

## CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Stephen Dempsey, President and CEO  
Greater Halifax Partnership  
Luncheon Remarks (Close)  
Mayor's Forum on the Greater Halifax Economy, March 30, 2009  
Halifax Marriott Harbourfront Hotel

Thanks, Glen.

Your remarks have certainly given us a lot to think about today.

And, as a former colleague of mine, I really appreciate you taking the time to join us and share your insight.

But Glen, as you know me, I have a few questions...

Your research tells us that we are a hub city...

So let me get right down to the numbers.

What does that really mean for government?

Is there a dollar value or a percentage?

Can you indicate how much more government should be investing?

And, do you have ideas on what government should be investing in?

other q's?

**Cut it at 1:28.**

*Present Gift...* Thanks Glen...

I'd also like to thank the Mayor, Chris and Fred for their remarks.

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And most importantly, I would like to recognize today's partners that made this event possible.

This luncheon is presented by The Chronicle Herald.

And partners: the Halifax International Airport Authority, Mount Saint Vincent University and RBC Financial Group.

I would also like to thank the other Partnership investors who played a hand in delivering today's event:

Advanced Systems, Atlantic Digital, Kim Squared and the Marriott.

And now for some housekeeping...

We're going to take a ten minute break, which will give us just enough time to move down the hall to the Nova Scotian ballroom.

For your information, it's open seating in the next room.

As we have a very full agenda, we will be starting at 1:40.

Thank you...

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Good afternoon.

I hope everyone enjoyed their lunch

I am very excited about this afternoon

We'll be hearing from Dick, on the Economic Strategy.

From our six panelists

Truly an excellent group...I think they have all the bases covered. So, thank you for making the time for us today

And we will be hearing from you – our stakeholders in the open discussion later this afternoon.

Now it might be an understatement to say that these are challenging times.

For some, really, uncharted waters.

It may be the first time some have experienced an economic downturn... but we who have been around awhile know that what goes up will go down...but sooner or later goes back up.

At the Partnership, we are pleased to have been asked by the Mayor to host this forum.

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To understand what this global economic crisis means for Halifax.

Our priorities, our challenges and our barriers to growth.

The Partnership is the catalyst for economic growth and confidence in Greater Halifax.

As I look around this room, I realize we're all in this together.

We are all impacted by current economic conditions.

And I am pleased that we have the right people in the room today to deal with these challenges.

I know Dick will be speaking to some of the challenges we are facing under the economic strategy.

However...I also do not want to lose sight of some of the things that are going well...

Like many of the fundamental elements that support our local economic platform, such as health care, the military, education, financial services and transportation

Those sectors are providing us with some shelter from the economic storm...They are employing many people with wages typically much above the provincial average.

Another fact we should not forget is that we're a smart city. Because of our highly educated workforce we can adjust more quickly to changing economic conditions than others.

That's why companies like RIM have set up shop.

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And how we have become home to the second largest concentration of financial services companies in Canada.

Our health care and research community attracts investment to create centres of excellence like the new Life Sciences Research Institute that is taking shape right now in the south end of our city.

Or our Transportation Gateway that has all of Atlantic Canada's post-panamax cranes and handles over half of all passenger air travel in our region.

But that's not why we're here today...

We're here to conduct what I like to call the four C's

We need to:

Check our plan

Challenge the assumptions of our plan

Change our plan if needed

And, confirm the current focus of our plan.

And to start that process, I'd now like to call on Dick Miller, Chair of the Mayor's Economic Advisory Committee and Director on the Partnership's Board to provide a review of our plan, the Halifax Region Economic Strategy. Dick...

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Thank you, Brad for facilitating this session.

I'd like to thank the panelists and the audience for the discussion and debate on this important subject.

I think we've covered a lot of ground here today.

At lunch, with Fred, we saw how our local economy is doing.

Glen confirmed for us the strategic importance of our position as a hub city, and...

Dick reviewed the challenges and possible areas of refocus, coming from his committee's work on the Economic Strategy.

And the panel...

Kathryn – Education

Tammy – Finance

Catherine – the social economy

Cathie – on infrastructure

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Alyson – young professionals

...and Jim – on confidence

So an awful lot to digest.

Really, as I see it, all of this information falls under three key themes:

The first is talent – how do we keep people here, how do we get more new people and how do we train and educate them to sustain our growth.

The second is infrastructure - I call it the ABC's. What do we need to acquire, build or complete to get our economy moving more quickly. And finally,

Confidence – how do we keep consumers and business actively engaged.

I know a lot of detail for these areas is already captured in our plan.

So, really, we seem to have the “what”, for the most part, correct...

But, I've heard, though, that we need to re-prioritize, really, work them differently.

I also think the “how” has to be different too.

If we are to respond to the current economic challenges, we need to act like a hub city.

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And to do that, we need your help, Mr. Mayor.

We need your focus and leadership.

And we need to get that work going now... open a dialogue with our provincial and federal counterparts.

So we can reach our full potential as a hub city.

To the benefit of our community, our province, and indeed the entire Atlantic Region.

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