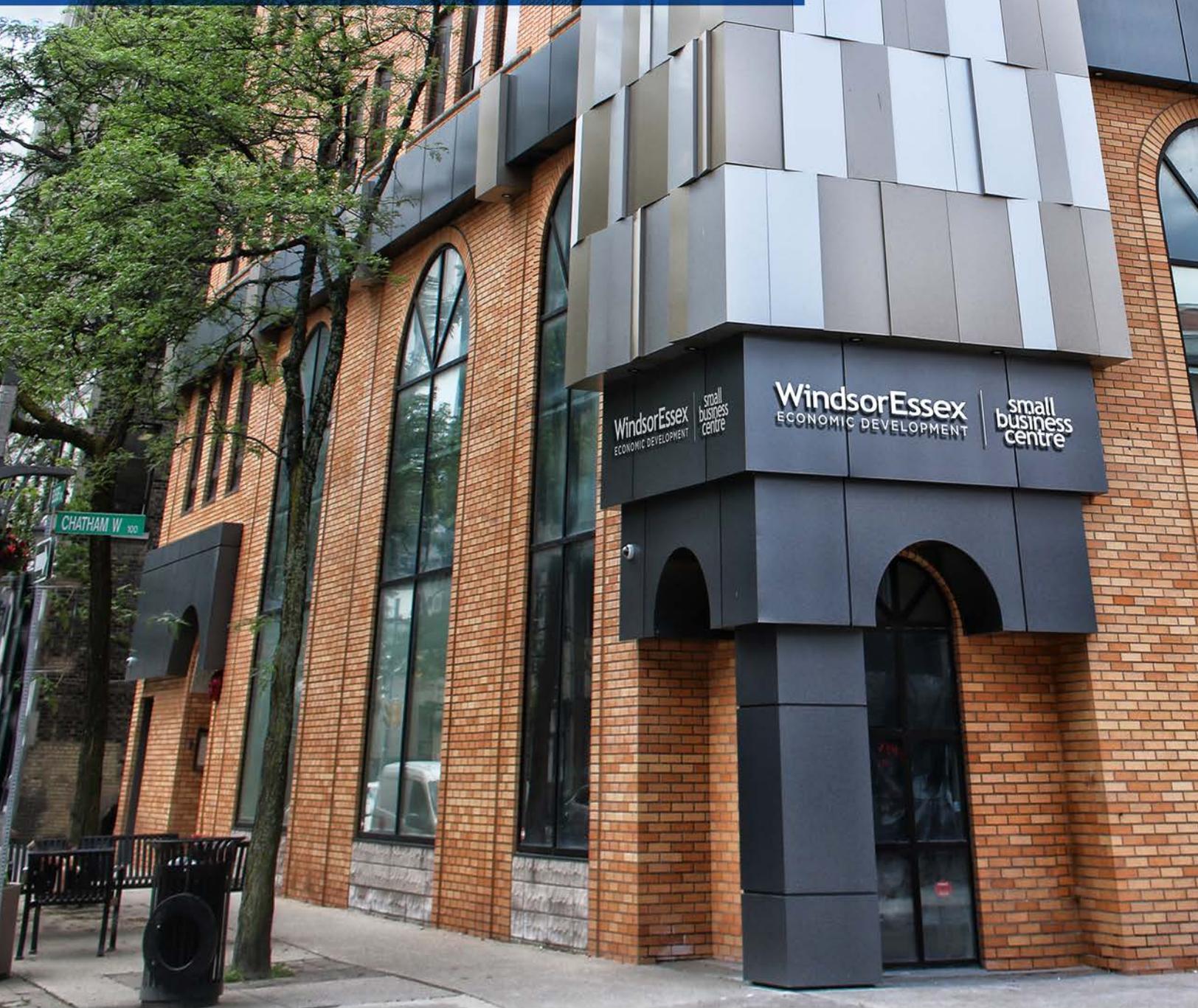


# RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY OF WINDSOR ESSEX



*Same organization,  
new name...*



**INVEST  
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# Chair of the Board

**WindsorEssex**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



*Tom Bain - Chair of the Board,  
WindsorEssex Economic Development  
Corporation*

The incredible work Invest WindsorEssex, (formerly WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation), has done over the course of this pandemic has been inspiring and uplifting, uniting this region with both a sense of purpose and pride, providing us with an unflagging sense of optimism that we will not only survive this health crisis but emerge stronger and more resilient on the other side.

We learned early on in this pandemic how important it was to stay connected and Invest WindsorEssex became a lynchpin for businesses across this great region. The Windsor-Essex COVID-19 Economic Task Force brought together more than 40 leaders from a broad cross-section of industries. It disseminated information on support programs and surveyed businesses about the impact of the pandemic on the local economy.

The survey received 575 responses from businesses, with the vast majority indicating COVID-19 was negatively impacting their operations. These businesses were vocal about the need for support from the senior levels of government and Invest WindsorEssex used these survey results to effectively lobby on their behalf

with a strong, unified voice.

The survey data is also helping Invest WindsorEssex plot a post-pandemic recovery strategy for this region that leverages our many attributes, including a skilled workforce, a proud history of industrial innovation and an enviable location at the epicentre of the North American marketplace.

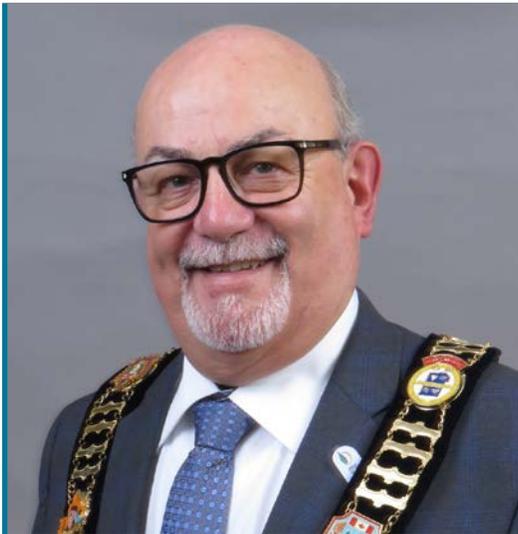
The tagline for the recent rebranding of Invest WindsorEssex says it all: Our Location, Your Advantage. There are more than 200 million people located within a 13-hour drive of Windsor-Essex and they know who we are and what we can do thanks to campaigns spearheaded by Invest WindsorEssex.

