



The VOICE of Business

Top 10 Barriers to Competitiveness 2014

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce and its nationwide network of chambers of commerce, including the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce, unveiled its Top 10 Barriers to Competitiveness list for 2014. The Top 10 Barriers to Competitiveness is an initiative the Canadian chamber network undertook two years ago to draw attention to the barriers that are holding back Canada's progress and to urge all orders of governments to act more swiftly in increasing our country's ability to compete globally.

Canadian Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Perrin Beatty indicated there has been progress in addressing these barriers to business success. "Since launching this initiative, in cooperation with our network of chambers of commerce, we have made great progress in furthering our competitiveness agenda, particularly in addressing the barriers our members identified as being the greatest impediment to the success of Canadian business: the growing skills gap. The federal government and several provincial and territorial governments have also named this issue as the country's biggest challenge."

Yorkton Chamber of Commerce President Don Rae agrees that skills shortage has impacted local businesses. "Businesses in Saskatchewan, and especially in the Yorkton area, know first-hand the need for skilled labour," he said. "We are pleased that the Canadian Chamber network

intends to maintain its focus on skill in 2014." The Canadian Chamber has proposed a number of strategies to solve this problem. Of particular interest to the Yorkton Chamber are the strategies to address immigration policies and Aboriginal education and workforce development. "The Yorkton Chamber agrees that the tightening of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program must be reconsidered, especially for small businesses in this area where there is low unemployment," said Rae. "And we recognize that increasing Aboriginal youth participation in the work force is a critical economic and social opportunity."

Other Barriers identified by the Canadian Chamber network include: Uncompetitive travel and tourism strategies; Inadequate public infrastructure planning; Barriers to success in global markets; Internal barriers to trade; A complex and costly tax system; Lack of clear sustainability policies; Severe shortage of economic development tools for businesses in Canada's territories; Inconsistent regulatory policies between Canada and the U.S.; and Insufficient support for innovation in Canadian manufacturing.

Of these, the Yorkton Chamber of

Commerce considers the complex and costly tax system and the internal barriers to trade as the second and third barriers most affecting the Yorkton area. In



Finding skilled employees is a challenge for many businesses in the Yorkton area. Stephanie Buckle, owner of All About Flowers offers employment to high school students such as Kirsten MacDonald who are willing to learn new skills and more about entrepreneurship.

relation to the tourism industry, the Yorkton Chamber recognizes the importance it plays in the local economy. In 2013, the Yorkton Chamber sent a letter to the Hon. Peter Kent, Minister Responsible for Parks Canada expressing its concerns about the cuts in services and programming to the National Parks.

To learn more about the Top 10 Barriers to Competitiveness, consult the document at www.chamber.ca or www.yorktonchamber.com

Congratulations!

- Congratulations to **Dick DeRyk** on being elected to the Board of Access Communications.

Congratulations to **Canadiana Agri-Motive Co. Ltd.** on 35 years in business.

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Just to mention a few . . .

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BUILDING LOCAL INTELLIGENCE:

Networking: Local business relationships generate leads, drive transactions and supply companies with reliable streams of talent. Increase your exposure, meet new clients & build your customer base by engaging with other businesses in your area.

Reputation: Consumers are 80 percent more likely to purchase goods or services from a company that belongs to the local Chamber of Commerce. Joining a Chamber and putting a sign in your window brings tangible business benefits.

Relationship: With local representation comes local engagement. Membership gives you a change to connect more closely with individuals & groups in your community. It enables you to give back where you live.

Lobbying: A powerful local Chamber of Commerce is influential with municipal, government. Build critical mass in your city or town by joining and play a role in shaping local policy.

Promotion: Our Chamber distributes a monthly newsletter which promotes Members only.

Education: Chamber membership provides education opportunities that nurture your next generation of leaders. Your employees can serve on local boards & gain experience in leadership, work on major community events and learn from local experts on how to promote business success.

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Business Lunch Highlights



At a recent Business Lunch, Sask Chamber of Commerce CEO, Steve McLellan and Director Cam Cooper shared the results of the Perceptions of Growth & Business survey conducted by the Sask Chamber in 2013. Overall, Saskatchewanians are feeling very good about life in the province. And the majority of respondents felt the impact of the province's growth is positive. For those who feel a negative impact, cost of living and housing costs are the main concerns.

