

***Fort Nelson & District Chamber of
Commerce***

***Strategic Plan
2009-2011***

August 2009

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About The Chamber of Commerce

The Fort Nelson and District Chamber of Commerce was started in 1959. It is now comprised to members in a wide range of businesses, from home-based, retailers and services to farming, construction, manufacturing, transportation, oilfield and more. The Chamber plays a role in facilitating networking opportunities and helps members speak with one voice about shared concerns and obstacles in achieving business goals.

The Chamber, with 192 members, represents approximately 30% of the current business in the Service area. Although this is a relatively high percentage for the average Chamber, it leaves a lot of room for growth. As businesses realize that a collective voice is more effective, it is anticipated that membership will increase.

The Chamber is actively involved in many aspects of the community and they are the voice of business in Fort Nelson. The Board meets monthly and there is a General luncheon meeting once per month as well. The Chamber also operates the Visitor Information Centre.

The Strategic Plan

Like every other Chamber, it is facing some challenges which have generated the need for this strategic plan. Some of those challenges include:

- Membership
- Advocacy and marketing
- Addressing the needs of the smaller business
- Taking advantage of new opportunities such as the Horn River Basis
- Financial Sustainability
- Organizational needs

This plan addresses all of these challenges and presents goals, objectives and strategic areas of focus (work plans) that will provide the direction needed for the Board, staff, and members for 2009 and beyond.

Mission and Vision

The board developed new draft Mission and Vision Statements to better reflect current thinking on where the Chamber should be focused.

Current Mission Statement

The Fort Nelson and District Chamber of Commerce will be the collective voice for business in the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality and will work to promote and enhance trade and commerce for the benefit of the region.

New Draft Mission Statement

The Fort Nelson and District Chamber of Commerce is the unified and proactive voice of business leaders in our region dedicated to advocating and promoting opportunities for its members.

Vision Statement

The unified voice of business

Governance

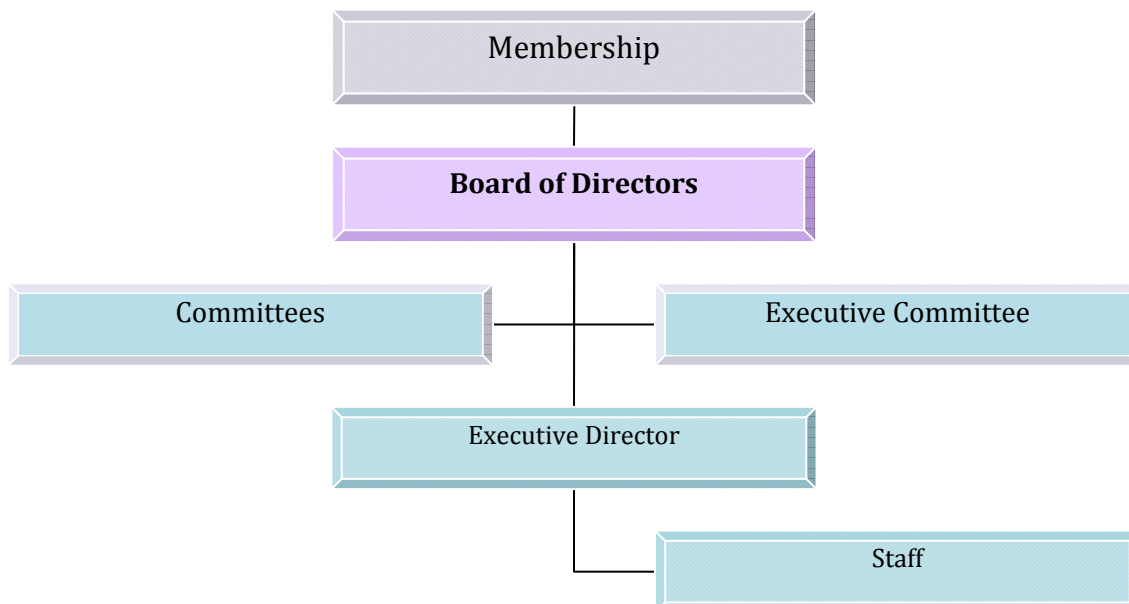
The Chamber Board consists of up to 15 members. The general governance of the Board can be best described as policy oriented.

