

# 2014 ANNUAL REPORT



2/25/2015

Grand Bend & Area Chamber of Commerce

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The Grand Bend & Area Chamber of Commerce seeks to promote and improve trade and commerce and the economic, civic and social welfare of the district

# 2014 annual report

**HITTING OUR STIRDE**

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## AT YOUR SERVICE

In operation since 1957, George Kadlecik, Peter Haist and Donald Southcott incorporated the Chamber in 1975. The Chamber has worked to support and promote local business for the last 57 years. We average just under 200 Members from the area, including Arkona, Forest, Grand Bend, Port Franks, Thedford, Bayfield, Exeter, Goderich, Hensall, St. Joseph, Zurich, Camlachie and all points in-between.

### MISSION STATEMENT

The objectives of the Grand Bend & Area Chamber of Commerce shall be to promote and improve:

- trade and commerce; and
- the economic, civic and social welfare of the district served by the Chamber (i.e. Lambton Shores).

Eric McIlroy, son-in-law of George and Ida Eccleston who built, owned and operated Grand Bend's *Lakeview Casino*, helped form the *Grand Bend Promotion Committee* in the 1950s along with John Aselstyne and Fred Walker. This Committee evolved into the *Chamber of Commerce* with Eric McIlroy as its first president.

## DIRECTORS, STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

The Chamber's Directors are volunteers – they give freely of their own time, expertise, experience and personal network for the overall good of the Chamber, its Membership and the business community. The Board makes an effort to encourage Members running successful businesses and who are seen as positive, forward-thinking, community-minded individuals to step forward and make the Chamber as effective and relevant as possible.



MARY-JO SCHOTTROFF-SNOPKO  
President  
(Pine Dale Motor Inn)



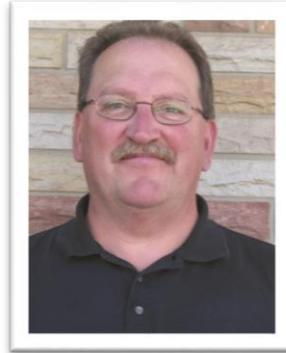
MARK LEWIS  
Vice President  
(Bayshore Broadcasting)



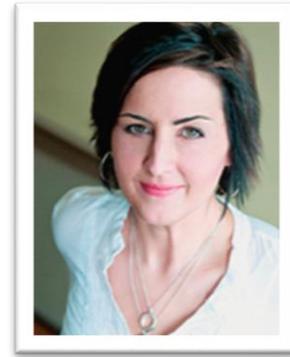
SHEILA BROOKS  
Treasurer  
(Bank of Montreal)



**PAUL PITTAO**  
Secretary  
(Medway Homes)



**NEIL CLIFFORD**  
Director  
(Lakeshore Advance)



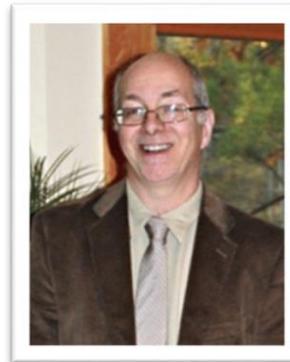
**NATALIE CORE**  
Director  
(Oakwood Resort)



**DOUG PEDLAR**  
Director  
(RE/MAX Bluewater Realty Inc.)



**STEVEN KARCHER**  
Director  
(Drayton Entertainment)



**GLEN BAILLIE**  
Past-President  
(Baillie's Picture Framing)



**MIKE RAHN**  
Director  
(Mike & Terri's No Frills)



**SUSAN MILLS**  
Manager



**DEBBIE KIRKWOOD**  
Volunteer

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



MARY-JO  
SCHOTTROFF-SNOPKO  
PRESIDENT 2014

As I look back on 2014, perhaps the biggest highlight for me is that Grand Bend has street lights and seasonal décor. Although there is still much work to be done in terms of seasonal décor throughout the year, a project on which we continue to work with the Municipality, the increase of lighted displays was certainly noticed. In reaching out to find volunteers to help with putting up Christmas décor, a new event came into being called *Light Up Grand Bend*. The Chamber is honoured to have worked with the West Coast Lions, Grand Bend Community Foundation, Grand Bend Rotary Club, Grand Bend Legion, Grand Bend Horticultural Society, local businesses, individuals and churches in bringing to life an event that promises to benefit the community and annually bring a festive spirit to the area.

As you review the audited Financial Statements and Treasurer's Report, you'll see the Chamber's financial position continues to be stable and sustainable, building on revenue-generating activities and programs initiated by previous boards. This stability is thanks to the creativity and efforts of several members of current and past Boards and to Members who have responded in such a positive way to events such as the Fall Classic Golf Tournament, Celebrate the Season Awards Dinner, Breakfast with the Mayor and new marketing opportunities, such as the outdoor Message Centre and sponsorships. Although we are currently using our net revenue to support Tourism & Visitor Services rather than re-build the Chamber's reserve fund, we believe the crucial importance of the tourism industry to the health of local business and employment opportunities is within the organization's mandate to "*promote and improve trade and commerce and the economic, civic and social welfare of the district.*"

In mentioning a few of our Member events, we're also pleased to have provide two professional workshops this year. In May, Ontario Chamber of Commerce Director of Programs Louis DiPalma conducted a workshop on the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and what is required for small business to ensure compliance. In November, Tom Vogel's Phoneography workshop showed us how to make the most of a Smartphone's embedded photo-editing features and how Smartphones can help promote products and services by taking, editing and posting photographs directly from phone to Facebook and Twitter. As well, the Chamber organized and hosted two all candidates meetings – one in June for the provincial election and one in September for the municipal election.

