

Connections

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January 2017

THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
LA CHAMBRE DE COMMERCE DU CANADA



The Voice of Canadian Business™
CONNECT! BRANCHÉ!
Le porte-parole des entreprises canadiennes^{MD}

Shock and Opportunity: Adapting to a Volatile World

Join us for our first webinar of 2017. Our senior director, economics and finance Hendrik Brakel will provide his *Economic and Political Outlook 2017-2018* for Canada and the global economy on January 19.

During this webinar, Hendrik will explore:

- Why is global growth so slow? Can we break out of our funk?
- What will happen to the Canadian economy? Will questions about NAFTA chill business investment and hiring?
- Have we reached a tipping point where the gains from trade and technology are no match for the negative effects of income inequality and sluggish global growth?
- Have we embarked on a new era of “close-the-borders” populism, where globalization is in retreat? Or do we risk reading too much into the election of Donald Trump and Brexit?
- What will happen to oil prices and the loonie?

You need to [register](#) for the webinar. Once registered, an email meeting request will follow with your Adobe Connect meeting info.

Two Policy Alerts: for your consideration

Number one: Health benefit programs a taxable benefit?

We, like many of you, have heard the federal government is considering taxing employer-paid health and dental benefits. That’s why we have created an alert for you and your members. MPs must be told that taxing employer-paid health benefits will harm middle class Canadians

In addition to hundreds or thousands of dollars that would be added to Canadians’ tax bills, it also means that many employers will no longer provide coverage to employees. When a similar tax was introduced in Quebec, 20% of employers dropped health and dental benefits for employees. Studies suggest the removal of this tax benefit across the board could result in a decrease of 50% of small firms that will be able to offer health benefits.

We need you to tell your MPs that this move would harm the people the federal government promised to champion: the middle class. Encourage your members to do so as well.

We’ve provided a template [email text](#) for you to send to the [Minister of Finance](#) and your local MP(s), whose name(s) and e-mails are available [here](#) by entering your postal code.

As a chamber, you may also be drawing conclusions about what this could mean for popular group insurance programs that contribute to your ability to attract and retain members and also add to your revenues.

Number two: Business Adjustment Tax (BAT)

Businesses that export to the U.S. are at risk from a proposal in Congress known as the “border adjustment tax” (BAT), that would have the same effect as a 20% tariff on imported goods. The measure is part of the tax reform package championed by House Speaker Paul Ryan and supported by the Ways and Means Committee. U.S. Congress will likely introduce the bill in January of this year.

How would it affect Canadian businesses?

Under the House GOP tax plan, as presented by Speaker Ryan, the corporate tax rate would be reduced from 35% to 20% and would be border-adjusted so that imports could no longer be deducted from revenues. This means that imports would effectively be taxed at a 20% rate. Exports would not be taxable at all.

This would have serious consequences for Canadian companies that export to the U.S. because it would have the same effect as a 20% tariff. It would distort the market, increase consumer prices and create an uneven playing field for companies and consumers. Canadian manufacturers would be significantly disadvantaged and would lose sales. American businesses would scramble to readjust supply chains to favour domestic sources.

We have created a more detailed [policy brief](#) for your consideration.

Calling all policy peeps! We’re excited about this opportunity!

We are launching a new program to improve policy development and teamwork within the Chamber’s network of community chambers.

Beginning in February 2017, our policy group will host a policy “intern” from a local or provincial chamber to come and work with us in Ottawa for a week.

Warren Everson, our senior vice president of policy, sees this as an opportunity to better understand each other – to understand the issues “in the field” and how we might be of greater assistance to your lobbying efforts on behalf of your members and, at the same time, be able to gain a better understanding of how we work at the federal level in Ottawa on issues that affect businesses across Canada.

To ensure we learn as well, we will want the intern to provide an update to our policy group on priority issues in his/her own home organization and community.

The intern will be able to participate in policy project work with one or more of our policy team, focusing on a subject of interest to their chamber.

As part of the week’s agenda, the intern will be able to accompany policy directors on meetings with ministers, staff and Parliamentarians, to get a better feel for the federal advocacy role

we play.

We will also arrange for our intern to meet with MPs and ministers from his/her own community and region. These more locally-focused activities will add impact to our combined lobbying efforts as well as provide good photo ops and communications pieces for community distribution once your staffer returns to work.

