



ANNUAL UPDATE

JUNE 2023



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VISION MISSION VALUES

Vision

"Stronger Community Through Business Prosperity"

Mission

"Help business improve, innovate & grow through networking, shared services, advocacy, and events"

Values

The operations and decision-making processes of the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce are guided by a set of organizational values. The chamber's board of directors and staff members are expected to exhibit each of these values while acting in their capacity as a representative of the chamber.

The enumerated values below are not to the exclusion of other values, traits, responsibilities and expectations of staff and board members. Our values are meant to provide a framework to achieve our organizational vision, mission and goals.

Integrity

- We work for the greater good in building our community
- We are transparent and make decisions that we are proud to stand behind

Responsive

- We are an action-oriented, member-centric organization
- We act with a sense of urgency to meet member needs and expectations

Openness

- We are an organization for the entire community
- We embrace new ideas, exemplified by a spirit of inclusiveness, diversity and transparency

Collaborative

- We build strategic relationships, help make connections, and actively seek new partners
- We value the ideas and input of our members and other partners as much as our own

We recognize that these values may evolve over time. Changing realities may dictate new values are needed to facilitate our vision and mission.

**Great things are happening
in New Brunswick.**

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OUTGOING PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It was an honour and privilege to serve as the President of the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce this past year. I look forward to supporting Mike Melvin as he assumes the role for the upcoming term – and I wish him the best of luck.

Our chamber has never been more relevant and important for those in the Fredericton business community and in New Brunswick. Our strong advocacy efforts see results on a regular basis, and the staff work diligently every single day behind the scenes to continue to be a powerful “Voice of Business” for all our members. I want to thank the amazing team of professionals who do their jobs with skill, enthusiasm, and fun – three essential ingredients to any successful organization.

As I stated in my incoming address, the changes around us – whether social, political, technological, scientific, economic, or otherwise – require that we help our members navigate through new and increasingly complex business landscapes, which profoundly impact the companies for which we work, our industries, and the business community at large. In many instances, we at the chamber are called on to help shape those new landscapes. That still holds true and is the foundation of what the chamber offers to its members, and I am honoured to be a part of it.

I am so proud of our chamber’s successes over the last few years, particularly in providing opportunities for meaningful engagement of our members and sponsors, introducing innovative programming formats and topics, and providing professional development and networking opportunities. In the years ahead, I hope we continue these

initiatives, building on what we have learned and focusing on what our members need.

With sincere thanks to you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J Stairs".

Jill Stairs
Chamber President (2022-2023)



CEO'S MESSAGE

As we complete another chamber year, it gives me the greatest pleasure and pride in our organization and our team that we have continued to grow, prosper, and serve our members and continue to exceed the 1000-member mark – thus maintaining us as the largest chamber of commerce in New Brunswick and one of fewer than 25 in the country of this size.

We have continued to keep our members informed of important issues and helped them stay in touch with each other. We have provided strong advocacy on behalf of our members and continued events, networking and benefits for the success of our members.

I express thanks to our board and committees – who have who committed volunteer time and energy to chamber work. Particular thanks to Jill Stairs – a tremendously dedicated and talented president with great concern for our members and a focus on having our organization serve them to the best of our abilities. Working with Jill has been truly outstanding – she has been an exceptional leader and ambassador for the chamber. On behalf of all of the members – thank you Jill for your service to the business community! Going forward – we are excited to have the leadership of Michael Melvin as our incoming president and look forward

to working with him to serve the business community.

A huge thank you to **#TeamChamber** with whom I have the pleasure to work with here at the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce. I couldn't be more proud of my 'work family' for the way that they continue to dedicate themselves to the support and betterment of our members. The team – made up of Operations & Communications Manager Wendy Morrell, Policy Manager Morgan Peters, Membership Development & Marketing Manager Christine Little, Bookkeeper Brianne Phillips, and our brand new Event Manager Judy Joe Scheffler, who has recently joined the team. Between us, we have worked for you, our members, for a combined total of 80 years. These talented individuals commit themselves to your success each and every day and on behalf of the members, I thank them for everything they do to support our businesses and organizations. A special thank you to Adam Peabody who stepped into the role of Event Manager for several months and helped us tremendously as events were fully coming back to in person.