Cross-border commerce is only going to grow when the Gordie Howe International Bridge opens and Invest WindsorEssex is laying the groundwork for this region to become a logistics and multi-modal powerhouse. We have an airport. We have a rail tunnel. We have a port. We have it all.

Invest WindsorEssex harnessed the power of connectivity to mobilize residents tired of receiving sub-optimal health care in cramped, outdated facilities. Residents sent hundreds of letters to Queen's Park, set out hundreds of lawn signs and convinced the provincial government to invest in this region's future and advance the hospital project to the next stage.

During a trying year when the pandemic literally drove us apart, Invest WindsorEssex brought us together and kept us connected, helping us weather an economic storm and positioning us for prosperity and continued growth and diversification.

# Message from the Warden, County of Essex



*Gary McNamara*  
Warden, County of Essex

The global pandemic that has upended our lives for more than a year is not over yet, but vaccines are helping us free ourselves from its grip. It was hard to look beyond the daily challenges in 2020 and that remains the case in the first half of 2021. That's why it's more important than ever to prepare for the future.

The rebranding of our economic development corporation as Invest WindsorEssex, (formerly WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation), could not be timelier. Working with our region's resilient, creative and dynamic businesses, it is making sure we are ready. The hardships these businesses faced in 2020 were real and terrifying. Invest WindsorEssex has played a critical role in helping them pivot and find financial lifelines to pull through this extraordinary crisis.

Federal and provincial governments have spent unprecedented amounts of money to help citizens and companies stay safe and financially afloat. Municipal governments have also taken on extra financial burdens. How do we ensure that spending pays off and won't imperil the futures of our children and young entrepreneurs?

We prepare for the future.

We are preparing by celebrating growth and ingenuity amid adversity. Residential construction in Windsor and Essex County has been booming despite the pandemic. Working from home has made our region more attractive than ever. Local businesses, from restaurants to automation companies, are using digital technology like never before to reach and serve customers. Companies that make products for the auto industry are showing they are nimble and adaptable by filling the demand for personal protective equipment. Global supply chains that broke during the pandemic are inspiring local entrepreneurs to look at what else they can build and do here.

We are preparing by developing the businesses of the future. Invest WindsorEssex has continued to pursue opportunities to attract companies and talent to make this region an automobility hub and player in the development of electric vehicles. Our agricultural sector is also growing, as are our information and communications technology companies. Both the University of Windsor and St. Clair College are contributing to research and a pool of new talent to take these ventures to the next level.

We are preparing by addressing global challenges at a local level. Both the City of Windsor and the County of Essex, along with our member municipalities, are addressing the local impact of climate change. At the same time, Invest WindsorEssex is working with businesses to adopt zero-emission technology, as well as develop and build it here.

We are preparing by working together and maintaining strong ties with our neighbours. The closure of the Canada-U.S. border has been crippling, but it has also opened our eyes to new ways we can work with our American partners during a crisis. It has helped us re-imagine our future as a transportation and logistics hub.

On behalf of the County of Essex, thank you to the Invest WindsorEssex board and staff. Your hard work and dedication is helping to ensure we survive the pandemic crisis and emerge prepared for the economic opportunities to come.

# Message from the Mayor, City of Windsor



*Drew Dilkens*  
Mayor, City of Windsor

The year 2020 will be remembered as a year of unprecedented challenges across the globe. In Windsor-Essex, this was a year our community pulled together like never before, proving in every way that we really are “stronger together.” We adapted our lives and businesses to face the new realities of living through a global pandemic.

During this time, nearly 50 Windsor-area companies retooled their operations and retrained their workforce in response to the government’s urgent call for Canadian-made personal protective equipment, essential medical supplies and cleaning products. The staff at Invest WindsorEssex, (formerly WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation), played a pivotal role in assisting these companies and entrepreneurs in navigating these challenging times to help Canada battle the virus. One Windsor company, Harbour Technologies

pivoted their business and recently opened a third production facility exclusively dedicated to manufacturing medical-grade face masks, face shields and gowns to meet the growing market demands. By this summer, they expect to hire dozens more workers to become one of the largest producer of PPE products and manufacturing equipment in Canada, positioning our region as a new leader in this industry.

While there have been many success stories to emerge in Windsor over the past year, we appreciate many have struggled. Small businesses in the hospitality and tourism industries were severely affected by the lockdown orders. From a municipal standpoint, the City of Windsor worked to make things a bit easier by deferring property tax collection in the early days of the pandemic, waiving fees to support restaurant and hospitality sector initiatives, expediting permits for outdoor dining and distributing over 24,000 litres of hand sanitizer as small businesses prepared for the first phase of reopening. Local campaigns championed by our community, including #ShopYQG #TakeoutTuesday and #YQGStandsStrong, have also helped raise awareness of the need to support our local businesses.

Invest WindsorEssex has also played an essential role in helping businesses weather this storm and setting our region up for a positive economic rebound. This team has worked to deliver COVID-19 relief funding, connect businesses with government programs, facilitate new investments and spearhead surveys on the impacts of the pandemic to help our region make informed data-backed decisions as we forge a new, better way forward.

Today I feel more confident than ever that Windsor-Essex will emerge from the pandemic stronger and more united than ever before. We are all starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. The vaccine rollout is underway and we are well on the road of recovery, as we work together to build back better.

On behalf of the City of Windsor, I would like to thank the board and dedicated staff at Invest WindsorEssex for all they do to support local businesses and for working to ensure our community continues to thrive.



# Message from the President and Chief Executive Officer

**WindsorEssex**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



*C. Stephen MacKenzie*  
*President and CEO, WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation*

On behalf of our Board of Directors and team members, it is my pleasure to present the 2020 Annual Report for the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation (WE EDC). It was a year like no other, dominated by the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus that wreaked havoc on our health, lifestyle and the economy.

WE EDC pivoted quickly in response to the crisis by first formalizing the Windsor-Essex COVID-19 Economic Task Force. The task force was comprised of businesses and business associations that played a role in tackling front line issues for each sector of our economy. We established an online central hub of information and support programs from all levels of government. In addition to their regular responsibilities, WE EDC team members were each assigned to a specific industry economic response committee or served as a general source of information to support regional business sustainability.

The response from our Windsor-Essex companies was also remarkable as approximately 50 local companies pivoted into the production of PPE with 80 per cent of those reporting in a Canadian Association of Mold Makers/Automate Canada survey that they intend to stay in the health care equipment sector.