We will pay accommodation (arrive on a Sunday night - depart on Friday) and meals for our guest. We would ask the home chamber provide travel costs to and from Ottawa.

The interns will be hosted only when the House is sitting in Ottawa. Over the course of 2017, it is our hope the program will accommodate about six interns.

If you or a staff member is interested in this opportunity, we would ask you/him/her to submit a CV along with a one-pager that outlines what you hope to achieve by participating; how you might promote this to your members - either while you are here in Ottawa or when you return. As mentioned, the first intern would arrive in February with others throughout the rest of 2017.

We hope you'll consider this new opportunity! Send your "applications" to [Jennifer Hagen](#).

First Data | New year, new offer

We are pleased to be able to present to you a new offer from First Data.

This offer is all out to get your members' business! If First Data **cannot** beat your members' current payment processing fees, they earn a \$1,000 MasterCard® gift card.

As you can see, this is a different offer from the 2016 version - and indicates the confidence First Data has to beat current offers "out there."

The [new flyer](#) is ready for your member recruiting and renewal purposes. Please make sure you update your websites too!

2016: what a year that was!

It is hard to remember a year when more has happened. For us, it was another successful year, and we would like to thank you for your continued support.

We saw our new government reshape Canada's economic and international agendas. It is under this government that we secured policy improvements and commitments in areas that are critical to business success: access to people, customers, infrastructure, capital and technology.

Canada welcomed and resettled over 34,000 Syrian refugees and overcame significant hardships – some were economic, others were caused by natural disasters.

Internationally, we signed a historic trade agreement with Europe while the United States elected a new president, bringing much uncertainty about the future of Canada's relationship with the U.S.

These successes are highlighted in our [Annual Report](#), which was sent to you last week. We hope you've had an opportunity to reflect on 2016 and all that happened. We encourage you to share the [Annual Report](#) with your members so they may know that we are all working on their behalf.

Chamber veteran Valerie Roy to retire

Valerie Roy, CEO of the Atlantic Chambers of Commerce Inc. (ACC), has announced she will be stepping down from the helm of the ACC later this year. The search is on to fill her shoes.

Valerie is one of those rare people who has lead not only one chamber but two - making the leap from the Greater Moncton Chamber of Commerce to the regional Atlantic Chamber a few years ago. Valerie was recently recognized (2016) as the Chamber Executive of the Year in the less than 500 member category by the Chamber of Commerce Executives of Canada (CCEC).

The deadline for any interested candidates to submit their resumes for the position is January 23. If you, or someone you know, are interested in learning more, the job posting can be found on our [website](#).

Welcome a new member chamber to the network!

We were pleased to have our first new member of 2017 join the in the first week of January. The **Fraser Lake & District Chamber of Commerce** (BC) is our newest member. Like them on Facebook!

The chamber is run by Dave Christie, economic development officer, and a dedicated group of volunteers; Dave can be reached at vfledo@fraserlake.ca.

Not a new chamber but a change in name... The Richmond Hill Chamber is now the [Richmond Hill Board of Trade](#).

Do you know a business that makes a difference in your community and deserves to be recognized?

From now until February 3, you can nominate a business for Canada's Volunteer Awards in the Business Leader category!

Now is the time to recognize the important contributions of socially-responsible businesses for their donations of time, resources and expertise, as well as those of volunteers and not-for-profit organizations that improve the well-being of communities across the country.

For more information on how to nominations, visit the website: www.Canada.ca/volunteer-awards or call 1-877-825-0434
Or send an email to: info-cva-pbc@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca.

New leaders in the network

Join us in welcoming the following new chamber execs to the chamber network; if they're in your region of the country, why not personally welcome them to the network?

Mark Woodward, operations manager, Huron Chamber of Commerce - Goderich, Central & North Huron (ON), info@huronchamber.ca.

Tami Smith, business development manager, Greater Innisfil Chamber of Commerce (ON), manager@innisfilchamber.com.

Art Dolan, interim business manager, Greater Napanee Chamber of Commerce (ON), napaneechamber@bellnet.ca.

Ola Crook, chamber administration, Pincher Creek Chamber of Commerce (AB), info@pincherchamber.com.

Jennifer McCurdy, president and chief executive officer, St. Albert & District Chamber of Commerce (AB), jennifer@stalbertchamber.com.

Melissa Pace, acting CEO, The Whistler Chamber of Commerce (BC), melissa@whistlerchamber.com.