Other accomplishments this year include a new look for the homepage of GrandBendTourism.com and easier access to key tourist information and the launch of GrandBendChamber.ca – a member and business focused website we hope will raise the profile of the Chamber itself and its members.

Looking to 2015, we plan to open up listings on GrandBendTourism.com to non-member businesses in exchange for a listing fee, while Member listings will be visually identified by an icon, as well as some additional text or visual differentiation. We look to increase the size of our Membership and to look for opportunities to build stronger ties between Lambton Shores' business centres. A stronger business network benefits us all as individual businesses and helps bring a voice to the business community.

Tourism & Visitor Services continues to offer challenges in terms of adequate funding and staffing and shared understanding by all stakeholders of the importance of this function and industry to local economic growth and business sustainability. The Chamber will continue to champion the cause and seek to build partnerships and relationships in support of shared and positive outcomes.

## MANAGER'S REPORT



**SUSAN MILLS**  
Manager

During 2014, we hit our stride as a Chamber in continuing to provide Members a stable offering of member-focused information and networking events. We've been consistent in our scheduling, with event dates announced and published before the end of the previous year.

A significant challenge this year was the loss of long-time volunteer Phyllis Statchuk, who lost her battle with cancer in June. Phyllis had contributed at least four hours per week, every week for just over 10 years. Phyllis' tremendous example of customer service excellence highlights how important customer service is in today's successful organizations. In honour of Phyllis' contribution to the Chamber and to the community, a very special award was created that establishes Phyllis' example as a benchmark to encourage similar levels of customer service, whether provided in the role of volunteer or employee.

Our central and ongoing challenge is two-fold: our ability to communicate the importance of Tourism & Visitor Services to Lambton Shores' business community to our Municipal stakeholders, and our efforts to provide an effective service level of this function. We have consistently detailed the importance of the tourism industry as a fundamental economic driver to the local economy and the need for adequate, year-to-year financial support of this function. We believe a properly funded and implemented Tourism & Visitor Services function will enable local businesses to thrive, not just survive, in what continues to be a sluggish economy.

In Ontario, Tourism & Visitor Services are funded by all levels of government and, with few exceptions, are delivered by government or government agencies. Our local efforts face increasing professional, competitive and well-funded tourism marketing campaigns from other Ontario communities, as well as markets just across the US border.

Respected and recognized tourism marketers – such as Roger Brooks - tell us the crucial importance of marketing. There's a plethora of advice on how best to spend the tourism marketing dollar, but the ongoing challenge remains the lack of dollars to make this advice a reality.

In 2014, the Chamber faced a reduction in financial support for Tourism & Visitor Services of \$3,376, which meant a corresponding reduction in the marketing budget. Apart from no-fee advertising exchanges with Tourism Sarnia Lambton, Huron Tourism Association and Bayshore Broadcasting, marketing expenditure was restricted to just \$2,372 for the year.

Members need to understand the Chamber is using its fundraising proceeds from events such as the golf tournament, silent auctions and event ticket sales to subsidize Tourism & Visitor Services. In 2014, we contributed just over \$10k to help fund Tourism & Visitor Services for Lambton Shores, along with a majority of staff hours, volunteer time and Chamber connections.

It is the Chamber's position that investment in Tourism & Visitor Services be funded by parking revenue from the Main Beach, which represents a direct tourist spend. The reinvestment of parking revenue into the function that generated it seems a good business decision and one with minimal impact on local taxpayers.

Lambton Shores' tourism *product* is broad – we boast some of the best beaches in Ontario, natural amenities, live theatre, motorsport, active attractions, great places to stay and eat, a cultural and arts heritage with several museums, galleries and studios, as well as unique retail offerings. Our potential is great – but if we cannot afford to tell anyone about it, we remain the proverbial light under a bushel.

## TREASURER'S REPORT



**SHEILA BROOKS –  
TREASURER**

The following report represents a synopsis of the information in the Audited Financial Statements, which are available to any Chamber Member at the Welcome Centre or by download from the Members Forum on GrandBendChamber.ca.

Our year-end report dated October 31, 2014 highlights a net revenue over expenses of \$6k. This is a significant improvement from 2013 where we experienced a net deficiency of \$6k. This increase is due to close review of revenue and expenses as they relate to programs and services, ensuring each activity can support its continued implementation. Another way of expressing this important financial balancing act is

simply to say that when a program's revenues can no longer cover its expenses, that program's continuation is reviewed and may be terminated. This is the case with Webervations, the online accommodation availability checker on

GrandBendTourism.com.

Despite Webervations' participant fees of just over \$3k, we experienced significant non-payment of this program's invoices. Ultimately, the subscription cost of this web plug-in combined with the amount of related bad debt represented by unpaid invoices, resulted in the Board's decision to cancel Webervations. This decision was communicated to all Webervations participants December 15, 2014.

Of note within the financial statements is the appearance of a decrease of almost \$3k in Membership dues revenue in comparison to the previous year. In 2013 and prior years, the revenue from weblink and upgraded web listings<sup>1</sup> on GrandBendTourism.com was included in the "Membership dues" revenue line. Since the purchase of these two web marketing items is optional and not dependent on membership with the Chamber, these funds have been moved to the "Other Revenue" line, which now shows an increase of \$6,211 over 2013, entirely attributable to the increased purchases of weblinks and upgraded listings.

