

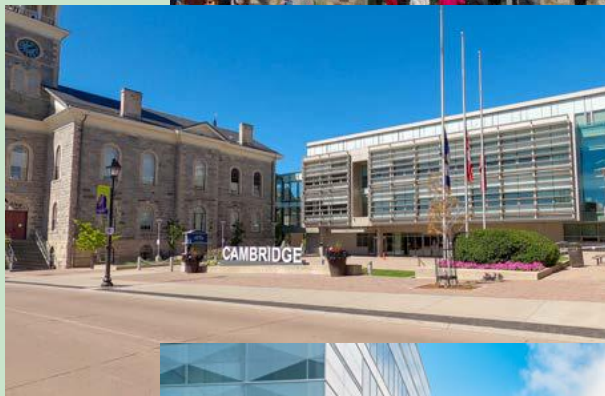


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The Chamber's Strategy to Support Our Growing Region

Over the past several months, the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors has been focused on setting our strategic plan for the three-year period July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2026. This three-year strategic plan aligns with the Chamber's June 30 fiscal year end.

A lot has changed since we developed our last three-year strategic plan in the fall of 2019. The pandemic forced Chamber staff to re-prioritize and focus on advocacy efforts to help our members through the challenges faced, and to reimagine how we interact with members through events and communications.

Despite that, many of the themes that came out from the last strategic plan are still relevant and have helped as one of the pieces of information feeding into our current planning process. Those themes included understanding our members' and community's needs, telling our story through marketing and communications, enhancing our digital interaction with our members, and understanding membership and how we can add value to members.

Another key piece of information which has been considered throughout the planning process is the output from a member and non-member survey that was conducted in 2022. This survey gave management and the Board further insight into how the community views the Chamber and the level of awareness of programs and services offered, what programs and services offer the most value to members, and what areas exist for improvement.

Using this data and other key inputs, with the help of consultants guiding the process, the Chamber Board has had two in-person strategic planning sessions in Q1 2023 with the intent of providing guidance to management to develop a detailed strategic plan. These strategic planning sessions have been aided by the depth and breadth of experience at the Chamber Board.

Our diverse Board comes from various business sectors with different professional and personal backgrounds which has helped to ensure we have balanced views and thoughts around the table. Management has been working hard to translate our strategic guidance into a detailed strategic plan with key performance indicators, which will be discussed and approved by the Board in time for it to be in place for the start of fiscal 2024.

Part of the focus throughout our strategic planning process has been to consider the needs of our membership, which continue to change and evolve as the Region of Waterloo grows. The strategic plan is being built to ensure we are adapting for the future of our Region, focusing on the things that add the most value to our members.

We also want members and other community stakeholders to see and understand everything that the Chamber does, to ensure that organizations are getting the most out of what a Chamber membership provides. Advocacy for our members will continue to be a key area of focus as we want all levels of government to see and hear the strength of our Region, what the future holds, and what investment is needed to maximize the prosperity of the Region.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Scott Gilfillan

Scott Gilfillan is a chartered professional accountant and a partner with PwC in assurance, as well as their Waterloo Market Leader. Scott focuses on providing clients with audit and accounting advice while acting as a trusted business advisor.



1:4 in our community do not have a family physician

Canada is expected to welcome 460,000 newcomers every year. Having access to adequate healthcare is critical to the success of newcomers integrating into our community.



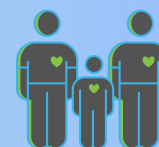
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Waterloo Region Economic and Population Growth - Cautious Optimism

Growth forecasts across the Region of Waterloo are better than many areas across the province. But inflation, global unrest and interest rates are just some of the issues that will cause concern as we move ahead. Following months of legislated closures and other disruptions, our local community appears positioned for economic and population expansion at levels anticipated prior to the pandemic.

A recent report from the Conference Board of Canada noted that the Region of Waterloo economy should perform above provincial and national standards. After exceptional trends during 2021 and 2022, local increases for gross domestic product (GDP) should register at 1.5 per cent in 2023 followed by 3.5 per cent in 2024 and 2.4 per cent in 2025. Provincial forecasts predict growth at 0.5 per cent in 2023, 1.6 per cent in 2024 and 2.1 per cent in 2025.

The Conference Board noted that over the last two decades, our community has been one of Ontario's economic engines, with expansion faster than provincial rates in 18 of the last 21 years. A diversified economy across the financial service, manufacturing, information technology and food production sectors has provided both long-term stability and growth.

Consistent economic growth has initiated population growth, placing significant pressure on the delivery of public services. In upcoming years, local businesses must generate appropriate revenues to support all levels of government for the essential benefits they provide.

One of the major challenges for the Region of Waterloo and other municipalities anticipating population growth is the supply of housing. In municipal candidate forums for mayors, regional chair and regional councillors conducted last October by our Chamber in collaboration with the Cambridge Chamber and Waterloo Region Association of Realtors (WRAR), all participants agreed that housing and housing affordability were the priority issues identified by voters. These are also the concerns of local business owners and managers.

The shortage of appropriate housing has contributed to on-going talent attraction and retention challenges across our community. There is a significant issue around the types of local housing, leading to a crisis of affordability, availability, and accessibility. Our Chamber membership remains very skeptical of the Region of Waterloo Official Plan, which should provide a more balanced approach on housing for addressing diverse employer demands.

The Region of Waterloo population is forecasted to reach 923,000 residents by 2051, placing significant pressure on existing local infrastructure and increasing demands for enhancements. Following many years of advocacy coordinated through the local business and municipal sectors, we have received commitments from the provincial government for a new Highway 7 with expanded GO train passenger service to Toronto Union Station. While construction has been delayed by the pandemic, we expect clear progress in the very near future on these projects that are critical for future economic and population growth.

Brian Prudham of Momentum Developments noted in a recent Waterloo Region Record article that two-way, all-day GO service would be the single largest game changing project for the community. Frequent service provides the option of lower Waterloo Region housing costs while offering employment opportunities in Toronto. Also, local employers seeking to recruit and retain employees residing in the Greater Toronto Area will also receive immense benefits.

