



Saint John
Board of Trade
Making It Happen For Business

Key Priorities & Issues

2008-2009

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Executive Summary

Saint John is a city steeped in the history of Commerce. Throughout its history, the City of Saint John has been a strong trading and commerce centre: from the start of trading between Aboriginal groups; to the Loyalists who established the City of Saint John in 1785; to present day with multi-billion dollar projects that have started and are forecasted. In 1819 the Saint John Board of Trade was formed. Since then the Saint John Board of Trade has been a strong advocate for free trade, regional partnerships and for the ongoing development of Greater Saint John.

The Saint John Board of Trade continues to address issues that impact the Greater Saint John region's ability to attract and retain new investment, new business activities, and new employment opportunities. In the past year, the Board of Trade has played an active role in the community from meeting with the provincial government regarding the Post-Secondary Education Report to launching a new website to continuing the Bare Necessities Campaign to submitting a letter outlining concerns to the US Department of Homeland Security regarding required travel documentation for border crossings. The Board of Trade has balanced its advocacy work with various events that provide networking and informational opportunities for its members from Big Splash on the Waterfront to the Golf Tournament to a variety of luncheons and toolboxes to the Doing Business in Latin America workshop. Through these events, the Board of Trade has been the voice of Business on a number of issues as well as helping and encouraging Businesses to establish themselves and expand.

The coming year promises to be just as busy if not more so than last. As Saint John and the Province continue to grow into an Energy Hub, the improvement of our Business/Industrial Parks is key to Saint John's continued growth and success. Once again, Business/Industrial Parks improvement is a top key priority for the Saint John Board of Trade. This is not mutually exclusive from our other top priority, Workforce Expansion; the continued growth and success that is predicted requires an educated, experienced workforce. Of critical concern is our ability to increase our population, through both the retention of young people and the welcoming of immigrants, especially with the current and forecasted growth for the City within the next few years. We already have a sub-group that has been hard at work on attracting and retaining doctors, and has expanded in the past year to include accountants and engineers, but more work lies ahead. As you will see, workforce expansion has made the top priorities list for this year as it is one of the greatest challenges facing our members today.

While there are many challenges that face the business community today, there are also a lot of opportunities developing. These challenges will require the business community's input. The Saint John Board of Trade will spend this upcoming year working to aide its members in creating solutions to the issues that have arisen and may yet arise.

Introduction

The Saint John Board of Trade owes its conception to a handful of local business owners, led by William Black, who met at Mr. Cody's Coffee House on April 5, 1819. From this meeting, the Saint John Chamber of Commerce was formed; later changing its name to the Saint John Board of Trade (1872). With a primary focus on transportation and communication at its outset, the Board of Trade has expanded its scope over the years to encompass areas of social and civic engagement, tourism, energy, and in the 1950s port and industrial park development. Since its inception, the Saint John Board of Trade has been a voice for business and has grown to represent over 600 members who employ over 30,000 people in the Greater Saint John area.

As one of the oldest Boards of Trade in Canada, the Saint John Board of Trade has a history of contributions to the Saint John area manifested in the creation of various organizations in the city including:

- The United Way
- University of New Brunswick, Saint John
- The Saint John Airport Authority
- The Saint John Waterfront Development Partnership
- The Harbour Bridge and Throughway Authority
- The Saint John Port Authority
- Enterprise Saint John
- The Business Resource Centre

Today, Saint John continues to grow, leading the nation in Job Growth at 9.5% according to the Canadian City Trends Update from RBC in February 2008. As the city and its businesses grow, the Saint John Board of Trade will continue to take a proactive approach to business development assistance through member consultation and engagement to determine what issues take priority for them. The Board of Trade works with community partners to develop solutions to ensure that our businesses continue to grow and prosper.

Our Mission Statement

To contribute to a proactive economic environment for business in Saint John.

To provide encouragement, assistance and guidance for established enterprise, or those aspiring to become established businesses.

Through our business offerings, programs, and membership the Saint John Board of Trade provides opportunities for members to grow themselves (through involvement and learning), to grow their business (through knowledge and connections), and to assist in the economic development of our community.

