



David Duplisea, CEO of the Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce, is pictured addressing a crowd at the 35th annual Outstanding Business Awards gala held at the Saint John Trade and Convention Centre in 2019. Duplisea said events were part of the reason the chamber saw an increase in its membership last year.

Photo: Noushin Ziafati/Telegraph-Journal

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An old business mantra emphasizes the value of a good location: it matters and it can make the difference between success, struggle and failure – and that’s good news for Saint John’s central business district.

There have been two new indicators in recent days that the uptown is becoming an attractive hot spot for the city's economy. This vibrancy is good for the whole city.

First was news that the Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce last year attracted 85 new members, a record number in its 200-year history. This success can be attributed to several factors, as chamber CEO David Duplisea has noted, including the chamber's own hard work in the community. And let's not underestimate the value of the chamber working in co-operation with other agencies, including Economic Development Saint John. It's easy for organizations to work in silos, but co-operation maximizes success with a collective focus.

Second was the auspicious decision by the University of New Brunswick to relocate its entrepreneurship program to the uptown core. This makes sense for the business students, who will be closer to the real-world action. And with the uptown's growing draw as a place to live, close to amenities, the draw for prospective applicants to the university increases.

Saint John can build on the positive trend by welcoming development and keeping fees and property taxes steady. That's what will make Saint John a robust and attractive business destination for years to come. City council should take note: upcoming municipal budgets will be crucial to maintaining momentum.

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