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## Planning for the Chamber's Future

The Board of Directors recently participated in a day long strategic planning session to prepare our program of work for the term ahead and outline a long-term strategy for our organization and staff succession.

During this term our strategic objectives will focus on:

- A campaign to encourage "Shop Local" and support for local businesses.
- Transportation and Access - In light of the defeat of the transportation plebiscite, we will work with local and regional representatives to identify sustainable funding solutions for transportation infrastructure and expansion to serve our growing community.
- Business Attraction & Retention - In partnership with the City and Township we hope to identify gaps in products and services for local residents and businesses that must shop elsewhere for products and services. It is our desire to create a list of potential businesses to complement our existing business community, diversify our economy, prepare for the projected growth, and to provide good jobs close to home.
- Member Engagement - We will continue to explore quality programs, benefits, and events to encourage increased participation from the membership. We will reach out to the members with brief surveys to seek your input on programming, advocacy, and



business issues.

During September, the Board will research and seek input from the members with regards to the Trans Mountain Pipeline project that will have a significant impact on Langley. We will attempt to identify the pros and cons of the pipeline as well as seek answers to any questions the membership may have.

This issue of The Chamber Voice newsletter contains a complete list of Committees and Task Forces. The Chairs will be preparing their programs and soliciting volunteers in the coming weeks. If you are interested in volunteering and participating, please contact Executive Director Lynn Whitehouse at the Chamber office.

You will also find information on a new and improved Sponsor of the Month opportunity. The Board has approved an expansion of the benefits in the program and new value pricing. If you are interested in reserving a month or wish further information please contact Jaclyn Van Den Berg at the Chamber office.

In closing, I wish to encourage and invite all members to advise any Board member or office staff with any questions you have concerning our organization and with any suggestions you may have for improvement or new programs. We answer to you - our membership - and all suggestions will be considered. Working together, we will continue to grow the Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce and strengthen the Voice of Business for our thriving business community.

*Scott Johnston,  
President*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR! Upcoming Chamber Events

**August 5**  
Monthly Mingle  
at Townhall  
Public House

**August 19**  
Small Business Strategies  
for USA Marketing  
Lunch & Learn

**August 19**  
Open Late for Business at the  
Langley Community Farmers  
Market

**August 27**  
Networking on the Fraser  
with GLCC  
& Port Metro

**September 15**  
Dinner Meeting

**October 29**  
Business Excellence Awards  
For event and registration details:  
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## GLCC ADVOCACY UPDATE

# Online Municipal Voting

The mission of the Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce is to foster a positive business environment by providing members with leadership, advocacy and services of value. Executive Director, Lynn Whitehouse, and select Board members recently submitted four resolutions at the BC Chamber Annual General Meeting in Prince George and all were successful at received support of the majority. Over the next few issues of The Chamber Voice newsletter, we will be sharing these resolutions so you can learn more about how the GLCC supports our community, and advocates on behalf of our members. If you have any questions about the Chamber's advocacy efforts, please feel free to call Lynn at 604-371-3770.

The success of businesses in B.C. is directly impacted by the policies of our municipal and provincial governments such as:

- Business tax levels, including income taxes, capital taxes, commodity taxes
- Property tax levels, including the relative proportions to individuals and businesses
- Various regulations that impact the efficiency of doing business in the Province and/or community, i.e. employment standards, health and safety standards, environmental standards, insurance regulations

As a Province, we are looking to create a more successful business environment and economy. Measures such as cost reductions, improving efficiency and reducing red tape are measures to facilitate such success. The current voter participation levels in municipal and provincial elections are extremely low and signal very poor engagement of the constituents. Province wide, in the 2014 municipal elections, turnout according to Civic Info BC was 33.3%, hardly a clear representation of public input. CBC News posted on November 19, 2011 that, "Municipal voter turnout in BC has dropped to the lowest in Canada." Overall, statistics from Elections BC show a decline in provincial voter participation from 77.66% in 1983 to 50.99% in 2009 (voter turnout in 2013 was slightly higher at 55.32%).

