

Kreke takes over as new Chamber president



Members of Clearwater and District Chamber of Commerce's new board pose for a photograph following the organization's annual general meeting on March 30. Pictured are (back, l-r) director Cheryl Thomas, director Sandy Mackenzie, treasurer Jeff Lamond, (front, l-r) secretary Goldie Krawec, vice president Jennifer Vincent, and president Jon Kreke.

— *image credit: Keith McNeill*
by Keith McNeill - Clearwater Times
posted Apr 7, 2015 at 1:00 PM

Clearwater and District Chamber of Commerce has a new president.

Jon Kreke, owner of Dutch Lake Resort and Painted Turtle Restaurant, was chosen for the position during the Chamber's annual general meeting on March 30.

The former town councillor takes the place of Jeff Lamond, owner of Rooted by the River Nursery. Lamond remains on the board as treasurer, however.

Jennifer Vincent from North Thompson Funeral Home was elected vice-president.

Goldie Krawec continues in her perennial role as secretary.

Sandy Mackenzie and Cheryl Thomas were chosen as two-year directors. Several other director positions remained unfilled.

Busy year for Chamber

Much was accomplished by the Chamber during 2014, according to reports from Lamond and Krawec.

The organization moved into the new Dutch Lake Community Centre on July 18.

The office has received many requests for information about the area, such as accommodation, hiking trails, business opportunities and so on.

As a result of the move, the Chamber now can use a Yellowhead Community Services employee on a part-time basis as an office worker.

That worker will be used to help organize monthly events to keep Chamber members active and informed.

The Chamber launched a new website in January of 2014 that has received as many as 60 hits per day.

The map project was a success and this year the Chamber plans to print 12,000 of them.

Membership for 2014 consisted of 96 businesses, organizations and individuals.

The three staff members at the Chamber's desk in Wells Gray Infocentre worked nearly 1,400 hours from May to October and attended to 84,000 visitors. Bill Cairns, the desk manager for many years, has retired and the Chamber is looking for a replacement.

The Chamber has received funding from Destination BC for 2015 and is waiting to hear from Service Canada about 2015 student funding.

The Chamber sends members to participate in the meetings of other organizations. However, not all of those organizations reciprocate and send members to work with the Chamber.

Businesspeople need to get involved

The Chamber needs to meet with business owners and managers and get them more involved in what is happening in the community, town councillor and former Chamber president Ken Kjenstad told the meeting.

"The number one thought we need to tell people is that what is good for the community as a whole is also good for your business," he said.

Kjenstad encourage the Chamber to use social events for networking.

"Unless you get people together, you are not going to get anywhere," he said.

He noted that it used to be easier to get businesspeople together because most of the local businesses were locally owned.

Now, more of them are owned by people who don't live here.

That just means the local managers should be encouraged to participate in the Chamber, he said.

The Chamber should work with Tourism Wells Gray and Information Wells Gray to promote tourism in this area.

"If tourism goes good, it helps the whole town," Kjenstad said.

Tourism Wells Gray is a consortium of tourism-related businesses in the area and used money collected by the hotel tax to attract visitors to the area.

Information Wells Gray is a group of businesses that operates the Wells Gray Infocentre.

Both were to some extent creations of the Chamber, although are now independent.