

GETTING to KNOW...

LISA DRESSLER

& Q&A



by Bruce Pentton

News: What is the No. 1 priority these days for the Chamber of Commerce?

Lisa Dressler: I would say economic growth within our region.

News: Can you be more specific?

Dressler: We want to see development, certainly commercial development within our region. So we're also looking at key strategic assets that we have. We know that we have strengths in aerospace and defence, agriculture and agri-food, and certainly, you know, tourism and petrochemical and energy manufacturing or energy production.

And so taking a look at the strengths so that we can influence some of those decisions in order to drive our economy forward.

News: What's your motivation for getting up and going to work every day?

Dressler: The people and our community. I love serving southeast Alberta, and there are so many strengths that we have within the region. But above all, our people are truly a large part or a significant part of the strengths that we have. So being able to get up every day and make an impact, tell the story of our region, of our community, and be able to support our business community. I think what fuels me every single day is when I can actually make an impact and provide somebody with the support they need.

News: Where were you born and where have you lived through the years?

Dressler: I was born in Medicine Hat. So I am a born Hatter. We moved to Calgary when I was a year old. My parents lived in Schuler at the time. And then we moved to Calgary. And then in the early '90s, moved out to a small community called Churchbridge, Saskatchewan, just outside the Yorkton region. Then I lived in Saskatoon, in Yorkton, and I moved back to Medicine Hat, back to my roots, in 2005.

News: Give me a quick synopsis of your educational trail.

Dressler: Started off in Calgary, finished my high school in Churchbridge ... a couple dozen graduates compared to, you know, the large graduating classes within a city. And then moved on to do my business schooling in Saskatoon.

News: What's your most memorable vacation, Lisa?

Dressler: Each of them have unique characteristics. So I don't know if I have one distinct favourite vacation. I've travelled from coast to coast to coast in Canada through my work with the Canadian Chamber. From Vancouver Island to Prince Edward Island, and all the way up to Iqaluit. And each of those have such unique characteristics. I always say Canada is such a beautiful country, and there is so much to see. Obviously my summers, you know, I love being in Western Canada, from the Rockies to the lakes that we have. And I've enjoyed the sun destinations in Mexico and taking the kids, when they were younger, to Disney World. I think that's always on everybody's radar when kids are young. So every vacation has had something memorable about it. There isn't one single one that stands out in my mind.

News: Can you remember the first concert you attended?

Dressler: Oh, for sure. It would have been out in Manitoba. We always went to Minnedosa Classic Rock Fest (Rockin' the Fields). (Ed. note: I went there too, believe it or not.) Pretty great time.

News: What's something about you that people would be surprised to learn?

Dressler: I learned how to ride a motorcycle before I rode a bicycle. On a little 50cc in the northeast part of Calgary.



News: What was your first paying job?

Dressler: A newspaper route. It was in Calgary. I delivered newspapers and flyers at age 10. And I was ecstatic with my \$30 a month paycheck.

News: What's your favourite musical group?

Dressler: I don't have a favourite. I like all genres of music. There isn't one that stands out.

News: Who's the most famous person you've met?

Dressler: These are tough questions. I've had the privilege of meeting various mayors and premiers and prime ministers and ministers over the years. Probably one that stands out is Perrin Beatty. I first met him through the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. A former MP and cabinet minister and with a wealth of knowledge. And then the other one that always stands out to me ... typical people won't consider him a celebrity, but Ron Chapman was somebody, one of my mentors over the years and taught me everything I needed to know about governance. And so I always appreciated his decorum and profile. So within Chambers of Commerce, he was a celebrity.

News: When you're dining out at a fancy restaurant, what's your go-to order?

Dressler: Oh, it would be Mexican or Greek foods. Those are my two favourite foods.

News: What were you doing when you heard the news on Sept. 11, 2001?

Dressler: I was working for an internal medicine specialist in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. And it was just all over the news.

News: What did you do that day? Take the rest of the day off?

Dressler: Continued to work through the day.

News: What's your favourite movie of all time?

Dressler: Oh, people will get a chuckle out of this: Dirty Dancing.

News: What do you tell out-of-towners what's so special about Medicine Hat?

Dressler: I tell out-of-towners that we have an oasis on the prairies. It is an incredible community with everything from sport, tourism to culture and art, a fabulous food scene, and incredible people.

Lisa Dressler has been executive director of the Southeast Alberta Chamber of Commerce for 17 years, starting in November 2009. She has three children, the youngest of whom just graduated high school, in her blended family.

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