In 2022-23 we have been highly engaged in advocacy – we have taken every opportunity to listen to the concerns, issues and problems that our members face and tried to help find solutions and answers. We continue to work collaboratively with other business

support agencies and all three levels of government as well as other chambers from coast-to-coast to help to inform programs and policies.

As we begin our new chamber year 2023-24 we are excited to move forward and continue to serve you with advocacy, with shared services and benefits, and with our educational and networking events. We are excited to meet with you in person, and to support your businesses, non-profits and charities in every way that we can. We continue to live and breathe our organizational vision: stronger community through business prosperity.

Krista Ross,
Chief Executive Officer
Fredericton Chamber of Commerce

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Jenna Evans
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CHAMBER STAFF



Krista Ross
Chief Executive Officer



Morgan Peters
Policy Manager



Christine Little
Membership Development and Marketing Manager



Wendy Morrell
Operations and Communications Manager



Judy Joe Scheffler
Event Manager



Brianne Phillips
Bookkeeper



POLICY PRIORITIES

Each autumn, our board of directors discusses and updates our policy priorities in draft form. These draft priorities are then put to the membership in our annual member survey for their feedback. Our policy priorities in 2023 are:

Competitive Business Environment

Traditionally, cost competitiveness has been an advantage that we have had in New Brunswick, but this has eroded over the past five years (pre-pandemic). NB businesses have seen increases in minimum wage, property tax, corporate tax, HST, EI rates, carbon tax, CPP increases, and land transfer tax (amongst other costs).

But the business environment is about more than just costs. It also includes the regulatory environment (red tape, roadblocks to development, overlapping jurisdictions, etc.), availability of housing, health care and more.

Workforce Development

For decades, New Brunswick has been staring down a demographic shift that has seen significant outmigration to other provinces. This trend, combined with a low birth rate, has made us one of the oldest and slower growing provinces. The past couple of years have seen an uptick in the right direction, but the province must continue to focus on growing our population, lowering our average age, and increasing the number of people in the labour force to fill positions that enable business growth. It's this growth that funds the programs, services and infrastructure that New Brunswickers deserve.

"...the business environment is about more than just costs. It also includes the regulatory environment (red tape, roadblocks to development, overlapping jurisdictions, etc.), availability of housing, health care and more."

Immigration and Population Growth

Growing New Brunswick's population is one of the foundational goals to sustained economic growth moving forward and the Fredericton chamber addresses this issue primarily through working closely with New Canadians and post-secondary students/institutions.

In 2019, the City of Fredericton's five-year immigration strategy was launched. The three pillar organizations of the strategy are the chamber (responsible for advocacy), Ignite Fredericton (programming) and the Multicultural Association of Fredericton (settlement).

The chamber advocates regrading the provincial nominee program, express entry program, startup visa and others. We also actively work to connect post-secondary students with local businesses and the community generally by working with businesses, our economic development organizations, post-secondary institutions and students themselves. There is substantial alignment of goals between these four groups and the chamber works to connect them and advocates for policies that put this alignment into practice.

Technology and Innovation

A healthy knowledge sector is critical to Fredericton's role in creating wealth for New Brunswick. Our post-secondary institutions are some of our most valuable economic development assets – they drive research and innovation, draw international students to the province,



propel the technology sector and the startup community – in addition to providing highly-skilled training for our future employees.

Technology and innovation are becoming part of most industries – cyber security, information technology, software development and the like perhaps first come to mind, but also includes the green economy, services and more.

Innovative Solutions to Accessing Primary Health Care

Easy and efficient access to primary health care continues to be an issue for our members, particularly in relation to attracting skilled employees. That is why we established a Physician Recruitment & Retention Committee in 2009 and are still actively assisting efforts of Horizon Health and the NB Medical Society to attract and welcome physicians to our community, while seeking other ways to expand easy and efficient access to primary care. More recently, we've engaged with a broader group of local stakeholders to identify gaps in the system and where we might have an impact.

