

QUARTERLY REPORT

Q1

HIGHLIGHTING 2024

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

- Investment Attraction
- Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre
- Business Retention and Expansion
- Automobility and Innovation
- Marketing and Communications



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

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES IN WINDSOR-ESSEX

This report highlights business development accomplishments by Invest WindsorEssex from January to March 2024 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.

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

AI engineering solution manufacturer establishes soft landing at University of Windsor's EPICentre

IndustrialNext

San Francisco-based tech company Industrial Next has selected the University of Windsor's EPICenter as their soft-landing space to start its initial R&D phase. The company provides expertise in creating technologies for intelligent and adaptive manufacturing automation to help manufacturers to improve and optimize manufacturing processes. The company plans to move to the next phase to produce modular workstations locally. The company is currently in the incorporation process for its Canadian entity and the first phase will create five full-time jobs with an approximately \$250,000 investment.

NextStar Energy collaborates with leading equipment manufacturers for plant setup phase



In recent months, numerous South Korean industrial machinery and equipment companies have established themselves in Ontario to contribute to the development of NextStar Energy's plant. Among these companies are Samho Machinery, specializing in machine structures; CK Canada, engaged in the design and construction of cleanroom systems; Gwangil and Duclean, provider of dust collector systems; and Avaco, providing integration for line automation processes. Throughout the project duration, these companies have secured leases at 9355 Anchor Dr., Windsor, with some expressing interest in establishing permanent service offices in the region upon project completion.

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

Breaking ground: TownePlace Suites by Marriott begins construction in Tecumseh



▲ Joe Goncalves, interim CEO and vice president investment attraction & strategic initiatives, IWE (left) celebrates the groundbreaking of TownePlace Suites by Marriott in Tecumseh.

The Town of Tecumseh celebrates the arrival of TownePlace Suites by Marriott, a new hotel catering to extended stays, strategically meeting the rising demand spurred by the NextStar Energy battery plant and other regional growth. The Investment Attraction team collaborated with HVS, a leading global consulting firm specializing in hospitality, during the initial planning stages. IWE's Investment Attraction team provided regional insights, demographic profiles, sector-specific workforce data and highlighted significant regional projects to facilitate the feasibility study. This venture injects an additional \$35 million into the region's economy and is expected to generate 80 new employment opportunities.

SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE

Foodpreneur Advantage programming starts off 2024



- ▲ Richmond Popcorn Co. owners Nicole and Dan Gemas completed the Foodpreneur Advantage Scale-Up program, which awarded them a \$5,000 grant to help grow their Amherstburg business.

The Foodpreneur Advantage program returned in January offering a new run of its virtual seminar series aimed at startup food and beverage businesses. The six seminars drew 233 small manufacturers from across southern Ontario. Seminar topics included starting a food business, regulatory compliance, selling to consumers and retailers, costing and pricing, marketing and labeling and packaging.

Participants from the fall 2023 cohort of Scale-Up are slated to complete their program requirements in April. The Foodpreneur Scale-Up program provides growing food and beverage manufacturers with eight intensive weeks of industry-led training followed by mentorship and an opportunity to receive a \$5,000 business grant. Among the southwestern Ontario businesses finishing the program from Windsor-Essex is Richmond Popcorn Co. and Pak'd Protein Pancakes. In March, Foodpreneur reopened applications for the Scale-Up program, and a spring cohort will run from April to October and again in November 2024.

Foodpreneur Advantage is collaboration between small business enterprise centres in Windsor-Essex, London, St. Thomas, Chatham-Kent, Sarnia, Brampton, Guelph/Wellington and St. Catharines. It is supported by FedDev Ontario and Libro Credit Union.

Small business team outreaches to Summer Company program hopefuls



- ▲ Stephanie Clark, business advisor, speaks with students at the Odette School of Business Job Fair at the University of Windsor on March 6.

