

Your Chamber of Commerce ... Gearing Up To Be a Stand Out!

The Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce will be submitting our application to become an Accredited Chamber within the next year.

What does this mean? Accreditation ensures:

- Strategic focus on core Chamber activities
- Uniform practices, policies across the network
- Dependable governance procedures
- Distinctive brand identity
- A competitive edge against other business organizations
- A stronger "voice of business" in our community
- An increased role in national and international policy advocacy.

Few things are more important than your identity as a business and as a business owner. It is what sets you apart from the

crowd. You have worked hard to build it, maintain it and protect it.

Your Chamber of Commerce wants the same thing—to have a strong identity of increased presence, surpass our competition, clarify the role of our Chamber, maintain professional standards, fulfill expectations of performance and even governance practices, and an increased sense of purpose.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce is working to help us do just that. Thus, the opportunity for accreditation has been brought forward to all chambers who wish to apply.

We are proud and pleased to report that we have most of the elements leading

toward accreditation already in place.

One of the most important steps we need to take at the Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce is the development of a new

Strategic Plan that will lead us into the future. When this is completed, we will know where we want to build on our strengths, address some of our challenges, seek opportunities and be prepared for any threats

that future trends may present.

The Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce is growing and we are now very close to 500 member companies. The Town of Halton Hills is growing rapidly and with the development of the Gateway project more companies will join our Chamber. We want to be ready with a strategic plan

that addresses the growth of our community at large.

Our motto is "connecting business and community." We want our strategic plan to reflect this.

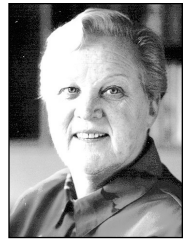
A great part of connecting with the business community is gathering your input. We would like our strategic plan to reflect some of your ideas that the Chamber might include as expressed by you and the community we serve.

Would you like to have the opportunity to give your input into the new strategic plan? We welcome your thoughts and suggestions. Please email them to Sue Walker, General Manager, at info@haltonhillschamber.on.ca.

*Positively and successfully,
Wendy Hue, PCC, CSP
President*

**From
the
Boardroom**

**Wendy
Hue
President**



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328 Guelph Street,
Halton Hills, ON L7G 4B5
Tel 905.877.7119
Fax 905.877.5117
Email info@haltonhillschamber.on.ca
www.haltonhillschamber.on.ca

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Knowledge Management

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Spring to Life at Sheridan Nurseries

By Marnie Hughes,
Communication Artistry

You will be compelled to hesitate before entering the head office of Sheridan Nurseries as you admire the ornately carved front doors signaling the warmth that lies inside. Pushing through the doors will reveal a naturally bright reception area bursting with plant life, bright sunshine beaming through the skylights, and dark woodwork along the walls. The welcoming setting extends to the personnel and speaking with Karl Stensson, Senior Vice President, sheds light on the environment. "We don't call them customers; they're our guests," he says. "We greet them and welcome them as though they are coming into our home." This hints to one factor contributing to the success enjoyed by the company in their 93-year history.

Sheridan Nurseries was established in 1913 when Karl's grandfather, Sven Herman Stensson, and his family came to Canada from England. His five children worked in the business until retirement. While many family-run businesses are particularly vulnerable during third-generation management, Karl suggests that his focus on the retail operations and his cousin Bill's focus on the nursery operation bring enough diversity to promote growth. With both playing to their strengths, occasional healthy opposing viewpoints fuel the fields for success.

In an attempt to be unique and different from the big box stores, Sheridan has focused on details. They are not a discount store. They carry mid- to high-end products and offer 800 varieties of plant material. The Georgetown location is one of ten throughout the area, nine located in the GTA and the tenth in Kitchener.

"Retail is detail" according to Mr. Stensson; therefore, you'll see great diversity in the products and services that Sheridan offers. Their guests can expect to

find not only top-quality plant products, but accessories, furniture and gifts. There is even a design division for those guests who wish to get either on-the-spot design advice at a Sheridan retail location, or at-home advice from a consultant. The designers will also recommend contractors authorized by Sheridan which extends that level of trust through the next phase of the project.

It is often said that a business is only as successful as its people, and that certainly applies at Sheridan Nurseries. It is one of the area's largest employers with almost 150 full-time employees which blossoms to nearly 500 during the peak spring and summer season. The entire company peaks at over 1,100 during the spring months. There are many long-term employees including some who have been there for decades. Sheridan is also a participant in a provincial "farm workers program" which enables off-shore workers to come from Jamaica and Mexico and work on the farms here during those busy months. This brings in the much-needed workforce while contributing to the local economy, and workers are paid a fair wage many times that which they would make in their native country.

A key business challenge is the fact that two-thirds of Sheridan's annual business occurs during ten weeks of the year. They seem to have overcome this challenge, however, through careful planning of personnel and maintenance. Not only are



Karl Stensson and writer Marnie Hughes of Communication Artistry chatting on the driveway at Sheridan Nurseries head office.

they the largest independent nursery retailer in Canada, but they are also the country's largest wholesale nursery, supplying product to as far as Newfoundland, Denver, and Tennessee.

The management at Sheridan Nurseries embraces the philosophy of community involvement and feels strongly about giving back. With their locations throughout the GTA, Sheridan has spread out their community projects to reflect the areas that they serve. Locally, they donate shrubs for the annual Glen Williams Town Hall for upgrades and on-going operational needs. Sheridan has also contributed to the Gellert Center as well as gardens at the Toronto Botanical Gardens and the Mississauga Garden Council Project at Riverwood. One of their more unique contributions is the annual Artists' Gardens at Harbourfront.

Where will Sheridan Nurseries grow next? Well, with a 100th anniversary on the horizon they hope to continue to challenge themselves by targeting the 100 million dollar sales mark in that centennial year. That should be a fireworks display you won't want to miss!