

BEST PRACTICES

AGM Session

2006 - 2007



227 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2A6
Telephone (204) 948 0100
Fax (204) 948 0110
E-mail: mbchamber@mbchamber.mb.ca
www.mbchamber.mb.ca

INTRODUCTION

This is a transcript of the Best Practices discussion held during the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce at the Chambers' 75th Annual General Meeting held in Winkler, Manitoba, March 24-26, 2006.

The discussion was facilitated by Jack Wilson, MCC Regional Vice-Chairman for the Capital Region, and was transcribed by Jim Forestell, MCC Corporate Secretary.

This document, as well as transcripts from previous years, are available at www.mbchamber.mb.ca.

Questions/comments should be directed to the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce at:

Manitoba Chambers of Commerce
227 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3B 2A6
Telephone: (204) 948-0100
Fax: (204) 948-0110
E-mail: mbchamber@mbchamber.mb.ca
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Vice-Chairman Jean McClellan welcomed delegates to the session and introduced the facilitator, Jack Wilson. A transcript of the session follows:

Jack Wilson: Welcome to our 75th AGM. It's an important meeting as all our meetings are. We've moved this "Best Practices" session to the beginning of the AGM and the purpose is to have you get involved and get to know each other. This is the fourth year of our "Best Practices" and the other years we've talked about chamber governance, the government and those ideas were well received. Then last year we talked about different things; about marketing the chamber and sharing ideas about marketing. Now both of those reports are on our MCC website. Just go to the website and click on Best Practices and you'll find the reports and you'll even find your quotes there.

The session today is being recorded and we are making notes and again, they will be put on the web.

So, to start this session we want to get everybody to know what's going on and to get to know each other. One of the ways I thought we'd accomplish this is to go around from table to table and introduce yourself and give a 30 second promo about your chamber or community. Again, it's to exchange ideas and get to know everybody. Hopefully, as the weekend progresses you'll get a chance to talk and compare and trade ideas and thoughts.

So we'll start over here with Brandon and we do have a prize for whoever gives us the best promo in 30 seconds.

Attendees Introduce Themselves and Their Community:

Marnie McGregor: I'm Marnie McGregor, general manager of the Brandon C of C. I've been there about three years. If Nonny and I look a little bit draggy today it's because last night was our annual dinner with 425 guests. Trying to get them out the door at the crack of midnight was somewhat difficult. I'm going to let Nonny do the promo.

Nonny Cancade: I'm vice-president of the Brandon C of C. Marnie cooked for those 425 people last night so that's why she's feeling a bit draggy today. I'm not sure exactly what you're looking for; I think maybe I'll just say a few words about our community. Brandon is poised where we have an opportunity to take advantage of some great changes happening in our community. It's exciting - there's been growth; we've seen a whole lot of development from the retail standpoint and the spin-offs, I guess from different service sectors and economic spin-offs that we're going to enjoy are very exciting and will provide us with some challenges regarding infrastructure.

Susan Yakobowich: I'm Susan Yakobowich from Altona and District C of C. Altona has a population of about 3600 and the chamber has been very involved with immigration in the past year and also bringing in refugees. We have five families that have come into Altona and the community has been great in opening up their arms in support to these people.

Arlin Dueck: I'm also with the Altona C of C. As Susan mentioned our community is growing, while maybe not quite the speed we'd like it to but that's why we're here and why we're absolutely determined to do our part. Because it's a small community it's not unlike many others across

Manitoba in that we face various challenges, such as big box stores and we continue to stress service and that's the theme that runs through and through our community.

Dennis Brownlee: I'm the past president of the Portage La Prairie and District C of C and we have another delegate that's here and is going to spend a little more time in telling you what the Portage Chamber has been doing in the last couple of years so I'm going to leave that to him.

Brenda Storey: I'm the 2nd vice-president of the Winkler and District C of C and Winkler is having their centennial this year and we are very excited about the number of things that we've been doing every month building up to the centennial. Our inauguration is in April and our huge celebration will be in August. Instead of the harvest festival being three days we've now grown it to ten days. So we have a huge party happening here in Winkler. The economic growth in Winkler has been substantial. The big box stores have come in over the last year and a half; they've brought challenges but they've brought lots of opportunity. The new construction in the city of Winkler has just flourished unbelievably. We're very proud of the growth that's happening in Winkler. We do believe that "it's where people make the difference" and we're very happy to host the AGM and we hope that everybody has a really good weekend.

Cheryl Bartley: I'm secretary of the Carman and District C of C. Carman is a very safe place to live; that has been a little bit of our focus lately as well as the Chamber has worked together with the adult education area in Carman and putting out a customer service program for all of the employees and business people to take it, you know, because of all the big box stores that are at McGillivray and here in Winkler it is a challenge for us because we're so close. So that's the focus right now of the chamber, trying to work in community service and trying to set ourselves apart a little bit.

Judith Sawatsky: I am also part of the Winkler chamber and the MCC. I'd add a little note to Brenda's item and that is the education growth. Kids used to have to go to university after grade 12. They can get quite a bit of post-secondary education in Winkler now because the Red River Community College has a campus out here and the different branches of that are expanding in size and also in different choices that people can take. I should have brought my new little catalogue that arrived in last week's mail - It lists dozens and dozens and maybe double or triple that of courses you can now choose from in all sorts of different types of work and also for all that is post-secondary.

One of the items we are having a little bit of a challenge with is finding the best way to teach English to the immigrants coming into the area. There seems to be some gaps in the whole process. We haven't quite figured out how to fill them but I guess we might as well have a challenge like everybody else.

Peggy Davies: I'm actually from the Selkirk and District C of C and I'm also the Southwest Regional Vice-Chairman with the MCC. I think I have 14 chambers now. I'd like to tell you that Selkirk is growing; we have a new executive on our chamber that is just booming along. One thing that I'm with and like to promote is the Aboriginal Student Success and we have an AGM every June. We have about seven people that get the awards and give the background to their lives. One of them was when a young lady had a baby and her family supported her and at the time she got the award she was in her third year at U of M. So Selkirk supports a lot of different things and we have

a new WalMart and that opens up a whole bunch of things. They told us that the same day they opened up their WalMart there were 22 happening in Canada, so there we are.

Hannah Giesbrecht: I'm from Jory Capital. We're a full service brokerage firm and we're a corporate sponsor for this AGM. We are a member of the MCC, the Winnipeg Chamber and the Italian Chamber of Commerce and what we work with with them is a mentoring program with the students they bring from Italy into Winnipeg, to work with them to see how the working environment and the financial industry works. We have set up a booth and are looking forward to speaking with any and all of you with regard to what we're doing here today. Thank you.

Henry Wolfe: Hello, I'm from the Carberry C of C. In our town we sort of keep busy trying to make enough french fries and potato patties for Winkler's McDonalds. That pretty well is our major business. Our big day is June 17th - we are going to have a big "show and shine" a firemen's breakfast, garage sale and you name it. You're all welcome, see you there.

George Penner: I'm home here in Winkler; you may have heard the story already about Winkler. I'm on the executive here but my role in our community is to be active in the Manitoba Immigration project and we have a project that's active and flourishing here and yes, we struggle with the ESL or EAL as it is now referred to and how do we do a better job. You know we have to do some more talking about that issue.

Curt Smith: I'm regional Marketing Director of the Chamber of Commerce Group Insurance Plan. Not only do the 30 agents that market the plan belong to your chambers, they get you members and this year we have contributed about a quarter of a million dollars in non-dues revenue to chambers throughout the province based on participation of your members with the program. So we're very happy that the partnership works and we continue to try to make it work better and look forward to conversations throughout the weekend to improve that situation.

Cheryl Link: I'm the Manager of the Morden and District C of C. The Morden Chamber has been around for 116 years - we're the third oldest in the province. The chamber's been involved in every major decision in the community from water and telephone and hydro electricity coming to the community in all that time. We're also very involved in tourism in our community; we're very proud of our Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre, our Corn & Apple festival, which I'm sure you've all heard of. We have one of the best golf courses in the province and beach and campgrounds and all the good things that go with it.

Dave Wilkinson: I'm President of the Morden and District C of C. I'm very proud to be here to represent Morden this year. Morden is a community, a business community that's growing steadily without the big box stores. It's also set, as you know, in the heart of the agricultural and farming community and we're hoping as a chamber to have some influence in improving the lot of the growers and producers. To these ends we are presenting a daylong conference on April 12th in Morden. It's an alternative fuels conference. There will be a number of prominent guest speakers there and it's also promoted by the Pembina Valley Development Corporation. Thank you.

Raymond Klassen: I'm from the Morris C of C. I'm new to Morris and new to the Chamber so I guess that's why I'm here today. From what I've seen of the town it's an excellent community; brand new recreational facility, thriving farm support community, we've got several major elevators as

well as an excellent John Deere dealership there. (Laughter) I guess one of the challenges is we're certainly in an excellent position within a 30 minute drive of Winnipeg, so one of the challenges we face is to have the people passing through our community to get them to stop and shop in town. It's certainly a big challenge.

Alvin Rempel: I'm from Rosenort and President of the C of C. Rosenort is a small community, we have approximately 600 people in the area but we are proud of one thing and when you travel in the States you always see the largest of this, the largest of that and we are proud that we have the largest grain auger manufacturer in the world. Maybe someone wants to disprove this but that's what I've been told. Before it was Westfield it was a private company you could never know for sure what their dealings were but we now have a company Bottomout and now more information comes out and obviously they are the largest manufacturer of grain augers in the world. We have last year opened up another residential subdivision and also we have a new industrial park that was opened up and we hope that we will continue to grow. Like most communities we always have a shortage of cheaper housing.

