The Voice of Business: The Chamber of Commerce is a member-driven, volunteer-led organization, proudly representing the interests of businesses in our region, and working diligently to stimulate a strengthened and vibrant economy through our connections, support and influence. For more than 115 years, the Chamber has stood for promoting business, monitoring government and championing managed growth in the local economy. The Chamber represents over 800 businesses in our region and is aligned with both the Alberta Chambers of Commerce (ACC), which represents over 25,000 businesses and the Canadian Chambers of Commerce (CCC), which represents over 200,000 businesses. With the largest and most influential business organizations locally, provincially and federally, the Chamber network is the most unified, valued and influential business network in Canada and works together to shape policy and programs that will make a difference to businesses in our region.

COVID-19 Resources & Information
It’s been over a month since the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic. A lot has changed since then but now it seems as if we are settling into a ‘new normal’. As we adjust to our new reality we understand that it’s going to be a tough adjustment. But while we can’t control the circumstances, we can control how we respond. Doing everything we can to flatten the curve is something we can control and will protect those that need it the most. Remember to choose kindness, compassion and resilience because we are stronger together.

We love our community and we are dedicated to support our businesses, their employees, members, non-members, old and young. Even though it feels like everything has changed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, our commitment as an organization to our community remains constant.

The Chamber of Commerce is being used as the hub for business information and news for our region and we are asking businesses direct their inquiries and question to us. If we don’t have the answers, we have contacts at every level of Government through our network that we are reaching out to with questions and we are advocating to government with recommendations when we find gaps in supports and resources.

Where to Find Information
We are reviewing information, sources, and updates daily, and aggregating all of these on our website: www.medicinehatchamber.com with a dedicated COVID-19 Information & Resources page. Use this page as your one stop shop for links to updates, business resources, funding, supports and tools you can use.

We are also pushing information out on Facebook and Twitter as our primary two social media feeds, but also on LinkedIn and Instagram using the Hashtags #InThisTogether #YXH2gether #COVID19AB #FlattentheCurve #AlbertaCares

We have also been creating short Daily COVID-19 Update videos on our YouTube channel and putting these out on all our blog and social media platforms. These are published Monday through Friday in the evening so that you can take a few minutes to catch up on the news of the day.

In addition, we take the most important news of the week and putting this in our weekly newsletter ‘the Voice’ which is delivered straight to your email inbox every Monday. If you’d like to subscribe please email us at communications@medicinehatchamber.com.

Advocacy in Action
We’ve been working diligently on behalf of our business community and are actively filtering up concerns we’ve heard locally through our chamber network to the highest levels. Here is an update on our work in the past few weeks:

WINS for Business
- Deferring tax deadlines, audits and payments (both for individuals and businesses) to both assist with short-term liquidity and allow them to focus on dealing with the pandemic.
- Offering flexibility on remittance payments (e.g. consider eliminating interest penalties).
- Building upon previous announced measures to help affected businesses of all sizes access credit and capital swiftly.
- Temporary foreign workers will be able to remain and those who have been approved can still come, but will need to self-isolate for 14 days.
- Agriculture is now recognized as an essential service.
- Implementation of income support options vs just deferrals and loan options.

Ongoing Advocacy: What we would like to see
- Reductions on tariffs on essential goods and medical supplies needed to deal with the pandemic.
- Helping businesses, particularly SMEs, pay furloughed employees and finance remote work options.
- Accelerating government payments owed to private sector and non-profit vendors.
- Postponing government consultations that are not germane to COVID-19 and place a moratorium on the introduction of new regulations and policies that are nonessential.
- Identifying and supporting front line workers for essential goods and services.
- Carbon levy suspension and putting a hold on moving from $20 to $30/tonne on April 1st.
- Rent and lease supports for business specifically.
- Defining who would qualify for child care through critical employees (trying to create a balance to provide essential services and keeping social distancing).
- Further defining essential “business travel” and implementing definitions around essential vs non-essential travel within Canada.
- Implement reasonable and realistic pay back arrangements for those who will use deferrals.
- Ensure fluid supply chain management.

Ongoing Actions: Tactical items we’ve requested include:
- Government put the ROE form online in a fillable PDF format, as currently you can only do this through the online web portal or by ordering paper forms.
- Provide more clarification on EI supports and additional economic supports for business.
- Additional information and clarification on insurance supports.
- Options for businesses dealing with Accounts Receivable collections challenges.
- An extension to lay-off rules beyond 60 days as many will have to pay severance if we go longer than that. We are requesting an option to change the rules so it’s a 90 day span.
- Clarification of what businesses are essential and the parameters for essential services to operate.
- Eligibility for corporations that operate as a partnership for the wage subsidy offered.

- Clarification on managing layoffs/ terminations for employers who have staff who are close to going on maternity leave, as employers do not want an employee’s maternity leave to be based on subsidy/support payments.

Is there anything else that should be on our radar? Let us know!

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS
- Daver Construction
- Ebel’s Desert Hill Farm Corp.
- Michelle O’Brien TPI

TEAM TSG
Insurance & Financial Services

Did You Know...
TSG has introduced a new line of business insurance products?
Our Products will provide state-of-the-art coverages and are priced for today’s economic environment.