

BUSINESS VIEW

June 2005

Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce

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Please see pages 5 and 7 for additional articles which Celebrate our Success!



Continued on Page 3



Photo Courtesy of Stuart Kasdorf Photographics Inc.

The President's View

by Jack Brodsky



On May 10 we attended yet another outstanding Celebrate Success Awards Gala. The event was well attended and the Saskatoon business community was well represented in all categories. Thank you to the organizing committee and Chamber staff for putting on a great show. Congratulations to all finalists and winners and thank you to all businesses in Saskatoon for helping to make our city the great place it is.

As President of your Chamber I have had a couple of opportunities to attend regional chamber events. In late February Kent Smith-Windsor and I attended the Northwest Chambers Conference in Spokane, Washington. This event was attended by Chambers throughout the Pacific Northwest United States, including Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. British Columbia and Alberta were well represented and we were the only attendees from Saskatchewan. Interestingly, our Chamber was one of the largest chambers by membership.

The purpose of the Northwest Chambers Conference was about a sharing of ideas and a comparison of visions and missions of the various chambers. There were a number of speakers who spoke about important issues such as media relations, fundraising, including sponsorship sales and events, and professional development for executive directors and volunteers.

There were also workshops relating to events management, fund raising, government affairs and others. The event served to reinforce for me that we are on the right track. While fundraising for some seemed to be their main focus, our approach is more like fundraising as required to take on the things we want to take on in order to help build our community.

Our committees are focused on addressing the needs and the potential of our community. There were several examples of chambers within a region working together to help build their region. This is exactly what we are working on in co-operation with the Regina Chamber and others in the province. Together we have a stronger voice, and we need to build on that strength.

A few short hours after we Celebrated Success, Kent and I left for the Centennial Bi-Provincial Conference for the Alberta and Saskatchewan Chambers in Lloydminster. This event was essentially the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting on Wednesday and the Alberta Chambers of Commerce Annual General Meeting on Friday, with a day of educational and professional development sessions on Thursday.

The Policy Session portion of the Saskatchewan Chamber AGM followed the standard parts of the AGM regarding financial statements and election of officers. The Greater Saskatoon Chamber was fairly active in the policy session, co-sponsoring three policy initiatives with the Regina Chamber. The first one related to a competitive tax and royalty structure that would encourage investment and send a clear message to the world that Saskatchewan is open for business.

Canadian Chamber Update ...

- *Pre-Election Readiness*

The vote recently in the House of Commons to accept the two budget bills – the original February budget and the Layton-Martin \$4.6 billion budget deal – means that these bills will now be studied by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance. What will happen to these bills at this committee is uncertain. If the bills make it through the committee, they will then come back to the House for third reading and a final vote prior to being sent to the Senate. All of this is expected to take place before the House rises for the summer recess on June 23.

When the original budget was presented in February, we welcomed some of its elements such as assistance for municipalities, investments in post-secondary education and the capital cost allowance initiative. However, I expressed my disappointment with the limited tax relief and the fact that it would not come into effect for several years. I also took issue with the large increase in federal spending in the last fiscal year, which is estimated to be about 12 % more than the previous year.

In order to gain the support of the NDP, the Prime Minister agreed to spend another \$4.6 billion on the condition that the promised future corporate tax relief was removed from the budget. I spoke out against these actions and called on the government to restore the tax relief, which it said that it would do in a separate bill. We are still waiting to see that bill.

What is happening is clear. The government, including all parties, has moved into pre-election mode. This will likely mean even more spending announcements; this continues to be a concern for us. It also means that there is ongoing uncertainty about the fate of the government, which has an impact on business investment decisions. Finally, government policy work remains unfocused.

Given all the above, the Canadian Chamber has also moved into pre-election readiness and we will be ready to play a role, albeit in a non-partisan manner, in the coming election. Business must endeavour to shape the debate and the policies of the next government. We have already surveyed our members to determine the policy priorities that the Canadian Chamber will promote and will challenge all parties to adopt these priorities.

These policies will be put forward in the near future. We will be sharing these with our members and urging you to engage all local candidates on these issues. More than ever, business leadership is required to ensure that our federal government understands the importance of a strong and growing economy to ensure the prosperity of Canada and all Canadians.

