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THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
LA CHAMBRE DE COMMERCE DU CANADA



news@chamber.ca

Clarification of Government's Intent on Private versus Public Health Care Delivery

The members of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce have a strong interest in the future sustainability of Canada's health care system. The Chamber's submissions to the Romanow Commission, and other studies on this important subject, have indicated that the Chamber is a strong supporter of the publicly funded system. The Canadian Chamber has raised constructive suggestions on how to increase the efficiency and accountability of the system.

As well, with a view to ensuring better access by Canadians to health care services and to assist in meeting the challenge of future sustainability, the Chamber has been an advocate for increasing the participation of the private sector in the publicly funded system. Without such participation, the Chamber is concerned that Canada will not be able to sustain quality health care in the future.

With health care promising to be a key issue in the upcoming federal election campaign and as a result of recent comments by Health Minister Pierre Pettigrew, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce has sent a letter to Prime Minister Paul Martin asking for clarification on his government's policy vis-à-vis health care delivery – public or private. *To view the letter that the Chamber sent earlier this week to the prime minister, go to <http://www.chamber.ca/cmslib/general/Martin040504.pdf>.*

Prime Minister and U.S. President Must Meet Annually

Prior to last week's meeting between Prime Minister Paul Martin and President George Bush, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce urged the prime minister to propose holding an annual meeting between the leaders of the two countries. The suggestion for this annual meeting was made in a letter to the prime minister in which the Canadian Chamber also outlined other issues that should be put forward to the president.

The Chamber believes that to better manage the Canada-US relationship, both leaders must meet at least once a year at a planned summit where regular and frequent meetings between the leaders would work to ensure progress on key issues of mutual concern.

With regards to Canada-U.S. relations, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce also applauded last week's government announcement of its security plan, and particularly how it will help ensure that the border between Canada and the U.S. remains open to the movement of legitimate goods and people.

To view the letter sent to the Prime Minister last week, go to <http://www.chamber.ca/cmslib/general/Martin040427.pdf>. For further information, contact Alexander Lofthouse, Senior Policy Analyst, (416) 868-6415, x234, alofthouse@chamber.ca.

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The Voice of Canadian Business – Le porte-parole des entreprises canadiennes

Canadian Chamber meets with Competition Commissioner

Earlier this week, the Canadian Chamber and some of its members took the opportunity to dialogue with the recently appointed Competition Commissioner Sheridan Scott. The intent of the meeting was to outline the Canadian Chamber's policy positions relative to competition issues focusing on the reforms proposed to the *Competition Act*.

The Chamber's main concerns are that the reforms, which are substantial, would increase costs to business, create a culture of litigiousness in Canada, and open businesses to a triple penalty by introducing Administrative Monetary Penalties (AMPs) civil cause of action and restitution for infringement of the civil provisions of the Act. Changes to the criminal provisions of the Act would decrease business certainty by potentially capturing a wide array of normal business practice.

It is imperative to keep these concerns at the forefront of the Commissioner's files; the Canadian Chamber of Commerce will continue to do so on its members' behalf.

For further information on this meeting, contact Kasia Majewski, Policy Analyst, (613) 238-4000, x251, kmajewski@chamber.ca

Food & Drug Administration (FDA) Bioterrorism Update

The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) is now in its second phase of enforcement on the prior notice of imported food shipments and the required registration of food facilities under the *Bioterrorism Act of 2002*. On May 13, Phase III will introduce drastically stepped-up penalties, and full enforcement of the rules, including outright refusal of food imports for which prior notice has not been properly given, will begin on August 12.

The FDA has announced a reopening of the comment period for the interim final rules for facility registration and prior notice, and, in a positive development, has also announced plans to increase the integration of its own prior-notice and targeting systems with those of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (USCBP). Members may recall that USCBP introduced a totally separate system of prior notice for imports to the U.S. under the *Trade Act of 2002*, and co-ordination between USCBP and the FDA has been a major issue for the Canadian Chamber working on this file.

