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NEWS RELEASE

Job losses will have significant impact on Truro and Colchester economy

TRURO – The loss of more than 200 jobs related to federal contracts in Truro in recent weeks will have a major impact on the local economy says the head of the Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber President Ron Smith said he is extremely disappointed one of the area's largest manufacturers was forced to lay off about 150 employees last week after it was unsuccessful in its bid for a federal contract to produce medical isolation gowns. This loss, combined with about 55 additional job losses in this region as the RCMP Communication Centre moved from Truro to Dartmouth, is making the Chamber question the federal government's position on supporting rural communities.

“It is certainly disappointing when Stanfield's Ltd. was there, the first at the door to offer help in a crisis when the country needed supplies immediately,” said Smith. “We understand government has procurement policies and selection procedures in place, however, we expect accountability from the federal government to immediately disclose who received contracts in the tender award that Stanfield's Ltd. was shut out from participation.”

He added that throughout the pandemic the federal government took several opportunities to publicly praise Stanfield's Ltd., a five-generation family-owned business, for its ability to quickly pivot operations early in the pandemic to provide Personal Protective Equipment to frontline health care workers in Canada and questions why they are holding back the names of the newly awarded contract recipients.

“Stanfield's Ltd. invested more than \$1.5 million in new equipment and were well-positioned with local material suppliers and human resources to continue to provide much-needed quality medical gowns and masks,” said Smith. “We need those jobs in this region to contribute to a strong economy.”

Smith is deeply concerned about the 150 people who have had their world turned upside down by this news. “These are not just employment statistics, these are moms and dads, families rooted in this community being impacted.”

“We expect our government to demonstrate leadership to support business proactively in ensuring our region and our province is an attractive place to start or grow a business,” said



Smith. “Shutting Stanfield’s Ltd. out of this new contract after they have given so much back to their country during really tough times demonstrates a lack of understanding by the federal government on rural economies and the value those 150 jobs have in a small area such as Truro.”

Smith further said that it is unfortunate that the federal procurement decision will force 150 hard-working people, ready to support their country’s frontline workers, to apply for Employment Insurance benefits or CRB (Canada Recovery Benefits) to support their families.

“This is surely not the most efficient use of tax dollars or its intent when a portion of that contract would have helped keep them employed supporting our rural economy,” said Smith

The Chamber is also concerned about the potential of further job losses in the region as the supplier of some material used at the Stanfield’s Ltd. facility in the production of the medical gowns was also manufactured in Truro.

“We have reached out to management at Intertape Polymer in Truro in an effort to better understand the impact of the loss of the federal contract to that organization, if any, and we will be further educating politicians at all levels of government on the importance of support for rural economies and how their procurement policies should better consider that issue.”

The Chamber is urging Colchester-Cumberland MP Lenore Zann to provide answers to the actions of her government that has affected so many of her constituents.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for businesses in the Truro & Colchester region and across the province. As the recognized voice of business, the Chamber has provided ongoing support to the business community during these difficult times. Smith said the Chamber will continue its efforts to meet business needs as the pandemic stretches through 2021 and beyond.

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About Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce

The Truro & Colchester Chamber of Commerce represents more than 450 members and has been the recognized voice of business in this region for 130 years on economic, political and social matters impacting business. Learn more at www.trurocolchesterchamber.com

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