This low turnout poses the following risks:

- Lack of government accountability to implement policies that positively impact business success
- Implementation of policies that do not represent the will of the majority of constituents, i.e. biased by minority views
- Further voter apathy as voters feel less ability to influence the public policy process

Internet voting is a method that reduces many potential barriers and therefore can positively impact engagement. Internet voting has strong public support<sup>1</sup>. Other municipalities in Canada have previously conducted municipal Internet voting. For example, for the 2014 municipal election, the City of Kingston introduced remote voting (online and phone) for advanced voting purposes only, and saw a 33% increase in advance voting, leading to a 2.8% increase in voter turnout overall<sup>2</sup>. This experience demonstrates the desire of Canadian voters to use technology for the elections process. It also suggests that there is potential over time for further gains in voter turnout. Furthermore, in BC, both major political parties have already endorsed the concept by using online voting options for party members in leadership votes since 2011.

Internet voting can provide the following direct and indirect benefits:

- provide easier access to time constrained voters
- reduce overall apathy as voters feel their vote is accurately counted and does in fact have an influence
- allow business owners, particularly sole proprietors, to improve their accessibility to voting
- enables people with disabilities to vote by themselves, easily and in secrecy
- It is expected that e-voting leads to more reliable results

since human error is excluded

Internet voting has not been implemented within BC to date because of concerns such as:

- Internet hacking;
- Technical difficulties; and
- Difficulty in verifying voter identification
- Lack of evidence that internet voting will increase the turnout at the polls

In this day and age of technology, the internet is an accepted method of communicating sensitive and confidential information safely. The business community transacts routinely via the internet with security. Municipalities in Ontario have already demonstrated their ability to design effective and secure systems, and this is constantly improving with audit and verification procedures. In October 2014, about one-quarter of the municipalities in Ontario (98 out of 414) offered internet voting in municipal elections<sup>3</sup>. Voters could choose, which voting channel they wanted to use. The municipality of Markham has already effectively dealt with voter identification with a system that required login to the system prior to registering. The voters were issued an access code and had to provide their address and date of birth to mitigate this difficulty, similar to applying for a homeowners grant.

There may exist new risks with internet voting, but all systems have risks and generally these risks can be addressed and mitigated over time.

In 2012, the Chief Electoral Officer formed the Independent Panel on Internet Voting following an invitation of the BC Attorney General to examine opportunities and challenges related to the potential implementation of internet-based voting as a channel for provincial and municipal elections in BC<sup>4</sup>. The panel recommended that the Province not implement internet voting at this time. However, it did conclude "that internet voting has the potential to provide some benefits for administering local government elections and provincial elections in British Columbia, and that the most significant potential benefit of internet voting is increased accessibility and convenience for B.C. voters." Although, current evidence does not consistently demonstrate a significant increase in voter turnout with internet voting, there is not sufficient data to negate the potential positive benefits. In fact, technology adoption has commonly occurred on a bell curve, with limited early adoption before the majority follows. Internet voting is likely to follow the same model, provided that good communications tools are in place to support the success of early adopters. With regards to security, the issues can be overcome with a focus on secrecy of the vote, verifiability, and voter authentication.

The Panel's report stated that "weighing the benefits and challenges to implementing internet voting in specific circumstances is the role of policy makers." The Chamber believes that the panel did not take a long term view in its report. The panel also provided useful recommendations on how the Province can implement internet voting:

- Take a province-wide coordinated approach to internet voting.
- Establish an independent technical committee to evaluate internet voting systems and support jurisdictions that wish to implement approved systems.
- Evaluate any internet voting system against the principles established by the panel (which includes Accessibility, Ballot anonymity, Individual and independent verifiability, Non-reliance on trustworthiness of the voter's device(s), One vote per voter, Only count votes from eligible voters,

*continued on next page*



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## Chamber Recommends Online Municipal Voting

from previous page

Process validation and transparency, Service availability, and Voter authentication and authorization).

If we are committed to reduction of red tape and generating efficiencies, on-line voting can be an effective tool to facilitate such success. By maintaining the current legislation and processes under

Elections BC we are effectively avoiding the opportunities to eliminate unnecessary labor costs and streamline the overall voting timeline process (from ballot creation to completion of count verification and reporting). This could save a significant amount of tax dollars and public resources.

