

General Manager's Report
February 2020 - November 2020

It has been a challenging year for us all, and these challenges to public health and personal prosperity were the focus for the Enderby & District Chamber of Commerce.

Upon being hired in mid-February, 2020, there was just enough time to expand and develop the scope of the Three Year Plan approved by the Board of Directors before our first lockdown in March. Although I was able to visit some of you in person, roughly half of the ideal membership had to be contacted through electronic means.

Pandemic support, emergency financial assistance and dissemination of public health and WorkSafeBC guidelines became the focus of the Chamber's first quarter activities. Re-opening seminars were presented with an online format and were well-received by community business owners and regional business owners alike. As a result of the relationships established in these early months, I was able to network with Chambers in Vernon, Armstrong, Kelowna, Oliver, Osoyoos, Summerland and Salmon Arm, to share the EDCC's re-opening seminars and business assistance with their Chamber members, and to share their resources with our own.

Sitting on the BC Chamber of Commerce COVID-19 task force provided an opportunity to learn the latest in information so that it could be shared with our chamber members through our social media and email networks. In addition, I was able to ensure Enderby's voice was heard at the regional, provincial and federal level for COVID-19 assistance. Currently, I am sitting on the BCCC Task Force for Benefits, which is re-tooling chamber benefits throughout the province and striving to get the resources you need, for less.

During this time, new Chamber documentation featuring membership packages, fees and benefits was researched, compiled and sent to members. At present, we have 94 members of the EDCC, out of a possible 108. I would like to thank all chamber members for their support, and encourage them to continue to actively participate in economic development opportunities in our community.

The EDCC was able to present before the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services in June 2020, where we raised the needs of the Spatsin community, workers and business owners and all those suffering from challenges related to rural living. These issues were included in the Standing Committee's final report.

At this time also, I became involved with the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce's burgeoning OkWegotthis promotional and support initiative. This has proved a lasting boon to our business community, allowing good news posts, best practices exemplars, promotions and services to be broadcast from the Canada - US border through to Clinton and Revelstoke. This initiative provides market access and support for Enderby businesses today, and I continue to involve Enderby businesses in its daily promotional and seasonal activities.

The BC Chamber Executives has been a valuable resource for good governance training and best practices, as well as a valuable means of networking with other Chamber managers and businesses. I attend monthly meetings with the BCCE and help to develop their policies and practices.

As part of my focus on economic development, I have secured two technology-oriented business initiatives for our local businesses. The advent of a data farm is awaiting further development,

dependent upon the direction of the Chamber of Commerce, but is approved for our region with Oracle systems. As part of our Chamber benefits package regarding Certificates of Origin (which highlight the high quality and organic/artisanal products made in our region), blockchain-verified product assurance is now available through a company with which I now consult. This company, Blockadvise Corp, works with the second-largest supplier of Blockchain verified standards, TE-Food. These blockchain verifications are useful for industries including pulp and paper, forest products, precious metals, food, grain, health products and PPE, as well as for COVID-19 compliance and verification. Two Enderby-based technology initiatives, with world-class partners, awaiting further development in 2021.

Although social events have been untenable throughout the year, the EDCC has worked in cooperation with the City of Enderby to provide online events and to livestream fireworks and other municipal events throughout the year. I would like to thank the City of Enderby andf CAO Tate Bengston for their guidance throughout the pandemic, and for helping to provide entertaining and morale-boosting alternatives to traditional events. Social events included Virtual Canada Day and Fireworks Display, Scarecrows on the Street Food bank drive, Virtual All-Candidates' Forums, Winter Coat Drives and Seniors Secret Santa business initiatives.

The EDCC has been hosting virtual and, when possible, monthly events such as Social Media Skills for Business, E-Business Skills Training (Levels 1 and 2), Leadership and Management Round Tables, Business Lunches, Business Support Group Sessions and Women in Business seminars (in conjunction with Tsuts'weye Womens' Entrepreneurial Network). It is hoped that such events and support seminars can continue in the future.

