

Q1 2026 REPORT

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN WINDSOR-ESSEX

Quarterly reports are provided to funders, stakeholders and the general public and are posted on the corporation's website, investwindsor-essex.com



Message from the Chief Executive Officer



As we complete Q1 for 2026, I am pleased to share Invest WindsorEssex's highlights, reflecting a strong start to the year driven by strategic investment attraction, business support and continued regional collaboration. Our team remains focused on positioning Windsor-Essex as a globally competitive hub for innovation, advanced manufacturing and economic growth.

The **Investment Attraction** team delivered significant results this quarter, facilitating over \$211 million in new investment and supporting the creation of nearly 600 new jobs across the region. Notably, SOLIZE PARTNERS, a Japan-based engineering firm, selected Windsor for its Canadian headquarters, bringing new high-quality jobs and reinforcing our reputation as a destination for advanced manufacturing and engineering expertise. The team also strengthened international relationships through participation in global events such as Alimentaria 2026 and continued engagement with prospective investors in the EV and automotive sectors.

The **Business Retention and Expansion** team remained committed to supporting local companies as they navigate evolving economic conditions. This quarter, we were proud to see several regional businesses benefit from the Province's Ontario Together Trade Fund, unlocking nearly \$44 million in investment, creating new jobs and protecting hundreds more across Windsor-Essex. The team also facilitated valuable industry engagement opportunities, including participation at the PDAC Convention and a delegation visit to Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Canada Aerospace, helping local companies explore new markets and strengthen supply chain connections.

The **Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre** continued to empower entrepreneurs through targeted programming and support services. The Starter Company PLUS program celebrated 23 graduates this quarter, contributing to new business startups, expansions and job creation. In addition, the launch of the Digital Accelerator Program is helping West Windsor businesses enhance their digital capabilities and remain competitive in an increasingly online marketplace. Through workshops, seminars and one-on-one support, SBEC continues to equip entrepreneurs with the tools needed to succeed in today's economy.

Across all departments, our efforts are underpinned by strong performance metrics, including 89 site visits, 25 business support sessions and continued growth in digital engagement across our platforms. These results reflect our commitment to informing, guiding and connecting businesses to the resources they need to grow and thrive in Windsor-Essex.

The **Marketing and Communications** team played an important role in elevating these successes, supporting key announcements, enhancing our visibility and promoting the Windsor-Essex advantage to audiences locally and internationally.

As we look ahead to the rest of 2026, we remain focused on building on this momentum by attracting new investment, supporting business growth and fostering innovation across the region. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our dedicated staff, Board of Directors, funders and partners for their continued collaboration and commitment to Windsor-Essex.

Together, we are driving meaningful economic impact and ensuring our region remains a leader in advanced manufacturing, entrepreneurship and investment attraction.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Orr', written in a cursive style.

Gordon Orr
Chief Executive Officer
Invest WindsorEssex



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 **\$61,004,341**

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

26 Expansions Facilitated

254 New Jobs Facilitated

79 Priority Files

11 Business Startups

Business Support Sessions

18 Sessions 15 Site Visits
258 Attendees 274 Consultations

Website Analytics

investwindsoressex.com

Users – 26,687

Page views – 35,207

New visitors – 25,551

Returning visitors – 1,275

webbusinesscentre.com

Users – 12,683

Page views – 27,686

New visitors – 12,281

Returning visitors – 1,299



China



Canada



Singapore



USA



Spain

TOP SITE VISITORS

Social Media Analytics

Invest WindsorEssex
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre



Total fans

36,059

Total impressions

120,854

Total engagement

8,183



Investment Attraction

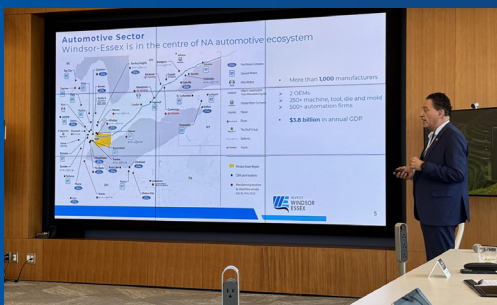
Japan-based engineering firm SOLIZE PARTNERS chooses Windsor for Canadian headquarters



SOLIZE PARTNERS has established its Canadian headquarters in Windsor with a nearly \$2 million investment, creating about 40 new engineering and technical jobs. The Japan-based company chose the region for its strong advanced manufacturing and automotive expertise, with support from Invest WindsorEssex's Investment Attraction team. [Media Release.](#)

Invest WindsorEssex's, Joe Goncalves, vice president investment attraction & strategic initiatives, meets with SOLIZE team at company's Japanese headquarters.

