

QUARTERLY REPORT

Q4

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 October to December 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.

From the interim CEO's desk



Dear Stakeholders,

As we approach the end of the year, I am pleased to share highlights from our recent quarterly report. The team at Invest WindsorEssex (IWE) has worked tirelessly to advance initiatives that strengthen our region's economic vitality and global competitiveness.

The fourth quarter of 2024 was marked by significant milestones. A clean room panel manufacturer established its Ontario hub in Tecumseh, bringing a \$2-million investment and creating over 10 new jobs. A Michigan-based automotive seating R&D company expanded into Essex County, contributing \$5 million in investment and 50 engineering roles, further boosting our automobility sector.

The Starter Company PLUS program supported 20 new entrepreneurs, and the W.E. Shop Local Pop-Up at Devonshire Mall provided local businesses with valuable exposure and community engagement opportunities. Additionally, IWE participated in the K-Globe Summit and hosted South Korean startups, strengthening partnerships and securing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Korea Venture Business Association.

The Emerging Technologies in Automation Conference set new attendance records, emphasizing Windsor-Essex's leadership in advanced manufacturing and automation. The Battery Boost program launched with \$3.8 million in funding, paving the way for workforce development in EV battery manufacturing. By leveraging core funding from the City of Windsor and the County of Essex, the program secured an additional government grant, enabling the upskilling of 400 employees from across WindsorEssex for roles at the NextStar Energy facility and other supply chain companies.

Looking ahead to 2025, Windsor-Essex is set to lead the nation in GDP growth per capita and rank second in overall GDP growth. This achievement underscores our region's resilience and innovative drive. Our priorities for the coming year include diversifying regional industries, fostering entrepreneurship, and building international partnerships to attract investment. These efforts align with Windsor-Essex's growth trajectory, driven by innovation and collaboration.

In organizational news, I am pleased to welcome Keith Andrews as IWE's new Strategic Advisor to the Board of Directors and Chief Operating Officer, effective January 1, 2025. Keith brings extensive leadership experience and a deep commitment to our community. Over the next six months, he will lead the development of a strategic and organizational review that will establish a framework aligns priorities and structure that will position IWE for continued success.

As Windsor-Essex experiences unprecedented growth opportunities, I will continue my role as Vice President of Investment Attraction and Strategic Initiatives, focusing my efforts on driving transformative investments for the region.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Invest WindsorEssex. Together, we are building a prosperous and innovative future for our community.

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JG'.

Joe Goncalves

Vice President of Investment Attraction and Strategic Initiatives

INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

Clean room panel manufacturer selects Tecumseh as Ontario hub



▲ Mississauga-based company is preparing to get its manufacturing facility ready.

A Mississauga-based engineering design and manufacturing company, specializing in clean room solutions for the automotive and pharmaceutical sectors across North America, has established a new subsidiary in Windsor-Essex with a nearly \$2-million Cdn investment in capital expenditures. Located at 5815 Outer Dr., Unit 300, in the Town of Tecumseh, this new facility will enable in-house production of prefabricated composite panels for modular clean rooms. This new operation enhances quality control, reduces reliance on external manufacturers and accelerates project timelines.

The company plans to create over 10 new jobs as it expands its client base and explores opportunities in emerging sectors, including EV batteries, medical devices and life sciences. This investment contributes to the region’s economic diversification.

The Investment Attraction team has been supporting the company by assisting with the site selection process, including site identification, workforce data analysis and connections to regional service providers.

Automotive seating R&D company establishes Canadian hub in Tecumseh

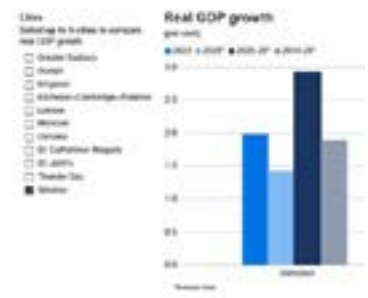
A Michigan-based automotive seating systems company is expanding its footprint into Canada with a new research and development (R&D) facility in the Town of Tecumseh. The new site will house several test lines to prototype products ahead of mass production. The \$5-million Cdn investment will create 50 engineering-related jobs and further strengthen the region’s automobility sector.