Of course, many issues arise during the course of a year that affect chamber members that may not fit neatly into one of these five priorities. We still always respond to matters of importance to our members, but prioritizing our policy areas allows us to be more efficient in our work and give members more value for their membership.

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GREATER FREDERICTON SOCIAL INNOVATION "WHAT'S YOUR LEGACY" BOARD RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

Launched earlier in 2023 with the support of the chamber, GFSI's What's Your Legacy program matches professionals looking for an opportunity to serve on a non-profit board of directors with organizations building their board's capacity.



Volunteering for a non-profit board is an opportunity to expand your community impact by lending your leadership skills to a caring organization in our community. You can help them continue to build and sustain their capacity to successfully achieve their mission.

If you're a professional looking to get involved with a non-profit organization visit socialinnovationfredericton.com

Professionals who volunteer can expand their portfolio, increase networking opportunities and are seen as leaders in the community. Research has shown that people who volunteer tend to live longer, have lower rates of depression, enjoy better physical health, have more friends and are more self-confident.

If you represent a Non-profit looking for expertise at a board level, click here. *Need URL***



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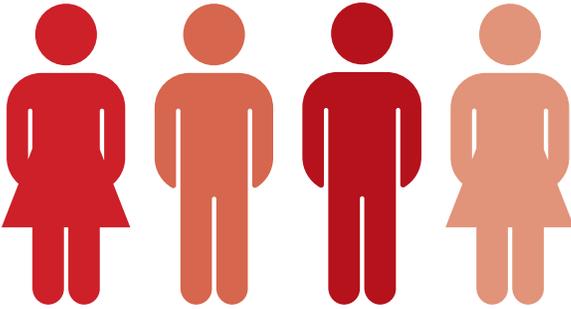
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2022 STATISTICS

2022 Membership Stats



1,045 TOTAL MEMBERS **143** NEW MEMBERS

88% MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

92,585 NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES REPRESENTED

43% EMPLOYEES USING BENEFITS

87 MEMBER 2 MEMBER OFFERS

429 MEMBERS 10+ YEARS

133 NOT-FOR-PROFIT MEMBERS

88 START-UP MEMBERS

18 MEMBER BENEFITS

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS

- 5,906
- 8,344
- 398
- 4,006



2022-2023 EVENT STATS

Chamber College	16
Member Networking	11
Information Sessions	3
Indigenous Business Forum	1
Major Events	5
Physician Recruitment/ Appreciation Events	2

Total attendance: 2896 people



WORKPLACE RAPID TESTING PROGRAM NOW COMPLETE

The chamber's Workplace Rapid Testing program was launched in the summer of 2021 in cooperation with the Government of New Brunswick and the Atlantic Chamber of Commerce. Originally the program was designed for small/medium businesses to test their asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic employees to proactively identify cases of COVID-19 that might have otherwise been missed.

In January of 2022, the Government implemented changes to the program and consequently the chamber's program was relaunched. Businesses now were only to test those employees who were symptomatic while in the workplace and unvaccinated employees while continuing to support the employees in high-risk workplaces.



This program was a great opportunity for our chamber to assist the business community during their time of need. We were fortunate to meet many business owners and employees from different parts of the province to help them access the program and to hear how COVID-19 was affecting their business.

In total, our chamber assisted 1043 businesses throughout the greater Fredericton region, the Miramichi region and other parts of the province that didn't have a Workplace Rapid Testing Program. It's hard to believe that we distributed a whopping 157,205 tests!

We are honoured to be able to help you during the pandemic. We do still have a small quantity of test kits available, should you require any, please contact the chamber at fchamber@frederictonchamber.ca.



Kordell Walsh, UNBSU and Krista Ross, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce and Rose Grant, UNBSU

This year, the chamber signed three MOUs with local post-secondary student groups and institutions. The agreements provide access for students to attend the chamber's member-only networking events as well as member pricing for ticketed events.

