

BETO
JANUARY 2020

OUR VISION FOR THE NEW YEAR IS PERFECT!

So, as we approach this year of perfect vision – 2020 – which author Bill Bryson says isn't "perfect, just a mathematical standard" – we know there will be lots of marketing taglines, sales strategies based around 20/20 – we'll try to steer clear of the worst clichés. A similar opportunity arises with 2020 being a 366-day year, including Saturday February 29, 2020. But, hey, it's not a standard nine to five workday, so take a day off! Shop local!

Of course, getting ready for 2020 was just like every other year for most organizations and the Kelowna Chamber was no exception. We reviewed how things went in 2019, reflected on where we can improve, explored some new ideas and then got down to prepping our 2020 budget. Now we are clearly focused on the exciting year ahead.

We started the year by kicking off the nomination period for our 'Top 40 Under 40 by BDO' program. The first honourees this year will be recognized on February 13 so that means lots of January communication to encourage people to nominate their favorite young leader who is making a big impact in Kelowna and the Okanagan.

On January 23, we welcome Michael Goehring, President and CEO of the Mining Association of British Columbia to give us industry insights. It's a good way to kick off a year in which businesses and BC business interest groups such as ours will continue to remind the provincial government to not lose sight of the importance of the resource sector and the challenges they are currently facing. These industries have always kept this province in good economic health, and all British Columbians should appreciate that fact.

We are also excited about our plans for BC Chamber Week (February 18-22) when we plan a full week of professional development workshops for our members and the business community.

Also in February, we're hosting the Superintendent of School District 23, the dynamic Kevin Kaardal, who will look at 'Re-Imagining the Future of Education'. Kevin keeps coming out with outstanding ideas, creating remarkable partnerships, including with Food for Thought (2500 children a day in SD23 get breakfasts through Food for Thought and the Central Okanagan Food Bank) and always soberly reminds us that we're all educating the business leaders and workers of tomorrow – and tomorrow is always arriving, every day, ready or not.

Of course, as a Chamber, we are preparing for our annual AGM (in March) and that means an election for our volunteer Board of Directors. We will say thanks and farewell to departing directors and our outgoing president and welcome aboard some new volunteers. Our Presidents Dinner is scheduled for April 2nd at the Hotel Eldorado – we'll honour not only our outgoing President, Nikki Csek, but toast all our former presidents, as well as give a nod to our incoming President, Jeffrey Robinson. It's always a superb celebration, decorated with tuxedos, gowns and a silent auction.

Meanwhile, issues remain at the fore. Once again, higher government spending and increased taxes, despite the federal tax cut announced for January 1. Troubling continuation of people living rough, living on the streets, addiction and health issues not being treated to the degree that residents feel is appropriate to effectively move the dial. Transportation – many related issues, nearly all of which impact local businesses. Housing. Housing. Housing.

The upside of challenging issues is that the Chamber can, in a small way, address those issues which our members feel strongly about through developing policies and advocacy tactics that can, over time, feed into real change. Working through our own Policy Advisory Committee, the BC Chamber, and our network of colleagues across the country, we know that this is a meaningful process.



To underline how relevant we are as a business network (the largest in the world by the way) – which is my theme this month – we were delighted to announce at the end of December that the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce had again achieved “Accreditation with Distinction” from the Chamber Accreditation Council of Canada. This is a tough process, as any Chamber which has applied for the recognition program will know. Jean-Guy Delorme, Chair of the Accreditation Council, said accreditation “is the acknowledgement that member chambers have been successfully evaluated against a rigorous set of national standards and have demonstrated excellence in Chamber management.”

And Perrin Beatty (head of the Canadian Chamber and a distinguished career politician and business leader) says we are “keeping the ‘voice of business’ loud and strong”. We’re one of only 64 accredited chambers in Canada’s network of over 450 businesses representing over 200,000 employees. Yes, we’re relevant!

Our new members since my last column (in this shortened end-of-year writing period) whom I’d like to welcome onboard include:

Candel Custom Homes; Farming Karma Fruit Company Ltd.; Wilson M. Beck Insurance Services (Kelowna) Inc.; Avoca Vineyards; NG Media. Welcome all, to our Chamber membership.

Happy new year, everyone. Let’s have a great 2020.



Dan Rogers
Executive Director
Kelowna Chamber of Commerce

