through immigration, apprenticeship, older workers, Aboriginal workers and high school/post secondary institutions.

Mayor's Trade Council

The Chamber, as one of eight members on the Mayor's Trade Council, helped develop a strategy for Winnipeg to succeed in the new global economy by capitalizing on Manitoba's inherent strengths, highlighting new opportunities and identifying long-term priorities for trade and transportation infrastructure. Its final report went to city council in March 2008.

Member Business Support

Membership Luncheons

From political, business and community leaders to the newsmakers of the day, a variety of high-profile speakers addressed The Chamber membership this year. These monthly luncheons provided an opportunity to listen and learn, make new contacts and enjoy food and conversation. In 2007-2008, Chamber members heard from everyone from the head of Vancouver's Olympic Organizing Committee John Furlong and the host of BioTech Nation Moira Gunn to Mayor Sam Katz and Premier Gary Doer.

Wake Up Winnipeg Breakfast Series

Wake Up Winnipeg was about celebrating the vision and accomplishments of Winnipeggers who've made a difference in our community – from Alexander



Alexander Mickelthwate speaks at Wake Up Winnipeg

High-profile speakers at Chamber events included Premier Gary Doer, Mayor Sam Katz and Major-General Tim Grant.





*Red Carpet Gala
award winners*

Mickelthwate, music director of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, to two-time Brier champion Jeff Stoughton. Chamber members also got to mix and mingle, make new contacts and expand their own personal networks.

LeaderCon 08

A joint initiative of The Chamber and Meyers Norris Penny, LeaderCon 08 was a full-day conference focused on engaging the “Next Generation” to help solve Manitoba’s workforce crisis. Input for the day was provided by The Chamber’s new Student Council, representing 16 students from four high schools in the Pembina Trail School Division.

After Business Mixers

Chamber members mingled over hot hors d’oeuvres and enjoyed an opportunity to learn more about a variety of local businesses through a series of mini-tradeshows, hosted this past year at ALIVE, the University of Winnipeg and MTS Centre.

Red Carpet Gala

A sold-out black tie event at the Delta Hotel recognized the valuable contributions made by volunteers to The Chamber. Among the recipients of the Volunteer Recognition Awards were:

Rookie of the Year	Tanis Sinclair, <i>The Portables</i>
Distinguished Long Service	Richard Melia, <i>Webstone Design</i>
Director of the Year	Helen Halliday, <i>Delta Winnipeg</i>
Volunteer of the Year	Laura Grassia, <i>Robert Half Canada Inc.</i>
Chamber Initiative	Bob Somers, <i>Scatliff & Miller & Murray Urban Design</i>
Community Contribution	Palliser Furniture

Chamber Golf Tournament

In June, more than 150 golfers took to the links at Pine Ridge Golf Course for The Chamber’s 18th annual Golf Classic, sponsored by Ceridian. The sold-out event brought Chamber members together to enjoy the great outdoors and each other’s company, plus a bit of friendly rivalry.

Aboriginal Job Fair

First held in 2002, the Aboriginal Job Fair has resulted in almost 100 Aboriginal job seekers being hired. The one-day job fair, hosted by The Winnipeg Chamber and The Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce, gives Aboriginal job seekers quick and easy access to local employers, who are actually recruiting.

Connecting with the Immigrant Workforce - A Job Fair

In an effort to leverage the fact Winnipeg has the highest per capita level of immigration to Canada, The Chamber held a day-long conference to help newcomers make valuable connections, find actual jobs and learn about initiatives to ease their transition into the workforce.

The Economics of Going Green Conference

A Chamber first, the Economics of Going Green Conference addressed the business case for going green and helped Chamber members discover new markets, as well as some of the programs and incentives to help them be socially responsible and at the same time, save money.

Chapter Meetings

To deal with business concerns specific to various parts of the city, The Chamber holds monthly chapter meetings in St. James and North and South Winnipeg.

Trade Events

Visits by the British consul to Canada, the governors of Arizona and Wisconsin, and representatives from Brazil, France, Cuba and China were among the highlights of The Chamber's trade initiatives in 2007-2008. Chamber representatives also attended the North America Works Conference in Kansas City, Futuralia in Quebec City, the NASCO Conference in Mexico and the American Chamber of Commerce AGM. As well, The Chamber promoted forums in England (Leeds and London) to promote immigration to Canada.

Community Leadership

High School Program

In October 2007, The Chamber launched its High School program with the establishment of a 16-person student council made up of students from various schools in the Pembina Trails School Division. The Council was instrumental in the development of LeaderCon 08 – Engaging the Next Generation, a one-day conference that attracted over 200 students, teachers and business leaders.

Podium Program

The Chamber helped raise funds for two Manitoba athletes - Dave Anderson (kayaker) and Kevin Geyson (diver) – to train full-time in the hope of qualifying for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.



Aboriginal Job Fair



Chamber Athlete Kevin Geyson



*Gail Asper speaks
at Canadian Museum for
Human Rights reception*

Donations made at a Chamber luncheon in April with John Furlong, CEO of the Vancouver Organizing Committee 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, went directly to the Athlete Centre Fund, established by the Canadian Sport Centre Manitoba. Roughly 80 per cent of the fund goes to the athlete to cover training expenses, special equipment or facilities, travel expenses related to training or competition and living expenses.

Habitat for Humanity Winnipeg

More than half-a-dozen Chamber staff volunteered to take part in the Habit for Humanity Winnipeg build in June, but rain forced the cancellation of their participation in helping construct an 800-square-foot house for a family whose five-year-old son has severe cerebral palsy.

Canadian Museum for Human Rights

Because the Canadian Museum for Human Rights will only become a reality through local leadership and support, The Chamber assisted the Friends of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights Inc. with a campaign inviting businesses and Manitoba residents to contribute the final \$30 million needed to complete the \$265-million museum.

2008 Tim Hortons Brier

As host city for the 2008 Tim Hortons Brier, Winnipeg and The Chamber took advantage of the great opportunity to raise the profile of our community. The Chamber hosted several events to promote the Brier and to welcome sponsors, participants and visitors from across the country to our city.

Manitoba Marathon

The Chamber put together a five-member relay team to run in the Manitoba Marathon, which supports Manitobans who live with an intellectual disability. Several staff also ran the half-marathon.

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