The intention of the MOUs is to facilitate connections between students and employers before graduation to help employers find the employees they need and to help students find a job quickly after graduation and increase the chances of retaining them in our community for the long term.

We already had an existing MOU with the NB Student Alliance, which represents most of the public university's undergraduate student unions in the province. The one exception is the UNB Student Union – we signed an agreement with them in August 2022. In February 2023, we signed a similar agreement with the UNB Faculty of Management Graduate Student Society and in March, another with Eastern College.



Krista Ross, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce and Chris Kantor, Eastern College



Akash Das, UNB GSS and Krista Ross, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce



2023 ANNUAL REPORT ADVOCACY

Annual Survey

Each fall, we survey our membership regarding our advocacy work – to ensure we’re working on what matters most to members, then ask whether members are satisfied with our advocacy and to make sure that we’re communicating that work properly. Some results from our December 2022 survey are:

What are your biggest concerns?

1. Primary Health care (#6 in 2021)
2. Workforce (#1 in 2021)
3. Costs (#2 in 2021)
4. Economic Growth (#4 in 2021)
5. Supply Chain (#5 in 2021)



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* Members also identified the following issues as being most relevant to their business/organization: housing, public safety, homelessness, and the environment.

Overall, I am pleased with the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce's advocacy efforts.

- Agree / Strongly agree – 84% (2021 = 85%)
- Neither agree nor disagree – 15% (2021 = 13%)
- Disagree / Strongly Disagree – 1% (2021 = 1%)

Employment Insurance Reform Consultation

We made a submission to the ongoing EI reform consultation process (Phase 2), which focuses on returning EI to a true insurance system.

Join our Wall of Champions

Introduce us to a new meeting or conference we can bring to Fredericton!

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The reforms were also the subject of Krista's July's commentary which runs monthly in Brunswick News papers, Huddle and elsewhere. We also followed up our submission with letters to Ministers Qualtrough and Freeland after the EI commission followed through and recommended an increase rate this year (and for the next several years). These documents can be accessed on our website.

Provincial Budget

We were actively involved in the GNB pre-budget process – first with a written submission, followed by attending the government budget lock in and hosting Minister Steeves for a meeting after the budget's release.

Bill 27: Paid Sick Leave

Chamber staff presented to New Brunswick's Law Amendments Committee regarding Bill 27, which sought to replace the *Employment Standards Act's* requirement that employees be provided five unpaid sick days annually with ten paid sick days. A previous letter on the matter can be found on our website.

Canadian Chamber of Commerce AGM and Conference

In October, members of the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce board of directors and staff attended the 2022 Canadian Chamber of Commerce AGM and Conference in Ottawa. Our organization submitted two policy resolutions for consideration by delegates. The first, Improving Startup Visa Processes to Decrease Wait Times was approved by 99.3% of delegates; the second, Enhancing Supply Chain Capacity Through Increased Truck Driver Training Support was approved by 100% of delegates (only two of 60 total resolutions receiving such support).

Other Issues

Because of the broad nature of our membership, throughout the year we work on many different issues affecting various sectors. Often advocacy on specific issues begins with a letter to the relevant government official. We publish our letters on our website here <https://www.frederictonchamber.ca/advocacy/letters/>.

Some of those issues in 2022-23 include:

- Prompt Payment Legislation
- Air Access
- Property Assessments / Tax Rates (Municipal and Provincial)
- Minimum Wage
- Public Transportation
- Basic Income
- WorkSafeNB Benefits Expansion
- Procurement
- Municipal Voting Rights for Permanent Residents
- Returning Government Employees to the Office
- Bill 27: Paid Sick Leave
- Mental Health



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Trade show at Indigenous
Business Forum

INDIGENOUS BUSINESS FORUM

Patrick Brooks, CEO Saint Mary's First Nation Retail Sales addressing audience at Indigenous Business Forum

In March, the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce and the Joint Economic Development Initiative ("JEDI") hosted our first Indigenous Business Forum at the Maqitahtimok Centre on Sistsansisk (St. Mary's First Nation). The event aimed to: (a) to create more opportunities for connections and collaborations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses, (b) to educate attendees about some of the unique challenges faced by Indigenous entrepreneurs, and (c) use this information to explore what is needed to organically create more partnerships and opportunities collectively.