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre team has been busy this quarter promoting its services and the Summer Company program to area students. High school and post-secondary students have until May 10 to apply to this year's Summer Company program, which provides training, mentorship and a grant of up to \$3,000. Business advisors conducted presentations about the program at 10 Windsor-Essex high schools. At the University of Windsor, they held an information session and attended the Odette School of Business Job Fair in March. Three presentations were also done at St. Clair College and an information booth was set up at Career Services. In April, the team will participate in a full-day business plan workshop session for the Windsor Essex Catholic District School Board, where students from eight high schools will be in attendance. At the event, they will educate students on the basics of

writing a business plan, crafting a business pitch and applying to the Summer Company program. These students are also competing for a \$2,000 grant through the school board to start their businesses. Additionally, in April, young participants in the United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County's On Track to Success Program will attend a presentation on the Summer Company program and tour the Invest WindsorEssex VR CAVE.

SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE

Women entrepreneurs strike connections at digital conference



▲ Nearly 80 people attended a viewing party at Imagine Cinemas Lakeshore for the StrikeUP 2024 digital conference for women entrepreneurs.

For a second year, the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre hosted a live viewing party to bring StrikeUP, a digital conference for women entrepreneurs, to local audiences. StrikeUP 2024: Driving Change Windsor-Essex Viewing Party took place Feb. 29 at Imagine Cinemas Lakeshore with nearly 80 women entrepreneurs and ecosystem partners attending. Those who attended the virtual conference were able to build local connections with other women entrepreneurs while discussing key takeaways from the presentations.

The event was supported by local partners WEtech Alliance, Community Futures Essex County and EPICentre. StrikeUP Canada is Canada's flagship digital conference convening women entrepreneurs and the women entrepreneurship ecosystem, with a united vision of equity and inclusive economic growth through entrepreneurship

Digital Main Street program concludes after assisting 1,300 local businesses



▲ Laura Tucker, owner of Bergeron Art + Frame, received business support from the Digital Service Squad and a grant from Digital Main Street.

During the first quarter of 2024, the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre's Digital Service Squad (DSS) supported Windsor-Essex businesses through the Digital Main Street (DMS) program. The DSS provided 146 consultations to 101 businesses. The one-on-one assistance to brick-and-mortar small businesses helped them grow their digital presence and adopt innovative technologies. In addition to offering hands-on advisory and technical support, the DSS also assisted businesses in applying for Digital Transformation Grants, which provided brick-and-mortar small businesses with a \$2,500 grant to support their digital transformation projects. During this period, 23 grants were awarded, totaling \$57,500 in funds distributed to Windsor-Essex businesses. The DSS also hosted Entrepreneur Toolbox, a four-part lunch-and-learn seminar series that covered topics such as AI for small businesses, email marketing with MailChimp and SEO strategies. The Digital Main Street program's delivery has had an outstanding and

lasting impact in Windsor-Essex. Since the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre received funding for a Digital Service Squad in 2019, 1,300 Windsor-Essex businesses have received advisory support and over \$1.1 million in grants have been awarded to 447 local businesses. The Digital Main Street program concluded in March 2024.

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

IWE joins the Temporary Foreign Worker Community Conversation Forum



◀ (L-R) Peter Sulman, CK LIP; Marion Fantetti, Invest WindsorEssex; Robyn Hodge, LAW; Laura Strathdee, WECHC; Andrea Steele, Active Care Response team; and Bel Jamieson, North Lambton Community Health Centre.

On March 7, 2024, supporters of the migrant worker community gathered for another Community Conversation event, this time to learn about the outcomes of the TeaMWork Project over the last two years, an initiative lead by the Windsor-Essex Local Immigration Partnership (WE LIP) and funded by Employment & Social Development Canada under the Migrant Worker Support Program.