Looking forward to 2015, and given the great success of GrandBendTourism.com as a web marketing tool connecting tourists and local consumers with Lambton Shores attractions and businesses, the Board has decided to open up inclusion on GrandBendTourism.com to non-Member businesses in exchange for a listing fee (price to be determined). Member businesses will be visually differentiated from non-Member businesses by the placement of an icon beside the business name and an additional visual or text identifier to mark Chamber membership. This change is expected to net the Chamber significant increased revenue over the next few years.

In 2014, revenue from "Government and municipal support" decreased by \$3,828 of which \$3,376 is attributable to the reduction of Municipal financial support for Tourism & Visitor Services and a \$452 reduction in federal and provincial wage grants.

The annual area visitor guide continued to provide a small net revenue (in 2014 \$2,697 – increase of \$273 over 2013) despite increased production costs related to design, printing and shipping. The annual golf tournament was our financial highlight of the year with a net increase in revenue over 2013 of just under \$3k.

<sup>1</sup> **Weblink:** Hyperlink from the member's listing on GrandBendTourism.com to their own website or Facebook presence. **Upgraded listings** on GrandBendTourism.com include a photo or logo plus an interactive Google map.

Thanks goes to the great networking and sales effort of Chamber Vice President Mark Lewis and our generous and many sponsors who helped make this possible.

In 2014, we experienced almost \$7k of bad debt! This is not the first year the Chamber has experienced non-payment of invoices, but the first in which a decision was made to indicate so in the financial statements. On the upside of this number is improved tracking by staff through office software such as QuickBooks and tighter office processes and procedures. The majority of this debt is attributable to non-payment of Webervations and Membership renewal invoices.

Chamber Membership renewal notices are issued late August, giving Members at least 60 days to either renew Membership during our Early Bird period or on November 1. Although the great majority of Membership dues are paid during this time and within 60 days post of November 1, annually a number of Members delay payment by more than 90 days. Without response to our Manager's efforts to follow-up with these Members regarding their outstanding invoices, we must assume they no longer wish to be Members. In addition, Canada Revenue Agency deems HST payable the moment an invoice is generated, therefore long outstanding invoices negatively affect the Chamber's financial reporting to CRA. As a result of our auditor's recommendation, the Board will make a policy decision providing a definitive date when a Member ceases to be a Member due to non-payment of dues. This date will be duly communicated to all Members.

We are currently in the fourth month of fiscal 2015, and we are confident our financial position will remain stable and consistent and hopeful the Municipality of Lambton Shores will desire to extend our partnership with them relative to Tourism & Visitor Services.

Special thanks to Shawn Fitzsimmons of The Fisher Corporation for the preparation and review of our financial documents and production of the audited Financial Statements.

## Revenues & Expenses

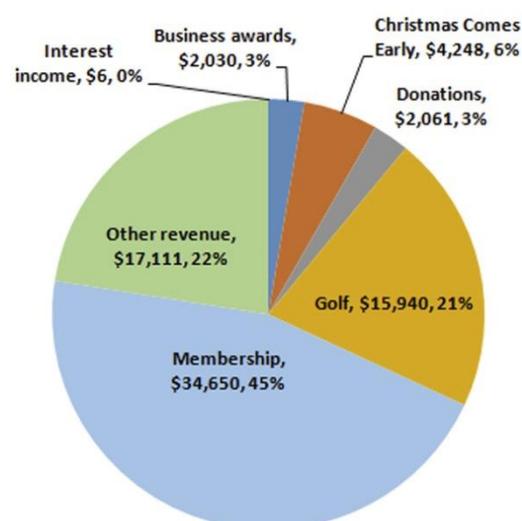
The reporting of revenues and expenses in the audited Financial Statements includes an overall summary entitled "Statement of Revenues and Expenditures" on pages 5-6, as well as separately for core Chamber programs and services (page 12) and Tourism & Visitor Services (page 11).

### Chamber Member Services Revenue

\$76,046: The Chamber's revenue comes from multiple sources:

- Business Awards (\$2,030 / 3%): Celebrate the Season ticket sales and silent auction.
- Christmas Comes Early (\$4,248 / 6%): Participation fees.
- Donations (\$2,061 / 3%): This figure is derived based on the fair market value of products donated to the Chamber and does not represent actual cash payments.

Golf Tournament		
	2014	2013
Gross Revenue	\$15,940	\$12,378
Expenses	\$7,408	\$6,746
Net Revenue	\$8,532	\$5,632
Difference	+\$2,900k	

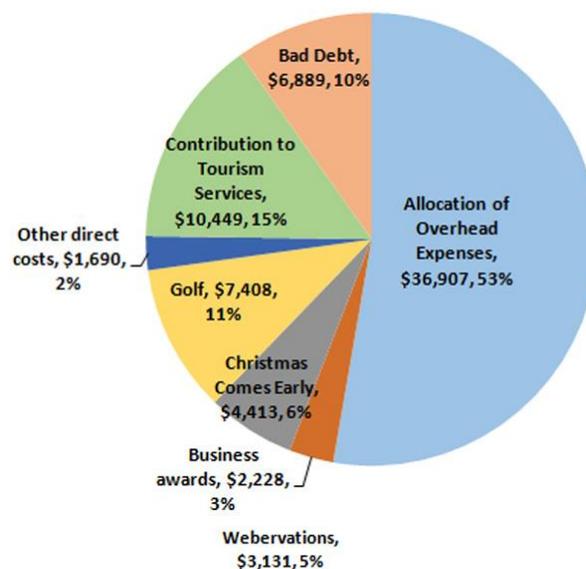


- Golf (\$15,940 / 21%): tournament registrations, passport sales, sponsorships/donations.
- Membership dues (\$34,650 / 45%): Fees paid by Members.
- Other revenue (\$17,111 / 22%): Includes balance of all revenue from Chamber services and programs such as ads sold on the Outdoor Message Centre Board, Weblinks and upgraded web listings, Breakfast with the Mayor, Members mixers, Thanksgiving Market and Group Insurance referrals (\$21,360 / 39%)
- Interest income (\$6 / 0%)