### Conclusion

The potential benefits of internet voting can reduce barriers to access and positively align the voting system with other preferred technology increasingly being used by a large component of the population.

### THE CHAMBER RECOMMENDS

That the Provincial Government:

1. commence a plan to implement a province wide approach to an electronic ballot system for the 2018 municipal elections;
2. amend the appropriate legislation to allow for the option of electronic ballots in municipal elections; and
3. establish an independent technical committee to evaluate internet voting systems to ensure the Elections BC criteria are met (i.e. accessibility, Ballot anonymity, Individual and independent verifiability, Non-reliance on trustworthiness of the voter's device(s), One vote per voter, Onlycount votes from eligible voters, Process validation and transparency, Service availability, and Voter authentication and authorization)

~ Submitted by the Greater Langley, Abbotsford and Penticton & Wine Country Chambers of Commerce

- [1] Elections Canada has shown considerable support for online voting, as noted in a 2009 report on the matter.
- [2] City of Kingston: Report to the Administrative Policies Committee (Report Number AP-15-009)
- [3] According to Ace Project: <http://aceproject.org/ace-en/focus/e-voting/e-voting-opportunities>
- [4] <http://www.internetvotingpanel.ca/docs/recommendations-report.pdf>

### MEMBER BENEFIT:

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edge to offer e-commerce to your customers. Both FirstData and VersaPay have online shopping cart and payment options to add to your website. Mobile terminals are available through either provider as well. Make sure to choose the right provider for your businesses particular needs. While with VersaPay, merchants that have an average transaction size of over \$100.00 can get their transaction fees waived, FirstData provides access to secure gift cards and customer loyalty cards for businesses of any size.

For more information on these services, please contact Chantelle at the Chamber office at 604-371-3770 or [info@langleychamber.com](mailto:info@langleychamber.com). Visit [www.langleychamber.com](http://www.langleychamber.com) to see a list of all the current member benefits.

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## 2015-2016 Chamber Committees

If you are interested in participating in any of the Chamber's committees or task forces, please contact Lynn Whitehouse, Executive Director, at 604-371-3770 or [lynn@langleychamber.com](mailto:lynn@langleychamber.com).

### Committees & Task Force Leaders

- Business Attraction & Retention – Scott Johnston
- Transportation & Access Task Force – Kristine Simpson/Garth White
- Shop/Support Local Business Campaign – Lynn Whitehouse
- Chamber Transition & Succession Committee – Jack Nicholson/Janis Ryder/Sherri-Lee Woycik
- Advocacy Committee – Scott Johnston
- Membership Engagement Committee – Mike Morrison/Rick Barnett
- Not-For-Profit Committee – Claude Choquette/Janis Ryder
- Celebration of Excellence Task Force – 2015 Paul van Koll, 2016 Brad Kiendl
- Golf Tournament Task Force – Claude Choquette, Brand Kiendl

### City & Township Appointments

- Township of Langley Ag Advisory – Tammy Rea
- Township of Langley Economic Development – Tammy Rea
- Tourism Langley – Claude Choquette
- CN/CP Community Advisory Committee – Scott Waddle
- City of Langley Safety Advisory – Rick Barnett
- City of Langley Crime Prevention Task Force – Claude Choquette
- City of Langley Homelessness Task Force – Lynn Whitehouse
- City & Township Healthier communities Partnership – Lynn Whitehouse

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Being a GLCC Sponsor of the Month is the best way to get your message to your fellow Chamber members and to the Langley business community. The program allows you to take full advantage of all of the Chamber's promotional avenues including: promotion at the Dinner Meeting (Chamber's most well attended monthly event), speaking opportunity at the Dinner Meeting, website promotion, email marketing, newsletter profile and social media promotion.

**Cost: \$500 + GST**

To book your month, or for more information on the program, please contact:  
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SHERRI-LEE WOYCIK, Social Media Minder

New Member Spotlight

Please join us in welcoming the newest Chamber members!

