

# BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN WINDSOR-ESSEX



# Q2

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2021

This report highlights business development accomplishments by Invest WindsorEssex from April to June 2021 and provides an overview of regional economic development interactions that include, but are not limited to, outreach, consultation, trade shows, performance metrics, entrepreneurship, marketing and international outreach by the business development team.

**Through these and other activities, the team focuses on five key areas:**

**Investment Attraction**

**Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre**

**Business Retention & Expansion**

**Automobility & Innovation**

**Marketing and Communications**



Quarterly reports are provided to funders, stakeholders and the general public and are posted on the corporation's website [investwindsoressex.com](https://investwindsoressex.com)



## From the president and CEO's desk



Welcome to the second quarter report of 2021. I am excited to announce that this is the first report published under our new Invest WindsorEssex branding.

In late April, the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation changed its name to Invest WindsorEssex (IWE). This rebrand reflects the continued efforts to promote Windsor-Essex as a competitive location for both foreign and local investment. The changes also included the launch of a new corporate website, [investwindsoressessex.com](https://investwindsoressessex.com), as well as name changes for the Small Business Centre (SBC) which is now operating as the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre (SBEC) and the Institute for Border Logistics and Security, now known as the Invest WindsorEssex Automobility and Innovation Centre. SBEC also launched a new website, [webusinesscentre.com](https://webusinesscentre.com).

The results are in from the 2021 Windsor-Essex Economic Development Survey. The survey, in partnership with St. Clair College and Workforce WindsorEssex, received 280 responses from local businesses, the majority of which were from the retail and manufacturing sectors.

The key survey findings showed the pandemic had an impact on respondents and has shaped how they do business. The top barriers to growth in the region were identified as closure due to the pandemic and marketing and capacity limits due to imposed restrictions.

On the brighter side, 75 per cent of respondents felt that the Windsor-Essex region is a good to excellent community in which to do business and most positively ranked the following factors: availability of adequate electricity and availability of natural gas. Learn more about the survey on the [Dashboard](#).

More good news was received on May 19 when Irek Kusmierczyk, Member of Parliament for Windsor-Tecumseh, on behalf of the Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages and Minister responsible for [FedDev Ontario](#), announced a FedDev Ontario non-repayable contribution of \$7.5 million for Invest WindsorEssex to establish Canada's first world-class automobility accelerator.

Leveraging the region's roots in automotive manufacturing, IWE will bring together key stakeholders in the Windsor-Essex region to support the development of secure, zero emissions vehicle technologies.

With this investment, IWE will offer a full spectrum of first-in-Canada training and other programming to support the upskilling of 1,350 automobility entrepreneurs and scaling firms. Tailored to the needs of startups and scale-ups in the automobility ecosystem, with a focus on electric vehicles (EV), connected and autonomous vehicles (CAV) and cyber security firms, this support will help entrepreneurs to accelerate the commercialization of their technologies while positioning the region as a hub for automobility innovation and investment.

FedDev Ontario's investment will also leverage an additional \$12.3 million in private sector and other matching funding and attract \$40 million in new foreign direct investment to the region.

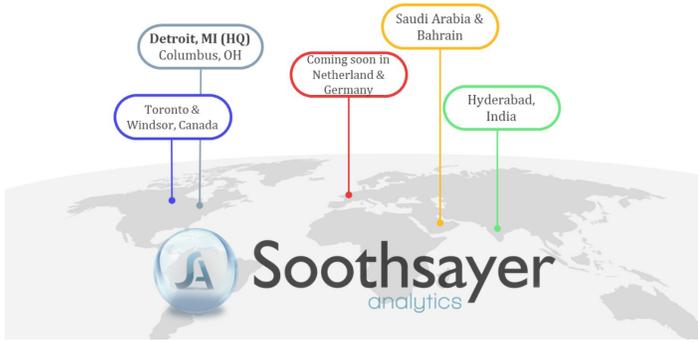
In closing, I would like to thank our IWE team members, board of directors and ecosystem partners who continue to assist our companies and entrepreneurs and attract new businesses to our region. As we continue to navigate through the pandemic stages, it is my sincere hope that my third quarter letter contains further news about the re-opening of our community and economy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Stephen MacKenzie". The signature is stylized and cursive.

