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From: Kelowna Chamber of Commerce [kelownachamber@kelownachamber.org]
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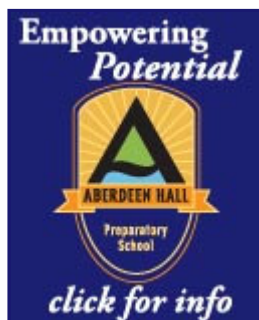
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March 2006

VOICE OF BUSINESS

The Chamber has been working on behalf of the business community on the following issues:



Supportive Housing

The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce has been an active participant in the Supportive Housing Task Force established to review the criteria to create an apartment complex to assist those with addictions and mental illness. Recognizing the need to provide additional services to assist people to overcome these significant personal challenges, the role of the Chamber has been to work to create a fair and equitable process to determine a location for the proposed facility.

The Chamber has expressed concerns to the City of Kelowna regarding the process currently in place to determine the location of the proposed facility. These concerns are:

- a number of the criteria focuses on the close proximity to reference points in the downtown area
- there is a need for a long term strategy for supportive services for homeless, addictions, and mental illness in Kelowna
- more consideration needs to be given to the possible negative economic impact on this type of facility on the area

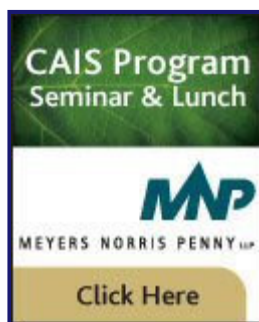
To review letter to Mayor Sharon Shepherd, [click here](#).



Municipal Government Affairs Committee

The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce has established a standing committee to provide leadership in identifying and taking action on municipal governmental issues of specific interest to the members of the Chamber, and of concern to the business community at large.

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the role of this committee will be to consult with Chamber members and key stakeholders to identify and research issues, and work cooperatively with key decision makers at the municipal level to determine solutions



to the issues.

In the 2005 membership survey, members indicated that they wanted the Chamber to focus on safety/crime, downtown revitalization, and transportation issues. The committee will work on these and other issues with key stakeholders and decision makers during 2006.

For more details on this committee's mandate, [click here](#).

2006 Provincial Budget Review

The Kelowna Chamber has reviewed the provincial budget released on February 21. On a positive note, the provincial budget has addressed key areas for the Kelowna Chamber such as:

- continued funding for the William R. Bennett Bridge
- increase in the Small Business Venture Capital tax credit to \$25 million from \$20 million
- funding for training tax credits to address the skills shortage facing businesses
- funding to provide assistance in dealing with social issues and dealing with crystal meth

However, the Chamber has expressed disappointment that the PST on legal fees was not eliminated. The Chamber encourages the Provincial Government to continue to work towards enhancing British Columbia's business tax environment, and assisting businesses to be more competitive in the global marketplace.

[Click here](#) for 2006 Budget news and analysis from the BC Chamber of Commerce.



Small Business Venture Capital

The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce is pleased that the recent Provincial Budget includes a new commitment to increase the Small Business Venture Capital tax credit to \$25 million from the annual total previously set at \$20 million. This move is a successful implementation of a significant portion of the recommendations set out in the Kelowna Chamber's 2004 resolution calling for an increase in the amount prescribed as the annual maximum venture capital incentive.

To review the "Improving Access to Small Business Venture Capital" resolution adopted as a BC Chamber policy statement in 2004, [click here](#).



The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce is a membership based business organization representing 1,550 business members. As the "Voice of Business – Choice of Business" for our membership, we welcome the opportunity to address a number of issues relevant to our organization and the business community at large. Our mission is to foster a positive business environment by providing members with leadership, advocacy and services of value.

*We invite members to submit issues and concerns affecting their business sectors. Please call **Jan Bauman** at 861-1515, ext. 29 or email jan@kelownachamber.org.*



PROVINCIAL RESOLUTIONS – CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Calling all members! It is resolution time again...

Each year, the Kelowna Chamber participates in the BC Chamber of Commerce policy development process prior to and during the Annual General Meeting in May.

As part of this process, the Kelowna Chamber is invited to draft and submit resolutions for debate at the AGM.

If passed, these resolutions become a part of the lobbying platform for the BC Chamber and are presented to the Provincial Government. They are called to the attention of the Cabinet Ministers responsible in order to make it possible for

pending government legislation and regulations to reflect the opinion of British Columbia businesses.

Chamber members are strongly encouraged to submit issues, concerns and important topics to be considered for resolutions to the B.C. Chamber. Please contact **Jan Bauman** at 861-1515, ext. 29, via email jan@kelownachamber.org or fax 861-3624 by **March 9**. Resolutions will go to the Kelowna Chamber Board at its March 23 meeting and are due to the B.C. Chamber on March 27.

Ensure that your voice is heard!