The TeaMWork Project supports migrant workers across the Windsor-Sarnia economic region (Windsor-Essex, Chatham-Kent, and Sarnia Lambton), and engaged 11 Sub-Agreement Holders to deliver projects that include a suite of services critical to migrant workers throughout the region with information and supports while living in Canada.

As a member of the TeaMWork Project Steering Committee, Marion Fantetti, from IWE’s BRE team joined a panel with community partners from CK LIP, LAW, WECHC, Active Care Response team and North Lambton Community Health Centre. The panel was moderated by Irek Kusmierczyk, MP Windsor-Tecumseh, and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Official Languages, who was involved in the initial 2020 Community Conversation, which sparked the development of a local action plan to identify and address the needs of the migrant worker community. The panel shared outcomes from the TeaMWork Project including lessons learned, best practices, successes, the importance of research and data, the economic impact of the agri-food sector across our counties and the contribution of guest workers, how to best include employers in the outreach and engagement with workers and next steps to continue delivering these critical services.

CanCham webinar: Ontario/Windsor-Essex - Driving the future of the automotive industry



Along with the Automobility and Innovation team, the Business Retention and Expansion team was pleased to share a presentation on the future of the automotive industry as part of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce of Mexico’s celebration of Ontario month in Mexico. The webinar was also supported by the Ontario government’s Trade and Investment Office in Mexico and provided the opportunity to connect with Mexican automotive companies interested in doing business in or expanding to Ontario.

◀ Top left, Christophe Chaffat, Ontario’s Mexico City Trade and Investment Office with Daash Hussain, Invest Ontario. Bottom left, Wendy Stark and Ed Dawson, Invest WindsorEssex.

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Workshop series - Opportunities in the Electric Vehicle Supply Chain



Following the success of two previous workshops in 2022 and in response to continued interest by local companies in becoming part of the electric vehicle supply chain, IWE was able to utilize funding provided by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) to offer this series of four workshops in Windsor-Essex in February. The workshops helped participants identify opportunities for their companies in the electric vehicle supply chain. PEM Motion, the German company behind the Canadian Automobility Hub, together with Automobility Enterprises, delivered the workshops. The content of these workshops was tailored to four different audience groups, depending on the day. Monday's session was directed at a general audience; Tuesday was aimed at automation companies; Wednesday's workshop was for tool, die, mold and machining companies; and Thursday's content was specific to parts manufacturers. Approximately 70 people attended the workshops.

AUTOMOBILITY AND INNOVATION

Consumer Electronics Show 2024



▲ CES crowd in Las Vegas.

IWE's Automobility and Innovation Centre's (AIC) Program Manager, Mackenzie Habash, represented the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network's (OVIN) Windsor-Essex Regional Technology Development Site (WE RTDS) at this year's Consumer Electronics Show – the most powerful tech event in the world. The goal was to learn about the latest trends and innovations surrounding autotech and mobility, as well as to find startups and small and-medium sized enterprises that would benefit from the **Ontario Conversion Package** and **other programs** that we offer. Attending the show proved to be beneficial as there were over 10 leads generated that requested follow-up and further information on how the WE RTDS team can support their efforts to potentially enter into the Canadian market.

Electric Autonomy Innovation Technology Conference



IWE's AIC Program Manager, Kassem Nizam, attended the Electric Autonomy EV Innovation and Technology Conference in Toronto. This event is pivotal for the transformation within the electric vehicle (EV) industry and is made up of companies, projects, partnerships in critical minerals, battery resources, advanced manufacturing, vehicle components, battery production and EV assembly. Kassem engaged with multiple industry leaders and created significant connections with Ontario-based EV startups, including QuantumEV and NEO Battery Materials. The event generated four leads and culminated in one project, with Kassem actively pursuing the remaining three leads.

◀ Invest WindsoEssex Program Manager, Kassem Nizam, at the Electric Autonomy Show in Toronto.

