

## IN GOOD COMPANY: Giving Thanks

Business: Giving thanks to a cornerstone of our community

By Mayor Geoffrey Dawe

It's fantastic to have warm weather this late in the season. I know that many of you had a wonderful Thanksgiving weekend with family and friends, and thoroughly enjoyed winter's tardiness. Autumn offers time for reflection, and Thanksgiving ? that quintessential North American family holiday ? provides time to take perspective.

As Canadians and Aurorans, we are truly blessed. For all our foibles, follies and sometimes failings, we enjoy a lifestyle second-to-none. We have world-class universities, colleges and apprenticeship programs that have produced one of the most educated populations in the world. The life expectancy of Canadians is one of the longest, thanks to a health system that provides universal access to innovative, cutting-edge medical care.

We have advanced infrastructure, from durable homes and reliable traffic and transportation networks to the most powerful mobile, computational and telecommunications technologies. Our land is vast and plentiful. Our border is shared with friends, not enemies. We enjoy comforts that are alien to many.

With all of these advantages, however, many still struggle. Aurora is an affluent community, but we are not immune to the challenges of poverty and homelessness. The underlying causes for these are numerous, but I take some comfort and a lot of pride in knowing that Aurorans and Canadians are a generous people who support their neighbours through crises with numerous social programs, services and community giving.

As this is Small Business Week, I thought it appropriate to extend thanks and celebrate the critical role that commerce plays in the development and well-being of our community. We have nearly 1,400 businesses in Aurora, with more than 200 of these businesses established for 25 years or longer. Much of the prosperity we enjoy can be attributed to the fundamental soundness of our business base and strong work ethic of our merchants.

As a former business owner in Aurora, I know that operating an enterprise is a bittersweet endeavour. Over the course of my business career, I have seen economic highs and lows. Much like a ship's captain, your fortunes in business are often made in how you navigate the ups and downs of business cycles.

Business ownership is a labour of love. But it is also immensely rewarding. While financial rewards can vary, there is always an intrinsic sense of pride and accomplishment that accompanies business success.

Businesses, especially SMEs (Small & Medium Enterprises), are a cornerstone of our community. They provide the goods and services required for families and other businesses to function and thrive. They also contribute handsomely to our tax base, offsetting the burden on our homeowners. It is to the largesse of business, as much as individual ratepayers, that we owe thanks for our library, parks and clean streets.

I am thankful for the immense contribution that business makes in keeping our community a place where families prosper. For those that have stood the test of time and navigated the economic storms, your long-standing contribution to our community's welfare is especially appreciated.

As I mentioned in my September Auroran article, Councillor Michael Thompson brought forward the idea to celebrate our long-standing businesses in a promotional campaign. Readers will note the full-page ad highlighting these businesses. We will be running these ads for four weeks, with accompanying public service announcements on 88.5 FM, the Jewel, encouraging people to shop in Aurora.

Our merchants give us much for which to be thankful, and I urge residents to continue to support this critical element of our community.

On a final note, I would like to thank the many residents who emailed and called me with words of thanks for my last article on decision-making at Town Hall. I hoped it would provide some insight to residents and I am pleased that it was so well-received.