Graham Starmer: You forgot to mention that you have one of the largest Credit Unions around with big vaults... (laughter)

Dale Wallis: Good afternoon, I'm from Clear Lake Manitoba. Graham strong-armed me into becoming the western region Vice-chairman for this year and I'm happy to be here especially pleased to be in a room of people that are volunteering and dedicating their time to help grow the province and with primary focus on rural Manitoba which I grew up in and love. I'm especially pleased to come down to this area of the province Altona, Carman, Winkler, Morden. You look on the map and it's this hotbed of economic growth and good feeling and dedication as a community. I think I've told the story of Altona about three times in the last couple of days about their service focus. I'm here to learn what the magic is. So, share with me as the weekend goes on, please.

Chris Dyer: I'm the most recent past president of the Portage and District C of C in the room, with good company, obviously. Portage has a population of around 15,000 people and some of the challenges we're facing right now is immigration we're getting our feet wet a little bit; we're struggling to find our niche there. Also keeping peoples' money in Portage, we're very close to Winnipeg and Brandon and it tends to be an outlet there shopping, so we're really focused on shopping locally. Some of the other opportunities we're able to capitalize on is our strong manufacturing base and our ag base. Some recent growth in our manufacturing with CanOat milling and a strong base with McCain's and Simplot as well. Our chamber is just trying to support them as well as our ag base in growing our membership and growing our population and working with the city as well. I look forward to hearing lots of great ideas.

Karen Donnellan-Fisher: Hi, I'm here with the Riverton C of C, I'm new to the chamber, I'm new to Riverton I've actually lived in Arborg, I'm the retail manager of the Co-op, so I'm looking for some new experiences and hearing everybody else's stories, and Suzie's going to give our promo.

Suzan Eyolfson: Hi I'm from Riverton; I'm the vice-president of the chamber this year. Greg said I wasn't supposed to write a script so in the last few years all I've done is, I know I've promoted the Erosion Control Blanket and the Peat Moss Plant so I won't dwell on those this year. I'll touch on the new sawmill and I guess, watch for Hecla opening again next year, it'll be the Hecla Oasis Spa;

they're closed for all of this year and not open again until next year and that's the same location where we had hosted the 71st AGM so it'll be all new and revised next year. Just one thing that our community, for a small town, I mean everybody has a really great fund-raising effort but I really have to brag about this last one; in the last six weeks there were a few fund-raising activities going on - we had the C-FRY Talent Show that they weekend with the elks and then we had our Carnival Queen contest and between the two of them in six weeks we raised \$30,000 and we're only 550 people and I know we drew the money from other peoples' towns too, but that's what our community has been raised on and the support gets spread among the whole thing and I just think that's amazing. (applause)

Verna Hryhorchuk: I think Suzie's pretty much said everything for the Riverton area at this point and you'll probably be hearing a lot more over the weekend. Any questions, just give us a shout.

Chad Sheppard: I'm with the Stonewall and District C of C, President this year we've got a great opportunity, we're close to Winnipeg and we're quickly running out of space for houses and businesses but we're expanding just as quick in new areas. We've got quite a big challenge being so close to the city, everybody calls it a bedroom community giving us a problem that people who live in town like to shop in the city and people in the rural community like to support the town. So we've got a big challenge to provide the services that the town community and the rural community need. I moved to the town about three years ago and I jumped in with two feet and opened up a business; obviously people recognized I wanted to make a change and got involved with the chamber as I said I'm president this year. I think it's important in small communities to recognize that you never know where your marketing and your opportunities are going to come from. Just the other day I got a call and I looked at the area code and I couldn't figure out where this area code was from. And I started talking to him and he had a bit of an American accent and he said he's calling from Texas. I said how did you call me in a small community outside of Winnipeg from Texas. He said I found you on the internet. I had a website and he actually found my name and he called me for some advice about moving back to Canada with his investments, so every opportunity you can get is important to take it. Promoting our communities is of course what we're all here for and I look forward to a really good weekend.

Ted Kelly: Hi I'm Vice-president of the Falcon/West Hawk C of C. I also own the grocery store at Falcon Lake. Our Chamber is 54 members strong, a third of them are contractors. We're right now a three-season resort, quickly becoming four with ski-doing, there's a big fishing tournament there this weekend. We are the centre of Canada, other than what Toronto thinks - This is true, our huge advantage is you must drive by the scales at West Hawk Lake if you're driving from Vancouver to Halifax. There's no dirt road, there's no bush road, there's no gravel road, there's no cutline, you have to drive by those scales so we have a huge advantage of people driving through. You are driving by the best golf course in Manitoba, with all due respect to Morden, Falcon is the best golf course in Manitoba and that doesn't even include that Hecla's closed, but we're still the best. Our biggest struggle we have is we have no municipal component. All the businesses are in a provincial park, so we do a lot of work through the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce and the provincial government directly, Parks Branch, Conservation, Tourism to actually get stuff done. It's a disadvantage a bit but we have a lot of advantage because we've got a direct line without the municipal component. So, to summarize we had a couple of really good successes dealing with the MCC and the government. We were the chamber that brought the back to school legislation so that it started in September and I know my business used to be a straight drop from August long

weekend until September. The line is not straight any more, there is a curve and there are a lot of people staying at the resorts the word September is in their minds and not August the 28th. So that's been a huge win. Last year we had a campground reservation system issue, that is being fixed, with a lot of help from Dan and Graham. And also we had a resolution on the table here the last couple of years turning Parks away from Conservation into Tourism. Now we weren't successful at that but we certainly raised the awareness level and the Minister of Conservation talks about tourism every once in a while, so that's a huge breakthrough. We have lots of wins through the MCC and our own chamber. Thank you.

Bob Curle: I'm with the Dauphin and District C of C. Dauphin is sometimes called the city of sunshine, sometimes called the city of Festivals, really it's the city of sports. We will be finishing our phase two in our rec complex in a couple of weeks so we're going to have a brand new curling rink, a brand new skating rink and a great facility for conventions. In addition just last weekend we had over 1800 fishermen on Lake Dauphin for a great derby. There's a guy out by Clear Lake that won the \$20,000 prize. And, really, the best golf course for your money is at Gilbert Plains.
(laughter)

Willie Brown: Hi I'm from the Russell and area C of C. We like to call ourselves the Playground of the prairies, we've got a lot of stuff up our way, we're very very lucky that way. We have a population of about 1500 people. We have 120 chamber members. We had our annual chamber meeting about three weeks ago - we had 104 show up for the meeting. It's a lot of work but it can be done. As I said, Lake of the Prairies is up our way; Russell is pretty well situated at the southern end of the lake. We have lots of fishing going up there, a world-class golf course going to be built up that way, a little executive one that's just going to be open this year. We have 200 new cottages and lots have been let go up there; I know because I'm also the building inspector. In the middle of summer we have our Russell Ultimate Summer Hockey, our summer holiday - the Manitoba Moose are coming out this year, Theirren Fleury's hockey school, this is going to be the last year of Theirren's but that's 15-16 years he's been doing it. Music camps, dance camps, the chamber's taken it on through the tourism group and we just sort of plug in the same people every week so it kind of works out really good. Well I'm not going to give you too many more good ideas; we don't want everybody stealing them.

Jim Forestell: I'm the Secretary for the MCC and for one more month Chairman of the Assiniboia Chamber. Assiniboia is the west side of Winnipeg basically from Rte 90 and Kenaston west and representing around 4000 mostly small businesses, a lot of home based and one-person businesses. Exciting times right now because we've taken a page out of the MCC book and had a strategy planning event and we're working on a five-year business plan and hoping to put some new life into the Assiniboia Chamber. We have about 300 members - we think we should have about 600 members and we're also looking at new ways to improve revenues without having to raise membership fees, so I'm looking for some great ideas out of this session.

Ken Kelly: I'm from The Pas and District, including the OCN and also the RM of Kelsey. I moved to Manitoba in 1974; there are 100,000 lakes in Manitoba and I think we've got about 80,000 of them north of the 53rd. Great, great fishing, great hunting, a great recreation area if you're ever interested. One of the things that our chamber is doing this year is that we are promoting these three dollar coins that you can buy and use in and around The Pas. I brought down some samples they are collectors items; this little package is for \$5 and we have the \$25 package also. If you're a coin

collector we have some of those. One of the things we're trying to do is to get a highway west of us going over to Edmonton because we think there's a lot of traffic that can come from Edmonton. We have a dirt road between The Pas and Hudson Bay and Nipawin that we would like to see paved so we can get that area going. Thank you.

Jack Wilson: Thank you, I think we've covered all the chambers that are here. So, for the winner, I think for one of the smaller chambers that raised the most money we give it to Riverton. So I've got a light here to light up some more ideas there. (applause)

Jack Wilson: OK Well I found that very interesting and I hope you did to. It's an opportunity to meet and greet, and get a little appreciation - we're not large in numbers here but we certainly are covering the province from one end to the other, from the east to the west and from the south to the north.

Today we put out some ideas and this is your meeting so you can take it anywhere you want it to go. My job is to try and keep some order here, as was mentioned earlier kind of like herding cats cause you guys don't take direction well, you just go.

Anyway, we're talking about relevance of chambers, we've had some questions and some of it came up at our strategy session, but we've had questions come in to the office from chambers about their relevance. What's the relevance of the chamber, what's your reason to exist? Why are you there? I know there are chambers that have some good ideas, that have good membership and they know and have their vision and whatever and they know their purpose.

What I thought we'd do today is we'll start talking and some of those points were brought up in your short presentations about the relevance of chambers to your communities and your membership.