C. Stephen MacKenzie  
President and CEO,  
Invest WindsorEssex

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

**U.S.-based ICT company-Soothsayer Analytics chooses Windsor-Essex**



Soothsayer Analytics, a U.S.-based ICT company, announced its expansion into the Canadian market and established its first Canadian office in Windsor, Ont. Soothsayer will offer data science consulting and training services to the Canadian market. The company is expecting to hire both technical and sales representatives with projections for 20+ data scientists working in Canada. Their mission will be to help companies in Canada hasten the adoption of analytical solutions and provide the ability to analyze, visualize and act on data with better speed, efficiency and insight.

▲ Soothsayer established its first Canadian office in Windsor, Ont.

**Axile Machine establishes North America headquarters in Windsor-Essex**



◀ AXILE is the high-end brand which is conceived to cover the premium market of three-axis and five-axis high-tech machining centres, focusing on technology and performance.

Axile Machine is a subsidiary company of Buffalo Machinery based in Taiwan, one of leading technology manufacturers. AXILE is bringing the leading technology in machine tools with world leading Industry 4.0 capability to Windsor-Essex to better support their distributors network and customers across Canada, the U.S. and Mexico. By embracing Industry 4.0 technologies, the product reliability is upgraded and Mean Time Before Failure (MTBF) is predicted so that maintenance costs are minimized and downtime is avoided. The company has set up its Canadian headquarters on Rhodes Drive in Windsor and are expecting to hire 10 to 15 employees. Axile is currently working with the investment attraction team to establish a FTZ bonded warehouse as their distribution hub and North American training facility.

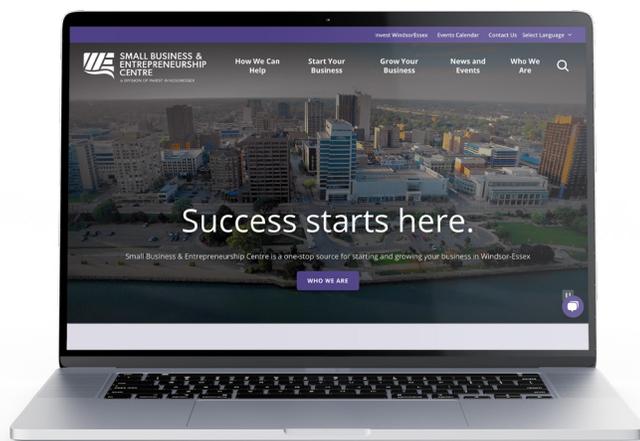
## SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE

### WindsorEssex Small Business Centre launches new brand and website



#### SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE

A DIVISION OF INVEST WINDSOR ESSEX



A new name and branding were unveiled for the WindsorEssex Small Business Centre in April. Now the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre (SBEC), has a refreshed image and a mission that remains the same — offering advisory services, easy access to resources and information, seminars and workshops and a network of mentors. SBEC also launched a new website to help entrepreneurs and existing small business clients start and grow their businesses in the Windsor-Essex region. The website features new and improved resources, such as information on topics like business law, cybersecurity, wealth management and succession planning. The website also features a robust events calendar, which now includes SBEC and Invest WindsorEssex events along with other training and professional development events hosted by community partners. As well, the site includes free access to a Property Search and Community Data GIS tool that can be used to find regional commercial and industrial properties and conduct market research to identify key demographics.

### Digital Service Squad concludes second round of supports

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre (SBEC) provided ongoing business support through its Digital Service Squad (DSS), a program of Digital Main Street (DMS). The squad provides one-on-one assistance to main street businesses to help them grow their digital presence and adoption of new technologies. The DSS program — initially launched in 2019 and renewed in 2020 — was extended this quarter to June. SBEC has successfully completed its second Digital Service Squad grant contract and hopes to continue offering these supports to businesses locally. During the second quarter of 2021, the squad reached out to 42 businesses with information about DMS programs and provided 14 complimentary one-on-one consultations and digital assessments to businesses. During this recent DSS contract, from September 2020 until June 2021, the squad outreached to over 1,900 businesses and provided advisory services and hands-on technology support to over 300 businesses.

## SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE

### Foodpreneur Advantage reaches Southwestern Ontario food businesses

## foodpreneur ADVANTAGE

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre recently partnered with its Small Business Enterprise Centre partners in London, St. Thomas and Oxford County to launch Foodpreneur Advantage program in April. The program features a monthly series of introductory seminars and training opportunities to support entrepreneurs looking to get a start in the food and beverage manufacturing industry. There is also a Foodpreneur Scale-Up Program launching in September that will comprise of a comprehensive 10-week program for a select group of 20 businesses that produce consumer packaged goods and have demonstrated high potential to scale operations. The program will connect entrepreneurs to industry experts and mentoring opportunities and provide them with an opportunity to receive a \$5,000 business grant. Foodpreneur Advantage is supported by Libro Credit Union and FedDev Ontario.

### Developing the arts and culture economy through Growing Creative Careers

## GROWING CREATIVE CAREERS

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre has partnered with WorkInCulture, a Toronto non-profit arts service organization, and Arts Council Windsor & Region to deliver the first series of a new program. Growing Creative Careers: Windsor & Region is an intensive professional development experience for artists, creatives and cultural workers living in Windsor-Essex. The program is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. It offers participants a training series that includes workshops, access to online resources and local experts, and facilitated peer mentoring circles. Participants who complete the program will come away with a detailed plan of action to move their careers, businesses and ran organizations forward. The program is delivered four times to four different cohorts over the course of 2021-2023. The first cohort ran from April 26 to June 30.

## SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE

### Summer Company program returns with new student cohort

# Summer Company

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre recently closed applications for the annual Summer Company program. The 2021 program will see up to 13 high school and post-secondary students participate in Windsor-Essex. 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 a grant of up to \$3,000. This year's group of young entrepreneurs proposed solid business cases that will allow them to introduce new and unique products and services locally. With an understanding that public health restrictions may impact sales activities, many students have opted to launch business websites, actively use social media and employ online tools and e-commerce to reach customers and grow revenues. The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre will be showcasing the Summer Company student products and services at the Downtown Windsor Farmers' Market later this summer.