### Chamber Member Services Expenses

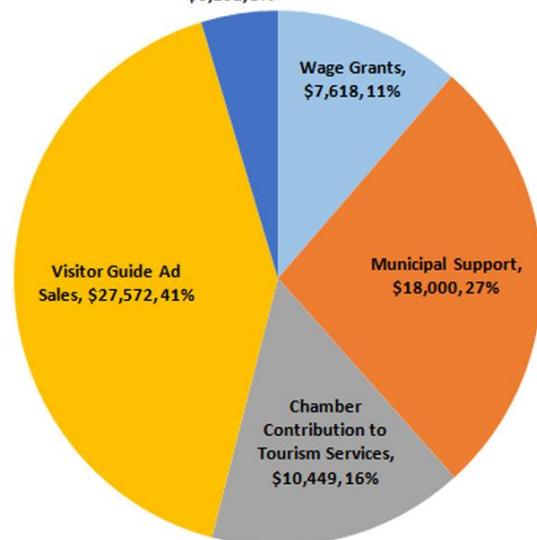
\$69,984: The Chamber's expenses are related to:

- Funding of Tourism & Visitor Services (\$10,449 / 15%),
- Bad Debt (\$6,889 / 10%)
- Allocation of Overhead Expenses<sup>2</sup> (\$36,907 / 53%): includes 50% of costs related to Welcome Centre, insurance, travel and meetings, professional fees, repairs and maintenance, student and manager's wages and related CPP, EI, WSIB costs, phone and utilities etc
- Business awards (\$2,228 / 3%)
- Christmas Comes Early (\$4,413 / 6%)
- Golf tournament (\$7,408 / 11%)
- Other direct costs (\$1,690 / 2%)



### Tourism & Visitor Services Revenue

Throughout Ontario, Tourism & Visitor Services<sup>3</sup> are funded by government – federal, provincial and municipal. Although the Municipality of Lambton Shores contributes approximately \$60k to Tourism Sarnia Lambton through the County's levy, funding of local efforts that directly promote Lambton Shores was \$18k. Annually, the Chamber appears before Council to outline the costs of providing this service on behalf of the Municipality. Overall, Tourism & Visitor Services revenue comes from government support and the Chamber's work selling advertising for the area's visitor guide and fundraising:



<sup>2</sup> **Allocation of Overhead Expenses** - Costs related to the operations, maintenance and staffing of the Welcome Centre, such as insurance, repairs and maintenance, landscaping, phone and utilities, summer students and Chamber's manager and related mandatory employer paid costs of CPP, EI etc; costs related to travel and meetings, professional memberships, professional fees.

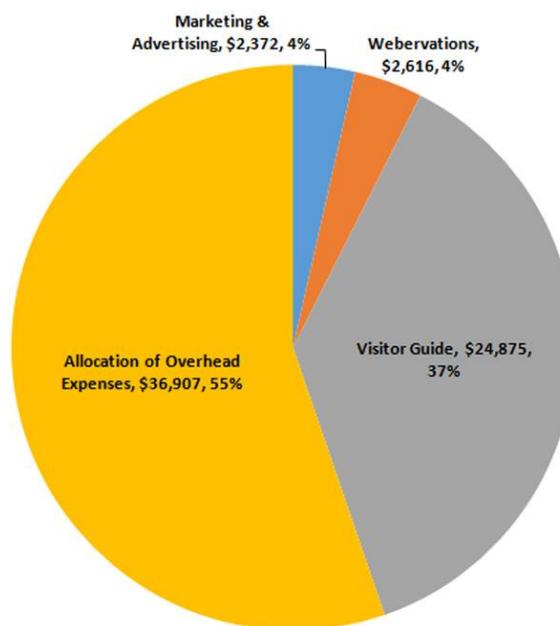
<sup>3</sup> **Tourism Services** – defined as marketing, promoting and “selling” an area to potential visitors for pleasure and business. Marketing tools include visitor guides, guides for event and meeting planners and tour operators, attracting and hosting travel writers, website and advertising campaigns. **Visitor Services** – defined as face-to-face information counseling, plus access to area maps, brochures and services that help a visitor plan their time and locate tourism products and services (information about events, festivals, attractions).

- Wage Grants (\$7,618 / 11%): federal and provincial
- Municipal Support for Tourism Services (\$18k / 27%)
- Chamber's contribution to Tourism Services (\$10,449 / 16%)
- Visitor Guide Ad Sales (\$27,572 / 41%)
- Webervations Fees (\$3,131 / 5%)

### Tourism & Visitor Services Expenses

During 2014, the Chamber provided Lambton Shores with:

- 112-page, full-colour visitor guide distributed to 198+ locations in Ontario, including official provincial Tourism Information Centres, Ontario Travel Centres, Tourist Information Outlets, hotels/motels, restaurants, retailers, attractions and other business locations in Lambton Shores, Bluewater, South Huron and Goderich, including an area mail drop in Grand Bend, Forest, Port Franks and Thedford. Welcome Centre distributes 4,000+ copies annually.
- Advertising campaign – no-cost ad exchange in *Navigate* (Lambton County's guide), listings in *Ontario's West Coast* (Huron County's guide), paid ads in *Bluewater Visitor Guide*, *Drayton Entertainment Playbill*, and no-cost event submissions to *FestivalsAndEventsOntario.com* and *OntarioTravel.net* as well as no-cost service-exchange with Bayshore Broadcasting for radio support.
- Attendance at tourism events to promote the area: Huron County's Brochure Swap, Lambton County's Tourism Summit, Best Host West Coast, Food Day Canada.
- Digital / Web presence: *GrandBendTourism.com*, online accommodation reservation system, Merchant Street Mapping, Facebook and Twitter, domain registrations/renewals.
- Advocacy for Lambton Shores – on the board of directors for Tourism Sarnia Lambton, Huron Tourism Association and the Lambton County Branding Committee.
- Year-round operation of the Welcome Centre - handles 11,000+ inquiries annually (phone, email, in-person).
- In-kind support to local event organizers.