True Growth

True Growth, led by the five regional mayors, is a community owned initiative to create a long-term vision and plan for Greater Saint John to ensure a high quality of life for the people who live here now and in the decades to come. The only "true" way to grow our region is to collaborate and achieve a balance of priorities with the economic, social, environmental and cultural sectors.

The work of the Saint John Board of Trade makes the business community stronger and more effective, thereby aligning our work with the regional True Growth agenda. Coordination, integration, and execution of population and workforce expansion strategies are crucial. The Saint John Board of Trade is working to address issues that will impact our community's ability to attract and retain new investment, new business activities, and new employment opportunities.

Within the True Growth model there are three key areas. The "Supportive Community" creates independence through the promotion of health and wellness; primary education; housing and immigration to help everyone live freely. The "Enriching Community" generates ideas and concepts that influence all aspects of society. Post-secondary institutions and the arts community can see their contributions here. The "Economic Community" helps build a sound economy. The Saint John Board of Trade, its members, and their employees are among those leading this charge.

Through information, education and awareness of the benefits of the economy and life in the Greater Saint John region, the Saint John Board of Trade is taking part in the True Growth agenda. For example, the Saint John Board of Trade is currently acting in a leadership role to: recruit and retain professionals, attract and retain UNB Saint John students upon graduation, and coordinate immigration and repatriation initiatives. Also, the Saint John Board of Trade is well positioned to address the needs of our business community by lobbying at all levels of government to support and create economic development.

Benefits Blueprint

As Saint John and New Brunswick grow into an Energy Hub for the Maritimes, rapid economic change is likely to occur. In order to create the most effective and efficient outcomes while recognizing and minimizing the potential downfalls of this change, various community members, led by Enterprise Saint John, have created the Benefits Blueprint. The Blueprint is supported by the five regional mayors as an aspect of the True Growth Strategy and is the "comprehensive long-term sustainable plan" that has been recognized by the community. The Blueprint focuses on seven initiative areas: community interests, training and education; business; infrastructure; workforce expansion; housing; and arts & culture. The premise of the Blueprint strategy is to learn from other cities that have experienced rapid economic development to determine the best course of action for Saint John in the coming years. There are several initiatives referenced in the Blueprints document that align with the priorities of the Saint John Board of Trade and its members. These initiatives were taken into consideration during the formation/deliberation of this year's key priorities.

Our Goals

We are the voice of business in the Greater Saint John region and our goal is to be the primary steward of the True Growth agenda for economic development in the area.

Five Key Initiatives

Main Priority Focus:

1. The continued development and improvement of Saint John Business/Industrial Parks and the creation of an "Industrial Loop";
2. Support Workforce Expansion initiatives identified in the Benefits Blueprint including promotion of six destinations after high school;
3. Creation of an updated municipal urban plan;
4. Knowledge Park Development; and
5. Regional Governance.

Continued focus on support and completion of following priorities:

6. An expeditious completion of the One-Mile Highway Interchange before 2010; and the twinning of Route 1 between Saint John and St. Stephen; and building of Welsford Bypass;
7. Continued development of Saint John into a regional energy hub;
8. Enhanced partnerships with Enterprise Saint John, Uptown Saint John, the Regional Hospital; NBCC's Saint John campus, UNB Saint John and other like-minded groups; and
9. The advancement of the ideals outlined at the inaugural Atlantica regional conference.

Business/Industrial Parks Improvement

The future success of Saint John Business/Industrial Parks will require strong community leadership with broad based public and private sector participation in order to improve and develop. Therefore, the Saint John Board of Trade advocates dialogue and communications within the business community and government to occur to ensure future growth of this key infrastructure for future economic prosperity.

The Atlantica initiative, Atlantic Gateway and Southern New Brunswick Gateway, the Access Atlantic Northeast Trade Corridor, the One-Mile Highway Interchange, the twinning of Highway 1 to the border, the new international border crossing at St. Stephen-Calais, planned enhancements to Highway 7, access to rail and sea and air transportation, and Saint John's role as an energy hub all represent unique opportunities for continued development and growth which must be capitalized on to improve our business/industrial parks.

