

Due to the OCC's move to its new office last Friday we were unable to produce last week's Legislative Watch, so this week we are providing a special 2-page edition.

Governing Councilors to Meet November 22nd

The next meeting of the OCC's **Governing Council** is set for November 22nd at the **Albany Club** in Toronto, and in light of the recent provincial election it's an important one because the Governing Council is the overall policy setting body of the OCC.

At this meeting the GC will have the opportunity to review OCC policy directions and its priorities when dealing with the new government. Every Chamber of Commerce and Board of Trade in Ontario in good

standing is eligible to appoint one representative to the GC, and if you have not done so already we encourage you to do so in order that your interests can be represented at this important session.

You can confirm your appointee, or find out more details about this important meeting by contacting **Ian Cunningham** at 416 482-5222, ext. 228 or iancunningham@occ.on.ca.

New Rules on Food Imports into the U.S.

For any of your members involved in the importing of food products into the United States, it's important to note that a new set of rules that will radically change the way food imports are handled will come into effect December 12, 2003.

In addition to being required to register facilities which manufacture, process, pack or

hold food for consumption in the U.S. with the **Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**, companies are also required to provide advance notice of exports to the U.S. More information on the new regulations is available at www.fda.gov/oc/bioterrorism/furls/.

Job Connect a Chance to Help Unemployed Young People

Job Connect is a provincial program delivered by 21 colleges across the province, and is designed to help young unemployed people between the ages of 16 and 24 find jobs.

Last year the program assisted over 13,000 youths find employment by assisting employers with job fairs, providing training subsidies and matching candidates to the workforce.

Its activities in more than 300 communities across the province were aided by a variety of organizations including local Chambers of Commerce, Business and Economic Development Committees, local training boards and community and school advisory committees.

The OCC is Now Relocated

Just a reminder that the OCC is now ensconced in its new offices.

For your records our new address is:

**180 Dundas St. West, Suite 505,
Toronto, ON
M5G 1Z8**

Our phone numbers and e-mail addresses remain the same.

We encourage all OCC members to drop by and visit our new home when the opportunity arises.

OCC's V.P. Policy on the Move

It's with great regret that the OCC announces that **Atul Sharma**, our V.P Policy Development and Chief Economist is leaving to take up new position in the government of Dalton McGuinty.

Atul has served the OCC in various roles over his 6-year tenure, but most recently he was the cornerstone of our policy department, and in that capacity provided insight and intellect in helping the OCC and its members develop its policy priorities and its key messages to the government of the day.

We'll miss him, but wish him well in his new role, and trust he won't forget his old friends at the Chamber when we come knocking on his door.

His final day at the OCC will be November 14th.

Two Events for Importers & Exporters

For businesses either importing or exporting products there's two upcoming shows to which they might pay attention.

The first is the IMPEX Canadian Import/Export Expo at the national Trade Centre in Toronto November 18-20, followed by the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters 2003 Trade Conference at Toronto's Delta Chelsea Hotel, November 23-24.

For more information on IMPEX go to www.impexshow.com and for the

OCC Committees & Task Forces Update

Finance and Taxation

The Finance and Taxation Committee met on October 22, 2003. The Committee was updated on the recent meeting of the OCC Chairs and the upcoming 2004 Federal Pre-Budget Submission.

The 2004 Federal Pre-Budget presentation to the Government of Canada's Standing Committee on Finance took place on November 6, 2003.

Members discussed a first draft of the submission and its different elements.

Transportation & Infrastructure

The Transportation & Infrastructure Committee met on October 29, 2003 for a conference call to discuss a second letter to the government regarding the Mid-Peninsula Transportation Corridor.

The Burlington Chamber of Commerce was on line to discuss the chamber's position and how the draft could satisfy both chambers. Revisions were suggested and agreed upon and the letter will be revised and distributed for final approval before it is sent to the Minister of Transportation and the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

Health

The Health Policy Committee met on October 23, 2003 and discussed a possible communications strategy on the launch of the SARS brochure with Clive Hobson, VP of Communications.

The content of the brochure has been finalized and once the final sponsor logos are collected it will be ready to be laid out and printed.

Education

The Education Committee met on November 6, 2003 and discussed a draft letter to the new government urging them to begin or restart negotiations with the federal government for a

labour market development agreement to ensure that Ontario receives its fair share of training dollars.