Member Surveys:

So, did any of you do surveys of your members to find out if you're relevant, you know, why are they paying their dues, why do they give you the money? Does anyone do surveys of your members to find out if you're hitting the mark? Brandon?

Marnie McGregor: Yeah, Brandon surveys our membership fairly regularly, twice or three times a year. This year we're actually looking at doing a full membership services and chamber operations survey of the membership just as a direction setting tool for the coming year and planning directions that way. As far as relevance goes, when we ask our chamber members what the value is in their membership with us; we've been asking that question, well, I've been there for three years, so that's three years now; It always comes back, "the network "; network is always number 1. The functions, the getting to know each other, business people making connections and learning about other business - that comes back as number 1 well ahead of the others. Far second is the lobbying. So we attribute that somewhat to the extent that a lot of our lobbying isn't very public. It's quiet meetings, it's suggestions, it's whispering in the ear and those sorts of things that we find are very effective but it's not things that people see. They can't, even though there is an effect and we see the change in direction and language that our local governments are using and things like that, it's not very visible to our membership, so we struggle with that on a regular basis.

Jack Wilson: What percent of business in Brandon are members of the chamber, do you know?

Marnie McGregor: Probably about 35 - 40%. We're in the neighborhood of about 2000 businesses including operations and home-based and things like that, so we're at 625 right now.

Jack Wilson: And they're a little above average, we understand based on some of the information we got back that about 30% of businesses are in rural Manitoba belong to chambers. In Winnipeg I think it's about 10% roughly. So there's a lot of opportunity out there and that's why I think some of this discussion is good.

Further, when you do your survey, how do, how do you do it, through e-mail or mail?

Marnie McGregor: We actually let our members choose, either by fax or by e-mail.

Jack Wilson: Any other comments? Do chambers see any value to poll your members or do you know what your membership wants?

Jim Forestell: I'd be curious about what sort of response you get, you know, on a percentage basis, is it 15%? About 10%

Nonny Cancade: Let me add to that - one of the directions that we've undertaken over the past couple of years is personal contact. It sounds crazy but it seems to work. We've basically endeavored to cover the whole membership and we have a team on our membership committee and we get much more relevant information and responses from those discussions. So we do send out the surveys and the surveys generally based on some specific issue, but we make our service phone calls just as you would in your own business. That's generally how we get more information that's useful to us.

Jack Wilson: We need to use the mikes. As we mentioned earlier, everything's being recorded so we can make notes afterward and publish it for you, so please use the mikes.

Jim Forestell: The surveys that you send out, do you tabulate percentages or do you ask for written responses, or both, and do you guys do your own analysis of these surveys and the data therein or do you hire someone?

Marnie McGregor: The results we get, we get a variety of answers we formulate each survey a different way depending on the kind of information we're looking for. The value survey, just as an example the first half was "which of these current activities provide your business with the most value?" There was a check-off box, they could pick three. The bottom half was "what other things would make your membership more valuable. And it's wide open. So we go through those ourselves at the office and try and tabulate and draw general conclusions and things like that. With the wide open answers, of course they're all over the board, but at least it gives you some idea of what your membership is thinking even if it wouldn't provide you with a statistical or scientific direction, it gives you a ballpark to start with. We keep them as simple as possible; we never send anything more than one page, we never send more than three questions and it always takes less than two minutes to send it back.

Jack Wilson: Any other questions or comments on that?

?: I'd be interested in knowing what are your dues, your annual dues?

Marnie McGregor: Our dues start at \$168 for a solo and our businesses with over 100 employees are paying \$1000 there's only about five of those. Actually now there's seven.

Peggy Davies: What we do is encourage our members to network outside of meetings. For instance, I go into get groceries and if I spot the manager or somebody I go up and say, "Well, how's business going, etc" Going into a clothing store, things like that. But, getting your membership out personally in other businesses in the community, that's had an effect on ours. That might be something you'd want to try.

Graham Starmer: Do people have sales people or do the individual board people go around sell their memberships?

Lobbying/Advocacy:

Jack Wilson: How many have sales people? Brandon, Assiniboia?. On the comment that was made about the lobbying, how many felt that the lobbying would take a higher precedent than a far second as was referred to in Brandon? That's interesting. Do the other chambers feel the same way? That's kind of the consensus?

Willie Brown: I think it kind of depends on your situation; we're in a bit of a unique situation where economic development has fallen from the town they dropped their committee a number of years ago. They've done all kinds of studies and round tables and then it just sort of got left. So for us, we have a bigger role to lobby the town, to lobby for any kind of economic development initiative. It even comes down to snow clearing on Main street - all of a sudden it's dropped to the last street to be plowed and the Saturday before Christmas, the busiest shopping day, everybody got stuck and the town doesn't see the relevance in plowing Main Street, so lobbying in some cases can be a big role of the chamber.

Graham Starmer: I think I'd like to add to that too; a good example is a situation Minnedosa is in at the moment. They thought that everything was going smoothly and they went primarily to the networking process and now they're finding that a lot of jobs are moving out to Neepawa and other places through the provincial government and they've had to revert to a very massive, fast lobbying process to try to retain these jobs and they sort of let it slide for a while so I think I agree, networking is probably primary but there's a point comes when things become desperate.

Willie Brown: Just on the point of lobbying, up in the Russell area we've been working very closely with our municipal people the town, we went on a hell of a bus ride. It's just one of those things we did. We took 42 people 26 hours, on a bus, to Leavenworth, WA. Leavenworth is a Bavarian themed community. They were dying, 40 years ago there were lumber mills and they died. They were on their way down, there were only 600 people there. They get 1.4 million visitors a year right now. and I think there's a population of about 5000 people in that area. So we went down to steal

some ideas..26 hours on the bus down, something like 20 hours there, 27 hours back (laughter) and then we discovered that on the bus, we did a survey of the people on the bus, and I think we spent something like \$13-14,000 excluding hotel rooms, and that was what they declared! So each bus that you see, that's why it's important for us up in the Russell area to have all these buses coming up our way. But our business community had lobbied our municipal community to get on board and come with us, and they bent down and they looked and things like that and they're offering us \$1.5 million as a group over the next ten years, from them, to re-vitalize our Main Street. We've got a lot of compliments from our municipal people but that's because of the lobbying from the chamber, from the business community to the municipal people. It's been really good for us but we had to do our homework and we had to prove to them that we were committed as well. If you haven't been in Russell in the last two years, drive down Main Street at night; there's 80,000 up in the trees down Main Street paid for by the businesses - \$200 a tree, maintained by the businesses, did it themselves. We just got together and said, enough's enough. We started out with nine people at a meeting then we had 15 then we had 32 then we had 60 in the last group of meetings. You can lobby and you can get money.

Jack Wilson: Good stuff, good information. Any other comments on this subject? If not, moving along - oh, sorry

Marnie McGregor: I just wanted to clarify one thing. With our surveying, the interesting part is that with networking coming back as the biggest priority its our members' perception of what we do for them. The networking is the most visible part that affects their business. Clarifying and quantifying what our lobbying side does which is our highest priority, is the difficult part for them to see the relevance, to feel the relevance for their business. Policy advocacy is the biggest chunk of what we do, but the most visible part is always the networking.

Jack Wilson: That's a good point. A little later this afternoon, that's pone of the points, about measuring your successes. We still have to grapple with the numbers for measurement – how do you measure some of this value, the networking. The lobbying you can measure but there's other things that the chambers do that we're having a hard time, I think, trying to get our head around how to measure it. And that's some of the ideas I think we're looking for as we go forward this afternoon. So that's one of the other subjects that we'll talk about.

Focus/Vision:

One of the things I think we need to look at also is your focus. As a chamber we hear all kinds of different areas that you're involved in. I was at a meeting the other night with Graham and he said I think the only area that we haven't been involved in in local politics or lobbying is with sports. You know we're involved with health care and you're involved with tourism, you're involved with taxes, you're involved with conservation, the environment. All these things you're involved with and everybody gets involved to a certain extent, but it's how do you keep that focus on what's a chamber. How many chambers have mission statements or vision statements? So can somebody tell us what their vision statement is in a nutshell? If you look on page 37 in the handbook that was given out today, you'll see that that MCC's vision statement is "to foster a dynamic economy and vibrant communities making Manitoba the best place in which to live, work, invest and raise a

family.” That took a lot of work to come up with and Jean can attest to trying to herd the cats that day. Is anyone else willing to share theirs? Cheryl?

Cheryl Link: Morden’s is “To make Morden a better place in which to live and work.”

Jack Wilson: Good. Short and to the point. Does that catch your members’ attention; do they understand your purpose then?

Cheryl Link: Yes.

Jack Wilson: Anybody else have theirs?

Jim Forestell: Well, we just revised ours in our visioning process and I can’t remember exactly how it goes but it does mirror the MCC’s vision.

Jack Wilson: OK. Anyone else willing to share theirs? Do people, do you see the importance or do you feel the importance of having your mission statement, and a vision to go with it? Do you see the relevance? It’s no different than with your business that you really need to know your focus and your purpose, but it’s really tough to be encompassing of all groups and not alienate yourself and that’s one of the issues that I think we need to deal with more is the perception that people have of chambers. And we’ve talked about it in previous years but it’s perception that those that aren’t part of the group that’s here, what’s their perception of us? Are we just, you know, a rich boys club, you know, looking after themselves and their own interests or are we really there for the betterment of the community? And people, you know, you spend good money to come here, it’s not like somebody’s paying like your municipal council they get their way paid with our tax dollars. There is some incentive from chamber coffers but most of the time people are on their own hook to come, through your company or out of your own pocket. And that indicates in itself that people are willing to put something back into the community. Anyway, Peggy...