The Investment Attraction team played a key role in the site selection process, showcasing Windsor-Essex’s unique advantages, including its highly educated and cost-effective labour force, a growing EV battery-focused ecosystem and access to government support programs. Windsor-Essex’s competitive edge was key in securing this project, and the Investment Attraction team will continue to support the company by assisting in attracting top talent for this R&D hub.

Town of LaSalle welcomes \$200-million commercial investment project

According to the Major City Insights report by the Conference Board of Canada, the Windsor-Essex region is poised for significant growth, with real GDP expected to expand by 2.9% annually between 2025 and 2028. The region is also experiencing record-breaking population growth, with 28,015 new residents having arrived since 2021. This population surge is primarily driven by the anchor investment of the NextStar battery plant, along with over 50 other investments secured in the past two years.

As a result of this exponential growth and investment, local development projects and new construction are at an all-time high. Notably, the Town of LaSalle, one of Essex County’s fastest-growing communities, recently welcomed its largest commercial investment, a \$200-million development by Petretta Construction and the D’Amore Group located at the corner of Heritage Drive and Sandwich West Parkway. This commercial hub, set to feature national retail brands and hotel chains, is expected to create 400 to 500 jobs over time — another great addition to the region’s economic diversification.



INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

Advancing partnerships with South Korean startups through K-Globe Summit and Windsor-Essex visits



▲ Invest WindsorEssex's Max Jung (centre) and eight South Korean startups at the K-Globe event in Toronto.



▲ Local solar panel company, Green SunRising introducing their products and technology to South Korean startups.



▲ (L-R): Invest WindsorEssex's Max Jung with INKE President Michelle Kim after a Memorandum of Understanding is officially signed between both organizations.

The 2024 K-Globe Canada Korea Startup Summit held in Toronto on Nov. 11 and 12 brought together eight South Korean startups specializing in industries like AI, IoT, EV batteries, robotics, ESS and renewable energy. These companies were selected by the Korean government for their technological potential. Alongside them, officials from the Korean Consulate, Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency, Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network and Invest Ontario attended the event to foster international collaboration. In coordination with the summit, Invest WindsorEssex (IWE) facilitated the visit of four promising South Korean startups to the Windsor-Essex region on Nov. 13. During their visit, IWE introduced the startups to relevant local businesses to explore potential collaborations. These connections included a solar panel recycling startup that was introduced to Green SunRising, a local solar panel manufacturer, an EV battery R&D and inspection systems startup who met with Flex-Ion, a local battery R&D facility and a cold-chain logistics startup who met with Laser Transport, a local logistics solutions company.

Additionally, IWE presented the Windsor-Essex value proposition for North American expansion. Adam Castle from WETech shared how their resources could assist the startups in establishing a Canadian presence, strengthening the partnership among WETech, IWE and South Korean companies.

A significant outcome of these efforts was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between IWE, the International Network of Korean Entrepreneurs (INKE) and the Korea Venture Business Association (KOVA). This MOU solidifies a framework where KOVA and INKE will introduce more South Korean companies to the Windsor-Essex region, while IWE will provide industry engagement and business opportunities for local companies. This initiative underscores IWE's commitment to fostering global partnerships, enhancing the region's foreign direct investment potential while driving economic growth through strategic international collaborations.

Investment Attraction attended Web Summit 2024 in Lisbon



▲ Joe Goncalves attends the world's largest tech conference Web Summit in Lisbon, Portugal.



▲ (L-R): Luís Sequeira, economic counsellor, Embassy of Portugal in Canada, Joe Goncalves, Invest WindsorEssex and Dr. Jimi Tjongs, University of Windsor at Web Summit.