### Women Entrepreneurship Strategy welcomes new program director

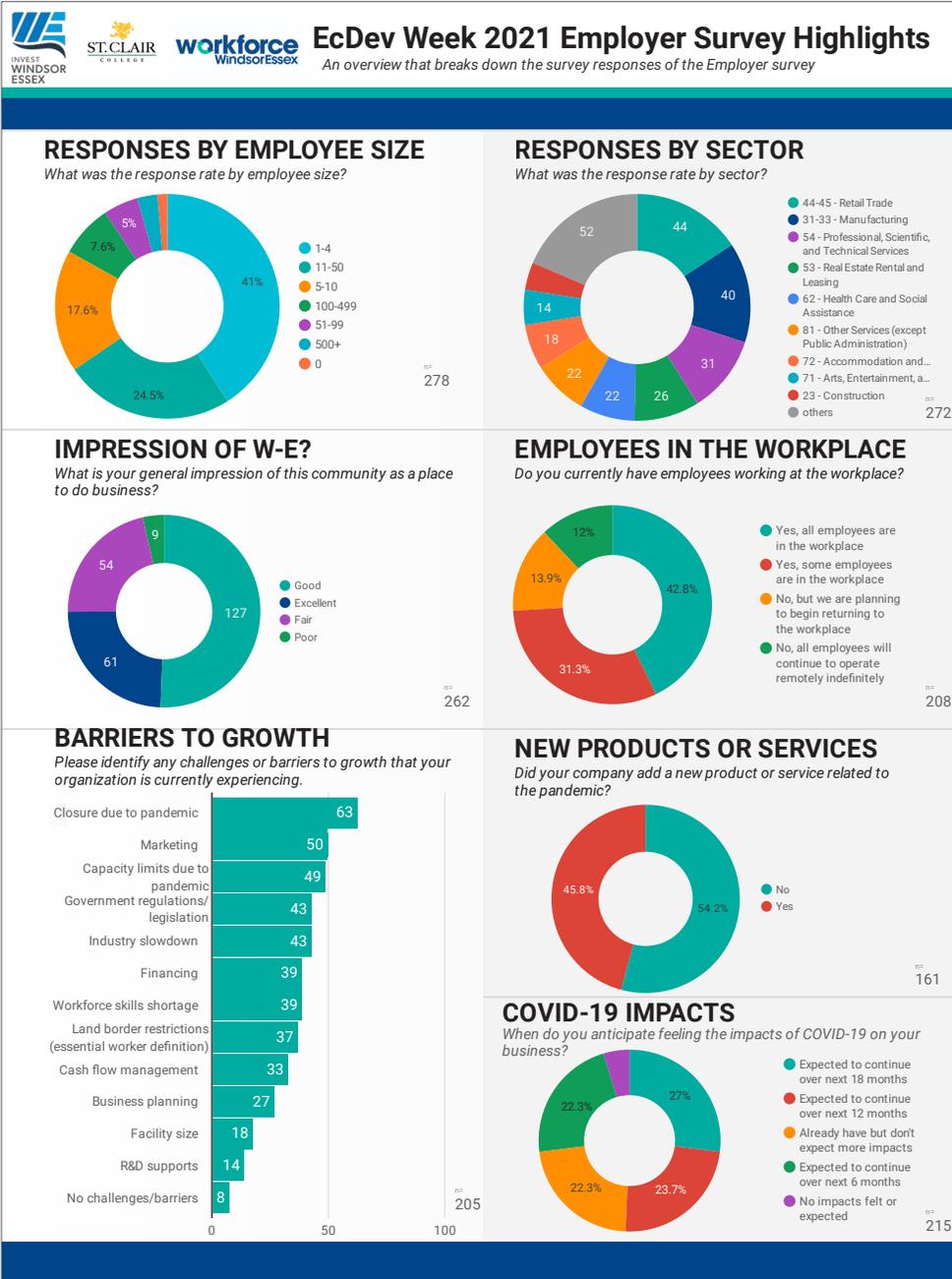


▲ Lee McGrath, Program Director, Women Entrepreneurship Strategy

In May, the Women Entrepreneurship Strategy welcomed Lee McGrath as its new program director. The role was opened with the departure of Nicole Anderson. McGrath most recently was the director of the business retention & expansion department at Invest WindsorEssex. In her new role, she will be overseeing the RISE Windsor-Essex initiative and working with regional WES partner organizations. McGrath is familiar with the WES portfolio as she previously was involved in planning and implementing the Emerging Technology Speaker Series that was made possible by WES funding. WES is a \$2-billion investment by the Government of Canada that seeks to double the number of women-owned businesses by 2025.

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

Economic Development Week business survey



In recognition of International Economic Development Week, Invest WindsorEssex along with partners Workforce WindsorEssex and St. Clair College, held a **Facebook Live event** to present the findings of our annual Windsor-Essex Economic Development Survey. The 2021 version of the survey generated responses from 280 companies, the majority of which were retail or manufacturing companies. Conducted from April 8 to April 30, 2021, the survey's purpose was to identify the needs of businesses and assist economic development professionals with developing strategies that will support businesses to stay, grow and become more competitive. The survey responses clearly showed the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the region. It was one of the top barriers to growth, but at the same time 46 per cent of respondents reported developing a new product or service related to the pandemic. Although 24 per cent reported feeling more negative than last year, 75 per cent felt that Windsor-Essex is an excellent place to do business. Workforce WindsorEssex developed an interactive **dashboard** to display the survey results.

## BUSINESS RETENTION &amp; EXPANSION

## Crossing the border guidebook update – assistance for Windsor-Essex manufacturers

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in many changes to imposed restrictions related to land and air travel, including the continued Canada-U.S. border closure to non-essential travel. As a result of these on-going developments, the previous edition of the **Cross-Border Tips for Manufacturing Sector Employees During COVID-19** guidance document required updated information to align with the current rules and regulations. The June 2021 revisions reflect the latest information related but not limited to such topics as: crossing the border tips for business travellers, additional information for industry, quarantine exemptions, pre-entry testing and quarantine requirements, air travel, the mandatory ArriveCAN app and template letters. The document will continue to be a resource for industry and will be updated as cross-border restrictions are eased.

## Upcoming Emerging Technologies in Automation Conference



Planning is officially underway for the fall Emerging Technologies in Automation Conference. This virtual conference will be held on Oct. 26 and will be free to attend. The planning committee includes conference partners Automate Canada, the Canadian Association of Moldmakers and the National Research Council Industrial Research Assistance Program. The conference theme will be How Automation Shapes the Post-Pandemic World. Recognizing the impact that COVID-19 has had on our economy and our manufacturing sector in particular, the conference will focus on how automation can help companies adapt and grow as we emerge from the pandemic. Keep an eye on [emergingtechnologies.ca](https://emergingtechnologies.ca) for more information on speakers, breakout topics and sponsorship opportunities as it becomes available.