Pictured (L-R):  
Langley Meadows Community Association,  
Lucid Water Co. Ltd., Sources Community  
Resource Centre, Comfort Keepers, Phase II  
Auto Detailing Inc., Extra Foods, Kyle Getty  
– Personal Real Estate Corporation and All  
of Oils, Wholesome Oils and Vinegars.

Not Pictured: Broco Auto Glass, Gager Electrical Consultants, Horizon Glass Ltd., MIS Solutions Canada, ULC, Marie Leginus Farrier, Norm McKay Excavating and Prairie Coast Equipment.

For more details about all Chamber members please visit [www.langleychamber.com](http://www.langleychamber.com) for a complete Membership Directory.



9 Ways Freelancers Can Get Paid on Time and Avoid Deadbeat Clients

Cash flow management for freelancers is more than just finding clever ways to save money personally and professionally. It means getting paid for the services you provide but that, unfortunately, requires more than sending out an invoice and then sitting back waiting for your payment. You also have bills to pay and if you don't have the funds, then you risk defaulting on the gadgets and services that keep your business afloat. Here is what I've learned about getting paid from 15 years as a freelance accountant and small business owner;

**1. Be known as a professional.**  
Your reputation isn't just important to attract and retain your current clients, it can actually play a part in getting paid on time. If you're rude to clients, late on projects, deliver sub-par work and have a website that screams amateur, then why would a client make paying your invoice a priority?  
Prove to clients that you are a true professional worth hiring by always being polite, exceeding goals on time, sharing reviews and showcasing your portfolio on your website.

**2. Do some homework on prospective clients.**  
When you are approached by a prospective client you should do a little digging. Search online for any red flags from your fellow freelancers about the client. You may be able to view consumer reviews on the Better Business Bureau from other consultants who have dealt with the client in the past and were left with a bad taste in their mouth. You should also review their website to make sure that everything appears to be on the up and up.  
In short, if you know that the client could become a potential headache, then why would you want to take a chance with them?

**3. Be flexible with your rates.**  
What happens when you're approached by a client, but they can't afford your rates? Do you decline their business? Or, are you

willing to be flexible?  
This isn't saying you should always give clients a break. You deserve to get paid for what you're worth. It just means if you want to attract clients you want to be flexible with your rates. This is especially true when you're just starting out, since this will add to your experience and maybe earn you some referrals.

When deciding on rates you usually have three options:  
Hourly fees: You can use sites like Careers in Business to learn how much consultants in your area are charging per hour. Then, use a different invoicing tools with a solid time tracker to help you with managing your hours.  
Project rates: You can also charge a fixed amount for a project. One way to figure this rate out is by estimating how many hours you believe it will take to complete the project, multiply that amount by your hourly rate and add 10 percent.  
Retainer basis: This is an arrangement where you agree to a monthly fee for an agreed upon number of hours.

**4. Bill up front.**  
Don't think it's rude or unprofessional to bill up front. I typically bill up to \$5,000 upfront. It's not only a common practice, it also ensures that you get paid for your services and keep the cash flowing in.  
How much you should ask for before starting on a job depends on your industry and how you've setup your rates. When you're charging for bigger projects 30 percent up front is pretty common. If you're billing for time, then you may want to invoice for one or two weeks upfront. I prefer to invoice the whole month upfront and then move to net 30.

**5. Make it easy for clients to pay you.**  
Instead of only accepting checks, which have to be sent snail and then deposited into your bank account, you should accept multiple forms of payment. Whether it's accepting eChecks, credit/debit cards or setting up a PayPal account, you need to

make it easy for your clients to pay you.  
Most invoicing software allows you to select your preferred method(s) of payment, so a client should be able to pay your invoice with just one-click of a button.

**6. Invoice promptly.**  
Instead of waiting every month to get paid, you should either bill weekly or immediately following the completion of a job. This not only keeps a positive cash flow, it also prevents you forgetting to send out the bill.  
If you use invoicing software, you can either setup recurring client profiles or automated billing, which not only makes your life easier, it also makes sure that your invoice gets to the client in a timely manner. Consider offering clients a discount if they pay ahead of time, such as 10 percent if paid-in-full within 21 days.

