

*Elliot Lake &
District*

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Our History

A Chamber of Commerce is a group of business people who for mutual benefit, or to fill a perceived void in a given geographic area, join together to meet those goals through a program of action. This, of course means that each such organization is unique in its specific purpose, which may or may not match the purpose of other Chambers of Commerce or Boards of Trade in another jurisdiction.

A Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade, therefore, may be dedicated to any one or any number of specific purposes such as: economic development, tourism promotion, lobbying government or event management.

In the mid 1600's the first Chamber of Commerce to use that name was formed by an association of merchants in Marseilles, France. That organization flourished and expanded in Europe, and in 1700 the movement migrated across the Channel to England where, in keeping with the formal traditions of the day, the name was changed to Board of Trade.

In 1911, The Associated Boards of Trade of Ontario was founded in Toronto by a number of Ontario based community organizations to lobby the Provincial Legislature to ensure that legislation and regulations passed by the Legislature fostered economic progress and supported business success.

Following the 1914-1918 "Great War", Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade representatives from around the world met in Geneva to form the International Chamber of Commerce. Recognizing that French had been chosen by the League of Nations as the official diplomatic language of the world, many attendees representing Boards of Trade (the English oriented) agreed to change their name to Chamber of Commerce (Chambre de Commerce) in keeping with this international trend towards goodwill and cooperation. Many others did not do so, and hence, today we have active and vibrant Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce, with the choice of name depending on the individual interests and historic background of the individual organizations.

One federation of community organizations, which did make the change referred to above, was The Associated Boards of Trade of Ontario, which, noted the majority will of their constituents and became the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

In 1925, a group of community organizations across Canada, viewing the successes of the then existent Provincial Federations of Chambers, joined together to form The Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

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Today, the Canadian Chamber is a federation of some 700 plus autonomous community Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce located throughout Canada. The Ontario Chamber of Commerce is a federation of approximately 171 community Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce located throughout Ontario, and there are active Provincial Chamber Federations in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec, and the Atlantic Provinces.

Additionally, there are a number of Regional Chambers offsetting various levels of Municipal Government, as well as some geographically specific federations such as the North Eastern and North Western Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

In short, a Chamber of Commerce (Board of Trade) is a federation or association of business people devoted to specific collective goals, which serve the best and key interests of the jurisdiction in which they have some combined voice and/or effect. The 1st President of The Elliot Lake & District Chamber of Commerce was Mr. Jack Gauthier in 1957.