Peggy Davies: What we’ve done is turned around and said tell what the resolutions that are done at the AGM, what the lobbying is done by the staff and Graham and various members of the chamber. One thing that I always use is Falcon West Hawk when they said OK, let’s go back to school after labour Day, I mean I grew up with that and when you mention that to people and they say, Oh yeah, gee whiz, we don’t have to re-arrange, now we can stay later at the cottage and so on and so forth and it’s better for hospitality trade, for the university students who need the tuition, for the Red River college people. So that that is the one main thing that I use, use what we have passed and have been successful at lobbying the government, both provincial and federal.

Jack Wilson: Any other comments on that?

Willie Brown: Just a quick comment back to that. We don’t say to the public though, what we’re doing and what we’re so good at; we’re not good at boasting. I don’t know whether we do enough of it we don’t have a, every week do a newsletter or something in our local newspapers or stuff like that of what the chamber’s doing. We did a thing in our area, just for members called the Business Buzz, just by e-mail. I’ll make it up, fire it off, it’s gone. And if there’s something coming up we’ll just quickly... as long as they see the Business Buzz in their subject line they know it’s going to be fairly short and keeping people aware but to get out to the public and to get out to the other non-

members just what the chamber does, some see the benefit packages, be it the insurance, be it the telephone, be it the credit cards, be it the gas cards, but a lot of them it is for the networking.

Jack Wilson: But what about the general people at large that aren't business owners that, like how many in your community know that the chamber's behind getting the lights put up, the 80,000 lights?

Willie Brown: Oh, they're very aware of that, Our chamber... because of the size of the community and when you deal with the community newspaper as well there's a bit of give and take there too because, you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours, you know, let's raise some scandal together and you'll get people out to meeting too. You know you've got to start some rumours sometimes and people get all upset about things and they get out to the meetings. That happens, sorry but ...

Jack Wilson: Good, thanks. Chris?

Chris Dyer: As far as lobbying goes, I think public awareness is a big factor. Last year what we had started before the AGM going up to Flin Flon what we did was we issued a press release through our local newspaper and through our local radio station saying we're going up to Flin Flon with these resolutions and here's all the other resolutions that are available on the website and we did the same thing this year so it just creates that level of awareness that yeah, we are here, putting these resolutions forward, lobbying on our area's behalf and on our province's behalf. So I think it's just important to make the public aware of what we do.

The Role of The Chamber:

Jack Wilson: And I think that's important, but what do you think the role is of the chamber in Portage?

Chris Dyer: Well our mission and vision statement is very similar to the MCC's and just really an advocate for business whether that be through networking, lobbying, like that.

Graham Starmer: If I can make mention that one of the casual scans that the MCC has been doing of some of the chambers and I think you'll find it in my President's Report there that we found a number of chambers have sort of reverted to almost like social clubs. And we're going to be visiting those particular chambers in the next year or so to sort of try to get them back on track and to get them back on track everybody has to know what that track is. And I think that that's one of the questions that's being asked here. It's quite obvious that most of the people here seem to be on track, from what they're saying here, but a lot of them who charge \$25, \$50 for membership fees and get together to discuss things over lunch that's some chambers and I think that if we're going to move the chamber movement ahead we've got to start focusing on what our vision statement is and what we're supposed to be doing, instead of just having that social lunch.

Jack Wilson: Peggy...

Peggy Davies: I don't mean to take everything up here but we went to our Weekly Journal and said, you know, you never mention anything about chamber and you don't send anyone out to our

meetings although you belong. Once a month we now have half a page in the Journal that comes out with what's happening in the chamber and that and we also will be having another story come out after this weekend to do with the Manitoba Chamber.

Jack Wilson: What does Carman see as their role for the chamber, what's the chamber's role there, do you have a..?

Cheryl Bartley: I, it's funny, I was just thinking about that because we do have a few small festivals and we found that we were all getting exhausted because we were trying to run the festivals because they're just not that big that we could hire somebody to do that job and now this year we've done that, we've hired an events coordinator so we can do more chamber things because otherwise we were just all burning out.

Jack Wilson: So do you see the chamber's role as promoting the economy of Carman through festivals as one of your purposes?

Cheryl Bartley: Well, yes, part of that is to get people to shop locally and keep them in the community. We just had a big panel discussion as well. The seniors that, you know, built up the active living centre said they wanted to have a panel discussion. We had the mayor, the reeve and a few other notables from the community and we had a public forum on what the future of Carman is. And it was awesome, like it was really good. We had a great turnout; everybody behaved themselves (laughter) and I think some good stuff came out of that but that is a little bit of our focus is trying to pull everyone together and have one voice because we've just got a lot of small groups trying to do the same thing and nobody's doing it well, so I think as a chamber that's kind of what we've decided on that we need to step up and take a little bit more of a role that way.

Jack Wilson: That's an interesting point I think you make about there's a number of groups trying to something good for the community, but not being able to seem to pull together, so you're taking the role of leadership, not to do them in but to say, let's communicate and work together.

Cheryl Bartley: Right, and so hopefully this will free it up, the person we've hired for an events coordinator. We have some great facilities for small conferences and things like that, so we're hoping eventually that she'll be able to take some of that and work through the town website as well so that there'll be one person to contact and she'll know how big of groups we can handle and where they can stay and all that kind of thing because right now there's nobody there to do that.

Jack Wilson: When you say "we hired" is that the chamber hired the coordinator, so the chamber pays the person?

Cheryl Bartley: Yes.

Jack Wilson: The Pas

Ken Kelly: One thing we've done and we're just now in the process of putting a survey out; we hired a person to put a survey out in The Pas, it's about a four page survey to talk to all the different businesses – what their employment needs are, what they want from their employees, etc. One of the problems we have right now is the close proximity to a reserve and the reserve has all kinds of

lots inside The Pas that are reserve land so a person can set up a business in there and sell tax-free to the natives. So, like, the post office is on reserve land; you can go in there and buy a card and pay no taxes on it if you're treaty status but if you go across the street to one of the stores you've got to pay taxes on this card. So we've been lobbying the government to have a tax free zone in and around the reserve. As a consequence of that last week they sent up 20 auditors to audit every business in town, a complete sweep of the town, because some of these people were selling to the reserve natives tax-free. So we're having a heck of a problem right now, this is unprecedented that they would send 20 right up during the middle of tax season too.

Jack Wilson: They sent 20 auditors and audited people on their tax?

Ken Kelly: Yeah. Out of all the businesses, so some of these businesses according to a couple of accountants will probably be going broke because of the tax consequences of this. One of the accounting firms up there; they're doing an audit on him, right now in the middle of his busiest season and that's unprecedented that they'd do something like that as far as I know.

Jack Wilson: Interesting. OK, is there one more?

Nonny Cancade: I just had a couple of comments. One of the projects we've been undertaking in Brandon over the past two, almost three years now is the community strategic plan. Part of the birth of this was through a chamber committee, or interested chamber folks that ended up on a committee, myself included. We were frustrated I guess with the lack of vision, the lack of direction we were seeing from our municipal government, in terms of where Brandon was going, in what direction we were taking. The struggles that we had with infrastructure have essentially been because we really didn't know what we were going to develop, where it was going to be developed. The development plan has been sort of a secret; I'm sure that's not unlike other communities. At any rate we helped to spark the process and it was actually quite well done. There were a couple days session with essentially of different community leaders from all different sectors, so we had representatives from agriculture, education, health care, municipal government and our role that our chamber had to play was sort of in the economic development group. So what we've come out with at the end is a community strategic plan. A lot of those initiatives are already being undertaken or are being scheduled to do so and it's at the behest of volunteers so we're actually getting something done as opposed to our municipal government. And if anyone would care to look at how that was put together, the process is laid out, as well as the finished product at www.brandon.ca and it is the comprehensive community strategic plan which encompasses as I mentioned nine different areas and I would think it's probably a great model for other communities that are looking to bring their community together.

Jack Wilson: Alright, Terry?

Terry Brown: Just in regards to the Thompson chamber it has a unique role in the north; we operate more as a hub than anything else so it literally acts as an information sharing point throughout the region. You have people coming in from Split Lake, Nelson House, Norway House, Cross Lake, all promoting towards the business community. It's so much so that we meet on a weekly basis, we bring in different speakers from different locations total cost to us is a lunch from that particular speaker, they come in just to speak to our business community. It's covered fully on the radio both NCI, HDM, our two radio stations as well as in the newspaper it usually gets front page coverage

because it's newsworthy enough in our town. It's one of the few things that's been building up year after year. The other aspect that we do in the Thompson chamber is quite a bit of lobbying. We push on different aspects in the community there's a lot of things that come back to us in regards to the city council and regards to a lot of the first nations surrounding there, the development corporations, the push is there. We're really pushing forward there but the true focal point of the chamber that we see right now is the information sharing point. Like we share a lot.

Jack Wilson: So do you see that as your number one focus, information sharing, or lobbying?

Terry Brown: Well I see us creating a value added service to all of our membership there because they see it – all it takes is a simple e-mail, you send it out once a week – this is the upcoming speaker - send a reminder. If you have a really good speaker like the chief executive officer of INCO coming you'll have a packed house, 100, 120 people. If you have something that nobody is really interested in about 15 members come out. You see back and forth there but it will still be covered, it will still be pushed forward there.

Visibility:

Jack Wilson: OK. Has anybody else got...Stonewall?

Chad Sheppard: We just touched a bit there on visibility of the chambers and I know ourselves we had the main restaurant in town to take a whole wall walking into the restaurant and put up a chamber display case. That got to be our visibility in the town. I'd be curious to hear from people what they do in the smaller towns where you don't necessarily have an office, whether it's signage, whether it's just general networking that you do get contact in the community, make yourself visible, whether it's publications. What are the successes in those communities?

