

OCC Prepares to Launch Skilled Trades Survey Next Week

The 2003-04 OCC member survey on skilled trades shortage and apprenticeship reform is currently being completed and the survey is expected to be launched early next week. The OCC is looking for feedback from members on these important issues and will use the results in its policy development and advocacy activities.

This will be the tenth survey of the Ontario Business Survey Program for 2003, a new initiative launched this year. Information about the survey program, and highlights from the first nine surveys, is available in our 2003 Summary report online at www.occ.on.ca.

In response to the important issue of the expected skilled trades shortage, we examine some of the approaches that can combat this shortage and try to uncover some of the causes for the shortage. Which practices do you believe best helps retain skilled trades workers and apprentices? The survey will examine how many organizations currently employ skilled trades workers and seeks to find out where organizations hire apprentices from.

The OCC will use the results of the survey to prioritize areas of focus, provide recommendations to the government, and to assist in the development of a policy white paper currently being planned by the OCC's Education Committee.

The survey will be posted on the OCC's website and will be directly emailed to you as soon as it is completed. We encourage all members to forward the survey to their members in order to capture members input from across the province and from a cross-section of industries.

Your contribution is greatly appreciated and will help us enhance our position as the *Advocate of Choice in Ontario*.

New Proud Members of the OCC

CarQuest Canada, Hoffmann – La Roche, Hitachi Canada, Peace Bridge Authority, Placer Dome Canada, and Telus

Upcoming Queens Park Liaison Forum Focuses on Investing in Prosperity

To wrap up the 4th quarter of the **Queens Park Liaison Forum** (QPLF), the OCC and the Ministry of Economic, Development and Trade are expecting a good turnout for the upcoming **December 12th** meeting. The final meeting of 2003 for QPLF members takes a look at one of the most topical discussions facing Ontario businesses this year - Investing for Prosperity.

The panelists for this meeting include **Jim Milway**, Executive Director of the Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity (www.competeprosper.ca); **Mary Webb**, Senior Economist at ScotiaBank and Chair of the OCC's Finance and Taxation Committee; and **John Hertel**, President of Exceleration Business Performance Inc. and Chair of the OCC's Education Committee. The December 12th meeting takes place at the

Ontario Investment Service, Suite 4040, Canada Trust Tower (south tower), BCE Place at 161 Bay Street in Toronto. The panel presentations begin at 10:00am followed by a Q&A period. A networking lunch will run from 12:00pm – 1:00pm.

For more information on the upcoming QPLF, contact iancunningham@occ.on.ca.

If you are a current QPLF member and wish to take part in this meeting please RSVP Erin Ashton, Events Coordinator, via email at erinashton@occ.on.ca, no later than Wednesday December 10th.

If you are not currently a member of QPLF and would like to participate, please contact Erin Ashton.

OCC Recommended for ISO Certification

In February 2003 the OCC reported that we had begun the process to achieving our objective of acquiring ISO 9001:2000 certification.

We are proud to announce that this week we have been recommended for certification.

The ISO 9000 family of international quality management standards and guidelines has earned a global reputation as the basis for establishing quality management systems.

ISO 9001 specifies requirements for a quality management system for any organization that needs to demonstrate its ability to consistently provide product that meets customer and applicable regulatory requirements and aims to enhance customer satisfaction.

The system will improve the consistency and efficiency in all of the Chamber's practices and logistics.

Upcoming Events

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

Ontario Chamber of Commerce Office Closed from December 25, 2003 to January 1, 2004

- **Finance & Tax Committee Meeting**, December 11, 2003
- **Queens Park Liaison Forum**, December 12, 2003
- **Transportation Committee Meeting**, December 17, 2003
- **Energy Task Force Meeting**, December 18, 2003
- **Health Policy Committee Meeting**, December 18, 2003

For more information on all committees, please contact Rachel Kagan at (416) 482-5222, ext. 233.

OCC Appoints Scott McCammon as VP of Communications & Stakeholder Relations

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce is continuing to reorganize its structure to better align itself to new priorities, opportunities and directions. On December 9th the OCC announced the appointment of Scott McCammon to the newly-created position of Vice-President, Communications and Stakeholder Relations. His position comes into effect on January 12, 2004.

In 1983, Scott joined his local Chamber of Commerce, working his way through committees and the Board of Directors. He was elected President in 1992 and became Executive Director in 1993. The Chamber has played an extraordinarily active role both in representing the business community and as a lead partner in "Team Burlington" – an association of the Chamber, Economic Development, Tourism and the Downtown BIA.

