



**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NOVEMBER 28, 2008**

Chamber supports review of city budgeting process

(Calgary, AB) – The Calgary Chamber of Commerce applauds the City of Calgary’s audit committee initiative to examine the current budgeting process, and strongly supports the call from one of the committee’s public representatives, to engage in a much-needed, full-scale review, in the wake of the recent public outcry over the 2009 budget.

Change to the City’s budgeting process was a key recommendation in the Chamber’s municipal budget submission released earlier this month.

“Calgary’s business community believes that the City of Calgary should move to a three-year rolling budget, where a new budget is presented annually for approval, and involves a process that is more transparent and open to greater public consultation and scrutiny,” says Geoff Pradella, Vice-President of Public & Government Affairs with the Calgary Chamber of Commerce. “It’s easier to adjust to changing needs and economic circumstances with an annual review requirement, yet the three-year rolling timeframe still supports a prudent level of forward fiscal planning.”

Both the provincial and federal governments use a three-year rolling budget approach with budgets presented annually for citizens to debate and discuss. They also have robust pre-budget consultation processes.

“The City’s current process limits the ability of citizens to provide input into the budget, which leads to increasing voter apathy and decreasing civic engagement,” says Pradella.

The Chamber hopes the City’s audit committee will also take this opportunity to consider changes that facilitate value for money audits, like the creation of a Municipal Auditor General, a position that the Chamber has long advocated. Calgary’s business community believes that an office of Municipal Auditor General would add value through its conduct of comprehensive (i.e. attest, compliance and value for money) audits of municipal expenditures, procurement policies and fiscal management, and its identification of best practices.

“Currently, the City’s Auditor is appointed by Council, directed by Council and reports to Council,” says Pradella. “These types of ‘book-keeping’ audits, however, are primarily in place to make certain that standard accounting practices are followed and that the books are balanced. An independent office of Municipal Auditor General would help municipalities and government departments deliver higher value to their citizens. Not having that means a missed opportunity to improve.”

The Chamber looks forward to the upcoming discussions on the City’s budgeting process.

– 30 –

For more information, please contact:

Tom Palak
Policy & Communications Strategist
403-750-0423
tpalak@calgarychamber.com