

Last Chance to Complete the 2003 Pre-Budget Survey

On Friday, February 7, 2003 the OCC will conclude its annual 2003 Pre-Budget Survey.

If you have not already done so, we strongly encourage members to take a few moments to visit our website at www.occ.on.ca and complete the survey.

Once the final results are submitted and analyzed, the OCC will develop a more substantive Pre-Budget Submission for the Minister of Finance, Janet Ecker, as she prepares the 2003 Ontario Budget, expected to be delivered in early spring.

On December 2002, the Ministry of Finance began their 2003 Pre-Budget Consultations in Ottawa. Over the course of the past few months they have been traveling across the province seeking guidance and suggestions from the Ontario business community.

The OCC delivered their recommendations and the preliminary results from the survey on

January 30, 2003 to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

We plan to expand the submission once the complete results of the survey have been tabulated.

Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade are encouraged to provide their specific feedback and recommendations for the upcoming provincial budget. There are several ways to provide your input to the Ministry's 2003 Pre-Budget Consultations. Please visit their website at www.gov.on.ca/FIN for more information.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce appreciates all the feedback received from our members through the 2003 Pre-Budget Survey. Thank you for taking the time to complete it. Your views will aid the Chamber in developing significant recommendations to the Ontario government.

Pre-Budget Queen's Park Liaison Forum

The next Queen's Park Liaison Forum on February 7, 2003, is a timely session on the state of the provincial economy.

Our expert panel includes **Phil Howell**, Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Economist, Office of Economic Policy, Ministry of Finance; **James Milway**, Executive Director, Institute for Competitiveness & Prosperity; and **Mary Webb**, Senior Economist, Scotiabank, and Chair of the OCC's Finance & Taxation Committee.

Each panel member has extensive experience in studying provincial policy and economics.

For more information on the Queen's Park Liaison Forum, please contact Ian Cunningham at (416) 482-5222, extension 228.

The Enterprise Centre Presents the E2E Conference 2003

The E2E Conference & Showcase 2003 will be on **May 15th**, in conjunction with Entrepreneurship Week, at Sheridan College in Oakville, Ontario. The conference is an initiative of The Enterprise Centre that celebrates entrepreneurs and fosters education and networking opportunities that help mentor new entrepreneurs.

The conference was created to provide a unique opportunity to celebrate the accomplishments of Canadian entrepreneurs and foster the entrepreneurial spirit, through keynote presentations by accomplished entrepreneurs sharing their experiences openly, in plenary session presentations that address key topics of interest to entrepreneurs, and through networking opportunities throughout the conference.

This year it is in partnership with the Canadian Federation of Executive Entrepreneurs, whose mandate is to promote and celebrate

entrepreneurship in Canada, as well as to create a healthy national environment for entrepreneurial growth, prosperity and sustainability.

E2E is directed at entrepreneurs in the GTA and Golden Horseshoe regions. The organization plans to market the event through the media, web initiatives, and by invitation through regional Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade. Over 200 attendees are anticipated for this year's conference.

Chambers and Boards are encouraged to participate in the E2E Conference & Showcase 2003. For more information please visit the Enterprise Centre's website at www.enterprisecentre.com/e2e

Registrations will begin in March, please contact Pam at the Centre at (905) 825-2345 for more information.

Upcoming Events

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

- ☞ **OCCE Conference**, February 5 – 7, 2003
- ☞ **Queen's Park Liaison Forum**, February 7, 2003
- ☞ **Finance & Tax Committee Meeting**, February 11, 2003
- ☞ **Board of Director's Meeting**, February 20, 2003
- ☞ **Health Policy Committee Meeting**, February 21, 2003
- ☞ **Ontario Business Advisory Council**, February 25, 2003
- ☞ **Executive Committee**, March 6, 2003

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

OCC Releases Results of the 2002 Member Health Care Survey

On Monday, February 10, 2003, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce released the final results of the 2002 Health Survey report.

The OCC Health Survey collected responses from member Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Trade and corporate members, during December 2002.

The OCC will use the results to prioritize areas of focus and to assist in the development of policy positions.

Key results from the survey indicate that 64 per cent of members believe that the health system is a competitive advantage to Ontario business. Canada and the province need long-term stability in our health care system. The OCC urges the government to leverage this advantage within a balanced budget framework in order to foster an encouraging business environment.

Interestingly, nearly half of the respondents suggested a greater role for for-profit delivery in the system. The government may want to

review alternatives to financing the current system in order to maintain quality and improve access. Though the OCC supports a publicly-funded system, we will continue to explore this issue of private delivery.

In its final report on health care reform, the Kirby Commission suggested that the government dedicate a tax for health care in order to finance improvements in Canada's health system.