Investment Attraction continues promoting Windsor-Essex to attract EV companies



The Investment Attraction team participated in a Toronto roundtable on Canada's EV and automotive ecosystem, where Windsor-Essex's strengths in manufacturing, talent, and recent investments were showcased. Joe Goncalves, vice president investment attraction & strategic initiatives, highlighted the region's competitive advantage and strong automotive heritage. The team is now continuing discussions with potential investors to pursue new opportunities.

Invest WindsorEssex's Joe Goncalves presented Windsor-Essex's value proposition to potential investors.

Alimentaria 2026 in Barcelona, Spain



The Investment Attraction team attended Alimentaria 2026 in Barcelona, the leading international food and beverage trade show, to support its strategic goal of attracting food and beverage processing investment to Windsor-Essex. The region's strong manufacturing and agri-business base, along with available shovel-ready sites, was highlighted to targeted investors. The team presented the region's value proposition to companies looking to expand into the North American market.



Invest WindsorEssex's Investment Attraction team, Joe Goncalves and Na Qu, attended Alimentaria 2026, which drew more than 110,000 attendees from 70 countries.

Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre

Starter Company PLUS graduates 23 businesses



The **Starter Company PLUS program**, funded by the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, concluded in February with 23 graduates across Windsor-Essex. The program provided support to local entrepreneurs with training, mentorship and grants of up to \$5,000. The cohort included a diverse range of industries, resulting in 16 business expansions, seven startups and 16 new jobs. Three participants also received food and beverage industry-specific support through the Foodpreneur Advantage training stream. Applications will reopen this June for the fall cohort to continue supporting local small business growth.

◀ During the opening training session, Sabrina DeMarco, executive director of the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre welcomes local entrepreneurs.

Future-proofing west Windsor businesses



The **Digital Accelerator Program** launched this quarter to help West Windsor brick-and-mortar businesses enhance their online presence and adapt to a digital marketplace. The program offers digital assessments, one-on-one support, content packages, and training in areas like social media, e-commerce and AI. It's part of the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre's West Windsor Business Development Program and funded through the Gordie Howe International Bridge Community Benefits Plan.

Seminars promote essential business skills



▲ Windsor-Essex entrepreneurs from various industries attended the AI Readiness for Business Growth workshop on March 30.

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre delivered a variety of training opportunities during Q1 aimed at equipping entrepreneurs with the knowledge and skills needed to start and grow their businesses:

- Futurepreneur Advantage - Series of six startup seminars
- Building a Successful Side Hustle – Presented by Futurepreneur for part-time businesses
- Small Business Tax – CRA-led sessions for sole proprietors and incorporated businesses
- AI Readiness for Business Growth – Sofie Andreou, AI Strategist & Educator, introduced entrepreneurs to emerging technologies and strategies for integrating artificial intelligence into their operations.

Business Retention & Expansion

Windsor-Essex mission to PDAC Convention



Eight Windsor-Essex companies joined Invest WindsorEssex at the PDAC Convention in early March. The event, which is the world's premier mineral exploration and mining convention, allowed local companies to explore opportunities in the mining supply chain, both in Canada and around the world.

Local companies joined the Invest WindsorEssex (IWE) booth at the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada Convention in Toronto. (L-R): Monsoon Networks, Carlyle D'Souza, Sabre Machine Tool, Mark Scratch, IWE Ed Dawson and Wendy Stark and MPP Andrew Dowie (Windsor-Tecumseh).

MHICA hosts delegation of Windsor-Essex companies



The Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) team brought 26 local companies to visit the MHICA Mississauga facility.

A group of 26 Windsor-Essex companies, coordinated by the Invest WindsorEssex BRE team, traveled to the Mitsubishi Heavy Industry Canada Aerospace (MHICA) facility adjacent to Pearson International Airport. The visit was organized in partnership with The Ontario Aerospace Council (OAC). The group heard presentations from the company and OAC and had the opportunity to tour the massive facility which builds the wings and fuselage for Bombardier business jets.