## AUTOMOBILITY &amp; INNOVATION

## FedDev Ontario invests in Canada's first automobility accelerator in Windsor-Essex

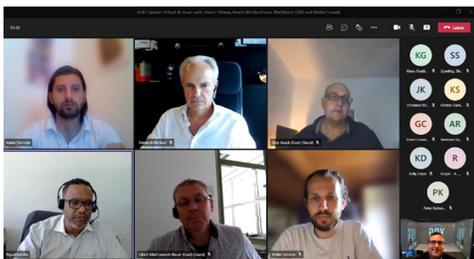


As a centre for automotive and advanced manufacturing excellence, the Windsor-Essex region is harnessing momentum to strengthen its developing automobility cluster. FedDev Ontario announced a five-year commitment and \$7.5 million to Invest WindsorEssex and regional partners including the University of Windsor, St. Clair College and WEtech Alliance to offer a full spectrum of first-in-Canada training and other programming to support the upskilling of 1,350 automobility entrepreneurs and scaling firms.

Tailored to the needs of startups and scale-ups in the automobility ecosystem, with a focus on electric vehicles (EV), connected and autonomous vehicles (CAV) and cyber security firms, this support will help entrepreneurs to accelerate the commercialization of their technologies while positioning the region as a hub for automobility innovation and investment.

This investment builds on an initial \$5 million by FedDev Ontario, announced in September 2019, to help Invest WindsorEssex establish and catalyze the growth of a next generation automobility cluster, attract investment to the region and create jobs of the future. The project initiated over 30 partnerships and projects to date, resulting in more than 300 new jobs created and nearly \$50 million in funds leveraged for the region.

## German Chamber virtual trade mission to Canada panel on sustainable mobility, connected and autonomous driving and e-mobility



▲ Ed Dawson, Senior Manager, Automobility and Innovation - Simulation Team participates in panel to promote region.

The automobility and innovation (AI) simulation team participated in a curated smart mobility panel during a virtual trade mission hosted by the Canadian German Chamber of Industry and Commerce. The team highlighted some of the work being done in the Invest WindsorEssex VR CAVE. The panel featured the joint efforts underway between the AVIN Ottawa RTDS and the Windsor-Essex RTDS sites to create a digital twin of the Area X.O. C/AV testing facility. The team showcased the collaborative efforts to grow the mobility ecosystem within Ontario and highlighted the key strengths of each location. Ultimately, the team demonstrated how the VR CAVE is a complementary testing facility to simulate real world testing that takes place in Ottawa and provides companies wrap around service and testing opportunities year-round. The session provided a great opportunity to highlight the Windsor-Essex region, our automotive and manufacturing heritage, our strategic geographic location and opportunities available to German companies looking to expand into North America.

## Hackathon and survey results



Preparation is well underway for BorderHacks 2021, which will be held on Sept. 25 and 26. This year's organizing committee includes many of the students who helped to make WinHacks 2021 a success, including the current University of Windsor Computer Science Society president, Jeremie Bornais, and master's candidate Spencer Briguglio. **Application for hackers are now open**, with the first sponsors already firmly on board.

In order to ensure that the BorderHacks event will be a success, past hackathon participants were surveyed and the results were analyzed. Over 900 students responded, providing insight into schedule and event preferences, the types of prizes which are the most encouraging and good news about increasing diversity and inclusion. Survey results have been compiled into a report and are available upon request.

## Corporate Marketing & Communications

The marketing department focuses on creating strategies that support business development initiatives within the areas of business retention and expansion, investment attraction, and entrepreneurship as well as, provides client support. Advertising strategies are aimed at enhancing business development and promoting the Windsor-Essex region.

**Strategic programs and activities include the following:**

Integrated marketing and advertising campaigns, event management, sponsorships, media and public relations, collateral materials, and communication through social media channels including video and corporate websites. Marketing maintains corporate brand standards and brand image across all media.

