

Fredericton Chamber of Commerce meets with Minister Higgs

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(Fredericton, NB) – Members of the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce met with New Brunswick Finance Minister Blaine Higgs on Tuesday, 8 January 2013 as part of his pre-budget consultation process. The Chamber presented a message to Minister Higgs that the Province’s focus should be on re-establishing its credit rating and debt ratio through increasing revenues and reducing expenses.

As the Alward Government has consistently stated an opposition to the use of tolls or increased taxes as a way of raising revenue, the Chamber’s submission centred on economic development as an alternative means to generate income for the Province.

“This government’s commitment to lower tax levels means that economic development must be a top priority in order to make this strategy work,” stated Janice Corey, Chamber President. “A commitment to attracting outside investment along with cultivating in-province entrepreneurs and resources is required to eliminate our deficit and debt.”

“While there are areas where we see room for improvement, in many respects we are urging Minister Higgs to stay the course and continue to make the tough decisions required,” added Chris Johnston, Chamber First Vice-President and co-chair of the Provincial Government Affairs Committee.

The Chamber’s submission to Minister Higgs followed two primary themes – growing revenue through economic development and reducing expenses with a focus on return on investment and departmental efficiencies. Topics covered included:

Revenue through economic development:

1. Innovation / Post-Secondary Education
2. K-12 Education Performance
3. Property Tax Reform
4. Energy
5. Strategic Population Growth

Reducing expenses:

1. Community Funding Model
2. Local Governance
3. Pension Plan Reform
4. Healthcare

The full-text of the Chamber’s submission to the minister can be found on our website at www.frederictonchamber.ca.

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