

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

## President's Message

Happy New Year! I realize we are well into the New Year, and I mean it literally, it is a happy new year! If you have spent any time listening to the media in the last little while you have heard that the New Year is not so 'happy' in other parts of the country and the world. Despite what is taking place elsewhere, we are very fortunate right now in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan is currently in a great position, and here are some facts to support that:

- The January 2009 Statistics Canada monthly labour force report indicates Saskatchewan has the lowest unemployment rate in Canada.
- The Government of Saskatchewan reports there were 16,600 more people working in Saskatchewan in January, compared to the same month a year ago - that is a growth of 3.3%. In contrast, there were more than 126,000 more jobs lost in the rest of Canada during that same time.
- Another Statistics Canada report indicates that the average earnings of an employee in Saskatchewan have increased in the last year. The average earnings of a payroll employee were \$770.06 per week in November 2008, an increase of 4.2% compared to November 2007, and well over the national average of 2.7%.
- A recent Statistics Canada report indicated that the population growth in Saskatchewan for 2007/08 was the strongest since the 1970's. For the first time Saskatchewan led the country in interprovincial migration.
- The Government of Saskatchewan reports the construction industry is booming in the province (accounting for 2,300 new jobs in the province).
- In December 2008, The Canadian Press reported that research shows that Saskatchewan can expect 2009

to be a bright year, meaning lots of positive opportunities for all of us.

- The Conference Board of Canada forecasts that Saskatchewan will lead the country in economic growth in 2009.

Those are some pretty reassuring facts. Recognizing that we are not immune to what is going on in other parts of the country; we are still facing a growing economy in Saskatchewan, something we should be very proud of! Premier Brad Wall recently announced that his government is injecting \$500 million worth of infrastructure within our province to ensure the Saskatchewan economy remains strong. We need to focus on what we have going on here in our province and even more importantly, our city. Yorkton is a major contributor to the boom in this province. We are still positioned to be in a strong growing economic climate in Saskatchewan as we see construction, housing starts, new business ventures and new residents in our city.

When speaking to local business people over the last couple of months I have been posing the question, "How's Business?" The answers are very positive. It interests me to hear of all the good things that are taking place right here in our own city and province, yet some are still reluctant to admit that things are going well. It is ok to admit that we are doing well and good things are taking place here. It is our turn to prosper, so let's enjoy it and make the best of it. I encourage you to embrace the growth of our province and our city with a positive attitude as it is the attitude of those within our community that will lay the foundation for our future. Focus on the good news, there's lots of it and lots more to come, be ready!

While growth in our city is a good thing, with all good can come bad,



Lori Walsh  
President

but the new Positive Ticketing initiative that was kicked off in Yorkton last week is a step in the right direction to enhance the safety of our community. Positive Ticketing is an initiative intended to promote safety and to directly reduce the amount of crime that takes place within our city. Yorkton is one of only two communities piloting this project in Saskatchewan. The City of Richmond, BC has seen a 41% reduction in crime since they launched this program three years ago. We encourage the local business community to support this initiative any way they can as it provides a win-win situation for residents, businesses and the community as a whole. Hats off to the Yorkton Alliance for Asset Champions and the RCMP for the dedication and commitment they have put forth to launch this community wide initiative. We look forward to seeing the positive results associated with this initiative in the coming months.

Lori Walsh,  
President  
Yorkton Chamber of Commerce



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Check out [www.chamber.yorkton.sk.ca/benefits](http://www.chamber.yorkton.sk.ca/benefits) for a list of benefits and online application form. 2009 is complimentary so you have nothing to lose and all the Chamber Benefits to Gain!

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## Is Your Door Keeping Customers Away?

Juanita Polegi, PAg - Executive Director

What do you see when you look at the entrance of your business? Do you see sidewalks free of snow? Are there railings on the stairs leading up to the doorway? Would someone walking with the assistance of a walker or using a wheel chair be able to enter your business easily? Are you losing potential customers because the entrance to your business is not accessible?

As we become accustomed to our places of business or work, we often don't "see" how entrances appear to others. For people with limited mobility, their view of your building's entrance may be very different from those who have no trouble moving around. For instance, when I am on an outing with my mom, who uses a walker, our shopping and dining in Yorkton are planned around how accessible a store or restaurant is to a walker. There are some places we have deemed too inaccessible so we go elsewhere. Is the entrance to your building causing potential clients to turn away?