AUTOMOBILITY AND INNOVATION

IWE's Talent Attraction Specialist hits the road to promote Windsor-Essex



Talent attraction initiatives have seen a notable increase during the first quarter of 2024. IWE's Talent Attraction Specialist, Jessica McCarthy, has attended over 20 career-focused events since the beginning of the year. The events were split between Windsor-Essex and outside of the region. Some notable career events included Dalhousie University in Halifax, which has a research collaboration with Tesla. Jessica also attended the University of Windsor's Engineering Career Fair, engaging with students on all the opportunities that the Windsor-Essex EV sector offers. The [EVCareers](#) website has gained over 1,300 contacts and registrations since the site was launched in January. The supporting talent attraction campaign has generated a large interest in the Windsor-Essex region as a premier career destination.

◀ Jessica McCarthy, IWE's talent attraction specialist with Peter Moses, Dalhousie University student.

NGen N3 Summit



▲ Crowd at NGen N3 Summit in Toronto.

IWE's AIC Program Manager, Kassem Nizam, attended the NGen N3 Summit in Toronto in the first quarter, which showcased this year's theme of what is 'New, Now and Next' in advanced manufacturing. The event brought together manufacturers and startups from across the country and highlighted the evolving advancements and hard work being done in manufacturing, more specifically, in automotive manufacturing. Kassem connected with various startups in the manufacturing space, such as Autometrics out of Toronto, who expressed interest in doing business in the Windsor-Essex region. Kassem also generated multiple leads which led to follow-up calls with startups from across the province.

AUTOMOBILITY AND INNOVATION

Driving Innovation: The Future Mobility Challenge inspires young innovators



▲ Left to right Mackenzie Habash, program manager, IWE; Sam Branton, manager of talent programs and engagement, WEtech Alliance; Scott Fairley, founder and CEO, Optimotive; Amber Mac, speaker, author, host, entrepreneur; Yvonne Pilon, president and CEO, WEtech Alliance.

In March, the Windsor-Essex Regional Technology Development Site (WE RTDS), in collaboration with WEtech Alliance, proudly hosted the learning component of their annual hackathon, The Future Mobility Challenge. This in-person event brought together over 70 students, alongside a virtual audience, and covered topics pertaining to automobility and the emerging technologies sector. The overarching aim was to explore the potential of these sectors and cultivate entrepreneurial opportunities for the students.

At the heart of the event were two distinguished keynote speakers. The first speaker, Scott Fairly, CEO of Optimotive, brought invaluable industry insights, shedding light on the latest advancements and future trajectories within automobility and robotics. His wealth of experience provided participants with a deeper understanding of the evolving landscape and the opportunities it presents.

The second speaker, Amber Mac, an award-winning host and entrepreneur, inspired participants to embrace innovation, offering invaluable advice on leveraging emerging technologies as catalysts for entrepreneurial success. Her motivational words resonated with aspiring innovators, providing confidence to pursue their ventures boldly.

CORPORATE MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Marketing and Communications department focuses on creating strategies that support business development initiatives within the areas of business retention and expansion, investment attraction, automobility and innovation and entrepreneurship. 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 and Communications maintains corporate brand standards and brand image across all media.

Website Analytics

investwindsor.essex.com

Users – 27,758
Page views – 49,052
New visitors – 98%
Returning visitors – 2%

webusinesscentre.com

Users – 16,295
Page views – 38,510
New visitors – 88%
Returning visitors – 12%

Top Site Visitors



Canada



Poland



USA



India



Nigeria

Social Media Analytics

Invest WindsorEssex

@investwindsor.essex
 @_investwe

Total fans – 27,955
Total impressions – 601,886
Total engagement – 13,402

SBEC

@webusinesscentre
 @wesmallbusiness

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

WINDSOR-ESSEX, ONTARIO: A region on the rise

FASTEST GROWING LOCAL ECONOMY IN CANADA



A REGION ON THE RISE
Windsor-Essex, Ontario is undergoing transformational projects and once-in-a-generation infrastructure development.