With Saint John positioned at the geographic centre of Atlantica and the Atlantic and Southern New Brunswick Gateways, it is crucial to improve our infrastructure in order to compete on a global scale. We are the largest industrial centre in New Brunswick and our business/industrial parks should be positioned to become the "location of choice" within the Atlantic Gateway region. The opportunities for trade and commercial activity will be endless.

The Saint John Industrial Parks Limited has been a focus of attention of the various groups working to promote economic development. A number of important steps have been taken in response to the Mayor's task force to address challenges facing Saint John Industrial Parks. Key concerns included budget and staff constraints and the time required to undertake a land transaction with a client due to the time necessary to acquire land from the Province. The City has directly addressed these issues. These were critical changes that are expected to have a fundamental, positive impact on the Saint John Industrial Parks Ltd. The Board of Trade commends City Staff, Council, as well as the Saint John Industrial Parks Ltd Staff and Board on making these important changes.

It is the view of the Saint John Board of Trade that further action could be taken to realize the full potential of the Commission. Accordingly, the Board would like to see the following additional steps taken by the end of June 2008:

- Review of the composition of the Board of the Commission to ensure the appropriate compliment of skills is providing oversight. Specifically, the Board of Trade would like to see Saint John Industrial Parks Ltd. tenants and the following disciplines represented on the Board:
 - Legal
 - Real Estate
 - Construction/Engineering
 - Finance
 - Marketing
 - Planning/Industrial Development
 - Logistics Management
- Preparation of a strategic and marketing plan for the Commission. The Plan would address key questions such as:
 - What is the role of the Commission relative to private sector developers of industrial land;
 - The target market or markets for the Commission;

- The extent to which the commission will react to leads that “come in the door” or become more proactive and undertake lead generation activity;
- The relationship between the Commission and various other entities:
 - The Province
 - Other Economic Development agencies in the City
 - Other private entities involved in industrial land transactions:
 - Contractors
 - Surveyors
 - Brokers
 - Developers such as those who would become involved in leasing facilities
- Service standards for reacting to “leads” and effecting land transactions;
- Overall performance objectives perhaps expressed in terms of dollars of new assessment generated annually or payback on the City’s investment in the Commission.
- Forward a draft of a strategic and marketing plan to the Board of Trade for input before it is published;
- Address issues of Governance, specifically terms of appointment for members on the Board of the Commission.

Workforce Expansion

An issue that is receiving nation-wide attention which is no less important in Saint John is workforce expansion. This is particularly important for the predicted economic boom that is to hit the area with the current and proposed projects. Workforce expansion covers several areas of initiatives including but not limited to post-secondary education; apprenticeship training; repatriation; retention; and immigration. Education for employers; work with other groups to help co-ordinate activities based on increasing the workforce.

A key area of workforce expansion that the Saint John Board of Trade will focus on during the next year is immigration. Due to the combination of a skills shortage, low birth rates, and an aging population, the labour market is facing a potential personnel deficit. This is of particular concern to Saint John as it prepares to experience/enter an economic boom.

The immigration of highly skilled workers can help to stop and even prevent any negative economic impacts that may occur from the aging and decreasing population. Indeed, researchers have argued that immigration can lead to a more prosperous business environment by increasing innovation, creativity and marketing. Immigrant entrepreneurship provides further economic growth and diversity and capital to a community.

The Saint John Board of Trade realizes the need for increased immigration to the Saint John region and will work to increase Saint John's image and reputation as an immigrant destination. There is a competitive need for Saint John to become successful in attracting immigrants who would otherwise choose to immigrate to large urban centres like Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. The Saint John Board of Trade will work with the various levels of government, businesses and non-profit organizations within the community to promote Saint John as an immigrant friendly location.

In 2004, the Saint John Board of Trade Business/Education Forum partnered with the provincial Department of Training and Employment Development and Enterprise Saint John to complete the *Saint John Workforce Survey* (May 2005) of existing businesses in the region. The Board of Trade asks that the provincial government pursue an outreach role and provide funding for the *"True Growth" Workforce Expansion Plan*.