Despite the impacts of COVID, our annual performance metrics do show positive outcomes. WE EDC supported \$31,272,753 in combined investment from startups, business expansions and new companies that set up operations in Windsor-Essex. This investment led to the creation of 971 new jobs as reported by the entrepreneurs and companies involved. WE EDC was also successful in attracting \$2.569 million in government grants to support economic development initiatives for the region.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of our board for their leadership and support, and to express our appreciation to our key funders – the City of Windsor and the County of Essex. I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the WE EDC team. It is a privilege to work with such a dedicated, professional and passionate group for the benefit of the organization and the Windsor-Essex region.

In closing, this will be the final Annual Report for the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation, as the organization re-branded with a new name to Invest WindsorEssex in early 2021. However, with our new look and name, we will continue to implement programs designed to support our entrepreneurs, our businesses and to attract foreign direct investment (FDI), while diversifying and future-proofing the Windsor-Essex economy.

# Business Retention and Expansion

## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS



The Windsor-Essex & Canadian delegation at the India Auto Expo, 2020. L - R: Dr. Bharat Maheshwari, University of Windsor; Chetan Chaudhari, Tata Motors; Jonathon Azzopardi and Anand Patil, Laval Tool; Kishor Mundargi, Consulate General of Canada; and Diane Deslippe, CAMM.

### *Trade mission to India – Auto Expo 2020*

In early February, the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation, Canadian Trade Commissioner Service, Canadian Association of Moldmakers (CAMM), Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association (APMA) and various provincial governments organized the Canada Pavilion at Auto Expo 2020 – Components Show in New Delhi, India. The group also had meetings with several leading OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers.

### *BR&E COVID-19 response*

In the early days of the COVID-19 crisis, the Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) team coordinated and participated in various working groups to support COVID-19 related product development. BR&E established the face shield and hand sanitizer working groups, comprised of many local companies who produced or planned to produce critically needed items primarily distributed in the region. The goal of the groups was to assist companies looking for material supply, information on regulations and licensing and end-user contacts. The working groups were successful in connecting with companies with raw materials and packaging sources, arranging for hospital evaluations of products and identifying local company to assist others with bulk purchasing and distribution. The team participated in working groups that focused on respirator or ventilator solutions, medical gowns and masks and supply management for in-demand PPE.

The BR&E team worked closely with the agriculture and agri-food sector through stakeholder outreach and the Windsor-Essex COVID-19 Economic Development Task Force committee. They worked with industry associations, such as the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers and Food & Beverage Ontario, to monitor the challenges and impacts faced by stakeholders and find opportunities. The team provided connections and direction to various government support programs and saw some Windsor-Essex companies who supply goods and services to the agriculture and agri-food sector shift their capabilities to assist companies producing PPE.



## Emerging Technologies speaker series

The BR&E team presented the Emerging Technologies Speaker Series, a virtual journey of entrepreneurship, skills for success, technology and community. The program received support from the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario and was in partnership with the Small Business Centre, RISE Windsor-Essex and WEtech Alliance.



The virtual series included presentations by Paul Zikopoulos, Dr. Roshawna Novellus, Helen Stoumbos, Jennifer Gibbs, Kate Brodock, and Stephanie Trunzo. Presenters covered topics that supported women entrepreneurs and businesses

during this turbulent time. The series not only delivered training, but it also provided practical solutions on how to use emerging technologies to grow your business. Building community and making connections when in-person events are not able to happen was addressed by having a monthly virtual coffee hour led by Lora Crestan, a local coach and leadership strategist. The series had a great turn-out with over 200 people attending the events.

## Helping companies to pivot

The BR&E team supported 442 Windsor-Essex manufacturers that pivoted production by providing them with information and connections. Some companies shifted production away from things like automotive parts, molds, automation equipment and distilled beverages and towards medical devices and supplies, personal protective equipment (ie. face shields, masks, gowns) and sanitizer. Others developed highly sophisticated manufacturing technologies for use in health care and other sensitive environments. As the pandemic continues, many companies are still actively seeking to contribute to local, provincial, national and international efforts.

# Investment Attraction

## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

### *First quarter travels to attract FDI*

The Investment Attraction (IA) team travelled to Berlin, Germany to attend Fruit Logistica 2020, the world's largest fruit and agriculture conference. The Investment Attraction team travelled to Berlin, Germany to attend Fruit Logistica 2020. The world-renowned conference provided a complete picture of the latest innovations, products and services at every link in the international supply chain. The conference yielded some very strong leads in the agri-business sector for potential expansion to the Kingsville and Leamington regions.



WE EDC's Matt Johnson and Ryan Donally at the Consumer Electronic Show (CES) in Las Vegas, Nevada.

### *Investment Attraction goes west*

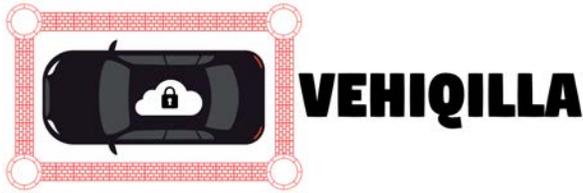
The Investment Attraction team ventured to the West Coast of the United States. The first stop was Las Vegas, Nevada for Consumer Electronic Show 2020 (CES). The world's largest consumer

electronics show yielded fifteen foreign direct investment leads and thirteen key contacts in the mobility and automobile industry. Following CES, the team moved north to San Francisco and Sacramento. In San Francisco, the team met with the Ontario Trade Commissioner to discuss enhanced FDI strategies specifically related to connected and autonomous, shared and electric vehicle start-ups. In Sacramento they engaged in a high priority site visit and meeting to continue the push to diversify the Windsor-Essex economy. The Investment Attraction team continues to build on the relationships they made in the West Coast of the USA to attract companies in zero-emission and clean tech.

### *Companies that chose Windsor-Essex in 2020*



The Investment Attraction team worked with **Eltromex Corporation**, from Querétaro, Mexico, to finalize plans for an international expansion into Canada. Eltromex, a multinational company founded in 2004, provides engineering consulting services and specializes in optimizing various advanced manufacturing process in automotive, food processing and agricultural sectors. Eltromex landed in Windsor-Essex in the summer of 2020 and stated it was looking to hire six to ten local technical experts and staff in the first phase of growth. However, hiring was delayed due to the pandemic.



