

Outgoing President's Message

It has been my pleasure and a privilege to serve as President this year. The Chamber is an outstanding organisation that has a long and distinguished 49-year history, supporting, promoting and protecting the major industries and the public welfare in the Cayman Islands.

The Council and I, with the support of a professional and experienced staff, worked diligently to represent your interests and to express your collective views on some of the key issues impacting your business and our Islands' overall quality of life and competitiveness.

Advocacy remains at the heart of the Chamber's efforts. In February, we released an election survey asking you to identify the most critical issues that the new Government should address. Government competence, crime and public safety, public spending, cost of living, national debt, cost of doing business, employment and education topped the list.

These issues became the central advocacy themes throughout the year and the focus of questions during the series of district Candidates Forums in April leading up to the General Elections and meetings with government and United Kingdom political leaders. I shared your concerns directly with the

new Premier, Hon. Alden McLaughlin Jr. shortly after he and the new Government took office and I am pleased to say that the relationship is both positive and proactive; a stark contrast from previous Government.

The Council also worked to address small business issues, immigration review matters, the national budget, long term planning and raised the issue of Sunday Trading and the introduction of Daylight Savings Time. Chamber representatives were appointed and served on several key Government advisory boards and groups. This demonstrates the positive relationships that have been established with

the new Government and the level of influence that the Chamber now enjoys.

One of the top priorities for this year was ensuring that all voters were given an opportunity to hear the views of the candidates in the districts. The Chamber organized a series of forums in each district so that probing questions developed by the membership could be posed to the candidates.

The Chamber regards these forums as our non-partisan approach to removing the element of campaign rhetoric and replacing it with probing questions that our members regard as

important for any leader to be elected to the highest office in the land.

Education and training has always been a key area of focus for the Chamber and I am particularly delighted with the reintroduction of the Golden Apple Awards for Excellence in Teaching. I consider teachers to be one of the most important professions.

Good teachers inspire and motivate their students and lay a solid academic foundation for future generations. It was wonderful to celebrate the achievements of some of Cayman's top educators at the awards ceremony in November.

In 2015, the Chamber will celebrate a significant milestone – 50 years of supporting, promoting and protecting the interests of the membership and the public welfare. There is so much to celebrate and a committee has been established to develop a list of activities for the anniversary year. If you wish to get involved please contact me or any member of the Council or staff.

In closing, I wish the incoming Council continued success and I would encourage all members to make the decision to get involved and to support and promote the work of the Chamber of Commerce. Don't sit on the

sidelines. The effectiveness of the Chamber depends on your support.