Mike Marsh, VP Operations and COO of SaskPower, spoke at a recent Chamber Business Lunch about SaskPower's plans for future infrastructure builds. He indicated that since 2008, there has been a 144% increase in the number of new power connections in the province. SaskPower projects that the province's energy consumption will increase by 30% over the next 20 years and to increase by 50% by 2050.

Sask Chamber Call for Nominations

The Sask Chamber of Commerce has released its formal call for Nominations to its Board of Directors. Four positions are open. Member businesses can bring forward nominations for Directors by nominating individuals that are current members in good standing of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. The current Board has no representation from Yorkton and area. Directors are expected to attend the six Board meetings per year, attend some of the various events and to participate in the program work of the Chamber. Deadline for



SASKATCHEWAN
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nominations is Friday March 21. Nomination forms can be obtained from the Sask Chamber of Commerce by calling (306-352-2671) or the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce (306-783-4368).

Upcoming Dates to Remember

- March 13**
"Countdown to Celebrate" Lunch - Parkland Room, Painted Hand Casino Announcement of Celebrate finalists
- March 13**
Immigration Information Sessions - Federal Labour Market Opinion and Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Programs 1:15 - 3:30
Convention C Gallagher Centre
- March 31**
Deadline for renewing City of Yorkton Business Licences
- April 2**
Celebrate Success Business Awards at St. Mary's Cultural Centre

Woman of Influence



Congratulations to Linda Turta, CEO of Ram Industries on being named by Sask Business Magazine as one of the province's Women of Influence.

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Did you Know?

- The Treasure Chest Toastmasters club has been in Yorkton for over 30 years! To learn more about how the Toastmasters proven communication and leadership program can help you with your skills, contact Keith at 306-783-8388 or Delores 306-620-8424.
- You can now follow @SunriseRegion on Twitter for daily notices and alerts from the Sunrise Health Region!
- "Patient Connect" is being installed at Yorkton Regional Health Centre to offer patients access to the internet, television, and telephone and will provide information and bedside charting for their nurses and physicians.
- The Sunrise Health Region stroke prevention clinic in Yorkton is one of a kind in Saskatchewan! The Sunrise "Telestroke" program of telehealth video conferencing for family support groups and therapy consultation, is one of only 7 such programs funded in Canada!
- According to the 2011 Census, the Tourism sector in Yorkton employs 1,218.
- Auto Electric Service has been a Chamber member since 1963!
- The Yorkton Brick Mill received \$15,000 through Saskatchewan's Heritage Foundation Grant.

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It's Big, It's Fun and It's All About Business

An evening of good food, fun and excitement is one way to describe Yorkton's largest business event of the year! It's the night when the city of Yorkton will learn which businesses will be named the recipients of the coveted Celebrate Success Business Awards. Three organizations will also go home with awards in the Community Merit category.

To order tickets or tables for the Awards Night, April 2 at St. Mary's Ukrainian Cultural Centre, contact the Chamber office (306-783-4368). This is an event you won't want to miss!



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What's with the Pipes?

Recently, the Yorkton Business Improvement District (YBID) sponsored an information meeting for the businesses along Broadway which will be affected by the proposed repairs to the underground infrastructure. Trent Mandzuk, the city's Director of Public Works delivered an excellent presentation with some interesting facts:

- The city has 128 km of sanitary sewers and 53 km of storm sewers
- The city has a remote robotic crawler equipped with a digital video camera and recorder that crawls through underground pipes taking photos that enables city employees to inspect the condition of the pipes
- Fifteen city employees have achieved certification through the National Association of Sewer Service Companies (NASSCO) and the Pipeline Assessment and Certification Program (PAPC). This ensures that they use a standardized methodology to rank the condition of sewers

The presentations from this meeting can be found on the city's website www.yorkton.ca Click on Broadway Street Reconstruction.



The remote robotic crawler took this photo showing a root mass in a city sewer.
Photo courtesy City of Yorkton.

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