The Region of Waterloo, as a growing community, urgently requires expanded healthcare services. Our Chamber, supported by the membership, has been leading local family doctor recruitment efforts for over two decades. Forecasted explosive population growth combined with the pending retirements of many practitioners demand that our community continue these programs to attract physicians. Also, the provincial government must expand their efforts on reducing the barriers for foreign-trained professionals to practice in Ontario.

There is significant work that remains to be completed by local governments and business to prepare for growth, however recovery from the pandemic and returning to intensive economic activity are clearly apparent.



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Government Budgets and Perspectives on Economic Growth

Canadian Chamber of Commerce President and Chief Executive Officer Perrin Beatty noted in advance of the 2021 federal budget that for all of the subsidy and stimulus spending Canada has seen and will continue to see the only path to real and sustainable economic growth is job creation and business investment.

Beatty also noted in an earlier 2020 article that governments cannot borrow or regulate our way back to prosperity. Any true recovery must, and inevitably will, be led by business. Just as every downturn is first felt on Main Street when the lights go out, every recovery starts when the open signs begin reappearing.

Similarly, Ontario Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy has indicated his strategy is to attract jobs and build infrastructure. Program reductions are generally excluded as governments cannot cut their way to prosperity.

The 2023 Ontario and federal budgets were delivered in late March and provide different approaches on fiscal management and deficits. A CBC News report from March 23, following tabling of the Ontario budget, noted that surging revenues will get the province back to black years earlier than previously projected. The fiscal plan for this year arrived amid unprecedented economic conditions for Ontario including above-target inflation, high interest rates, generational labour challenges and a potential recession. At the same time Queen's Park is receiving record-high revenues while the province manages a low unemployment rate.

Minster Bethlenfalvy noted his budget is "rooted in strong fundamentals" to not only survive the current pandemic-related economic challenges but emerge stronger than ever. Underlying the province's approach to fiscal management is the notion that continuing business investment and related employment will incrementally provide the revenues for essential public services such as healthcare and education.

A March 23, 2023, article in The Financial Post indicated the provincial government is specifically bolstering economic growth through investment in critical mineral infrastructure and tax credits for manufacturers. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce noted a focus on fiscal responsibility while maintaining growth-enabling investments that support greater productivity, resilience and competitiveness.

A provincial balanced budget is forecasted in 2024-25, much earlier than the 2027-28 projection from last year. The anticipated

deficit for this fiscal year stands at \$2.2 billion, an improvement of \$10.7 billion relative to the most recent Fall Economic Statement. A small surplus of \$200 million is expected in 2024-25 followed by a surplus of \$4.4 billion.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CCC) stated the 2023 federal budget provides mixed signals for business. The government is encouraging private-sector investment in the green economy and examining program spending while also introducing new taxes that will discourage sustained economic activity. Perrin Beatty noted the federal government missed an opportunity to encourage further private sector investment by fixing a broken regulatory system and eliminating barriers to interprovincial trade.

The Business Council of Canada indicated the 2023 federal budget includes measures to attract and retain business investment however the government's fiscal position risks undermining economic growth. President and Chief Executive Officer Goldy Hyder noted that Canadians were promised fiscal restraint, but instead this budget increases the national debt burden at a time of higher interest rates. More of every taxpayer dollar will service this expanding issue.

Rachel Aiello, in a March 28, 2023 CTV News article, observed that the federal budget confirms the government is continuing deficit spending targeted at Canadians' pocketbooks, public healthcare and a clean economy. The deficit is projected at \$40.1 billion in 2023-24, nearly \$10 billion more than forecast last fall. A slowing economy and new government spending are the primary reasons.

Governments cannot borrow our way back to prosperity. Tax revenue through economic growth is the sustainable route for supporting required public services.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Art Sinclair

Art is Vice President Policy and Advocacy for the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce.

KW4 Ontario Health Team- The Need for Integrated, Community-Based Healthcare to Support our Growing Communities.

The Kitchener-Waterloo, Wellesley, Woolwich, & Wilmot (KW4) Ontario Health Team (OHT) is a collective of 41 organizations including primary care, home care, hospitals, community agencies, long-term care, mental health and addictions, municipalities, and post-secondary education. The KW4 OHT members are working towards co-designing a health and wellness system for more than 400,000 residents of Kitchener, Waterloo, and the three Townships of Wellesley, Wilmot, and Woolwich. The goal is to provide a seamless, interconnected system of care that focuses on community wellness through collaborative partnerships.

To ensure that resources are allocated effectively, the KW4 OHT engages its members and community members to determine the areas of greatest need. As a result of the great work led by OHT members in year one of the OHT, the KW4 OHT members approved newcomers and the four neighbourhoods where they reside, as an area of focus for the 2023/24 fiscal year.

The rationale behind selecting this population is multifold. Canada is hoping to welcome over 460,000 newcomers each year, the highest level in its history. The Waterloo-Wellington region is a designated resettlement area for Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) and other newcomers, which will result in a growing need for years to come. Research indicates that the physical health of recent immigrants arriving in Canada is better than non-immigrants upon arrival in Canada. However, the data also demonstrates that the longer immigrants live in the country, the more their health declines. Factors such as income levels, official language proficiency, circumstances of arrival, discrimination, health literacy, and ability to integrate all contribute to declining health outcomes.

Immigrants make up a large proportion of the region's population growth, and settling into a new community can be challenging. Recent immigrants are more likely to be living in unaffordable or unsuitable housing, unemployed, and/or living in poverty. A review of the health data from our neighbourhoods where the highest proportion of recent immigrants reside indicates that these residents are disproportionately represented in our hospital visits. The challenges that newcomers face as a result of income levels and the lack of knowledge as to when and where to access healthcare resources, results in sicker individuals with higher hospitalization rates and emergency room visits for mental health

challenges. We hope, through our work with the neighbourhood integrated care teams, to increase availability of healthcare not just to newcomers, but to everyone who needs it, in order to have overall healthier communities.

The pandemic has significantly strained primary care providers in the Waterloo region. Many providers were already at maximum patient capacity prior to COVID-19 and the pandemic has only further depleted this critical health resource. In the KW4 OHT, immigrants accounted for 26% of the total population in 2021. The total population of KW4 OHT grew by 43,048 individuals between 2016 and 2021, and recent immigrants made up more than half of that growth (source - Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Data). Without access to team based primary care services, many newcomers are forced to pay for necessary health care from their own funds or wait until they are very ill and then visit the emergency department. According to Health Care Connect, KW4 OHT has over 5000 people registered and waiting to be connected to primary care services. Approximately 32% of those waiting for a primary care provider reside in the identified priority neighborhoods.

