

The Tri-City News

## Rapid transit will come to Tri-Cities, chamber chair predicts



Stephanie Booth is the chair of the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce and will be lobbying for the completion of rapid transit to the region.

CRAIG HODGE

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The next several weeks will be hectic ones for Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce chair Stephanie Booth who was installed in the post in January.

But the senior account manager for the Royal Bank of Canada's commercial financial services is relishing the opportunity to bring the chamber's valuable services closer to members and raising the flag on key issues for the Tri-Cities.

Booth is helping to re-establish some committees and believes strongly the hard work will pay off because members will get more out of their membership when they sign up to join a committee.

“People don’t realize the value they get out of the chamber because the more effort they put in, the more they get out of it,” said Booth.

Similarly, Booth is enjoying the job of chair even if it takes her away from her family occasionally. It’s hard work, she admits, but she feels like she is giving back to the community.

Key issues for her this year are transportation and economic development which she believes are intertwined. With the Port Mann/Highway 1 project underway and the Evergreen Line waiting for funding confirmation, Booth believes it’s the chamber’s job to keep politicians and key funders aware of Tri-City issues.

“We need to be out there, making these issues public,” Booth said.

Although she has no doubts about the Evergreen Line: “It’s coming,” she asserts. Booth would like to see the Burnaby-to-Coquitlam line extended to Port Coquitlam and eventually out to Maple Ridge to ease up congestion and promote goods movement.

As well, she’s concerned about the combined effects of PMH1 and Evergreen Line construction on the local road system. “It’s not a happy ending until 2014 (when both projects will be completed.)”

Her more immediate concern is what impact the 2010 Winter Olympics will have on local businesses. Those unprepared for games-related road closures in Vancouver may have problems with staffing, if people can’t get to work, and deliveries. Meetings and other day to day business may be hampered as well.

For commuters, the West Coast Express will likely be packed to the rafters, which may come as a shock to some, Booth said.

“People aren’t prepared and have no clue what’s going on.”

Still, by raising these issues, she hopes the chamber can play a role in lobbying for local transportation concerns and other local needs.

At home in Port Moody, where she lives with her husband, and two children, it’s always rush hour.

The couple divides up the duties. But the family has never

come to expect — or love — her cooking. “I’ve never learned to cook, and everybody knows it,” she shrugs.

She doesn’t spend a lot of time on house work. With two active youngsters, Booth spends most of her time driving them to soccer, lacrosse and hockey games, cheering on the sidelines and occasionally coaching and managing.

The laundry? She leaves it for others.

“I dump it on the floor in the TV room, the kids sort it and fold their own.”

For her own mental health, Booth plays women’s soccer and attends a practice and a game each week to keep in shape.

She advises other women to find a balance between work and family life, making sure they find time for themselves. Her employer, the Royal Bank, is very supportive of her chamber job and she has some flexibility in being able to work at home one day a week.

“That flexibility might not be available to everyone,” she admits. But she encourages other moms interested in climbing the corporate ladder to be prepared to research family friendly companies and get involved in the chamber.

“It’s a great place to network.”

- To learn more about the Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce, visit [www.tricitychamber.com](http://www.tricitychamber.com)

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