Jack Wilson: OK, good. Back on the question that was raised by Stonewall about visibility in small chambers – Altona, do you have an office for visibility?

Susan Yakobowich: Yes, we have an office and we've got great media. We get great media coverage from the radio station and also the newspaper. Also, having a paid position I can get out into the businesses and we have about 150 members, probably about 40 of which are retail service oriented and probably about 80% of my time is spent getting services and working with the retailers and some of the obstacles that we've been facing.

Jack Wilson: What about at Carberry?

Henry Wolfe: I'm new down there; I've been to two meetings. I know I have to ask a lot of questions when I get back there but that's about all I can say right now.

Jack Wilson: Do you have an office? Does the chamber have an office?

Henry Wolfe: No. no. In fact I have meetings at the hotel.

Jack Wilson: OK, anybody else? Cheryl?

Cheryl Link: Thanks Jack. I just wanted to add to the role that chambers can take in helping to provide opportunities for educating their members. Everything from customer service seminars, to leadership to business start and that sort of thing. One of the things we do in Morden is cooperate with other businesses and organizations that are also bringing in speakers; we help to promote and give those opportunities to our members as well and that has been very, very successful.

Jack Wilson: Susan, up in Riverton, do you have an office?

Susan Eyolfson: Actually one thing that we've done and we didn't do it on purpose, it just sort of happened is we've been starting a lot of events, usually one, something new to the community every year. Once it's stable and running well we turn it over to another community organization to handle it. And sometimes there's a little bit of money to be made at it; something as simple as the May long weekend community wide yard sales. We initiated that but now we have somebody that's taken it over. That's kind of worked well to blend the community in and then we still support it. Oh, no we don't have a chamber office. I'm sorry; I guess I didn't listen to your question.

Jack Wilson: So what do you do for visibility, just by the activities that you undertake?

Susan Eyolfson: Yes, that's about it. Oh, and the community signs that lead into the community say that the Riverton Chamber of Commerce thank you as you leave the community and welcomes you to Riverton. And at the bottom of the reader board it says sponsored by the Riverton and District C of C.

Jack Wilson: What about at Clear Lake, for their chamber? There isn't? Well there used to be a chamber there wasn't there?

Dale Wallis: The Wasagaming is made up of some of the local businesses. They don't have an office or a paid staff position. They basically promote tourism initiatives in the area. As a seasonal community it's certainly not as strong as it should be and certainly will be.

Graham Starmer: I just wanted to make mention that Mr Downey has indicated that if there's a new conservative government coming into power that all businesses would be required to join a chamber (Laughter)

Curt Smith: The interesting thing about compulsory membership is you lose your ability to lobby so it's a double-edged sword

Jack Wilson: Any other comments?

Marnie McGregor. The Brandon Chamber has always made it a practice of issuing our membership decals for the inside of the windows of our member businesses as well as membership certificates that we see posted all around town. A suggestion that had been made to me, I believe it was through the Canadian Chamber Executives, and something that we haven't taken advantage of is developing a logo, or a version of your own logo that members can put on their own business cards, on their own promotions, so that they can tag it onto the bottom of their promotion so that your members end up promoting you, free of charge and it adds credibility to their business and it doesn't cost you

a nickel. All you have to do is develop the graphic or whatnot and circulate to the membership and they can add it in wherever they see fit.

Jack Wilson: Well, that's a good idea. Yes. Ken?

Ken Wilk: What I wanted to ask all the local chambers here, I'm involved on the MCC, on the executive, and one of the things I've been after the MCC as the parent organization to do is develop some standards, some standards in terms of when a member comes to the chamber, does he get a letter, does he get a phone call, does he get a sort of a quantitative value statement of what you're going to do for him? When his anniversary comes up for renewal, what's the process for sending him an anniversary card? What does he get, what do you do to retain membership? Just, it's fine to get visibility and get your message out, but if you're not contacting your members when it's time to pay the bill or time to rejoin or taking a survey to get results of what's going on, how do you quantify your relevance to the business community and if you're having membership issues perhaps that's a place to start.

Jack Wilson: Thanks, Ken. So from this little discussion as far as what's the role, you know, what's your role as a chamber, it seems like we have information, education, lobbying and networking are some of the main themes that have come up from the different groups. Also involved is economic development and these are all good things for those who don't have mission statements or vision statements, maybe you can work that into putting those types of themes into your mission and vision statements.

George Klassen: In Winkler a couple of years ago we solved the problem of how you keep people involved; we just send them a bill when the year is up for the next year. Like, don't go and talk to them, just send them a bill and we found out it's a little bit ironic that you do that but we found out that's the simplest thing; they just want to write a cheque and they're gone instead of asking all kinds of questions at that time so that's what we did and it works very nice. The other question I have is if it was mandatory, why do you lose the lobbying effect if all of a sudden everybody had to be part of the chamber? I'm not quite sure why that would work.

Curt Smith?: In Europe it's pretty well required and what's evolved is more of a functioning relationship between governments and chambers and chambers have taken over a large measure of education and so on and so forth so there's been, it's just a totally different concept from than you're talking about sitting here in this room. It just takes it to a whole different level of participation and involvement.

Jim Downey: I wouldn't mind making a comment on this because, with the greatest of respect, that is not the case as it relates to lobbying. Twenty-five years ago I set up what is known as the Manitoba Cattle Producers organization, because they were being quite frankly, pushed around by government, and they weren't able to get an effective voice. The lobby came forward and they got a compulsory check-off which they could opt out of and today they are a very successful organization and they can, quite frankly, lobby anybody they want, so I disagree with taking away the effectiveness by being compulsory. It's worth debating, I think.

Jack Wilson: Thanks, Jim. Any other comments on the role?

Kristine Sigurdson: Yes, I have a comment if I could. Regarding visibility, one of the things that we did in the Gimli chamber when I was involved, was to try to get members, every advertisement, every brochure that you did for your company, you put on the bottom, proud member of the Gimli Chamber of Commerce. It's such a simple thing and you kind of: oh yeah, why don't we do that? Once you do it, and I've seen it, I saw in our newspapers and it was like, oh, you know, there it is, visibility: he's a member, he's a member, and I thought that was a good idea.

Jack Wilson: Good – Russell?

Willie Brown: I like that idea from the Gimli one. What we've suggested to our membership is when they make up their e-mail signature, put on the website, down at the bottom, if you've got a few seconds, check out these websites. Plain and simple; I've got hits like you wouldn't believe. We put a link on their signature to the town of Russell website, www.russellmb.com and you know if you're sending out a letter to any of my suppliers, to anybody in the area, any of my e-mails go out it's always on the bottom: if you've got a few seconds check out these websites.

Jack Wilson: Good idea. Any other comments? Cheryl, Morden?

Cheryl Link: Along that same vein as Russell, the Morden chamber made up one of those little stickers, a magnetic type of sticker that went along with a paid membership that they put on the inside of their door that said "This chamber member thanks you for shopping in Morden." And we're seeing more and more of those go up too.

Jack Wilson: OK any more comments. If not. We'll take a short coffee break and after coffee we'd like to talk as I mentioned earlier about how do you measure your success in your community, not just by your membership but when you do certain programs and projects. And I'd also like you to go around and visit our sponsors at the back of the room. They're participating this weekend in our conference and they'd like you to participate by going down so they can talk to you about the services that they can offer the chamber and or you as an individual. We'll take a 15-minute coffee break.

Jack Wilson: So we've had a wee bit of a coffee break and now we're going to move on. I think there was some good discussion there and I hope you've picked up a few ideas and we're looking forward to maybe getting some more ideas and discussion going in this next half. Greg in his efficiency has put some of this up on the big screen for us so you don't have to try and read my scribble on the flip chart. Are there any other thoughts or questions that you have about your fellow chambers about how to promote your community, your chamber, generate revenue, things like that. Morden?

Engaging The Farming Community:

Dave Wilkinson: Yes, just to reiterate the introduction to our chamber, Morden and District. That's relevant really because the "and District" bit must cover at least 100 quite major farmers and producers. And I'd like to pick up some tips this weekend, if I can, at how to reach those guys and what we could possibly do for them. I've mentioned the alternative fuels day that's coming up April 12th, that's one thing that we're doing. But any advice in that regard would be well received by us.

Jack Wilson: You're looking to attract the farming community?

Dave Wilkinson: To attract the farmers and the producers because I think that the tendency is they tend to see themselves as "oh well, the chamber of commerce, that's more of a business". A lot of farmers don't consider themselves to be a bona fide business really, especially if it's been handed down.

Jack Wilson: Any comment on that? Susan?

Susan Eyolfson: We picked up a few this year, more than other years, over the group insurance. It's an extremely good selling point, the main one actually for the farmers and the fishermen.

Jack Wilson: OK. Judith?

Judith Sawatsky: We invited the agricultural sector to select one of their own to become a board member; they don't have a legislated time that they will have to be there, they'll be there for a couple of years and then they'll select somebody else and the response to that has been pretty positive.

Jack Wilson: Is that through a farmers' association locally or..

Judith Sawatsky: I don't think they have an association as far as I know, but we started with one of the potato farmers the first time around and they sort of rotated amongst themselves the potato farmers or some of the diversified farm ones.

Jack Wilson: OK, good. Russell.

Willie Brown: We also have an ag side to our chamber and they're full directors as well, so they do their own programs and they bring it back to the chamber, the way our chamber's structured it seems to work really well. They do their own farm safety programs and we advertise it through the chamber then all their farm members are able to get all the benefits too, and they are full directors of the chamber.

Jack Wilson: OK. Selkirk?