As our community grows, we need to ensure we have access to team-based primary care services for everyone. We need the healthcare system that includes access to primary care doctors, nurse practitioners and allied health resources in order to provide comprehensive and connected care to everyone throughout their health journey.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Neil Naik

Dr Neil Naik grew up in the GTA and studied medicine at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. He completed his residency in both urban Newfoundland and rural Nunavut and currently practices family medicine in Waterloo. Dr. Naik is the Primary Care Lead for the KW4 Ontario Health Team, Regional Primary Care Lead for Prevention and Treatment of Cancer for the Waterloo Wellington Region, and is on the Board of Governors for the Grand River Hospital Foundation where he chairs the Jupiter Lab subcommittee, bringing innovation into hospital care through novel investment streams and opportunities. Dr. Naik is committed to improving health services for local communities through collaboration with health providers and co design with community members.



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Wreck-It Room Canada

Amusement Places

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Cambridge, ON N3H 4V6
wreckitroomcanada@gmail.com
wreckitroom.ca
Phone: (519) 716-6454

2023 Business Excellence Award Winners



1. Employee Engagement Award

Victoria Campbell, Director of HR at WalterFedy, accepts the award from Dr. John Tibbits, President of Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

2. Volunteer of the Year Award

Allison Bourke accepts the award from Rosemary Naccarato, Manager, Community Affairs and Investment, with Bell Canada

3. Environment & Sustainability Award

Dave Blake, Sustainable Facilities Manager at Tepperman's, accepts the award from Blair Hiseler, Manager Operations with Enbridge

4. Non-Profit/Charitable Award

Sharon Gilroy-Dreher, Founder of ToastyToes Waterloo Region, accepts the award sponsored by MTE Consultants Inc.

5. Service Excellence in Hospitality and Tourism Award

Jill Sadler, Owner of S&V Uptown, accepts the award from Bryce Kraeker, Waterloo Region Managing Partner with Gowling WLG

6. Innovation Award

John McLeod, Head of Marketing at RideCo, accepts the award from James Dannemann, District Vice President Waterloo Region with Scotiabank

7. Health & Wellness in the Workplace Award

Jessica Kuepfer, Director of Communications at Home Hardware Stores Ltd., accepts the award from Garth Cressman, CEO of WalterFedy

8. Community Builder of the Year Award

Rob Schlegel, Chief Financial Officer of RBJ Schlegel, accepts the award from Nick Heffner, Variable Operations Manager with Heffner Lexus & Heffner Toyota

9. Young Professional of the Year Award

Katie Giddy, Vice President of Operations at Grand River Agricultural Society, accepts the award from Scott Gilfillan, Partner with PwC

10. New Business of the Year Award

Eric Cyr-Smith, Owner and Operator of The Caring Mushroom, accepts the award from Kristin Bard, Broker, General Manager with Cushman & Wakefield Waterloo Region

11. Business of the Year Award (1-10 Employees)

Ellen Graf-Martin, Founder, President and Chief Strategist of Graf-Martin Communications Inc accepts the award sponsored by MNP LLP

12. Business of the Year Award (11-50 Employees)

Dana Shortt, Owner and Operator of Dana Shortt Gourmet and Gifts, accepts the award from Emily Durst, Partner with Miller Thomson LLP

13. Business of the Year Award (50+ Employees)

Dr. John Tibbits, President of Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, accepts the award from Ross Johnston, Executive Director, Cooperative Education with University of Waterloo

14. Michael R. Follett Community Leader of the Year Award

Dr. Joseph Lee accepts the award from Marc Avaria, Senior Vice President, Group, with Equitable Life of Canada

2023 Business Excellence Award Gala



Mark Your Calendar

May 4, 2023

MNP Speed Networking

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM

Location: Concordia Club

Member: \$50 +HST (Includes a breakfast buffet)

Future Member: \$90 +HST (includes a breakfast buffet)

The Speed Networking event is always highly anticipated, and now it's in person! Start your day by meeting other business professionals in a quick (yet effective) method of networking.

Title Sponsor:



Supporting Sponsor:



May 9, 2023

Manufacturing Summit

8:00AM – 12:00PM

Location: Catalyst 137

Member: \$75 (in-person) or \$15 (virtual)

Future Member: \$130 (in-person) or \$30 (virtual)

The Greater KW Chamber, along with key corporate sponsors and community partners, host the annual Manufacturing Summit to bring the manufacturing and supply chain communities together in Waterloo Region. Industry experts will share their insights on innovation this year, as it relates to people, processes, technology, and more.

Gold Sponsors:



May 10, 2023

2023 Business Expo

2:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Location: Bingemans – Marshall Hall

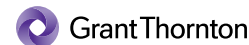
8' x 8' Exhibitor Booth: \$345 *Members only

10' x 10' Exhibitor Booth: \$365 *Members only

General Admission: free!

The Guelph, Cambridge, and Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chambers are teaming up to host this annual event with 1,200+ attendees. The Business Expo is an outstanding networking opportunity for job hunters, entrepreneurs, and businesses alike.

Gold Sponsors:



Bronze Sponsor:



May 30, 2023

6th Annual Canada's Innovation Corridor Summit

8:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Location: Bingemans • General Ticket: \$275

Regional connectivity and collaboration fuel success in a global economy. Bringing together experts and key decision makers from business, government and the association's sector, the 6th annual summit will focus on three key areas that have the potential to transform the Corridor: Transportation, Sustainability and Talent.

Host Sponsor:



Presenting Sponsor:



May 31, 2023

Heffner Women's Leadership: Wine Wednesday

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Location: Wineology

Member: \$50 *Includes appetizers and your first glass of wine

Future Member: \$90 *Includes appetizers and your first glass of wine

Join us for a wine social in DTK for our annual Women's Leadership Event. Reconnect with everyone over a glass of wine, some good food, and some casual get-to-know-you questions.