The response to this event demonstrated a willingness and desire in our communities to bridge both real and perceived gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses, communities and people to everyone's benefit.

Due to the overwhelming response from all areas – Indigenous and non-Indigenous businesses, government agencies, not-for-profits, and other support organizations, the venue was at capacity and attendance doubled our original goal.

Once the event started, it was evident that many attendees were being exposed to Indigenous economic issues from the Indigenous perspective for the first time. A few of the unique challenges for Indigenous entrepreneurs discussed were racism, accessing capital, and a lack of representation / role models in some sectors and few opportunities to connect with businesses outside of their own communities. Solutions were harder to come by, but the one thing that speakers kept returning to was events and opportunities for communication just like the one we were attending.

The forum began with Chief Allan Polchies and Patrick Brooks, CEO Saint Mary's First Nation Retail Sales of of Sistsansisk speaking about their vision for economic development in the community which set for the stage the

entrepreneurs that subsequently spoke. The afternoon featured two panels – one featuring Indigenous entrepreneurs talking about challenges and the other at the flip side of opportunities and partnerships. There were two particular highlights for me: first, the session that featured the newest graduates from JEDI's procurement accelerator program. The five participants each had a unique journey but every one of them spoke about how it was important for them to succeed not only for themselves but also to provide jobs for others and to be role models for Indigenous youth that might not have seen someone from their community in a certain sector – whether it was IT, metal fabrication, construction, or hosting events. The second highlight was the trade show that featured ten Indigenous businesses and allowed those entrepreneurs to showcase their products and services and introduced them to more than 100 potential new customers.

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For reservation and booking contact -
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Membership Development &
Marketing Manager

Fredericton Chamber of Commerce
Tel : 506-458-8006
Email : membership@frederictonchamber.ca

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SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

In August, the chamber awarded its annual scholarships to three very deserving recipients:

Ava Yerxa, Andrew Forrest and Luke Staeben were each awarded \$1500 scholarships, which they are using to further their post-secondary studies. Congratulations to Ava, Andrew and Luke!

Thank you to our partner, the Fredericton Community Foundation for managing our scholarship fund.



Pictured (L to R): Ava Yerxa, Andrew Forrest, Luke Staeben, Krista Ross (Fredericton Chamber of Commerce CEO)



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Ashley Dearing – *Dearing Media*
Paula Lehr – *Ignite Fredericton*
Sukanksha Khatri – *Greener Village*
Kent Fackenthal – *Kiers Marketing*

New Member Welcome Committee

Tosin Ajibola – Co-chair – *Welkom.U Inc.*
Jenna Evans – Co-chair – *Stiletto*
Mark Lancaster – *Scotiabank*
Haridas Patel – *Mitacs*
Abdul Samad – *Enterprise Rent-A-Car*

Government Affairs Committee

Dave Milburn – Co-Chair – *Focal Point Landscaping*
Rodney Blanchard – Co-Chair – *Stantec*
Keir Clark – *Scotia Wealth Management*
Corrine Arseneau – *Inclusion NB*
Sydonia Chandon – *NB Student Alliance*
David Emerson – *UNB*
Jenna Evans – *Stiletto*
Jamie Ryan – *NB Real Estate Association*
Larry Shaw – *Ignite Fredericton*
Leslie Hillier – *Thermtest*

Roger Duvall – *Learning Disability Association of NB*

Oriana Cordido – *Planet Hatch*

Policy Committee

Jordan O'Brien – Co-Chair – *Porter O'Brien*
David Shipley – Co-Chair – *Beauceron Security*
Candace Sears – *KPMG*
Sydonia Chandon – *NB Student Alliance*
Rose Grant – *UNBSU*
Luke Robertson – *Black Arcs*
Oriana Cordido – *Planet Hatch*
Andrew Lockhart – *Ignite Fredericton*
Bill Chuong – *Maple Smart Control*
Mark Scaplen – *A Buyer's Choice Home Inspections*

