



Perrin Beatty, president and CEO of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, speaks at the Brandon Chamber of Commerce luncheon held at the Royal Oak Inn and Suites on Thursday. (Bruce Burnstead/Brandon Sun)

Business lobby groups carry lots of sway: Beatty

BY ALLISON DOWD

Canadian Chamber of Commerce president and CEO Perrin Beatty brought a distinct sense of international optimism to Brandon's business community yesterday.

Beatty — who served as the president and CEO of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters prior to joining the Canadian Chamber in 2007 — addressed a crowd of about 225 people gathered at the Royal Oak Inn and Suites during the Brandon Chamber of Commerce's monthly luncheon.

He told those in attendance that it is only through the co-operation of the organization's 175,000 member businesses that the national chamber was able to achieve so much change during last winter's tenuous session of Parliament and in the federal Conservative's subsequent 2009 budget.

"This is Main Street, Canada," he said. "There is no other organization

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"There is no other organization in Canada with the breadth and scope that this network brings."

— Perrin Beatty

in Canada with the breadth and scope that this network brings ... the strength that we have and our effectiveness in Ottawa comes directly from your involvement here in Brandon, in your local chamber of commerce."

Involvement from chambers across the nation has also been critically important as Canada continues its fight against the "Buy American" trade restrictions contained in the U.S. government's economic

stimulus package, he noted.

"The relationships that our chambers have with their counterparts in the U.S. to say 'Let us explain why it's bad policy to build walls and why it makes sense to work together' helps enormously as the government attempts to prevent U.S. protectionism from shutting Canadian businesses out."

And even though Canada has weathered the economic storm far better than many other western industrialized countries, Beatty cautioned that all businesses must start dreaming bigger than just "the best in the community, best in the region, (or) the best in the country."

"We have to benchmark ourselves against best in the world, to be truly world-class in everything that we do," he said. "In our science, in our logistics, in our tax and regulatory system if we want to attract investment to Canada ... We have to test ourselves against the very best in the world."

adowd@brandonsun.com