

## AGM Just One Month Away So Make Sure It's in Your Calendar

The OCC's **Annual General Meeting** is less than one month away, and members are encouraged to participate in this important meeting which establishes policy priorities for the coming year, and also provides an excellent networking opportunity for Chamber members from across the province.

Those networking opportunities include plenary sessions, receptions, luncheons, dinners and other activities and each occasion will give attendees an informal setting to connect with each other.

The main business of the AGM will be conducted in the Brant Park Inn, but the organizing committee from the host Brantford Chamber has put together a program that will give members a chance to see other aspects of the community including a luncheon at the Brantford Golf and Country Club and an evening at the Brantford Charity Casino.

The policy sessions also promises to be lively and illuminating with a record number of resolutions being

tabled relating to the OCC's four areas of focus:

1. Finance and Taxation
2. Health
3. Transportation & Infrastructure
4. Education

In addition to policy development and networking, the AGM is also a time to recognize the efforts of our many volunteers.

This will include the **James Gordon Carnegie Memorial Award**, presented to a member of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce Executive who has displayed exemplary efforts as a mentor and a leader.

The deadline for nominations is **April 15<sup>th</sup>**, and you can forward your nominee to **Ian Cunningham** at [iancunningham@occ.on.ca](mailto:iancunningham@occ.on.ca)

This year's event will be held **May 2-4, 2003** in Brantford, Ontario. For more information or to register for the 2003 AGM, please contact **Regan Clarke** at 416 482-5222 extension 222.

## OCC News Conference to Address Cross Border Issues

On **Thursday, April 10** the OCC, in partnership with the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, will hold a news conference in Toronto to address the issue on cross border transportation, and the impact that a cooling of U.S. - Canada relations could have on business in Ontario.

The Michigan Chamber's President, **Jim Barrett** will be in attendance to reinforce the message that trade is a two-way concern.

Michigan represents Ontario's largest single trading partner with the combined cross

border trade between the two jurisdictions valued at \$100-billion almost annually.

At the news conference, the OCC will announce several initiatives to address this important issue.

A similar news conference will be held in Lansing, Michigan the following week.

For more information on this news conference please contact **Clive Hobson** at 416 482-5222, ext. 232.

## Colony Hotel, Toronto to Close

The **Toronto Colony Hotel** in Toronto, which offers OCC members a discounted business rate, has been sold and will no longer operate as a hotel commencing **May 30, 2003**.

OCC members will no longer be able to take advantage of this pricing arrangement, but several alternatives are being explored for a replacement arrangement.

Members will be advised as soon as a new deal is in place.

### Upcoming Events

Listed below are some upcoming events that may be of interest to local Chambers and Boards:

- Education Committee Meeting, April 3, 2003
- Finance & Tax Committee Meeting, April 10, 2003
- Queen's Park Liaison Forum (QPLF), April 11, 2003
- OCC Office Closed for Good Friday, April 18, 2003
- Ontario Business Advisory Council (OBAC) featuring Bill Graham, Minister of External Affairs, April 22, 2003
- Board of Directors Meeting, May 2, 2003
- Annual General Meeting (AGM), May 2-4, 2003
- Education Committee Meeting, May 15, 2003

For more information on all committees, please contact **Atul Sharma** at (416) 482-5222, ext. 235.

## Education Survey Complete

The results from the Education survey in the **OCC's Ontario Business Survey Program (OBSP)** have been analysed and entire report will be posted on the OCC Web site next week. This was a very successful survey with over 500 respondents providing input. Some of the highlights of the survey include:

- **61.3 per cent** of respondents agree that Ontario's education is a competitive advantage for the province's business community.
- Over **80 per cent** of respondents believe that the Government of Ontario should offer training tax incentives to employees.

## Chamber Members Have Opportunity for Throne Speech Consultation

Continuing his policy of public consultations, Premier **Ernie Eves** has announced that the people of Ontario will have a opportunity to provide input to the upcoming Throne Speech.

"I believe Ontarians don't just want to be led by government, they want government to take its lead from the people," Premier Eves said in a news release announcing the initiative. MPPs will be meeting with people in their local communities to seek their input and advice. The government has also prepared a consultation booklet that helps frame the province wide discussion.

For more information or to complete the booklet online, visit the Premier's Web site at [www.premier.gov.on.ca](http://www.premier.gov.on.ca). Throne Speech consultation booklets will also be available at **Ontario Government Information Centres**.

- Just over **15 per cent** of businesses participate in the government's Apprenticeship program (OYAP), while **23 per cent** are not even aware of the program.

The **OBSP** survey is Web-based and is conducted 10 times a year on a range of relevant business issues, and is designed to identify the trends and priorities of the Ontario business community. Next on the survey schedule is the topic of borders, which will be launched the week of **April 14, 2003**.

## AGM Countdown Continues

The countdown is on for this year's Annual General Meeting, in **Brantford, May 2-4, 2003**.

If you have not already registered we encourage you to do so as soon as possible, in order that you have the opportunity to participate in the policy sessions as well as taking advantage of the networking opportunities.

Also don't forget **April 15** is the deadline for submissions for the **James Gordon Carnegie Memorial Award**, presented to the OCC executive who has displayed exemplary efforts as a mentor or leader.

Submit your nominations for this award by the deadline to **Ian Cunningham** at [iancunningham@occ.on.ca](mailto:iancunningham@occ.on.ca).