The Enderby & District Arts Council and Courtyard Gallery have been valuable partners for Chamber activities and promotions in the course of the year; I would like to thank EDAC and the Gallery board for their active partnerships and participation. A thriving arts community and deliverables such as Music by the River, public art murals, local music, performance and workshopping events, make Enderby a destination for tourists and regional visitors alike, as well as encouraging local residents to become involved and keep active in our community. The Chamber of Commerce is happy to partner with EDAC to help develop Enderby as a thriving community in which to live.

The entire year to date has been about returning the Chamber's focus to business and worker-centric services, with an emphasis on municipal and regional economic development. From the streamlining of the Chamber website to focus on business and make it understandable and accessible to local residents, we have progressed to our initiatives to develop local workforce skills and training, diversify our industries to include technology, agri-foods security, destination tourism and agri-tourism, arts and culture.

The Chamber of Commerce has offered grant and funding assistance to its members and organizations in the community; we have assisted with grants for the Enderby Seniors' Complex, EDAC, and the Enderby & District Curling Club. While we are able to easily assist in funding procurement for non-profit organizations, obtaining funding for a Chamber of Commerce proves impossible without becoming a non-profit organization.

I was hired on in February with assurances that the Chamber was in fact a non-profit organization; this is my area of expertise and my focus in life. Upon discovering that the Chamber was in fact a federal for profit, non-taxable corporation, I made it plain to the board of directors that the entirety of the Three Year Plan would not be practicable without grants and funding assistance, available only through non-profit granting channels. I have attempted and obtained three board votes to approve the transition to

non-profit status and to obtain a bank account which has signing authority access to the new generation of board members who are energy and interest-heavy, but may not have stringent credit standards required by our current financial institution. This prevents 2/3 of the 2020 board from participating fully in board activities, including financial oversight.

Despite board votes to progress to non-profit status and add a bank account with greater transparency, refusals and renegeing on the part of the two remaining signing authorities prevent this from transpiring. We find ourselves at this point unable to obtain funding, and in the same financial situation as the Chamber has been in for years: memberships alone do not provide adequate financial funding for economic development and community support activities. Chambers across Canada have had to shutter their doors and close for good as a result of the changes in society, expenses, emergency occurrences, and funding models - we are sitting at 6 Chamber closures in British Columbia alone. The day of the for-profit corporate model are past, and it is time to look to the future and economic development.

This unfortunate eventuality means that the Chamber of Commerce must decide and implement what two members of the board stonewalled - to become a non-profit organization. Otherwise, the Chamber must find new management and determine how to proceed going forward. In the event that the Chamber decides to maintain its corporate status, I will not be putting for a contract for services, but will be continuing with non-profit economic development in our community.

A. Online Presence

1. Website streamlined and made accessible to our demographic – content focused on local business and community
2. Monthly member emails initiated.
3. Seminars and Training – monthly seminars in Social media for Business, E-Business Skills Training, Leadership and Management Round Table, Business Lunch, with additional specific seminars such as re-opening, CEWS and CERB tutorials, tax time software tutorials, women in business seminars etc
4. Social Media presence streamlined and focused on business and community – revamped Facebook site to be go-to hub for local business and community events, added re-tooled Pinterest, Twitter and Instagram accounts specific to the Chamber of Commerce.
5. EDCC helped to develop the OkWegotthis regional promotion and support site, and is a flagship member of it (notably, the northernmost part of the collective and referenced frequently as a northern Okanagan-Shuswap destination). This promotes local business initiatives like health compliance, re-opening, best days, new promotions, off-season promotions, charity and community good news stories etc.

B. Networking on Enderby's Behalf

i) One-on-One

1. Provided meaningful insight to the BC Provincial Budgetary and Finance Working Group, ensuring that First Nations, local business and rural Enderby concerns were heard. This Working Group's final report is used to determine the scope of the 2021 Provincial Budget.
2. Established positive relationships with M.P. Mel Arnold through three meetings, at which these same concerns were conveyed. Emphasis on funding supports and outreach to businesses in rural and small town areas, as well as communication network improvement and job retention.
3. Established positive working relationships with MLA Greg Kylo through attending meetings and assisting in fundraising efforts for Canadian Mental Health Association. Met with BC Liberal Party Andrew Wilkinson and conveyed Enderby concerns and needs to BC Liberal Party.