### Website Analytics

**investwindsoressex.com**

**Users** – 15,803  
**Page views** – 60,351  
**New Visitors** – 92.5%  
**Returning Visitors** – 7.5%

**webusinesscentre.com**

**Users** – 5,114  
**Page views** – 15,134  
**New Visitors** – 85.3%  
**Returning Visitors** – 14.7%

### Top Site Visitors



Canada



USA



China



India



United Kingdom

### Social Media Analytics

**Invest WindsorEssex**

@investwindsoressex  
 @\_investwe

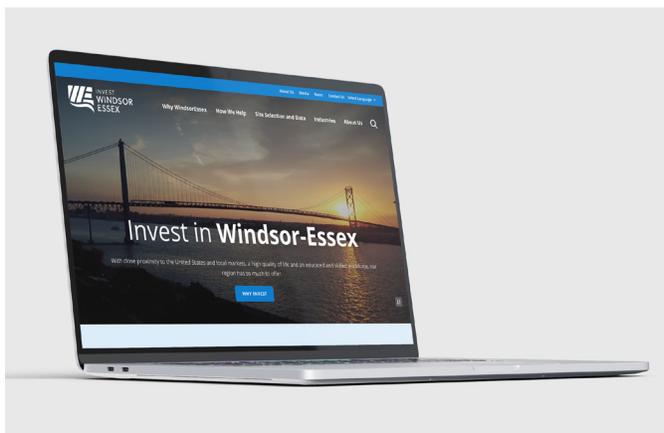
**SBEC**

@WEBusinessCentre  
 @wesmallbusinesscentre  
 @wesmallbusiness

**Total Fans** – 18,882  
**Total Impressions** – 415,443  
**Total Engagement** – 9,494

## MARKETING &amp; COMMUNICATIONS

## Corporate rebrand



The organization changed its name from the **WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation (WE EDC) to Invest WindsorEssex (IWE) on April 28, 2021**. The rebrand reflects the continued efforts to promote Windsor-Essex as a competitive location for both foreign and local investment. Invest WindsorEssex speaks to exactly what we do and the name itself is a call to action – Invest WindsorEssex! This allows for targeted campaigns and clear messaging regarding our region’s offerings.

Invest WindsorEssex also launched a new corporate website at [investwindsor.essex.com](https://investwindsor.essex.com). The new Invest WindsorEssex website will allow for easier access to data and information relevant to site selectors and local businesses for the purpose of investment, expansion and talent attraction.

The rebrand also included the renaming of the WindsorEssex Small Business Centre (SBC) to the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre (SBEC) and included a new website, [webusinesscentre.com](https://webusinesscentre.com). Lastly, the Institute for Border Logistics and Security (IBLS) is now operating as Invest WindsorEssex Automobile and Innovation Centre.

The marketing department developed a targeted digital campaign that included a **splash video** and organic and paid social media ads.

All marketing assets were updated including outdoor signage at both the downtown Windsor office (119 Chatham St. W.) and the newly named WindsorEssex Automobile and Innovation Centre (3475 Wheelton Dr., Windsor).

# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

## Advertising

### 2020 annual report

The marketing department was responsible for the development of the final WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation’s annual report. Due to the current COVID-19 gathering restrictions, the organization did not host an in-person annual general meeting that would normally bring together stakeholders, funders, government officials and business leaders from the region. Instead, the AGM was held in a virtual environment with the board of directors and staff in attendance.

Advertisements and campaigns for the second quarter included:

- Economic Development Week
- APMA – Lead, Reach and Connect magazine ad
- Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce Business Briefing ad
- Biz X Magazine ads
- Invest WindsorEssex rebrand ads



## Event marketing

The marketing department supported the coordination and promotion of the follow corporate events:

- Leamington Small Business Update
- Economic Development Week Business Survey Results
- WE Can’t Wait Presentation to Windsor city council
- Post Budget 2021 Discussion
- Workforce WindsorEssex Annual General Meeting presentation
- **FedDev Ontario announcement to support an automobility innovation cluster in Windsor**
- Gordie Howe Bridge 1,000 Days of Construction recognition



## Sponsorships

- Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce - WEStaySafe Provincial Antigen Screening Program
- Windsor-Essex Regional Business Excellence Awards
- Canadian Urban Institute’s CUI x Local listening tour