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June 6, 2023

MCAP Chamber Young Professionals: Hot Seat

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Location: Morty's Pub

Member: \$30 *Includes 6 wings • Future Member: \$60 *Includes 6 wings

Just like "First We Feast Hot Ones" – Kris Ronan of Ginger Goat sits down with a (local) celebrity, interview style, to ask hot questions while they eat even hotter wings.

Title Sponsor:



Event Sponsor:



Hospitality Partner:



June 15, 2023

Libro Business After 5: Kickstart to Summer

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM Location: Chicopee Tube Park

Member: Complimentary (but recommended \$10 donation to the Feature Non-Profit)

Future Member: \$40 minimum donation to the Feature Non-Profit

Kick off your summer with a patio party edition of Business After 5. Build new business connections while helping us celebrate and empower youth creativity in Waterloo Region.

Title Sponsor:



Gold Sponsor:



Supporting Sponsor:



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Host Venue:



Feature Charity:



June 21, 2023

36th Annual Energy & Environment Forum

12:00pm – 4:00pm Location: Evolv1 Building

Member: \$45 • Future Member: \$90

You'll have the opportunity to network with other like-minded business professionals, explore Evolv1 (Canada's first Zero Carbon Building) and receive an update on the TransformWR Climate Action Strategy Plan (to reduce GHG emissions by 50% by 2030). Plus, we'll also have industry experts covering a variety of topics, including: Energy Infrastructure, Green Energy Advantages for Businesses, and Power Generation with Bruce Power CEO, Mike Rencheck.

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Moving Forward, Together

If you're reading this piece, it means you care about this community and it means you care about where this community is headed. Just by choosing to run your business in Waterloo Region, you are playing a big part in continuing to grow the fabric of this place we call home.

Recently, I had opportunity for a conversation with the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce Board to discuss what lies ahead in the early post-COVID years and bring into view the Waterloo Region we are building.

Our conversation touched on many of the priorities relevant to you and to your businesses. We spoke about attainable housing and housing choice, about jobs now and jobs of the future, about immigration, talent attraction and economic recovery. We spoke about the need to create even stronger strategic local partnerships and combined advocacy to build for the future. What underpinned most of our conversation was the reality that we are moving through a time of incredible growth.

Afterwards, it struck me that in generations to come, we may well look back on this period as a defining era in the ongoing history of the region.

Let's consider the current level of growth for a moment. Right now, our population sits at about 650,000 people, and we expect that this will increase to almost one million by 2051 – roughly the equivalent of adding a city the size of Vaughan to this community.

This is exciting. Growth opens doors and it creates possibilities. But it also places great pressure on services and poses challenging decisions when priorities are at odds with each other. How do we maintain (or improve!) service levels while balancing the realities of inflation, cost increases and resource shortages?

We feel this pressure in the municipal sector, in the education and health sectors, and while it is tough at times, it does serve to sharpen focus and it enables people to think deeply about the community we are building. This is a good thing.

Ultimately, we are working to build an inclusive, thriving and sustainable region with global reach, fostering opportunities for current and future generations. And the role businesses play and the types of businesses we have here are vital to this future.

At the Region, we just concluded our most challenging budget process to date, and as we continued to fund essential services like roads and transit, we prioritized investing in assets like the airport, investments that will pay dividends in the future – for residents and businesses alike.

In the same way that our population is expected to increase, so too will the number of jobs in this region – by approximately 50% over the next 30 years.

And the big question many are wrestling with now is what kind of jobs will this increase accommodate?

Waterloo Region is truly unique. Ours is a community rich with a variety of talent, where farmers and scientists are building the future side-by-side, so without a crystal ball on my desk, it's tough to wager exactly what Waterloo Region's workforce of the future might look like. But based on the breadth of who is investing here now – from aerospace to advanced manufacturing – it's safe to say that it will be diverse and cutting-edge.

Organizations across the region are asking: how do we prepare for this growing and diverse workforce of the future? Housing is at the cornerstone of this approach and in the same way that we strive for a mix of jobs, we also need to plan for an array of housing options. To accommodate our projected growth trajectory, including the attraction of our future workforces, we have anchored our growth plan in housing by planning for the addition of over 100,000 new housing units here in Waterloo Region.

Importantly, the growth plan focuses on a mix of housing forms. This will help accommodate workforces with diverse needs, support climate action, and promote affordability. The strategic use of intensification also means optimizing existing infrastructure to limit costs.

I moved here in the mid-1990s (still feels like yesterday!) and at that time, about 10% of new builds were in the high-density bucket. Fast forward to today, and that number is stretching close to 60%.

So while we expect that in 2051 the majority of homes in the Region will still be lower-density forms (single and semi-detached), it's wonderful to see developers, municipalities and others partnering to determine how to best provide for a range of housing choices.

During that same conversation with the board at the Chamber, we talked about intentionally diversifying our business ecosystem. An example of that is the emerging aerospace industry and its links to the Region of Waterloo International Airport (YKF).

As Waterloo Region continues the journey to a world-class community, the airport plays a key role. It's impossible to imagine a world-class community without a thriving airport, and at YKF we are going through transformative change with a \$35 million expansion project that is creating more travel choices for businesses with connections to economic hubs across Canada and the US.

Often overlooked from an Ec. Dev. perspective is the fact that over 500 residents come to work at YKF each day. Think of your airport as a growing aviation and aerospace cluster on your doorstep that has helped attract 125 companies working in the sector, with more and more to come.

Coming back down to the ground from YKF, and further examining this period of incredible growth, there's no doubt that we are all wrestling with similar questions. How do we balance growth with affordability? How do we attract talent and differentiate ourselves from our competition? How do we create an environment for attainable housing? And how do we expand all of the public services that go along with that?

We are faced with many of these big questions at the Region of Waterloo, but what helps me sleep at night is the comfort of knowing that as organizations and as friends, we have quality partnerships across this community that we all lean into. These are partnerships with long-laid foundations that were strengthened by our work together during the pandemic.

Reflecting again on that recent conversation with your Chamber's board, what struck me was the opportunity that exists for businesses of all sizes as we face into this period of growth.

For the Region, growth means more infrastructure, more transit, more cultural supports. It also means more supports from a social and health perspective for the most vulnerable in our community.