Invest WindsorEssex's Joe Goncalves, interim CEO and vice president investment attraction & strategic initiatives attended the 2024 Web Summit conference in Lisbon, a premier technology event that drew over 70,000 participants. During the conference, the Investment Attraction team engaged with several European tech startups to highlight the Windsor-Essex value proposition and the advantages of establishing operations in the region. Follow-up efforts with identified leads are ongoing. Additionally, opportunities for research and development collaboration between Portuguese universities and the University of Windsor were explored, with plans for further engagement in the near future.

SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE

Starter Company PLUS supports 20 new entrepreneurs

The **2024 Starter Company PLUS program** returned in November with 20 new Windsor-Essex entrepreneurs participating. Starter Company PLUS is supported by the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade and provides individuals starting, expanding or purchasing a small business with training, mentorship and a grant of up to \$5,000. This year’s program intake drew interest from 143 individuals, with 57 of them going on to apply to Starter Company PLUS. The businesses accepted to the program deliver a range of products and services from many industries including healthcare, hospitality, professional services, manufacturing, personal care services, janitorial services, arts and recreation and education.



▲ Starter Company Plus participants completed a week of business training led by BizLaunch, followed by group mentorship sessions and one-on-one business coaching.

Starter Company PLUS program participants:

Anchor Leather Design	Mahon Nursing Professional Corp.
Balanced Fitness Wellness Studio	Musicland
Cementology Incorporated	The Oven Door
Daisy & Co. Wine Bar	The Topsy Toucan
DustFree Cleaning	Sweet Retreat by VANtastic Wellness
Ember Ridge Celebrations of Life	TOTO Café Inc.
FEPSS	Rose City 360
Ford City Potters	Weldok
Genio Tech Robotics	Work Lingo
Junk4Less	Yolanda’s Woodslee Pharmacy

The participants completed a week of business training led by BizLaunch, followed by group mentorship sessions and one-on-one business coaching. They also successfully pitched their business plans to program facilitators and members of the business and professional community. The program is proudly supported by professional mentors and business pitch judges from the following Windsor-Essex companies: Miller Canfield, Mainstream Marketing, Cedar Valley, Whamburg, Zuleeats, Light Up Works, Midwest Accounting, Work with Wanda, Shred Shop and Edward Jones. Starter Company PLUS will conclude in spring 2025.

Devonshire Mall W.E. Shop Local Pop-Up



▲ (L-R): Allison Mistakidis and Katie Stokes, owners of Whiskeyjack Boutique.

In honour of Small Business Month in October, the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre (SBEC) launched the W.E. Shop Local Pop-Up at Devonshire Mall from Sept. 30 to Nov. 10. This event, a continuation of SBEC’s signature W.E. Shop Local Show, aimed to further support and promote local businesses. A dedicated kiosk in the mall’s south end showcased a rotating selection of six Windsor-Essex small business vendors each week: Whiskeyjack Boutique, Urban Art Market, Corporal4Life Apparel, Montañeros Coffee, Ruscom Maple Products and The Little Petal Truck. These vendors offered a wide range of products, including handmade homewares, jewellery, apparel, flowers, and specialty food items. The initiative highlighted the unique offerings of local businesses, while providing them with valuable exposure to new customers and educating the community on the importance of shopping locally. There was no cost for businesses to participate in the W.E. Shop Local Pop-Up, offering them an excellent opportunity to boost sales and connect with customers.

SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE

F&B businesses join Foodpreneur Advantage

Southwestern Ontario small businesses interested in food and beverage manufacturing attended **Foodpreneur Advantage** virtual startup seminars this fall. Seminar topics included starting a food business, regulatory compliance, selling to consumers and retailers, costing and pricing, marketing and labelling and packaging. Another round of startup seminars will be hosted virtually starting in January, 2025.

