



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New survey of business community shows top municipal priorities are fiscal management and transparency in decision-making

(Calgary, AB) – The Calgary Chamber of Commerce released survey results today that identify the business community’s most important issues. At the municipal level, fiscal management and transparency in decision-making rank as top concerns. Crime, transportation and urban growth round out the top five.

“October’s election is looking more and more like an opportunity for change,” said Geoff Pradella, Vice-President of Public & Government Affairs with the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. “Calgary’s business community wants the new Council to demonstrate value for money, be far more transparent in decision-making, focus on crime prevention, and address our transportation and urban growth challenges.”

Addressing these issues will help local businesses succeed.

“Cutting red tape through streamlining local regulation and permitting processes would reduce the cost of doing business for small and start-up companies in Calgary and create new jobs,” commented Pradella. “We need to end the double taxation of business through the collection of both a business tax and a higher-than-average non-residential property tax,” said Pradella. “Calgary businesses contribute about 60 per cent of local tax revenues, meaning higher costs for consumers and reducing Calgary’s attractiveness for investment.”

Overall business priorities, which will guide the Chamber’s policy and advocacy work in the coming year, are:

1. Economic competitiveness
2. Government fiscal management
3. Local business success
4. Health care

“Businesses are now looking to remove roadblocks to growth after weathering the economic storm, the highest priority from last year,” commented Pradella. “Competitive fundamentals must be strengthened, including reducing or streamlining regulatory burdens, measures to increase productivity and ensuring Alberta’s energy industry and overall business climate restore their competitive edge.”

Part of this forward-looking competitive focus includes an efficient and cost-effective health system. Health care appeared in the top overall business issues for the first time since the Chamber started the survey in 2006.



“Over 40 per cent of the provincial budget is allocated to health care spending, the largest budgetary item,” said Pradella. “We must keep costs down and improve access. Alberta’s return to balanced budgets depends on new ideas and the political will to make improvements to the health system.”

Deficit elimination and debt repayment is favoured at the federal level, while the provincial government is encouraged to develop a stronger commitment to a provincial saving strategy.

About the Chamber:

The Calgary Chamber of Commerce is a member-driven, sustainable organization whose mission is to connect, serve and champion the Calgary business community in its quest to excel.

The Public & Government Affairs Department measurably contributes to the Chamber's profile and effectiveness. We are the leading edge business advocate and forum for debate, and a credible source for policy analysis and issue commentary. We advocate new and innovative solutions to improve the business climate on behalf of our members.

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Backgrounder - 2010 Membership Issue Priority Survey Results Summary

Media inquiries may be directed to:

Sharon Janzen
Marketing & Communications Coordinator
The Calgary Chamber of Commerce
403-750-0431
sjanzen@calgarychamber.com



BACKGROUND

2010 Membership Issue Priority Survey Results Summary

Survey conducted February 1 - 12, 2010

2010 Top Business Issues

1. Economic Competitiveness
 - Reduce tax and regulatory burdens
 - Ensure energy industry competitiveness
 - Increase productivity
 - Grow trade and investment
2. Government Fiscal Management
 - Eliminate deficit and debt
 - Exercise spending control
 - Heighten transparency and accountability
 - Create a provincial saving strategy
3. Local Business Success
 - Cut red tape
 - Target crime and enhance security
 - Build and maintain transportation infrastructure
 - Meet workforce demands
4. Health Care
 - Ensure efficient spending and delivery of services
 - Improve access, quality and sustainability
 - Address mental health in the workplace
 - Advocate changes to the legislative framework

2010 Top Municipal Issues

1. Fiscal management by City Council
2. Transparency and accountability of City Council
3. Crime / safety / policing
4. Transportation – roads
5. City expansion and growth management

2010 Top Provincial Issues

1. Health care spending and delivery
2. Competitiveness of the oil and gas industry
3. Diversification of the economy
4. Manage spending to eliminate the deficit
5. Infrastructure investment

2010 Top Federal Issues

1. Manage spending to eliminate the deficit
2. Personal tax competitiveness
3. Infrastructure investment
4. Internal barriers to trade, investment and labour mobility
5. Diversification of export markets

2009 Top Business Issues

1. Weathering the current economic storm
2. Tax competitiveness (municipal, provincial and federal)
3. Energy industry competitiveness and environmental sustainability
4. Workforce development
5. Fiscal management and accountability of Calgary City Council

2009 Top Municipal Issues

1. Fiscal management (spending and priority setting) by City Council
2. Crime / safety / policing
3. Transparency and accountability of City Council decision-making processes (e.g. Municipal Auditor)
4. City expansion and growth management (e.g. planning, urban sprawl)
5. Transportation – roads

2009 Top Provincial Issues

1. Economy
2. Fiscal management (spending and priority setting)
3. Health care spending and delivery
4. Infrastructure (e.g. provincial highway system, schools, hospitals)
5. Corporate and small business tax competitiveness

2009 Top Federal Issues

1. Economy
2. Fiscal management (spending and priority setting)
3. Corporate and small business tax competitiveness
4. Personal tax competitiveness
5. Interprovincial trade barriers / labour mobility