

# Advocacy Summary

## 2009 Year In Review

### Meeting with Prime Minister Harper

## Ottawa Meetings to Address Federal Issues

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Representatives of the Kelowna Chamber along with local MP, Ron Cannan, met with the Prime Minister, Federal Ministers, senior government officials and other stakeholders to discuss key Chamber priorities at the federal level. Stakeholder meetings included:

- Director of Policy, Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
- Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transportation Infrastructure and Communities.
- Minister of International Trade and Minister for Asia-Pacific Gate-

way, Stockwell Day

- Prime Minister
  - CDN Vintners Association
  - Senior Vice President, Policy, CDN Chamber
- CEO & President, CDN Chamber

Strategy, and other federal Chamber priorities.

Representatives of the Kelowna Chamber also presented the Chamber's federal priorities and pre-budget consultation submission to Kelowna-Lake Country MP, Ron Cannan.

Issues discussed include the sharing of immigration facilities between provincial and federal governments, removing barriers to the sales of 100% CDN wine, the need for an Okanagan Transportation Corridor



Kelowna Chamber President, Norm LeCavalier, with Prime Minister Steven

## Resolution Passed at Canadian Chamber AGM

In early October, representatives of the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce travelled to Victoria to attend the Canadian Chamber AGM. While they were there, they presented a policy resolution directed at the federal government. The resolution received unanimous approval by the voting delegates. The resolution focuses on supporting the real estate development industry to help it realize its

full potential as a powerhouse of economic recovery in Canada. The resolution focuses on two areas:

- Protecting housing affordability
- Improving environmental regulation

The first recommendation calls on the Federal Government to index the thresholds for the GST

New Housing Rebate to the New House Price Index to protect housing affordability across Canada.

The second recommendation calls on the Federal Government to work with the Provincial/Territorial Governments to harmonize environmental regulation in order to increase the efficiency and expediency of the approval process.

## Advocacy Summary

# Chamber Takes a Stand on the HST

The Kelowna Chamber has developed two position papers on the new BC HST. The Chamber received input from members through polls, roundtables, emails, phone calls and informal discussions as we were developing our position on this issue.

The Chamber has committed to working with our members to determine the impact of tax harmonization on their business and bringing those concerns forward to government to mitigate any negative impact.

The Chamber also met with the Minister of Finance to discuss the areas of concern identified by Kelowna Chamber members with regards to the HST. Recommendations put forth to the Provincial Government include:

- Revisit the provincial tax portion of the HST and consider reducing this portion from 7% to 5%.
- Launch a comprehensive education program to ease businesses through the transition process.
- Provide financial resources to assist businesses through the transition process.

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- Undertake a comprehensive consultation process with the business community to:
  - ✓ identify impact
  - ✓ identify transition issues
  - ✓ clearly communicate benefits
- Address the negative impact of harmonization on significantly impacted sectors.

## Victoria Meetings to Address Provincial Issues

*“According to the results of an Economic Outlook Survey, 64% of respondents feel the HST will have a negative impact on the Okanagan economy as a whole”*

Representatives of the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce travelled to Victoria to meet with the following Provincial Ministers:

- Solicitor General
- Minister of Small Business, Technology & Economic Development
- Minister of Environment
- Minister of Tourism, Culture & the Arts

Key issues discussed at these meetings related to organized crime, chronic offenders, community court, correctional facilities, the need for additional prosecutors, barriers to the inter-provincial sales of 100% CDN wine, economic sustainability, HST and the feasibility of a convention centre for Kelowna.



**Norm LeCavalier, President, Kelowna Chamber, standing outside Provincial Legislature**

## Economic Outlook Survey

As the end of 2009 approached, the Kelowna Chamber partnered with Meyers Norris Penny to conduct an Economic Outlook Survey. The survey was intended to gauge how members fared in 2009 and how they feel heading into 2010. It was also to receive input on key provincial issues such as the HST and BC minimum wage.

Despite the poor economy, the majority of respondents

reported positive results for 2009, most meeting or exceeding their expectations. The majority of respondents are also optimistic in their forecasts for 2010 with 70% expecting to perform better than 2009. Despite the optimism, only half of the respondents plan to make capital investments in their business in 2010. Close to 20% of respondents reported having difficulty finding qualified staff in 2009.

The majority of respondents feel that the minimum wage needs to be increased from \$8.00 to a rate of \$9.00-\$10.00. Half of the respondents feel that the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) will have a negative impact on their business and 64% feel that it will have a negative impact on the Okanagan economy as a whole. A total of 1394 Chamber members were contacted for the survey with a total number of 334 responses for a response rate of 24%.

## Chamber Weighs in on Municipal Issues

Municipal priorities this year have included:

- Official Community Plan (OCP)
- Economic Prosperity Framework
- Comprehensive Development Zone (CD Zone)
- No Gang Colours Policy
- Convention Centre

The Kelowna Chamber has submitted a total of four additional OCP consultation submissions to the City of Kelowna in 2009. The key message that was conveyed

to the City in the Chamber's OCP feedback was that the City needs to make economic sustainability a higher priority in the OCP.

