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CHAIR'S BLOG

April 2020

The end of April means that it has been two months that we've been during this COVID-19 pandemic. The impact from the new coronavirus COVID-19, has become and continues to be the biggest threat to the global economy and its impact on our Chamber members and their business, on our Parkland regional communities and our way of life have been felt in each household in the Tri-Region.

Our Chamber has answered the bell by reaching out to our members as well as to the community at large to offer a helping hand. Through our Chamber surveys, our teams have gained valuable feedback with a greater understanding of what people and business need to weather this storm. Rest assured that your Chamber is working for you. There have been many committees struck over the past weeks and in addition to our internal governance committees, we're proud to represent our members on the following committees:

- Greater Edmonton Regional Chambers of Commerce
- Town of Stony Plain Growth and Commerce Committee
- City of Spruce Grove Economic Development Committee
- Town of Stony Plain COVID-19 Mayor's Task Force

Furthermore, the recent announcement by the Alberta Government on their Relaunch Strategy is encouraging. Although there is uncertainty on the protocols with the opening of some businesses, the news provides some relief. Of course, there is some trepidation due to the real fear of the pandemic's second wave. I am confident that Albertan's will remain resilient, resourceful and responsible.

To help promote local businesses, we are pleased to launch the "I Shop Local" campaign featuring video clips on our social media channels. To accompany the "I Shop Local" video, we also designed and printed "I Shop Local" stickers that have popped up in store windows and on vehicle bumpers. We encourage you to pick one up from the Chamber office in Stony Plain, No Frill's in Spruce Grove, Freson Bros in Stony Plain and Ray's Market in Wabamun.

We feel inspired by our membership and it drives us to be better, faster and different for the benefit of our membership and our community.

Please join us in the coming weeks as we launch the "We Are GPR" campaign. We encourage members of the Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce to submit a 15 second video clip highlighting who they are and how they're operating during this time. Alternatively, you can submit 4 pictures that convey your story. Check out our new and improved website for more information and instructions.

Our community needs us now more than ever, and we are here to support you. We know that times are tough but when we work together, we will overcome. To ensure we are relevant and delivering value, our Chamber is active in the community advocating on your behalf to business and government leaders to assist businesses through these challenging times. We are focused on business recovery and strategies to drive long-term sustainability for the region. As well, we are working with the Alberta Chamber and other Chambers throughout Alberta on best practices to help business and communities survive and thrive.

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In a recent Chamber survey, 73% of respondents said they struggle with government information and want to better understand or have assistance with a transition plan. Members are looking for a Tool Kit of information for the transition out of COVID-19 with health and safety procedures. All small businesses need help with marketing, e-commerce and preparing their business for another potential wave or a similar situation in the future. Businesses also need assistance with Emergency Preparedness Planning.

We are responding to the concerns of our membership and will continue to solicit feedback to ensure we are addressing the issues effectively. In the spirit of continuous improvement, we welcome your input and engagement to help build a better business community.

To conclude on a positive note, we are pleased to announce the launch of our new website on May 7th, 2020. Congratulations to the management team for bringing this very important communication tool to life. The look and feel of the new website elevate the new brand while providing an excellent platform for our members to showcase their information and promotions. While maintaining some of our popular features such as Member2Member discounts, Hot Deals and a Community Events calendar, we have added a new feature, Requests For Proposals (RFP's). Become a member today and enjoy the value-added offerings and exclusive benefits our current members enjoy!

Stay safe, stay healthy and take care of one another!

Richard Wong
Chair, GPRC

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