Peggy Davies: What we have is 'citizen of the year' that is nominated from Selkirk and district. This year the new executive realized that district part hadn't really been lobbied for doing that. So they contacted the reeves and the municipalities of the district to nominate 'citizen of the year'. So this might be another way of where you contact your agricultural community in the district around. Plus the fact that we do now have the very, very successful shop Selkirk and District and we've, believe you me, that certificate program has been wonderful.

Jack Wilson: Altona.

Susan Yakobowich: We found that we held a farmers' appreciation luncheon last November with over 200 people coming out, helping us sponsor the event was chamber members that were

agriculture related and it was a really good way to communicate with them and we had a guest speaker and we were expecting 100 and well over 200 came out for it so it was a good communication link to the farmers in our area. And we got four members through that avenue.

Jack Wilson: Judith?

Judith Sawatsky: Winkler did that and we can vouch for it; it was very successful

Jack Wilson: You've done the same thing here in Winkler?

Judith Sawatsky: An appreciation lunch for the agricultural people and the truckers.

Jack Wilson: Well, that's an interesting option too, is to include the truckers. You must have quite a number here.

Dennis Brownlee: In Portage La Prairie we host an annual ag appreciation evening, recognizing the farm family of the year and the young farm family of the year. And, although it's hard to determine if we do or how much new membership we get out of that, it does create that level of awareness of farm businesses as members and that we do support the ag industry in Portage and District.

Jack Wilson: That's good. I think one of the things that we've struggled with at the MCC, and I know when I was involved in Portage and up in Thompson, it's, again, the vision, because the comment was made, you're right, people perceive us as only for business and business is very encompassing. So you sometimes have to take that word out because people put different meanings to it. So sometimes you have to look at how those words are used. If you look at our mission statement now you'll find that business doesn't even show up in that, peer se, directly, if you go to page 37. We still mean the same thing; it's just that it's not there. Again it's important that you meet with your constituents and when you say you're a district, you know, a community and district, it's important that you're inclusive beyond the town boundaries.

Judith Sawatsky: We did that quite deliberately as well instead of having just business people in the chamber we invited representation from the education field from the medical field, from the agricultural field so that all the different sectors of our community are actually, have members on our chamber board.

Jack Wilson: So you make a point of ensuring that you have somebody from each of the major...

Judith Sawatsky: Yes, from the agricultural, from the schools, usually it's the superintendent, and a representative from the medical field and actually a members from the local ministerial also comes along and sits on the Board, along with our business people.

Graham Starmer: One of the things that we've ascertained through putting on some of our events and the relevance issue is we've learned as a provincial chamber, perhaps, what not to do. One of the things we felt that we can't do, but perhaps the municipal chamber can and that is for instance we held a "lawyer day". We felt that we were going to do the big event, all day issue, to have businesses have the opportunity to talk to their particular lawyer. This didn't work at all because it was too long, and in Winnipeg it just didn't flow. However, if you use your imagination a little bit

and you sort of talk to your local lawyers to sort of provide an opportunity so that some of the businesses or the agricultural people come in to talk, or you talk to your BDC people on finances or some of the investment people and you hold these sort of mini-events and charge for them. Get revenues. And I tell you that our sponsors and groups of people that want that type of exposure, we receive many, many requests continually to do this, we don't have the structure provincially to do it but municipally there's plenty of opportunity. You can put on these little short events and get a dozen, twenty people to attend; I think you'll find that some of the businesses would be very interested in working with you.

Jean McClellan: I was just going to say if you want to engage a particular segment, either the ag sector or the transport sector why not have a best practices session just like this one. I mean have it focused on farm businesses or trucking companies, or that type of thing. It's very cheap to put on, I in terms of that you don't have to bring a speaker and it's really just getting people together and if you can get a corporate sponsor for that then it's a cheap way to engage your members.

Jack Wilson: OK. Any other types of events that you put on to promote the chamber whether it's for fund-raising, and or lobbying and or information? That we haven't already discussed?

After Business Mixer:

Marnie McGregor: The chamber in Brandon, two years ago started doing "business after five" events and we found them to be quite successful, we found that a lot of our members, a lot of what we do as far as event-wise happens to be luncheons and things, at the beginning of the day or the middle of the day when independent business people just can't be there, so we host events, we call the "business after Five"; they're a completely unstructured networking session from 5 – 7 pm. The host business supplies all of the refreshments and whatever they think is appropriate, whether they have cash bar or hot hors d'oeuvres or cheese and crackers, they do whatever they think they can manage. It's their opportunity to host other members in their business, show off what they do best. We actually started hosting these events once a month and found that we weren't getting the attendance that we wanted so instead of changing them or adding or whatnot we actually pulled them back to once every two months and that way we find that we're getting 50-60 people out each time. We find that there's a core group that comes each time, but then there's also about half that turns over, depending on what business you're at, or if they happen to be potential customers or know that business in advance and things like that. We found that to be very successful. As far as the chamber goes, the only cost to us is to print a flyer and send it to our members and it just gets our members in the same room and connecting one more time.

Jack Wilson: Altona, then down to Selkirk...

Chamber Buy Local Programs:

Susan Jakobowich: One of our programs that has been very successful is our Chamber Buck program. It started about three years ago in that we started a chamber buck program encouraging businesses at Christmas time rather than give out a Christmas bonus in cash to give out chamber bucks. And we have over 44 businesses and services listed on the back including banks. It can't be

deposited but it can be used for RRSPs, paying off loans, and we have \$80,000 per year that is directed right back into our community. And it's become a great advertisement for the chamber, as it's known as chamber bucks. We even had a school order some recently; they were looking at some prizes for chocolate bar selling and they were looking at a gift certificate and one of the students said "How about chamber bucks?" So it has become very well known in Altona and we're proud that we're directing this money back into our community.

Jack Wilson: Excellent! Selkirk?

Peggy Davies: One thing we do is have five minute information at our chamber meeting of the various members who come in and they have five minutes to explain what their business is, etc. And that's another way that we promote and get people to come in and it's more networking. The one thing that I find although I'm from Selkirk, but in Steinbach, because it's in my region, I've been attending the Lund boat company where they gave you a tour of the whole thing and there was a little bit of a luncheon there, but it was after five, similar to Brandon. And they give you the tour. The other time I had to go there was when the bus depot had done a renovation and I think it was their radio stations had got new premises, so they gave that and you held your chamber meeting there at the company.

Jack Wilson: Thank you. Cheryl?

Cheryl Link: Graham wants me to talk about Morden Moolah. We've expanded that Christmas bucks kind of program to year round, where the chamber has printed our own money and it's used at any Morden business, no matter whether you're buying something at a store, buying groceries, buying gas, paying for a plumber, everyone accepts the Morden Moolah. It just comes back to the chamber and we, within 24 hours, reimburse the business. That is growing and growing now that people are starting to buy them, other businesses are now buying them for their gifts, Christmas presents and things like that for their employees. The whole point is that this is money that is spent in your community that could have been spent anywhere else in the province, but it's spent at home; that's the important part of it.

Jack Wilson: How much money goes through the system now, roughly?

Cheryl Link: Probably \$60-80,000 a year.

Terry Brown: Could we possibly have that as an information distribution for the successful groups that have done it, because if a new group picks it up I'm sure that there are a number of pitfalls that you can fall into, you know, anything from people copying whatever money it is you have, because people do try different things, to problems in collecting and paying out and what kind of administration there is for it. Is there some way the MCC might be able to circulate something like that? It would be a worthwhile effort for everybody.

Jack Wilson: Yes, you can talk here but we'll see if they're prepared to write something up and we could e-mail it or post it on our website. That's Selkirk, Altona and Morden; who else has one? Yes?

Willie Brown: We also have Russell Bucks on the go. It can be done that way, but do you restrict it to chamber members? So they can go into any business? See ours is restricted to chamber members. I don't know what are the pros and cons of that

Cheryl Link: When other businesses see it they think it's a great idea, so we've picked up members from it.

Jack Wilson: OK, so we have four and we'll try to get something together and send it out to you and post it on our website. Terry?

Revenue Generating Ideas For Local Chambers:

Terry Brown: Just on a different topic, one of the long-standing things we've done in Thompson is a map of Thompson that we send out, a very simple map showing basically where our different businesses are, the different attractions and whatnot, we distribute it all over town. Something we do with this as well is we sell advertising on this map and we make approximately \$5-7000 a year just from the advertising and it's annual revenue, you just have to renew it with each of the businesses there. And often you have maybe 5-10% fall off and you have to recoup that 5-10%. So it's a very effective way of raising money through non-traditional means.

Jack Wilson: That's a good one; I know it works well. OK, The Pas?

Ken Kelly: Two things we're doing in The Pas; one is that we have an annual trade show up there and it's held in early May. And we have about half the people come from out of town to the exhibitors at the trade show. And another thing we started two years ago is "citizen of the year" and that's been going over pretty well also.

Jack Wilson: Who picks, is it any group that can bring in a citizen of the year?

Ken Kelly: It's nominated. What happened last year is we had different people fill out a sheet of why you think this person should be nominated citizen of the year and you have to get 25 people to sign this nomination sheet and last year we had two different groups nominate the same person, so that person sort of won.

Jack Wilson: Good. Selkirk?

Peggy Davies: The way we do the citizen of the year is from anyone who wants to write in, it doesn't have to be a business, it could be one person in the whole community. Last year it was the ex-coach of the Steeler hockey team. Anyway, but you don't have to have 25 nominations or anything like that, it's very much more simple. We've had as many as 10-15 that have been nominated and then we have a committee in the chamber that has to decide which one.

Jack Wilson: OK, Russell?