In 2009, the City of Kelowna prepared a draft Economic Prosperity Framework outlining economic development in our community. This draft document establishes principles to shape public policies, connecting the dots between economic strength and a healthy community.

The Kelowna Chamber prepared a position paper welcoming the initiative to de-

velop the Prosperity Framework as a positive start, but called for an action oriented Economic Prosperity Strategy to provide more substance and accountability to the framework.

The Chamber also sent a letter to the Mayor and Council urging them to approve the CD-21 plan as recommended by Kelowna City Council during the first, second and third readings.

The Kelowna Chamber supports a no gang colours dress code in our business community.

## Convention Centre in Kelowna Has Potential

The Kelowna Chamber of Commerce presented to City Council the results of a Phase One Pre-Feasibility study exploring the business case for a convention centre for Kelowna.

The results of the study show that Kelowna is well-positioned in the meeting and convention market, and that there is market potential for a convention centre in

Kelowna. The report recommends that the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders undertake a Phase 2 full feasibility study as the next step to evaluate the viability of a convention centre in Kelowna. The next step would further define the opportunity and its benefits to the community, and to outline a business strategy for the proposed convention centre.

The Phase One Pre-Feasibility Study was funded by a strategic partnership consisting of the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce, the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission, Downtown Kelowna Association, Tourism Kelowna, Kelowna Hotel Motel Association and the Kelowna International Airport.

## Chamber Hosts Business Roundtables

In early 2009, the Chamber hosted a Roundtable on the Economy to give local businesses the opportunity to discuss how the Kelowna Chamber, as well as all levels of government can assist businesses through the economic downturn. Feedback from the session was sent to the CDN Chamber of Commerce and appropriate government officials.

Later on in the year, the Chamber hosted a Roundtable on Industry with Industry Minister, Tony Clement, to give businesses and stakeholders the opportunity to discuss with the Minister opportunities and obstacles facing the economy in the Okanagan.

The Chamber also hosted two HST Roundtables to receive input from members

on the impact that this tax shift will have on business.



Kelowna Chamber hosts HST Roundtable



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**Connection Value Influence**

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**2009 Board of Directors:**

President, Norm LeCavalier, N.J. LeCavalier & Associates

Past President, James Paterson, Pushor Mitchell

Executive Vice President, Wesley Shields, FH&P Lawyers

Vice-President, Bryn Gilbert, Grant Thornton

Vice-President, Karen Hawes, Interior Savings

Vice-President, Karen Luniw, Karen Luniw International

David Bond, KPMG LLP

Viki May, Valley First Credit Union

Brad Buchanan, Avalon Event Rentals Inc.

Jackie Podger, UBC Okanagan

Meryle Corbett, Kelowna Flightcraft

Peter Raja, Norelco Cabinets (1988) Ltd.

Heather Schneider, Okanagan College

Perry Mack, Prophet Media Group

James Dusik, BMO Bank of Montreal

**2009 Appointees:**

Forestry, Nick Arkle, Gorman Bros. Lumber

Downtown Kelowna Association, John Perrott

Urban Development Institute, Randy Shier,

The Mission Group

EDC, Bob Monaghan, Kelowna Flightcraft

City of Kelowna, Angela Reid

**Message from the President**

As my term at the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce wraps up, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your support during my tenure as President.

The past fifteen months have been both very busy and rewarding. We have been challenged by the economic downturn and the uncertainty this has brought to the business community. We responded by hosting a Business Round Table discussion in order to assess the impact this has had on the business community and identify what remedial course of action could be taken to assist those members who needed help in this area.

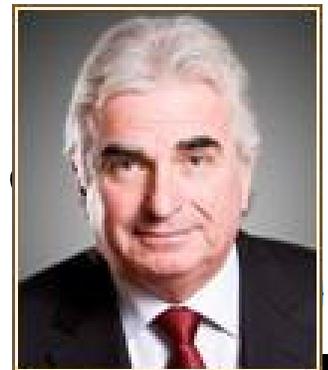
Another challenge was the introduction of HST which the BC Provincial Government announced in late July 2009. The Chamber met with Finance Minister Hansen to discuss concerns expressed by the Chamber membership over plans to harmonize GST and PST. In our meeting we raised concerns regarding the impact to sectors such as construction, tourism, retail and restaurants. A copy of the detailed report provided to the Finance Minister can be obtained from our web site.

The Convention Centre Task Force completed its pre-feasibility study which recommended we continue to the next phase of the

project, which is to put together a business case/feasibility study. This will be undertaken shortly.

As the Chamber has worked to tackle these and other business issues over the year, we have remembered to stay true to our commitment to foster a positive business environment and make Kelowna one of the best mid-sized cities in North America to live, work and play.

In the months ahead, the Chamber will continue to pursue key business priorities while engaging our members throughout the process and communicating



**Norm LeCavalier, President, Kelowna Chamber of Commerce**

on achievements and progress made.