



# ANNUAL REPORT

2024 – 2025



# INTERIM CEO & BOARD PRESIDENT MESSAGE



This past year was marked by meaningful progress across all areas of our Chamber's work.

We continued to deliver strong programming and advocacy for our members, from successful networking events and educational sessions to advancing key policy priorities through our partnerships with Alberta Chambers and the Canadian Chamber network. Our collaboration with community partners reached new heights with the formation of the Homeless Foundation for Red Deer Region, which emerged directly from our comprehensive report on homelessness in the region. We're also exploring exciting new collaboration opportunities to strengthen business support services throughout central Alberta.

During the year, we experienced a leadership transition at the CEO level. While transitions are never simple, this change created an opportunity to pause, reflect, and strengthen our foundation for long-term growth.

I stepped into the role of Interim CEO alongside my responsibilities as Board President. While this dual role wasn't part of our original plan, it provided the stability and continuity needed to advance key strategic priorities while conducting a thoughtful search for our next permanent leader.

During this transition period, we focused our energy on three core areas:

- **Operational Excellence** – Implementing new systems and processes to increase efficiency and accountability across the organization.
- **Strategic Alignment** – Ensuring every initiative directly supports our mission and delivers measurable value to members.
- **Future-Readiness** – Building the operational foundation that the Chamber staff need to drive growth and innovation.

As we move into our 132<sup>nd</sup> year, the Chamber remains on solid ground. Our financial position is stable, Agri-Trade continues to be a cornerstone of success, and we welcomed 100 new members this year. But we're not satisfied with maintaining the status quo.

This year was about raising the bar for what our Chamber can be: more strategic, more member-focused, and more aligned with the evolving needs of our business community.

This report reflects both our strong foundation and our commitment to continuous improvement. We're building on what works while innovating where needed.

To our members, thank you for your continued trust and engagement. Your success drives everything we do, and we're excited about the enhanced value and impact we're building for the year ahead.

Mike Szyszka  
Interim CEO & Board President



# BOARD MESSAGE



This past year demonstrated the strength of good governance and the Chamber's commitment to serving our members at the highest level.

As stewards of the organization on behalf of the membership, the Board of Directors maintains an active role in ensuring our direction remains aligned with our mission, values, and the evolving needs of our business community.

During the year, we undertook a comprehensive review and update of our Board policies, sharpening our focus on governance best practices, performance evaluation, and clarity of roles.

Throughout this period, we remained focused on what matters most: ensuring the Chamber continues to deliver exceptional value to our members while building toward an even stronger future.

We want to thank our Board President, Mike Szyszka, for stepping into a dual role as Interim CEO through our leadership transition, providing the stability and leadership continuity our members and staff needed. His commitment to both Board governance and operational excellence has been invaluable.

The role of the Board is to ensure that the organization is delivering on its mandate, serving members well, and operating with integrity and strategic focus. We remain fully committed to that role and will continue to exercise it with thoughtfulness and care for the community we serve.

On behalf of the Board, I want to thank our staff, our volunteers, and especially our members for their continued trust and engagement. Your success is our purpose, and that purpose continues to guide every decision we make.

Matt Wear  
Vice President

# FINANCIALS

## OVERVIEW

The Chamber ended the 2024–2025 fiscal year in a stable financial position, with healthy reserves and uninterrupted operations across all programs. Our financial fundamentals remain solid, providing the stability needed to pursue strategic growth opportunities.

As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, this year brought increased focus on optimizing how we allocate resources and track project investments. While our overall financial management remained sound, we identified opportunities to enhance transparency and strategic alignment in how approved funds are utilized across different initiatives.

Looking at our revenue structure, Agri-Trade continues to be a significant contributor to our operating income, demonstrating the strength of this cornerstone program. However, the Board recognizes the importance of building sustainable growth and diversifying our revenue streams to create multiple pathways for long-term stability.

With strong reserves providing a solid foundation, we're well-positioned to make strategic investments in growth while implementing enhanced financial oversight. The Board has directed the development of a comprehensive reporting framework to provide both internal teams and Board leadership with clearer visibility into organizational performance and strategic opportunities.

These improvements reflect our commitment to ensuring sustainable operations that can support continued member value and strategic reinvestment in the Chamber's future.

