



**Remarks to Thorold City Council related to the Closing of the
LCBO and Ontario License Bureau in Thorold**

September 1st, 2009

**Presentation by:
David DiFelice, 1st VP for the Chamber, and VP of Credit Services for Canadian
Tire Financial and Kithio Mwanzia – Policy Coordinator for the Chamber**

Prepared by the St. Catharines – Thorold Chamber of Commerce

Good evening, my name is David DiFelice the 1st Vice President of the St. Catharines – Thorold Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, and a resident of Thorold. I am here with Kithio Mwanzia, the Policy Coordinator for the Chamber. We are here to represent the chamber and participate in the discussion regarding the closure of the LCBO store on Pine Street, and the pending closure of the Ontario Licensing Bureau on Albert Street W.

As members of council are aware, the St. Catharines – Thorold Chamber of Commerce has been actively working with council and the business community to generate more private investment in our community. From our support of Rolling Meadows to the servicing of the 406/Hwy 20 interchange to the lowering of industrial and commercial development charges – we have been very active in Thorold over the past four years, and we are committed to representing the interests of business. We are proud of the work we have accomplished in working with our members in the Thorold business community

Over the past week, Thorold has been informed it will lose two government agencies – an LCBO store and a license bureau. In both cases, jobs will be removed from the downtown area, and convenience of location will be lost for some residents. This is unfortunate – and we understand the concerns being raised by members of council.

As some of you may be aware, our Executive Vice President and General Manager – Walter Sendzik – is also a member of the LCBO board, and it precludes him from discussing the issue of the closure as it is a conflict, but the board of the chamber did address this issue at our board meeting last week.

Based on the information that has been made public by the LCBO – we have come to understand the following:

- 1. Based on postal code disclosure at the point of sale, Over 80% of Thorold residents were also shopping at the Pendale LCBO location.**
- 2. A 2006 LCBO market study recommended the consolidation of service at the new, larger store as a cost-effective way to offer increased selection and services in an accessible location to both St. Catharines and Thorold residents.**
- 3. The new store will be the largest in Niagara with more than 9,500 square feet of shopping area – 3,000 square feet more than the two older stores combined.**
- 4. It will also offer 2,470 products in total – almost twice as many as the store at 210 Glendale Avenue and more than double the selection of the Thorold store.**

5. The new store will also offer the LCBO's largest single store selection of Ontario VQA wines -- some 250 -- although more than 300 will be available for the opening when new Vintages VQA releases are added.

6. New stores offering "one-stop" shopping and a full range of services have also contributed to LCBO's ability to generate increased dividends to help pay for important provincial government programs and services that benefit many Ontarians.

As a Chamber, we encourage efficiencies in government. When looking at the research conducted by the LCBO, it is clear that decisions were made based on a desire to strengthen the local wine industry, create a store that will be attractive to tourists, and serve residents of both Thorold and south St. Catharines.

As to the licensing bureau on Albert St., we have committed to reviewing the research that led to the decision to consolidate the office in St. Catharines. Based on the information we receive, we will take appropriate action.

We share your objective to generate economic activity in downtown Thorold – and it is critical to have a plan to attract new business. We renew our commitment to actively participate in the economic development taskforce that was announced during the 2009 City of Thorold Budget deliberations.

We are committed to Thorold's future prosperity.

Thank you for your time.