

Representing the Interests of Business for the Growth and Prosperity of Our Members and Communities

President's Message

In July we marked a week long appreciation for agriculture in the region. Whether directly or indirectly, agriculture affects every Saskatchewan citizen, regardless of the industry we operate in. Agriculture has and will continue to remain a staple for the region's economy. Thus, one would hope for an ongoing appreciation, celebrating agriculture throughout the year as opposed to just one week.

In 2005, Statistics Canada estimated the amount of farm capital in Saskatchewan at \$33.648 billion, placing us close behind Ontario and Alberta. Our close standing behind these two provinces is outstanding when a comparison of equal market value of land between provinces is taken into account. Saskatchewan would actually place first for farm capital if the market land value were adjusted for a true comparison.

Also in 2005, Saskatchewan's value of farmland and buildings was estimated at \$23.002 billion. It's estimated that our land in east central Saskatchewan is the most affordable land in Canada, while the farm industry still lags the potential growth needed for the region's economy. A case in point is if we were to take the \$23 billion value of farmland and buildings, and divide it by acres to find a ratio of value per acre. We would then find that Saskatchewan finished dead last of all the provinces with a value of \$353 per acre. Compare this to Ontario's \$3,417 per acre value, or Alberta's \$842 per acre. Even the farm land of the Maritimes was valued higher than Saskatchewan. Based upon this, Saskatchewan should be a very viable center of choice for investment in agriculture.

When the grass roots program, Last Cattle Frontier, was conceived to attract Alberta farm investors to Saskatchewan, the direct economic impact for the region of a cattle operation was estimated at \$80,000. Multiple this many fold by the number of cattle operations and accordingly we can realize the relevance of a cattle operation for the region's economy. We truly need to appreciate the impact of agriculture in keeping the region afloat and further entice investment for the region.

In 2005, Statistics Canada estimated that machinery and equipment related to agriculture was around \$8.139 billion, while the livestock and poultry were estimated at \$2.507 billion. Based upon the above investment figures made in agriculture we once again can appreciate the positive affect agriculture has for the economy.

Another example that has a direct impact on the economy is the manufacturing sector that is directly related to agriculture. Nearly 40% of Western Canada's 11,000 farms and ranches manufacturing jobs are in Saskatchewan. In 2005, the Saskatchewan manufacturing industry invested over \$80 million in research and development. This investment is more than four times the total agricultural machinery research and development spending of the other three western provinces.

Even with all of the inputs into agriculture, Saskatchewan's GDP for Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing & Hunting is only 7%. However, if we are able to take this and break it down into a regional aspect for our specific area, more than likely, the regional GDP for agriculture would be closer to 50% or 60%. Beyond a doubt, agriculture is the backbone for our region and should be respected as such.

Based upon the above, one can conclude that our region's livelihood is sustained through agriculture. Therefore, we need to remain a support channel for the industry and encourage all political parties to remain accountable to agriculture.



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Meet the Board of Directors Series;

JUDIE BERNAT

Board of Director



Judie is the Owner/Operator of the Plum Tree which started as a Christmas store operating at the Parkland Mall in 1997. The store relocated to Linden Square Mall and expanded to include unique home décor, kitchen items, giftware, a wedding supply and rental shop, as well as funeral floral arrangements and cake decorating classes for all ages. In mid October of each year, the store is decorated in an elegant, almost magical enchanted Christmas store. From lit delicate

angels, plump jolly snowman, to serene nativity scenes, hours can be spent looking at the various pieces. Even the endless array of tree ornaments are detailed and can be a gift for that someone special. Judie's ornaments have gone to many homes abroad . . . Japan, Russia, Ukraine, Portugal, England, Alaska, Australia, South Africa, India and Germany. Judie has decorated many hotels/ motels, car dealerships, restaurants and offices with everyday and Christmas décor. Judie has also decorated and provided decorations for the Parkland Mall for the Christmas season since beginning her business. Judie has four full time staff and two part time staff.

Judie attended school in Sturgis and then in Saskatoon where she obtained her Certified Nursing Assistant Diploma. She was employed at the Royal University Hospital in the Orthopedic and Burn Unit. Later she became employed at the Yorkton Regional Health Center in the obstetrics and gynecology wing. Judie is married to Matt and have four children: Giselle, Darcy, Corelie (Rod), and Rhonda (Todd) and three grandsons (Austin, Tavis and Luke). When the children were in high school, Judie returned to the Health Center to work with Level IV patients until she began her business in 1997. Judie has volunteered for many organizations over the years and enjoys singing Christmas carols at the hospital and nursing home for the past 18 years. She also enjoys gardening, fishing, camping, sewing, decorating and designing, and doing what she loves the most . . . her business!

Judie has been a Board of Director with the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce for two years and she is very involved in the Attitude Committee (special events).

Meet The Board of Directors Series

LINDA OUART

Board of Director



Linda is an investment advisor with Edward Jones Investments for four years and has been in the financial industry for more than 20 years. Linda was born a Yorktonite and was raised on the family farm and moved 8 miles to settle here. She has been married 26 years with husband Brad. Their daughter Pam, convocated from the U of S this May with a four year degree in Native Studies; and son, Tyler, is currently completing a Process Operations course in Alberta.

Linda is in her 3rd term of Women Entrepreneurs as a Board Member representing this area. She is inspired by individuals that start their own business and the story behind their journey to success. As a Chamber Board Member of two years, Linda finds it a rewarding opportunity to network with other like-minded business owners.



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