

Letter to the Editor- Saskatoon Star Phoenix

I am writing in response to a letter by Nayda Veeman of Saskatoon (**Voter's need to consider Sask.'s long term interests - Nov 06/07**).

In that letter it was suggested that the current push by business leaders to grow the population in Saskatchewan may come at a high cost to personal lifestyle and the environment. As it was the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce who created the Growth Strategy for a New Saskatchewan in which we identified the target of 1.5 million people by 2030, I want to assure the readers that we are aware of the risks and challenges associated with this type of growth. When surges in the economy and population are not conducted in a planned, strategic manner there can be negative outcomes. Some of these Saskatchewan is experiencing now.

It is for this very reason that the Chamber is advocating a strategic and sustainable approach to growing Saskatchewan.

There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that Saskatchewan must grow. Without change we will not have the tax revenues necessary to sustain a high level of services in education or healthcare, yet alone target improvements. The demographic situation also means the current labour shortage will be exacerbated and productivity will decline.

To guarantee the sustainability and enhancement of our province, we are challenging the citizens of Saskatchewan to join with the chamber network to create a growth plan that will mitigate the downsides where possible and ensure we grow in a fast but not furious manner. For the last century this province has been a place of creativity and innovation. We can harness that to ensure our collective legacy is a positive one.

Without a solid long-term and collective effort, we will soon be a province that is a social and economic disaster zone. We can and will make the right decisions if we all join in the effort.

Steve McLellan
CEO
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