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Keep working for prosperity

By Bob Manning, Chair of Enterprise Saint John

Just a little over a decade ago we recognized we had a problem – our undiversified economy was suffering, our reputation was poor, and we were failing to retain our skilled labour, our youth, and to attract new residents to our region. Since that time, we have seen a turnaround in our Saint John Community, which includes Grand Bay-Westfield, Quispamsis, Rothesay and St. Martins, and we have embraced a new, collaborative can-do attitude.

So how did this happen? One important step was recognizing that regional cooperation would be instrumental in growing our region. Working together as five municipalities but one Community, we could focus on “growing the pie” rather than fighting over its pieces. True Growth, our region’s strategic approach to fulfilling our objectives, hinges on regional cooperation while balancing our social, cultural, economic and environmental priorities so that we can focus on the things that retain and attract people, ideas and investment. It is all about building a Community that people want to live in, work in, raise their families and build long-term rewarding careers.

And now we’re seeing the benefits.

While there is significant momentum in all of our strategic sectors including: ICT, energy and advanced manufacturing, health sciences and tourism, we cannot rest on our laurels and assume that this momentum will continue. It is time for action and to plan for a future of opportunities so that we continue to build on the solid foundation we have created – we need to continue to step up, not step down. Collectively, we need to be supporting the opportunities that impact our entire region – policy, governance and infrastructure – and always remind ourselves that there is more that unites us than divides us.

Recent years has seen the Saint John region begin to capitalize on a number of significant opportunities that are gaining momentum and generating further investment. We see new relationships being built with people eager to do business with our corporations and entrepreneurs. It is an oft-repeated phrase but it bears saying again: the scale of potential growth is unprecedented in Saint John’s history.

This is why we must have the courage to seize the moment. We are proud of the leadership role we at Enterprise Saint John are playing, along with our partners, in encouraging economic development in our region.

We need to do whatever we can to ensure projects like Eider Rock, Long Wharf, Peel Plaza, the Q-Plex and the Canada Games Stadium refurbishment move from concept to completion – we need to “put the puck in the net”, to execute.

The economic impact of Eider Rock is unprecedented. It will do so much for our region that we have to do what we can as a Community to help support the process through the EIA

(Environmental Impact Assessment) to permit, and then be there for the project proponents as they then consider the decision as to whether the economic conditions warrant an investment of the magnitude of Eider Rock. Whatever the final decision, we will continue to support the team at Irving Oil as they continue to look to the future.


We also need to change our mindset when embarking upon public infrastructure projects. What we build today will be with us for a long time, well beyond our current generation, so we need to ensure whatever we do enhances our Community as a magnet for innovation, creativity and business investment.

Peel Plaza is one of those projects – it is more than just a police station – it is a regional justice complex, in partnership with the Province of New Brunswick, that supports our Community by providing infrastructure for first-rate social and justice services, by contributing directly to the Saint John Arts Centre, and ultimately defining and enhancing our Uptown landscape. Enterprise Saint John has been an early-supporter to this project and we congratulate the Saint John Common Council in its efforts to realize a project of this nature.

Our hopes for the future are high. Our opportunity to directly influence that future is unprecedented in our province's history. Now more than ever we must renew our commitment to effective regional cooperation and maintain a clear, and shared, vision for that future. Then we must work together to achieve it. If we do, everyone will benefit.

Together we can press forward to continue to build a vibrant community where you can live life on your terms.

Sincerely,



R.M. (Bob) Manning
Chair, Board of Directors
Enterprise Saint John