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Chamber Cautiously Optimistic About Plans To Re-Open Province's Economy

In an April 23 Media Release, the Board of Directors of the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce indicated it is cautiously optimistic following Premier Moe's announcement earlier in the day about the first phase of the province's plan to re-open its economy.

President Mike Stackhouse stated the Chamber is pleased Saskatchewan is leading the country in taking the first steps to bringing normalcy back to the lives of the province's residents by beginning to open some businesses.

"Businesses have sacrificed in order to collaborate and comply with measures put in place by the Saskatchewan Health Authority," he said. "The low number of cases of the novel virus and the large number of recoveries demonstrates our methods have been working".

As to the scope of the businesses being allowed to open, the Chamber would have preferred more types of businesses included in the list. "Many of the business types given the green light to be the first to open, by their nature, require close contact. Other business types which also involve close contact between the customer and service provider will be delayed in

opening," said Stackhouse.

"Others such as fitness centres, which many patrons claim contribute to their mental health, will not be open until Phase 3."

Stackhouse also indicated members have been pointing out cases where it appears the local, small businesses have been put at a disadvantage.

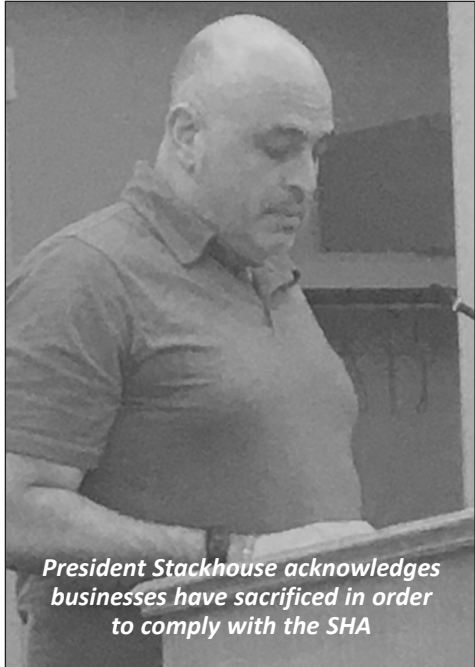
Many of the large retailers have been allowed to stay open because they sell groceries and yet they have been allowed to continue to other items while the small businesses selling those items have been closed. "There is an element of unfairness in this," he said.

The Yorkton Chamber fully supports the Shop Local initiative.

"Our local retailers and service providers, especially the small, locally owned businesses need you and me now

more than ever", he said. "The owners are your neighbours and friends. They employ your family and friends. And they generously give back to the community."

The Yorkton Chamber will continue to monitor the re-opening of the local economy. The Directors and staff encourage everyone to continue to practice proper hygiene as recommended by health officials.



President Stackhouse acknowledges businesses have sacrificed in order to comply with the SHA

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John Lagimodiere
is a popular facilitator

Return of Indigenous Awareness Training Modules

Due to popular demand, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce that it will host another round of **Indigenous Awareness training modules!**

While there are not any in-person Indigenous sessions at this time, the Chamber is pleased to offer a series of webinars with John Lagimodiere, Aboriginal Consulting Services.

To register for these webinars and to learn more about them, visit www.saskchamber.com events

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Our Members Have Been Saying . . .

What a month April has proven to be! It's been a roller coaster of emotions, good news and bad.

With such an unprecedented interruption to the economy, both the Saskatchewan and Yorkton Chambers of Commerce have conducted surveys of the membership to learn more about the impacts on our local business.

In the survey conducted by the **Sask Chamber**, so many businesses from the Yorkton and Melville area responded that they were able to pull out the numbers for the area and share them.