A majority of respondents (56.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the imposition of a dedicated health tax. Although there was a strong minority of respondents who did favour a dedicated tax to finance health care reform (34.2%).

A complete copy of the Health Survey Report and accompanying press release is available on the OCC website at www.occ.on.ca.

Martin & McGuinty Confirmed for OBACs

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce the recent confirmations of **Paul Martin** and **Dalton McGuinty** for two future Ontario Business Advisory Council meetings in March.

OBAC is a forum for business leaders to exchange ideas with senior political leaders.

OBAC also provides a stimulating atmosphere in which senior executives are able to network and consult with peers about concerns and issues affecting other industries.

The next OBAC session is scheduled with **John Baird**, Minister of Energy, for February 25, 2003. The first OBAC of the season in January was with The Honourable **John Manley**, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister. For more information on the meeting please visit our website at www.occ.on.ca.

OCC Begins Gearing Up for 2003 Annual General Meeting

Please mark your calendar for the OCC's **Annual General Meeting and Convention, May 2-4, 2003** in Brantford, Ontario.

The convention will be centred at the recently expanded Best Western Brant Park Inn and other Brantford venues.

The official ceremonies are scheduled to begin at 2:00pm on Friday May 2nd followed by the Annual General Meeting.

The program will be full of opportunities for delegates to network and socialize with other chamber leaders and to engage in policy making processes. The program will also feature addresses from key provincial political leaders in what is expected to be an election year.

In conjunction with the OCC's annual summit,

the Ontario Chamber of Commerce will be offering "Boot Camp for Chamber Volunteers", an orientation for chamber volunteer leaders, focusing on board governance and the roles and responsibilities of Directors, at 10:00am on Feb 2nd, followed by the annual Community Leadership Reception and Luncheon starting at 11:30am.

Complete details and registration forms will be forwarded shortly. Your participation is important. It ensures that the policies adopted by your OCC represent the consensus views of the membership. We look forward to seeing you in Brantford.

For more information on this year's AGM, please contact Regan Clarke at (416) 482-5222, extension 222.

Upcoming Events

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

- ☞ **Board of Director's Meeting**, February 20, 2003
- ☞ **Energy Task Force Meeting**, February 21, 2003
- ☞ **Health Policy Committee Meeting**, February 21, 2003
- ☞ **Ontario Business Advisory Council**, February 25, 2003
- ☞ **Ontario Business Advisory Council**, March 5, 2003
- ☞ **Executive Committee**, March 6, 2003

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Deputy Prime Minister John Manley Delivers a 'Mile Wide and an Inch Deep' Federal Budget

On February 18, 2003, John Manley delivered the federal government's budget plan. Dubbed as John Chrétien's "legacy budget" the plan marked healthy increases for each major sector including health care, infrastructure, child care, and the military.

As announced earlier, health care received an injection of \$34.8 billion over five years as outlined in the Health Care Accord. A total of \$3 billion has been allocated for a ten-year infrastructure plan. Nearly \$1 billion has been allotted for daycare over five years, and Manley announced a significant increase in support for poor families, increasing the National Child Benefit by \$3.1 billion over the next five years.

In preparation for a possible war in Iraq, and with recent efforts in Afghanistan, the government will distribute \$800 million a year for the next three years to defence with an immediate payment of \$270 million for other pressing needs.

The OCC continues to express its view that

Call for Policy Resolutions for 2003 Annual General Meeting & Convention

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce encourages member Chambers and Boards to submit their resolutions for the OCC's Annual General Meeting & Convention being held in Brantford from May 2nd to the 4th, 2003.

The deadline for submitting resolutions is **Friday, March 21, 2003 at 5:00pm**. Resolutions should be directed to Atul Sharma by email to atulsharma@occ.on.ca

Areas of focus for the resolutions should be related to Finance & Taxation, Health Policy, Transportation & Infrastructure and Education issues.

The AGM is an excellent opportunity for Chambers and Boards to provide direction on policy issues to the OCC.

To assist local chambers and boards in determining if an issue is appropriate for

the government's overarching goal should be to create a competitive economy, and as such, we believe that more focus should have been placed on key areas including debt reduction, competitive taxation, streamlining regulation and eliminating internal trade barriers.

The government's debt levels continue to remain high and we believe that they missed an opportunity to address this issue.

The feds offered a few tax reform measures. They plan to eliminate the capital tax within five years, increase the small business deduction limit to \$300,000 over four years, and increase the RRSP contribution limit to \$18,000 from \$13,500 by 2006.

These reforms are a good start, however, the country's tax regime is at the risk of becoming very uncompetitive in light of the recently announced U.S. fiscal plan.

