

President's Message

The Power of the Chamber Network works for BBOT members

Did you know that a Board of Trade and a Chamber of Commerce were the same thing? Further, did you know that across our great nation Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce are collectively referred to as "The Chamber Network"?

When you join the Brampton Board of Trade (BBOT), a portion of your membership fee is sent to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC). So by joining the Brampton Board of Trade, your business is represented at local, provincial, and federal levels of government. The BBOT staff, as well as members of Governing Council and several of the committees meet with representatives of the OCC and CCC regularly to discuss issues that are of importance to Brampton Businesses. For example, in April we met Shauneen Bruder, Executive Vice President for RBC and the 1st Vice Chair for the Canadian Chamber of Commerce at our Governing Council meeting.

This in itself is good, but the really good news is that when the OCC calls the Premier of Ontario or the CCC calls the Prime Minister – their calls are taken! Our elected leaders are very interested in what the businesses want and need, and the best way to express those needs is through your Board of Trade - hence the Power of the Chamber network.

We also meet with politicians from our area, to make sure that the issues facing our members are brought to the attention of our elected officials. Since becoming President on July 1st, I have made it a priority to continue the tradition of meeting with our elected officials. We have had several meetings already, and plan to continue with this. Many businesses in Brampton are facing significant challenges this year,



BBOT President
Charles Waud

and we are doing what we can to get help with these issues.

On the provincial level, The Ontario Chamber of Commerce works closely with governments, labour, academia, other business associations and groups to create a stronger and more vibrant economy in Ontario. The OCC represents 60,000 businesses across the province through its network of local

- A Brampton Board of Trade policy covering the effective labour integration of immigrants was adopted by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and considered a major policy position that they advocated on and eventually contributed to the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement valued at over \$900 million to do much of what was included in the BBOT policy.

- In 2004, the OCC began lobbying, on behalf of its members, for a long term tax strategy with three pillars. All three have now been achieved:

Elimination of Capital Tax
Single Sales Tax (the HST -

foster a strong, competitive economic environment that benefits businesses, communities, and families across Canada.

The CCC is not industry-specific. Only the CCC can show that specific issues are important to more than just one sector and demonstrate the broader economic impact.

Each year, both the OCC and CCC hold Annual General Meetings. Representatives from the Brampton Board of Trade (normally the CEO, President, and/or Vice President of Policy) try to attend these events whenever possible. It is here that the policy issues previously submitted by members are debated, updated or modified, and put forward for voting by attendees of the meeting.

This year, on Sept. 30, Gary Collins, Keith Medenblik, Jim Schrembri and I will attend an American Chamber of Commerce event in Toronto to meet and speak with John G. Murphy, Vice President of International Affairs for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce regarding protectionism and bilateral trade with the U.S. This is another example of the power of the Chamber Network.

In closing, I would like to pass along some comments from Stuart Johnson, former General Manager of the Brampton Board of Trade, and now Vice President, Policy and Government Relations for the OCC "Members' voices need to be heard, they shouldn't hesitate to express their views on issues, and that as such, the network truly is a grassroots organization. So we 'at the top' as it were truly take direction from the grassroots, and not the other way around..."

I am interested in your opinion. You can reach me by email at president@bramptonbot.com.

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chambers of commerce and boards of trade. OCC members employ about two million people and produce about 17% of Ontario's Gross Domestic Product. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce is a solutions-based organization. Through informed research, patient but consistent advocacy and by engaging OCC members and the network of chambers and boards of trade throughout Ontario, the OCC has become the "go-to" business organization for research, access and opinion.

