

Chamber opens business centre

By Sarah Sobanski

Bancroft and District Chamber of Commerce is settling into what general manager Greg Webb says will be its forever home. The new venue may mean permanent roots for the chamber and an opportunity to offer a solid foundation for up and coming area business people.

The chamber has opened a business services center at its new location on Bancroft's main street - across from Scotiabank. It offers spaces business owners can rent if they don't have a local office or if they need additional space to host board meetings, hold workshops or conduct interviews. Additionally, businesses tend to save money with these offices by sharing resources, ranging from serviced rooms to the expensive equipment needed to use these offices.

"The concept of it is that it's allowing folks to show a presence in the Bancroft area," said Webb suggesting southern businesses could use spaces for satellite offices, as an example. He said it can also be an option for entrepreneurs not ready or big enough to commit to an address on the main street.

"The concept of it is as a chamber of commerce we're always having the mandate of trying to have folks open up businesses in the area [and] most importantly stay, because that's a big fear factor especially if you're trying to open up a brand new business," he said. Webb said the chamber's plan has always been to open a business centre, it was even budgeted for in 2017. Now, he said, it has the space to see that plan realized and offer support to the business community.

"This is kind of a chamber trend," he said noting Peterborough's chamber has similar offices available. "They're sold out... It really gives folks a real comfort level to know, well, they're in the chamber of commerce they must be a good business then - that's the same concept as being a member of the chamber."

Those looking to rent the space will be able to do so by the day, week, month or year - whatever their needs may be. Spaces come with most essentials to administrative work including internet, phones, printing and copying and a kitchenette space.

"We do have one of our chamber members who will be our exclusive caterer if folks leasing the space want to use [them]. That's Ebenezer Foods," said Webb.

The chamber's receptionist will also be on hand to welcome guests and provide reception for those who rent the space.

"There's no additional costs unless there's paper use," said Webb.

The chamber and centre is open now. Those looking to check it out can visit between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday upstairs at 51 Hastings Street North.