The government should have also paid particular attention to red tape and internal

consideration, the OCC has developed a set of guiding principles. An issue must be provincial in scope, one that does not pit one industry against another, it should be an important matter of principle requiring the OCC to speak publicly, and finally, it should be an issue already on the legislative agenda or be of considerable concern to a majority of members.

After we've received all the member and committee resolutions, they will be posted on the OCC website for review. Appropriate committees will review the resolutions and provide their comments to the submitting chamber or board. Amended resolutions will be highlighted on the website. Prior to the AGM, a directory of final resolutions will be distributed.

Detailed notification of the resolutions process will soon be available on the OCC website.







trade barriers. Small-to-medium sized enterprises are affected most significantly by red tape. If the government streamlines regulation, there will be more opportunity to focus on creating more jobs and expanding business. Furthermore, Canada is a leader in international trade, however we are tied to an antiquated system of trade barriers between provinces.

The government allocated money to mitigate the impact of the Kyoto Accord. However, few details were provided on how the money would be allocated. The Ontario Chamber believes that the federal government should have pursued a NAFTA based agreement rather than the Kyoto protocol.

For more information on the federal budget, please contact Atul Sharma at the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

Upcoming Events

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

-  **Energy Task Force Meeting**, February 21, 2003
-  **Health Policy Committee Meeting**, February 21, 2003
-  **OBAC with John Baird**, February 25, 2003
-  **OBAC with Paul Martin**, March 5, 2003
-  **Finance Committee Meeting**, March 11, 2003
-  **OBAC with Dalton McGuinty**, March 26, 2003

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

OCC Welcomes Ottawa's Blueprint for Transportation

On Tuesday, February 25, 2003, **David Collenette**, Transport Minister of Canada, delivered Ottawa's plan for Canada's transportation industry.

The ten-year plan, *Straight Ahead*, will see many regulatory changes to the industry including environmental provisions, changes to the Canada Transportation Act, investments in infrastructure, and proposed amendments to the rail and air transportation sectors.

In a news release issued the same day, OCC President and Transportation Committee Chair welcomed many of the ideas outlined in the fed's transportation paper.

Congestion, city gridlock and the state of public transit are pressing concerns that need to be addressed as soon as possible. This plan is a welcome and important initiative to improving the transportation sector, which is a vital component to the success of the Ontario business community.

The plan arrives after years of consultations with stakeholders and other levels of government.

Paul Martin to Address the Ontario Business Advisory Council

Paul Martin is set to address members of the Ontario Business Advisory Council on **Wednesday, March 5, 2003**. This session promises to be an exciting exchange between senior business leaders of the province and the man widely regarded as the front runner in the federal liberal leadership race.

Paul Martin has been a Member of Parliament since 1988 and served as Minister of Finance from November 1993 until June 2002.

The majority of Martin's career in the private sector was as a business executive with Power Corporation of Canada and later as CEO of Canada Steamship Lines.

OBAC is an informal forum for the candid exchange of ideas between senior political

In February 2001, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce proposed the establishment of a transportation authority with a priority emphasis on the issues affecting the Greater Toronto Area. The OCC is encouraged that the federal government will begin exploring the viability of this option through their blueprint plan.

Urban congestion and setbacks at border crossings in the province have become the focus of attention not only at the federal government level, but also at the OCC.

In response to these issues, two separate task forces on Border Crossings and GTA & Golden Horseshoe issues have recently been approved by the Board of Director's. Efforts and resources will be focused on developing policies on these important and pressing provincial issues.

For more information on the government's plan *Straight Ahead: A Vision for Transportation in Canada*, please visit their website at www.tc.gc.ca.

For a copy of the OCC news release visit our website at www.occ.on.ca

officials and leaders of the Ontario business community. Business participants are restricted to senior business executives.

Upcoming meetings for the remainder of the year include Premier **Ernie Eves** and Opposition Leader **Dalton McGuinty**.

Since the new year began we have held meetings with Deputy Prime Minister **John Manley**, and most recently with the Minister of Energy, **John Baird**, who met with OBAC members to discuss the province's electricity system.

If you have a local member who is interested in joining OBAC please contact **Regan Clarke** at (416) 482-5222, extension 222.

OCC on the Road to ISO Certification

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce's objective to acquiring ISO 9001 certification is currently underway.

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.

The OCC's goal is to be certified by November 2003.

Upcoming Events

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

- ✍ **Education Committee Meeting**, March 4, 2003
- ✍ **OBAC with Paul Martin**, March 5, 2003
- ✍ **Finance Committee Meeting**, March 11, 2003
- ✍ **Deadline to Submit Policy Resolutions for AGM**, March 21, 2003
- ✍ **OBAC with Dalton McGuinty**, March 26, 2003
- ✍ **Queen's Park Liaison Forum**, April 11, 2003

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