

Brown named chamber president

By KEVIN MILLS
Abbotsford News
Nov 30 2006

FIONA Brett, 20006 president of the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce, ended her year of service with a simple move of her hand.

In a ceremony held yesterday afternoon, Brett picked up her gavel and handed it to president-elect Ross Brown. It was a symbolic gesture as Brett was also handing Brown her title and responsibilities.

"I am honored to be the next president of the Abbotsford Chamber of Commerce; Brown told the large crowd who came out to the chamber's annual general meeting.

"I look forward to working with all of you over the next 15 months. There are many talented people in our organization. I know with their help and their guidance business will continue to gain ground in our community," he added.

According to the new president, this is "an exciting time indeed to be involved with the Abbotsford Chamber."

"Plan A has just been given the go ahead. And within two years Abbotsford will also have a new Hospital and Cancer Centre and, we hope, a new Fraser Valley University. Those projects carry the promise of a stronger community, better jobs and businesses that grow larger, not smaller."

And business growth is one of the key elements that Brown wants to examine during his term as president.

"It wasn't too long ago, if you wanted a small business in B.C., you would buy a large one, and then wait a while. But thanks to a dynamic economy and energetic business and community leaders like you, that is no longer the case."

Brown told the crowd that he wants to focus the chamber's attention on a subject near and dear to his heart – entrepreneurship.

"Over the next year I want us to foster entrepreneurship by interacting and encouraging the young men and women in our schools and colleges. And, I want to thank you today for taking the first step along that road. Our new, reformed membership fees will make the Chamber more accessible to young business people.

"I believe in entrepreneurship and I believe in it passionately. It's the foundation of our business community; in fact, it's the foundation of the Chamber of Commerce.

"It's for reasons like those that I have chosen entrepreneurship as the theme during my term as president of the Chamber of Commerce in Abbotsford," explained Brown.

Himself an entrepreneur – he started his own business just two years ago – Brown has experienced first hand the thrill of success and come face to face with the

challenges of starting a business.

"I now have a better understanding of the risks you must take and the skills you must have to be a successful entrepreneur."

Other important points that Brown touched on during his speech include:

- Creating policy that finds acceptance with all three levels of government;
- Developing policies over the coming years regarding such projects as the Abbotsford International Airport, about Agricultural Land Utilization, about Provincial Highway infrastructure, about the Pacific Gateway Plan and other issues;
- Developing a policy book for the chamber.

"I believe we have the skill and expertise to develop the kind of quality regulatory framework that can glide through every level of government. And if I am right, I hope that will put us in the running for a Chamber of the Year award next year," said Brown.

"Our future is limited only by imagination. May Abbotsford be blessed."

Elected officials:

Five new directors were also elected during yesterday's meeting.

Doug Edgar, Patrick Giesbrecht, Keldie Jamieson, Bote Miedema and Ron Price were newly elected.

They will join fellow directors Allan Asaph, John Funk, Dave Holmberg Sandra Nagurny and Pat Sapielak on the board.

The 2007 chamber executive include Ross Brown, president, Alvin Epp, first vice-president, Sir James Barlow, second vice-president, Melanie Miller, treasurer and Fiona Brett, past-president.