Municipal Urban Plan

With Saint John's predicted economic boom, more development is likely to follow. Currently there are issues surrounding development processes in the city, particularly with the municipal plan. With the development of the new police station as well as other recently proposed developments in the uptown area, there has been recognition of the need for a new municipal urban plan.

Presently, there are development plans for the Inner Harbour Land Use and an outdated municipal plan. What is needed is the development of a comprehensive/inclusive municipal plan that fosters economic growth and development; that does not present a roadblock for potential developers. There needs to be a clear, concise process in place to prevent the loss of potential developers.

The Saint John Board of Trade will encourage the City of Saint John to develop a plan that will address the needs of the present and future residents and businesses of Saint John. A successful plan will foster growth in population, business and tourism. There is a need for the city to have a vision of its future, and be wary of forming a patchwork quilt of various different and disjointed plans for urban developments. This will become increasingly important as more developers and businesses move into the area.

Recently there has been a lot of rhetoric surrounding the development of a new municipal plan. The Saint John Board of Trade will push for its creation and implementation with the new city planner.

Regional Governance

There is a need for continued co-operation between the local communities to join together on various projects to ensure continuity and service. Under the True Growth initiative, the five Regional Mayors already meet on a regular basis to discuss issues of regional importance.

The Board of Trade believes that a number of key issues, like infrastructure planning, maintenance and improvement, impact the region as a whole, and request that the regional governments work together to address such issues on a regional basis. Adding formality to the working relationships that currently exist between the Regional Mayors, and creating a structured process on how to collectively address these regional issues, will strengthen the relationship between the regional governments. There is need to approach such regionally impacting issues collectively to avoid duplication of efforts and unnecessary competition on funding, and to improve the region as a whole.

To further entrench this notion of regional governance, the Saint John Board of Trade will work actively to promote greater co-operation and conversation between the Chambers of Commerce in the region.

Through regional co-operation the Saint John Board of Trade hopes to bring greater progress to issues of regional impact, like Transportation. This will provide the current political regional co-operation with Business regional co-operation, furthering the goals of the True Growth initiative.

Transportation

Investment in New Brunswick infrastructure is crucial for our entire region. More than 60 percent of New Brunswick's exports originate in Saint John and sustainable economic development is negatively impacted by the current state of infrastructure within the region. The Saint John Board of Trade will continue to focus on key transportation infrastructure which is crucial for Atlantica, the Atlantic and Southern New Brunswick Gateways.

1. One Mile Highway Interchange

This continues to be a priority for the Saint John Board of Trade for 2008/09. The issue was taken to our Board of Directors at their regular meeting on December 05, 2002 where a motion was passed to support this as our number one transportation priority for the Saint John road system. The One Mile Highway Interchange project was also tied to our Waterfront Development priorities, as trucks must travel through the uptown core which negatively impacts the experience of residents and tourists. This interchange will take truck traffic off our uptown streets, something that is vital for our tourism industry and also reduces the wear and tear on our city streets.

The provincial and federal governments have committed funding to the One Mile Highway Interchange. Our efforts will go towards ensuring that the Interchange is completed by 2010. Taking this traffic directly into our industrial area will allow our region to better leverage investments and opportunities such as the investments in the oil refinery, the LNG project, the proposed second refinery, the development and growth of the proposed Green Industrial Park, Bayside Drive and Business/Industrial Park properties.

In continuation with the One Mile Interchange, for 2008/09 priorities, the Saint John Board of Trade will also propose the notion of the creation of an "Industrial Loop" connecting Grandview Avenue to the Airport Arterial Highway. This Loop will improve traffic flow as well as open the industrial parks to the airport.

2. Twinning Route 1 Highway

Route 1 is Southern New Brunswick's major link to New England markets. The improvements made on Route 9 in Maine have to be matched by improvements and twinning of New Brunswick's Route 1. These issues are a matter of urgency for all of southwestern New Brunswick.

In 2007, the provincial and federal governments committed funding to the twinning of Route 1. The Saint John Board of Trade is now asking for the Government of New Brunswick to set a date for the completion of this project.

