

## **Fort St. John and District Chamber of Commerce Executive Director's Report 2025 Annual General Meeting**

### **Message from the Executive Director**

It is a privilege to present this report on behalf of the Fort St. John and District Chamber of Commerce. 2025 marked the first year of implementing our 2025 to 2030 Strategic Plan. This year focused on strengthening our foundation, rebuilding connections, and positioning the Chamber to better serve businesses across the North Peace. Guided by our mission to advocate for, support, and promote businesses, we have taken important steps to ensure the Chamber remains relevant, responsive, and forward focused.

### **Strengthening Relationships with Members**

A key priority in 2025 was reconnecting with our membership and better understanding the needs of the business community. We completed 89 one on one meetings with members and partners, along with dozens of business visits and ongoing office conversations. These discussions led directly to new workshops, events, and opportunities for collaboration. They also provided valuable insight into the realities businesses are facing, including labour shortages, regulatory pressures, and changing market conditions. Event participation exceeded expectations, with overall attendance increasing by 135 percent. This demonstrates that businesses continue to value opportunities to connect, learn, and engage when those opportunities are meaningful and relevant.

At the same time, membership numbers declined. This reflects broader economic factors, as well as a shift in expectations around value. This feedback has been clear and constructive. Businesses are looking for tangible benefits, stronger advocacy, and practical support. This creates a strong opportunity for the Chamber to evolve and deliver greater impact.

### **Advancing Advocacy and Regional Voice**

Significant progress was made in strengthening the Chamber's role as a business advocate. Relationships with the City of Fort St. John have been strengthened through regular engagement, and connections with Taylor and Hudson's Hope have been re-established and are continuing to grow. At the regional and provincial level, we have increased our presence through active participation in chamber networks and committees. A major milestone was the selection of Fort St. John as the host community for the 2026 BC Chamber AGM. This is a significant opportunity to showcase the strength of our region and bring provincial attention to the priorities of Northeast British Columbia. We have also focused on improving how we communicate the value of our region. Through events, media engagement, and partnerships, we are

ensuring that the work being done in the North Peace is better understood and recognized.

### **Delivering Value Through Events and Programming**

Events remain one of the most effective ways we deliver value to members. Our luncheons, mixers, and signature events continue to grow, providing space for businesses to connect with each other and with decision makers. The Creating Energy Conference continues to evolve as a key platform for discussions on economic growth, industry development, and regional opportunity. In addition, we expanded business support through targeted workshops and partnerships. Sessions on artificial intelligence, immigration, Treaty 101, and peer mentorship were well attended and demonstrated strong demand for practical, skills based learning. The rebrand of “Your Guide to the Peace Region” has also strengthened our ability to support workforce attraction and business promotion across the region.

### **Building a Stronger Organization**

Internally, 2025 focused on improving how we operate. We updated bylaws and improved financial reporting systems. These changes have increased transparency and made it easier to track performance and plan for the future. Our systems for membership management and communication have also been strengthened. While there is still work to be done, the foundation is now in place to support more consistent engagement and improved reporting.

### **Looking Ahead to 2026**

Year 2 of our Strategic Plan shifts our focus from building to delivering.

In 2026, we will:

- Implement an advocacy framework and increase member involvement in policy development
- Strengthen our regional leadership through collaboration with local governments and neighbouring chambers
- Continue to grow the Creating Energy Conference as a platform for economic development
- Focus on membership retention and growth by delivering clear, tangible value
- Expand business support through targeted training and resources
- Complete governance and operational improvements to ensure long term sustainability

These priorities reflect both our strategic direction and the direct feedback we have received from members.

### **Closing**

2025 was a year of progress, learning, and opportunity. We have built stronger relationships, improved our systems, and clarified our role as a regional business leader. Most importantly, we have listened to our members and gained a better understanding of where we need to focus next. By continuing to strengthen advocacy, enhance member value, and support regional collaboration, we will create meaningful impact for businesses across the North Peace.

Thank you to our Board of Directors, members, partners, and community for your continued support and engagement.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
Executive Director  
Fort St. John and District Chamber of Commerce