Burlington, Ont.-based Vehiqilla Inc. announced its decision to move its headquarters to Windsor-Essex in the fall of 2020. The rationale behind their decision was based on many factors including the vibrant automotive and logistics sector in the region, the access to untapped tech talent from the University of Windsor and St. Clair College and the strong ecosystem that exists in the Windsor-Essex region. Another essential decision factor for selecting Windsor-Essex is the free access to the Virtual Reality CAVE, Canada's largest publicly accessible virtual reality environment. This access will enable Vehiqilla Inc. to continue to advance its competitive strengths in automotive cybersecurity. Vehiqilla is an ideal company to position Windsor-Essex as a leader in automotive cyber-security and has hired for various positions in their first growth phase.

The Investment Attraction team worked with **Uniformex**, headquartered in Aguascalientes, Mexico to set up its Canadian distribution office serving both the United States and Canadian markets. Because in-person meetings were not possible, Uniformex was able to get a good overview of our location advantages and capabilities by viewing our [360-degree videos](#).

After careful consideration, the company incorporated as **WEBIND** in October and started to distribute traditional uniform products from Mexico to Canada as its phase one expansion. The CEO of WEBIND, Rodrigo Hernandez, pointed out several reasons for choosing Windsor-Essex as the home of its North American distribution network including the region's proximity to

the United States and its seamless highway connections to serve as a logistics hub, the free trade benefits of CUSMA and the innovative technology ecosystem in Ontario for smart product research and development. WEBIND is already working with its first Ontario-based client since incorporating.

### *Windsor-Essex – target picture for zero-emission ecosystem*



The IA team partnered with P3, a German-based consulting firm that specializes in strategic planning, to assist with the research and development of a zero-emission ecosystem in the Windsor-Essex region. Windsor-Essex presents an industrial landscape with a focus on R&D and advanced manufacturing within the automotive sector. As a result of industry relying heavily on automotive, this region is faced with the enormous challenges of changing technologies and trends – electrification, connected, autonomous, cybersecurity and Industry 4.0. The purpose of this study is to design and implement a strategy to attract investors and companies to tackle this change and to implement a local ecosystem for zero-emission. Research and attraction efforts continue in this sector as Windsor-Essex is well positioned for the future of mobility.

# Institute for Border Logistics and Security



**WindsorEssex**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

### *Trade mission to Cybertech Global, Israel*

In late January, the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation (WE EDC) team joined the Canadian Association of Moldmakers (CAMM) in a business development trade mission to Tel Aviv, Israel. Coordinated by Invest in Ontario, the group attended Cybertech Global Israel — one of the largest cybertech conferences in the world. The group travelled to three different cities in Israel and met with 10 highly qualified tech startups. They also conducted five site visits and attended business-to-business meetings at the Canadian Embassy. As a result of the trip, WE EDC has initiated discussions with the Israeli Innovation Authority to create a binational matching program that connects Israeli tech startups with Windsor-Essex manufacturers.

### *COVID-19 and logistics, transportation and cross-border issues*

In the Windsor-Essex region, the logistics, transportation and cross-border sector plays an important role and is made up of 2,600 businesses employing over 10,000 workers. While the sector is designated as being essential, it was not immune to the economic hardships faced by the rest of the economy. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, many trucking companies were forced to drive empty tractor trailers or idle their trucks thus generating little or no revenue. The announcement by the large automotive companies to close their plants to halt the spread of COVID-19, combined with

travel bans, has had a dramatic impact on the sector. Led by the IBLS team, the Logistics, Transportation & Cross-Border Committee for the Windsor-Essex COVID-19 Economic Task Force met regularly to exchange information and identify ways to support the sector. Key actions also included the development of a comprehensive guidebook for crossing the border entitled: [\*Cross-Border Tips for Manufacturing Sector Employees During COVID-19\*](#). It is an evergreen document to ensure that manufacturing employees can cross the border with ease and remain safe when working in a cross-border environment. Members of the committee include representatives from Laser Transport, SK Cornerstone, Canadian Group of Companies, Carrier Centers, Myers Towing, Windsor International Airport, Windsor Port Authority, Windsor Detroit Bridge Authority, Windsor Detroit Border Link, Windsor Transportation Club and WE EDC.

### *Digital twinning*

Thanks to funding from the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario, WE EDC, with support from CAMM, Automate Canada, and St. Clair College, launched a digital twinning program to encourage its adoption in manufacturing facilities in the Windsor-Essex region. Digital twins make it possible to optimize operations, detect issues, test settings, simulate scenarios and predict performance. In 2020, 17 local manufacturing companies expressed interest in this program. The first cohort of six companies launched their projects and are currently at various stages of implementation. The digital twinning program supports local companies to further adopt Industry 4.0 practices, driving innovation and business growth. This program also helps to connect students with local companies by providing them hands-on experience to become the workforce of the future.

## ***WE EDC receives regional endorsement of its automotive cybersecurity plan***

WE EDC continues to lead local efforts to establish a focus on automotive cybersecurity since its designation that cybersecurity is an area of specialization under its responsibilities as an Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network's Regional Technology Development Site in 2018. WE EDC has sponsored several cybersecurity events, including being part of an Ontario trade mission to CyberTech Israel. WE EDC also worked with the University of Windsor to feature cybersecurity as part of its WE Diversify proposal. These steps allowed WE EDC to lead local efforts to further build local excellence in the automotive cybersecurity space. In August 2020, WE EDC released its draft strategy for an automotive cybersecurity plan. Efforts are in motion and include four activities needed to make Windsor-Essex an automotive cybersecurity hub:

- supporting a skilled labour force through tailored education and training;
- raising awareness of the importance of automotive cybersecurity and supporting local companies to adopt automotive cybersecurity practices;
- creating an entrepreneurial culture to start and grow automotive cybersecurity companies;
- encouraging academic research in automotive cybersecurity and spurring increased commercialization.

## ***BorderHacks and Women in Mobility Speaker Series***

From September 25-27, WE EDC, in coordination with the U.S. Embassy and Major League Hacking, hosted a binational, cross-border mobility hackathon. The virtual event inspired over 600 students from the University of Windsor, St. Clair College and Wayne State University to

create their greatest innovation. Areas of focus included cross-border mobility issues such as smart infrastructure, health care, cybersecurity, entrepreneurship, and more. Industry experts from local and global organizations on both sides of the border offered mentorship and workshops. In addition, the first-ever cross-border Women in Mobility Speaker Series through RISE Windsor-Essex was launched at the hackathon. The main partners were RISE Windsor-Essex, Women in Mobility Detroit, WEtech Alliance, University of Windsor and the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce. The events included expert speakers from the United States and virtual networking sessions for women in attendance.