SPORT KELOWNA WINS PRESTIGIOUS TOURISM AWARD

The partnership of Sport Kelowna is pleased to announce that the Council of Tourism Associations of BC (COTA) has awarded Sport Kelowna with the Sport Tourism Community Legacy Award. The prize was presented to Sport Kelowna at the Seventh Annual British Columbia Tourism Awards in Penticton on February 16, 2006 – part of the Tourism Industry Conference 2006.

Sport Kelowna is a community-based partnership between Tourism Kelowna, the City of Kelowna, and the Pacific Sport Group, committed to supporting Kelowna's sports community through sport development, sport tourism and sport partnerships.

"We are thrilled that Sport Kelowna was awarded the Sport Tourism Community Legacy Award," says **Nancy Cameron**, General Manager of Tourism Kelowna. "This is significant because it is a provincial recognition that we have an effective, partner-based model that has resulted in the successful advancement of sport tourism and sport development as a whole."

Accepting the award on behalf of Sport Kelowna, Event Development Coordinator **Michelle Collens** remarked, "Since Sport Kelowna's inception three years ago, the partnership has been providing the community with sport bidding, event planning, and event funding mechanisms. We strive to refine the process of sport event hosting, right from assisting sport groups in presenting professional bid packages, to guiding host clubs through the planning and execution stages. This award marks the acknowledgement of our efforts and achievements in the broader sport community."

TOURISM KELOWNA – A NEW LOOK!

Tourism Kelowna has revamped its website to improve the online experience for visitors exploring Kelowna as a destination. Feedback was gathered from our members, industry experts and consumers to aid in the concept design.

The new site showcases the beauty and diversity of Kelowna through imagery and improved content while ensuring that site navigation is more intuitive for users.

Visit www.tourismkelowna.com for a refreshed look at Kelowna!

Did You Know?

MAXIMIZING MEMBERSHIP VALUE

Chambers of Commerce Group Insurance Plan

Did you know that the Chambers of Commerce Plan offers "big group" coverage and

flexibility to Chamber members regardless of company size? This means your company can provide its employees with valuable extended health care and life insurance benefits with many options. And best of all, you can control the costs and create a custom group benefits plan based on the coverages you choose. Why pay for a package with benefits you don't want when you can customize and get top value for your dollar?

For more information about who can join, plan features, rate stability and agent information, [click here](#).

The local Chambers Plan agent is TD Benefit Solutions (1-800-254-6162). You can view their home page at http://www.chambers.ca/dyas_insurance/ or email tdbenefits@shawbiz.ca.

For more information about Chamber member benefits, contact Membership Services Coordinator **Debra McGillivray** at 861-1515, ext 36.

Local, National and International Referrals

Tracking down local companies for interested customers in the Kelowna area, from across Canada and around the globe is something we do every day at the Kelowna Chamber to refer member businesses.

For example, Chamber staff has handled numerous requests for contact information on **The Titanium Workshop** operated by Kelowna Chamber member **Arnell Workshop Inc.** – the Westbank-based workshop and online jewelry store www.titaniumrings.com providing unique handcrafted aircraft grade titanium, black titanium rings and titanium wedding bands.

Chamber CEO **Weldon LeBlanc** recently received an email from a satisfied customer in Minnesota who had purchased titanium wedding rings from The Titanium Workshop in 2002 and was anxious to make further purchases but could not locate the company as his “Google” search had come up empty. Despite the fact that the company is listed locally as Arnell Workshop, Weldon was able to search the Chamber's online Business Directory with the word “titanium” and then pass on the company's email address info@titaniumcommitment.com.

Fred and Roy Arnell have expressed their appreciation for the extra effort made by the Chamber on the company's behalf.

“We have, indeed, benefited from referrals by the Chamber office. Because our business is web-based, we don't have a large advertising presence within the local community. From time to time, Kelowna residents who have heard about our business from other customers contact the Chamber seeking contact information for the Titanium Workshop and your staff has always been very helpful about helping them to reach us. We appreciate these referrals greatly because they add to local awareness of our business and that benefits us through increased sales. Thanks for your continued assistance with this.”

Look Who Has Joined the Chamber!

Since the last issue of FLASH, 16 new members have joined the Chamber. [Click here](#) for a list of new members for February 2006.

FREE PROVINCIAL SALES TAX (PST) SEMINARS

If you already own a business, or are thinking of opening a new business, the Ministry of Small Business and Revenue is presenting free seminars this month to help you learn more about PST and the right way to apply the tax in your business – March 21 to 23 in Osoyoos, Penticton and Kelowna.

Each seminar will have a brief presentation followed by a question and answer period. If you have any specific tax questions regarding your business, this is an opportunity that should not be missed! To register for a seminar in either location [click here](#) for a form. Deadline is March 14.



SuperHost Customer Service Award **PUTTING JETSGO PASSENGERS FIRST...**

The March 2005 Exceptional Service Award winner, **Agazzi Abay** from Jetsgo Airlines, won the SuperHost Customer Service Award at the 7th Annual BC Tourism Awards banquet as part of the BC Tourism Industry Conference in mid February.