# FINANCIALS

## OVERVIEW

Revenue Category	2022–2023	2023–2024	2024–2025
Total Revenue	1.3M	1.35M	1.36M
Joint Ventures	54%	57%	57%
Membership	17%	17%	17%
Events/ Sponsorship	17%	12%	13%
Admin Fees Agri-Trade	5%	6%	6%
Administrative	5%	5%	4%
Investment	2%	3%	3%

# FINANCIALS

## OVERVIEW

Expense Category	2022–2023	2023–2024	2024–2025
Total Expenses	1.14M	1.18M	1.3M
Salaries & Benefits	57%	57%	65%
Administrative	16%	19%	16%
Events	18%	13%	12%
Conventions/ Conferences	1%	4%	1%
Building	4%	4%	4%
Amortization	2%	2%	1%
Bank Charges	2%	1%	1%



# MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNITY



This past year, we welcomed 96 new members to the Chamber and our base has remained stable around 800 members, providing a solid foundation for our advocacy work and community programs.

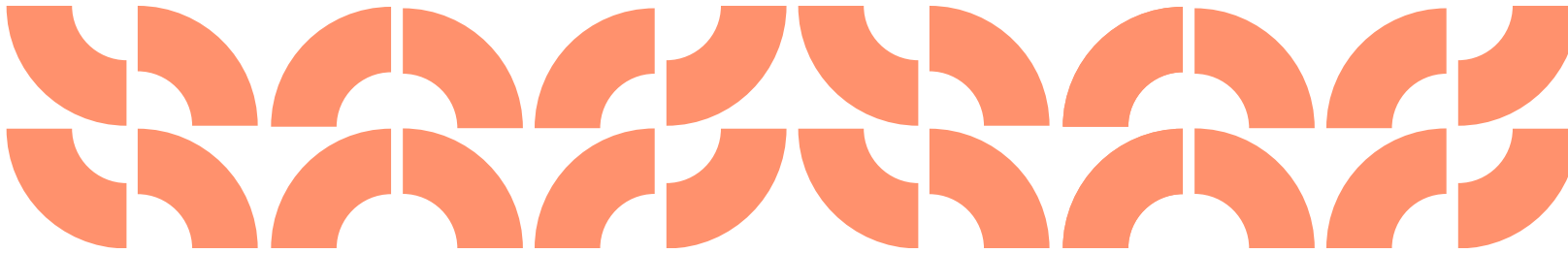
As the voice for business in our region, we know that membership strength directly translates to advocacy power. The more businesses we represent, the stronger our voice becomes in the meetings and discussions that shape policy and economic development in central Alberta.



With this in mind, we've been listening carefully to feedback from current and prospective members about what they need from their Chamber membership. The message was clear: businesses need different things from the Chamber at different stages of their growth, and our one-size-fits-all approach isn't the solution anymore.

For years, the Chamber has used a pricing model where every member receives the same core benefits, with pricing based on employee count. While this approach has served us well, we recognize it doesn't always align with how different businesses want to engage or the specific value they're seeking.





In the year ahead, we'll be launching a tiered membership model that allows businesses to choose the level of membership that best fits their goals, engagement level, and budget, regardless of company size.

This new approach will include an individual membership tier at a significantly lower price point, perfect for sole proprietors, consultants, or businesses just getting started. Along with mid-tier and premium memberships that bundle event tickets, enhanced marketing visibility, and sponsorship opportunities for companies looking to raise their profile and invest more deeply in the business community.

We believe this evolution will create more pathways for businesses to join our collective voice while ensuring every member receives value that aligns with the needs of their business.

The business landscape continues to evolve, and so does the Chamber. Our goal is to build a membership model that reflects the diversity, ambition, and varied needs of the businesses we serve, creating a stronger, more inclusive voice for business in central Alberta.

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Total Members	812	787	799
New Members	91	97	96
Member Retention	95%	90%	92%

# NEW MEMBERS

53 on Ross  
Blanchard & Company Ltd.  
Blackfalds Automotive & Collision Centre Ltd.  
NextGen Automation  
OK Tire Timberlands - Red Deer  
Sonata Design  
John Howard Society Red Deer  
Red Deer Event Rentals  
RBC Dominion Securities  
Jillian Vukovich - IG Private Wealth Management  
Rotary Club of Red Deer Sunrise  
Elite Chiropractic and Sports Medicine  
Amethyst Estate Management Inc.  
Mountain Music Events  
Peak Energy Solutions  
LeaderImpact  
Petroteck Resources Ltd  
Dirt Road Pretty Clothing  
Total Recon Property Inspections  
Renegade Fleet Safety Ltd.  
Sweet Home in the City  
Busy Bee Bookkeeping Ltd.  
FinCap Financial Group - Jacques Beaudin  
Alton Design & Build INC.  
Amy Cheng, Mortgage Broker - BRX Mortgage  
Hypnosis For Health and Happiness  
Better Development Corporation Ltd.  
MacKay CEO Forums  
Integrated Feed Solutions  
Canadian Red Cross  
BNI Alberta South  
iHandyMan Central Alberta  
Utopia Hair Studio  
Global Philanthropic Inc ( Canada )  
RK Real Estate  
NXL Technology Inc.  
Ken Striker Proprietorship  
Prairie Grain Artisan Ltd.  
Western Financial Group INC  
IronClad Machinery Services Ltd.  
ReFind Immigration Consulting Corp.  
Work Based Learning Consortium (WBLC)  
Tanya Rogalczyk Simply Mortgages, Maximal  
Mortgages Inc.  
Canada Custom Autoworks  
Olds College  
Barrier Group Inc.  
Gameland Laser Tag & VRcade