Concept vehicle for Project Arrow

## ***WE EDC named official Virtual Reality Simulation Partner for Project Arrow***

WE EDC is the official Virtual Reality Simulation Partner for Project Arrow. The concept car in digital form used WE EDC's publicly accessible Virtual Reality CAVE. The Windsor-Essex Regional Technology Development Site (RTDS) VR CAVE is a feature of the Province of Ontario's AVIN network.

Project Arrow, an initiative from APMA, is the first original and full-built zero-emission concept vehicle in Canada. It will be designed, engineered and built by Canada's world-class automotive supply sector and post-secondary institutions. This project brings together the best of Canada's electric-drive, alternative-fuel, connected and autonomous and light-weight technology companies. The winning design was created by a team at Carleton University and is referred to as Traction.

# Small Business Centre

smallbusinesscentre

## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

### *Small Business Centre launches COVID-19 business support services and programs*

With the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the SBC team revised its services to providing assessment and supports to its clients remotely. SBC continued to deliver its regular services while also introducing a suite of business supports tailored to new and established Windsor-Essex businesses. For the first seven weeks of the pandemic, SBC delivered a weekly newsletter to over 4,600 subscribers which provided information on government business supports, webinars, resources/tools, positive media stories, COVID-19 retail campaigns, and more. A [COVID-19 section](#) of the SBC website was created and continues to be updated regularly. The COVID-19 supports developed by SBC also included partnerships with legal, marketing and accounting experts who delivered Ask the Expert webinar sessions for businesses operating during the pandemic. SBC also engaged with nearly 300 clients operating businesses through two COVID-19 business impact and check-up surveys in the spring and summer of 2020. The response from businesses helped inform the team on support gaps and allowed them to reach back to provide individualized consultations and referrals to businesses during COVID-19.

### *EPIC Nimble*

In April 2020, the Small Business Centre partnered with the University of Windsor's EPICentre and WEtech Alliance to launch EPIC Nimble, a mentorship and grant program to support technology adoption for small businesses affected by COVID-19. Businesses will leverage technology to create new revenue streams or pivot to a new business model to achieve sustainability and stay competitive in the fast-changing marketplace. Over

50 local small businesses applied for seven awards of \$6,000 in grants and services. EPIC Nimble awards were given to GreenerBins Composting Co., The Grove Hotel, Efficient Operations Inc., Riverside Pie Café, Ergonow Inc., Dan's Nautical Shop, Yoga with Lora and Windsor Creative. Funding for EPIC Nimble was provided by FedDev Ontario.

### *Digital Growth Grant*

SBC partnered with the Town of Essex to help deliver its Digital Growth Grant program in the summer of 2020. The program supported main street businesses that had traditionally relied on foot traffic to generate sales and attract new customers as they have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Digital Growth Grant program provided \$1,000 grants to 20 businesses in the Town of Essex (Essex Centre, Harrow, Colchester and McGregor). Businesses used the funding to implement digital tools or online advertising to help strengthen their business in response to COVID-19.



### *Digital Main Street program extension supports hundreds of Windsor-Essex businesses*

The Small Business Centre's Digital Service Squad continued to support Windsor-Essex businesses through the Digital Main Street program in 2020. The Digital Service Squad, which covers the BIAs

or commercial districts in Windsor, Tecumseh, Amherstburg, LaSalle, Essex and Kingsville, assisted businesses in implementing new digital technologies and applying for \$2,500 Digital Transformation Grants. In June 2020, the Government of Ontario, in partnership with the federal government, announced a \$57 million investment for Digital Main Street to provide a new suite of programs to help small businesses reach more online customers, including shopHERE powered by Google and Future-Proof. A new round of Digital Transformation Grants opened and from July 1 to December 31, 2020, businesses were again able to apply for funding to improve the efficiency of their digital operations. In 2020, 101 Windsor-Essex businesses in SBC's service area received Digital Transformation Grants representing a \$252,500 investment in the community.



### ***Small Business Centre delivers RE3: Rebuild, Reopen, Revive program for women-led SMEs***

RE3: Rebuild, Reopen, Revive is a government funded program that provided non-repayable performance-based contributions of up to \$5,000 to assist women-led SMEs to rebuild, reopen and revive their businesses. With the support of FedDev Ontario and the Government of Canada's Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF), WE EDC's Small Business Centre along with Northumberland CFDC working collaboratively within its regional entrepreneurial ecosystems to advance women-led SMEs across Ontario, effectively positioning them for rapid and positive post-pandemic economic recovery. SBC was

tasked with delivering the \$2M funding program for women-led businesses in Southern Ontario, from Windsor to Toronto. The team received over 800 applications for RE3 contributions with 379 businesses awarded funding, including 20 in Windsor-Essex. Funding was used by businesses for the acquisition of personal protection equipment (PPE), workspace reconfiguration to accommodate physical distancing, and hardware/software upgrades to enhance online capacity, client servicing and accessibility. The RE3 program supported over 700 women-led businesses in Ontario and ran from July 2020 to March 2021.



### ***RISE Windsor-Essex launches to supports women entrepreneurs and women in STEM***

Launched in March 2020, [RISE Windsor-Essex](#) is a network of organizations that are empowering women in entrepreneurship and women in STEM in Windsor-Essex County. RISE is facilitated through the Government of Canada's Women's Entrepreneurship Strategy and supported locally by the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation's Small Business Centre and partners WEtech Alliance, EPICentre, Build A Dream, WorkForce WindsorEssex and Windsor Essex Capital Angel Network. RISE Windsor-Essex, with the support of founding partner Workforce WindsorEssex, published the RISE Windsor-Essex

[Needs Assessment Report 2020](#) in May 2020.

The report also provided recommendations for supporting these women and entrepreneurs broadly through six best practices that are keys to successfully cultivating this environment in the community — mentorship, allies, employers, personal investment, financial investment and community support.

As part of the Women in Mobility Speaker Series, RISE Windsor-Essex partnered with the US Consulate General in Toronto to provide three events in the last quarter of 2020. These events were hosted with the Automotive Parts Manufacturers' Association (APMA) and Women in Mobility Detroit, as well as a third event in partnership with WE EDC's Emerging Technologies Speaker Series and brought together over 300 people to hear from women in the mobility sector in Windsor-Essex region. The final event in the Women in Mobility speaker series was part of the RISE and Resilience Summit held on Feb. 11, 2021.

