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June 2019

Steel tariffs lifted - good for biz

The announcement of the U.S. lifting its steel and aluminum tariffs was positive news for Canadian businesses. These tariffs have never had a national security justification, and we welcome this long overdue resolution, as stated in our media release.

Along with other Canadian business organizations, we have since issued a [letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau](#) in support of the ratification of CUSMA. You can read the letter [here](#).

Wage-Earner Protection Program: feedback sought

The WEPP provides financial support to Canadian workers, under federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions, who are owed money when their employer files for bankruptcy or becomes subject to a receivership. The WEPP provides timely payment of eligible wages, up to an amount equalling four weeks maximum insurable earnings under the *Employment Insurance Act* (\$3,977 for 2018). The government is now moving forward on its Budget 2018 commitment by increasing the maximum payment from four weeks to seven weeks of insurable earnings, which will total \$6,960 in 2018; this will amount to an increase of close to \$3,000. The increase to the maximum payment came into force on Royal Assent (December 13, 2018), and applies retroactively to bankruptcies or receiverships that occurred on or after Feb. 27, 2018, the day the budget was tabled.

Currently, approximately 46% of recipients are still owed money after receiving WEPP payments. Under this increase, it is expected that this will drop to 32%, and will increase the number of applicants that are fully compensated for eligible wages by approximately 1,600 per year on average.

The federal government has opened a consultation process about the development of regulations that would support recent legislative changes made to the *Wage Earner Protection Program Act*. [Deadline for responses is June 28](#). [For more information](#) on how you or your members can participate in the consultations, please visit [this page](#).

Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) Canada is launching a new Canada Business mobile app for small business

This is the first-ever app at ISED and with this the department joins other government departments in providing public services to Canadians which are simple to use and trustworthy, as part of the shift to becoming more agile, open, and user-focused.

This app will make it easier for businesses to interact with government, and have programs and services at their fingertips. They will be able to navigate government services, get personalized recommendations, and find the answers they need to start up, scale up, and access new markets.

Users are encouraged to download the app from the Apple Store or Google Play, and test it for yourself. Experience firsthand the experience that stakeholders will have. ISED welcomes your feedback as we are constantly seeking ways to be more responsive in our provision of resources for small businesses across Canada.

We want to make the experience so positive, that the *Canada Business* app will become the default manner that Canadian business owners want to deal with the federal government.

Pay Equity Regulations

The federal government is seeking your input on key elements of the pay equity regulations under the new *Pay Equity Act*. [Deadline is June 28](#).

On December 13, 2018, the federal government adopted a new proactive pay equity regime for the federal public and private sectors with the passing of the federal *Pay Equity Act*. Once in force, the new legislation will require federal jurisdiction employers with 10 or more employees to develop a pay equity plan to ensure that they are providing equal pay for work of equal value.

The focus of this consultation?

By survey:

The government recommends employers, managers, or any other person designated by the employer to manage human resources or personnel operations of the business or organization to complete the survey as you will be asked to provide the number of people employed in your business, or organization, their gender and occupations.

The [survey](#) will inform the development of a method to complete a pay equity plan in a business or organization where there are no predominantly male jobs.

Discussion paper:

We encourage all Canadians, specifically stakeholders and Indigenous partners, to share their input. Stakeholders can include employer, labour and advocacy stakeholders, as well as pay equity professionals and experts.

The [discussion paper](#) will contribute to the development of regulations that respond to the varied experiences and circumstances of employees and employers to which the act will apply.

Canada Revenue Agency releases *Serving you Better* report

Earlier this week, the Honourable Diane LeBouthillier, Minister of National Revenue, released the [Report on the Canada Revenue Agency's 2018 Serving You Better Consultations with Small and Medium Businesses](#).

CRA senior officials met with small and medium businesses and accountants and they partnered with CPA Canada and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce to host 21 sessions in 17 cities across Canada. Sessions with small and medium businesses took place through the **local chambers of commerce** in Surrey, Whitehorse, Fredericton, Saint-Georges, Red Deer, Yellowknife, Sydney, Saskatoon, Iqaluit and Tillsonburg. A shout-out to the chambers who hosted these consultations!

What follows is a list of the top 10 recommendations from the consultations with SMEs.