Guru SEO and Web Design Services - Red Deer  
Web Design  
Rich & Grounded  
Bridges of Love Ministry Society  
Body Basics  
AgeProof Living Spaces Ltd.  
HSS Production House  
Stacked Pancake & Breakfast House  
Ash Tyndall Photography  
Restore Wellness IV Hydration Therapy Inc.  
Tee Trail Golf Carts  
Redpoint Creative  
Homeless Foundation for Red Deer Region  
HometownMarket.ca  
Red Deer Dream Centre Society  
MiLo Group Ltd.  
Bjornson Insurance Group  
Drive Happiness Seniors Association  
Hilltop Wedding Center  
UNITYWORKS CONSULTING INC.  
Climbing High Supply - The Arborist Shop Inc.  
Social Shift Therapy and Wellness  
Hear Right Canada  
Sally's Play Centre & Social House  
Altered Gown  
Summit People & Compliance  
Alberta Roof Experts  
Empowrify Ventures Ltd.  
CASA Coaching and Consulting Inc.  
Rambow Consulting Group  
Four Roots Pet Products Inc.  
INDUSTRILOGIC SYSTEMS LTD.  
EcoRaze Solutions Ltd.  
Getaway Vacations Global 2025 Inc.  
Coldwell Banker OnTrack Realty - Chris Forsyth  
MR MIKES Red Deer  
Transpera Technologies Inc.  
High Road Leaders  
SoldiPays  
Nik Eco Strategies Ltd.  
Better Life Protocols  
HGA People Ltd.  
Living Lands Landscape + Design  
Brant Law  
BDO Debt Solutions  
Brainchild Designs  
Luxinn Supply  
GoldDipper's Canada

# POLICY & ADVOCACY



Over the past year, the Red Deer District Chamber has continued to advance a proactive, solutions-focused policy and advocacy agenda on behalf of our members. As economic uncertainty, rising costs, and labour shortages continued to impact local businesses, your Chamber has been a strong and consistent voice at the municipal, provincial, and national levels.

Throughout 2024–2025, the Chamber engaged directly with decision-makers and stakeholders to surface issues and champion solutions that matter most to our business community.

## **Notable highlights include:**

- **Economic Development Leadership** – The Chamber’s participation in an Economic Development Steering Committee resulted in The City’s Economic Development Ad Hoc Committee and the subsequent decision by Red Deer City Council to transition economic development activities to an arms-length model; an important step toward more nimble and effective investment attraction.
- **City Budget Analysis** – The City invited the Chamber to a dedicated working group to provide deeper analysis and constructive input into the City of Red Deer budget, advocating for prudent fiscal management and clear alignment with business priorities.
- **Homelessness Strategy Implementation** – The Chamber contributed to the finalization of Homelessness Task Force and subsequent formation of the Homeless Foundation for Red Deer Region.

## **Provincial and Federal Engagement**

To ensure Red Deer’s voice is heard across Alberta and Canada, we participated in several key policy forums and government relations activities:

- **Canadian Chamber of Commerce AGM & Policy Plenary** – while we were unsuccessful in getting our policies passed, we participated in advancing federal priorities including SME competitiveness and housing supply.

- **Alberta Chambers of Commerce AGM & Policy Plenary** – Represented member perspectives through policy submissions with successful provincial policy adoption for Private Worker Coverage Options, Single Stair Building Code Reforms, and Municipal Transparency and Accountability.
- **Alberta Chambers of Commerce Fall Board Meeting and Deputy Ministers Dinner as well as Political Action Day** – Met directly with senior non-elected decision-makers in Alberta, Provincial ministers and MLAs to share Red Deer business priorities.
- **Federal Candidates Meet and Greet** – Convened an opportunity for members to engage directly with federal election candidates on the issues that matter to business.
- **Bank of Canada Roundtables** – Participated in economic outlook sessions to inform monetary policy perspectives.
- **Economic Corridors Working Group** – We are participating in a working group with the Alberta Chambers of Commerce and Government of Alberta to advance regional economic corridors development.
- **Municipal Candidates Information Session** – Partnered with Alberta Municipalities to host a non-partisan session encouraging community leaders to consider running for local office.