## *Students rise to the entrepreneurial challenge with Summer Company*

Despite entering an uncertain economy, six Windsor-Essex students plunged ahead as first-time entrepreneurs in the annual Summer Company program. Summer Company is an Ontario government program which provides young people with the resources and training to start a new summer business. Full-time students, aged 15-29, receive hands-on business training, advice and mentorship from local business leaders and up to a \$3,000 grant. This year presented a new challenge for these young entrepreneurs as they were tasked with creating a business plan for success during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2020 cohort included businesses such as a grocery delivery service, hair products and accessories, landscaping and lawn care and mobile vehicle detailing. Summer Company students also had the opportunity of promoting their products and services as vendors at the Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market.



The 2020 Summer Company students outside of the Small Business Centre with Youth and Entrepreneurship Advisor Myrtle Donnipad (centre)

# Marketing & Communications

The Marketing and Communications department develops strategies and plans that support and leverage business development activities and include the following elements: event management, media/public relations, communications, social media, marketing tools such as videos, brochures and integrated marketing and advertising plans. These strategies are developed for the Corporation and its departments - Business Retention & Expansion, Investment Attraction, Small Business Centre and Institute for Border Logistics and Security teams.

## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

### ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS



#### *Perspective Ontario*

A two-page advertorial and an advertisement were placed in the January 2020 Perspective – Ontario Magazine. This unique Ontario Ministry of Economic Development Job Creation and Trade publication was designed to raise worldwide awareness on investment opportunities available in Ontario and targeted to prospective FDI leads or companies looking for joint ventures. The magazine is distributed to 16 Ontario Trade offices globally, and will be made available at trade shows, conferences and trade missions the Provincial government attends. The ad was also placed in the 2019-2020 Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island Visitor Guide. This publication's goal is to attract visitors to the region. It is distributed at trade shows, visitor information centres, the Ontario Tourism Information Centres and businesses across Windsor-Essex County.

## RISE Windsor-Essex network

The Marketing and Communications department partnered with the Small Business Centre to brand and launch RISE – a network of organizations with the mission to empower women in entrepreneurship and women in STEM in Windsor-Essex County. In addition to the RISE website, the marketing team helped develop a comprehensive branding guide, logos, postcards, promotional flyers, partner emblems and additional assets for future RISE events.



A social media advertisement campaign was developed to invite the Windsor-Essex residents and business community to the March 5 How Woman are using Tech to Change the World event and launch of the RISE Network program.

## COVID -19

The Marketing and Communications department developed a logo for the Windsor-Essex COVID-19 Economic Task Force. The branding is used on all communications from this task force.



## Promotional videos

Collison from Home – Web Summit Event Video – The Marketing and Communications department developed a short video to introduce the Windsor-Essex region to an audience of international tech executives attending the Collison from Home conference. [WATCH VIDEO.](#)

Windsor-Essex County 360-degree Video Series - The Marketing and Communications team developed a unique YouTube series that includes eight 360-degree videos. The video series was created to highlight important assets of the Windsor-Essex region and allow non-locals to experience the region - remotely. During playback users get can pan around the video by clicking and dragging from their desktop computer or a smartphone. [WATCH SERIES](#)



The WE EDC team supported the Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island [#YQGStandsStrong](#) campaign.

## WE Can't Wait

The Marketing and Communications team developed a social media marketing campaign in support of a modern hospital for Windsor-Essex. The WE Can't Wait campaign mobilized members of the Windsor-Essex community that support this project and ensure their voice is heard loud and clear.



## RE3

Throughout the year, the Marketing and Communications department develops social media content and campaigns to highlight the activities of each of WE EDC's departments. In Q3, a paid social media campaign was developed to promote SBC's RE3 program. Ads were targeted to over 122,000 English and French speaking women-led SMEs in a 50 km radius of the cities of Brantford, Chatham, London, Hamilton, Niagara Falls, Kitchener, Halton Hills, Toronto, Guelph, Sarnia, Barrie, Owen Sound, Woodstock and Markham.

## Small Business Month

A social media advertising campaign was developed to support the Small Business Centre's Small Business Month promotions in October. The digital campaign highlighted three Windsor-Essex entrepreneurs who have not only survived during these trying times, but quickly adapted their business models to continue to thrive, including Claudius Thomas from Turaco Web, Eddy Hammoud from Tabouli by Eddy and Eddy's Mediterranean Bistro and Sawyer Telegdy from Shred Shop. We hosted a giveaway by asking residents to let us know their favourite local and independent business. There were three gift cards given away to local businesses.



## MEDIA RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

### *Best Locations to Invest 2020*

Site Selection Magazine, an international publication that is recognized as the leading publication in corporate real estate, facility planning, location analysis and foreign direct investment, has awarded Windsor-Essex one of 20 'Best Locations to Invest' in 2020. Published by Conway Data Inc., Site Selection magazine delivers expansion planning information to 47,000 executives of fast-growing firms. The rankings were released as part of the Global Groundwork Index. The Index is based on proprietary data from Conway Analytics' Conway Projects Database and an equally robust database from global infrastructure advisory and events firm CG/LA. This is the third time in the past six years Windsor-Essex has been recognized as Best to Invest.



### *Media releases*

[Network to Support Women in STEM and Entrepreneurship Launched RISE Windsor-Essex](#)

[Engineering Simulation and Analysis Software Company – Simutech Group Chooses Windsor, ON](#)

[Windsor-Essex County Manufacturers Pivot to Make Products the World Needs | Backgrounder](#)

[Detroit Mobility Lab Partners with WE EDC to Support Mobility Companies Expanding to Windsor-Essex and Detroit WindsorEssex](#)

[Economic Development Corporation's 2019 Annual Report Released](#)

[Windsor Essex 'Can't Wait' For A New Hospital Says Economic Development Agency, Launches Digital Campaign](#)

[ShopHERE Program to Grow E-commerce Presence for Windsor-Essex Small Businesses](#)

[Windsor Essex COVID-19 Economic Task Force Releases Results of COVID-19 Business Impact Survey](#)

[A Pulse of the Windsor-Essex Economy – Manufacturing](#)

[A Pulse of the Windsor-Essex Economy - Logistics, Transportation & Cross-Border](#)

[A Pulse of the Windsor-Essex Economy - Agriculture and Agri-foods](#)

