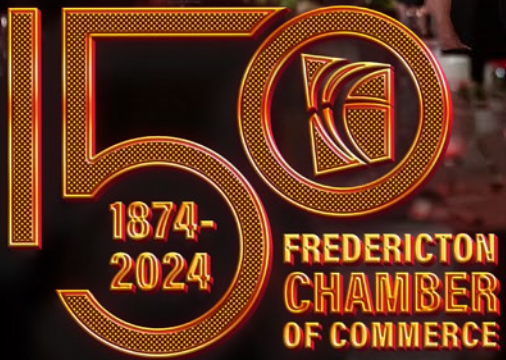


JUNE  
2024

# ANNUAL UPDATE





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# SIEMENS





# 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.

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



This past year has been one of transition and renewal for the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce. Little did I know when I began my year as President that the Chamber's highly respected and longtime CEO, Krista Ross, was about to announce her retirement.

Nor could I have known that, shortly thereafter, Krista would be appointed to the Senate of Canada. Krista's announcement of her pending retirement triggered a flurry of activity at the Board level last fall as we worked to ensure that the Chamber would have strong leadership for the future to continue its track record of excellence in advocacy and to preserve and enhance the Chamber's extraordinary culture.

Fortunately, the Chamber had previously implemented a succession plan which laid the groundwork for our longtime Policy Manager, Morgan Peters, to step into the CEO role. Morgan's promotion to the CEO role has been a huge success and a welcome development for me, the Board, the Chamber membership and the many community stakeholders with which the Chamber deals on a regular basis. Of course, Morgan's departure from the Policy Manager role created another gap, which Morgan ensured was soon very capably filled by new Policy & Communications Manager Nicholas Sehl. The Chamber had previously welcomed Event Manager, Judy Joe Scheffler to the team last March and her work on the Chamber's events throughout 2023 has been

highly successful. Combining this wealth of new talent with the proven strength of the existing Chamber staff has, I believe, reinvigorated the Chamber and placed it on a very strong footing for the future. Needless to say, the Chamber also continues to have a strong relationship with Senator Ross.

While the transition to our new CEO was the most significant event during my year as President, the Board and the Chamber's various committees also had occasion to explore a few other issues important to the Chamber's future, most notably how the Chamber's needs for office space will best be served in the future. This is a long-term project that will not be resolved during my tenure as President; however, I feel we have set things in motion over the past year, which will, in the future, result in an even stronger and more independent Chamber.

Of course, as always, the Chamber has continued its relentless advocacy on issues of importance to the business community, with a particular focus on the number one issue for our members over the last two years: access to healthcare and its impact on investment attraction and employee recruitment. The Chamber has also been at the forefront of responding to unexpected problems such as those caused to New Brunswick educational institutions by the Government of Canada's recently announced two-year cap on international student permit applications. It has been a privilege to observe the "well-oiled machine" that is the Chamber responded to these issues, and to offer input as appropriate, over the last year.

As my year as President comes to an end, I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to participate in the Chamber's work to a much greater extent than in previous years. I would like to thank Past President, Jill Stairs, for her continued contributions to the Chamber Board over the last year and I would like to welcome incoming President, David Shipley, whose tenure as president I am sure will be quite consequential. Thanks also to all the Board members and Committee members with whom I have had the privilege to work over the last year. I leave the Presidency more impressed than ever with the calibre of the Chamber staff, Board of Directors and members who continue to actively contribute as volunteers in various Chamber committees and events. It has been an honour to get to know you better and work with you over this past year. Having had the opportunity to observe your continuing contributions up close, I am more confident than ever, as the Chamber celebrates its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, that we can look forward to 150 more years of success for the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce!

**Michael Melvin**  
*2023-2024 Chamber President*  
*Fredericton Chamber of Commerce*





# CEO'S MESSAGE

Writing my first CEO message for our annual magazine brings a mix of gratitude, pride and reflection. It has not been a small task to succeed Krista Ross in this role after she spent a total of 20 years elevating our organization to the strong position we find ourselves in today, but I'd like to recognize that there have been a few big factors working in my favour.

First, I had the opportunity to work with Krista and learn from her for more than 11 years in my previous role as Policy Manager and she put a lot of time and effort into ensuring that I was ready to take on the CEO job when the time came. Of equal importance, the team here at the chamber is very experienced and great at their jobs and wonderfully supportive colleagues. Not everyone has such a luxury when stepping into a leadership role. A big thanks to Wendy, Christine, Brianne, Judy and Nick for their efforts to make this transition period go as smoothly as possible. Finally, the confidence and support from our board of directors and all of our members has given me a lot of confidence to hit the ground running—a heartfelt thanks to all of you.

