

Thoughts on This and That

October is Small Business Month in Ontario, an opportunity to celebrate the enormous contribution small businesses make to the Canadian economy. Small businesses with fewer than 100 employees contribute about 30 per cent to Canada's GDP and two-thirds of

employees work for small business. There are approximately 1,500 businesses in Georgetown and about 700 in Acton. An unofficial estimate would be that 90 per cent of businesses in Halton Hills fall into the under-11 employee category. It is widely recognized that small business, however you might define it, is the backbone of the Canadian economy but even more important in our town.

At our Annual General Meeting in September, we celebrated the contribution of 50 individuals that

volunteered their time to the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce. These people are the strength of the Chamber and have contributed their time, energy and expertise by doing what they do best.

I want to thank our very dedicated Board of Directors, committee chairs and committee members who have well represented our membership and their concerns. Our Board comes from a good cross section of businesses and each member brings a unique strength and area of expertise to ensure that the goals and mandates of this organization are

met. This year we will celebrate 100 years of being the voice of business in our local communities including Acton and Georgetown. Through those years, the name of the organization has changed but the mandate has been the same and it has been powered by volunteers. Please take the time to consider participating in some aspect of the Chamber this year. I am confident you will find it rewarding.

We want to hear from you. Please send your comments and suggestions to me at kathleen@haltonhillschamber.on.ca.



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100 Years and Counting – a Look Back

Disclaimer: The history referenced is as we know it, much of it anecdotal. If you have more or better information, we'd love to hear from you!

It's strange – 100 years is a very long time indeed when you look forward; when you look back, however, it often doesn't seem that long. Acton and Georgetown were very different places in 1912 and yet business people were concerned with many of the same things that drive them today: how to grow their business, keep costs (including taxes) reasonable and keep their town thriving as well.

The Acton business community first organized as a Board of Trade in April 1904, under President A. F. Nicklin. In 1925 it was organized as a Chamber of Commerce under President H. P. Moore, who had previously been secretary to the Board

of Trade. In 1940 the Acton Businessmen's Association was formed under President G.A. Dills, which was followed in 1954 by the re-emergence of the Acton Chamber of Commerce under former mayor Dr. Frank Oakes. The chamber quickly grew from 35 members to 100 and got busy promoting industry and significant involvement in community life.

Local businessmen formed the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce on January 26, 1912. Readily available records provide little more information about its activities until the 70s when we again have records indicating active involvement in the activities of the community.

The two Chambers participated in some activities together. They united for Halton Hills Day in July 1985, under Acton president Bill Cook and Georgetown president Dave Kentner. In 1988, discussions began on the amalgamation of the two Chambers of Commerce culminating in the formal amalgamation ceremony that took place on January 28, 1989. Since that time, the Chamber has continued to provide the Halton Hills business community with effective representation locally, provincially and nationally as the situation warranted. With your help and support, the Chamber will continue to do so for the next hundred years.



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