

Grabbing the ear of government in 2016

By: Sandra Dueck, Policy Analyst, Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce

Two days and 70 policy resolutions to debate; this is the task ahead of delegates at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC) Annual General Meeting next month. It is through adopting, defeating or referring resolutions to the Board of Directors that the Chamber Network sets the policy agenda for the CCC.

What is a policy resolution? A policy resolution is a discussion paper that identifies an issue impacting the business community, presents the case for how the issue could be resolved and concludes by providing recommendations to government.

The policy debates highlight the issues on the collective mind of businesses across the country and the end result is a script that the Canadian Chamber can use in its dialogue with the federal government.

There are eight main areas of focus: finance and taxation, special issues, natural resources and environment, transportation and infrastructure, industry, international affairs, social policy, and human resources.

For the most part these resolutions are written by chambers just like the Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce. This year, our policy committee and board of directors submitted two policy resolutions: Advancing Canadian



2016 Board Chair Jason Becker, BDO and Peterborough Chamber President and CEO Stuart Harrison at the 2015 CCC AGM in Ottawa

Competitiveness Using Shortline Rail (Transportation and Infrastructure) and Restoring Canada's Innovation Competitiveness (Industry).

In the **rail resolution**, the federal government is being asked to create a dedicated shortline capital funding program that is accessible to all shortline companies, and to establish a tax credit program to assist shortline rail companies in making capital investments.

The **innovation resolution** is asking the federal government to:

- Rename the SR&ED tax credit the Innovation Tax Credit and start it at 20% of eligible expenses
- Simplify the process of the Innovation Tax Credit application, using the following as a base: improving the pre-claim project review service, simplifying the base on which the credits are calculated, and introducing incentives that encourage SME growth – so that Canadian companies of all sizes and across all industries can move forward with confidence to bring their innovation to market
- Create an innovation environment that encourages private sector investment in R&D and

technology across all industries focusing on the following factors for success: ease of use for businesses, consultation with the business community to ensure programs are in line with the real time needs of business, achieved and sustainable growth of participating businesses, export readiness, and help with operational scale-up.

Other resolutions of note include Addressing Barriers to Indigenous Participation in Canada's Economy, Canada as a Global Leader in Venture Capital Financing, the Risks of Cyber Crime, Expanding Canada's Export Capacity through Harmonizing Agri-Food Cross-Border Trade Regulations, and Improving the Express Entry System for International Student Graduates.

Broader issues from pension reform to marijuana to infrastructure asset management to broadband to scaling up to recruiting talent will also be discussed.

The goal of the delegates in debating and refining these recommendations is to provide clear direction to the Canadian Chamber as to the thoughts and needs of the Canadian business community, through the membership

What you need to know

- 2 days - 70 policy resolutions to debate
- Eight areas of focus:
 - Finance & Taxation
 - Special Issues
 - Natural Resources & Environment
 - Transportation & Infrastructure
 - Industry
 - International Affairs
 - Social Policy
 - Human Resources
- Peterborough Chamber submitted two resolutions:
 - Rail
 - Innovation
- Approved resolutions will become official policy of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce

of chambers of commerce and boards of trade across the country.

You can find the proposed 2016 resolutions on our website peterboroughchamber.ca/policy-report-cards--resolutions.html

Ontario Chamber Network role in policy process

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce policy debates are often lively as delegates debate issues that have different impacts across the country.

In an effort to ensure that the Ontario perspective is not lost, a group of chambers and boards of trade review all of the resolutions

to be discussed. This allows the group to have a good understanding of the issues and to pass that information on to their volunteers attending the event. It also allows for local Chambers to receive feedback on resolutions from members and present the case for support of their resolution to the group. What we

bring to the AGM is an informed group of delegates focussed on ensuring Ontario's voice is heard at the national level.

This year's co-chairs of the caucus are Sandra Dueck from the Peterborough Chamber and Joyce Mankarios of the Sudbury Chamber.

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@PtboChamber one of three finalists in national competition

Chamber of Commerce gather for their Annual General Meeting, the 2016 meeting is taking place in Regina, Saskatchewan, September 16 – 19. As part of the AGM the Canadian Chamber holds a competition based on a relevant theme. This year the theme was "Membership in the Age of Google, How Our Chamber is Reinventing Ourselves". The aim of the competition is to profile chambers of commerce that are innovative in their approach, particularly as it pertains to the theme.

The Peterborough Chamber submission focussed on the rebranding of our chamber under the "Strengthening Business" banner, as both a slogan and a way of doing business.

The key elements included:

- The advocacy/lobbying work we do on behalf of our member
- A renewed focus on member fulfillment
- The creation of the Holistic Group, providing programming to health and wellness practitioners

The rebranding project has helped increase awareness of the Chamber and the core work we do.

"Our members drive us, and channeling the collective strength of the business community gives us a focused voice on a variety of issues. Apart from the lobbying work we do, helping our members grow helps the local economy." Stuart Harrison, President and CEO Peterborough Chamber of Commerce.

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