3. Route 7 Bypass from Welsford to Nerepis

The Saint John Board of Trade has been advocating for the twinning of Route 7 since the mid-1970's. Route 7 is one of the most dangerous sections of major highway in the province. It is also the link between the province's largest city and its capital, and the main route to truck goods to and from southern New Brunswick to northern NB and Quebec. Completion of improvements to Route 7, such as paving the shoulders and the Welsford bypass are also urgently needed.

In 2007, the provincial and federal governments committed funding to the creation of the Welsford ByPass. The Saint John Board of Trade is now asking for the Government of New Brunswick to set a date for completion of this project

Atlantica & Gateways

Atlantica

The Saint John Board of Trade embraces the ideals of Atlantica, a truly regional approach to trade and economic development. Atlantica is defined as the geographic corridor that runs from Buffalo, New York through the Northeastern United States to Atlantic Canada. Within this zone are 23 border crossings, 11 major truck gateways and seven major rail gateways.

Regional development has long been a favoured cause for the Board of Trade. The Maritimes Rights movement of the 1920's was spearheaded by the Saint John Board of Trade and eleven years ago Reform Leader Preston Manning coined the term 'Atlantica' in an address to the Board on the importance of building cross-border trade connections.

The Saint John Board of Trade and the Atlantic Provinces Chambers of Commerce (APCC) proudly presented Reaching Atlantica - Business Without Boundaries. This inaugural conference took place in June 2006 at the Saint John Trade and Convention Centre with over 300 delegates in attendance from across Canada and the U.S.

Reaching Atlantica provided an interactive discussion forum for the tourism, transportation and energy sectors as well as fulfilling its traditional role as a professional development venue for the Atlantic Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade. The goal of this conference was to find our way back to the formerly economically driven trade oriented region of Atlantica. Our goal is also to renew the positioning of the northeast as the epi-centre of trade between the NAFTA partners and the European Union Members by:

- Creating a network of like-minded business leaders from the Atlantic Provinces, southeastern Quebec and New England in the promotion of the Atlantica concept.
- Fostering partnerships between businesses in this region.
- Attending the yearly New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers Conference.
- Networking with the Eastern Maine Development Corporation to promote the Atlantic Coast Trade Corridor.
- Promoting growth of east coast port facilities as competitors in the global marketplace.
- Promoting the development of an East-West interstate highway through New England to foster corridor options for Atlantica businesses.
- Encouraging inter-provincial and international trade through the removal of barriers and harmonization of regulations.

Saint John lies at the geographic centre of Atlantica and is therefore its natural "Canadian gateway," enabled by our road, rail, air and seagoing systems. Our city's position is further strengthened by its relationship with its 'sister' city in Bangor, Maine. Organizations on both sides of the border have teamed up, such as the Eastern Maine Development Corporation,

Enterprise Saint John, Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce and the Saint John Board of Trade to develop a trade corridor between the two cities. The Access Atlantica Northeast Trade Corridor was officially launched in Saint John on May 18th, 2007 (www.accessatlantica.com). Saint John is also uniquely positioned as the “gateway” due to its large amount of trade and commercial activity. Our city is the largest industrial centre in New Brunswick and home to many prominent companies including the Irving Group, Moosehead Breweries, Xerox, Aliant, Cendant and Unilever.

Atlantic Gateway

Born from a federal government initiative, the Atlantic Gateway complements the efforts of Access Atlantic in portraying Atlantic Canada as an entry point to the major North American markets. The Federal Government’s *National Policy Framework for Strategic Gateways and Trade Corridors* outlines the importance of multi-modal transportation networks across the country to Canada’s international trade competitiveness. Atlantic Canada’s deep sea ports are an important factor in the development of the Atlantic Gateway as a major import/export point for Canada, as there are few ports in North America that are capable of accepting the largest container ships.

On October 14th 2007 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Federal Government and the Four Atlantic Provinces creating the Atlantic Gateway framework. A key aspect or requirement of the Gateway is the creation of Gateway Councils which are public-private partnerships to help create the political and financial will to advance the regions interests nationally. One of the roles of the Councils is to ensure an alignment of transportation and infrastructure policy at the provincial level to complement the goals of the Atlantic Gateway.