Ontario remains the only province without such an agreement. Committee members also discussed their ongoing skilled trades shortage and apprenticeship reform strategy and reviewed a first draft of a survey aimed at business on this issue.

John Hertel reported that the committee continues to make strides in its objective of developing stakeholder relations.

Border Crossings Task Force

The Border Crossings Task Force met on October 14, 2003 and will be meeting next on November 12th to finalize its policy position paper outlining recommendations to the government on improving the Ontario-U.S. border crossings.

The report will be presented at the Governing Council meeting on November 22, 2003.

Energy Task Force

The Energy Task Force met on November 5, 2003 to discuss the OCC's position on the electricity rate cap and its next steps in developing a policy position for the new government with regards to energy supply and pricing issues.

The task force also reviewed the first draft of an energy brochure for OCC corporate and affiliate members. This was a suggestion put forth in response to August's power outage. The brochure provides information on what businesses and home owners need to know in the event of further power disruptions. This includes business contingency planning, sources of information and energy conservation tips.

Upcoming Events

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

- **OCC Board of Directors Meeting**, November 12, 2003

- **Finance & Taxation Committee Meeting**, November 13, 2003

- **Borders Task Force Meeting**, November 19, 2003

- **Energy Task Force Meeting**, November 20, 2003

- ...

- **Health Policy Committee Meeting**, November 21, 2003

- **Governing Council Meeting**, November 22, 2003

- **Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Meeting**, December 3, 2003

- **Education Committee Meeting**, December 4, 2003

- **Finance & Taxation Committee Meeting**, December 11, 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 or by email at rachelkagan@occ.on.ca.

Governing Council to Meet Saturday, November 22, 2003

This Saturday's Governing Council Meeting is your opportunity to participate in a review of the OCC's policy direction and priorities.

Every Chamber or Board in good standing is entitled to appoint one member to the Governing Council.

If you have not already done so there is still time to make your appointment by contacting **Erin Ashton** at (416) 482-5222, ext. 222 or erinashton@occ.on.ca.

For current GC members please take a few moments to confirm your attendance at this important meeting by contacting Erin at the above coordinates.

For your information Saturday's agenda is outlined below, and further information will be sent to you via e-mail later today.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

**Governing Council Meeting
Saturday, November 22, 2003
The Albany Club
91 King Street East
Toronto, ON**

DRAFT AGENDA

Registration and a continental breakfast will begin at 8:30am and the meeting will be called to order in the Main Dining Room at 9:00am.

| | | |
|-----|--|---------|
| 1) | Welcome and Opening Remarks - Chair, Susan Houston | 9:00 |
| 2) | Treasurer's Report - Wayne Munday | 9:10 |
| 3) | Business Plan Update - Len Crispino | 9:25 |
| 4) | <i>Break</i> | 9:45 |
| 5) | Guest Speaker - Phil Dewan | 10:00 |
| 6) | Policy Session I | |
| | a) Borders Task Force - Ryan Clarke | 11:00 |
| | b) Transportation Committee - Chair, Keith Robson | 11:15 |
| | c) Health Committee - Ryan Clarke | 11:25 |
| | d) Resolutions - Ed Fothergill, President, Hamilton Chamber | 11:35 |
| 7) | <i>Buffet Lunch</i> | 12:00pm |
| 8) | Guest Speaker - TBD | 12:40 |
| 9) | Policy Session II Finance & Taxation Committee - Chair, Mary Webb / Speaker TBD | 1:20 |
| 10) | Policy Session III Education Committee - Chair, John Hertel / Speaker TBD | 2:20 |
| 11) | Policy Session IV Energy Task Force - Chair, David Sword / Speaker TBD | 3:20 |
| 12) | Wrap Up and Termination - Susan Houston | 4:20 |
| 13) | Host Bar Reception | 4:30 |

Upcoming Events

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

- **Health Policy Committee Meeting**, November 21, 2003
- **Governing Council Meeting**, November 22, 2003
- **Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Meeting**, December 3, 2003
- **Education Committee Meeting**, December 4, 2003
- **Finance & Taxation Committee Meeting**, December 11, 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 or by email at rachelkagan@occ.on.ca.

