

Connections

... get plugged in to your network

February 2011

Policy Update

Business wins on border announcement

In early February President Obama and Prime Minister Harper made a joint declaration to establish a new long-term partnership between Canada and the U.S. This partnership will strengthen the economic and physical security of both countries and facilitate the flow of legitimate people and goods across the border.

This is a policy win and you and your members can read the details under the [policy wins](#) on our website.

Chamber meets with Rob Moore

The Chamber recently met with Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism Rob Moore to talk about doing more for small business and tourism across Canada.

The meeting focused on AGM resolutions relating to his portfolio, and the initiatives the Chamber has underway, including creating a new SME Committee and promoting innovation among SMEs. Also discussed was how low business taxes help Canada attract foreign investment and make our businesses more competitive.

The minister explained his goal of developing a whole-of-government approach for tourism, currently affected by the decisions made by 15 federal departments. By coordinating its strategies, the government can do more for the industry.

Finally, the minister reported on the Red Tape Reduction Commission that he chairs. The group has received a wide range of ideas but still wants to hear from other small businesses across Canada.

Businesses are encouraged to feed into the Red Tape Reduction commission especially if they have something the commission needs to know regarding how business is affected by red tape or if there are improvements to suggest - the opportunity exists to contribute [online](#). It's a great way to make the business voice heard.

A new SME committee of the CCC – a reminder to engage

In last month's *Connections*, we told you that the Canadian Chamber of Commerce plans to place an even greater emphasis on SME issues and challenges in our lobbying and advocacy efforts in the future. To do so, we are creating an SME committee and request your support of this important

initiative.

Good progress has been made and we thank those of you who have joined the committee and/or provided your suggestions for potential members from within your membership. For those who have not yet responded with an expression of interest on either your/a member's behalf, please do so ASAP.

We want to hold the first meeting at the beginning of March via conference call and get the new committee off the ground. In order to do so, **we need your input by Feb 25**. Also, we continue to seek your comments to the draft [terms of reference](#) for the proposed SME committee.

Please send an expression of interest regarding the committee and any comments regarding the [terms of reference](#) to Anne Argyris, aargyris@chamber.ca. If you have questions, contact Anne, 1-800-661-2930, x223.

Tax campaign continues

The Canadian Chamber launched a campaign surrounding threatened reversals of tax for business in November. In late January we asked the chamber network to support this initiative by sending a letter (template provided) to the prime minister and other House leaders to remind them of the importance of maintaining planned tax reductions for Canada's business community.

This week, in partnership with regional, provincial and territorial chambers, chambers across the country have been encouraged to adopt this advocacy campaign as the reversal of taxes being proposed by opposition parties, threatens businesses from coast to coast.

Remote communities initiative

Earlier this year, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and GE Canada announced they were joining forces to answer the question "What is the enabling infrastructure that will engage remote communities in the 21st century economy?"

Remote communities can have one or more of the following characteristics:

- Limited transportation access (road, air, rail);

- Limited access to a commercial/service hub;
- Limited infrastructure: water; off-grid; broadband access; healthcare; schools, library, other institutions; and/or
- A single primary employer.

The economic potential of remote communities is very much on the minds of Canada's businesses, community stakeholders and government as Canada seeks to become more competitive in the global market place.

GE Canada is studying remote communities to gain insight into what business people see as the economic opportunities, key barriers/challenges, investment intentions, sustainability, etc. of/associated with operating in these locations. This study includes a survey, one-on-one interviews and roundtable discussions with Canadian business and community leaders.

The findings of this work will be used by the Chamber to develop a policy paper – to be released at our 2011 AGM - to provide federal public policy makers and businesses with recommended actions to bring remote communities into full economic partnership with the rest of Canada.

If you wish to be involved in the paper's development, contact Susanna Cluff-Clyburne, scluff-clyburne@chamber.ca 1-800-661-2930, x225.

Chambers have a new TDMS program to promote!

In late January, chambers were made aware that a new TD Merchant Services program launched.

Rates now available to your members:

1.59% VISA

1.64% MasterCard

Debit 0.069 per transaction

A revised flyer is available to you to promote the new rates to your members. You can request a personalized flyer for your chamber, but you need to do so through your TDMS sales executive.

In line with the new *Code of Conduct* rules, your members on the program have been notified of the new rates, which will take effect 90 days after notification.

If your members want to take advantage of the rate immediately, they can waive the right of the 90-day notification period. To do so, they must sign a waiver and send it to TD. This waiver accompanied the announcement letter but can also be obtained through Jennifer Hagen, jhagen@chamber.ca.

Also indicated as part of the code, was a revised merchant statement which clearly indicates to merchants what their effective rate is. Your members should already be receiving these statements; if you (or they) have not seen it yet, a sample of this new statement is available from Jennifer.

iPolitics: New Canadian website for breaking political news, information and analysis

Chambers will want to make their members aware of a unique new service that provides great value to any business in

Canada. Chambers are encouraged to take advantage of a free, no obligation two-month trial available to Chamber members.

Here are a few highlights of this new service:

- *iPolitics.ca* is an independent, non-partisan daily online news service that delivers in-depth coverage of legislative, regulatory, and political developments.
- *iPolitics* has twelve journalists generating daily reports on issues of relevance to the business community. Their mission is to be more comprehensive and more substantive than that of the mainstream media.
- The *iPolitics* news service delivers timely, relevant, insightful content which can help business leaders stay informed of the issues and developments in Ottawa and in the provincial /territorial capitals.
- The service permits easy daily access to the website through desktop, laptop, smartphone or iPad.
- Optional daily email briefings have become very popular: a 6 a.m. (EST) e-mail summary of the key political news stories and events for the day; and a 7 p.m. *Evening Brief* recap of issues and events that were relevant during the day. Another optional element of the service includes email notices about breaking political news as it happens.
- The service also includes: aggregated articles (from mainstream media); news wire stories; opinion and analysis pieces from a select range of guest contributors; and a selection of resources, including a review of legislation and committee schedules, a "who's who" guide to elected officials and a (soon-to-be added) discussion forum.

Special Discount for Chamber Members

- The Chamber has negotiated a 45% discount for Chamber members; the discounted annual rate is \$99.00. (Regular annual subscription rate is \$180/yr.)
- Business and institutional subscriptions registering multiple users receive escalating discounts off the individual rate.

If you wish to subscribe or simply register for the free two-month trial, go to www.ipolitics.ca and enter the Chamber members' discount code **ccc9822**.

The Chamber has been consulted on the content and design of this unique news service. The publishers have a clear commitment to deliver content that is relevant and of potential strategic value to Canadian businesses.

Your feedback during the free trial period will help them to ensure they are delivering on their editorial mission. Given this, we hope that Chamber members will register for the trial, get a sense of the daily service and provide feedback on aspects that you feel can be improved or made more relevant to the membership.

New chamber staff

Mona Cloutier, Directrice générale, Chambre de commerce de Grand Sault/Grand Falls, St-André Drummond Chamber (NB)
Renee Clark, Executive Director, Rossland Chamber of Commerce (BC).

If you are a new manager or have changes that you would like the network to know about send an email to jhagen@chamber.ca.