## NOMINATIONS REPORT

With the addition of four new directors for 2014, a number of which were elected into multi-year roles and therefore are returning for 2015, the Board can accommodate one additional director. Chamber Bylaws allow for up to nine directors.

Leaving the Board this year are Steven Karcher (Executive Director of Drayton Entertainment) and Mike Rahn (owner of Mike & Terri's No Frills). Steven Karcher served for 3 years on the Board and will remain accessible to the Board for consultation on various matters. We thank Steven and Mike for volunteering their time and expertise to help make our Chamber a better organization.

Nomination forms were mailed with the AGM Packages to all Chamber Members on December 5, 2014 stating the nomination period was open from December 8, 2014 through to January 23, 2015. This provides a nomination period of at least 45 days and which closes 30 days prior to the Annual General Meeting (February 25, 2015), as required by the Chamber's Bylaws.

Over the past several years, the Nominations Committee has evaluated the suitability of potential directors based on several criteria: the industry sector in the local economy the potential director represents; the person's individual experience and skill-sets; and the person's reputation for being positive, forward-thinking and community-minded.

The Nominations Committee is pleased to announce the addition of Marilyn Keunecke-Smith, owner/operator of *Trin's Fashions of Forest* for the last four years, after working for more than 10 years with Jeunique International, a clothing manufacturer. Marilyn has many years of community involvement, including recent stints on Lambton Shores Economic Development Committee, the Forest BIA, the Film & Food Festival event and Communities in Bloom. Marilyn will be joining the Board to represent the retailers & merchants segment of our business community.

### **Returning & New directors include:**

1. Mary-Jo Schottroff-Snopko (Pine Dale Motor Inn / hospitality),
2. Mark Lewis (Bayshore Broadcasting / broadcast media),
3. Sheila Brooks (BMO / banking & financial),
4. Paul Pittao (Medway Homes / developer),
5. Neil Clifford (Lakeshore Advance / print media),
6. Natalie Core (Oakwood Resort / hospitality),
7. Doug Pedlar (Re/Max Bluewater Realty / real estate),
8. Marilyn Keunecke-Smith (*Trin's Fashions of Forest* / retailers & merchants), and
9. Glen Baillie (Baillie's Picture Framing / manufacturing).

Board Directors are volunteers and give freely of their time and expertise to provide leadership to the Chamber in its efforts to support and improve the local business community.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

At the end of 2014, the Chamber had 180 Members, this represents a net decrease of 10 Members over the 2013 year.<sup>4</sup> Please join us in welcoming the following new Members:

- Janet Girodat (Bluewater Cottage Rentals)
- Cam & Dinah Taylor (Captain's Cottages)
- Devankumar Shah & Himansu Shah (DREAMZ Inn)
- Susan Gillies (Good Vibrations NeuroFeedback)
- Devankumar Shah & Himansu Shah (Harmony Inn)
- David & Laurie Hume (Hume's Horse and Carriage Rides)
- Shirley Parkinson (Parkinson's Cottage)
- Matt & Julie DeJong (Pizza Delight)
- Jesse Kadlecik (Tri-County Tree Service)
- Benita Larsen (Website Creations)

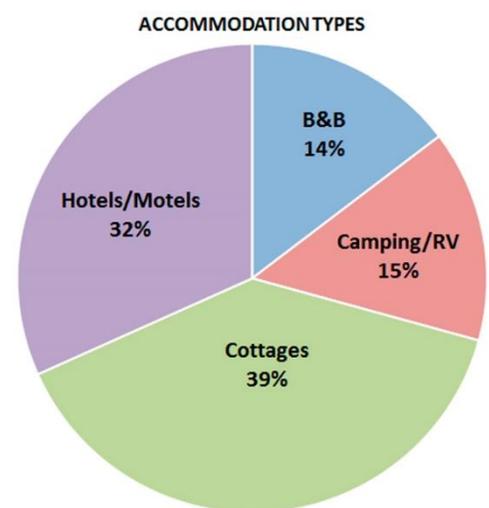
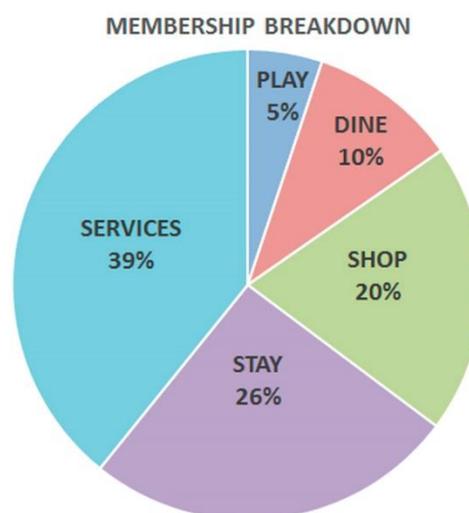
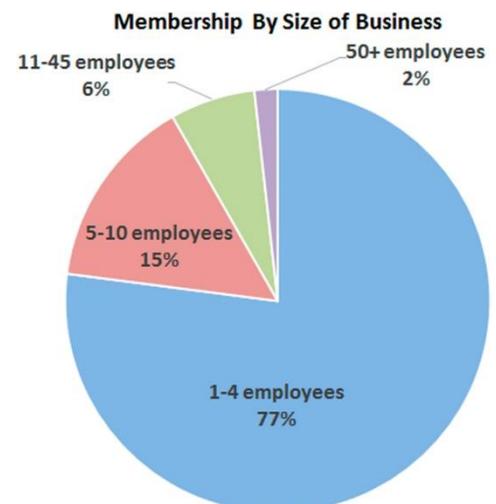
### Member Business Demographics