And for the Region, the more we know about the needs of our businesses, the better equipped we will be to leverage this growth and plan for the Waterloo Region of the future.

Our touchpoints will be many over the coming months as the Region launches the Waterloo Region Economic Development Strategy and the Waterloo Region Talent Attraction, Reskilling and Retention Plan (more to come on both of those). These will be further opportunities to work collaboratively to help shape tomorrow's Waterloo Region.

I'm personally excited to continue the conversation as we head into this historic period of growth together.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bruce Lauckner

Bruce Lauckner is the Chief Administrative Officer at the Region of Waterloo where, in collaboration with partners, he is helping ensure this community continues to thrive. At the Region, he guides an energetic, dedicated team that delivers critical services to residents on a daily basis.

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Powering a Growing Population

Waterloo Region is growing fast, and Enova Power Corp. (Enova) is ready to meet its electricity needs.

Born from the merger of Kitchener-Wilmot Hydro Inc. and Waterloo North Hydro Inc. in September 2022, Enova's talented team has been adapting to sweeping changes in the electricity industry for close to 15 years, since the Green Energy Act in 2009 transformed Ontario's electricity industry with the introduction of time-of-use rates and changed the way Ontarians use electricity. Conservation and Demand Management (CDM) programs helped customers manage their electricity costs and decreased demand, and the introduction of customer-led generation through solar and other energy resources changed the delivery of electricity from a one-way transaction to two-way.

These changes helped position Enova and its customers for the future of electricity.

Dorothy Moryc, Enova's Vice President of Engineering and Stations, says planning for population growth and being poised to meet the energy needs of our growing communities is part of Enova's routine planning process.

"Locally, we're in good shape for at least 10 years because our distribution systems have been built to pre-2007 levels and demand is down since then due to behaviour change of consumers and changes in local manufacturing and industry as a result of the 2007-2009 recession," says Dorothy.

According to Greig Cameron, Enova's Vice President of Innovation and Business Transformation, planning for normal population growth is easy, but between the rapid growth anticipated under Ontario's More Homes Built Faster Act and Canada's plans for decarbonization, which lean heavily on electrification, it's a little tougher. "There is a dovetailing of population growth and electrification that we are watching, and we will be working with the municipalities to find out what it means for them in terms of homes to be built and the location and space. We might have the capacity, but we will need to expand and upgrade the distribution system to get the resources to where they are needed," says Greig.

But planning for future growth in a highly regulated industry poses unique challenges as the utility weighs the need for new technologies while keeping costs down and electricity rates

reasonable. "We compare the cost of the wires solution to what could be done with non-wires alternatives, such as local generation in a subdivision for example, but those costs are very high," says Dorothy. "Often it's more economical to extend our distribution systems and serve customers using traditional technologies."

"It's also hard to predict customer behaviour," adds Dorothy. "We can be ready, but sometimes uptake on new technology is slower than anticipated."

Feed-in-tariff programs and battery storage have changed electricity customers from just consumers to also producers, which requires a distribution system that is poised to accept a higher penetration of distributed energy resources and can accommodate fluctuations in demand. Enova is building that distribution system today.

"It will be difficult to meet the current pace of demand, so we are exploring partnerships with our customers and upcoming technologies to manage load resources, such as load management," says Greig.

Enter Enova's Key Accounts team, who are helping business customers learn to better manage their energy use and working with them to take advantage of opportunities in the market, including distributed resource management.

"It's an exciting opportunity to work with our customers and look at how the role of the local distribution company is changing," says Greig.

To learn more, customers can talk to Enova's Key Accounts team or find a suite of options for behind the meter services from Alliance Metering Solutions (alliancemetering.com) and Grand River Energy (grandriverenergy.com), both part of Enova Energy Corporation.

ARTICLE BY:



Youth Creativity Fund is Building the Creative Confidence of Local Youth

When Laertes discovered that more families than ever in Waterloo Region are accessing the food bank due to the pandemic, rising food prices, and inflation, an idea came to mind. Inspired by an interview he heard on the radio promoting the creation of the Youth Creativity Fund, this teen set to work using sprouts grown on his counter at home and thinking how he could make this healthy food option available to families accessing food banks.

"I'm getting a chance to take my idea and turn it into a reality. That is something that a lot of 13-year-olds don't get to do," he said while attending the official Launch of the fund on February 22nd.

Laertes joined 30 other students in attendance to share their creative ideas with community leaders and supporters. The Youth Creativity Fund Launch was a great way to showcase how these youth have brought their innovative ideas to life after receiving funding.

The fund, created in partnership between the Greater KW and Cambridge Chambers of Commerce, BEP Waterloo Region and the Region of Waterloo, builds creative confidence by connecting student-led ideas, with donations from individuals and businesses in Waterloo Region. Through the program, students in grades 5 to 12 can apply for microgrants up to \$1,000 to pursue a creative idea, with the emphasis of the projects being on student learning and problem-solving skills.

At the launch, student projects were celebrated by the community, students' families, school board representatives, and by our inaugural sponsors of the fund including Hip

Developments, Catapult, Waterloo Region Community Foundation through the Cambridge and Greater KW Corporate Challenge Fund, Arrow, Graham Mathew, LJM Developments, Melloul Blamey Construction, Cambridge Centre Honda, Novocol Pharma, ONYX Property Group, Staebler Insurance, Powerline Logistics and



the Rotary Club – Cambridge, Preston, and Hespeler. Together, the Chambers and these community partners have raised over \$20,000 this year to support these student projects in addition to the ground-breaking \$100,000 donation by HIP Developments in 2022 to establish the fund.

“These donations mean the world to these students,” says April Albano, Program Manager – Youth Innovation at the Business & Education Partnership of Waterloo Region.

“[This fund] has completely changed the way we’ve seen things, not only is it a definite confidence booster to see that your community is behind you, but it has also given us a chance to sit down and say we have the money so what can we put it into?” expressed grade 11 fund recipient Aalaa who is working with her partners on an app to support unhoused people in downtown Kitchener by connecting them with available shelters and low commitment job opportunities.

If you are interested in investing in the creative ideas of local youth consider donating today! You could help students like Milica launch their first business as a gluten free home bakery, or Gavin who is trying to shorten wait times for patients needing to see a specialist in Ontario.