To succeed in our mandate, we need your ongoing support and engagement in the policy and advocacy work of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

- *Nancy Hughes Anthony, President & CEO,
Canadian Chamber of Commerce*



And the Winners Are ... (Continued from Page 1)



Award of Innovation
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SABEX New Product
**Display Systems
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***Congratulations to all the Finalists and Winners and
Thank You to our sponsors and all who attended the Gala!***



Food for Thought

by C.M. (Red) Williams

Exploring an old Debate

There are those that ideologically insist that small is beautiful and better for the farming business, while practice is generally to grow larger. Is there an explanation for these apparently opposite viewpoints held by reasonable people? The answer is found in examining the skills required to operate a farm. Let's use a grain farm for example.

My father farmed a half section, with a dozen horses, and four basic implements: a disc plow, harrows, a seeder and a binder. He had all the skills, and inputs were minimal except for a contract for threshing. But, innovations started appearing which increased yields and met market changes but the input costs skyrocketed. To make the system work, farms became larger because they could, and cash flow became a factor. But machinery maintenance, hauling grain, knowledge about biologics and varieties fell into the hands of specialists and the farmer became a coordinator on the business enterprise. That is where most are now, but the pressure is for ever larger acreages and then the farmer (because that is what he or she still likes to be called) becomes a financial manager, of borrowing, investments, futures trading, with all other skills provided by employees or contractors.

But the case for the "small farm", that is a farm that provides significant income, not just a rural postal address, is interesting. The trend is the same as the large farm in that more specialized skills are required, but with a narrow focus on fewer, perhaps only one, high-per-unit priced product line. This farmer has a high level of technical skill, usually something he or she really enjoys doing and the inputs are purchased or contracted. So the common factor is about building on a skill, so long as it yields a profit, of course.

Yanke Group of Companies - Member Profile

- submitted by Mark Hanley on behalf of the Future Opportunities Committee - Corporate Visits

N. Yanke Transfer Ltd. was founded in 1968 and in 1980 the company was purchased by Russel, Joe and John Marcoux of Marcoux Brothers Trucking. The company, now known as the Yanke Group of Companies with Russel Marcoux as 100% shareholder, has grown from its beginning as a two truck operation to a major Canadian transportation conglomerate with 8 operating divisions employing over 700 people.

The operating divisions: Yanke Expedited Services, International Van Division, Multimodal, Logistics, Container Port of Saskatchewan and Container Port of Manitoba, Cool Blue Xpress and Aero Delivery make it a full service international transportation company with locations in nine major Canadian cities.

A major strategy of diversification has significantly contributed to their growth and success. The breadth of services provided covers door to door service including trucking, freight forwarding, container services and an agent network that allows Yanke to operate in 58 countries world wide. The company has moved from dependency on servicing the pulp and paper industry to transporting a diverse list of products and goods including pulp and paper, peat moss, pipes, home care products, furniture, electronics, agricultural equipment, chemicals, building materials and food stuffs.

Yanke considers its people as its greatest asset. The Canadian transportation industry employs approximately 275,000 people and is characterized by high staff turnover, with driver turnover approaching 100% annually. Yanke experiences about one-fifth of that or 20%. They have been able to achieve this by having driver friendly policies such as guaranteed move and home time and providing driver bonuses to encourage fuel consumption reduction and minimum idle time. Their key to success is recruiting motivated, experienced people who thrive in an environment that encourages growth and advancement. To support this environment, a significant portion of the annual budget is committed to training and development. This results in Professional Transport Operators that are among the best in the industry as well as maintenance, administration and operations staff that provide support required to offer excellent customer service.

Yanke is considered a leader in innovation and is recognized within the North American transportation industry as exemplary in best practice development. Yanke has partnered with other transportation service providers like CP and CN Rail to provide complete transportation solutions. They link over-the-road services with comprehensive intermodal services. This provides customers with seamless dock-to-dock delivery in the most cost-effective way possible. Yanke also utilizes state-of-the-art technology to manage operations. Each of their 400 plus trucks is equipped with a satellite system that provides tracking and communication capability and monitors such things as truck speed, idle time and brake use. They utilize a national weather monitoring system to avoid inclement weather and also provide a full range of on-line services for customers.