## MARKETING &amp; COMMUNICATIONS

## Media releases

[WE EDC Board of Directors welcome new young professional representative](#)

[WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation Rebrands as Invest WindsorEssex](#)

[Invest WindsorEssex Announces Organizational Changes](#)

[ICT company Soothsayer Analytics expands to Windsor-Essex](#)

[Windsor-Essex automobility ecosystem welcomes Ettractive Inc.](#)

[Invest WindsorEssex funds hundreds of women-led businesses through FedDev Ontario RE3: Rebuild, Reopen, Revive program](#)

## Media coverage

[A new business program aims to help 'foodpreneurs'](#)

[New program launched to support entrepreneurs in food and beverage sector](#)

[Alexandria Tolton joins WE EDC board](#)

[WEEDC defends recent spending on hospital campaign](#)

[WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation changes its name](#)

[WEEDC rebrands itself as Invest WindsorEssex](#)

[WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation rebrands as Invest WindsorEssex](#)

[Economic development group's rebranding 'call to action' for more business in Windsor-Essex](#)

[Federal budget offers further support to small businesses, says minister](#)

[Minister boosts Windsor's bid to transform into high-tech auto-mobility centre](#)

[Most Windsor-Essex businesses expect to feel COVID-19 impact for next 6-18 months](#)

[Accelerating Automobility: FedDev Ontario invests in Canada's first 'automobility accelerator' hub in Windsor-Essex](#)

[New accelerator aims to make Windsor Essex automobility capital of Canada](#)

[From Canada's Automotive Capital to Canada's Automobility Capital: WEtech Alliance Releases Cybersecurity Report](#)

[Michigan-based tech company chooses Windsor for Canadian expansion](#)

[The future of smart mobility – transformed by Canadian automotive innovation](#)

[FedDev Ontario invests in Canada's first automobility accelerator in Windsor-Essex](#)

[Windsor region receives \\$7.5-million grant to support auto mobility plan](#)

[Biggest shakeup in auto industry's history chance for Canada to climb on top](#)

[Revving up Canada's first automobility accelerator](#)

[Mid-sized Moment: Windsor targeted for deep probe into post-pandemic recovery](#)

[Biggest shakeup in auto industry's history chance for Canada to climb on top](#)

[Rebuild, Relief and Revive program helped keep business dreams alive for female entrepreneurs](#)



## PERFORMANCE METRICS 2021

### What We Do

Invest WindsorEssex 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 three key ways:

### INFORMING

We provide the most current and relevant information and data on site selection, market research and available government funding.

### GUIDING

We provide answers and advice on general business practices, expansion planning, multi-national branch planning and exporting, as well as training and educational resources.

### CONNECTING

We help organizations cut through red tape and we connect them directly with key decision makers, potential partners and funders.

### New Investment Facilitated

**\$34,000,000** (IA/BRE)  
**\$152,500** (SBC)  
**\$7,500,000** (AI)

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

**18** Expansions Facilitated  
(IA/BRE) 41 (SBC) 14

**120** New Jobs Facilitated  
(IA/BRE) 791 (SBC) 41

**10** Priority Files

**16** Business Startups

**3** Funding Applications and Joint Papers Developed

### Business Support Sessions

**53 Sessions**  
**382 Attendees**

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

- 1 Canada-U.S. border closure - limited cross-border business travel; uncertainty of staged/planned re-opening of land border - all heavily impacting the manufacturing sector
- 2 Uncertainty of economic climate - impacting business investment and project planning
- 3 Labour challenges - unintended consequences of COVID supports to employees leading to staffing, labour, and talent shortages
- 4 Uncertainty of longevity of government resources, support programs, rotating stages of Provincial COVID-19 "Re-Opening"
- 5 Small business sustainability

### Regional Economic Indicators †

 **Population**  
**369,400** 

 **Labour Force**  
**224,100** 

 **Employment**  
**199,200** 

 **Unemployment**  
**24,800** 

**Unemployment Rate**  
**11.1%** 

**Participation Rate**  
**60.7%** 

**Employment Rate**  
**53.9%** 

**Building Permits**  
**\$108,251,734**



† Notes: The above figures reflect all of Windsor and Essex County, Q1 2021 to Q2 2021. Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey custom tabulation.