[A Pulse of the Windsor-Essex Economy - Hospitality and Tourism](#)

[A Pulse of the Windsor-Essex Economy - Professional Services and Retail](#)

[Engineering Consulting Company – Eltromex Corporation Chooses Windsor-Essex](#)

[Cross-Border Manufacturing: An Essential Part of the Canadian and US Economies](#)

[OneLedger Partners with the Institute for Border Logistics and Security \(IBLS\) to Launch the International Health Passport Windsor-Essex](#)

[Named One of Canada's Best Locations to Invest](#)

[Automotive Cybersecurity Company – Vehiqilla Inc. Chooses Windsor-Essex](#)

[WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation named official virtual reality partner of APMA's Project Arrow](#)

For related news stories visit [investwindsor-essex.com](http://investwindsor-essex.com)

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

### ***CUSBA Annual Cross-border Economic Forecast event***

WE EDC supported the Canada – US Business Association (CUSBA) by sponsoring the Annual Cross – Border Economic Forecast & Lunch that included an ad in the program.

### ***Industrial Manufacturing Excellence Award***

WE EDC sponsored the Industrial Manufacturing Excellence Award for the Leamington Chamber of Commerce virtual ceremony.

### ***Town of Kingsville Business Recognition Awards***

On October 23, 2020, SBC's Shannon Dyck joined the Town of Kingsville for their Business Recognition Award Ceremony to present two awards – Young Entrepreneur Award, sponsored by the Small Business Centre was presented to Ireland Manual Physiotherapy, and Business of the Year Award, sponsored by WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation, was presented to Erie Shores Rehabilitation.

### ***Biz X Awards***

The Small Business Centre was delighted once again to be the Business and Service sponsor of the 23rd Biz Awards themed We are all Survivors. Sabrina DeMarco, Executive Director, SBC, also graciously accepted the honour of becoming a judge along with other local business professionals and industry experts. Congratulations to all 2020 nominees and winners.

### ***WindsorEssex COVID-19 Economic Task Force***

During the second quarter, the WindsorEssex COVID-19 Economic Task Force participated in two Facebook Live events with City of Windsor's Mayor Drew Dilken. The first was held on April 24 and was a media briefing of the WindsorEssex COVID-19 Economic Task Force. The mayor introduced the committee chairs and they were given an opportunity to provide updates on their sectors. On June 5, the event provided an update of the WindsorEssex COVID-19 Economic Task Force and launch of ShopYQG Initiative. Each committee chair had an opportunity to cover key issues and provided commentary on the future for their respective sector.

## EVENT MARKETING

### 2020 AGM

The Marketing and Communications department was responsible for the development of the 2019 WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation's Annual Report. Due to these unprecedented times, WE EDC did not host their Annual General Breakfast Meeting that usually brings together 150 people representing stakeholders, funders, government officials and business leaders from the region. Instead, for the first time in WE EDC history, the AGM was held in a virtual environment with the board of directors and staff in attendance.

### *Emerging Technologies in Automation Conference and Trade Show*

An ad to promote the Emerging Technologies Speaker Series was placed in the Fall edition of the CTMA View Magazine – a reliable source of information at the forefront of the tooling and machining industry. The magazine is distributed to CTMA members, industry partners and stakeholders, government agencies and affiliated associations and organizations.

The Marketing and Communications department worked with the BR&E team to update the conference website by updating the design and content to increase traffic, and to attract sponsors, speakers, exhibitors and attendees. The conference video was also updated.



### *Emerging Technologies Speaker Series: Recover & Thrive*

A social media advertising campaign was developed to support the Business Retention & Expansion team's webinar series. The campaign included social media paid ads, promotion of YouTube videos and live social media during the webinars.

## 2020 PERFORMANCE METRICS

### What We Do

The WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation advances economic development and prosperity in our region. We are the region's lead economic development agency and a dedicated catalyst for business growth and expansion. We attract new businesses to our region, help strengthen existing businesses and support entrepreneurship in four key ways:

#### WE Inform and Promote

*To be the leading source for economic information and promotion in the Windsor-Essex Region.*

#### WE Invest and Attract

*To be the leading source for economic information and promotion in the Windsor-Essex Region.*

#### WE Innovate and Advance

*To diversify the Windsor-Essex Region and enable companies to be leaders in innovation and not victims of technology disruption.*

#### WE Engage and Collaborate

*To lead, inform, guide, connect and leverage the economic development ecosystem in the Windsor-Essex Region.*



# 2020 PERFORMANCE METRICS

## New Investment Facilitated

**\$30,086,838 (IA/BRE)**  
**\$1,244,383 (SBC)**

Total amount of new investment to the region, through both public and private investment streams.



## Business Support Sessions

**149 Sessions**  
**3336 Attendees**



## Top Economic Priorities as reported by Windsor-Essex businesses

- 1** Canada-U.S. border closure - limited cross-border business travel, COVID protocols, restrictions and mandatory quarantine orders
- 2** Uncertainty of economic climate - impacting business investment and project planning
- 3** Labour challenges - unintended consequences of COVID supports to employees, leading to labour shortages
- 4** Health & safety protocols - increased enforcement
- 5** Fair and equitable distribution of COVID support programs across business sectors

## Regional Labour Market Indicators†



\*Industrial, commercial and institutional permits only



Statistics Canada has revised the labour market information for Windsor-Essex County going back to 2006. The 2020 figures above are compared to the revised 2019 figures.

## WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA STATS



### @weecdev

**New Twitter Followers – 337**  
 Total Twitter Followers – 4,316  
 Total Interactions – 15,671  
 No. of Mentions – 1,619



### @SBCWindsorEssex

**New Twitter Followers – 179**  
 Total Twitter Followers – 1,641  
 Total Interactions – 5,826  
 No. of Mentions – 483



### /WindsorEssex

**New Fans – 66**  
 Total Fans – 2,640  
 Total Interactions – 6,543  
 Total Impressions – 216,221



### /SBCWindsorEssex

**New Fans – 172**  
 Total Fans – 3,422  
 Total Interactions – 6,075  
 Total Impressions – 211,072



### /weecdev

**New Followers – 236**  
 Total Followers – 631  
 Total Interactions – 497  
 Total Impressions – 9,908



### /SBCWindsorEssex

**New Followers – 543**  
 Total Followers – 2,102  
 Total Interactions – 3,418  
 Total Impressions – 74,815



### ChoosewindsorEssex.com

Users – 32,226  
 Pageviews – 68,898  
**New Visitors – 89%**  
 Returning Visitors – 11%

