

## **Chairperson's Report – 2025 Annual General Meeting:**

The Morden Chamber of Commerce, established in 1890, is a member of the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce and an accredited member of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce network. The actions of your Morden Chamber of Commerce flow through our 4 core Pillars.

- Voice of Business
- Source of Information
- Networking
- Promotion of Local Businesses

The organizational highlights of the Morden Chamber of Commerce throughout 2024 and into early 2025 include the following:

- **Chamber Accreditation:**

We obtained recognition from the Chamber Accreditation Council of Canada, as one of only 23 Chambers of Commerce across Canada, and one of only two in Manitoba, to achieve accreditation for 2025-2029, following our initial accreditation in 2021. This is a significant achievement as it points to our strengths in governance, operations, commitment to the business community and the overall strength of the organization.

- **Advocacy:**

Our boldest initiative in 2024 and one that will drive long-term value to our members is the full activation of our advocacy efforts. In 2023 we established a new Governance & Advocacy Committee which was assigned with a new mandate. This committee has now developed a framework to guide the Chamber in acting upon and responding to member feedback. The goal is to provide a standardized intake system and objective framework to ensure that member concerns are consistently received, recorded, and assessed, with appropriate action taken where warranted. To date we've embarked upon the following three advocacy efforts:

- **Wastewater:** We responded to member concerns by writing to the City of Morden. The resulting dialogue prompted a wider letter-writing campaign with results shared at all levels of government.

- Suncatch: We met with concerned Chamber Members and shared this information with the City.
- Manitoba Chamber of Commerce: We've drafted a policy resolution for potential adoption at their upcoming AGM in Winkler that asks the provincial and federal governments to increase their infrastructure funding commitments beyond the typical 1/3 amount of total project costs. This is a particularly relevant and painful issue in Morden as we remain in a holding pattern for a wastewater solution partly due to a lack of provincial and federal funding, while project costs continue to escalate and regional economic development pays the price. This policy resolution was developed in cooperation with the Winkler Chamber of Commerce and City of Morden.
- Strategic Plan:

We're now in year 3 of a 3-year strategic plan and we're on track to materially accomplish our core objectives of Enabling Organization Growth, acting as the Voice of Business while Enhancing Membership Services & Engagement.
- Financial Position:

We find ourselves in a solid and enviable position with Balance Sheet stability and Income Statement viability.

Our Balance Sheet includes over \$50,000 in non-operational capital that is available for deployment between 3 internally restricted funds; Innovation, Special Projects & Sustainability. The bulk of these funds arrived via Covid 19 pandemic support grants and continue to grow as our annual financial performance results in a surplus.

Our Income Statement shows that we're operating with a business mindset. The organization has financial viability by enhancing new and existing revenue generating opportunities while providing good financial management and oversight.

New revenue generating opportunities arrived in 2025 by the creation and implementation of a new Marketing Partnership strategy. Our 2025

sponsorship packages are nearly sold-out with local businesses wanting to pledge support to the organization. Thanks again to our many sponsors. The new revenue generated by the sponsorship packages has allowed us to hire our casual Administrative Assistant, Courtney Peters, who is freeing up time for our Executive Director, Clare Agnew, to function more so in an executive capacity. This is one of the key investments that the Chamber is making to drive additional value to our members.

- Events:

We hosted or co-hosted 12 events last year including a full sellout of our Golf Tournament, Inspire Wellness events & International Women's Day event. In 2025, we already have 16 events on our schedule including an expanded golf tournament.

We celebrated another year of local business success at our annual Awards Banquet. Congratulations again to Pharmasave, Regional Connections, Gardenland Coop, Shannon Samatte-Folkett, Morden Nurseries and Bevan & Sandra Wiebe for your outstanding performance and impact in 2024.

Another highlight was co-hosting the 1<sup>st</sup> annual Your Region Your Voice event with the Winkler Chamber of Commerce.

- Members:

We had 241 Members in 2024 with a goal of a net increase of 2% each year. Thanks for your trust and investment in the Chamber.

We circulated a Members Survey that was used by your Chamber of Commerce to inform current and future activities. This included a collaboration with the City of Morden to provide business specific content that fed into their strategic planning process.

- Community Partnerships:

The Morden Chamber of Commerce is committed to listening to and understanding the needs of our local businesses and community partners.

To that extent, here's a non-exhaustive list of the community partners that we collaborated with in 2024:

- City of Morden, administration and council
- Morden Community Development Corporation

- Morden Enrichment Corporation
- Western School Division
- Red River Technical Vocation Area
- Morden School Aged Programming Cooperative
- Manitoba Finance Minister, Adrien Sala
- MLA Carrie Hiebert
- MP Brandon Leslie
- Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters
- Many local business leaders

The Morden Chamber of Commerce is in a great position to make a difference within our community. We're in one of the fastest growing regions in Canada and with that comes opportunity. As an organization we've had the great benefit of strong leadership and governance over the past decade and with that comes opportunity as well. We have a strong Executive Director and Board of Directors. We have a revitalized downtown retail sector. We have an expanding industrial park. We have a City council and administration with a new strategic plan. The list could go on and on. There's a lot to get excited about.

What's your vision for the future of Morden? Please tell us. As we wrap up the last year of our current strategic plan we have the opportunity to be BOLD in the development of our next 3-year plan. The Chamber is in a strong position, organizationally and financially, to make a difference. Please engage with us to share your vision of our community.

We're often asked what the benefit of a Chamber membership means. The truth is that the answer is different for everyone. At a high level the benefit of a Chamber membership is that we act on your behalf as the voice of business to connect with people, business, industry, government, and community. We're devoted to supporting local businesses to evolve and grow. Please speak with our Executive Director, Clare Agnew, to better understand the value of a Chamber membership for your business. Please join us and engage with us.

Thank you.

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