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THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

LA CHAMBRE DE COMMERCE DU CANADA



news@chamber.ca

Canadian Chamber applauds return to budget fundamentals

Yesterday's federal budget delivered the right message on fiscal management by reinstating prudence and contingency planning, creating a goal for debt reduction and by slowing the pace of government spending.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce believes that the government has heard our calls and delivered a back-to-basics budget that restores confidence in the government's fiscal management. The Chamber approves the government's plan to reallocate \$1 billion from low to higher priority programs and to identify at least \$3 billion annually in savings within four years to deal with newer priorities. The Canadian Chamber continues to advocate a three per cent cap on federal program spending based on the rate of inflation and population growth.

More detailed budget analysis was sent to all members late yesterday but is also available on the Chamber's Web site at <http://www.chamber.ca/cmslib/general/BudgetMarch232004.pdf>.

Border Coalition releases Third Report

The Canadian business community formed *The Coalition for Secure and Trade Efficient Borders* in September 2001. The Coalition combines the resources of over 55 of Canada's largest business associations, including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, and companies with the shared goal of improving Canada's borders. Last week, the Coalition released its latest report, "***Rethinking our Borders: Beyond the Plan***".

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce has identified the Canada-U.S. border, and its management, as one of the biggest challenges facing Canadian businesses.

The third report of the Coalition updates the progress made on recommendations outlined in the *Plan for Action*, issued in December 2001, and introduces areas for further improvement relative to the many developments that have occurred in the last two years.

Also outlined in this report are the next key steps that the Canadian and U.S. governments need to take to build upon the ***30-Point Plan*** and enhance current programs and policies as well as to introduce new directives that will facilitate the movement of legitimate goods and people across the Canada-U.S. border.

Members can view the report on the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Web site at <http://www.chamber.ca/cmslib/general/CoalitionReport040316.pdf>. For further information, contact Alexander Lofthouse, Senior Policy Analyst, (416) 868-6415, x234, alofthouse@chamber.ca.

501-350, rue Sparks St., Ottawa, Ontario K1R 7S8
Tel/Tél: (613) 238-4000 Fax/Télé: (613) 238-7643 www.chamber.ca info@chamber.ca
The Voice of Canadian Business – Le porte-parole des entreprises canadiennes

Canada and the European Union agree to a framework for a Trade & Investment Enhancement Agreement

Prime Minister Paul Martin, President of the European Commission Romano Prodi, and the current President of the European Union, Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern, met in Ottawa last week for the semi-annual *Canada-European Union Summit*. The three leaders looked at the enhancement of Canada-EU trade and investment relations and regulatory cooperation, and how to address 21st century challenges and opportunities. With this in mind, a *Framework for a Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement* - to be negotiated between Canada and the EU - was launched. The framework for a new *Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement* (TIEA) is designed to further stimulate the bilateral commercial relationship. The TIEA will move beyond traditional market access issues and offer concrete results to the business communities by reducing barriers to trade and investment flows. Negotiations are expected to begin this year.

As active participants in the *Canada-Europe Round Table* on business (CERT), the Canadian Chamber of Commerce and company executives met with Canadian Minister of International Trade James Peterson and EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy for a working dinner last week to discuss the negotiating framework for the TIEA. The discussions focused on CERT policy recommendations that have been submitted to the federal government and the European Commission. *For more information, contact Darrel Houlahan, Policy Analyst, (613) 238-4000, x 225, dhoulahan@chamber.ca*

Skilled Trades – A Career to Build On

Promoting Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship is a joint project between the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum and Skills/Compétences Canada, with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada providing the funding.

The issue of skills shortages, and the need for a concerted and effective approach to this issue, is the key driver behind this initiative. Skill shortages are expected to affect virtually every sector of the labour market, in every area of the country.

Launched in 2003, this project focuses on changing the perceptions of careers in skilled trades, and repositioning skilled trades as a first choice career option in the minds of Canadian youth, parents and educators. The end goal of this project is to encourage more young people to consider careers in skilled trades.

In conjunction with a media campaign in the spring of 2004, extensive regional consultations will be held with interested groups to determine what types of regional programs are already existing and which complimentary programs might be initiated to improve the visibility of trades and apprenticeship.

Details on the consultations and the development of a *Council of Champions* will be available shortly on the Canadian Apprenticeship Forum Web site at www.caf-fca.org. *For more information on the “Promoting Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Project”, contact Beverlie Cook, Project Manager, (613) 235-4004, bev_cook@caf-fca.org.*

Bank of Canada Issues New \$100 Bank Notes

Last week the Bank of Canada began circulation of Canada's new \$100 bank notes. The new notes will be distributed and become available across the country over the next two weeks.

The new \$100 note incorporates state-of-the-art security features designed to combat counterfeiting. There are four new security features that protect the \$100 bank note against counterfeiting: a metallic holographic stripe, a watermarked portrait, a windowed colour-shifting thread, and a see-through number. The note also incorporates enhanced versions of security features with which Canadians are already familiar, such as raised ink (intaglio), fine-line printing, and improved fluorescence under ultraviolet lighting. To help blind and vision-impaired

individuals identify the new \$100 bank note, it has a tactile feature (raised dots) and large, high-contrast numerals.

Since the unveiling of the new \$100 note, the Bank of Canada has been working with law-enforcement agencies, financial institutions, and the retail and hospitality industries to train their employees on the note's security features.

