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Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce Awarded Large Chamber of the Year

Parkland County (July 22, 2021) – The Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce (GPRC) received the 2021 Award for Large Chamber of the Year from the Alberta Chambers of Commerce (ACC).

Every year, the ACC offers awards to chambers in three categories: small, medium, and large. The GPRC was up against large chambers of similar size, which included: Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Medicine Hat, and Lethbridge.

Prior to 2020, work had been done by the Tri Regional Action Collaboration (TRAC Task Force) to unify the Spruce Grove, Stony Plain, and Wabamun District Chambers' of Commerce. Upon membership approval to unify the three chambers, the Spruce Grove and Wabamun District Chambers were dissolved, and the Stony Plain & District Chamber of Commerce would undergo a name change. On January 1, 2020, the Stony Plain Chamber began operating as the Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce, with the name change officially being accepted by Corporations Canada in June 2021. After unification of the three chambers, the GPRC became the fourth largest chamber in Alberta.

“The desire to move toward a chamber of commerce that served the entire region wasn't a new idea, although it needed to happen at the right time,” explains, TRAC Task Force member, Rik Kaminsky. “With the municipalities committing to closer collaboration, the appetite from our individual members was certainly expressed.”

“As a chamber we provide networking, educational and collaboration opportunities to strengthen our local community. We see our role to support the businesses by providing the resources to assist them in business and to grow over time. **One of the most important roles of the chamber is to be present for our members.** Our focus is not on recruiting businesses it's about working to create an economy that supports all,” says GPRC CEO, Sarah Parry. “For these reasons, I was honoured to accept this award on behalf of our members, our chamber team, directors, and those who had the vision and tenacity to unify the chambers of Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and Wabamun.”

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“Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our chambers have stepped up like never before to support their communities,” says ACC President and CEO Ken Kobly. “For the Greater Parkland Regional Chamber, this came during an amalgamation process and time of great change. Throughout it all, the GPRC team never wavered in their commitment to their members or to our network. Congratulations on this well-deserved award.”

The GPRC has been focused on the work of its committees in its first year and a half of operation. The five committees, advocacy, finance, governance, Indigenous business, and membership have been feverishly creating policies and procedures while putting efficiencies in place. While the GPRC is only in its second year of operation, it still has over 60 years of experience behind it.

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the GPRC successfully lobbied for better wage subsidy programs for members on the federal level and has recently been successful in getting support for robust and cost-effective broadband networking in the community.

“It is very rewarding to see the work that the staff have done to be recognized in this way and I know the desire of everyone is to continue to get better as we diligently work hard at representing and advocating on behalf of our members,” says GPRC Chair, Darcy Torhjem. “The work of the board and committees has been outstanding; they also deserve credit. I know we will continue to see greater things in the future, and I have been proud to be apart of this group of outstanding individuals.”

The goal of the GPRC, which was set-out in the first strategic planning session, was to be recognized as a top performing chamber of commerce in Alberta by 2022. The GPRC has hit their target and will look forward to setting a new target going forward.

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