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. A new cohort of businesses joined the fall cohort of the program from across southwestern Ontario, including four Windsor-Essex businesses: Golden Oven Bakery, Just Freeze It Sweets, Iyal and All Season Caribbean Jerk Sauce & Rub. The program began in November and will conclude in March 2025. Foodpreneur Advantage is a collaboration between small business enterprise centres in Windsor-Essex, London, St. Thomas, Chatham, Sarnia, Brampton, Guelph/Wellington and St. Catharines. It is supported by the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario and Libro Credit Union.



▲ Four Windsor-Essex businesses receive eight intensive weeks of industry-led training followed by mentorship.

Business walks promote services and partnerships



▲ (L-R): City of Windsor Councillor Renaldo Agostino; By-law Property Standards Enforcement Lead for the downtown core, Nicole Brush; Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre's Business Advisor, Aparna Krishnamoorthy and Marketing & Entrepreneurship Manager, Natasha Marar.

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre (SBEC) team recently completed their annual business walks throughout Windsor and Essex County. In 2024, SBEC visited 298 businesses across 16 commercial districts in the region. These walks allowed SBEC to connect directly with business owners and operators, offering information about available services and support. During these interactions, the team gathered valuable insights on how businesses are performing, the local business climate, challenges faced and the types of assistance needed. SBEC followed up with advisory support for businesses that requested further help. The next round of business walks will take place in spring 2025. SBEC extends its thanks to regional partners, including BIA coordinators and board members, Community Futures Essex County, and municipal representatives, for their ongoing support of this initiative and for joining SBEC on many of these walks.



▲ The Town of LaSalle Mayor Crystal Meloche; Director of Strategy and Engagement, Dawn Hadre; Executive Director, Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre, Sabrina DeMarco; and Owner/Pharmacy Manager, Malden Health Pharmacy, Naimish Shekhat.



▲ Ottawa Street's Yay for Stray Cat Café, owner Chantelle Gaudette.

SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRE

| Success celebrated at Merry Business Mingle



▲ Entrepreneurs, business professionals and regional partners network during the annual Merry Business Mingle event.

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre celebrated a successful year with the Windsor-Essex business community at its second-annual Merry Business Mingle. This sold-out event on Dec. 4 drew 140 entrepreneur clients, business professionals and regional partners together for a festive evening of networking at Erie St GastroPub in Windsor. Attendees enjoyed appetizers, desserts and drinks, participated in a door prize draw and received free professional headshot photos on site. SBEC looks forward to presenting more networking opportunities for its small business clients, mentors and partners in 2025.

| Events and sponsorships support small businesses

The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre (SBEC) hosted the following in-person and virtual business seminars between October and December:

- **Basics of Starting a Small Business**
- **Basics of Writing a Business Plan**
- **Foodpreneur Advantage: Starting a Food Business & Regulatory Compliance**
- **Foodpreneur Advantage: How to Sell Your Food Product**
- **Foodpreneur Advantage: Costing & Pricing to Make Profits**
- **Foodpreneur Advantage: Marketing & Branding your Food Product**
- **Foodpreneur Advantage: Labelling & Packaging Your Food Product**
- **Foodpreneur Advantage: Selling to Food Retailers**
- **Financial Bootcamp: Know Your Numbers**
- **Financial Foundations: Advanced Financial Statements**
- **Financial Foundations: Maximizing Your Business**
- **Merry Business Mingle**
- **Planning for Business Transitions**
- **Small Business Tax: Sole Proprietors**
- **Small Business Tax: Corporations**

SBEC also supported local business events and initiatives through various sponsorships and partnerships, including the Jingle & Mingle Holiday Lunch & Business Expo, hosted by the Leamington Chamber of Commerce; Ontario Colleges Marketing Competition, hosted by St. Clair College; Biz X Magazine Awards; and 2024 Windsor-Essex Holiday Gift Guide, led by Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island.