**7. Never work until you're paid.**  
You're not a debt collector. Instead of spending time tracking down clients and asking why their invoice is overdue, you could be working on other projects for the clients who are paying you. If you send out an invoice and it hasn't been paid on the agreed upon date, then stop working for that client until the invoice is paid.

Follow up with clients after sending an invoice. If you have a client who has always paid on time and suddenly you don't receive a payment, you should reach out to them politely and make sure everything is all right. Maybe they missed the email or were in a severe car accident and have been in the hospital.  
I've had long-term clients who missed a month but I continued working for them. Most of the time it's just that they missed the invoice but this isn't always the case!

**8. Have it in writing.**  
A contract protects both parties, since it should prevent either party from pulling a fast one (plus it adds to that whole professional perception I mentioned earlier). Contracts also

specify the terms and conditions of the project which include everything from expectations to terms of payment. That keeps everyone on the same page. A contract might specify that you require a 30 percent deposit, 50 percent half way through, and 20 percent when completed.

If you don't have the budget for an attorney, there are plenty of websites that provide Contracts Service Agreements.

**9. Call in the cavalry.**  
What happens when a client still hasn't paid an invoice? If you have an assistant or colleague who is more assertive than you, have them handle

outstanding invoices. Follow up with these difficult clients by emailing or calling them and asking for a payment. If all else fails, you may have to ask your attorney to send the client a letter informing them that if the debt is unsettled there will be legal action, such as being taken to small claims court. Another route that I have had to use in the past is to hire a debt collection agency.

Remember, if you want to get paid on-time make sure you communicate frequently with you client, have set clear expectations and you've properly invoiced them. Here's to getting paid 100 percent of the time!



2015 BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Nomination Form

Awards Evening: Thursday, October 29, 2015

Cascades Casino Resort Ballroom - 20393 Fraser Hwy, Langley

The Greater Langley Chamber of Commerce invites you to help us recognize businesses, organizations and business people who demonstrate outstanding innovation, growth, ethics, customer service and contributions to the community.

- Please provide reasons for nomination on a separate sheet. Optional - Include letters of support (3 maximum).
- All nominees must be conducting business within the Langley Trade Area
- Previous winners are ineligible for nomination in same category for 2 years following the year in which they have won.

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Nominated By \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF NOMINATIONS: SEPTEMBER 1, 2015

- ☐ **George Preston Memorial Business Person of the Year**  
Recognizes an individual who demonstrates outstanding business achievement through solid leadership, business ethics, community contribution and innovation.
- ☐ **Entrepreneur of the Year**  
Recognizes an individual who has been in business no less than 1 year and no more than 5 years, and combines risk, innovation, leadership, skill and craftsmanship upon which to build and motivate.
- ☐ **U40 Business Person of the Year**  
Recognizes an individual age 40 or under (as of Dec. 31, 2014) who has distinguished themselves by supporting business growth. The recipient inspires others with their business vision, leadership and achievement, and contributes to community programs either corporate or personal.
- ☐ **Service Excellence**  
Recognizes a business that consistently provides outstanding customer service.
- ☐ **Business of the Year** (Small/Medium/Large)  
Recognizes a business that demonstrates an overall high level of leadership in the community, shows continuous innovation and growth, and provides outstanding customer and employee service (including employee education and training).
- ☐ **Environmental Leadership**  
Recognizes a business that exhibits a significant proactive concern for, and proven success with, conducting business processes in such a way as to leave the environment (water, earth, air) better off because of their products, services or business practices.
- ☐ **Community Impact Award** (For-Profit)  
Recognizes a for-profit business that consistently contributes to the social and cultural well-being of the community.
- ☐ **Community Impact Award** (Not-for-Profit)  
Recognizes a non-profit organization that consistently contributes to the social and cultural well-being of the community.

Please return completed forms to [events@langleychamber.com](mailto:events@langleychamber.com).  
For more information visit [www.langleychamber.com](http://www.langleychamber.com) or call 604-371-3770.

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