Governing Council Wraps Up Business for 2003

There was a good turnout for the Governing Councilors meeting held at Toronto's Albany Club on Saturday, November 22 with representation from Chambers and Boards across the province, along with a cross section of corporate members. The meeting was hosted by OCC Chair **Susan Houston** and commenced with reports from OCC Treasurer **Wayne Munday** who reviewed the organization's finances, followed by President and CEO **Len Crispino** who presented the OCC's plans for 2004 including a review of two major initiatives. The first is a planned "Team Ontario" Business and Tourism Development tour to the four states with which Ontario conducts the lion's share of its cross border trade – New York, Michigan, Ohio and Minnesota, followed by a presentation on the planned **Ontario Economic Forum** which will take place June 2004 and involve representatives from business, government, labour and academia to discuss the province's economic future.

The guest speaker for the meeting was Premier **Dalton McGuinty's** former chief of staff **Phil Dewan**, who provided insights into

the Liberal party's governing priorities. In addition presentations were made by the OCC's committees and task forces – **Ryan Clarke**, borders and health; **Keith Robson**, transportation; **Mary Webb**, finance & taxation; **John Hertel**, education and **David Sword**, energy.

Two resolutions were tabled and approved by the council, the first proposed by the **Hamilton Chamber** calling for the creation of a Greater Toronto Transportation Authority specifically supporting the inclusion of the city of Hamilton in any GTATA that may be established, along with a recommendation that Hamilton also have an appropriate level of representation on the Board of Directors of a GTATA.

The second resolution, also tabled by the Hamilton Chamber, urges the government of Ontario to consider utilization of the St. Lawrence Seaway for transportation of all commodities and particularly inter-model traffic as an alternative to other modes.

Finance & Taxation Governing Councilors Poll

In addition to the regular matters of business at the Governing Council meeting, a brief poll was conducted during the **Finance & Taxation** policy session to gauge Governing Councilors' opinions on current finance issues in Ontario.

The questions posed were:

1. How fast should Ontario reduce its deficit, recognizing that spending restraints and

revenue measures may be necessary?

2. In a period of expenditure restraint, rank the top 3 priorities for new provincial spending.

3. If the deficit can be eliminated, what pace of debt reduction should be targeted?

The results of the poll can be found on the OCC web-site at

<http://www.occ.on.ca/2Gov.asp>

OCC Member Benefits from Global Payments

The OCC-Global Payments Visa and MasterCard merchant discount rate program is a terrific way for your members to save money. It offers an attractive merchant discount rate for both Visa and Mastercard of 1.82%. The program provides participating member merchants with a convenient amalgamated Visa and Mastercard statement at no extra charge. A variety of solutions is offered and available. Other cards such as American Express are processed free of charge. And proceeds can be transferred to the bank of the merchant's choice. Other associations may offer a lower marquis rate but when you investigate them you discover

that only one solution available (usually terminal-based, face-to-face transactions), there is a per item charge, a minimum bill amount, a settlement fee to close the merchant's terminal each day, a charge for processing other cards such as American Express, an extra charge for an amalgamated Visa and MasterCard fee, and in many programs, the merchant is forced to use a particular bank. When all is considered, the OCC-Global Payments merchant program is a great solution for many of your members. For details, check the OCC website under Member Discounts.

OCC Appoints New Vice President Policy Development

The OCC is pleased to announce that **Stuart Johnston** is its new V.P. Policy Development, replacing the recently departed **Atul Sharma**. Stuart joins the OCC from his current position as Executive Director and General Manager of the **Brampton Board of Trade**, and will commence his new role on January 5, 2004.

Prior to his current position at the Brampton B of T Stuart served for two years as its Policy Analyst and was responsible for drafting and advocating the business community's position on a wide range of issues affecting the city's corporate sector. He has also served on the OCC's **Transportation and Infrastructure Committee** for the past year and was recently selected by his colleagues as Chair for the **Chamber Executives of Ontario**.

Two Policy Submission Sent to Government

The OCC sent two policy submissions to the government this week, one to The Honourable Mary Anne Chambers, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities on the Labour Market Development Agreement, and the second to The Honourable Harinder Takhar, Minister of Transportation and his colleague The Honourable David Caplan, Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal on the Mid-Peninsula Transportation Corridor. Both these letters are posted on the OCC web-site at <http://www.occ.on.ca/2policysub.asp>.

Upcoming Events

- **Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Meeting**, December 3, 2003
- **Education Committee Meeting**, December 4, 2003

For more information on all committees, please contact **Rachel Kagan** at (416) 482-5222, Ext. 233 or by email at rachelkagan@occ.on.ca.