### Site Visits By Country

- Canada – 72%
- USA – 13%
- China – 4%
- India – 3%
- United Kingdom – 0.6%



### WindsorEssexSmallBusiness.com

Users – 35,025  
 Pageviews – 76,729  
**New Visitors – 88%**  
 Returning Visitors – 12%

# Financials



## WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation Statement of Operations

| For the year ended December 31,                                    | Actual<br>2020    | (Unaudited)<br>Budget<br>2020 | Actual<br>2019    |
|--|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Revenue</b>   |                   |                               |                   |
| Other grants (Note 6)  | \$4,021,727       | \$ 1,832,435                  | \$ 229,970        |
| Core Funding - City of Windsor                                     | 1,291,661         | 1,291,661                     | 1,190,472         |
| Core funding - County of Essex                                     | 1,060,544         | 1,060,544                     | 977,460           |
| Deferred contributions realized (Note 6, 7)                        | 348,272           | 295,159                       | 295,159           |
| Small Business Centre grants and income                            | 234,685           | 124,000                       | 440,315           |
| Miscellaneous revenue  | 46,857            | 231,650                       | 100,897           |
|  | <u>7,003,746</u>  | <u>4,835,449</u>              | <u>3,234,273</u>  |
| <b>Expenses</b>  |                   |                               |                   |
| Development programs   | 4,251,647         | 1,718,747                     | 572,176           |
| Salaries and benefits  | 1,218,156         | 1,492,576                     | 1,371,156         |
| Office operations  | 483,274           | 566,100                       | 451,489           |
| Amortization - Virtual Lab (Note 7)                                | 322,365           | 295,159                       | 295,159           |
| Amortization - WE Diversify (Note 7)                               | 25,907            | -                             | -                 |
| Support  | 251,051           | 10,000                        | 8,078             |
| Media and special events   | 151,969           | 210,000                       | 135,330           |
| SBC events and special projects                                    | 125,444           | 500,650                       | 413,838           |
| Amortization - other   | 53,852            | 35,000                        | 37,859            |
|  | <u>6,883,665</u>  | <u>4,828,232</u>              | <u>3,285,085</u>  |
| <b>Excess of revenue over expenses<br/>(expenses over revenue)</b> | <b>120,081</b>    | <b>7,217</b>                  | <b>(50,812)</b>   |
| <b>Net assets, beginning of year</b>                               | <b>576,900</b>    | <b>576,900</b>                | <b>627,712</b>    |
| <b>Net assets, end of year</b>                                     | <b>\$ 696,981</b> | <b>\$ 584,117</b>             | <b>\$ 576,900</b> |

# Board of Directors 2020-2021

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Chair               | Mayor Tom Bain, Town of Lakeshore  |
| Past Chair          | Tal Czudner, Vice President, Landscape Effects Group of Companies                  |
| Vice Chair          | Chris Savard, General Manager, Devonshire Mall, Cushman & Wakefield Asset Services |
| Secretary/Treasurer | Peter Roth, Former Managing Partner, Roth Mosey                                    |
| Director            | Mayor Drew Dilkens, City of Windsor  |
| Director            | Kevin Laforet, Regional President and CEO, Caesars Entertainment & Caesars Windsor |
| Director            | Paul Mastronardi, Red Sun Farms  |
| Director            | Tom O'Brien, Partner, Cooper's Hawk Vineyards                                      |
| Director            | Diane Reko, CEO, Reko International Group  |
| Director            | Kyrsten Solcz, Executive Director, Solcz Family Foundation                         |

# Staff 2020

## WindsorEssex

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Susan Anzolin      | Executive Director, Mobility & Innovation (until Sept 2021)             |
| Kathy Bellamy      | Office Management Coordinator   |
| Noah Campbell      | Tech Community Program Manager  |
| Akash Charuvila    | Engineering Analyst-VR & Optics   |
| Holly Connelly     | Executive Liaison   |
| Edward Dawson      | Senior Manager, Automobility and Innovation                             |
| Ryan Donally       | Manager, Investment Attraction and Corporate Marketing (until Nov 2020) |
| Marion Fantetti    | Business Ombudsman  |
| Joe Goncalves      | Director, Investment Attraction and Corporate Marketing                 |
| Mackenzie Habash   | Economic Policy Researcher  |
| Matthew Johnson    | Executive Director, Automobility and Innovation                         |
| Stephen MacKenzie  | President and Chief Executive Officer                                   |
| Lee McGrath        | Director, Business Retention and Expansion                              |
| Gina Meret-Dybenko | Manager, Investment Attraction and Corporate Marketing (from Nov 2020)  |
| Linsey Pecile      | Digital Twin Engineer   |
| Na Qu              | Investment Attraction Specialist  |
| Wendy Stark        | Manager, Business Retention and Expansion                               |
| Lina Williams      | Marketing and Communications Specialist, Corporate Marketing            |

## smallbusinesscentre

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Nicole Anderson | Program Director, Women Entrepreneurship Strategy (until Apr 2021) |
| Sabrina DeMarco | Executive Director   |
| Myrtle Donnipad | Youth and Entrepreneurship Advisor                                 |
| Shannon Dyck    | Business Advisor (until Oct 2020)                                  |
| Natasha Marar   | Manager, Marketing & Entrepreneurship Programs                     |
| Cristina Melnik | Business & Entrepreneurship Coordinator (on leave)                 |
| Christa Vadori  | Business & Entrepreneurship Coordinator                            |



119 Chatham St W Unit 100,  
Windsor, ON Canada N9A 5M7  
519-255-9200 1-888-255-9332

[info@investwindsor.essex.com](mailto:info@investwindsor.essex.com)  
[investwindsor.essex.com](http://investwindsor.essex.com)



119 Chatham St W Unit 100,  
Windsor, ON Canada N9A 5M7  
519-255-9200 1-888-255-9332

Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre  
(Satellite Office)  
39 Maidstone Avenue East, Unit 5  
Essex, ON, Canada N8M 2J3  
519-776-1116

[info@webusinesscentre.com](mailto:info@webusinesscentre.com)  
[webusinesscentre.com](http://webusinesscentre.com)



3475 Wheelton Drive  
Windsor, ON Canada N8W 0A6  
519-250-4444

[investwindsor.essex.com](http://investwindsor.essex.com)  
[info@investwindsor.essex.com](mailto:info@investwindsor.essex.com)