

## A Wonky Weekend: This Newbie's Experience at the OCC AGM

By: Ben vanVeen, Salesperson, Century 21 United Realty Inc., Brokerage, Vice-Chair Peterborough Chamber of Commerce Board

While I have been a Peterborough Chamber of Commerce member for over a decade, my Chamber World has, until now, remained limited to the workings of the Chamber within our city. Much like a schoolchild who sees his teacher outside of school for the first time, my Chamber life was instantly blown wide open at the 2018 Ontario Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting in Hamilton from April 26 to 30. Following that weekend, I am left with three key impressions that have further solidified my belief that being a member of the Peterborough Chamber of Commerce is integral to my business.

Firstly, there are, obviously, Chambers of Commerce in cities and towns, large and small, throughout our province. How these individual Chambers work together at the OCC AGM, a result of their cooperation leading up to and following this annual event, is a microcosm of how businesses from across this province exist as integral parts of a whole. This cooperation was not always a result of seeing eye to eye, but it was achieved with respect and led to a common goal.

Secondly, policy is EXCITING! I never thought I'd say that. While I have long been involved with the Peterborough Chamber, I have never been one to get deeply involved with, nor energized by, the "P" Word. Oh, how wrong I have been. I



Ben vanVeen presenting a Peterborough Chamber Policy Resolution at the Ontario Chamber AGM. Photo: Roland Isberto Photography

did know that policy is perhaps the most important work in which the Peterborough Chamber engages, but I was not able to understand just how powerful and absolutely necessary this work is. Policy is the very essence of what it means for the Chamber to be "The Voice of Business". Seeing over one hundred delegates from Chambers across the Province come together in a room to debate sixty policy resolutions that directly affect the lives of every business owner and their employees was fascinating and energizing. These resolutions will now be taken to Queen's Park, with the force of thousands of Chamber members behind them, to give a rudder to our Provincial Government. It is difficult to get across here the energy this gives me. What I will say is that, if you ever feel that being a Chamber member has little or no value, remember this: Without the policy and advocacy work our Chamber

does, in concert with Chambers across the Province, we as business owners would be listless and alone at sea, trying to make our own way against a Government tide unaware of what we want or need. Get wonky, people.

Finally, we as Peterborough Chamber of Commerce members are lucky. I was honoured to see the respect that our President, Stuart Harrison, and our Policy Analyst, Sandra Dueck, receive from Chamber representatives from across the Province. If you've ever hung out with rock stars for a few days, you'll know how I felt. Keeping a Chamber headed in a positive and continually fresh direction can't be easy. Stuart has always strived to do this and attending the OCC AGM is a place where new ideas are shared and explored. More than a few delegates turned to Stuart for advice and opinions. Seeing Sandra

hustle around the floor of the policy debates was a marvel. Again, your Chamber staff member was a go-to resource. Sandra was often sought out for her expert knowledge on issues and policy that ultimately formed the Provincial voice of business. As business owners we must find the best bang for our buck. You cannot do better with your hard earned money than making sure these talented people, and all of the staff at our Chamber, continue taking our local voice to join that of the larger business community.

The OCC AGM reinforced for me that "Strengthening Business" is not simply a catchy phrase. It is the essence of the work our Chamber does, and they do it extremely well. Be a member, you cannot afford not to be.

[peterboroughchamber.ca/blog](http://peterboroughchamber.ca/blog)

## OCC: Survey on provincial election issues

The Peterborough Chamber of Commerce and the Ontario Chamber Network are looking for your insight on what matters to business in an election year.

Share your views by taking a short survey here: [occ.ca/surveys](http://occ.ca/surveys)

All responses will be kept strictly confidential.

The Ontario Chamber Network is committed to ensuring government understands the issues impacting business in this province.

Closing date: **Friday, May 25, 2018 at 5:00pm**



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October 12-22

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More: [peterboroughchamber.ca](http://peterboroughchamber.ca)

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**Peterborough Business Excellence Awards**  
NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN!  
DEADLINE IS MAY 23RD 4:30 PM  
Host Sponsor: Bell Business Citizen of the Year Sponsor: Z

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#StrengtheningBusiness  
Learn how: [peterboroughchamber.ca](http://peterboroughchamber.ca)

**PTBO CHAMBER MEMBER**

**Local manufacturer wins industry award**  
McCloskey International Ltd. received the Top 25 Rollouts Award from the Aggregates Manager Magazine for the introduction of their Sandstorm Modular Wash Plant



### Raising Money for Local Causes

First Responders Cup in Peterborough raised \$8,000 for mental health initiatives for the Canadian Mental Health Association - Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge

Lakefield College School accepted donations at their Annual Dance Showcase to raise funds for the YWCA Peterborough Haliburton for their Crossroads Shelter. A total of \$2,430.15 was raised.

### Featured Member Discount Program: Group Insurance Benefits

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Chamber members, send your Member Milestones to [reception@peterboroughchamber.ca](mailto:reception@peterboroughchamber.ca) or call 705-748-9771 x0.

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## Event Calendar

**WEDNESDAY**  
May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
(Chamber & WBN Members only)

**LUNCHBOX LEARNING**

**Compassionate Leadership at Work**  
Chamber Boardroom  
175 George Street North  
12:00pm - 1:00pm

**Speaker:** Jennifer Garland, The Mane Intent Inc.

**Details:** Caring is a competitive advantage. As technology continues to change our work environments at warp speed, businesses need to invest in human traits that cannot be replicated by machines in order to stay ahead. Creating a heart-based, innovative, cooperative work culture is essential.

**Cost:** Free (Bring your lunch)  
**Note:** Pre-registration required

**THURSDAY**  
May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**PROVINCIAL CANDIDATES BUSINESS ISSUES DEBATE**

**Holiday Inn Peterborough Waterfront**  
150 George Street N  
4:00 - 6:00pm

**Details:** Join us to hear from the candidates for Peterborough - Kawartha Riding. The debate will focus on issues impacting the business community. Submit any questions to [sandra@peterboroughchamber.ca](mailto:sandra@peterboroughchamber.ca)

Liberal - Jeff Leal  
PC - Dave Smith  
NDP - Sean Conway  
GRN - Gianne Broughton  
**Cost:** Free to attend  
**Note:** Pre-registration required

**TUESDAY**  
May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018

**THE VENUE PTBO**  
286 George Street N

**11:45am - 1:00pm**

**Speakers:**

- Cam Taylor, Outdoorsmart & Venture North
- Sana Virji & Ribat Chowdhury, Ribitt
- Lynn Teatro, Teatro

**Details:** Hear from these business leaders and then find out who they believe is next level!

**Sponsor:** The Law Studio  
**Cost:** Free with Chamber Membership  
**Note:** Pre-registration required

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