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Dear CIBPA Family,

The health and safety of our members and affiliates across Canada remains our #1 priority as Canadians and countries worldwide deal with the reality of COVID-19. In this critical time of a global pandemic, we believe everyone should do all we can to protect each other and our communities by helping prevent the spread of the virus.

The National Federation CIBPA is equipped to function remotely and manage our member/chapter services via email, text, or telephone. We have every confidence that our commitments to you will be fully maintained and we will provide you the service and professionalism you have every right to expect from our organization.

The Canadian Italian Business and Professional Association (CIBPA) is a non-profit member organization founded in 1949. Our mandate is to promote and cultivate the business, professional, cultural and social interests of our members, and to serve as their local voice, as well as representing the Canadian Italian community at large. We build and foster partnerships that create business and civic initiatives which contribute to the overall growth of the Canadian economy from coast to coast to coast.

According to the 2016 Census of Canada, 1,587,970 Canadians (4.6% of the total population) claimed full or partial Italian ancestry. Italian Canadians are the seventh largest self-identified ethnic group in Canada behind French, English, Irish, Scottish, German and Chinese Canadians. As we approach the 2 million-mark, Canadian Italians continue to have an important voice within the Canadian landscape.

In fact, Canadian Italians, own, operate or manage thousands of businesses and organizations across Canada. They employ tens of thousands of Canadians and generate hundreds of millions in revenue that directly contribute to the economic development of this country with a focus on developing our youth by providing scholarships to future entrepreneurs and professionals.

Throughout the history of CIBPA, chapters and other various Italian organizations throughout Canada have distributed thousands of scholarships to students attending post-secondary education. CIBPA and its affiliate organizations have surpassed 14 million dollars of donations and bursaries for the communities we serve, along with funding for earthquake relief initiatives in Italy.

Although Italian immigration to Canada started as early as the mid-19th century, a substantial influx of Italian immigration to Canada began in the early 20th century, primarily from rural southern Italy, with immigrants primarily settling in Toronto and Montreal. During World War II, approximately 600 to 700 Italian Canadian men were interned between 1940 and 1943 as potentially dangerous enemy aliens with alleged fascist connections.

In 2010, the Government of Ontario passed Bill 103 with royal assent proclaiming the month of June as Italian Heritage Month. On May 17, 2017, the Minister of Canadian Heritage Mélanie Joly passed a unanimous motion, Motion 64, in the House of Commons of Canada to recognize the month of June as Italian Heritage Month across Canada — a time to recognize, celebrate and raise awareness of the Italian community in Canada, one of the largest outside of Italy.

This year, 2020, marks the 30th year that the initiative for an apology in the House of Commons, regarding the interment of Canadian Italians, was tabled. Unfortunately, with the world pandemic of COVID 19 it was understandable that this issue did not make the current list of priorities. As President of the Canadian Italian Business & Professionals Association, I will continue to work with the Canadian Government to ensure that the men and women that make up our community finally find solace in the land that their ancestors helped build into this great nation we now all enjoy.

Please reach out to us at the National Federation of CIBPA or your local CIBPA Chapter with questions or concerns and we will provide updates as circumstances warrant.

Wishing each of you and your loved ones continued health.

Respectfully yours,

Gianni Leonetti  
President of the National Federation of CIBPA