Scott chairs the Editorial Board of the Team's new *inBurlington* magazine – a community

publication published quarterly and circulated to local businesses and residents. The Chamber's former magazine was named the Best Chamber Publication in North America.

In 1997, Scott was named Executive Director of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce Executives of Canada (CCEC). He served in 1998 - 1999 as President of CCEC and represented Canadian Chambers on the Board of Directors of the American Chamber of Commerce Executives in Washington. In 1998, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce Executives honoured Scott with their President's Award. For the past two years, he has acted as Chairman of the Team Ontario Policy Caucus and, in 2003 was awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal.

We are pleased to have Scott at the OCC in this new position. He will play an active role in helping to move our renewal agenda forward.

Ontario Business Advisory Council Gets Set for a Stellar 2004 Program

After its most successful year to date, the Ontario Business Advisory Council (OBAC) is looking to make 2004 a year to remember with a stellar line up of leading policy decision makers. After a provincial election, and a new Prime Minister, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce promises a good selection of both timely and topical speakers throughout the 2004 OBAC year.

OBAC is intended to provide an in-camera forum for senior business leaders to speak directly with senior political leaders. Each forum consists of a one and a half to two hour meetings and is restricted to a manageable number of business leaders. The roster of participants typically includes the Premier of Ontario, the Finance Minister, Leader of the Official Opposition and senior Cabinet Ministers of business related ministries.

With both a new Premier of Ontario and a new Prime Minister of Canada and their

subsequent cabinets, this coming year OBAC is about rejuvenation. The upcoming meetings for the 2004 year are being finalized and the schedule will be on our web site in the New Year. This past years guests included; the then Minister of Energy, John Baird; the now Prime Minister of Canada Paul Martin; the then Premier of Ontario, Ernie Eves; the then leader of the Opposition Dalton McGuinty; and the then Minister of Finance Janet Ecker.

Because of the great demand for this unique in-camera (no media) meeting opportunity, we will guarantee at least six meetings through out the year, with the potential of up to three additional guest speakers.

If any of your members are interested in OBAC, please have them contact Erin Ashton, Events Coordinator, either by email at erinashton@occ.on.ca or by telephone at (416) 482-5222, extension 222.

Order Your OCC Decals Today!

For those Chambers who are interested in purchasing window decals they are now in.

For those of you who are unaware of our decal program, all chambers that are in good standing (meaning have provided us with a commitment form for 2004, and have made all 2003 payments) are able to purchase window decals at a cost of \$10.00 per bundle of 25.

The decal order forms were sent out last week with the 2004 chamber commitment packages.

If you are currently a chamber member and did not receive a package you can contact Erin Ashton at 416-482-5222 ext 222 or email at erinashton@occ.on.ca.

Also members can go on-line at www.occ.on.ca under the Chambers and Boards section to order your decals on-line.

Upcoming Events

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

Ontario Chamber Offices Closed from December 25, 2003 to January 1, 2004

- **Transportation Committee Meeting**, December 17, 2003
- **Energy Task Force Meeting**, December 18, 2003
- **Health Policy Committee Meeting**, December 18, 2003
- **Education Committee Meeting**, January 8, 2004

For more information on all committees, please contact Rachel Kagan at (416) 482-5222, ext. 233.

The OCC Continues to Rejuvenate in 2003: A Year in Review

You asked the OCC to turn up the volume, renew our energy and passion, improve communications, responsiveness and governance, add value and strengthen our policy efforts. The year 2003 has been a challenging one but we have succeeded on a number of fronts, here are just some of the highlights in our annual Year in Review issue of the Legislative Watch.

Renewed Focus: This past year the OCC had the greatest number of **Ontario Business Advisory Council (OBAC)** meetings to date. We promised six meetings and delivered nine. The roster of speakers included many of Ontario and Canada's top political leaders including former Federal Ministers such as the then Finance Minister & Deputy Prime Minister **John Manley**, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs **Bill Graham**, former Liberal leadership candidate **Paul Martin**, and Leader of the Canadian Alliance **Stephen Harper**. The former Ontario government was represented by the former Premier **Ernie Eves**, the then Leader of the Official Opposition **Dalton McGuinty**, the then Minister of Energy **John Baird**, the then Minister of Finance **Janet Ecker**, and the then Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation **Jim Flaherty**.