ii) Chamber Networking

1. Re-established relationships with BC Chamber of Commerce and Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Attend bi-weekly meetings with all provincial chamber managers.
2. Attended the entirety of the BC Chamber of Commerce COVID-19 task force (weekly meetings with advocacy and data collection, outreach to business and community). Deliverables from this task force included extensions of CERB, provincial assistance, second round of funding for restaurants and businesses, with rebates and supports for PPE and pandemic-related purchasing for small business, rent relief re-tooling and re-expanding, rehiring initiatives and employee attraction schemes.
3. Attending the BCCC Member Benefits task force to make member benefits more relevant for small and local business.
3. Re-established relationships with BC Chamber Executives Network, attend monthly round table discussions. Assist with policy advocacy and Chamber network supports.

iii) International Networking

1. Attending the All-India Chambers of Commerce Trade Fair, networked with 14 India-based industries in construction, trades, PPE production, fine art and crafts, technology, manufacturing

supplies, and promoted Enderby & District as a market and as a supplier of wood products, organic food products and technical know-how.

2. Networked extensively with the International Chamber of Commerce to represent Enderby as a microcosm of Western Canadian lifestyle and business. ICC recommendations figure meaningfully in each EU yearly Budget talks and in trade and tourism policies.

3. Forged relationships with world's second-largest supplier of Blockchain-verified products for food security/organic designation and health assurance, TE-Foods. Have brought their technology to the Okanagan-Shuswap.

4. Have secured a new technology industry in Enderby with the advent of an Oracle Data Farm facility, which provides secure data access for health, finance, industry and small business, as well as providing monetization, university and collegiate training opportunities, university research and local jobs.

C. Community Connections

1. Formed meaningful, mutually beneficial connections with Salmon Arm, Armstrong-Spallumcheen, Vernon, Kelowna, Penticton, Oliver, West Kelowna, Summerland through the OkWegothis network, and through daily and weekly interactions.

2. Repaired EDCC connections to local community groups including: Enderby Seniors Complex, Enderby Seniors Housing Society, Recreation Services, Enderby Arts Council and Courtyard Gallery, City of Enderby including Mayor, CAO and Councillors, Splatsin Band, Splatsin Development Corp, Grindrod Players, Enderby Curling Club, Enderby Community Resource Center, Kingfisher Interpretive Center, Enderby Museum and Archives, Okanagan Regional Library, Enderby Gardening Club, Feed Enderby & District, Twice but Nice.

3. Created virtual online events to combat the isolation of community members due to COVID-19 pandemic and to encourage social distancing. The City of Enderby was a major stakeholder and supporter of these events. These included: Virtual Canada Day Celebrations, BC Day events, autumn Scarecrows on the Street event for FED, video/virtual all-candidates forum with email in/write in questions to candidates whose videos were broadcast at seniors lunch society, safe Hallowe'en event, recording and live-streaming of Remembrance Day event and Legion entertainments.

4. Member of the Rail Trail Committee; continue to support it as it transitions into active fundraising and logistics organization through chairing meetings and coordinating support strategies.

5. Provision of video tours of businesses – ask for details!

D. Day to Day activities

1. Encourage networking and cooperation with member businesses and local businesses, industry and citizens – email, social media and telephone interactions, in person where possible.

2. Promotion of local chamber member businesses in our community, regionally and provincially.

3. Support services including assistance with legislation, health guidelines and restrictions, psychological support, manpower provision and retention.

4. Collection of member concerns, queries and stories to use in advocacy and information-sharing at municipal, regional, provincial, national and international levels.

E. Accountability

1. Improved the regard of the EDCC in the community, regionally and provincially. Became a chamber of note on the national stage.

2. Re-obtained access to websites and social media sites, recovered data which had been lost.

3. In the absence of existing current policy manuals, conflict resolution guidelines and paperwork, chamber board member codes of conduct and best practices, created these in conjunction with our board.
4. Developed a policy of good governance specific to dealing with the new role of General Manager, for which I was hired, in Feb 2020.
5. Obtained copies of original 1979 bylaws thanks to Enderby Museum and Archives, developed new adjustments to bylaws to reflect modern needs.
6. Established- and enforced- inclusivity and accountability through implementation of conflict resolution process, core values statements and through welcoming a new and diverse board to the table.

