



SAINT JOHN REGION

THE CHAMBER

CHAMPIONS FOR BUSINESS

February 11, 2015

SAINT JOHN, NB - The Chamber today announced the completion of its strategic plan review, with the final document scheduled for release later in February 2015. The Chamber underwent a comprehensive review that included regional open houses and town hall meetings, member survey and questionnaire, social media engagement and a planning and review session for the board and staff. The new strategic plan is the first 3 year plan for the organization and will serve to guide The Chamber from 2015 through 2017.

"It was vital to our growth that we ensured the organization sought as much input from all four regions as possible. We feel strongly that this strategic plan is comprehensive and will serve the needs of our organization and the business community over the next 3 years. A tremendous amount of consultation went into this plan and I am sure our members will see that their voices are strong in the future of The Chamber." stated CEO David Duplisea.

This process included engaging its nearly 1000 members for the first time to gauge their opinion on the status of the new organization. Feedback from members included:

- 85.5% of members are either somewhat or very satisfied with the overall value their organization has received from the Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce
- 93.3% of members feel that the Chamber partnership formed by the former Saint John Board of Trade, the Kennebecasis Valley Chamber of Commerce, the River Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Saint John West Business association was either somewhat or very positive for the community

The Chamber's survey served as the initial building block of the strategic plan and several questions highlight the direction going forward. The survey showed that members of the Chamber said that:

- 96.5% of businesses are either somewhat or very concerned are with the current deficit/debt in the Province of New Brunswick
- 95.6% feel natural resource development is either somewhat or very important to our province
- 98.1% of businesses are either somewhat or very supportive of the Energy East Pipeline

In terms of advocacy based questions, The Chamber survey pointed to the fact that natural resource development projects and reducing barriers to small business are the top priorities for members. Highlights from the survey include:

- Natural Resource Development (35.1%) and Input Costs (28.1%) are the top two advocacy issues for members
- Top advocacy items for the Chamber are Energy East Pipeline (60.3%), Shale Gas Development (60.3%), Energy Costs (38.8%), Small Business Tax Rate (38.8%) and Property Taxes (36.4%)

The conclusion of the consultation process will come with the release of the strategic plan and introduction of The Chamber's annual Key Priorities survey in March. The 2015 Key Priorities survey will be The Chamber's 4th annual survey and now serves as a premier analysis for the state of the business community. Several questions in the survey will now also serve as a primary benchmark for True Growth 2.0's goals as determined by the Regional Oversight Committee in Greater Saint John. The Chamber is please to play a role in determining the success of our social and economic community plan.

The Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce is a nationally accredited business organization dedicated to fostering an economic climate that enhances growth, prosperity, and an improved quality of life in the community. With nearly 1,000 member businesses, representing the interests of 37,000 people, The Chamber is a dynamic advocate and the principal voice for the business community of Greater Saint John. It offers a variety of programs, activities, services,

and networking opportunities designed to enhance the business prospects of members and the overall business climate of the area.

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