FOUR GREAT REASONS WHY...

- 1

LOCATION

 - Busiest Canada-United States border: \$1 billion Cdn daily
 - At the heart of the richest consumer market in the world, with more than 200 million people located within a 13-hour drive
- 2

INCENTIVES

 - No development charges
 - Expedited building permit process
 - Tax grants
 - Available serviced land
 - Competitive land costs and lease rates
- 3

TALENT

 - Highly educated, skilled and diversified workforce
 - Over 13,000 graduates annually from local post-secondary institutions
- 4

AFFORDABLE

 - Attractive cost of living and housing costs
 - High quality of life in one of Canada's most affordable communities

OVER \$6 BILLION IN INVESTMENT AND 4,000 JOB OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE REGION



JOIN CANADA'S FASTEST GROWING EV SECTOR
Advance your career in Windsor-Essex, Ontario.



DETROIT, MICHIGAN (1.6KM AWAY)



A GATEWAY TO NORTH AMERICA
The region offers all the charms of a close-knit community with access to the business and lifestyle amenities of a metropolis.



HOUSING PRICES 41% LOWER THAN PROVINCIAL AVERAGE



AFFORDABLE LIVING AT ITS BEST
Enjoy a high quality of life in Canada's most southern community.





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INVESTWINDSORSEX.COM

FDI brochure updates

In the first quarter of 2024, the Marketing and Communications team updated several foreign direct investment brochures with current data to reflect the latest investments in the region.

Website migration to new platform

The Marketing and Communications team completed the migration of the Invest WindsorEssex and the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre websites to an industry-standard, content management system (CMS), WordPress. Overall, the new WordPress CMS will allow for:

- More efficient online event and registration management
- Better site selector/data display tool integration
- More control over design and layout and therefore less cost for support and customization
- Better user experience for both web administrators and visitors
- Improved integration between both sites
- Better customer service from a reputable, local company

Through this transition, the team also took the opportunity to update all regional data and content.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS



This Month in Automobility in Q1

The Marketing and Communications team published “This month in automobility” newsletter which highlights the most recent announcements and developments in the automobility sector impacting the Windsor-Essex region. Read the newsletters:

January

February

March



Automate Canada

The Marketing and Communications team developed an ad to promote the upcoming **Emerging Technologies in Automation Conference and Trade Show** for the spring edition of the **Automate Canada Magazine**.



Biz X Magazine

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre placed an advertisement in the March edition of Biz X Magazine to promote the Summer Company program.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Promoting the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre's events and programs



Social media campaign to promote the services offered by the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre



A year-long social media campaign was launched to promote the services and programs offered by the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre. The first quarter of 2024 promoted the support and services that SBEC offers as well as the Summer Company program.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS



Strike-Up Viewing Party

The Marketing and Communications team developed promotional assets and executed a social media plan pre and post event for the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre’s Strike-up Viewing party held on Thursday, Feb. 29.

Sponsorships



WEST International Women’s Day Gala

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre sponsored the WEST International Women’s Day Gala. One of the benefits of the sponsorship was an advertisement in the event program guide.

National Engineering Month and Ontario Society of Professional Engineers Partnership

The Marketing and Communications team has confirmed a partnership with the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, which includes sponsorship recognition during National Engineering Month (March 2024) as well as participation in three career events taking place in Markham on April 16, Ottawa on May 1 and Windsor on Oct. 28, website banner ads, 2 ½ page ads in the OSPE Voice magazine, a direct email to their membership as well as an interview with Jessica McCarthy to develop a blog post about her role in attracting more engineers and professional talent to the Windsor-Essex region.