BRE clients secure Ontario Together Trade Fund support



At an event held at Dimachem Inc. in Windsor, the Province of Ontario announced the investment of \$7.3 million through the Ontario Together Trade Fund (OTTF) to support eight Windsor-Essex companies, the majority of which are BRE clients, that are impacted by U.S. tariffs. These projects will help strengthen supply chains, build capacity and increase competitiveness across the region. The funding will enable nearly \$44 million in investments, create more than 65 new jobs and protect 692 existing jobs in the region.

(L-R): Invest WindsorEssex (IWE) CEO Gordon Orr, Dimachem VP Andrew Conway, IWE Business Retention and Expansion Director, Wendy Star and IWE Director of Marketing Gina Meret-Dybenko at a recent funding announcement.

Marketing & Communications

Advertising



A full-page ad was featured in the Windsor Essex Chamber of Commerce's 150th anniversary commemorative magazine.



Invest WindsorEssex's mural at Windsor International Airport has been refreshed and relocated to a more prominent, high-visibility location.

Event Marketing

CUSMA COMPLIANCE SERIES

IN-PERSON WORKSHOP | WINDSOR-ESSEX

Avoid the U.S. tariff trap and keep your goods moving cross-border

February 11, 8:30-1:30 | Register today!

CUSMA compliance workshop.

WINDSOR-ESSEX
ONTARIO
Canada's leader in advanced manufacturing and automation
investwindsoresex.com

WHY WINDSOR ESSEX IS A MANUFACTURING POWERHOUSE

Known as North America's manufacturing powerhouse, Windsor-Essex is a well-known leader and innovator in advanced manufacturing. Parts suppliers and mold makers across the region are at the forefront of using innovative technology to remain competitive in a changing global marketplace.

Industry profile:
Windsor-Essex is home to more than 1,000 manufacturers, responsible for \$3 billion in annual GDP, making up almost 25 per cent of the region's total GDP (the largest sector by revenue in Windsor-Essex). Our region has more than 90 automotive parts manufacturers, including two original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), 200 plus machine, tool, die and mold manufacturers and more than 500 automation related firms.

National associations founded in Windsor-Essex:
Windsor-Essex is experienced manufacturing leadership in engineering and design allows for a high level of automated production using a wide range of materials. Windsor-Essex boasts the largest cluster of both tool and mold and automation companies in North America. Because of this, two national associations were founded here: Canadian Association of Moldmakers (CAMEM) and Automate Canada.

Regional key sectors in advanced manufacturing include:

- Aerospace
- Automotive
- Industrial automation
- Tool, die and mold
- Food processing
- Pharmaceutical, nutraceutical and medical devices

LOCATION:
Located just south of Detroit, Michigan in the heart of the richest consumer market in the world, with more than 200 million people located within a 12-hour drive. At 42-1639° N, Windsor-Essex is Canada's southernmost region.

- Excellence in large scale precision machining, fabrication and custom automation
- 1,000+ machine tool and 500+ automation companies
- \$3 billion in manufacturing GDP
- Highly skilled workforce of 46,000+ designers, engineers, production workers and technicians
- One of Canada's fastest growing economies
- Home to NextStar Energy, a \$5 billion+ battery plant
- Home to \$6.4 billion Gordie Howe International Bridge, once-in-a-generation megaproject
- Home to major research facilities and academic institutions graduating 4,500+ engineering and science professionals per year

INVEST WINDSOR ESSEX

CANADA'S LEADER IN ADVANCED MANUFACTURING AND AUTOMATION

- Excellence in large scale precision machining, fabrication and custom automation
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WINDSOR-ESSEX, ONTARIO

Booth design for Invest WindsorEssex's participation at PDAC - a premier mineral exploration and mining convention.



Marketing & Communications

Social Media

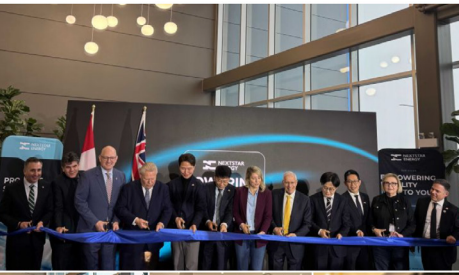
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We were proud to attend the grand opening of **NextStar Energy** – a historic milestone for our region and for Canada's growing battery manufacturing sector.

Our team is incredibly proud to have supported this transformational \$5-billion investment, creating 2,500+ jobs and further strengthening **#WindsorEssex's** position as a North American leader in battery production, advanced manufacturing and clean energy.

