

**MB Chambers of Commerce Ministers' Dinner  
May 29, 2023  
MHCA President & CEO Chris Lorenc - Speaking Notes**

Thank you to the Manitoba Chamber and President & CEO Chuck Davidson for this opportunity to chat about the issues and the challenges before us.

Let's take this moment to recognize Chuck Davidson's leadership and advocacy in promoting the imperative of ***growing the economy as job #1 for each level of government.***

The MHCA is a founding sponsor of this event. We look forward to it each year because of its value to the future of our province.

The MHCA, like many of you here, regards ***Growing the Economy as Job #1 of every level of government.***

And as we ready ourselves for the October election, focusing on economic growth is particularly important.

Without the revenues generated by a growing economy, our province's ability to improve health care, education, help communities tackle crime, homelessness and addictions *is frankly hobbled.*

But here's where I see good reason for optimism.

Manitoba's attention on wrestling down the deficit, is paying off. It's freeing up revenues to put towards repairing the damage to services caused by the pandemic.

It has also given the government room for investments that fuel economic growth.

Premier Stefanson, and her Cabinet, have shown they are focused on investing public funds where they produce the highest ROI to GDP.

The Premier has become the leading champion for a proposed Canada Trade Infrastructure **Plan** – a sustained nation-building initiative that moves beyond the traditional five-year funding approach. ***That's old school thinking.*** It is short-sighted and has not served our national nor provincial interests well.

Canada needs a *long-term strategy* focusing on high-priority/high-value trade corridor investments to build the trade enabling transportation network Canada needs, 20 to 30 years from now. One that sets criteria for identifying investment based on a project's ability to offer high value and highest ROI to GDP.

This **Plan** is being advanced by seven leading national business organizations, including: Business Council of Canada, Canada West Foundation, Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Construction Association, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, Civil Infrastructure Council and the Western Canada Roadbuilders & Heavy Construction Association.

This strategy is critical for our national and provincial economic growth, therefore our social welfare and national security interests.

And as we move toward our pre-election campaign season, *we need to know* the plans our three leaders have to support ***growing the economy.***

That is why the MHCA, and eight Manitoba business organizations are co-hosting an All-Party Leaders Forum, focused exclusively on ***Growing the Economy*** co-moderated by **Richard Cloutier** of CJOB, and **Mary Agnes Welch** of Probe Research.

On September 12, our forum co-moderators will put important questions to the party leaders.  
Please, look at the postcard at your place setting – **and save that date!**

The Forum will be an important voice of the '**growing the economy**' conversation we need ahead of and after the election.

Join us at the Forum to help ensure that **Growing the Economy is Job #1 for all levels of government and** for all Manitobans.

Thank you!