



COMMUNITY

The Voice of Business

Director's Favourite "Thing" about their city

One day, while sifting through some material from another Chamber, I found a page featuring each Director's favourite "thing" about their city. So I sent an email to the Directors of the Yorkton Chamber and asked them to each tell me what they thought was so special about Yorkton. As no Director used the Reply All button, no one knew how the other responded. Their responses are intriguing:



Susan Stewardson: Dec 27/1999. After we looked at 3 houses we stopped at the mall to have a bite to eat. Despite the fact that it was 2 days after Christmas and people are often preoccupied with their own families - as we walked down the mall everyone we saw seemed to look us in the eye and smile and say hello - remember we knew no-one - we were strangers and people just made us feel welcome. It seems to me that the people of Yorkton still make time for one another, they care for each other and want to make everyone feel welcome by walking with their heads up, they look you in the eye and smile. It makes it a great place to live and to do business.



Tom Seeley: What makes Yorkton a great place to live is the way people and organizations work together towards making a better community.



Evan Ortynsky: It's really cool that we have all the trains that go thru Yorkton so often during the day - it sort of stops everything for awhile.



Amie Zamonsky: You can drive anywhere in the city within 7 minutes....unless there is a train.



Dick Deryk: Two sushi restaurants, part of our small town feel with big city amenities.



Carol Yaholnitsky: We chose to start our business here. Yorkton has a small town atmosphere with city amenities. Most everything we need is available here. I am not a real big fan of large cities, so Yorkton appeals to me. Opportunities for recreation are here and the variety is growing. Choices of schools for educating our young people, including post-secondary. Also the crime rate as I know in Yorkton is not at all like the larger centers.

Congratulations!

- To Yorkton Short Film Festival on 65 years!



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What's Being Said About Your Business?

On occasion, the Chamber office will receive a call from a member of the public complaining about the lack of service provided by a business in Yorkton. Most often, at some point during the conversation, the caller will mention the rudeness of the person he or she was dealing with. Since the last issue of the Courier, two such calls have been received.

It is not the mandate of the Chamber to "do" anything about those calls. But we listen. Just by listening to the caller's complaint, the caller is usually satisfied. The caller has vented his or her frustration or indignation and "someone" has "heard" it.

But the picture is not likely to be so rosy for the business about which the complaint has been made. The caller is a potential or former customer. He or she has been affronted in some way and is not likely to forget. And what will the caller do? Tell anyone who will listen about the negative experience. Negative word-of-mouth advertising can be very damaging.

We at the Chamber office are not Customer Service experts but there are many professionals who can assist businesses develop and improve their Customer Service plan. The point of this article is to bring to the forefront the importance of establishing a working relationship with your customers. When a conflict or dispute arises between a business and a customer, can a mutually satisfying agreement be reached? Listening to the customer and seeking some common ground could evolve into a win-win for both parties. Failure to resolve the issue could garner some unwanted negative advertising for the business.



When conflict arises between your business and a customer or potential customer, can a mutually satisfying agreement be reached?

When conflict has arisen between your business and a customer or potential customer, how has it been addressed? Has your Customer Service plan been put into effect? Were you able to reach a resolution satisfactory to both parties? Will the Chamber office be receiving calls about your business?

Did You Know?

- The Chamber Board Room is available for rent. For rates or to book the 16 chair room, call the Chamber office.
- Nominations are now open for the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce ABEX Awards. The ABEX awards are the longest

Upcoming Dates to Remember

- May 17**
Business Lunch. Gallagher Centre. Guest Speakers: Crosby Hanna & Associates to speak on the preparation of the Official Community Plan, Zoning Bylaw and Sign Bylaw and seeking Chamber member input. Pre-register.
- May 24 - 27**
Yorkton Film Festival. For more information, call the Festival office 782-7077 or visit www.goldensheafawards.com
- July 4 - 7**
Yorkton Exhibition Association Summer Fair. Parade July 7. For more information, contact the YEA office 783-4800 or visit www.yorktonexhibition.com
- July 19**
Business Breakfast 7:30 am Painted Hand Casino. Guest Speaker Mr. Johannes Vervloed, Consul General from the Netherlands. With the new EU directive on 10% renewable fuel content, the opportunity to export canola to EU via the Port of Rotterdam is promising. Pre-register.

running and most prominent business awards in Saskatchewan. The ABEX Awards are open to all private sector businesses operating in Saskatchewan and self-nominations are welcome in all categories. Nominations close May 31, 2012.



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City Responds to Chamber Member Concerns

This is the third in a series of questions or comments posed by Chamber members during the summer of 2011. The questions or comments featured in this edition have been responded to by David Putz, City Manager.

- 1) A suggestion that if bike lanes are deemed necessary, that they be put along the sidewalk and that parking meters be moved to the end of the street. Calgary was cited as an example.

David's response: The City has no immediate plans to designate bike lanes on additional City streets.

- 2) The City needs some long term planning. (This comment was made prior to the October 2011 planning session).

David's response: In October of 2011 Council held a Strategic Planning Session and forty-six people attended representing the community bringing a very good variety of backgrounds and experience to the discussion table. The output of the strategic planning session was incorporated into Council's Strategic Plan titled Yorkton 2020. It was the guide for the business plans and the 2012 budget with the expectation that it will continue to serve that purpose with some adjustment from time to time.

In 2011 the Planning and Engineering Department also initiated the process to update the City's Official Community Plan. An Official Community Plan is revised every 5 years with the expectation that it will be the guiding document for land use and development in the City for the next 20 years. Some communities develop 40 year Official Community Plans.

The Official Community Plan now being revised will have significant public input and consultation prior to adoption by Council later this year.

- 3) Someone needs to take responsibility for the garbage around the private dumpsters.

David's response: Residential garbage services are provided through a contracted service with Ottenbreit Sanitation Services Limited (O.S.S. Ltd.). O.S.S. is in the process of converting the 5 cubic yard back alley dumpsters to the roll out cart system. The conversion to the cart system is approximately 75% complete. Where the cart system has been incorporated, it has eliminated the disposal of garbage in back alleys.

OSS also provides services to multi-units, and apartment blocks. The previous practice was to



Currently, dumpsters placed in city back alleys behind multi-unit dwellings attract more than household trash.



The new containers now in use at apartments. The lids are always shut to prevent trash from blowing everywhere.

place the multi-units/apartment dumpsters on City owned back lanes. Due to the extreme abuse of these dumpsters (due to residents moving in/out), the dumpsters are now located on the multi-units lot. This has dramatically decreased the amount of calls we are receiving due to garbage lying around the dumpsters. Further, OSS is placing "bear proof" containers in these locations. This container has a much smaller opening and will not accept mattresses, TV's, dishwashers etc.

If a complaint arises about garbage disposed along back lanes and/or on city property, it is first identified by the City, and then picked up through a collection program provided by OSS.

The City does not handle commercial garbage. It is the business's responsibility to dispose of the material by themselves or by contacting local contractors such as OSS or Waste Management. The City deals with few issues when it comes to commercial garbage.

Member Visits in 2012

Later this month, Sherry and Juanita will begin contacting Chamber members to set up an appointment for a visit. These visits are a great way for the members to meet the Chamber Staff and for the staff to drop in on the businesses. When the staff visit, they will have with them a brief survey about the

Chamber. This survey was conducted last summer and the information provided by the members has been very valuable. The survey takes about 20 minutes. The Staff is looking forward to working on this project throughout the summer.