The Bank of Canada plans to complete the introduction of the new *Canadian Journey* series later this year when it issues the two remaining high-denomination bank notes (\$20 and \$50). All bank notes from all previous series remain legal tender.

For more information on Canadian bank notes and the new security features of the \$100 note, visit www.bankofcanada.ca/en/banknotes/.

Congratulations to Chamber Member Monsanto for their Stevie Award

Monsanto has been named ***Best Multinational Company*** in the first ***International Business Awards*** competition. The ***International Business Awards*** are a global, all-encompassing business awards program honoring great performance in the workplace. Monsanto will receive a 2004 Stevie Award at a ceremony this week in New York City. The awards honor companies that exhibit excellence in leadership, innovation, teamwork and integrity, surpassing industry standards.

The awards committee chose to honor Monsanto for projects that demonstrate the company's Monsanto Pledge principles at work - from the development of new technologies to improve food production, to transparency of scientific data, to charitable contributions and sharing of technology for humanitarian applications globally.

Companies from across the globe were eligible to compete and the 2004 awards attracted nearly 500 nominations from more than 30 countries. *Complete lists of international Stevie winners and other award details are available at <http://www.stevieawards.com/iba>.*

Quebec & Ontario businesses find on-line presence translates into savings and opportunities

For the past eight years, the Montreal-based company *Leading Edge* has run on-site training programs that teach airline pilots and airport ground crews how to safeguard aircraft from icing. But the assembly of key employees in one location to spend up to four hours studying ground de-icing and the anti-icing of aircraft has always required careful planning. The logistical challenge became even greater after 09/11 when the airline industry had even less flexibility to free up groups of air and ground crews at the same time.

Working with two student business advisors (SBAs) at Industry Canada's ***Student Connections*** Centre at John Abbott College in Ste-Anne-de-Bellevue near Montreal, the company decided to augment the company's operations and create state-of-the-art, computer-based training for aircraft de-icing.

After 18 months of design and development, *Leading Edge* launched its cutting-edge multimedia Web site (www.deicingbt.com) late last year and now gives pilots and ground crews the choice of pursuing via cyberspace the same industry standardized de-icing certification program they had previously only been able to obtain in a classroom.

Not only has the e-learning component provided savings to the company and its clients in terms of money and resources, but has also reduced training time by up to 50 per cent.

In Brantford, Ontario Brantford Hydraulics Inc. drew inspiration from *Student Connections* on how to better reach clients over the Internet.

After *Student Connections* SBAs at Wilfrid Laurier University's Student Connections Centre reviewed their Web site, the company (www.brantfordhydraulics.com) not only made the suggested improvements but also decided to extend their small business' online presence too. An electronic newsletter has been created to send out to customers that gives them information on products, tips and industry trends, and which features links that brings them back to the company's Web site. An e-commerce component to the Web site is in the works. Meantime, the company's *Student Connections*-inspired Web site is generating new business and the positive response has boosted the company's outlook for Brantford Hydraulics' ability to cast a wider sales net via the Internet in the future.

Student Connections provides small and medium-sized businesses with practical, customized e-commerce and Internet training. An Industry Canada initiative under the federal government's *Youth Employment Strategy*, Student Connections hires technology-savvy post-secondary students to assist businesses in getting their business on-line. For more information regarding the closest *Student Connections* centre call toll free 1 888 807-7777 or visit www.studentconnections.ca.

Calendar of Events

March 29, Ottawa - Trade Policy Day. Members invited to attend this event being held at the Westin Hotel Ottawa. This is a valuable opportunity to consult with senior government officials and Minister for International Trade Jim Peterson on a wide range of international issues.

Minister Peterson will release the ***State of Trade 2004*** report at the luncheon. The report is the Department of International Trade's annual report card on the performance of Canada's economy, and details Canada's trade and investment performance for 2003. Information is available on the Chamber's Web site at <http://www.chamber.ca/cmslib/general/March29Reg.pdf>.

April 16th - New York - Breakfast Briefing "The New Normal: Ensuring the New Security Conscious Border Does Not Disrupt Your Business Objectives"

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce is co-sponsoring this event being organized by Fraser Milner Casgrain LLP. Canadian Chamber of Commerce members, who may be in the New York area on April 16, are encouraged to attend.

Participants will learn about new initiatives undertaken by NAFTA partners to ensure that trade continues to flow freely throughout North America while simultaneously identifying potential pitfalls in the new barriers that are being erected to ensure that personnel or goods are not unnecessarily hindered by these new measures.

To register, or for further information, contact Melissa Howard, melissa.howard@fmc-law.com (212) 218-2995. There is no cost, but space is limited.

April 26-27, New York, "Doing Business with the United Nations"

Various business organizations and the Canadian Mission to the United Nations in New York are supporting this seminar in New York. UN organizations spend \$US 4.6 billion each year on goods and services and are constantly seeking new suppliers. Canadian business needs to be more aware of the market opportunities that the UN offers for Canadian products. For more information visit www.nexcoseminar.com or contact Bob Keyes, (613) 238-4000, x223, bkeyes@chamber.ca.

May 2-8, Emergency Preparedness Week Coordinated nationally by Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC) and delivered locally through the active participation of provincial and territorial Emergency Measures Organizations. All provinces and territories are participating in ***Emergency Preparedness Week 2004***. To help ensure consistent national messaging, PSEPC has provided an online promotional kit that includes newspaper articles, news releases and sample letters and more. The kit can be viewed at www.ocipep.gc.ca/promo/index_e.asp.