Part of the concept has included an international marketing campaign which saw representatives from around Atlantic Canada travel to India in February 2008 to promote the Atlantic Gateway. Another aspect is the Atlantic Gateway Analytical Working Group who is currently conducting an assessment of the multi-modal transportation systems in Atlantic Canada. The Saint John Board of Trade looks forward to the completion and presentation of the assessment as well as the continuation of international marketing campaigns for the region.

Southern New Brunswick Gateway Council

Developed as part of the Atlantic Gateway initiative, the Southern New Brunswick Gateway is a collaboration of various businesses and organizations within Southern New Brunswick from St. Stephen to Moncton. The participating businesses and organizations have a common list of priorities in transportation and trade. The notion of a Southern New Brunswick Gateway surfaced in October 2007 when the Saint John Port Authority commissioned a consulting firm to develop a plan for the establishment of a Gateway Council for Southern New Brunswick.

In March 2008 the Southern New Brunswick Gateway was created involving the Saint John Port Authority, the Greater Moncton International Airport, Irving Oil Ltd. and other industry partners. The Southern New Brunswick Gateway Council will work together to promote Southern New Brunswick as a Gateway with a world-class transportation system for both industry and tourism.

The Saint John Board of Trade has been asked to participate as a Resource Member (non-voting) with the Southern New Brunswick Gateway Council. Both Gateway initiatives are aligned with the Saint John Board of Trade’s transportation priority and Atlantica.

Strategic Partnerships

The Saint John Board of Trade continues to work to enhance partnerships with Enterprise Saint John, Uptown Saint John, the Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation, NBCC's Saint John campus, UNBSJ and other like-minded groups. Through supportive and enriching communities we ensure that we have an environment beneficial to maintaining health and wellness. This diverse community includes hospitals, schools, recreation, and neighbourhood amenities.

Healthcare

Saint John is the primary referral centre for the people of this region and, in a number of tertiary services, for people throughout the province. The Saint John Regional Hospital is a designated campus of the Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University and is affiliated with Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland. It also has an active Research Services Division and is the Province's centre of excellence in many provincial programs, such as the New Brunswick Heart Centre and recently designated a level one hospital for the provincial trauma system.

Priorities:

1. Anglophone Medical Training Centre

Building an Anglophone medical teaching centre is at the top of the Board of Trade's healthcare priorities. A coalition involving the Board of Trade, Enterprise Saint John, the University of New Brunswick Saint John, and AHSC has been working to advance medical education in this area for some time.

A new medical teaching centre, located at UNB – Saint John campus, is now scheduled to take new students in September 2010. The medical program is under development and UNB will partner with the accredited medical doctorate program of Dalhousie University in Halifax, which submitted a proposal to the provincial government in June 30, 2006.

The Board of Trade is pleased to have the government's announcement on June 11, 2007 to establish the province's first four-year, Anglophone medical education program and offers our assistance in this major undertaking.

2. Doctor Recruitment & Retention

We need the Province to continue and intensify their efforts in addressing the current shortage of qualified medical professionals in New Brunswick. We ask for your support to ensure that we have adequate physicians for the Greater Saint John area.

Saint John has the largest teaching hospital in New Brunswick which welcomes over 225 undergraduate and postgraduate medical trainees to our community each year. New doctors are needed to meet the healthcare needs of the community. They are also needed to become teachers and perform research at the medical teaching centre to be built UNBSJ.

The Saint John Board of Trade, Enterprise Saint John, and Fusion have been working in partnership with AHSC to create meaningful connections to our community while they are in Saint John. These highly qualified people will be in great demand throughout North America,

and we are taking the opportunity to demonstrate the advantages of working and living in Saint John while they are here.

3. Expansion & Retrofit of The Saint John Regional Hospital

The Board of Trade has a long history of working with the Saint John Medical Society and the Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation (AHSC) in resolving issues and continues to work together.