The majority of our Membership – 77% - is small, independently owned and operated businesses with between one and four employees (i.e. self-employed plus one or two others). This category decreased by 1% point over last year (2013). The 5-10 employee category now represents 15% of our businesses – a 2% point increase over last year.

Additionally, most of our Members come from the “Services” sector (39%), and of that group the overwhelming majority are real estate brokerages (16%).

The second largest sector represented is “Accommodation”

(26%), and of that group 39% are cottage owners (a drop of 2% points from last year). The hotel/motel group now represent 32% of our accommodation businesses, which is an increase of 6% points over last year.



<sup>4</sup> **Member Count:** The net decrease in Membership count is due to improved accounting practices and tracking of Membership payments and our auditor's recommendation that Members who neglect to pay membership dues are no longer considered part of the Membership base.

## 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

### Facelift for GrandBendTourism.com

Our tourist-focused website got a homepage facelift in July with a new slideshow and featured content blocks linking to content originally developed for the visitor guide. Apart from the improved visual impact, the slideshow is mobile-friendly and fully-responsive, meaning it adjusts to smartphones and iPad finger-slides.

The Featured Content Blocks give users direct access to editorial content covering beaches, marinas, parks, recreation, attractions and area amenities. Until now, the editorial content developed for the visitor guide was not easily integrated into the website's structure (originally established in 2009). With the use of the Featured Content Blocks and associated sidebar menus, visitors to the site can now access all the content online.



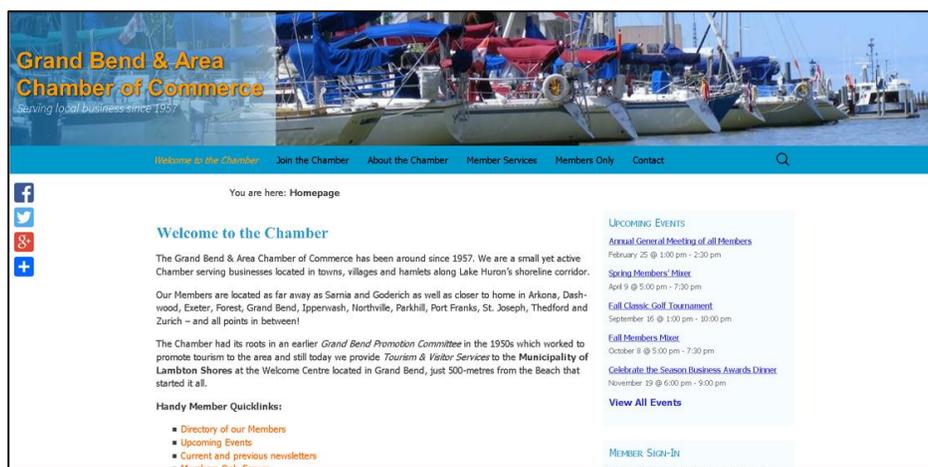
The visitor guide is also provided as an online flipbook version, providing another way for potential tourists to access area information ([www.grandbendtourism.com/it-starts-at-the-beach](http://www.grandbendtourism.com/it-starts-at-the-beach)). The flipbook can also be downloaded as a PDF document.

### Chamber Website focuses on Business & Members

As more and more of the Chamber's documents and information was placed online for Members and potential new Members to access, it became apparent the Chamber needed a Chamber-focused website, not a sub-section of the GrandBendTourism.com website.

GrandBendChamber.ca was launched in August. Members now have a website focused on their information and service needs and businesses looking for information about the Grand Bend & Area Chamber of Commerce – potentially with the goal of joining the Chamber – can easily access key information.

The site boasts a clean design, simple navigation and direct access to the information Members seek most and in so doing improves chamber-to-member and member-to-member communication. The new site also has a visible and direct call-to-action for potential new Chamber members and makes the act of joining much easier.



The Chamber's new website will better serve the needs of the Chamber, its Members, potential new members and new businesses re-locating to Lambton Shores.

### Special Features Include:

- **Member Login:** Each Chamber Member has a website user account. This enables Members to update their own directory listing and access the Members Only Forum. User account information was mailed out in the Membership Renewal Package at the end of August.
- **Member Directory:** A Membership directory focused on conveying searchable business listings. The directory has two additional areas called "Notes" and "Details" that give Members more space to promote their business without clogging up the initial listing display.
- **Members Only Area:** Includes publication of Chamber documents, such as Minutes from AGMs, Directors' meetings, reports from public meetings, tourism services reports, annual reports, survey and poll results and an area where Members can post announcements, news and inquiries for sharing with fellow Members.
- **Community Profile:** Coming in 2015! This section will include demographic and economic data about Lambton Shores to help new businesses connect with key business-services in the area.