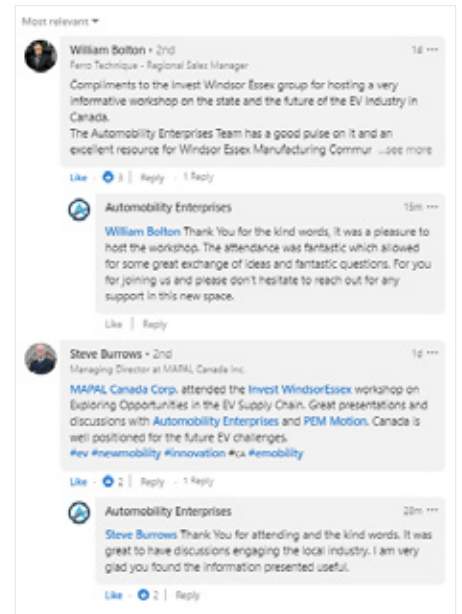
MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Event Marketing

Exploring opportunities in the EV supply chain

The Marketing and Communications team executed all aspects of the four-day in-person EV events. Marketing assets were developed, that included social media, e-mail communications and registration page development. Event management and logistics were coordinated by the team.

These events were made possible with funding by FedDev Ontario. The program included presentations by Automobility Enterprises, PEM Motion and NGEN. Over 67 participants engaged in networking opportunities and interactive question-and-answer sessions. Plans are underway for these events in Hamilton, Ontario.



Future Mobility Challenge



The Marketing and Communications team helped promote 'Navigating the Future: Mobility and Emerging Technologies,' an information session and extension of the Future Mobility Challenge (FMC) that Invest WindsorEssex hosted in Feb. and Nov. of 2023. The FMC is a dynamic event that brings together young innovators, students and classrooms for a vibrant discussion on the future of mobility powered by Invest WindsorEssex, WEtech Alliance, Windsor-Essex Regional Technology Development Site (WE RTDS) and the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN).

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Media Coverage

Highlights:

[Project Arrow showed off what Canadian auto technology can do. Now comes phase 2](#)

[Windsor industrial real estate prices smashing records](#)

[Windsor/Sarnia part of \\$8-million automobility pilot project](#)

[Automobility News | January](#)

[Automobility News | February](#)

[Automobility News | March](#)

[Workforce WindsorEssex Releases EV Sector Talent Development, Attraction, and Retention Toolkit](#)



PERFORMANCE METRICS 2024

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

\$85,873,580

(IA/BRE/SBEC/AI)

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

- 36** Expansions Facilitated (IA/BRE/SBEC)
- 434** New Jobs Facilitated (IA/BRE/SBEC)
- 25** Priority Files (IA)
- 38** Business Startups (SBEC)
- 1** Funding Applications and Joint Papers Developed (AI)

Business Support Sessions

72 Sessions (BRE/SBC/AI)

838 Attendees (BRE/SBC/AI)

Top Economic Priorities as reported by Windsor-Essex Businesses

- 1** Labour force challenges - continued shortfalls in labour/talent pools across all sectors and growing concern for labour resources as new infrastructure projects come on-line and companies are met with increased labour costs.
- 2** Housing and labour - a two-fold challenge where demand for housing is outweighing the skilled labour capacity and in-turn, talent attraction is stymied by lack of available and accessible housing.
- 3** Rising energy costs (electricity and natural gas) - impacting the bottom line across all sectors (especially agri-greenhouse and manufacturing) with very few programs/incentives to mitigate the impact.
- 4** Inflation and geo-political uncertainty - rising interest rates deeply impacting small & medium-size businesses across all key sectors and lack of confidence to re-finance and make capital expenditure commitments is impeding growth and creating a barrier to forecasting special projects and expansions. Some industries are softening and there is an uneasy business climate due to uncertainty regarding the U.S. presidential election-volatility and threat of tariffs.
- 5** Small business - struggling with COVID-19 loan repayments with inflation impacting the ability to forecast/schedule repayment of pandemic recovery loans.

Regional Economic Indicators †



Note: The above figures reflect all of Windsor and Essex County Q4 2023 to Q1 2024.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey custom tabulation.