Congratulations and thank you to NextStar Energy, the **Government of Canada**, the **Province of Ontario**, the **City of Windsor** and all partners who helped bring this landmark project to life. We look forward to continuing to support NextStar's growth, driving long-term prosperity for our community. Read the media release: <https://hubs.ly/Q045NnYT0>

Premier **Ford** | **Mélanie Joly** | **Victor Fedeli** | **ONeconomy** | **ÉconomieON** | **Danies HS** | **Lee** | **Drew Dilkens** | **Gordon Orr** | **Joe G. Na Qu** | **Max Jung**, **P.Eng**, **MASc**



Ferruccio Da Sacco and 145 others · 2 comments · 4 reposts

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Congratulations to the **City of Windsor**, Mayor **Drew Dilkens**, Council and the **City's Economic Development Team** for being awarded the **Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) Award of Excellence** in the **Business Attraction & Retention – Urban** category at the **President's Dinner** during the **Annual #EDCO2026** Conference.

Windsor's win is a testament to the strength of our region's economic development ecosystem in securing one of Ontario's most significant advanced manufacturing investments—MintH Group's \$300 million electric vehicle manufacturing campus.

IWE's Investment Attraction Team was proud to support this "all-hands effort" together with the **City of Windsor**, **Invest Ontario**, the **Ontario Government** | **Gouvernement de l'Ontario** and industry partners to deliver a seamless, one-window investment experience that positioned Windsor as MintH's first Canadian manufacturing location. This recognition reflects the impact of collaboration with forward-looking investors like **MintH North America, Inc.**

Read more: https://hubs.ly/Q041_ck60

Gordon Orr | **Joe G. Na Qu** | **Jelena Payne** | **Matthew Johnson** | **Ray Mensour** | **Jeremy Coulter** | **Sabrina DeMarco** | **Edward (Ed) Dawson** | **Gina Meret-Dybenko** | **Cristina Melnik** | **Wendy Stark EcD**



Jason Toner and 145 others · 12 comments · 7 reposts

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Today, we wrapped up our final mentorship sessions for the **Starter Company PLUS** program! 🎉 Our incredible entrepreneurs have completed business training, received one-on-one advisory support, and gained valuable mentorship to help launch and grow their ventures with confidence.

A special thank you to our mentors who joined us this afternoon:

- Steve Schincariol, VP, Commercial Operations at **Motor City Community Credit Union**
- Monica Borrelli, Owner at **Melt Body Health**
- Paul Dromgole, Business Development Manager at **Futurpreneur**

We truly appreciate the time, expertise and guidance shared during this final mentorship session.



Jason Toner and 27 others · 1 comment · 1 repost

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The Province of Ontario is investing \$7.3 million through the Ontario Together Trade Fund (OTTF) to support Windsor-Essex companies impacted by U.S. tariffs. These projects will help strengthen supply chains, build capacity and increase competitiveness across the region.

In total, the eight funded projects will drive nearly \$44 million in investments, create more than 65 new jobs and protect 692 existing jobs in the region.

Invest WindsorEssex is proud to have worked closely with many of the recipient companies. Congratulations to **Dimachen Inc.** and all companies receiving support through this funding. Supporting local manufacturers and identifying growth opportunities helps ensure **#WindsorEssex** continues to thrive as a global manufacturing hub.

MEDIA RELEASE: <https://hubs.ly/Q046q4LX0>

City of Windsor | **The County of Essex** | **ONeconomy** | **ÉconomieON** | **Victor Fedeli** | **Drew Dilkens** | **Andrew Dowie** | **Gordon Orr** | **Wendy Stark EcD** | **Gina Meret-Dybenko** | **Anthony Leardi** | **Andrew Conway** | **Candian Electro Coating Ltd.** | **Central Stampings Ltd.** - **The NARMCO Group** | **Jahn Engineering, Inc.** | **Kringer Industrial** | **NextGen Mold Technologies** | **Reko International Group Inc.** | **Stratus Plastics International**



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We've got a full house today for our **AI Readiness for Business Growth** workshop, with participants eager to learn, connect, and prepare for the future of business.

This dynamic, hands-on session is geared to provide clarity, confidence and practical tools needed to succeed in today's AI-driven landscape — helping businesses get ready for increased visibility, stronger competition and new opportunities ahead.

WDBA-APWD #GordieHoweBridge



Sabrina DeMarco and 18 others · 1 repost

Media Release 

Media Coverage 