



COMMUNITY COURIER

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

It has almost been a year to date that the Public Policy Committee of the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce started to meet officials from the City, RCMP, Provincial government and interested parties, in establishing the state of affairs concerning our local policing issues.

I would like to take a few moments of your time to share with you what your Public Policy committee has accomplished and where its proceeding on this topic from this point.

What started out with a meeting to find out how the city paid for its policing, and if there was money to be saved, has turned out to be a larger topic than just money. What we found out is that Yorkton, being a community of 15,035 according to Census Canada, put us into a bracket in which we pay 90% of the policing cost and the Federal Government contributes 10%.

If we were just under the 15,000 such as North Battleford, we would only pay 70% of the costs, saving our City about \$650,000/yr. This is an agreement made between the federal and provincial governments on our behalf.

The new agreement is up for renewal in 2012 and is being looked at by all municipal governments for their input. In short nothing will change in that regard until that date and we as a community will be on the bargaining table between the governments. Let's hope we are not dealt away for another deal.

We have found out, through a meeting with the former government, that the federal government had promised more police officers to all provinces. Only a portion of those officers have been instated to date. The federal government charges a problem in recruitment, but they working on it.

This could be credited to the fact that the Federal Government does not pay recruitments while in training!

We invited Lori Cote as a guest

speaker for a luncheon, and he informed us on about Gangs in our community and province. For those of you that attended it was an eye opener and is the driving force of the committee's commitment to improve things within our community.

The city has met with us and has stated it is committing more funds in its next budget to increase the amount of officers it will hire. The City and Mayor have been excellent in their support and efforts on this topic and realize its importance to our growth and safety.

In January the Public Policy committee held a meeting with, Minister of Municipal Affairs Minister Hutchinson, Executive Director of Corrections Mr. Sawatsky, provincial representatives from Corrections and Policing, Terry Hawks, Terry Lang, Provincial MLA Greg Ottenbreit, Tribal Justice Unit Representatives, Regional Director of Community Corrections, Local M.P. Garry Breitkreuz, Mayor Wyatt, and a local Police Officer attending. It was an excellent meeting in and we did learn the Provincial officials were very much in tune with the issues when it comes to policing. Their suggestion is to apply for special constables to aid in targeted areas of concern.

A short term fix, but none the less we see that if an application proceeds, the meeting will have shown our concern and progressive outlook as a catalyst to make this pass a little easier through the red tape.

Our local MLA Greg Ottenbreit has been very helpful and positive in trying to get us to the right people to make changes. His support and enthusiasm is very helpful in this cause.

In short, we are greatly under staffed in the City detachment. It's not easy to replace those positions that are unmanned. The officers left to do the work although dedicated and efficient, are feeling the toll of long hours, and the stress related. We are facing growth fairly quickly and we all know now that the safety



Guy Gendreau
Executive Vice President

in regards to policing will not be able to keep up with the growth as we are already behind. We on the Public Policy committee will continue to push the powers that be to get us back on track and to show crime that it is not welcome in Yorkton.

What I have found on being involved with the Chamber is that there is a change coming in our area. Not only in growth but in the people that are willing to put forth their names and reputations on the line to make this a better community in all aspects. I encourage all of the business and community as a whole to become aware of what is going on around you and support those that are standing up front for you.

It is up to us to take control of our future and safety. Yorkton is our community and needs its people to become passionate for its safety and well being. No one else will do it for you. If you can't take an active role yourself then please support those that do.

I would like to thank at this time all of the members of the Public Policy committee from 2007 that helped with all of the work to date. Your time, dedication, and ideas were very much appreciated. Thank you!

Guy Gendreau
Executive vice president

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7:00 a.m.

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