



COMMUNITY COURIER

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

A recent topic of discussion in the local business community has been the proposed "fly in work" project. This initiative was brought forward by Terry Pollock, board member of the Yorkton Business Improvement District. The purpose of the project would be to facilitate having employers, most likely those from the booming oil and gas sector in Alberta, fly local Yorkton and area workers to and from the oil patch.

This has proven to be a divisive issue. In general, the City's retailers are in favour of such an initiative. They believe that it will have a number of positive spin-offs for the city and region.

Firstly, there are already several people employed in the oil and gas sector who commute to and from work. Some of these people have been leaving the community, as the commute becomes too onerous. If given the option to fly to their employment, there is a higher likelihood they would stay in Yorkton, keeping their children in our schools and spending their paycheques here. Their spouses would also stay, providing a labour supply for the local business community. A public safety benefit to the fly in work project is also cited, in that workers currently commuting to the oil patch are driving home after long shifts, and the resulting fatigue is contributing to traffic accidents. Having the ability to fly will take these drivers off the roads.

Secondly, if it is more convenient to obtain employment in Alberta, but still stay in Yorkton and area for the quality of life, there will likely be more area people accepting employment in the oil and gas sector. The high wages paid in this sector would improve the employment income of area residents, leading to more disposable income available to be spent at local businesses.

However, the large employers in our region see the fly in work project as a serious threat. Over the last few years, there has been a dramatic shift in the labour market. The competition among employers to attract skilled workers has become increasingly fierce. Welders, engineers, accountants, and all skilled trades people, among others, are increasingly difficult to find and hire. If an employer relies on these workers to produce its products, it becomes extremely frustrating when orders can't be filled due to a lack of skilled labour. That frustration level would only mount if that employer was forced to compete more directly with the oil patch for labour, due to the fly in work project.

A key focus of the Chamber of Commerce is to help ensure that Yorkton has a positive investment climate. The most significant issues that the Chamber has been working on in the past couple of years, including the business tax review, changes to the beautification bylaw, Team Yorkton, and labour legislation, are all attempts to improve the investment climate in the City. A major concern is that, by us exporting all of our best workers, we will be left with a very poor labour supply. Given that having an ample and skilled work force is one of the cornerstones of a positive investment climate, the fly in work project could seriously impact the ability of Yorkton to attract new businesses over the long term. Put simply, without enough qualified workers, new businesses will not want to come to our community.

Just as this is a divisive issue in our business community, it is a difficult issue to reach consensus on at our board table. As a board, we agreed that the Chamber of Commerce is not in a position to stop private business interests who may want to fly workers from Yorkton to their work sites. Alternatively, we are also not going to actively work to promote this initiative. Our focus will continue to be on projects where we have the ability to affect change, to create a positive climate for business in our community.

We hope to see you on July 17 at the Chamber / Tourism office for the flag raising barbeque in recognition of Ag Days. Have a safe and fun-filled summer!

David Horsman
Executive Vice President



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Congratulations to...

*Gerry Smysniuk of Parker Quine LLP who received the ICAS Distinguished Community Service Award.
The Yorkton Exhibition Parade is being held Saturday, July 8th and if you wish to enter a float call the Exhibition Office at 783-4800.



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Meet the Board of Directors Series;

ROBERT ASHCROFT *Board of Director*



Owner and Manager of Custom Microsystems Inc. since May 1996. Involved with the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce Board from 2000 to 2004 and from January 2005 to present. Robert is currently a Director for the Good Spirit REDA. Robert currently sits on the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce-Youth Education and Training Committee since 2001, the Yorkton Tourism Board since 2002, as well as Yorkton Short Film & Video Board since 2004. A member of Rotary, Downtown Business Association, and Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

Robert graduated from Sacred Heart High School and since has been part of the community in a number of volunteering positions with Jr. Wildlife, 4-H, Taekwondo, T'ai Chi, Bowling Leagues, Air Cadets and many others. Robert's wife, Audrey also works at Custom Microsystems. His three daughters, Skya, Autumn and Rae are active with Kee's Taekwondo competing nationally and internationally. The family has been involved in the INTO Student Exchange Program. Robert is committed to Yorkton. WHERE GOOD THINGS HAPPEN.

Meet The Board of Directors Series

KENT LATIMER *3rd Vice President*



Kent is the Owner of YDB Scoops, he has been a Yorkton resident since 1988. Kent grew up in Estevan. He is married to Tammie and has one son, Ethan. Kent went to school at the University of Saskatchewan and majored in Marketing with the College of Commerce. Kent just received his Certified Insurance Professional Designation. Kent also works as a Claims Assessor for Claims Network.

Kent has been on the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors since 1999. Kent also Chairs the Business Development Committee. Kent enjoys his work with the Chamber of Commerce and too, is committed to Yorkton. Kent has made his Landmark business, Scoops a true tourist attraction, adding murals by local artist Madison Blackstone. He has served as Board Member for the Yorkton Abilities Council and is actively involved in the local Kinsmen Club.

For Distribution from the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, Re: GST

As you are aware, the Federal Government's recent Budget changed the rate of GST that Canadians will pay on goods and services starting July 1, 2006. As a result of the reduction of the GST rate from 7% to 6%, businesses where GST-able transactions occur will need to take necessary measures to ensure that their incoming and outgoing accounting practices are up to speed by the implementation date. There are multiple instances where the changes will impact business transactions. The auditing firm of Deloitte & Touche LLP has prepared information on the recent changes. We thank them for sharing this information with our members. This information is available on website at www.saskchamber.com/documents/807Getting_Your_Business_Ready_for_the_GST_Reduction.pdf.

This information is in no way meant to be an exhaustive list of items that businesses need to address. Members are encouraged to review the upcoming GST changes with their own auditing and accounting firms.

Members should also consult the Canada Revenue Agency Web site, www.cra-arc.gc.ca where more information can be found under the GST/HST section or call 1-866-959-7797.



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