As with any company that competes in such a large industry, there are issues. Being based in Saskatoon is both a challenge and a source of opportunity. Saskatoon is not considered a major transportation center and therefore an experienced pool of potential staff is not readily available. By their commitment to training, development and retention, they attempt to minimize this impact. For an industry like this to flourish in Saskatoon, they recognize that the benefits of living and working in Saskatoon must exceed the business challenges of being in a mid-sized, land-locked city with unbalanced labour laws, high business taxes and an imbalanced customer base.

**The Yanke Group of Companies
is definitely one of the brightest stars that make Saskatoon Shine!**

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Canadian Business Investor 500 Report Ranks Saskatoon Based Businesses Ahead of the Pack

- Cameco leads the nation and Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan ranked number 3 in the 2005 survey of investor returns

Each year Canadian Business Magazine ranks publicly traded companies in Canada based on annual and five year investor rates of return. Cameco led the ranking in the 50 largest capitalization companies in Canada, and Potash Corporation ranked 3rd on the same list.

In the small capitalization category, Shore Gold of Saskatoon ranked 15th out of the 300 companies measured for this section of the analysis largely on the results of its exciting Saskatchewan diamond exploration project. *"These results really do show that Saskatchewan and Saskatoon in particular is home to some of the best mining companies in Canada and these companies are among the very best in the world at what they do!"* stated Kent Smith-Windsor, Executive Director of the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce. *"The talent, vision, and determination of the leadership and staff teams of these companies drive home the fact that our people can and do compete successfully in our global village."*

Canadian Business Magazine is distributed across Canada to leading investors and business people. The survey compared results based on investment performance to the period ending April 2005. *"There is an amazing map in the Canadian Business article that shows that Saskatchewan leads the investor returns among all Canadian provinces,"* said Smith-Windsor. The map demonstrates that a dollar invested in these Saskatchewan companies one year ago would have returned more than thirteen times the rate of return as compared to investing in the Manitoba based companies included in the analysis. A dollar invested in the Saskatoon based companies over the last five years would have given the investor a rate of return more than twice the rate of the same investment in the Alberta companies included in the report. In fact, the Saskatoon investment led the nation for both the one year category and the five year category. For example, a dollar invested in these companies returned 7 times the Ontario investment returns over one year and almost 3 times the Ontario investment returns over 5 years.

Smith-Windsor stated, *"While the markets do fluctuate and we shouldn't expect these results to be repeated in 2006, these companies have substantially improved our city's image on the national business stage as the result of their hard work over the past five years."*

"Just imagine what we could do as a city and a province if we could convince the Government of Saskatchewan to better align its taxation and labour policies to further spur investment and the resulting job growth. Perhaps we could even make Saskatchewan's youth exodus a thing of the past," Smith-Windsor concluded.



Figuratively Speaking ...

Compiled by John MacIntyre

- Average increase in salary expected for employees across Canada during 2005, according to Mercer Human Resources Consulting: 3.4
- Average increase employees in Alberta can expect to see, putting them at the top of the list in Canada: 3.5
- Average increase employees in Saskatchewan can expect to see: 3.4
- Percentage of workers who say they prefer the comfort of their own desk for a business meeting, according to a survey by Cisco: 15
- Percentage who say they prefer to use the telephone or computer to meet: 60
- Percentage who say they can better focus on their thoughts during a phone or computer meeting: 33
- Percentage of Canadians who own shares, either through a mutual fund or actual shares, according to the TSX Group Shareowners Study: 49
- Percentage by which direct stock ownership has increased in Canada since 2000: from 51 to 57 percent
- Percentage by which ownership through mutual funds has decreased during the same period: 87 to 81 percent
- Percentage of Saskatchewan's economy which is accounted for by its primary industries, according to Industry Canada: 24
- Percentage of those primary industries which are related to mining, oil and gas: 60
- Number of hours per week worked by the average employee, according to an online Microsoft Office survey of 38,000 people in 200 countries: 45
- Number of those hours they considered unproductive: 17
- Average number of hours spent each week in meetings: 5.6
- Percentage of workers who felt these meetings aren't productive: 69

Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce - Board of Directors



Alan J. Felix
Nu-Fab
Burton LP

no photo available



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Phenomenome
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Benefit Facts - Chambers of Commerce Group Insurance Plan®

5 Great Reasons Members-Only Group Benefits are Worth a Look!

If you're thinking of adding group benefits to your company, there are a lot of good reasons to put your Chamber membership to work for you. Not the least is exclusivity: only members have access to the Chambers of Commerce Group Insurance Plan®.