## Christmas Lights & Light Up Grand Bend



**FIGURE 1 MARY-JO SCHOTTROFF-SNOPKO ACCEPTS \$6,200 FROM GRAND BEND COMMUNITY FOUNDATION IN SUPPORT OF CHRISTMAS LIGHTS**

Chamber President Mary-Jo Schottroff-Snopko has long been the champion of getting Christmas street lights in Grand Bend. Sparked by her letter to Council in 2012, efforts progressed and finally bore fruit in 2014. In 2013, Mary-Jo Schottroff-Snopko met several times with Municipal staff to discuss and review the options for street lighting. Due to Hydro One restrictions, it was learned lighting and seasonal décor (such as seasonal banners attached to light standards) would be restricted to those light standards owned by the Municipality. Donated funds<sup>5</sup> were finally put to use with the purchase of street lights, seasonal banners and Christmas décor, such as the lighted Christmas trees and Santa display. Volunteers

and Municipal staff installed the lights and banners and additional volunteers from Grand Bend Horticultural Society with Mary-Jo Schottroff-Snopko leading the charge turned Grand Bend into a

festive delight.

In addition to lighting and décor efforts, Mary-Jo's community outreach around Christmas lighting resulted in many more volunteers from local service clubs and community groups, as well as local businesses, getting involved and created a new event called *Light Up Grand Bend!* Elements included the Celebration of Life tree, Grand Illumination contest, children's poster competition, Operation Christmas Child, carol singing by the Seaforth Harmony Kings and United Church of Grand Bend, free horse and carriage rides, hot chocolate and apple cider topped off by a visit from Santa Claus.

<sup>5</sup> Among groups that donated to the Christmas Lights and Light Up Grand Bend efforts were The Grand Bend Community Foundation, Grand Bend Rotary Club, Grand Bend Legion, Grand Bend Lionesses, the Chamber and individuals within the community.

## VOLUNTEER UPDATE & NEW AWARD

Many of you will have seen the obituary for our long-time volunteer Phyllis Statchuk in the Lakeshore Advance, June 2014. For ten years, week after week, consistently arriving at the Welcome Centre on Tuesday by Noon to give us hours of valuable time, Phyllis made an effort to be at every Member event, whether to sell tickets or handle registration or setup a prize table or simply to help make events run smoothly.

Phyllis had a unique ability to quickly garner a person's life history and discover additional information needs which she was so very qualified to answer, and she did this with genuine desire to provide excellent customer service, all for a simple sense of satisfaction.

We did not want that level of customer service or commitment to be lost to memory, so we created a customer service award to establish a service standard based on Phyllis' contribution to our organization and others.

Called the ***Phyllis Statchuk Award for Customer Service Excellence***, it will be awarded annually to "an individual working or volunteering for a business or organization in the Lambton Shores community who is known for their dedicated service over a period of years. The recipient's ability to discover and respond to customer needs in a friendly, genuine and personable way makes a difference to the customer and organization. This award recognizes the citizen who connects with people as a foundation for delivering excellent service."

At Celebrate the Season Awards Dinner held November 20, 2014 at Oakwood Resort, this award was presented for the first time.



PHYLLIS RECEIVES RECOGNITION OF 10-YEARS OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE AT CELEBRATE THE SEASON NOVEMBER 2013.



PHYLLIS STATCHUK AWARD FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

## MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

### Events

The Chamber strives to deliver great networking and business development opportunities that provide opportunities to connect and hear from government officials and thought leaders.

In 2014, the Chamber hosted 8 Member events with over 345 attendees, two retail support events and two all candidates meetings.

Our two signature events, Celebrate the Season Awards Dinner and the Fall Classic Golf Tournament were once again huge successes.

Number of attendees at Celebrate the Season

Awards Dinner : 92

Number of awards handed out : 4

Number of new members : 10

Number of cost reduction programs offered to members : 4

Number of years the Chamber has been the voice of business : 57

Number of members : 181

Number of repeat sponsors : 25 (68%)

Number of Member events last year : 8

Member Retention Percentage : 90%

### YEAR IN REVIEW - EVENTS

#### February

- *Breakfast with the Mayor (February 5, 2014) – held at Aunt Gussie's Country Dining / sponsored by Ellison Travel & Tours*
- *Annual General Meeting (2013) – held at Grand Bend Legion*

#### April

- *Members Mixer (April 10) – held at Oakwood Resort and sponsored by Bluewater Motel*

#### May

- *Accessibility Workshop (May 20) – held at Pine Dale Motor Inn*

#### June

- *All Candidates Meeting for Provincial election (June 3) – held at the Legacy Recreation Centre*

#### September

- *Annual Fall Classic Golf Tournament (September 17) – held at Bayview Golf Course*
- *All Candidates Meeting for the Municipal election (September 30) – held at Grand Bend Public School*

#### October

- *Members' Mixer (October 9) – held at Growling Gator and sponsored by Mike & Terri's No Frills*
- *Thanksgiving Market*

#### November

- *Celebrate the Season Awards Dinner (November 20) – held at Oakwood Resort*
- *Christmas Comes Early*
- *Phoneography Workshop (November 29) – held at Pine Dale Motor Inn*

## RECOGNITION & CELEBRATION

### Celebrate the Season Awards Dinner

Through our annual awards dinner we celebrate and recognize excellence in initiative, innovation, marketing, research and development, increased sales, environmental consciousness, customer service and contribution to our community.