Immigration Advocacy Committee

Fanny Bodart – Co-Chair – *Property Ladies*
Asif Hasan – Co-Chair – *Climative*
Roxanne Reeves – *UNB*
Ali Allauddin – *Syntec*
Alex Scholten – *Victory Meat Market*
Janet Moser – *NB Business Immigrant Association*
Haridas Patel – *Mitacs*
Tosin Ajibola – *Welkom.U Inc.*

Doyin Somorin – *Ignite Fredericton*

Amir Akbari – *Anessa*

Joseph O'Donnell – *National Bank Financial*

Luisa Montoya – *Two Roads*

Oriana Cordido – *Planet Hatch*

Sarah Corey-Hollohan – *Ignite Fredericton*

Yenni Ogando – *Craft Coast Canning*

Sunil Pathak – *UNB*

Michael Shen – *GenInk Toner*

Folusho Iyaniwura – *RBC*

Esther Hephzibah – *Shine Transformation*

Indigenous Partnerships Committee

Stanley Barnaby – Co-Chair – *JEDI*

Samantha Bosca – Co-Chair – *RBC*

Mark Haines-Lacey – *Atlantic Growth Solutions*

Jenna White – *Jenna's Nut-Free Dessertery*

Bryan Harn – *Unnoweg*

Laura Englehart – *JEDI*

Julie Augustine – *JEDI*

Evelyn Bisconsin – *Still Up Marketing*

Beth Fairbairn – *Viva Therapeutic Services*

Kim Allen – *Forest NB*

Kristina Brown – *Fredericton Convention Centre*

Penny Polchies – *Cando*



CHAMBER PRESIDENT *INTRODUCTION*

Becoming President of the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce is both an honour and a great responsibility. Thanks to the engagement and hard work of the chamber staff and of our many volunteer board and committee members, and, indeed, our entire membership, the chamber is a high-performing organization. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that the chamber's regional and national profile is prominent relative to Fredericton's growing, but still relatively modest, population.

Becoming president marks my transition into a more hands-on phase of involvement with the chamber. The presidency brings the opportunity to exert some additional influence over both the chamber's strategic direction and its day-to-day operations. While every president wishes to leave their stamp on the chamber in some way, I believe that, with a high-performing organization like the chamber, a president's first consideration should be resisting the temptation to fix things that are not obviously broken.

Accordingly, my primary focus during my year as president will be to make the chamber even more effective by drilling down into member concerns in as much detail as possible, so

that the chamber is able to raise very specific, readily-actionable issues with various levels of government and other stakeholders. The chamber benefits greatly from member input that it receives by means such as its annual member survey, and I strongly encourage all members to make their voices heard by the chamber through the survey and by other standard means.

However, often-times businesspeople are so immersed in the day-to-day challenges of running their businesses that they may not be able to identify a regulatory, or other, problem with as much specificity as the chamber requires in order to advocate effectively. Great strides have been made in recent years to achieve greater and greater refinement of the issues in all chamber advocacy; however, I believe this is one area of focus that will pay dividends on a go forward basis, and I intend to advocate for even greater focus in this area.

Issues to be addressed in the chamber's 2023-2024 year include: the challenges of keeping pace with the unprecedented economic growth that sprung up during the pandemic, including the tightening of the housing market and challenges faced by developers; the extreme challenges to the provincial health care system; maintaining the economic health of our downtown and other commercial areas; and, with our partners at the Fredericton International Airport Authority, addressing the severe degradation of air service to and

from Fredericton over the last year.

Of course, the chamber does not have the power to single-handedly fix any of these problems. However, under my presidency, the chamber will continue the work of past presidents on these and other issues and advocate strongly to further advance the chamber's vision of "stronger community through business prosperity".

Mike Melvin
Chamber President (2023-2024)

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