I refer to it often because I very much believe in our organizational vision: Stronger Community Through Business Prosperity. Having the opportunity to work with and for members to try to improve conditions for growth, which ultimately strengthens our community for nearly 12 years, energizes me every day. I absolutely know that this is the organization

and job for me because I've never dreaded a Monday—not something many people can say (including me about any other job in my career).

As we move the organization forward, I think a lot about the inverse of our vision—Business Prosperity Through Stronger Community. We will continue to evolve and a big part of that for me is thinking about issues more holistically. There's a reason that our members' #1 issue is improving healthcare, and that housing, education and childcare are also near the top of our list. Are cost burden, red tape and workforce still important? Of course—they are foundational to creating conditions for growth—but they don't exist in a vacuum.

Those things that were once siloed as “social” issues, our board of directors actually sees as business enablers, and I agree! It all comes down to people. Forgive the cliché, but they really are our most important resource. We're not recruiting the employees we need without being able to provide healthcare and housing. We can't maximize our current labour market without providing childcare or world-class education. We won't catalyze underemployed segments of society without providing the supports needed to enter or re-enter the workforce. We're not able to continue our current growth trajectory without making the right investments in infrastructure and transportation to meet our current and future needs.

Small businesses comprise most of our membership, and I think we collectively understand that they make up the fabric of

what makes our community great, so we need to meet their needs, and those are changing. Additionally, 10% of members are non-profit organizations that do amazing work which benefits the entire community—including businesses—so we need to figure out how we can best support them and amplify their work.

Finally, I believe that we must continue our momentum becoming a more inclusive organization that reflects our growing community. A big part of Fredericton's growth is diversification, and I want the community to see themselves in our chamber and know that we are a welcoming place that values the full spectrum of diversity—of culture, of thought, of opinions, whatever—and I am also convinced that's what's good for business in 2024.

Moving forward, I hope we can be as proactive and innovative as possible, offering measures and solutions based on our unique position representing the business community of Fredericton. From my experience the biggest innovation is this understanding that to strengthen our community, the most immediate needs and the possible solutions are interrelated and require alignment. Whether from a business or social issue point of view, we are one community.

**Morgan Peters**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
*Fredericton Chamber of Commerce*

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*Beauceron Security Inc.*



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**Morgan Peters**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Nicholas Sehl**  
Policy and Communications Manager



**Christine Little**  
Membership Development and Marketing Manager



**Wendy Morrell**  
Operations Manager



**Judy Joe Scheffler**  
Event Manager



**Brianne Phillips**  
Bookkeeper





# POLICY PRIORITIES

The vision of the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce is Stronger Community Through Business Prosperity. This is a recognition that as members of our chamber, board of directors and staff are primarily local residents, we believe that a symbiotic relationship exists between business, the community and the citizenry. Citizens support local business, which creates jobs, grows the economy and provides government with the resources to provide the social programs, recreational activities and infrastructure needed in our communities.

Our mission is to support business prosperity through networking, shared services, advocacy and events. The Fredericton chamber's vision and mission, along with our close connection to the community, guides every decision we make as an organization, particularly our policy and advocacy work.

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 2024 are:

## ***1. Competitive Business Environment***

Traditionally, cost competitiveness has been an advantage that we have had in New Brunswick, but this has eroded over the past few years. 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.

## ***2. Workforce Development and Population Growth***

For decades, New Brunswick had been staring down a demographic shift that had seen significant outmigration to other provinces and an aging population. The past few years have seen positive growth and a lower average age, and the province must continue to focus on 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. However, in order to do this, we must also provide needed supports – business enablers.

## ***3. Business Enablers***

- a. Health Care
- b. Housing
- c. Childcare
- d. Public Safety
- e. Transportation and Infrastructure
- f. Technology and Innovation






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# ADVOCACY UPDATE

## **Topic: Health Care – Physicians Round Table**

In partnership with the Greater Fredericton Area Physicians Staff Organization, we hosted our first Fredericton Chamber of Commerce Physicians Roundtable. This expert, first-hand knowledge, will not only inform our advocacy, but will also directly influence the traditional planks of our health care policy and annual physician recruitment events. In an issue such as health care, we continually seek to grow our knowledge base and avenues of communication with those serving vital roles within our community.