The SuperHost Customer Service Award recognizes a front-line employee whose exceptional customer service contributed to an outstanding travel experience for one (or more) of our visitors to BC in 2005.

Agazzi was nominated for this distinctive award by the Exceptional Service Under the Sun Committee who was impressed by his exceptional story – one that is deserving of extra special mention for going above and beyond the line of duty when his job and company no longer existed. For this, he was met with admiration, applause and a standing ovation by the 500-plus delegates in attendance at the tourism awards.

When Jetsgo Airlines abruptly ceased operations in March 2005, the company's employees were instructed not to show up for work. Agazzi, a Jetsgo manager in Kelowna, heard the news and decided that he could not abandon customers at such a stressful time. So he went into the Jetsgo office at the airport to "be there" for his customers and to apologize to passengers for the inconvenience – acting as the complaints department and helping to make alternative travel arrangements, knowing that he would not be paid for his efforts.

The only Jetsgo employee in Canada to show up for "work" and volunteer seven hours of his time, Agazzi said the decision was easy because he believes the role of tourism is to serve people and that's what he was doing. The 32-year-old from Ethiopia now works as a project manager for a construction company in Nanaimo.

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE UNDER THE SUN **Presentation to Harry Brust - December Winner**



Harry Brust from Quest for Success (left) received his Exceptional Service Under the Sun Award and balloon bouquet from the CFDC's Stephanie Moore at his shop on February 14.

MARCH EVENTS



FRIDAY, MARCH 3

Chamber Breakfast with BC Energy Minister at the Coast Capri Hotel

The Honourable **Richard Neufeld**, BC Minister of Energy, Mines & Petroleum Resources will speak to Chamber members at special breakfast meeting on March 3 sponsored by **FortisBC**.

Minister Neufeld will talk about alternative energy solutions and outline the provincial government's future energy plans. He was appointed Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources on June 16, 2005, and has served as Minister of Energy and Mines since 2001. Mr. Neufeld has been involved in the oil and gas industry most of his life and is a former City Councilor and Mayor of Fort Nelson (1978-1986).

Registration will be at 7:10 am and the breakfast will run from 7:30 to 8:30 am. Tickets are \$25 for members and \$35 for non-members, and must be purchased in advance via the **Events Line** at **861-1515, ext. 2**, in person at the Chamber Office (544 Harvey Avenue), or online. **Seating is limited.** [Click here](#) for Online Registration.



MONDAY, MARCH 27

Business After Hours at Kelowna Community Food Bank

The Business After Hours on Monday, March 27 will be hosted by the **Kelowna Community Food Bank** at **1265 Ellis** from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Wine Sponsor for the event is **Hainle Vineyards**. The topic for the pre-BAH Education Session (5:00 to 5:30 pm) is to be announced and will be posted on the Chamber website soon.

Tickets for members are \$7 each or \$15 for three from the same office if arriving together; non-members, \$12 each. Since pre-registration is not required for after hours events, please do not register on-line. You can purchase your tickets at the registration table when you arrive (payment by cash or cheque only; no credit card purchases at the door).



MORE EVENT INFORMATION

Click on links to visit Chamber website for details.

- **Special Events** – Tourism Kelowna Stakeholders Meeting & Advisory Council Elections (March 8 at the Coast Capri); 31st Annual Civic and Community Awards – Tickets available March 20 (April 20 event at the Grand Okanagan)
- **Breakfast Meetings** – Breakfast with the Honourable Richard Neufeld, BC Minister of Energy, Mines & Petroleum Resources (March 3 at the Coast Capri)
- **Business After Hours** – Networking event hosted by Kelowna Community Food Bank (March 27 at 1265 Ellis)
- **SuperHost Courses** – “Fundamentals” Workshop (March 21 & 22 at Chamber Office)

ONLINE LINKS

Member Updates

Members are reminded to check their online listings in the **Business Directory** on the Chamber website www.kelownachamber.org to see if any information requires updating or correcting. It is important to keep your member listing current so that visitors to the Directory can always find you! Please take time to update your listing as soon as information changes.

For details on how to update your information, click on the **Members Only** directory then **Online Update**. You will then be directed to the **Member Login** area.

Or click on the direct link below:

http://www.kelownachamber.org/index.php?fid=Members_Only&sid=Online_Update

If you have any questions or concerns, please call **Dicky Dack** at 861-1515, ext. 27 or email dicky@kelownachamber.org.

Charity Member Spotlight

Member charities are reminded to apply to the Chamber if they wish to be profiled as the "Charity Member Spotlight" at a future luncheon. More information and application forms are now available online at www.kelownachamber.org – Click on **Membership Info / Charity Spotlight** or via direct link: http://www.kelownachamber.org/index.php?fid=Membership&sid=Charity_Spotlight

Member Profiles

- [New Member Spotlight](#) – Kristin Butler and Sharon MacKenzie, Beautiful Arts

Chamber News

- [Newsletter Articles](#) – Current issue of e-FLASH (March 2006)
- [Newsletter Archive](#) – Back issues of e-FLASH (March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December 2005; January, February 2006)