The Saint John Regional Hospital was opened in 1982 and has not had a major retrofit of the facility since then. In their Presentation to the Annual General Meeting in June, 2006, the AHSC outlined a "Master Plan" to expand the facility and to meet the needs of key clinical services. The expansion and retrofit will allow the hospital to address:

- Over-crowding
- Increasing burden of chronic and complex diseases
- Changing models of patient care / service delivery strategies
- Flexibility to adapt to technological advancements
- Support of health education partnership with UNBSJ and NBCC-SJ
- Clinical effectiveness and patient convenience in:
 - Emergency department
 - Cancer Care and Dialysis
 - Ambulatory Care
 - Diagnostic Imaging

The AHSC "Master Plan" includes an expansion of 230,000 building gross sq.ft. of new space and renovation of 200,000 department gross sq. ft. of existing space at a project cost estimate of \$192,253,000.

Education

The establishment of an LNG pipeline and terminal, as well as the refurbishment of Point Lepreau, the creation of the Atlantica Centre for Energy, and the re-location of the Department of Energy firmly establish Saint John as the “Energy Hub” of the Maritime Provinces. As these projects are completed a trained workforce must be ready to fill the jobs that will be created over the next three years.

The Board of Trade actively supports our two post-secondary institutions - NBCC Saint John and UNBSJ - as they prepare students for our evolving economy. In addition, the Board will endorse a regional immigration strategy that aims to attract skilled immigrants, particularly through our growing international student body, to the region.

Priorities:

1. Six Destinations After High School

The Saint John Board of Trade will continue to promote the 6 destinations after high school campaign. This program seeks to educate parents and their children about the various opportunities for students after high school; apprenticeship; community college; direct to work; military; private training; and university. By supporting this program, the Saint John Board of Trade looks to expand the variety of post-secondary options for youth. Working in conjunction with the School Districts, the Saint John Board of Trade will continue to promote the various options to students and their parents through education campaigns and activities.

2. Expansion at New Brunswick Community College Saint John

In 2000, the Saint John Board of Trade made a submission regarding “The Need for Upgrade and Expansion at the New Brunswick Community College Saint John.” This report identified that NBCC Saint John is experiencing serious electrical, mechanical, structural and space problems at its 40-year old main college site. These issues must be addressed for it to provide the training and upgrading for the students and employers it serves.

We believe the governance model chosen should permit the college system to address the needs of the employers and students it serves in a more focused and market-driven way. Specifically, it should provide for:

- Flexibility to respond quickly to training needs driven by the growth sectors in the economy of Greater Saint John.
- Flexibility to source alternate targeted funding to support client needs in the Greater Saint John market.
- Committed re-investment in the physical plant of the NBCC Saint John campus to address the critical deficiencies identified in the existing infrastructure.

Investments must also be made to expand on programs delivered by New Brunswick Community Colleges. For example, programs such as the training of electricians. NBCC Saint John receives over 200 applications for the electrical program, but can only offer to 18 successful candidates.

It is our understanding that government made policy a number of years ago regarding the number of seats available for training programs. The Board of Trade asks that the provincial government revisit this policy.

3. UNBSJ – A Centre of Excellence

We would like to see the University of New Brunswick – Saint John campus become its own “Centre of Excellence,” offering specialized programs of study and areas of research that are unique to this campus. With the creation of the new Anglophone medical teaching centre and the recognition of Saint John as the “Energy Hub” of the Maritime Provinces and the “Canadian Gateway” to Atlantica our region is a natural location to set up new programs and research. Saint John could be the destination for the study of health sciences and health-related therapies, marine biology, aquaculture, environmental studies, and business at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

We want to use this capacity, together with strong links to government, the community and the private sector to provide research leadership and to help define economic, social, and cultural strategies for our region. The Board of Trade strongly urges the Province to take this opportunity to differentiate UNBSJ from other Universities. These initiatives will help to ensure the future success of the greater Saint John region and the Province as global competitors.

Over the past year there has been some turmoil regarding the future of UNBSJ. The Post-Secondary Education Report that was presented in September 2007 left many questions regarding UNBSJ’s future from becoming a polytechnic to a possible co-location with NBCC. The Board of Trade was pleased with the Premier’s State of the Province Address in February which promised that the University of New Brunswick Saint John will remain the University of New Brunswick Saint John. The Board of Trade strongly supports UNBSJ and NBCC remaining separate institutions sharing a location to create a “Centre of Excellence” that will benefit students, business, and the community for years to come.