F. Continued Success

Our continued success as an organization dedicated to economic development, community and business support, depends on the general membership vote to become a non-profit organization.

Without becoming a non-profit organization, we must rely upon memberships to fund economic development and business/worker support services. This provides only a part-time role for General Manager/Executive Director, offers no financial support for events, training, networking initiatives, and is unsustainable. Please refer to Lumby Chamber, Summerland Chamber changes, Chetwynd Chamber and others for a part-time model and its results.

Please note: I was hired in February 2020 under the understanding the EDCC was a complete Non-Profit Society. My background is in non-profits, grant writing and non-profit funding models, and the Three-Year Plan Booklet which was the framework for our activities was based upon these assertions.

In the course of my duties, it was brought to my attention that the Chamber is *not* a provincially nor federally registered non-profit organization; as such, some of the deliverables in the Three-Year Plan may be unobtainable if the EDCC does not transition to non-profit status.

In addition, it has been apparent (unbeknownst to me, but known to long-term board members) that the EDCC was unsustainable as a purely membership-funded organization; the cultivation of contracts to run Visitors' Centers or other monetization concerns was not practical, as it required more manpower than could be afforded, and resulted in the Chamber Executive Director having too much work, not enough authority and too little pay to provide for the EDCC's core mandate, which is economic development and business/worker support.

1. In April 2020, presented my case to the board to shift to provincially-registered non-profit status. Obtained a majority board vote to do so.

Please see attached report entitled "Non-Profit Transition", to learn more about the process. In brief, no grants or financial supports go to a Chamber of Commerce as it is a for-profit corporation. In addition, grants will rarely be provided to an organization with only two signatories, and who cannot open easily and access easily specific chequing accounts for grant funds (ie: funding agencies don't want to see all your records, just those which apply to the funding provided).

As a result of the stringent credit requirements at the Chamber's local accounts provider, only three of the eight board members could attain signing authority; when one stepped down, the Chamber had only two. Please see attached report for details. Signatories were the only ones able to view or monitor

account activities; book-keeper and accountant were not able to obtain access to these accounts for viewing and records-keeping purposes easily.

This is an unacceptable situation for a non-profit organization, and has resulted in us losing out on \$25,000 in Red Cross funding (which would have, after I initiated three appeals with the grants committee, been provided, had we had a bank account which was more transparent).

Upon embarking upon this transition, I encountered increasing pushback, up to and including the refusal of one of signatory to sign a cheque paying for the non-profit incorporation for BC.

2. Attempted to open a bank account to provide operating funds and grant money deposits at Bank of Montreal in Enderby, BC. In July and August, 2020, following a second board vote to become non-profit (board members reneged on their earlier vote to become non-profit) and a vote to open a bank account for operations funds at BMO in Enderby, an account was opened.

A signatory who had accepted the majority board vote balked at signing; the account timed out and was closed.

If we had had this account, we could have received Red Cross Funding, United Way funding and applied for operating grants for 2021.

3. Presented a Fee-for-Service model to the City of Enderby, RDNO and Province of BC to provide funding for a dedicated economic development and community/business/worker provision program for our area.

This model was received favorably, but funding was not at that time necessary, as the Chamber had operating funds for 8-10 months. This Fee-for-Service model will be re-presented to these groups, asking for stakeholder support and core funding, dependent upon the outcome of general membership votes regarding non-profit status.

I will not present this Fee-for-Service model to these groups again under a for-profit corporate model; I was under the impression that the Chamber was a non-profit upon first presentation, and this is both the structure and the spirit of the Fee-for-Service proposal presented. Any further requests for Fee-for-Service funding will be made under a non-profit model.

In the event that the Chamber membership decides to stay with its federally-incorporated, for-profit model, I will be stepping down with two weeks' notice to ensure smooth transition to the new board and its manager. I will be proceeding with economic development according to the model I have undertaken this year, under a provincially-registered non-profit community organization. I welcome any and all interested parties to join this new economic development society, and to participate in its continued advocacy and support for local business, workers, organizations and industries.