Other developments related to the Bioterrorism Act:

- The FDA has issued an updated Q&A “guidance document” on the *Prior Notice Interim Final Rule*. This document, which is designed to help industry comply with the new legal requirements under the Prior Notice rule, is available at: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~pn/pnqagui2.html>.
- On April 14th, the FDA released an updated, 135-page long *Industry Guidance Document*. The document lists, and provides written description of HTS numbers flagged in CBP entry system, both numbers that apply to foods FDA believes prior notice is required and those that may apply. It is available at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/htsguid2.html>.
- Publication of the final rules implementing the recordkeeping and administrative detention provisions of the *Bioterrorism Act*, originally scheduled for March, is now expected in late May.

For further information, contact Alexander Lofthouse, Senior Policy Analyst, (416) 868-6415, x234, alofthouse@chamber.ca.

Chamber Participates in Trade Corridors Conference

Bob Keyes, the Canadian Chamber's Senior Vice-President, International, spoke last week at a Trade Corridors Conference in Niagara on the Lake sharing a platform with his counterpart from the US Chamber of Commerce.

The conference explored the various dimensions of trade corridors as part of the Canada-U.S. trading relationship. Presentations from the conference will be posted at www.tradecorridors.com

Canada Post Announces 2004 Literacy Awards

The Canada Post Literacy Awards were established more than a decade ago to discover and acknowledge the achievements of Canadians who have made a special effort or an important contribution to literacy.

Today the awards have become Canada's only national honour dedicated to recognizing grassroots literacy initiatives and celebrating the achievements of both learners and those who have helped them learn to read and write.

This year's awards contain a significant change in that the eligibility criteria has been expanded to include English Second Language (ESL) and French Second Language (FSL) learners, educators and programs.

There are four award categories. One of these awards is Business Leadership Award, which recognizes the contribution to literacy made by businesses in Canada. This award honours a single business organization that has demonstrated its commitment to learning by establishing or supporting literacy or ESL/FSL programs in the workplace or community.

Entries in this category should describe how the efforts of the nominated companies have contributed significantly to improving reading and writing skill levels, and outline any innovative approaches taken to develop, administer or support their programs.

This award has been presented at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting for the past few years.

Award information including criteria, nomination format, submission deadlines and more is on-line at www.canadapost.ca/literacyawards.

Calendar of Events

May 29-31, 2004, Toronto, ON

The Forum for International Trade Training (FITT) holds its national conference. Program elements include a plenary session titled "World Economic Outlook", and workshops such as Corporate Social Responsibility, Corruption and International Business: A Case Simulation, Market Access to China, a business case on how to develop your Competitive Intelligence, and a session highlighting Canadian Success Stories. *For a detailed program and other conference information, visit <http://www.fitt.ca/conference/2004/>.*

June 14-16, 2004 Toronto, ON

Bangladesh Trade Show - The High Commission of Bangladesh and the Export Promotion Bureau of Bangladesh (EPB) are hosting this trade fair of approximately 30 manufacturers and exporters from Bangladesh who will be displaying their products such as: ready-made garments (woven), and other textiles, handicrafts, frozen food and more. The show will provide a good opportunity for Canadian importers and Bangladeshi producers to engage in business matching. It may be mentioned that since January 1, 2003, Bangladesh enjoys duty-free, quota-free access to the Canadian market. *For more information, contact Mamunur Rahman Khalili, (613) 234-3633, bangla@rogers.com.*

June 23-25, 2004, Calgary, AB

"Security and Prosperity in a Dynamic Global Economy" is the theme of the International Trade and Technology Summit. This summit will touch on homeland security, next generation technology, resource concerns, cross-border expansion and urban sustainability – all important challenges for North American and international business. *For more information visit the summit Web site at www.calgarysummit.com.*

▪ *July 10 – 17, 2004*

Globe Trade Mission to Nigeria - Canadian executives are invited to join a team of other business development and trade executives on a viable seven-day trade mission to Nigeria. This tour, which will visit three major cities, will involve direct meetings and mini seminars with potential major clients and partners in both government and business.

This trade mission will be of particular interest to companies in the following sectors: power production and transmission, telecom, information tech, oil and gas, engineering, technical services, manufacturing of consumer goods, housing construction, transportation, sales and marketing and others.

For more information, contact Eugene Nzeribe, Globe Marketing International Corp., (613) 270-9800, enzeribe@globe-canada.com or visit the Web site at www.globe-canada.com.