

# **President's Message**

Christine Denby  
April 22, 2008

I'll try to keep this brief. I would like to thank everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules to be here this afternoon, showing your commitment not only to the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce but to the Town of Fort Frances and the Rainy River district as a whole.

A week ago, I was enjoying time at the beach in Playa del Carmen, Mexico. I left with snow on the ground and came back to people raking their yards and preparing for the green of Spring! It is a reminder that much has happened since our last General Meeting. We had an election for our board for the first time in ten years ~ indicating strong support for the Chamber of Commerce by our membership. We have a great board with many new faces – not only to our board but to our area as well. I'd like to thank everyone who has volunteered their time to the board.

At Christmas time, we caused a bit of stir with our Shop Local Campaign. We felt it was time to Thank our local consumers for shopping locally, making people aware of their impact on the local economy with that choice. That campaign didn't end with the Christmas season. We recently put up fresh posters around town, once again Thanking people for shopping locally.

The Business Retention and Expansion Project got back on its feet with the hiring of our new Community Development Officer Cassandra Parise. Cassandra has done a great job at picking up where Kerry left off, with the assistance of our volunteer, Irene Laing. Surveys have now been completed and the report in the works for June release.

In December, I had sent out an email and fax to our membership asking for input on Non Residential recycling. We received some good responses, which were combined with responses from the BIA. I met with BIA president Russ Ling, to work on a joint presentation but due to various time constraints, the project was put on hold. I still strongly believe that as a community and as a business community, we need to partner and work together to make recycling a priority.

We held our Strategic Planning session in March, which we'll touch on later in the meeting. Strategic planning was one of our priorities for last year but with there is only so much to get things done ~ I'm very pleased we made it happen and I'd like to thank Geoff Gillon for facilitating. Another big task was the By Laws review, which was also be touched on later this meeting.

Upcoming ~ The Home and Leisure show committee, under the direction of Dawn Booth and Nancy Daley, has been very busy planning. Mark your calendars ~ May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. I'd like to thank our lead sponsors, Tbay Tel. Following closely, is our Business After Hours Deck Party, held in conjunction with the RRFDC's Customer Service Challenge winners recognition, here at the Rendez-Vous. Again, mark your calendar

and order sunshine ~ that event is happening Wednesday May 28<sup>th</sup>. Plans for Quest for the Best held in conjunction with the Fort Frances Bass Championship are well under way, with B93 FM as our major sponsor.

I'd like to welcome new Town of Fort Frances Representative, Ken Perry. I'm certain Mr. Perry will be an asset to the Chamber. We look forward to working more closely with the Town of Fort Frances, as the Voice of Business.

I'd like to thank you once again for taking time out of your busy day to attend today and urge to stop in to see Dawn and Cassandra at our office on Scott street, our check out our website @ [fortfranceschamber.com](http://fortfranceschamber.com). We are here for you, our members and need your input so that we can be 'The Voice of Business'.