

BRIAN GATIEN'S SPEECH - POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2008

Good morning.

Poverty reduction makes good economic sense.

My name is Brian Gatien and I am here as the Chair of the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce.

In February of this year, the Chamber formally adopted support for the Social Planning Council's Community Strategy to Reduce Poverty.

A Task Force determined that the Chamber's focus would be on two areas of the report dealing with affordable housing and transportation.

As the ‘Voice of Business’ in our community, the mission of the Chamber is to advocate for business and COMMUNITY prosperity.

Let me be clear, the Chamber’s interest is the improvement of the economic conditions of our members.

At the same time however, we also realize that to grow the overall wealth of the community, a concerted effort to tackle poverty must be undertaken in order to improve the foundation of the community.

By ensuring that we do our part as responsible and prosperous citizens, we are better positioned to enjoy the full benefits of a strong, stable and secure future.

So how does the business community fit into the poverty picture?

To answer that question, I reflect back on the axiom I tend to use when concluding my remarks to Chamber members: “Do Good Business”

And what is “good business”?

Some will say that customer service or employee creativity play an important role. Others may point to technology and innovation as generators of efficiency in the workplace.

These elements are critical for achieving business success;

However, the Chamber also believes that advocating for poverty reduction is another component that is just as central to improving business results.

When the Social Planning Council of Greater Sudbury released its strategy for poverty reduction earlier this year, it made a compelling link between poverty, business and overall community achievement.

In fact, the report made it abundantly clear that reducing poverty has a direct influence on a communities overall economic achievement and illustrated how poverty levels can affect costs related to health care, social services and criminal justice.

The Chamber of Commerce adds its voice to call for a strategy to reduce poverty in Greater Sudbury -

And I commit to you that the Chamber will continue to advocate for a formulation of a

progressive policy on social infrastructure, particularly in the areas of affordable housing and transportation.

- Affordable housing so there is no scramble to find a place to live...**
- Transportation so that if someone living in the downtown needs to get to work in the Valley, they can.**

The Chamber will continue to specifically advocate for these areas of the Poverty Reduction Strategy -

And, in addition, will support the establishment of a human services planning and policy development body at the municipal level.

We believe that an integrated approach to municipal planning includes planning and

developing social infrastructure on an equal footing with economic development and environmental initiatives.

I am encouraged by the attendance today and urge all of you to keep working on this very important community issue.

The Chamber believes successful communities nurture business prosperity and business prosperity generates community prosperity – and community includes everyone.

Thank you very much.