Willie Brown: One other thing that we did with our bucks is that we had a customer service award. There were nomination forms in the community that went out; the general public could fill them

out, submit them to the chamber and the executive of the chamber would look at the merits of them and these were for employees of businesses in the community, didn't have to be chamber members. And we would award them a prize and get their picture taken and present it to them at a chamber meeting, put it in the newspaper as a thank you as well. So customer service in that way was sponsored from the chamber. Another thing we did also was try to get the front-end staff in gas bars, hotels, bed and breakfasts to all get together on the same page for the tourism side and let them know what's happening in events in the next three-month period. So they were aware of what was happening, you know, somebody goes up to the gas bar and says, "what's happening in Russell", well, this is on and this is on.

Jack Wilson: OK, any other comments on that? Ideas, thoughts? So we've talked a bit about the events and the relevance to the community and I guess you go back to the theme, it's a way of marketing yourselves. And that is really something that was mentioned earlier by Russell, that we don't always market ourselves well for some reason. We do a lot of good things and we can give ourselves a lot of attaboys but we don't get the message out and I think if a lot of people knew what we did in the community, not just business people I think we'd have a lot more membership and a lot more participation. Just listen to all the things that go on here across Manitoba that are initiated by people like yourselves; it's pretty awesome. And we need to really figure out how do we market this. And we talked an bit about that last year at Flin Flon; remember we talked about marketing and from Falcon Lake but how do we tie all this together and not look to the province or somebody else to do it. How do we tie ourselves, how do we motivate ourselves to market the chamber movement in your community and market you community.

Terry Brown: One point with that, I guess, is the motivation is probably the biggest factor in all these things. We've got lots of great activities, lots of great programs, but we've got about that many executives on the chamber and without this motivation to get the chamber members involved all these programs are just going to fall flat. We've really got to look at self-promotion campaigns just to get these activities going, because we know the value in them and that's probably one of our biggest challenges, we'd like to do a lot of things but they don't happen easily necessarily.

Measuring Success:

Jack Wilson: I think you hit the nail on the head for sure. One of the points we talked about earlier was how do you measure your success? How do we measure ourselves at being successful? You know, whether you're in a small chamber or a large chamber, how do you measure that success? And it's a question that we've talked at the MCC about how do we measure our success so that you people see what we're successful and you'll continue to support us and the MCC. But the same thing applies for your members; how do you measure yourself what benchmarks do you use? Do you have any benchmarks that you look at at the end of the year and say "Yeah, we hit these benchmarks or no we didn't and why didn't we and what can we do to improve?" And I think we need to have some good thought on this. Even if you don't have bench marks, why not and are there some that might be very common for us to pick up from these ideas. So whoever wants to start; who's got benchmarks, who, at the end of the year sits down and does a review of the success of their chamber and using benchmarks? Graham?

Graham Starmer: Well, with our events we measure the success related to the number of people attending the particular events. We re-evaluate the attendance to see whether we can improve the number each year. With our lobbying of course we set out to the constituents here the matrix that indicates how successful we have been with the lobbying process. With some of our other issues, lobbying we use measurements related to the number of media hits we get on an annual basis, we evaluate whether those are improving or decreasing. We also do a subjective review on the quality of our media hits and the way that process is. So we have various measurements on how to determine whether we're a success. We look at this event, the annual meeting and we do a review after each annual meeting to see what the numbers are, are the dynamics of the people in attendance changing, are the numbers of chambers changing, what have we done wrong, how do we improve and we try to evaluate all those issues on a continual basis.

Jack Wilson: If you go to page 44 of your booklet, you'll see, just from the resolutions that Graham has talked about, our scorecard. And you'll get an idea of what we're talking about. Yes?

George Penner: Thanks. I'm just involved in one particular aspect of what we do in the Winkler Chamber, the immigration integration program that we are operating is funded largely by the provincial government, several departments of the provincial government; probably a budget of somewhere around \$180,000 plus the local contribution in terms of time and effort. What makes it particularly unique in some ways is that we're mandated to provide some measurement and we track our statistics with regard to how many immigrants are coming in, how many of them are being serviced, what level of service, what repeat services and we keep stats on it and that's just part of the project. When it comes to some of the other efforts we have with the Winkler Chamber or Winkler Harvest Festival I think we had reference to the stats with regard to the number of visitors we have and the amount of business that is conducted at that time. But I'd be interested in having some softer ways of measuring because I think those are relevant as well: what is the satisfaction that is received by the community in terms of the activities the chamber is offering?

Jack Wilson: Thank you. Are there any follow-up comments to that? Do other chambers do any measurements? Dauphin, Bob?

Bob Curle: We look at the number of people that sign up every year, just the roster at the end of the year.

Jack Wilson: Any other...

Willie Brown: Our treasurer, he always measures it by dollars and cents in membership dues, plain and simple. Like how many members we've got coming in, how many have dropped off for any reason. He even does an exit survey too, if a chamber member drops we want to know why if possible. If anybody drops off I call them and just try and find out, was it procedure, was there something that we screwed up with or were you just not getting out of the chamber what you thought you'd get out of it, and that sometimes happens.

Jack Wilson: From those exit interviews do you find things that you can improve so you don't lose more?

Willie Brown: Oh yes, you can do that and that goes for every kind of little board you're on or whatever. People like a little bit of recognition sometimes too in the chamber. We have to remember to do that for our members, the people who are volunteers; it's so important, because they get paid twice as much as they got last year, these volunteers. So you've got to make sure that you do the presentations and thank yous and you do all the little things right too.

Jack Wilson: Assiniboia?

Jim Forestell: The Assiniboia chamber, probably like most chambers has always been in the habit of measuring by looking at the bottom line at the end of the year to make sure that you haven't lost money or lost too many members – hopefully we will have gained some – and have had good participation at the events that we've sponsored or held. But as a result of our strategy session, our planning session, we now have about a dozen items on the table for completion over the next three to five years that we're going to be looking at and measuring ourselves against and I think that's going to be healthy for us. There are specific activities or specific goals that we've identified and we can check each year whether we're moving along and whether we've completed some. Some of them are things we can do right away, some of them are things that will probably take five years. As I say, I think that is going to be healthy for our chamber.

Jack Wilson: Can you give us just some general examples off the top of your head?

Jim Forestell: One of the things is to establish a more recognizable storefront on Portage Avenue. Right now our office is quite nice but it's kind of in the alley behind a barbershop, off Portage Avenue and can't be seen from the street, so we hope to get there sometime maybe in the next year. Over a five-year period we hope to see the establishment of a small business incubator in our part of the city. Those are a couple of examples.

Jack Wilson: OK. At the back? And you are who? (laughter)

Grant Nordman: I appreciate the Chair taking over for me. Hi, I'm Grant, I'm the president of the Assiniboia C of C. Part of the exercise that we went through, I said to the Board, before we did our strategic process and any of you who are chamber managers here in the room, there's always something to do but to a certain extent you're on automatic pilot after you've done it as long as I have and in a way it was shooting myself in the foot but it was a way of kick-starting our organization with some fresh thinking. As Jim suggested we've got a one, three and five year sort of agenda and set of goals, The one year, our facilitator called it the low hanging fruit – what can you get at right away quick – and at least get some successes and victories under your belt before you tackle the more difficult things such as a small business incubator in our part of the city. We now have something to measure ourselves by and any organization needs that. I'm looking at Dale from Elkhorn and I'm sure they have a plan in place that's one, three, five and ten years – how far down the road do you want to go? And I felt that after a number of years at Assiniboia we weren't looking far enough down the road and it certainly is all brand new to me at this point because we've just received our final copy this week from the facilitator. But I think if you don't have a map any road will take you there, so we now have our map.

Jack Wilson: Thanks, Grant. Any other comments on this; Russell?

Willie Brown: It was just something that was discussed earlier asking about, it's on membership dues as well, maybe we can get a survey of all the chambers no names, but just an average of what chamber dues are across the board. I'm not sure if we've done that in the past, I'm sure there have been.

Graham Starmer: Yes, I think there's one on the website.

Marnie McGregor: I've got one for you. Just last year the Brandon chamber started putting together what I called a victory log and what ends up being our activities log for the year. Without it being quantifiable, right now it's a two-page list of the things that we've accomplished during the year. So it includes, yes, our hosting of events and things like that, but it also includes "met with our local MLAs" it includes "presented to this provincial inquiry". It has just a long list of everything that we've been doing that isn't visible but also is, so it's a good tack on; we do a yearly membership renewal and so that list now goes out with our renewal so that people can see exactly what we've been doing for them. And if they have questions on specific issues or whatnot they contact us, but it's just kind of a once-over of the year and of course it's not everything that we do – if it fit on only two pages I'd be fired. But it does just give them a little glimpse of what we're trying to accomplish.

Jack Wilson: Have you got positive feedback from you members saying, "Gee, I didn't know you did that?"

Nonny Cancade: Sadly yes. A lot of them said "hey, we had no idea you were even doing that for us". So it's good, obviously. One of the other things I think, the impact that I've seen over the three, four years that I've been involved is we have a tremendous impact with our municipal governments and we have a huge impact on their budgets. I think we can't certainly take all of the credit but definitely we're one of the higher impact lobby groups that make decision changes in budget policy. So, although our members don't realize that, that's still number one priority for our Brandon Chamber. We've decided that all the community activities that all the other chambers are undertaking are extremely good for their communities but we're finding though that to be able to do those activities as well, in addition to the full time job we have with lobbying, we just weren't able to do them all so we just trimmed back some of the community stuff and focused more on delivering highest value for members.