Adding Value: This year we developed the **Ontario Business Survey Program** to capture members' views on important business and policy issues in Ontario. The program allows members to have direct input into OCC policy positions and submissions. Surveys are web-based and conducted ten times a year on a range of relevant business issues. This year's survey topics included health care, provincial pre-budget, education, SARS, the rise of the Canadian Dollar, pre-election priorities, an interim economic outlook, energy / August power outage, provincial election priorities and skilled trades and apprenticeship reform. A value-added feature of the program is its "co-branding" element which allows the OCC and its member Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade to partner and share information.

The **Queens Park Liaison Forum (QPLF)**, which is a joint initiative between the OCC and the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (EDT), presented five meetings this year to its members. The forums focused on several topical business issues including: Competitiveness and Prosperity, Border Security, Biotechnology, and the Ontario Economy. A new element of program was introduced this year which includes holding a QPLF session outside of Toronto. In June 2003 the Greater Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber co-hosted a special QPLF session as members headed to Silicon

Valley North (KW) for a special meeting to discuss Innovation.

Governance: In February 2003 the OCC reported that we had begun the process of achieving our objective to acquire **ISO 9001:2000** certification. In November, the OCC was recommended for certification. The Quality Management System will improve the consistency and efficiency in all of the Chamber's practices and logistics.

This year marked our 21st Anniversary of the **Outstanding Business Achievement Awards (OBAA)** Dinner. It also marked our largest and most successful OBAA to date. With nearly 1,000 distinguished guests at this year's gala dinner, the newly elected Premier of Ontario, **Dalton McGuinty**, headlined the event and spoke to attendees with his first address to a business audience as the Premier-Designate. The OCC appreciates and values the support of our members and thanks you all for making this year's event the most successful to date.

Resolutions: The 91st **Annual General Meeting & Convention** took place in Brantford, Ontario from May 2 – 4, 2003. A record number of 33 policy resolutions were reviewed and debated during the policy sessions. Of that, 31 resolutions were approved and have paved the way for a very busy year in policy development and advocacy efforts. There were several keynote speakers including the Commissioner of Public Safety, **Dr. James Young** who provided delegates with a very timely presentation on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

For the **Canadian Chamber of Commerce** Convention, held in September, many members of the Ontario Chamber joined our **Team Ontario** and engaged in numerous consultations to review and make recommendations to the Canadian Chamber's proposed resolutions.

At this year's **Governing Council Meeting**, delegates adopted resolutions on the Greater Toronto Area Transportation Authority and on the St. Lawrence Seaway. The keynote speaker was **Philip Dewan**, former Chief of Staff to then Leader of the Official Opposition, Dalton McGuinty.

Communications: The OCC really turned up the volume this year with an improvement in our communications reach, a 31% improvement to be exact; that was the increase in media mentions over the same period last year. The OCC website continues to be a critical part of our communications efforts and received an entire site

revamp as the website was launched with a new look, design and feel, earlier this year.

Policy Submissions and Advocacy Efforts: The OCC was busy this year preparing submissions and meeting senior members of the Ontario government to discuss issues including the removal of the electricity rate cap, establishing a transportation authority, the Mid-Peninsula Transportation Corridor, WSIB, calling on the government to have an independent review of its books, new action on foreign trained doctors, negotiating a Labour Market Development Agreement, among other emerging issues.

The OCC Policy Committees and Task Forces are as busy as ever and are key to the success of the OCC's policy development process. The OCC develops its positions through its four primary committees, Finance & Taxation, Transportation & Infrastructure, Health Policy and Education and through its targeted task forces, Energy and Border Crossings.

We would like to recognize the tremendous efforts of two of our committee chairs whose terms ended this year. The OCC greatly appreciates the time and effort that both **Mary Webb**, Chair, Finance and Taxation Committee, and **Don Atwell**, Chair, Health Policy Committee, devoted to the OCC.

Looking Ahead: In 2003 the OCC continued to review its activities and improve its performance in a number of key areas. We will continue to rejuvenate and improve policy development and advocacy activities for OCC members in the new year. Looking ahead, 2004 is a year of opportunities with new provincial, federal and municipal governments and a growing affiliate and corporate membership network. The Ontario government is scheduled to coordinate the largest Pre-Budget Consultations across the province and the OCC will be sure to be a part of it. Next year's AGM will take place in Thunder Bay, Ontario, from April 30 – May 2, 2004 and it will be followed by the highly anticipated Ontario Economic Forum – "Muskoka Summit", a policy conference which will be held from June 20 – 22, 2004. In October we will have our annual OBAA dinner marking its 22nd great year. These are only a few of the activities which will keep us busy in 2004, so be sure to visit our website at www.occ.on.ca to keep up to date with the OCC's activities. Watch out for the 2004 Advocacy Plan at the end of January and remember, we always welcome your feedback.