For more information or to register for the 2003 AGM please contact Regan Clarke at 416 482-5222 ext. 222.

## Biotech Industry Subject of Latest Queen's Park Liaison Forum

The biotech industry and the Ontario government's strategy for encouraging growth was the topic at the **Queen's Park Liaison Forum** held **Friday, April 11, 2003**. **Bill Mantel** from the **Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation** provided an overview of the government's plan which included a two-pronged approach that combined attracting investment and the commercialization of successful biotech products.

The second presentation of the session was from **Janet Lambert**, President of **BIOTECanada**, a business association for biotech companies, who brought a private sector perspective to the discussion. Next up for the **QPLF** is a session on innovation and technology to be held in Kitchener on **June 20, 2003**.

## Upcoming Events

Listed below are some upcoming events that may be of interest to local Chambers and Boards:

- **Joint OCC – Michigan Chamber of Commerce News Conference on Border Relations**, April 17, 2003
- **OCC Office Closed for Good Friday**, April 18, 2003
- **Ontario Business Advisory Council (OBAC) featuring Bill Graham, Minister of External Affairs**, April 22, 2003
- **Board of Directors Meeting**, May 2, 2003
- **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**, May 2-4, 2003

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## OCC Takes the Lead in Explaining SARS

The OCC's recent survey on the impact of SARS on business in Ontario catapulted the OCC into the spotlight as the leading voice dealing with the impact of SARS on business in Ontario. The survey, which drew almost 800 responses from OCC members across the province was implemented and tabulated in record time by the OCC policy advocacy team, and yielded significant data to indicate that Ontario businesses are experiencing business losses.

OCC President and CEO, Len Crispino, was a much in demand interview guest with television, radio and print reporters logging time in front of the camera on CBC Newsworld and ROB-TV, and behind the microphone on Radio Canada,

CBC's business show with **Bernie McNamee** and on CBC's Metro Morning.

Other OCC staff members were equally busy fielding calls from The Globe and Mail, Toronto Star, Toronto Sun and numerous radio stations both in Toronto and elsewhere in the province.

The SARS survey, part of the OCC's ongoing Ontario Business Survey Program, was a good example of using the Chamber's enhanced Web-site to solicit valuable input from its membership in a timely and topical fashion, and it became the de-facto reference tool in a wide range of media coverage.

## The \$100-Billion Handshake

While SARS has taken over the headlines recently, the need to maintain good trade relations with our single largest trading partner is still a pressing issue with businesses in Ontario. That's why the OCC joined forces with the Michigan Chamber of Commerce at an April 17<sup>th</sup> news conference in Toronto to take steps to address concerns over deteriorating relations with the U.S., as a result of Canada's stand on the war in Iraq.

Joining OCC President and CEO Len Crispino, was **Jim Barrett**, President and CEO of the Michigan Chamber, to announce the formation of a Business Summit Council that will look at ways to ensure that deteriorating

Canada-U.S. relations do not affect the \$100-billion worth of annual trade between the two jurisdictions.

Also in attendance to provide perspective at the local level were **Gerry McCartney**, President of the London Chamber, **Bob Malcolmson**, President of the Oshawa Chamber and **Mary-Sue Fitzpatrick**, Vice-President of the Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber.

Details of the business summit will be announced in early May, when members of the OCC will take the same message to the news media in Lansing, Michigan.

## Last Call for the AGM

Don't forget this upcoming weekend, **May 2-4**, is the OCC's Annual General Meeting in Brantford, there's still time to confirm your attendance at this important gathering. There's a full slate of events and activities designed to provide networking opportunities, and more than 30 resolutions will be tabled that will help shape the OCC's Policy and Advocacy activities for the next year.

Featured guests include MPP and President of the Liberal Party of Ontario, **Greg Sorbara** (Vaughan, King, Aurora) and MP **Jane Stewart**, Minister of Human Resources Development Canada. To register for this year's AGM contact Ian Cunningham at 416 482-5222 ext. 228.

## OCC Joins with CME to Address Issue of SARS

On April 25, The Ontario Chamber of Commerce came together with other business organizations such as the **Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters** and representatives from major businesses to form a broad business coalition focused on discussing best business practices concerning SARS. The objective of the coalition is to work with governments, public health authorities, and individual businesses to combat SARS, and to provide businesses with the information they need to deal with as employers, suppliers and customers.

The OCC SARS survey, which revealed that almost one-third of Ontario businesses have been impacted financially, and almost 80 percent of Ontario businesses do not have in place a contingency plan to deal with SARS if it enters their workplace, was presented as part of the group's information package. In addressing these issues the group agreed to a commitment to work together with government to disseminate information about prudent measures that should be taken by business and to dispel myths regarding the SARS outbreak. The short term goal is to provide businesses with the information they need, while the longer term goal is to look at how to minimize the impact on the Canadian economy.

## Upcoming Events

Listed below are some upcoming events that may be of interest to local Chambers and Boards:

- **Board of Directors Meeting**, May 2, 2003
- **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**, May 2-4, 2003
- **Education Committee Meeting**, May 15, 2003
- **Finance & Taxation Committee Meeting**, May 22, 2003

For more information on all committees, please contact [Atul Sharma](mailto:Atul.Sharma@occ.on.ca) at (416) 482-5222, ext. 235.