## **Topic: International Students – Working Hours and Cap**

The Fredericton Chamber of Commerce has advocated extensively concerning the positive impact of international students within our community. In November 2023, we wrote to the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship,

asking the government to extend the waiver of the 20-hour-per-week cap on the number of hours that eligible post-secondary students are allowed to work off-campus while class is in session. In early 2024, in response to the announced two-year cap on foreign enrolment, the Chamber advocated for the necessary and timely actions to support and protect our universities and colleges which have exhibited a history of sustainable growth in our community.

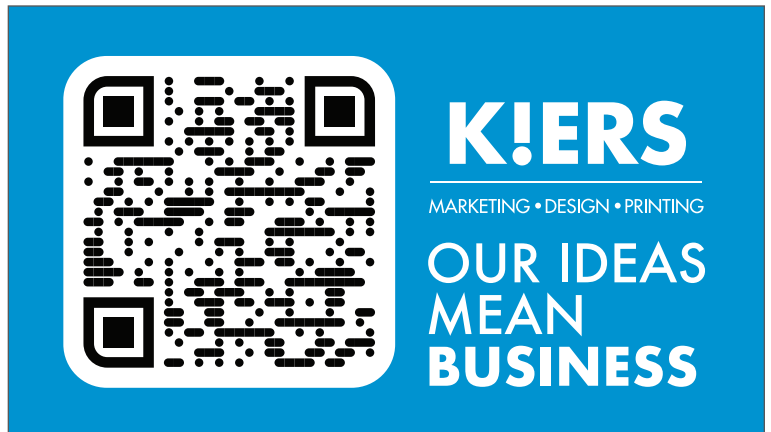
## **Topic: George Street Middle School Replacement Site**

The Fredericton Chamber of Commerce delivered a letter to Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development Bill Hogan to encourage the provincial government to choose in a timely manner the New Brunswick Exhibition Grounds as the site for the George Street Middle School replacement announced in November 2023. This position was based on the need for a downtown location to be chosen and the

pre-existing plans for the New Brunswick Exhibition Grounds Site Development thanks to a partnership between the City of Fredericton and the Fredericton Exhibition Limited. This new school project can fulfil numerous existing and obvious needs within the urban core, which in turn will allow Fredericton to attract and retain more families and businesses alike.

## **Topic: Provincial Budget**

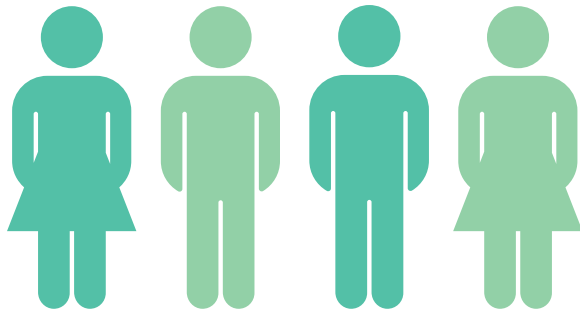
We were actively involved in the GNB pre-budget process – first with a written submission, followed by attending the government budget lock in and hosting Minister Steeves for a meeting after the budget's release.





# 2023 STATISTICS

## 2023 Membership Stats



1,076 TOTAL MEMBERS | 144 NEW MEMBERS

89% MEMBERSHIP RETENTION

92,585 NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES REPRESENTED

44% EMPLOYEES USING BENEFITS

97 M2M OFFERS

447 MEMBERS 10+ YEARS

113 NOT-FOR-PROFIT MEMBERS

52 START-UP MEMBERS

15 MEMBER BENEFITS

### SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



6,328 ▲

8,319 ▼

668 ▲

4,719 ▲

# ADVOCACY & COMMITTEE WORK

Every 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 end of 2024 survey are:

## *What are your biggest concerns?*

1. Access to Primary Health care
2. Costs of running your business/organization
3. Workforce
4. Red Tape
5. Economic Growth

\*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 – 84.06%
- Neither agree nor disagree – 14.49%
- Disagree / Strongly Disagree – 1.45%

## *Other Issues*

Because of the broad nature of our membership, throughout the year, we work on many different issues affecting various sectors. Our committees, including - Policy Committee, Government Affairs Committee, Immigration Advocacy Committee, and Indigenous Partnerships Committee - are indispensable resources to advise and support our advocacy based on the vast knowledge and varied experience of committee members. Often advocacy on specific issues begins with a letter to the relevant government official. We publish our letters on our website. Some of those issues in 2023-24 include:

- Prompt Payment Legislation
- Air Access
- Property Assessments / Tax Rates (Municipal and Provincial)

(cont'd on page 11)



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- Public Transportation
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- WorkSafeNB Benefits Expansion
- Procurement
- Mental Health

**Canadian Chamber of Commerce AGM and Conference**

In October, members of the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce board of directors and staff attended the **2023 Canadian Chamber of Commerce AGM and Conference in Calgary**. Our organization submitted two policy resolutions for consideration by delegates. The first, Standardizing Health Care Credentials was approved by 96.4% of delegates; the second, Supporting Public Transportation Funding in Smaller and Rural Communities was approved by 92.42% of delegates.