Many important policies advancing the interests of business at the provincial and federal level are a direct result of the effective advocacy of local, provincial and federal Chambers. For example:

please see my article from last month for more info)

Corporate Tax Consolidation

At the federal level, members of the CCC form an integral part of the strong and diverse network that gives the Canadian Chamber its voice and its credibility with federal policymakers, the media, and the general public. Local Chambers and Boards of Trade are an essential link and help to form a vital connection between business and the federal government and, together, we continue to demonstrate impact on public policy and decision-making to the benefit of all Canadians. The CCC is the only national organization that connects businesses of all sizes, from all sectors of the economy and in every federal riding across the country to advocate for public policies that will

BBOT Policy update

HST, PMH and Buy American on the agenda

As Vice President of Policy for the Brampton Board of Trade (BBOT), I want to provide you with an update on the policy and advocacy work of the Board.

Our Policy and Government Relations (PGR) committee is made up of members of the BBOT that are interested in policy and how it affects the business community in Brampton. On your behalf we tackle policy issues at all levels of government - municipal, regional, provincial and federal. The PGR committee debates and discusses these policy issues and makes recommendations to either the Executive Committee or Governing Council to be further discussed and likely ratified as an official policy position of the BBOT.

HST

One of these issues is the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST). BBOT President Charles Waud, wrote an excellent article last month outlining the cost benefits to business with the HST. At our last PGR meeting Past President Michael Collins suggested that we advocate on behalf of all Ontarians and ask Premier Dalton McGuinty to consider a reduction in the PST portion of the HST.

We discussed the issue at length and passed a motion at PGR to ask the Executive Committee to ratify our position and send a letter to the Premier and the ministers involved. As you can imagine, the Executive



VP Policy
Jim Schembri

Committee was more than pleased to pass the motion put forward regarding the PST decrease, unanimously. In the letter to the Premier dated September 23 our motion stated that "the HST will apply to more items, which will result in an increase in provincial retail sales tax revenue". We informed the premier that "The Brampton Board of Trade (will) advocate to the Government of Ontario to consider reducing the provincial retail sales tax from 8 to 7% beginning January 1, 2011 to help Ontarians transition with the HST." We'll be following up on this letter and I'll be sure to keep you up to date.

Here are a couple of the other things we are working on at PGR. The BBOT has sent a letter to Stockwell Day, federal minister of International Trade, regarding the Buy American provisions in the United States stimulus package that will inevitably affect many Brampton by locking us out of the bidding process. The letter states "we would like to commend your actions to date protecting Canadian businesses from protectionism in the United States". The letter went on to encourage the Minister to continue

working the premiers reach an agreement with the United States. We are also working with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC) on this very important issue. The CCC has been working hard with the American Chamber of Commerce to ensure that the message reaches United States Senate and the President's office.

Peel Memorial Hospital is still a hot topic at PGR. Gary Collins provides regular updates from the Community Advisory Council regarding the progression of the Peel Memorial redevelopment. There is progress and

I'll keep you posted as soon as we know more.

I'll be writing about the BBOT's policy and advocacy on a monthly basis. Readers will be updated on new advocacy positions and current advocacy initiatives. I also invite all members of the BBOT that have an interest in policy to visit the PGR committee. I'm sure you'll find it to be a rewarding committee. The PGR committee meets the first Thursday of each month at 8 a.m. in the boardroom of the BBOT offices. I look forward to seeing you there.

H1N1 preparedness

H1N1 influenza doesn't just threaten your health. It threatens our economy. Thousands of businesses in Mexico closed their doors this spring after the H1N1 flu outbreak. The same thing happened in Toronto after SARS in 2003.

Studies have shown that small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Canada aren't as well prepared as they should be for the economic and business challenges that come with a pandemic.

That is why the International Centre for Infectious Diseases (ICID) and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce have partnered up, with the support of the Public Health Agency of Canada, to help SMEs plan so we can limit the

economic impact of a flu pandemic.

Shortly, we will be by launching a Web site at businessfluplan.ca, delivering web casts and organizing seminars across the country specifically for small and medium-sized businesses.

We will be providing tools so SMEs can:

- Protect themselves and their employees
- Get sound information for themselves and their business and Reduce the risk of their business failing.

Business owners, HR managers or employees interested in pandemic planning can learn more at www.chamber.ca