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Emerging Technologies in Automation Conference and Trade Show



▲ The BRE team's signature event, Emerging Technologies in Automation, drew its largest attendance to date.

The Emerging Technologies in Automation Conference and Trade Show was held on Oct. 23 at Caesars Windsor, welcoming approximately 370 attendees and 49 exhibitors. The Business Retention and Expansion team has organized this event since 2016 with support from Automate Canada, the Canadian Association of Moldmakers, the Canadian Tooling & Machining Association, the Ontario government and founding partner the National Research Council of Canada's Industrial Research Assistance Program.

This year's keynote speaker was Paul Zikopoulos, vice president, IBM technology sales – skills vitality and enablement, who spoke about generative AI for business. Breakout sessions featured presentations on topics such as artificial intelligence, robotics, the convergence of IT and OT as well as industry-specific technology demonstrations for agri-business, automotive, construction and mold-making companies. Many of the presenters in the breakout sessions were from Windsor-Essex companies. Gold sponsors this year were the University of Windsor and Next Dimension and silver sponsors were Vista Solutions, St. Clair College and Siemens. WEtech Alliance powered the Start-up Zone again this year and Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing sponsored the post-event reception. Additional support was provided by Next Generation Manufacturing Canada (NGen) and the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario). The post-event survey results showed that over 97% of respondents made valuable contacts for their companies at the conference. Next year's date has been set for Oct. 29, 2025.

Windsor-Essex's manufacturing industry highlights career opportunities



▲ Essex Mayor Sherry Bondy joined the MFG Day tour of Atlas Tube in Harrow.

MFG Day is an international effort to show students the opportunities offered by a career in the modern manufacturing industry. This year marked the ninth annual MFG Day in Windsor-Essex. Workforce WindsorEssex, Automate Canada, the Canadian Association of Moldmakers and the Canadian Tooling & Machining Association worked together with Invest WindsorEssex's (IWE) Business Retention and Expansion team to coordinate a program of visits by more than 1,000 students to 23 individual manufacturing locations. With a significant portion of the skilled trades and manufacturing workforce approaching retirement, it is becoming increasingly important for manufacturers to recruit new talent. MFG DAY is a way to demonstrate to students that a career in manufacturing, and particularly in the skilled trades, will offer them a secure, well-paying job and expose them to the latest in technology and automation. This year, municipal elected officials and local economic development officials joined some of the tours. The initiative was supported by IWE's Marketing and Communications team with an extensive organic social media campaign.

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

| BRE and SBEC clients exhibit at Grocery Innovations Canada



▲ Support from BRE and SBEC helped Grape Leaves Foods and Great Lakes Greenhouses to exhibit at Grocery Innovations Canada.

In late October, the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) team partnered with the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Centre (SBEC) team to support their clients' participation in the Ontario pavilion at Toronto's Grocery Innovations Canada trade show, a premier trade show and conference focused on the grocery industry in Canada. The event was hosted by the Federation of Independent Grocers and gathered professionals, suppliers and industry leaders from across the food and grocery sectors. It served as a platform for showcasing new products, technological advancements and innovative solutions for the retail food industry. Great Lakes Greenhouses of Leamington (BRE client) and Grape Leaves Food of Windsor (SBEC client) both participated and made positive connections at the event.

| Webinar: Unlocking International Talent

Business Retention and Expansion team and Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre also partnered to host this webinar in early October in response to requests for information from clients of both departments. Approximately 25 companies attended and heard presentations focused on the various pathways that employers have to recruit international talent. Both Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development delivered presentations providing clarity on the available programs and the procedures employers must follow in hiring employees from abroad.

AUTOMOBILITY AND INNOVATION

| Talent Attraction takes EVCareers.ca across Canada



▲ Harley Noskey of Edmonton recently applied for a job at NextStar Energy.



▲ (L-R) Invest WindsorEssex's Jessica McCarthy, Yashawini Pagadala and Wendy Stark attend the OPSE Engineering Conference.



