



**NEWS RELEASE**  
**Friday, December 19, 2008**  
**3:00 p.m.**  
**\* For immediate release**

Lethbridge AB... **Jack Grant, the Chair of the Alberta Chambers of Commerce was invited to a pre-budget round table consultation with Federal Finance Minister Flaherty on December 18, 2009.** To reflect the views of Chambers throughout the province, the Alberta Chambers' Chair asked for input on a series of questions.

Dennis Hatt, President of the Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce, sent responses to each question, on behalf of the local Chamber:

**A) What would provide the most effective and immediate stimulus to the economy?**

We concur with the Canadian Chamber President and The Calgary Chamber calling for the federal government to reduce personal income tax rates for lower and middle income families. This would put more disposable income in the hands of the consumer to support the economy.

**B) How would you rank and give suggestions on the following areas in terms of priority for the government providing a stimulus:**

- i. Access to Credit
- ii. Investing in the Housing Market
- iii. Accelerating Infrastructure Spending
- iv. Strong Sustainable Labour Markets and Training Incentives
- v. Traditional and Emerging Industrial Sectors

We believe items **iii) Accelerating Infrastructure Spending** and **iv) Strong Sustainable Labour Markets and Training Incentives** are the most important. It is important the Infrastructure Spending include rural infrastructure to ensure spending is not concentrated on the major urban centers. ***"The Lethbridge Chamber, over the past several years, has been concerned with the lack of skilled labour and training and with the possible increasing unemployed, retraining would be critical to ensure these people can get back to work", states Dennis Hatt.***

The remaining three areas (i, ii, v) although important are less important than the above in our view. Item **ii) Investing in the Housing Market** has already been done by the Government and so there is limited further need in that area at this time.

**C) Beyond the questions of short-term stimulus, what steps should the government take to ensure that the Canadian Economy remains internationally competitive, continues to attract investment and jobs?**

*"We agree with the Canadian Chamber's recommendation that the government needs to identify sectors where urgent action needs to be taken and that assistance should be timely, targeted and temporary. **We understand the government will be looking to provide a stimulus package to the automotive sector. However, providing that sector funds without a caveat for changing the status quo, would be just delaying the inevitable. The government needs to ensure the automotive sector changes the way it does business to ensure their long-term stability**", says Chamber President.*

*"We also support the elimination of the provincial and territorial barriers to trade and mobility."*

The Lethbridge Chamber also cautions the federal government, not to over-react to further regulate the banking and financial sectors. **"We strongly believe our banking sector is the strongest in the world and further regulatory measures are not required. However we believe we should have one securities regulation body for the country, as opposed to one for each province. We do recommend the government allow financial and insurance companies to merge to ensure they remain strong in the world marketplace,"** states Mr. Hatt.



*Dennis Hatt, President  
Lethbridge Chamber of Commerce*

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