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## 2023-2024 EVENT STATS

Chamber College: **5**  
 Member Networking: **12**  
 Information Sessions: **9**  
 Indigenous Business Forum: **1**  
 Major Events: **6**  
 Physician Recruitment/  
 Appreciation Events: **2**  
**Total Attendance: 3569 people**





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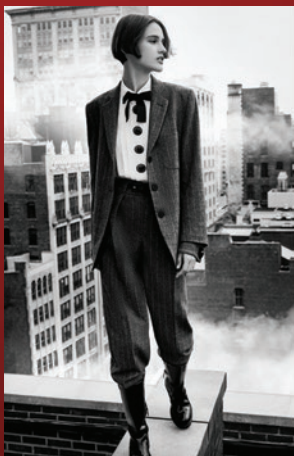
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# INCOMING PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

## Towards 2050: Shaping a prosperous future for Greater Fredericton with an urban agenda.

I've been a soldier, a newspaper reporter, a digital marketer, an accidental cybersecurity professional, a start-up founder and now I can proudly add a new title: Fredericton Chamber of Commerce president.

It's an honour and privilege to have the opportunity to play a leadership role during the Chamber's 150th anniversary year.

This year marks an opportunity to reflect on the Chamber's many accomplishments and its leadership during good times and bad for our community. It's also an opportunity to think about the tremendous future ahead for our community and how a strong, vibrant private sector can help drive economic prosperity and societal growth here.

It is a time of great change for our chamber, for our city and for our province.

The retirement of long-time CEO (and now Senator) Krista Ross and the promotion of Morgan Peters to the CEO role is just one example of the changes the chamber is experiencing. Morgan has stepped up into the role with the full support of the board, the staff, and the broader business community. He brings a depth of experience and passion for complex policy issues, and a voice of reason at a time when politics across all parties tend to gravitate towards hype cycles, social media sound bites and wedge issues.

The second half of the 2020s has a markedly different potential future for all of us than what

many could have imagined at the turn of the millennium. Over the past 30 years, our politics in this province was dominated by how we'd manage our declining population, soaring debt, slowing economy and greying society.

Post-Covid, it truly is a new day in New Brunswick. Instead of the issues of decline, we are now grappling with the issues that come with unexpected growth. There are strains in many of our social programs, in our health care system, in our housing market and more. While these are better problems, arguably, to have than the story of school and hospital closures, program cuts, unsustainable spending, and spiralling debt, they are nonetheless, problems.

Should we care as business leaders about these issues? Yes, we should and yes, we must. Our vision as an organization is to build a stronger community through business prosperity. Our businesses can't prosper if our employees can't get primary healthcare or can't find affordable housing, or they lack faith in our public institutions. Our businesses can't reach their full potential without a community that's also prospering.

I'm so proud of the leadership the chamber has shown over many years and is poised to continue to do so well into the future. We have a brilliant, engaged board that sees the connection between our businesses and our community. We have an engaged membership that continues to support the chamber in its nationally recognized advocacy work.

The challenges we face to building prosperity for the next quarter century will require us to continue to play a strong leadership role, but we can't do it alone. Government can't do it alone. We must continue to build bridges between

the business, government, and the broader community.

At the civic level, we need to encourage municipal leaders to embrace a bold, urban agenda for Fredericton and to build up the population in our core and downtown across generations with smart housing solutions that meet the needs of students, young professionals, families, and seniors with the right mix of options. We must applaud when they think and act proactively – striking the right balance between supporting and encouraging needed growth in the community, while preserving what already makes the Fredericton Region great.

At the provincial level, we need to ensure that balanced budgets and thoughtful tax regimes don't unduly burden individuals and businesses. It is equally necessary to ensure that investments in social services and capital infrastructure are balanced with a view that also goes beyond the next election cycle.

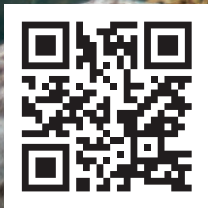
The choices we make in the next few years will set the foundation for the next few decades of growth and prosperity. I can't wait for all of us to play a role in shaping an even better Fredericton region and a better New Brunswick than what we have today.

**David Shipley**  
*2024-2025 Chamber President*  
*Fredericton Chamber of Commerce*



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