

Stephen Dempsey
Opening Remarks (Beginning of Program)
Building our Future, featuring Stephen Poloz
May 9, 2006

- Good afternoon. My name is Stephen Dempsey and I am President and CEO of the Greater Halifax Partnership.
- I would like to welcome all of you here today to the second installment of our 2006 Building Our Future event series.
- As the economic growth organization for Greater Halifax, the Partnership is committed to stimulating discussion and debate on leading issues.
- Today we're going to talk exports.
- At the Partnership, we are working to create more awareness and drive growth in exporting.

- This is why I am honoured that Stephen Poloz, senior vice president of corporate affairs and chief economist with Export Development Canada is here today.
- Stephen will be more formally introduced after lunch.
- Exporting already has a significant impact on our economy, but it can be even bigger.
- The Greater Halifax Partnership's SmartBusiness initiative has conducted over 1,000 interviews with CEO's since June of 2004.
- The goal? To create the most competitive business climate in Canada.
- We've been listening, to you.
- Listening and responding, to you.

- Helping business remove barriers and find opportunities for growth.
- I would like to share with you some of our export-related findings.
- Of the 1,000 companies visited, thirty-nine percent export products or services outside Canada.
- On an industry basis, no surprise, the Manufacturing, Professional Services and Transportation and Warehousing sectors are the most export intensive.
- In late 2004/early 2005, the higher Canadian dollar had not affected export sales. Fifty nine per cent of firms interviewed state exports have been increasing and only nine per cent state a decline.
- Sixty eight per cent of all firms operating in the Information & Cultural Industries, Finance and Insurance sectors report increasing exports.

- Heartening statistics, but did you know that Nova Scotia is well behind other Canadian Provinces in exports as a percentage of gross provincial product in Canada?
- We need to work on this.
- Creating better awareness about the opportunities is the first step. Nurturing companies and helping them seize opportunities is the next.
- Because one of the ways we can create more wealth right here at home is by bringing new money into our economy through exporting.
- If you were looking to build an export-driven city today, you'd build Halifax. Everything you need is here. We're no longer on the fringe. We're in the centre – of everything.

- The key is to be ready for the next wave of exporting. It means having the vision. We have to return to the thriving mercantile culture that created this city and this province. We need to look outside our boundaries.
- If you want to be in the export market, this is the city, and the province, you want to be in. It is, however, up to us to take advantage of this tremendous opportunity.
- That is why we have brought Stephen here today to share his perspective on exporting.
- I encourage you to look at today's edition of The Chronicle Herald. You will find two pages dedicated to the topic of exporting.
- Finally, thanks to our Building Our Future partners – Presenting partner, The Chronicle Herald. Other partners: the Halifax International Airport Authority, Mount Saint Vincent University, Office Interiors and RBC Financial Group. For the important role you are playing in advancing our economy.

- We'll be calling on Mr. Poloz shortly. In the meantime, enjoy your lunch.

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Thank you, Stephen

You have certainly given us a lot to think about today...

(SUMMARIZE AS YOU SEE FIT)

(PRESENT GIFT)

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If you parked out back, your parking is covered. The gate should be up. If it isn't, please indicate to the attendant that you were attending this event and they will wave you through.

And finally, please join us on September 12th to hear Ms. Rebecca Ryan, the founder of Next Generation Consulting at the next installment of the Building our Future series.

Enjoy your afternoon.