

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT  
Carlin Smith, President



### **ANNUAL REPORT PART THREE: THE NEW YEAR**

What's new at the Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce in 2015? As an investor in this organization, you can be assured that the chamber's board of directors and staff are not resting on past successes. In fact, I predict that 2015 will be one of our most innovative years yet in regard to our programming.

The first thing you will notice will be our new web site which will roll out within the next two weeks. The new site is a responsive site that adapts to all formats and is directly tied to our Chamber Master Data base. This site will give members a greater presence and will offer several features that we will gradually roll out to help you better promote your business.

You'll also see a new event this year that will bring together chamber members for conversations and information about key community issues. Comfort Keepers has kindly agreed to underwrite this new program as a sponsor. The first session is coming soon.

Another change you'll see in 2015 is an enhanced chamber building. Our facility is overdue for some upgrades to repair some structural challenges, to make the building more energy efficient, and to make it look more attractive. We're planning to begin work in the spring.

Beyond these upcoming projects, the chamber's board of directors rolled out a new strategic plan for 2015-2018. The plan focuses on three areas:

Goal #1 is to increase net revenue by an average of \$10,000 per year for the next three years. The prize at the end of this growth is to be able to hire another full-time staff person for the organization to help us maintain the active level of programming that I discussed in Part 1 of this series.

Goal #2 is to develop the next generation of business-to-business and business-to-community networking and promotional opportunities to help member businesses better sell their products and services. The chamber will utilize technology and other creative means to give you, the member, new ways to utilize the chamber to help your bottom line. What will this look like? Stay tuned, the board presented some innovative ideas that will enhance the value of your chamber membership.

Goal #3 is to develop and implement a community-wide workforce strategy to increase the number of high-wage professional jobs in the region, while helping businesses fill the low-to-medium wage positions. Workforce will be *the* business issue over the next few years. While the chamber won't be able to solve the problem on its own, we need to be a leader and a convener to find local solutions.

As a successful and financially sound chamber of commerce, it would be easy for us to scale back our aggressive programming schedule and offer a level of events and products that would be more fitting for an organization our size. But that's not our style, and it's not the direction the staff or the board of directors wants to go. So look for things to ramp up even more in 2015 as we continue to strive to exceed your expectations as a chamber member.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carlin Smith".

Carlin Smith, President