“We are youth, we are still learning and building our skill sets, so investing in us today is going to help Kitchener Waterloo and surrounding areas in the future,” says Charlie, who also received funding to help support Flowboat, a student led startup incubator that is coaching over 50 students per year.

The fund has supported 55 students to date, giving out over \$12,000. The goal is to support 100 students by the end of 2023 and to continue this program for many years to come. For this to happen, we hope to see the community come together and invest in the ideas of the next generation. The word is spreading about

this initiative and the momentum is growing! To learn more about the students enrolled in the fund watch this [video](#).

Please consider donating to the fund and spreading the word! Join us in making Waterloo Region the Creative Capital of Canada! Let’s #GetCreative Waterloo Region!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

April Albano

April is the Program Manager-Youth Innovation at the Business & Education Partnership that is helping to bring the Youth Creativity Fund to Life. April has worked in the innovation space for the past 7 years and is behind the students who are working on their creative projects through this fund.



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Immigration in Waterloo Region: Our Future State

Waterloo Region is expected to grow to a community of around 1 million people over the next 30 years, and immigration will be the major source of that growth. Canada has been on a clear path to increase permanent immigration to support population and labour force growth for the last 10 years, with our political leaders clearly linking immigration and economic success.

In our three-pronged immigration system focused on economy, family and refugee/humanitarian streams, most growth has been through the economic stream but the others also grew. This March the Ontario government announced a large increase to the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program. The way immigration happens in Canada has also changed. There has been significant growth in the temporary migration of students and workers through our post secondary institutions and workplaces, a growing number of whom become permanent residents and citizens. New rules and changes to immigration regulations are announced regularly, all aimed to make it possible for more temporary residents to participate in the Canadian labour market for sustained periods. Some immigrants move directly into Waterloo Region, while others move here from other communities across the country.

Based on federal immigration levels forecasts, and Canada's continuous humanitarian commitments to welcome large cohorts of refugees, high levels of immigration will continue. We in Waterloo Region are benefiting from the many changes in numerous ways. Our population is growing quickly and so is our diversity as more immigrants from Asia, the Middle East and Africa chose Waterloo Region as their new home. New immigrants bring a wide range of skills, experiences, connections, language capacities and other talents that are enriching our regional communities and workplaces. Many are highly educated, working age individuals that come to Canada with their families to pursue employment and educational opportunities that offer a good life for themselves and future generations. They start businesses and employ others, and give back to our communities in many ways.

At the same time, fast immigration and population growth bring challenges when it comes to the needed infrastructure and other community conditions. Enough housing that is affordable at a range of price points and appropriate to varying family sizes and living patterns. Capacity in our health care system and ability

to provide specialized care for complex patients. Openness and ability of our workplaces to provide opportunity and growth for diverse talent. Culturally and linguistically diverse local services and programs. Welcoming, vibrant public spaces that cater to a dynamic, changing population.

Since 2009, the Immigration Partnership has brought together business, community service, municipal, post-secondary, ethnocultural and other partners to create the conditions for immigrants to succeed and contribute to a thriving, prosperous community for everyone. Through our partners, we work to address short-term challenges while setting the stage for long-term success as we build our collective community capacity to leverage the benefits of our growth.

Many positive changes are happening because of this coming together. Equity, diversity and inclusion work is taking root across the community. Workplaces are evolving their hiring and retention practices. Organizations are offering programs and services more tailored to a culturally and linguistically diverse community. More and more residents are welcoming new immigrants and helping them to settle. A wider range of housing options is being developed. New partnerships are developing, and much more.

As immigration and our regional community grow and evolve, so does the nature of the work we are doing together and the work that every organization and resident must do on their own. We will continue to pursue made-in-Waterloo Region strategies as we grow into the future, while continuing to provide advice to the federal and provincial governments on how to best target immigration and other policies and investments to support our regional growth.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tara Bedard

Tara Bedard is Executive Director of the Waterloo Region Immigration Partnership.

THE GLOBAL NEED FOR RESPONSIBLY PRODUCED ENERGY MEANS AFFORDABILITY AND PROSPERITY FOR CANADA



GLOBAL ENERGY DEMAND

The world is undergoing a historical transition that will impact every country and virtually every society in existence today. This global shift is at the scale of the industrial revolution and is ushering a new era, redefining global trading relationships and geopolitics. At the centre of this transition is energy. Energy supports life and the world is demanding more and more energy to heat or cool our homes, power our transportation systems, run our hospitals, operate our businesses and to grow, deliver and cook our food.

Underlying this transition is the fact that the world's population is expected to exceed nine billion by 2040. A larger population and growing middle class, combined with more disposable income and aspirations for a better quality of life, will drive the ongoing need for energy.

CANADA'S OPPORTUNITY

Canada, meanwhile, has vast energy supplies. We have the expertise and commitment to extract natural gas and oil resources in a responsible and sustainable manner. Today there is growing demand for Canadian natural gas and oil because we are one of the few stable, democratic countries that produces more energy than we consume. And as a global leader of GHG emissions reduction through cleantech innovation, Canada has an opportunity to stabilize energy security

and become a preferred global supplier of responsibly produced energy for decades to come.

The fact is, Canadian energy can help displace natural gas and oil from regimes like Russia and Saudi Arabia. An analysis by the International Energy Agency showed North American oil and gas exports will need to increase 90 percent to Europe and 170 percent to Asia by 2030 to enable reduced reliance on Russian resources.

Meanwhile, Canada has a socially responsible industry that partners and invests in Indigenous and local communities. The industry follows rigorous best practices and regulatory frameworks that emphasize safety, environmental protection and continuous improvement.

CREATING PROSPERITY AT HOME

Canada's energy industry is actively seeking access to global markets, because that's where we can make a difference by generating Canadian

prosperity through reliable, affordable energy while also reducing net global emissions. In addition, developing and exporting natural gas and oil enables Canada to receive full market value for our products, which in turn supports Canadians through employment, the purchase of goods and services required by the industry, and government revenues derived from taxes, royalties and other sources.