Perhaps, as we begin a new year, it's time to look at our store fronts with "new eyes". The following is a short list of points to consider when assessing the accessibility of your store front:

- Is handicapped parking provided near the entrance of your building?
- Is it clearly marked? Is it enforced?
- In the winter time, is the snow cleared away from the entrance and the curb?
- Is there a spot on the curb that allows easy access to the sidewalk for a wheelchair or walker?
- Is there a ramp leading up to the entrance? Is it equipped with the recommended railings and landings? Does it have the proper slope?
- Is the door easily opened from a wheelchair or while maneuvering a walker?
- Do the doors to change rooms and wash rooms swing out? Are they wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair or walker? Have they been equipped with grab bars?
- Are there uneven spots on the floor that could hinder the movement of either a wheelchair or walker or cause someone to trip?



Ramp should be built to recommended specifications:

If you have determined that your place of business could do with some upgrades to accommodate those customers with physical disabilities, there are resources available. The Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing has several documents that describe the minimum requirements for these structures. These can be found on the Ministry's website [www.cpsp.gov.sk.ca/building-standards](http://www.cpsp.gov.sk.ca/building-standards). Documents pertaining to ramps and washrooms are also found there. You can also contact the City of Yorkton Building Services Department at 786-1710.

You may wish to invite someone with physical disabilities to visit your business to discuss with you their requirements for easy access. Something I've learned these last few years is that "just a little step up" can be insurmountable for someone with a wheelchair or walker. Just ask my mom.



Keep handicap parking clear

## Positive Ticketing Campaign Launched in Yorkton

On behalf of the Yorkton Alliance of Asset Champions, a Healthy Communities Healthy Youth initiative, I would like to extend an invitation to your company to become involved in a beneficial activity in the city of Yorkton. The Yorkton Alliance of Asset Champions, made up of various community organizations, have partnered with the Yorkton RCMP Detachment to begin a Positive Ticketing campaign in Yorkton. This Positive Ticketing approach starts with police officers giving out positive tickets to youth in the city for good behaviours. These tickets allow the officer to make a proactive positive contact with a young person to build positive relationships and trust with youth in our community. The ticket is really the gateway to a relationship between the officer and the young person. The police have been traditionally seen as the "hunters" by young people...waiting in the bushes until the

young person 'messes up'. Police are trying to change this perception. They are trying to be ahead of the curve. They want to be seen in a positive light and they want to engage youth in a positive fashion. This positive ticket initiative allows for this interaction and future positive contacts.

Positive Ticketing is built within the framework called Asset Building, also known as Developmental Assets, which has been developed by the Search Institute. This framework identifies 40 critical factors for young people's growth and development. When drawn together, the assets offer a set of benchmarks for positive child and adolescent development. The assets clearly show important roles that family, schools, neighborhoods, organizations, and others in communities play in shaping young people's lives.

By Andrew Sedley

Health Promotion Coordinator - Sunrise Health Region

Positive Ticketing is making a difference to communities across Canada. The City of Richmond, British Columbia has experienced an amazing 41% reduction in their youth crime during the past three years. Positive Tickets has been a major contributing factor to this decrease.

If you would be willing to provide the Yorkton Alliance of Asset Champions with any passes, coupons, etc. that the RCMP can give out, it would be greatly appreciated. Your support will also be recognized in the local media. These tickets will help to build positive relationships between adults and youth in the city of Yorkton. Regardless, whether the ticket is actually used or not, Yorkton RCMP view the success of the program through the relationships built. Every relationship with a young person potentially equates to one less crime, one less young person harmed or in trouble with the law.



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## Yorkton is a Bright Spot in the Country



Building of residential & commercial  
properties continue



Photo by Calvin Daniels

If we're to believe the media from  
eastern Canada, the entire country  
is in a slump. Once again, the east  
has overlooked Saskatchewan.  
Certainly the outlook is not as  
rosy as it was a few months ago,  
but it's pretty bright when com-  
pared to much of the rest of  
Canada.

Several key indicators are proving  
Yorkton's slogan - "where good  
things happen!" Building of resi-  
dential and commercial properties  
continues. Low housing vacancy  
rates and No Vacancy signs on  
many of the hotels and motels fur-  
ther indicate that people are mov-  
ing to and working in Yorkton.  
Several prospective new business  
ventures are scouting the opportu-  
nities in Yorkton. Help Wanted

signs appear in the windows of  
many businesses. While the  
media paints a picture of doom  
and gloom in much of the rest of  
the country, Yorkton is growing  
and prospering!

The mandate of the Yorkton  
Chamber of Commerce is to sup-  
port and represent business con-  
cerns in the community.  
Businesses are encouraged to con-  
tact the Chamber to discuss any  
issues that are negatively impact-  
ing their business. The Chamber  
will endeavour to find solutions to  
these concerns. In the meantime,  
the Chamber will continue to tell  
whoever will listen, all is well in  
Yorkton!