### **Strengthening the Chamber's Foundation**

Recognizing that strong governance underpins effective advocacy, the Chamber has invested significant time in updating both Board governance policies and internal operational policies to ensure our organization remains transparent, accountable, and responsive to members.

### **Serving All Members**

We have convened several meetings with nonprofit member organizations to explore new ways the Chamber can better serve and represent this important sector, with more engagement planned for the year ahead.

### **A Strategic Member Benefit**

Policy and advocacy remain a significant benefit of Chamber membership. Whether championing fair taxation, supporting regional economic development, or shaping policy debates that impact your operations, our work ensures that the collective voice of Red Deer's business community is heard – and respected. Looking ahead, we remain committed to strengthening relationships with all levels of government, delivering high-quality policy analysis, and ensuring our advocacy priorities reflect the needs and aspirations of our members. Thank you for your engagement and support as we continue to advocate for a thriving business environment.

# EVENTS

Chamber events continued to bring members together throughout the year, hosting 45 events with over 1,367 total attendees across our programming. From Business After Hours and Lunch & Learns to our Speaker Series and signature gatherings, these touchpoints remained an important way for members to connect, learn, and build the professional relationships that drive business success.

Feedback from attendees was generally positive, with an overall satisfaction rating of 79%, reflecting the value these programs continue to provide for networking and business development. However, we also heard honest input about areas for improvement.

The core purpose of Chamber events remains vital: helping members expand their networks, discover business opportunities, access valuable education, and connect with the other professionals who are building Central Alberta's economy. Whether you're a seasoned business owner or just starting out, knowing and connecting with your peers is fundamental to success in our region.

Our events program has a strong foundation. The year ahead will focus on building from that foundation to ensure every gathering delivers clear value and fosters the kind of business community that benefits everyone.

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Total Events	39	50	45
Event Registrations	1,429	1, 618	1, 367
Event Satisfaction	N/A	N/A	79%





# 2024 AGRI-TRADE



Agri-Trade Equipment Expo, presented by Farm Credit Canada, celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with record-breaking success. The event featured over 500 exhibitors across 300,000 sq. ft., including the largest outdoor exhibit area in the show's history, and drew thousands of attendees thanks in part to unseasonably warm weather. Positive exhibitor feedback highlighted robust sales, underscoring the show's value to the agricultural industry.

Agri-Trade 2024 also saw significant international participation, with visitors and exhibitors from 13 countries, reflecting growing global interest in the Canadian agricultural market. The 16<sup>th</sup> annual Ag Innovations Competition showcased cutting-edge solutions, with Current Group's OPEN20 water bowl power saver winning both the Judges' Choice and Farmers' Choice awards.

**Agri-Trade 2025 will take place  
November 5–7, 2025 at Westerner  
Park.**





# THE ROAD AHEAD

## **Building Momentum: Stronger, Smarter, and Member-Focused**

As we look ahead, we're building from a position of strength. The Chamber's financial stability, successful programs like Agri-Trade, loyal membership base, and strong community partnerships provide a solid foundation for the next phase of our evolution.

This past year reinforced something important: while our fundamentals are sound, the business landscape continues to change rapidly. Today's business leaders expect more flexibility, clearer value, and organizations that move at the speed of business. The leadership transition period gave us valuable time to listen, learn, and align our operations with these evolving expectations.

## **Strengthening Member Value & Engagement**

Our new tiered membership model will provide more pathways for businesses to engage meaningfully with the Chamber. Combined with better member onboarding and more systematic feedback collection, we're building a membership experience that truly serves businesses at every stage of growth.

## **Building Revenue Diversification**

While Agri-Trade remains a cornerstone success, sustainable growth requires multiple strong revenue streams. We're developing new sponsorship opportunities, expanding our events model, and creating programming that generates both member value and operational stability.

## **Enhancing Operational Excellence**

The systems and processes we're implementing this year, from financial reporting frameworks to strategic planning alignment, position us to operate more efficiently and transparently. This operational strength frees up energy and resources to focus on what matters most: member success and community impact.

The Chamber has served Central Alberta's business community for 131 years because it adapts while staying true to its core mission. This year proved our resilience and our commitment to continuous improvement.

The work continues. The momentum builds. And we're just getting started.