Jack Wilson: Well, that's an interesting suggestion; maybe some other people want to take a look at that. That's one relatively easy way to keep your members informed when you send out your invoice, you make a list of "Here's what we've been doing for you in the past twelve months." I think that's a big stumbling block because a lot of people pay their cheque, but they don't really appreciate the work, the effort that goes on behind the scene by those that have paid staff, that's a lot of it, but a lot of it is by volunteers. And you're taking time from your job and your business and your family to do this on behalf of everybody, putting something back into the community. I think that's really the crux, that we need to market that a lot better. So, we wanted a survey and it's on the website, so maybe we'll have to pull it up so it jumps out and people can find it easier. I think that's one of the things we find with websites – you can't find anything. So we'll certainly make sure that it jumps out and send a note out to everybody maybe through Greg's Omnibus to say where this stuff is. Curt?

Curt Smith: Looking at measures of success. Hopefully, and this may be talking to the converted, but having a presence on the world wide web is relatively easy; as was mentioned, you get responses from Texas and so on and so forth. I think people anticipate a response and on www terms I suppose an hour is a long time. Particularly for the volunteer-driven chambers, somebody needs to be responsible for checking messages on your website. Because if it sits for four days or ten days you have created an impression and you can't recover from that impression and in this competitive world people do go on the web and look for vacations, they look for property, they look for opportunities and it's just got to be one of a chamber's measures of success that they turn those around extremely quickly.

Jack Wilson: That's a good point. OK, any other comments on measures of success? So out of this little discussion I think we see the suggestion of making a list, and checking it twice, sort of and letting your membership know what you're doing- it sounds almost ridiculously simple, but we don't do it. And there's nothing wrong with stealing ideas, that's what we're talking about doing here – is not re-inventing the wheel, it's sharing ideas because time is of the essence and it's just sharing that experience. Another thing that we have found very good is the quality of lobbying, it's very important that when you're doing lobbying, whether you're lobbying your municipal people, your provincial or whatever; you have to have your facts and I think that's been highlighted, Russell, you've talked about you have to put your money where your mouth is and you've got to do quality work. That's sometimes very difficult when you're working as volunteers, not that you don't do quality work, it's to find the time to do the research to get it done. And that's where you need to employ the resources of your membership to try and get them involved. We're finding at the MCC the work over the last few years that Dan and Graham and the rest of the staff have done, great rewards I guess are coming, it's taxing us more and more, but it's the benefit of being successful and being thorough and being politically fair. And trying to present both sides of the question. Ken

Ken Wilk: Hi, I just want follow up on a couple of things. Willie talked about phoning, doing exit interviews on his membership, he talked about recognition of volunteers. I think that's key. The www was brought up; I just want to mention one thing on the www. If you're not doing the basics in terms of recognition, follow-up and getting membership value statements out to people in paper or through membership phone calls, going to the www doesn't solve anything. You may get a lot of hits, but how many of those hits are local? And the other thing is just because you put it on the web, a lot of people are too busy to read the web or read their e-mails. They still need a phone call, they still need a physical notification saying hit them over the head with a baseball bat and go look at the website. Just because you put it on the website doesn't solve your problem. And the final thing is you've always got to look at what you're providing your members. Too often I've heard that people are afraid to place a value on the membership in the Chamber of commerce. Well if you can't place a value of the membership to your chamber, you may as well give up the game right now, because you've got to see value in what you're providing to your constituents. If you don't you've got to go back and re-think the whole process. So that was all I had to say.

Jack Wilson: Thanks Ken. Grant?

Grant Nordman: In our process of evaluation we've brought one of the terms you've just used into the new century and we've stopped saying, "lobbying"; the word is advocacy. And, you know, I'm 56 so I'm old enough to know what lobbying was but in today's world, advocacy has a much more

powerful presentation in our mind's eye. Is the chair looking at that? Have you already talked about that?

Wind-Up/Miscellaneous Comments:

Jack Wilson: No, that's another good point. So anyway, is there any other discussion on this subject? Does anyone want to say anything? That kind of wraps up the points I wanted to discuss, except for the general discussion, and what I thought I'd do is go around to each table and see if there's something that you'd like to get some input on, raise it and we'll go around quickly. And if you've got any comments about today's session, good, bad or ugly, we'd like to hear that too. We'll start with table #2.

Terry Brown: One thing that we talked about during the intermission was the great opportunity we've got coming up this year with the provincial municipal elections. It's sitting on everybody's doorstep, whether you call it lobbying or advocacy, if we need support to do programs, this is our chance to actually work with people and get them in place so that we can further our efforts. We're looking forward to doing something in our communities and it might be something that other people should work at as well.

Jack Wilson: Table 5.

?: Just those communities going with the dollars. I know we do Santa Cash but we only do it for Christmas; the Credit Union offers the cheques and they're just loans, basically. I'd be interested in seeing how it works without people trying to scam and photocopy those dollars.

Jack Wilson: Table 6

Chris Dyer: I'm curious if there are chambers that work together, chamber to chamber, if that's a model that anybody has used? I know there's probably the occasional phone call, but do you have meetings in regions?

Peggy Davies: The economic development Brokenhead and Beausejour, Lac Dubonnet, Bluewater chamber do meet and discuss issues that they do have but that's combining economic development corporations as well.

Graham Starmer: That's also going to be the responsibility of the Vice-chairs. I know you're new to the job but I just thought I'd let you know.

Jack Wilson: We were out at Oak Bank the other night. They're looking at forming a chamber and the meeting was actually convened by the economic development group. They paid for the room and the whole nine yards and spoke very positively about why they saw the benefit of having chambers in these communities. Table # 9?

David Wilkinson: One thing that I was looking forward to was a new event for our local members, a business finance forum, where maybe a bank or a finance institution could come along and give our

members tips on how to present applications for business financing or project financing, because I know that a lot of people have been disappointed of late with their applications in this area.

Jack Wilson: Well, we'll certainly see what we can do and get back to you on that one.

Cheryl Link: One of the things that we do in Morden from the chamber is a weekly newsletter and I just wondered if there are other chambers that do a newsletter; is there some way maybe that we could share those newsletters, by e-mail or whatever, that we could continue this information sharing.

Jack Wilson: OK, who does newsletters? Winkler, Altona, Brandon, St Pierre, Winnipeg, Steinbach. What would be the easy way to do that – if it was sent it to the chamber and put on our website? Greg?

Greg Findlay: Why don't the chambers share e-mail addresses and then when they send out newsletters or press releases they can include the chamber e-mails.

Jack Wilson: OK, we have a couple of suggestions here. It looks like we are going to have to take it away and have our IT person write it up. So who, Greg, do you know everybody, the chambers who have newsletters? So who here has a newsletter – we have Winkler, Altona, Morden, St Pierre Joly, Brandon, Portage, Winnipeg, Steinbach, The Pas. How many do it once a month? Once a quarter? It's all over. We'll send everybody out a list of those chambers that have newsletters. Grant?

Grant Nordman: Just back to the original piece that Curt was talking about having a website. Links are a part of most websites and what a lot of folks should do is in the links section of your chamber website have the city, in our case I'll just use what we have in Assiniboia; we've got the city of Winnipeg, the Province, government of Canada, Destination Winnipeg, Tourism Manitoba – all those are easily linked, so if somebody does come to you from whatever corner of the world, they can go into your links and connect to those different agencies of the province. The chamber insurance plan is in there!

Jack Wilson: Anybody else from table 6? I know, Alvin there, we were out at Rosenort at their annual meeting he was telling us there are only 500 people there at night but if you come in the daytime there are over 1000 with all the jobs you've got there, with the industrial park – interesting. Table 10?

George Penner: I was interested in that comment earlier about groups and another word for that is advocacy. I wear another hat in one of my lives and that has to do with the multi-ethno-cultural advisory and advocacy council for the province of Manitoba, and I'm wondering if there are ethnic or cultural issues that are surfacing including immigration, racism and the promotion of specific cultures that would serve a purpose? I would like to hear from any of you and you can approach me personally.

Jack Wilson: OK. Table 11?

Brian Kelly: I just wanted to comment; all of you have in your bag that was given out a single sheet, If you're like me you might not read that in the amount of detail that you should. It does relate to

each of the community chambers' potential for getting funding for development of many of the things I see going on in communities. There's a category 1, 2; it has to relate to developments that can bring investment to your community but there's a very wide range that can be funded under it and it's called the Community Investment Support Program, or CISP. There's substantial amount of money that's given out each year to communities in the province and I think that a number of people here are looking at things that could be very worthwhile. It does require an integrated approach, but the chambers are really in the right position to do that and for some of the things you're looking at, I just wanted to draw it to your attention. It's up to \$300,000 so it's certainly worthwhile.

Jack Wilson: Table 8, anything to add? Table 4?

Nonny Cancade: If I could, this year as we do every year we engage in the budget at both municipal and government level and what I'd like to talk a little bit about today is school board trustee and school division level. We've been experiencing in our division a rapid decline in enrolment; just to give you a bit of an example, in the last ten years we've lost about 1000 students enrolled in our schools. In that time period the budget for the school division has gone up from \$38 M to, now \$54 M and change. I'm just wondering if there's maybe an opportunity over the weekend for other chambers to give me feedback with regard to their situations. We'd like to share some of the research and some of the ways we conduct our research and maybe get some best practices from other chambers that are also endeavoring to look at school divisions and how they operate. So if people could contact me on that I'd appreciate it.

Jack Wilson: It'd make for an interesting discussion. OK, any other comments? If not I'd like to thank you for your participation. I hope you found it worthwhile; I think there were a lot of good ideas. We have a couple of take-aways that we'll work on and get back to you over the next few weeks through our e-mail system. So, with that, thank you very much and have a great weekend.