#### 2014 Award Recipients were:

- Entrepreneur of the Year: **Jesse Kadlecik**, Tri-County Tree Service
- Business of the Year: **Track21 Graphix**, Mark & Deborah Darling
- David Scatcherd Community Spirit Award: **Glen Baillie**, Baillie's Picture Framing
- Phyllis Statchuk Customer Service Excellence Award: **Fadhil Askar**, Mac's Milk (Grand Bend)

### Blue Water Motel - 65 Years in Business

At the Spring Members' Mixer, Mark Boogemans gave an intimate and witty retrospective of the Blue Water Motel over the years with photographs showing the motel's development since 1949. The Boogemans family – Mark, Laura, Xavier and RuthAnn - each had amusing and incredible tales to tell of their experiences – including finding a panther in one of their motel rooms!

### Fall Classic Golf Tournament

#### Winning Team was:

- Team Sarnia Firefighters: Brad Forbes, Mac Dunlop, Duanne Carr & Brad Raymer.

### Best Bloomin Business

The Chamber participated in a Forest BIA initiative called BEST Bloomin Business! The contest was designed to get businesses to spruce up curb appeal in time for the international Communities in Bloom judges' visit in July.

#### Award Recipients were:

- Ultimate BEST Bloomin Business: By the Old River Bed & Breakfast
- Best Unique Garden: **Pine Dale Motor Inn**
- Best Bloomin Containers: Canada Post, Grand Bend



**Photo 1:** Kyle Beattie accepts Business of the Year on behalf of Track 21 Graphix. **Photo 2:** Chamber Director Doug Pedlar presents Jesse Kadlecik with Entrepreneur of the Year. **Photo 3:** Helen Scatcherd-Bushnell presents Glen Baillie with the David Scatcherd Community Spirit Award. **Photo 4:** Past-President Glen Baillie presents Fadhil Askar with the Phyllis Statchuk Customer Service Excellence Award.



**Figure 2:** L-R Mark, Laura, Xavier & Ruth-Ann Boogemans



**Team Sarnia Firefighters:** (L-R) Brad Forbes, Mac Dunlop, Duanne Carr & Brad Raymer

## THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

### Breakfast with the Mayor & Members Mixer Sponsors

Ellison Travel & Tours  
Blue Water Motel  
Mike & Terri's No Frills

### Golf Tournament Sponsors

104.9 the Beach  
Baillie's Picture Framing  
Bill Weber  
Blue Water Motel  
Brentwood on the Beach  
Canadian Linen  
Coleson Freight  
Constellation Brands  
Co-Operators/MacDermid Insurance  
Ellison Travel & Tours  
Fidelity Investments  
Forever Furniture  
Godbolt Ciufu Financial  
Hay Communications  
Hay Mutual Insurance Company  
HMP Huron Motor Products  
Hyundai of Goderich  
IA Clarington Investments  
Invesco Canada  
Lakeshore Advance  
Medway Homes  
MicroAge Basics  
Mike & Terri's No Frills  
Oakwood Resort  
Pest Away  
Pine Dale Motor Inn  
RBC Dominion Securities  
Re/Max Bluewater Realty  
Rice Homes  
Rock Glen Family Resort  
Rotary Club of Grand Bend  
Sentry Select for RBC Dominion  
Southwest Marine Services  
The Whole Pig  
Tourism Sarnia Lambton  
Track21 Graphics

### Golf Tournament Supporters

Baillie's Picture Framing  
Bank of Montreal  
Bikiland  
Bluewater Cottage Rentals  
Bluewater Motel  
Brentwood on the Beach  
Casual Industries  
Constellation Brands  
Cooperators/MacDermid Insurance  
Country Manor Retirement Home  
Down On The Farm B&B  
Drayton Entertainment  
Gillespie Garden B&B  
Glass in Motion  
Goderich Tire  
Good Vibrations  
Neurofeedback  
Grand Bend Decorating  
Growling Gator  
Hair by Joycey  
Hay Communications  
Home Hardware Building Centre  
Huron Motor Products  
Indian Hills Golf Course  
Klondkye Trailer Park Inc  
Lambton Heritage Museum  
MacLachlan/HMS Insurance  
Main Street Motel  
Medway Homes  
Oakwood Resort  
RBC Dominion Securities  
RentHuron.com  
Royal Canadian Legion  
Ruston Family Campground  
Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership  
Sea Jewels  
Sears of Goderich  
ShopLambtonShores.com  
Shoppers Drug Mart  
Sobey's  
Sunset Arts Gallery  
Sybillie's Garden B&B  
T. Harry Hoffman & Sons  
Funeral Home

The Garden Gate Gifts & Florals  
The Pet Stop  
Tri-County Tree Service  
Turnbull Plumbing & Electric INC  
Website Creations  
Westland Green Houses Inc

### Business Represented by Golf Teams

104.9 the Beach  
Baillie's Picture Framing  
Blue Water Motel  
BMO  
Canadian Linen  
Co-Operators/MacDermid Insurance  
Ellison Travel & Tours  
Growling Gator  
Hair by Joycey  
Huron Shorese Property Management  
Ice Cultures  
Lakeshore Advance  
Mike & Terri's No Frills  
Municipality of Lambton Shores  
Oakwood Resort  
Paddingtons  
RBC Dominion Securities  
Re/Max Bluewater Realty  
Richman Gallery  
Russo & Associates  
Rus-Ton Family Campground  
Sentry Select  
The Colonial Hotel  
Tri-County Tree Service

### Tournament Volunteers

Pat Billington  
Sheila Brooks  
Mike Burgess  
Tim Dionne  
Debbie Kirkwood  
Doreen McHarg  
Tara Medeiros  
Kerry Rex  
Nancy Starek

PHOTO GALLERY



Spring Members Mixer - Blue Water Motel celebrates 65 years



Highest attended Golf Tournament