# EVOLVING

# HOW WE WORK

## **Strengthening Leadership & Member Engagement**

As the Chamber continues to grow in scope and impact, we've made some key changes to how we're organized internally as a team. These changes are designed to improve member experience and create new opportunities for member involvement.

## **Enhanced Focus on Member Experience**

This year, we introduced a Chief Operating Officer (COO) role to provide dedicated leadership for the day-to-day operations that directly impact our members. While our CEO focuses on major strategic initiatives like revenue diversification, policy advocacy, and managing our growing portfolio of programs (including the newly acquired AgSmart Educational Expo), the COO ensures that member services, event execution, and operational excellence receive the attention they deserve.

For our members, this translates to improved service delivery, member benefits, and direct value the Chamber can add to your business.

## **New Opportunities for Member Involvement**

We've also created four new Board committees aligned with core areas of Chamber work: Membership, Events, Advocacy, and Marketing. These committees bring together Directors, staff, and engaged members to provide insight and support in shaping key programs and priorities.

Whether you're passionate about advocacy, have marketing expertise, want to contribute to the success of our events, or are interested in membership growth, there's now a structured way to contribute your skills and help guide the Chamber's direction. These changes reflect our commitment to both operational excellence and community engagement, ensuring the Chamber runs effectively while creating meaningful ways for members to shape its future.

Watch for opportunities to get involved in the year ahead. Your expertise and perspective help make the Chamber stronger.

# VOLUNTEERS

## Thank You to Our Volunteer Ambassadors

Our Ambassadors are some of the most recognizable faces of the Chamber, showing up to welcome new members, attend events, and represent the spirit of connection that lies at the heart of our mission.

To all of our current and past Ambassadors: thank you. Your commitment to building central Alberta's business community really does make a difference.

As we continue to grow and evolve, we see exciting opportunities to expand the Ambassador Program and create even more meaningful ways for volunteers to contribute. We're exploring enhanced recognition programs, additional volunteer roles, and better coordination to help you make an even greater impact.

The business community thrives when people step up to support each other. Our Ambassadors understand this, and your efforts help create the connections and relationships that make central Alberta stronger.

Thank you for everything you do. And to anyone interested in joining our volunteer team, we'd welcome the opportunity to talk about how you can get involved.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024-2025



Erin Forbes, Kevin Walsh, Jen Goehring, Konstantin Neykurs, Matthew Wear (Vice President), Rieley Kay, Mike Szyszka (President), Mindy Smythe, Scott Robinson (Former CEO), Donna Purcell, Haris Zafar, Nadine St. Denis

# THE TEAM

Behind every program, event, policy win, and member connection this year was a group of dedicated people doing the work, often behind the scenes, always with professionalism and commitment to our members and community.

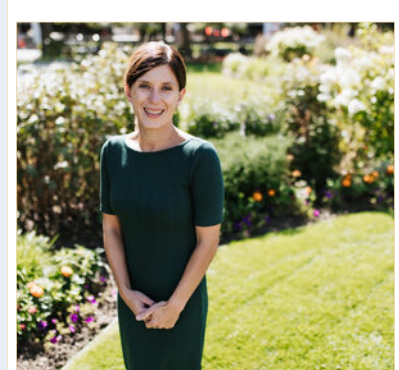
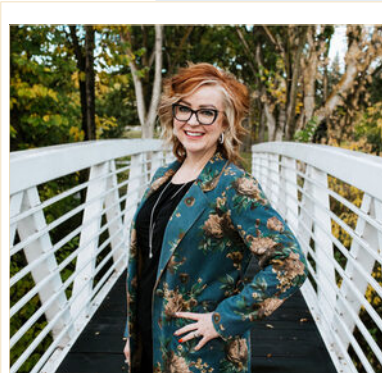
This year brought change and evolution to how we operate, and throughout it all, our staff continued to deliver excellent service to members while adapting to new processes and taking on expanded responsibilities when needed. Their flexibility and dedication ensured that members experienced seamless service.

We also want to recognize the collaborative spirit they brought to this year. Whether supporting colleagues across departments, contributing ideas for improvement, or stepping up to help with special projects, they demonstrated the teamwork that makes the Chamber successful.

Their work matters. The events that connect our business community, the advocacy that amplifies members' voices, the programs that support business growth, none of it happens without their daily commitment to serving our members.

The Chamber's strength comes from having people who care deeply about serving central Alberta's business community. Our staff are those people, and that dedication shows in everything we accomplish together.

On behalf of the Board and the entire membership, we thank them.



Sandra Gunderman,  
Amber Mack,  
Tricia Hunter,  
Lindsey Knudson,  
Shelley Hanlan



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