

## President's Report

February 3<sup>th</sup> 2016

This organization has and continues to play an important role in our communities along the Eastern Shore.

Several years ago we established goals of building our economy, and maintaining our institutions. Our various committees have been working hard this year to achieve these goals.

We have many challenges facing us as do most rural communities in Nova Scotia as well as across Canada. We need employment opportunities, we need infrastructure improvements, and we must find ways to stem and reverse the outmigration of our youth.

I am delighted to see some young entrepreneurs starting and running successful businesses in our area. We have Trevor Gammon Home Hardware, Chris Snow with a new mink farm, Trevor and Michelle Munroe with Sober Island Oysters, Doug Haynes and George Purcell, with carpentry businesses, and Becky Atkinson is also starting a new venture.

Also, with the help of the Chamber, the Eastern Shore Wildlife Association has been rejuvenated and is now successfully operating again, with one of our directors, Doug Stein, as vice president.

These are some of the many people and businesses in our area that driving and growing our economy.

This list clearly shows that we can improve our local economy, so we can work and live in this great part of Nova Scotia.

Our various committees have been working diligently toward these goals in the following ways:

Our marina group has had studies done on one possible site for a marina in Sheet Harbour. This site has proven to be unsuitable so the committee is now focused on the site at the head of the harbour. They will also be installing seven moorings in the harbour in the spring.

The multi-purpose centre committee has been somewhat inactive as there is nothing that they can do until the government announces the site for the proposed new school. To date, they have not been forthcoming with any decision.

Our Port Authority is actively searching for new business for our port. Hopefully in the near future there will be an announcement regarding another business at the port that will mean more employment in our area.

Your directors have had many meetings this year on your behalf. We have met with various politicians including, MP Sean Fraser, MLA & Minister of Natural Resources Lloyd Hines, Councillor David Hendsbee, ACOA representative Shannon Chambers, and of course Senator Tom McInnis.

We have a meeting scheduled for this Sunday with our Member of Parliament Sean Fraser to discuss the upcoming infrastructure renewal fund. We will be discussing with him how we can acquire some of that funding to go toward the projects of the Chamber.

The Sheet Harbour CoC and Civic Affairs continues to be a partner with the Nova Scotia Nature Trust, ACOA, Lake Charlotte Heritage Society, Dept. of Natural Resources, NS Tourism Agency , DEANS, and the Musquodoboit Harbour and area Chamber of Commerce and Civic Affairs, in the STEP program that will result in greatly enhancing our tourism and related businesses.

We have a committee that is working on the MacPhee House enhancement and town square project.

A by-laws committee is actively working to update our by-laws. They hope to have them ready for presentation to the membership this spring.

A committee of one, thanks Ed, is working on High speed internet service to create better residential and business service in our area.

We are working to secure a lease DNR property at the mouth of West River which includes the Art Park and trails on the west side and the area around the MacPhee House on the east side.

This past year the tank has been removed and the land has been remediated.

We had a successful spring banquet, with Dr. Susanna Fuller speaking about the Ivany Report and other interesting topics. We have plans well under way for this year's spring banquet which will be discussed later in the meeting.

The New East River Bridge has opened– Grand opening walk organized by our chamber. Special thanks to Susan Boutilier for spearheading this great event.

We sponsored the community tree lighting. Christmas wreaths were put up from bridge to bridge. Thanks to those who helped put up and take down, Donald Rutledge, Terry Rutledge, Rick Rutledge, Angus Moser, Billy Gammon, and Becky Atkinson. Also, thanks to Terry for putting up and taking down the birdhouses.

Regarding the walking bridge on the West River, I have met with DNR staff, and found out that our Chamber does in fact own that bridge. The chamber, in 2003, signed a contract with DNR to take ownership of the bridge and in doing so, became responsible for maintenance of the bridge.

Our Chamber is a member in good standing of the Atlantic Chambers of Commerce, which is our parent organization.

The ACC Vision: "ACC will be a strong credible unified voice for business and will provide excellent service and maximum value to our members."

ACC Mission: "To be-The strong, credible, and unified voice for business, fostering ongoing economic development."

It seems clear that their focus is on the businesses in their organization. Our directors have been discussing the fact that our Chamber could perhaps be doing more to provide support for our business members. That in no way means that we will be relenting on our Civic Affairs responsibilities.

To help achieve this we have formed a Business committee. We will hear from that committee in a few minutes.

In order for us to continue our success, we must have the support and involvement of as many people as possible. We need all of the members to be involved in the activities of the Chamber. All of our committees are open to all members and I encourage all of you to participate whenever you can. We want all the businesses in our area to be part of our Chamber. Also, we must continue to work with all of the communities along our Eastern Shore to attract business and infrastructure to our area.

Thank you all for your support throughout this year. Thanks to the many committee chairs and hardworking members.