Prosperity allows the industry to tackle social and environmental issues. A thriving, prosperous industry is good for people because we generate jobs and support communities. We also generate government revenues through royalties, taxes and other means, and that revenue in turn funds education, healthcare, infrastructure development and social programs. Sustained investment in the industry enables research, development and deployment of technologies to address impacts on air, water, land and biodiversity, plus funding community investment from trades training to building parks and libraries.

Energy production and export is the backbone of the Canadian economy. Hundreds of thousands Canadians directly or indirectly rely on the industry for work, enabling thousands of families to improve their lives and support their communities. The industry is active in 12 of Canada's 13 provinces and territories through a nationwide network of more than 10,000 businesses that supply goods and services to oil and natural gas operations.

HOW THIS IMPACTS GREATER KITCHENER WATERLOO

What does all this mean for the Members of the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce? A strong natural gas and oil industry is good for Canada, good for the world and good for the economy of Greater Kitchener Waterloo. Canada's natural gas and oil industry has deep ties with the Ontario manufacturing and hi-tech sectors: Ontario alone has more than 1,300 businesses supplying goods and services to the industry, valued at more than \$2.4 billion in 2019. These range from steel manufacturing to cleantech innovation startups: a growing industry means more opportunities here and across the country.

We can work as leaders at reducing emissions from natural gas and oil production, while helping stabilize energy security for nations around the world—all the while, creating jobs and economic possibility here at home in Canada.



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after U.S., Russia and Iran



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The Chamber's Strong Advocacy is Key to Waterloo Region's Ongoing Prosperity

Having had the pleasure of attending (in person!) the recent 2023 Chamber Business Excellence Awards Gala I was inspired to be reminded of how fortunate we are in Waterloo Region by the entrepreneurial drive, business creativity, environmental leadership and sense of social responsibility on display each day in so many businesses across our community. That strong "Waterloo County" commitment to hard-work, innovation and inclusivity has served our community so well since its inception and continues to position us well for the challenges and opportunities ahead. The very real headwinds we face mean that our future prosperity will depend on a continued strong community building effort. The tireless advocacy work of President Ian, the talented Chamber staff team and the many dedicated volunteers of the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber will be more important than ever as we move forward in business prosperity together.

From the vantage point of an organization which has many health sector operations, and of course heavily people based, I believe that adequate access to a talented and skilled workforce is our number one community challenge. Schlegel Villages and Homewood employ more than 10,000 people across Canada, most in southwestern Ontario, and approximately 1000 in Waterloo Region. We own and operate 19 seniors' continuum of care campuses- called "villages"-with 10 new villages currently in various stages of development across southern Ontario. Those 10 new villages, plus expanding existing villages and services, will require approximately 5000 new highly trained health care workers over the next 5 years to care for our aging population. We need to hire 83 people a month, or 3 people each day for each of the next 60 months. Access to a talented workforce is top of mind for the Schlegel organization and I believe many other Waterloo Region based businesses.

Recent 2023 provincial budget investments in the Skills Development Fund, enhancing Ontario's Immigration Nominee Program, expansions in access to dual credit opportunities in health-related courses and the expanded Ontario Bridge Training program to help internationally trained immigrants move toward a licence or certificate are positive measures which will assist the health sector. One of the local innovations we are very proud of is our "Living Classroom" partnership with Conestoga College which embeds a satellite college campus in our Schlegel Village- The Village at University Gates- which is located on the University of Waterloo's north campus. The next generation of skilled healthcare team members learn right in the environment they are ultimately going to work in. In addition to the Living Classroom, The Village at University Gates is home to the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging, an initiative the Schlegel family has been proud to found and fund with a mandate to enhance seniors care and quality of life across Canada and globally through research and training.

The Chamber's long-standing and important efforts to support physician recruitment to our community to provide primary family care to Waterloo Region residents, and our workforce, is so very important and appreciated. A new state of the art hospital for Waterloo Region -- the strong community- based initiative which

President Ian and the Chamber have also been driving is going to be a game changer I believe for attracting and retaining talent in future.

And when we attract that talent to Waterloo Region we need the market based range and mix of housing forms which all ages across the spectrum are looking for. Ours is a young community due in large part to our excellent universities and college and the young talent they attract (and retain), which creates a dynamic and diverse economy in K-W. It's hard to imagine a better place to raise a young family than in Waterloo Region.

For many years our community building company, Schlegel Urban Developments, has been seeking to deliver age friendly, transit supportive, complete communities within the boundaries of South West Kitchener. We believe that well planned, dense, ground oriented "missing middle" housing for young families in the urban adjacent areas and excellence in infill intensification are not mutually exclusive goals. We are presently launching Schlegel Living which in 2023 is now beginning construction of its first purpose built rental project in our Williamsburg Town Centre development in Kitchener. Access to high quality, affordable rental or for purchase housing options is key to continued local business growth and to the quality of life for citizens of the Region. It is also essential to provide housing choice and options for the record setting new Canadians we welcome, for first time buyers, and to chip away at the decades long housing shortfall as identified by the federal government in its very recent budget with initiatives such as the Tax-Free First Home Savings Account.

I trust that Waterloo Region business and community leaders will continue to show the resilience and commitment to hard work, the drive to develop sustainable and long-lasting business models, all the while, and most importantly, the generous commitment to finding innovative solutions to social needs which make for a well-balanced and thriving community.

The challenges ahead are significant -- as are the opportunities -- and I believe as always Waterloo Region businesses are up to the task... most notably when pulling together through organizations like the Chamber.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Schlegel

James Schlegel serves as President & CEO of RBJ Schlegel, a Kitchener based family-owned business which includes Homewood Health, Schlegel Villages, Schlegel Urban Developments, Schlegel Living, the St. Jacobs Market District, Stockyards Beverage Company and Schlegel Poultry.

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Employees often wonder if they must disclose their medicinal cannabis use to their employers. Some may worry about employer judgment, while others may believe all medication usage should be private. The short answer is...it's tricky.

While there is no official overarching legal requirement that employees disclose their use of medicinal cannabis to their employers, they do have a duty to report hazards in the workplace under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

On the other side, although employers have a duty to accommodate workers* who consume medicinal cannabis under the *Human Rights Code*, they are also legally obligated to keep their employees safe under the OHSA.

This includes situations where impairment induced by employees' medication may endanger their safety, the safety of their co-workers, or others - mainly when being fit for duty is an occupational requirement.