Top 10 action items from the 2018 consultations

1. Sign-up to receive an email confirmation when the CRA receives a document or a payment.
2. Upload up to 10 documents at once in the *Submit documents online service*.
3. A new "Pay" button in the online portals will allow businesses to pay outstanding balances with the click of a button.
4. Expand the *Liaison Officer* service to incorporated businesses.
5. Represent a client will be available for estate accounts.
6. The *Dedicated Telephone Service* for tax preparers is becoming a permanent program.
7. Business owners and their representatives will be able to print certain types of remittance vouchers.
8. Create a new Canada.ca page that lists all CRA services available for businesses.
9. Correspondence about objections will be available in the CRA's online portals.
10. Businesses will be able to watch new informational videos related to taxpayer relief and objections.

To stay up to date on the implementation of CRA's action plan, don't forget to bookmark [Track how the CRA is helping small and medium businesses!](#)

Consultation: labour exploitation in global supply chains

The federal government wants stakeholder feedback on possible ways to address labour exploitation in global supply chains. This first phase of consultations responds to the 2018 report by the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development. You can read the full report, *A Call to Action: Ending the Use of all Forms of Child Labour in Supply Chains*.

The government's [Labour Program](#) would like your opinion on possible legislation and other methods to address labour exploitation in global supply chains. You can read the [issue paper](#) and [complete the survey by June 21, 2019](#) to have your say.

Your responses will help the government identify how best to work with businesses and other partners in addressing labour exploitation through global supply chains. The government uses the broader term "labour exploitation" in order to encompass the range of issues that could be addressed through possible legislative and/or policy initiatives relating to global supply chains, including human rights violations or abuses more generally.

We invite you to share this survey with your members. Direct any questions to:

EDSC.PRDAI.AIT.AMT-MLA.IILA.PDRIA.ESDC@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca

AGM & Convention updates

Reso process update

The deadline for the submission of resolutions for our annual meeting has come and gone. We have received 80+ resolutions from chambers all over the country.

Chambers are able to view submissions and make comment through the resolution portal.

The policy screening committee will review resos in July ensuring that the resos match specified reso criteria and the proposed reso book will be available one month prior to the convention.

Bursary

Our good friends at ESSO have generously offered to sponsor a [bursary](#) to attend this year's AGM in Saint John, NB.

In addition to the amazing sessions we have lined up this year, leading into the hot zone of the federal election, many delegates cite the networking that happens outside sessions as one of the most valuable benefits of attending the event. Delegates come from all over Canada and you are sure to expand your personal network by attending.

If you are thinking that the AGM & Convention is something that you should attend but your chamber's budget is stretched this year, maybe the bursary can get you there!

Don't delay though, the bursary application process closes July 8. Details can be found [here](#).

Very early bird registration pricing

Please be aware that your best pricing for AGM registration end as of July 3. To access this pricing and lock in to the best rate, visit our [AGM page](#).

Chamber Competition

Share with your peers. This year's competition is focused on advocacy through events. If you host an event that creates "influence in action" we want you to share the successes that you have had with creating profile for business advocacy.

Maybe it's a candidates forum that you've held in a new and exciting way? Maybe you've hosted a summit? Tell us what you are doing to create awareness of business issues in your community and/or region and let others learn from your experience.

Deadline is July 19, 4:00 p.m. EDT. More details are [here](#).

CCEC has announced their conference lineup

The Chamber of Commerce Executives of Canada (CCEC) meets immediately preceding our annual meeting and convention. For 52 years, the CCEC has had chamber execs backs for professional development.

This year's highlights include:

- *Communicating chamber value to maximize member engagement* with [Shari Pash](#) and a session on LinkedIn (BTW - don't forget about the Chamber Network Exchange on LinkedIn. If you are on LinkedIn and not in the Exchange - [let us know](#).)
- *Go digital and get results* with Frank Kenny.

Details on the CCEC program and registration are available [here](#).

Where we've been on your behalf

Based on comments from our Chamber Network Committee, we have developed a new tool that shares what activities the Chamber has been involved in during any given month. This will list engagements with our staff and government and other stakeholders so that you can see that we are hard at work on behalf of our members. Please see the first report [here](#).