But, the Chambers Plan also offers you a quality, customized product with features you aren't likely to find elsewhere. Here are five of the most frequently cited reasons companies like yours join the program.

No Minimum Firm Size

Your small-to-medium sized business is eligible to apply – even if it's a one-person operation, or a home based enterprise.

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Most benefit plans won't accept some industries. The Chambers Plan welcomes for-profit businesses of all kinds.

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Saskatoon Ranks Second for Metropolitan Economic Activity

- CIBC report ranks economic activity in nation's largest 25 cities

A recent report released by CIBC World Markets ranks Saskatoon as second among Canada's largest 25 cities in terms of the rate of change in the level of economic activity.

The CIBCWM Metropolitan Economic Activity Index utilizes eight key macroeconomic variables and drivers of economic growth to rank the cities, including: population, employment, unemployment rate, fulltime as a share of total employment, consumer bankruptcy rate, business bankruptcy rate, MLS unit sales, MLS average price, and housing starts. The study author stated that the city of Saskatoon ranked second behind Kitchener due in large part to a "nation-leading 9.2% (year-over-year) gain in employment during the first quarter of the year." Also highlighted were an improved labour quality, low unemployment rate, and a personal bankruptcy rate which ranks well below the national average.

Jack Brodsky, President of the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce stated "the opening of world trade markets have fuelled demand for Saskatchewan's resources and technology. These new markets in turn have helped improve the lives of people living in the Saskatoon region with more job choices, appreciating homes, and a better chance for their children to pursue career opportunities here rather than elsewhere."

"Just imagine what we could accomplish if our provincial tax laws and labour policies were as competitive as the work ethic of our people," concluded Kent Smith-Windsor, Chamber Executive Director.



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City of Saskatoon Confirms Commitment to Productivity

- SaskPower fails to meet targets

Saskatoon City Council recently adopted recommendations put forward by City Administration that Council confirm its commitment to continually attempt to increase the corporation's productivity and efficiency. In addition, Administration will prepare a report annually outlining the efficiencies implemented in the previous year. These efforts, in response to lobbying by the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, provide a good first start by the City to achieve productivity gains, and offer a solid foundation from which to improve.

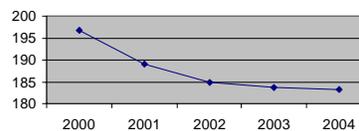
City Administration recently released a report on innovations and efficiencies which have occurred in 2004, which highlight 24 specific initiatives undertaken throughout the year in an effort to improve productivity. While the Chamber may not agree with each and every initiative, the efforts of City Council and Administration are to be applauded. The Chamber encourages the City to establish a productivity gains agenda prior to the start of the year to gauge success against these set targets. The Chamber is encouraged by the stated commitment and efforts of the City of Saskatoon.

The campaign of the Chamber for public enterprises to adopt productivity agendas does not end with the City. The Chamber has challenged numerous organizations with the same challenge. In response, SaskPower has continually stated that the organization already has a productivity agenda in place. However, recent debate within our provincial legislature highlights the failure of SaskPower to achieve any productivity gains.

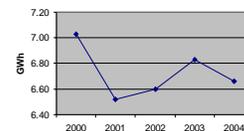
The Minister Responsible for SaskPower indicated that in 2003, \$161 million in wages, salaries and benefits was included in the budgeted operating, maintenance and administrative expenses, which were budgeted at \$301 million. The same expenses for 2004 were \$166 million within a \$317 million budget.

The following charts outline the performance of stated productivity measures within SaskPower from 2000 through 2004. These include: number of customers per employee, power generated per employee, and power generated per dollar of assets.

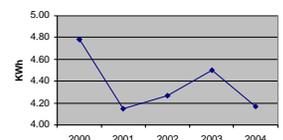
Customers Per Employee



Power Generated Per Employee



Power Generated Per Dollar of Assets



Concerning the government productivity agenda, one is starting in the right direction (City of Saskatoon), the other needs to find its way to becoming committed to productivity (SaskPower). In each case, your Chamber will be pressing all government agencies hard on the productivity file. Our standard of living depends on progress on this agenda.

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**Greater Saskatoon Chamber
of Commerce**

2005 / 2006

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everyone who
donated a prize
and, of course,
the golfers !*

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