For example, Jessie uses medicinal cannabis every day. They work at a clothing retail shop, where they interact with customers but have no interaction with dangerous machinery. Jessie does not need to disclose their medicinal cannabis use under OHSA.

Whereas Jayden uses medicinal cannabis periodically and works on the factory floor of a manufacturing company. They do need to disclose their medicinal cannabis because, due to the nature of their work, their use of cannabis could reasonably be expected to create a hazard to their co-workers.

Based on the parameters above, while employees and employers have duties to each other under the OHSA, it is ultimately up to the employee to decide whether or not they tell their employer about their medicinal cannabis usage from a safety and accommodation perspective. Although, failure to disclose the use of medicinal cannabis where required may be grounds for disciplining the employee.

**If an employee needs an accommodation to use medicinal cannabis, they must first request it - a lack of awareness of a disability and corresponding need to consume medical cannabis may relieve an employer of any duty to accommodate.*

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Member Notables



Alfred Lowrick Retires as Oktoberfest Executive Director

Alfred Lowrick announced his retirement after six years as Executive Director of Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest. He assumed the position in 2017, a year prior to the festival's 50th anniversary, after working at Maple Leaf Foods for 38 years.

His innovative approach and collaborative leadership guided the organization through the anniversary and challenges of COVID-19. In a recent Waterloo Region Record article, he noted that it was critical to maintain operations and remind residents on the importance of this local event.

A search committee has been formed by the Board of Directors and the recruitment process will appoint a new Executive Director to assist with implementation of their strategic plan.



Senior Executive Changes at Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS)

Karen Redman, Chair of the Waterloo Regional Police Services Board, recently announced that Deputy Chief Shirley Hilton will retire from the Waterloo Regional Police Service (WRPS) on May 30, 2023.

Deputy Hilton joined the WRPS in 1990 and led the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force for the Region of Waterloo. Chief Mark Crowell noted in a January 9, 2023, WRPS media release that Deputy Hilton's passion for public service and community have been an inspiration to many across the region she has so passionately and selflessly served for the past 33 years.

On March 3, 2023, the Board announced the appointments of Superintendent Eugene Fenton and Superintendent Jen Davis as the new Deputy Chiefs for the Waterloo Regional Police Service. Deputy Chief Fenton assumed the role of Deputy Chief of Administration and Member Services effective March 6, 2023, while Deputy Chief Davis will assume the role of Deputy Chief of Neighbourhood Policing and Investigations effective May 22, 2023.



Process Begins to Identify Site for Proposed New Joint Hospital

Grand River Hospital and St. Mary's General Hospital are formally commencing a process to identify the preferred site for a proposed new joint hospital in Kitchener-Waterloo. The new institution is a key component of a broader strategy to modernize infrastructure and services for a growing number of patients and their families across the Region of Waterloo.

The hospitals secured a \$5 million planning grant last year from the provincial government which was reiterated in the 2023 Ontario Budget. Grand River and St. Mary's have a long history of partnering to provide healthcare services and a new hospital will enable their shared goal of creating a connected health system in the region.

A March 24, 2023, release notes that a Panel of skilled professionals is being assembled to identify a preferred site for the proposed new institution. The Panel will be responsible for managing all steps in the selection process including development criteria to evaluate potential sites for reaching a final recommendation.

New VP and CFO at Conestoga College

Conestoga College appointed Eric Johnstone, CPA, CA to the role of Vice President & Chief Financial Officer effective March 7, 2023.

Eric joined Conestoga from OCAS Application Services Inc. where he served as Vice President, Corporate Services and Chief Financial Officer. For the past twenty years he has worked as a key member of the management team within a number of organizations, supporting innovation and the achievement of strategic priorities through strong business and financial leadership, a service mindset, cross-functional cooperation and data-driven decision-making.

Mr. Johnstone, who holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the I.H. Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba, also served as a Regent for the University of Winnipeg including two terms as Board Chair. In his role at Conestoga, Eric will be responsible for strategic business and financial leadership including budgeting, financial forecasting and planning, reporting and capital management.



Major Grant to Assist University of Waterloo for Sustainable Aeronautics Sector

In February of 2023, the University of Waterloo was awarded nearly \$10 million in federal funding for a major initiative to rebuild Canada's aeronautics sector from the pandemic and position it for a more sustainable future.

The investment will support research by the Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Aeronautics (WISA) as it explores new technologies, processes and policies to assist the industry with resiliency and meeting net-zero emission targets by 2050. Funding originated through the FedDev Ontario Aerospace Regional Recovery Initiative.

University of Waterloo president and vice-chancellor Vivek Goel noted that he believes in a future where every flight we take is socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable. This federal support will activate the transdisciplinary research and teaching required to reduce emissions and prepare aviation professionals to transform this vital sector.



WRDSB Appoints New Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-Being

The Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) announced the appointment of Michelle Newlands as a new Superintendent of Student Achievement and Well-Being effective March 1, 2023.

Michelle brings knowledge and expertise gained in her past position as a Private Schools Inspector in the Field Service Branch with the Private Schools and International Education Unit in the Ontario Ministry of Education. Her prior experience includes positions as a manager and education officer with the Ministry and principal with the Halton District School Board. Michelle has focused on supporting the achievements of all students and building strong relationships with stakeholders.

Scott Miller, Associate Director of the WRDSB, noted that Michelle's extensive experience as a provincial leader and school principal has provided her with the attributes to support, serve and lead student achievement and well-being.



Weber Supply Recognizes 100 Years of Service

Weber Supply is Kitchener's oldest operating company and recognized as Canada's oldest industrial/safety distributor. The tradition is continuing after 168 years of business.

In 1855, Samuel Date opened the Date, Distin and Co. hardware store which was later purchased by John Fennell. Carl (C.N.) Weber assumed ownership of Fennell Hardware in 1923 and the Weber family has continued to lead this organization with each new generation.

Weber Supply (formerly Weber Hardware and C.N. Weber Ltd.) is celebrating 100 years of family leadership in 2023. The Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce offers our congratulations on this significant achievement.



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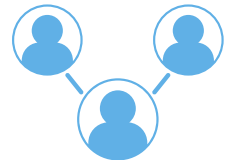
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