▲ Invest WindsorEssex's Jessica McCarthy sharing information about EV Careers at the Halifax Career Fair.

The Talent Attraction team wrapped up the year by taking EVCareers.ca across Canada. From Nova Scotia to Alberta, Jessica McCarthy, talent attraction specialist, met with many career seekers to discuss the incredible opportunities in the Windsor-Essex region. Throughout this quarter, Jessica hosted a booth at career fairs and attended conferences in:

- **Calgary, Alberta**
- **Greater Toronto Area**
- **Build a Dream's Dreamer Day and You're Hired (Toronto)**
- **YQG Green Expo (Windsor)**
- **OPSE Engineering Conference (Windsor)**
- **Halifax, Nova Scotia**
- **Edmonton, Alberta**

In Edmonton, IWE's Marketing and Communications team developed a talent attraction campaign that ran for two weeks through Meta, strategically launched to engage job seekers in the area. The marketing campaign successfully raised awareness of opportunities available through EVCareers.ca and promoted jobs at NextStar Energy and other Windsor-Essex companies in the EV battery manufacturing sector.

One notable success story was Harley Noksey, who discovered the campaign online and attended the Edmonton Career Fair to connect with Jessica. Inspired by the available opportunities, Harley has since applied for a Machine Technician role at NextStar Energy and is excited about the prospect of building his career in the Windsor-Essex region.

| WE RTDS joins OVIN Partnering Forum for historic announcement



▲ Invest WindsorEssex's Ed Dawson and Mackenzie Habash with fellow OVIN Regional Technology Development Sites and Central Hub.

The Windsor-Essex Regional Technology Development Site (WE RTDS) participated in the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network (OVIN) Partnering Forum in Toronto on Oct. 8, 2024. The event provided a valuable platform to connect with partners, clients and industry leaders, fostering collaboration and sharing insights about Ontario's evolving automobility sector.

One of the forum highlights included Premier Doug Ford's announcement on OVIN incubators, a collaboration between OVIN and Mercedes-Benz AG. These incubators, the first of their kind in Ontario and Canada, will drive the creation and growth of ventures in the automotive and mobility sectors.

An exciting milestone for the region is the opening of a new incubator at the University of Windsor. This development further solidifies Windsor's role as a hub for automotive innovation, offering startups resources and support to scale and thrive.

AUTOMOBILITY AND INNOVATION

Growing Your Workforce Conference - The Future of Talent and Economic Development in the Electric Vehicle (EV) Industry Panel



▲ (L-R): Justin Falconer, Workforce WindsorEssex; Erin Harrison, Unifor; Chinweizu Okeke, Smart Prosperity Institute and Ed Dawson, Invest WindsorEssex.

On Nov. 22, Ed Dawson, Invest WindsorEssex’s executive director, automobility and innovation centre, participated in an important panel discussion on The Future of Talent and Economic Development in the Electric Vehicle (EV) Industry at the Growing Your Workforce Conference held in the Windsor-Essex region. The panel brought together stakeholders from across the EV sector to address workforce development and recruitment challenges pivotal to driving growth in this transformative industry. Ed Dawson highlighted the journey that has taken place in the region to transition from the Automotive Capital to the Automobility Capital of Canada and how this has culminated in the creation of Canada’s first EV battery manufacturing facility, NextStar Energy, with a supply chain that has followed.

As the adoption of electric vehicles accelerates and technological advancements reshape the landscape, the discussion highlighted the pressing demand for skilled talent, ranging from engineers and technicians to software developers and production specialists. Panelists shared strategies to attract, train, and retain this workforce, offering actionable insights for employers, policymakers and educators. The conversation emphasized the importance of collaboration to strengthen Windsor-Essex’s growing workforce, ensuring Canada remains at the forefront in global electric vehicle innovation and manufacturing.

