CELEBRATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY

PCBPA

OF THE POLISH-CANADIAN BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WINDSOR

AND THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TWINNING OF THE CITY OF WINDSOR WITH THE CITY OF LUBLIN, POLAND

Participants of 22nd Polish-Canadian Business Society Dinner, Dom Polski Hall, November 24, 2017. - *COURTESY OF SOOTER'S PHOTOGRAPHY.*

Polish-Canadian Business and Professional Association of Windsor

BY KAREN PATON-EVANS
Postmedia Content Works

Representing "one of the most engaged business and cultural groups in our community," the approximately 15,000 people of Polish origin living in Windsor-Essex County are comprised of "leaders, individuals, businesses and organizations all committed to making this city an amazing place," observes Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens.

"They do it through investments, donations and supports to business and neighbourhood development. They do it through celebrations, exhibitions, and the honouring and sharing of their traditions and culture to add to our city's diversity and inclusivity," Dilkens says.

Many belong to or have been encouraged by the Polish-Canadian Business and Professional Association of Windsor (PCBPAW), celebrating its 25th anniversary this November.

ANNUAL POLISH-CANADIAN SOCIETY BUSINESS DINNERS

PCBPAW began by bringing people together around the dining table. "Our association has organized 24 successful annual business dinners and VIP receptions that have served as a platform to connect businesses, professionals, politicians, community groups and young people. We are glad that local Canadian business and professional guests keep coming back to our event, reinforcing the long-term common bonds that we have forged," says president Jerry Barycki.

More than ideas are exchanged; PCBPAW demonstrates support and encouragement of one another in tangible ways. "Among the many practical things we have done is promoting the opening of the popular European Market, now located at 6415 Tecumseh Rd E., and arranging a meeting between Members of Parliament and several Polish-Canadian businessowners to discuss skilled labour shortages," Barycki says. "We are always available as a resource to help businesses succeed.

COVID-19 has postponed one very special event this year: the double celebration of PCBPAW's 25th anniversary and the Windsor-Lublin partnership's 20th anniversary. It is rescheduled for Nov. 19, 2021 at the Giovanni Caboto Club. "We invite everyone interested in our activities to attend," says Barycki. "By working together, we are enriching our Windsor community, and contributing to initiatives across Canada, and even on the other side of the ocean in Poland."

WINDSOR-LUBLIN, TWIN CITIES FOR 20 YEARS

After Joe Ouellette, owner of Windsor company Acrolab Ltd., established a branch lab in Lublin, Poland in 1994, a relationship grew between the two cities, leading to twinning in 2000.

"Polish-Canadians have lived in Canada for over 160 years, and in Windsor for over 100. Throughout much of this time, Poland was under either foreign or Communist rule and Canada was a place of refuge. Today, it brings us great joy to build relationships between Windsor, Canada and our homeland – now that it, too, enjoys freedom and prosperity," Barycki says.

A symbol of the twin cities' special bond stands in Windsor's Centennial Park: Leszek Rymczuk's Billy Goat Spring - Lublin Goat Fountain, modeled after a similar fountain in Lublin. The Polish city gifted it to Windsor in 2008.

Leszek Rymczuk's Billy Goat Spring - Lublin Goat Fountain, modeled after a similar fountain in Lublin. - *COURTESY OF THE PCBPAW ARCHIVES.*

"The connections between Canada and Poland are about highlighting our similarities and differences through political, education and cultural exchanges," Dilkens says. "These experiences matter in a world where finding ways to stand united with human beings across the globe, and working together on universal issues is important, relevant and timely."

TRADE MISSIONS

Helping to conduct more than 10 reciprocal delegations between Windsor and Lublin, PCBPAW members most recently traveled to Poland in May 2019, in the company of the WindsorEssex Economic Development Commission and other organizations.

"The 2019 Windsor-Essex Business Development Mission to Poland was an opportunity for those attending to explore the impressive economic and educational potential of Poland," Dilkens says. "Agreements on economic co-operation were signed. Such agreements support the free-flow of ideas relating to future commercial, cultural, academic and technological cooperation. They help facilitate contacts between schools, universities and academic professionals, while also promoting sporting events, tourism and cultural exchanges between communities. Canada and Poland have much to learn from one another, and much to share when it comes to issues of mutual benefit in education, medicine and health, social services, technology, and arts and culture."

POLISH HERITAGE IN CANADA

The association's Polish heritage displays introduce all Canadians to Poland and its people and culture. Canadians who are not Poles "are surprised to learn that Aleksandre Edouard Kierzkowski was the first Polish-Canadian MP elected to the very first Canadian Parliament back in 1867, and that a Pole, Sir Casimir Gzowski, served as the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, or that Canada hosted a training camp for the Polish Army called Camp 'Kosciuszko' at Niagara-On-The-Lake during the First World War or the Recruiting Station in Windsor during the Second World War," Barycki says.

Having travelled in Poland and Canada, including Queens Park and Parliament Hill, the displays can be viewed virtually at http://poloniawindsor.ca/polish-canadian-business-and-professional-association-of-windsor/polish-canadian-heritage-collection.

ENCOURAGING POLISH-CANADIAN YOUTH

Understanding the importance of community, "PCBPAW has prioritized supporting our youth from the very beginning through mentorship and financial support," says Barycki. "We know that when our young people are successful in their professional, business and community lives, they will become strong leaders that can overcome challenges and contribute to the building of a better Canada, and of a better world."

To learn more about the Polish-Canadian Business and Professional Association of Windsor, please call 519-256-4172 or visit www.poloniawindsor.ca.

The Canadian Windsor-Essex Trade Mission Team to Poland welcomed by H.E. Leslie Scanlon (centre), Ambassador of Canada to Poland and her staff, Canadian Embassy, Warsaw, May 13, 2019. - *COURTESY OF THE PCBPAW ARCHIVES.*

Canada 150-Polish-Canadian Heritage Exhibition, Leddy Library, University of Windsor, April 7, 2017. - *COURTESY OF THE PCBPAW ARCHIVES.*