When this survey concluded April 21, the following responses had been received:

- Is your business currently being impacted by COVID-19?
- 95% Yes; 2% No; 3% Unsure
- What is the short term impact to your business?
- 62% Significant negative; 34% Somewhat negative; 4% None; 2% Somewhat positive
- What is your current employee situation?
- 2% permanently lay off staff; 42% temporarily lay off staff; 18% not laying off staff or accessing support programs; 9% using government programs to keep staff on payroll; 29% No response
- Which one of the following statements best describes your view on the economic recovery going forward?
- 29% Wait until we are sure we have no new cases and only then start a gradual removal of restrictions
- 61% Open up economic activity soon, in a slow and gradual manner guided by credible public health data
- 6% Our positive tests are low enough so all restriction on economic activity should be removed and normal day-to-day activities should resume
- 4% No response
- In your opinion, when will optimism recover in Saskatchewan?
43% 3 - 6 months; 29% 6 - 12 months; 23% 12+ months; 5% No response

The **Yorkton Chamber** also conducted a survey of you, the members, in mid April. Your responses to some of the questions were as follows:

- What impacts of the pandemic do you foresee applying to your business in the short run?
- 23% closure; 67% loss of revenue/employees/clients/customers;

6% supply issues; 3% no impact

- What impacts of the pandemic do you foresee applying to your business in the long run?

66% loss of revenue/employees/clients/customers; 6% Debt repayment; 3% Closure; 6% No impact; 6% Hoping for increased support; 3% Negative effect on community; 10% Unsure

- Have you heard about the resources currently available to small businesses? 99% Yes; 1% Unsure
- Do you plan on taking advantage of any of the government programs? 48% yes; 16% No; 35% Maybe
- What do you need most from the Municipal Government?
- 42% Tax relief & stimulus spending; 8% Focus on eliminating the virus; 4% Cut spending; 12% Support small businesses; 23% Don't know; 8% Nothing
- How can the Chamber help you at this time?
- 44% Keep us informed; 26% Advocate/fight for small business; 11% Continue encouraging people to Shop Local; 4% Ensure stakeholders have a say on local decisions
- It has been helpful getting updates & communication about the ever-changing status of affairs
- Continue to help business lobby the government

The **Canadian Chamber**, in collaboration with Stats Canada, also conducted a survey about impact of the pandemic on Canadian businesses. Over 13,000 businesses responded to that survey!

The Chamber appreciates the time you have taken to answer these surveys. Your input is so valuable. Governments recognize that the Sask and Canadian Chamber networks are strong and able to reach a large number of businesses very quickly. By pointing out the concerns of the Chamber members, the governments have more industry information to draw upon when developing rules and regulations.

At the time of writing, the Sask Chamber is discussing with the provincial government the "rules" for retailers to re-open, especially as they pertain to clothing and shoe sales; and how personal care providers such as hair stylists, manicurists, etc can provide their services.

Your voice matters!



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Speaking of Optimism

Just a short couple of months ago, we lived our lives as we were accustomed. All that changed March 16. So after weeks of disruptions, the announcement that Saskatchewan will slowly begin to re-open its economy brings some optimism for better things. The following are a few quotes we thought you might find interesting or cause you to pause to reflect:

- "A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty". Winston Churchill
- "An optimist is someone who figures taking a step backward after taking a step forward is not a disaster, it's more like a cha-cha". Anon
- "Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out". John Wooden
- "Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened". Dr. Suess
- "Optimism refuses to believe the road ends without options". Robert H. Schuller

- "Even if I knew tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would plant my apple tree". Martin Luther
- "And this too shall pass". Anon



The Board and Staff of the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce wishes all the members of the Yorkton Business Community continued good health.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to a friend, neighbour, colleague or health professional if the stresses of this time in our history are creating difficulties for you.

We wish you all successful re-openings.

And we promise to never again complain about not being able to find a parking spot downtown!



City of Yorkton Deadline Extensions



- The assessment roll for the City of Yorkton for the year 2020 has been prepared and is open to inspection from April 1st to June 2nd, 2020.

If you wish to appeal against your property assessment or classification, you must file your appeal on or before 4:00 p.m. June 2nd, 2020.

For further information, please contact, the Assessment and Taxation Branch - City of Yorkton at (306) 786-1736 or (306) 786-1723.

- The deadline for paying city Business Licences has been extended to June 30. The renewal form asks for the number of full time, part time and seasonal employees. Please provide the information as the city will use it to help analyze trends in the business community; and support local businesses in sustaining growth and maximizing opportunities.

Your data is confidential. No info specific to your business will be released to a third party.