FedDev Ontario ecosystem site visit



▲ The Windsor-Essex Automobility ecosystem partners from Invest WindsorEssex, WEtech Alliance, the University of Windsor and St. Clair College hosted FedDev Ontario for a site visit.

The Automobility and Innovation team welcomed regional automobility innovation ecosystem partners for a special visit from our funders at the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario). Krystal Hicks, development officer of FedDev Ontario, engaged with our ecosystem to learn more about the impactful projects and initiatives driving automobility advancements in the Windsor-Essex region. During her visit, she experienced an impressive demonstration in the Invest WindsorEssex Virtual Reality CAVE, highlighting one of St. Clair College’s latest projects on digital twinning—an integral part of our collective efforts. We appreciate FedDev Ontario’s continued support, which enables us to drive progress in zero-emission vehicles, battery innovation and electrification advancements.

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 – 12,556
Page views – 34,234
New visitors – 94%
Returning visitors – 15%

webusinesscentre.com

Users – 10,446
Page views – 31,994
New visitors – 97%
Returning visitors – 12%

Top Site Visitors



Canada



USA



India



UK



China

Social Media Analytics

Invest WindsorEssex

@investwindsor.essex
 @_investwe

Total fans – 30,446
Total impressions – 314,147
Total engagement – 11,039

SBEC

@webusinesscentre
 @wesmallbusiness

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Advertising

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

FINANCIAL FOUNDATIONS
Advanced Financial Statements
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre
NOVEMBER 27 + 28 2024

FINANCIAL FOUNDATIONS
Maximizing Your Business
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre
OCTOBER 26 + 27 2024

FINANCIAL FOUNDATIONS
Know Your Numbers
Monday, December 16 9:30am - 12pm
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre
#100

Planning for Business Transitions
Wednesday, November 13, 2024 1:00 - 2:00 PM
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre

SUCCESS STARTS HERE
We have skills and experience to guide you through the process of starting your business. We'll help you understand the legal and financial aspects of your business and how to get started.

Small Business Tax
SOLE PROPRIETORS TAX MONTH 2024
CORPORATE TAX WEEK 2024, WEEK 1

Basics of Writing a Business Plan
Learn the basics of writing a business plan and how to use it to grow your business.
THURSDAY, JULY 18
10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Basics of Starting a Small Business
Everything you need to know when starting your first small business.
DECEMBER 9
9:30 to 2:30 p.m.
Akan Tubal Recreation Centre Lakeshore

Merry Business Mingle
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 11 • 4:00-7:00PM
2 North Wellington Street

SBC Client
Dan & Nicole Gemus
Richmond Popcorn Co.
@Anstenburg

Celebrating Small Business Month OCTOBER 2024
Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre

LEVEL UP your marketing
Reduce a five month no profit to a six month profit for small businesses your business plan

Small Business Month
October is a time to celebrate small businesses and the enormous contributions they make to our local economy. Our team of advisors are here to support you through your journey of starting and growing a successful business in Windsor-Essex.
webusinesscentre.com

▲ Advertisement in Biz X Magazine, Oct. 2024

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Promoting Invest WindsorEssex's services, programs and client's successes on social media



MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

This Month in Automobility in Q4



The Marketing and Communications team published three automobility newsletters, which highlight the most recent announcements and developments in the automobility sector impacting the WindsorEssex region. Read the newsletters [October](#), [November](#) and [December](#)

Battery Boost: Technical Training for Battery Manufacturing Careers program

**Battery Boost
Technical Training
Program**

Battery Boost is an extensive training program funded by UPMK (Canada) (owned by Platts NRI) and the Government of Canada. Administered by Invest WindsorEssex with delivery support from NextGen Energy, this program is designed to prepare participants for careers that include Product and Process Technicians in electric vehicle (EV) battery manufacturing.

Through advanced Virtual Reality (VR) simulations, participants gain hands-on, job-specific training that equips them with the skills needed to thrive in Canada's rapidly growing EV battery manufacturing sector.