The primary functions of the Chamber are:

- To promote a better understanding of the private enterprise system
- To coordinate the efforts of commerce, industry and the professions in maintaining and strengthening a sound and healthy business climate in the Northern Rockies Regional Municipality
- To provide a creative business leadership and effective co-ordination of all interested parties in solving community problems and in initiating constructive community action
- To create broad understanding and appreciation of the great opportunities in our area, and to promote the advantages and assets of this District and surrounding area.

The Board is supported by the Executive Director and Administrative Assistant.

The organization chart is best described as:



Our Partners

The Chamber has many partners which help it to fulfill its mandate. Included in these are Northern Rockies Regional Municipality Economic Development staff, Sci-Tech North, the BC Chamber of Commerce and other Chambers.

Our Progress

Through this process, the Board has made a commitment to focus on three key goals for the next three years.

Strategic Planning

The Board has developed this three year corporate strategic plan that guides policy and development of day-to-day operations of the organization. The plan defines goals, expected outcomes and corporate strategies that cover both the geographic and topical areas of our mandate. It will be updated annually.

The new strategic plan will see a major shift in both priorities and membership. The Board feels that by doing this, they will strengthen the Chamber's short and long term opportunities that will benefit the Chamber, its members and the communities that it serves.

Planning and Evaluation Framework

The Board solicits input from a variety of sources to develop its strategic plan. We have used the expertise of both our Board and key staff to ensure that the plan's direction is consistent with the Board's goals and needs. We will continue to involve our members and partners to ensure that our plan reflects their viewpoints and vision of the Chamber for both the current and future needs.

2009-2011 Strategic Areas

The following areas have been designated by the Board as priority issues that need to be addressed. Some are very short term while others will take more time to develop and implement.

1.0 Goal: Membership

Membership is the keystone for any organization and the Chamber is included in this need. The Chambers commits to strategically reviewing local business criteria and creating better networking and workshops. Strength is always in membership.

1.1 Objective: To increase membership to 250 members by 2011.

<i>Strategic Areas of Focus</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
Recruitment of 3 members per Board member	45 new members per year for 3 years	Board	2011
Review of benefits and members services offered by the Chamber	Increased membership	Board/ED	October 2009
Membership Committee	Implementation of membership initiatives and continuing membership programs	Board	September 2009
Review any other gaps for small business	Increased membership in the small business category	ED	November 2009

1.2 Objective: To improve networking opportunities

<i>Strategic Areas of Focus</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
Conduct review of workshops, training, speakers, etc. currently being offered	Programs that will be better received by members	ED	September of each year
Survey members to determine their needs	Programs that meet the members needs	ED	November 2009

Conduct workshops, etc. once per month	Increased participating by members	ED/Board	November 2009
Explore partnerships with other organizations such as Sci-Tech North for funding for workshops & speakers	Increased opportunities for members	ED	September 2009

2.0 Goal: Advocacy

Advocacy for Chamber and business members is one of the key functions of the Chamber. This will increase the presence of the Chamber at all levels including political, business and local. This will be done by a focus on creating advocacy opportunities, defining critical issues in a communications plan and developing effective partnerships to respond to public and industry issues.

2.1 Objective: To identify and focus on critical issues that impact on members

<i>Strategic Areas of Focus</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
Create a list of current issues	Increased focus on critical issues	ED/Board	November 2009
Develop strategies for dealing with issues	Improved response to issues as they occur	ED/Board	December 2009
Conduct a survey of members to determine their opinions as to what critical issues exist	Increased participation by members and identification of issues that are relevant to them	ED	December 2009
Establish a Regional Affairs Committee	Issues responded to in a timely manner.	Board	October 2009
Communication plan for dealing with critical issues	Increased presence of Chamber, procedures for email, phone, fax, notice of meetings, etc.	Board/ED	December 2009

2.2 Objective: To increase the Chamber's presence

<i>Strategic Areas of Focus</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
Increased attendance of Chamber at public, political, etc. events	Increased community awareness of the Chamber. Schedule for Board members to attend NRRM and other important meetings.	Board	Continuous
Increased public response to issues	Increased community and political awareness of the Chamber	Board	Continuous

2.3 Objective: To increase partnerships

<i>Strategic Areas of Focus</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
Increased use of partners such as the BC Chamber and other Chambers	Increased capacity to deal with issues	ED/Board	October 2009
Identification of potential partners	Increased partnerships	ED/Board	October 2009

3.0 Goal: Effective Organization

The Chamber's ability to move forward on a number of fronts will depend on an effective organization to do this. This will include being fiscally sound, prompt responses to issues and operating as a unified voice of business.

3.1 Objective: To develop a communication strategy

<i>Strategic Areas of Focus</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
Investigate the needs of members on such issues as timing of meetings	Increased participation by members at Chamber functions	ED/Board	December 2009
Create a Power Point presentation that can be delivered by any Board member on what the Chamber does	Consistent delivery of messaging on what the Chamber does	ED	January 2010
Review of website	Increased use of the website by members and others	ED	February 2010
Investigate the use of Face Book as a tool for communication with members and public	Increased membership and awareness of Chamber activities	ED	February 2010
Explore the use of tools like Skype to reduce the cost of long distance calls	Increased efficiency and budget reductions	ED	February 2010
Purchase display system for trade shows, etc.	Increased marketing of the Chamber	ED	February 2010
Develop a marketing plan for the Chamber	Increased membership and awareness of the Chamber	ED/Board	April 2010
Create a marketing project team	Completion of work plan items	Board	October 2009
Communications Committee	Implementation of communications strategies	Board	September 2009

Objective 3.2 To maintain financial sustainability

<i>Strategic Areas of Focus</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
Review the events that the Chamber is currently conducting	A program that reflects the needs of the members	ED/Board	January 2010
Explore other areas of revenue including the provision of services to other businesses or organizations	Increased revenue	ED	October 2009
Investigate provincial and federal programs and grants that may help the Chamber	Increased revenue	ED	December 2009
Review the budget for possible efficiencies	Increased disposable income	ED/Board	November 2009
Ways and Means Committee	Implementation of fiscal planning and implementation	Board (Treasurer and others assigned)	September 2009

Objective 3.3 To ensure that staff needs are met

<i>Strategic Areas of Focus</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
Conduct a review of staff training and development needs	Staff development plan	ED	October 2009
Establish annual performance review for ED	Annual performance review	Board Chair	October 2009

Objective 3.4 To review the general operations of the Board and the Chamber

<i>Strategic Areas of Focus</i>	<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
Establish timelines for operational needs of the Board and Chamber	A gant or timeline chart of Chamber events and operations	ED/Board Executive	September 2009
Review of strategic plan, policies and procedures, Constitution and Bylaws	Key documents are kept current	Board/ED	Annually in April of each year
Monthly Electronic Newsletter	Members better informed on Chamber events, etc.	ED	Monthly
Review of frequency of Board meetings	Frequency meets Board members needs	Board	September 2009
Review of improvements to Board meetings	Improved Board meetings	Board	December 2009
Orientation session for new and returning Board members	All Board members on the same playing field	Board Chair/ED	September 2009 and April of each year after the AGM
Exit survey for departing Board members	Continuous improvement to Board	Board Chair	Continuous

Recommendations

There are a few recommendations that are submitted to help the Board move forward with the new plan, namely:

1. That the Board conducts a six month review of the plan to ensure that items are being moved forward. After that, annual reviews should be conducted and updates be made as appropriate.
2. That job descriptions be reviewed for staff to ensure that they are current.
3. That the Board develops a list of “executive limitations” for the Executive Director so that both the Board and ED know what the limitations of this position are.

Conclusion

This plan outlines the short and long term goals of the Chamber. In meeting these goals, the Chamber will be better positioned to meet both current and long term needs of itself and community.

All questions on this plan should be directed to the following:

Chair of the Board
Executive Director