The program offers paid training, aiming to help candidates secure a full-time role as a Product OR Process Technician after successful completion of the program. Those who do not successfully complete the program's requirements will have the opportunity for additional unpaid training to support a career in the EV supply chain. There are no direct costs to participants in the Battery Boost program.

Boost Your EV Career!

[Apply to Battery Boost](#)

Note: Qualified candidates will be contacted by email.

The Marketing and Communication team supported the Automobility and Innovation department in launching the Battery Boost program. This included developing the [media release](#) to announce Invest WindsorEssex's program funding of \$3.8 million, creating a [program landing page](#), coordinating all social media assets and a digital campaign.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Sponsorships

YQGgreen Expo



In celebration of Waste Reduction Week in Canada, Invest WindsorEssex, in partnership with the City of Windsor Economic Development Department were the event’s official cosponsors and hosts of the Fireside Chat Reception for the YQGgreen Expo. The event also featured green business exhibits, an environmental expert panel discussion and a community recycling drop-off.

Women Driven Mobility YQG Breakfast



Invest WindsorEssex sponsored the Women Driven Mobility YQG Breakfast for the third consecutive year. The event highlighted innovative urban transportation: smart vehicles and sustainable cities.

WIFF



Invest WindsorEssex supported the Windsor International Film

Festival as a sponsor for the Industry Program. The program’s events included in-depth panel discussions and workshops featuring industry professionals and nominated filmmakers. Invest WindsorEssex recognizes the potential for growth and success within our local film industry and understands the importance of continuing to support and build a vibrant arts community.

Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island Holiday Gift Guide



The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre (SBEC) partnered once again with Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island to publish the Windsor Essex Holiday Gift Guide. The edition included a 32-page guide packed with unique, locally made gift ideas from Windsor-Essex small businesses and entrepreneurs. SBEC had the opportunity to showcase 65 clients and their variety of amazing products that were perfect for the holiday season.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Sponsorships

Leamington District Chamber of Commerce Jingle & Mingle Business Expo



The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre sponsored the Leamington District Chamber of Commerce lunch and business expo. The event included networking and Danielle Campo McLeod, a resiliency and leadership expert as the guest speaker.

Ontario Society of Professional Engineers partnership

Invest WindsorEssex partnered with the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE). The partnership benefits supported IWE’s talent attraction efforts and included participation in OSPE’s E3 employment events in Markham, Ottawa and Windsor. Other benefits included targeted advertising in The Voice magazine and banner ads in “In The Know” online publication, mentions on social media platforms and inclusion in direct email campaigns to OSPE members. These efforts showcased Windsor-Essex’s thriving job market and resources available to support careers in major industries such as advanced manufacturing, technology and next-generation vehicle production.

Biz X Magazine Business Excellence Awards



The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre supported Biz X Magazine once again for their 27th annual Business Excellence Awards. The awards recognize outstanding businesses and individuals in the Windsor-Essex region, celebrating their contribution to the local economy and community.

Ontario Colleges Marketing Competition



The Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre (SBEC) sponsored the Ontario Colleges Marketing Competition hosted by St. Clair College. The SBEC team participated as judges for the competition and had a booth to provide information on the services and programs available to entrepreneurs.



Advertisement in The Voice Magazine.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Event Marketing

Emerging Technologies in Automation Conference and Trade Show



The Marketing and Communications team supported the Business Retention and Expansion team with the development of a marketing strategy for the Emerging Technologies in Automation conference that included a robust digital-paid and organic advertising campaign to promote the event. The [conference website](#) was regularly updated to include up-to-the-minute agenda details, speaker profiles and sponsorships. The Marketing and Communications team also developed and maintained the event registration page and managed all media relations around the conference. Read the [media release](#).

Small Business Month's W.E. Shop Local Pop-Up



The Marketing and Communications team supported the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Centre with the development of promotional assets and a marketing strategy that included [weekly social media videos](#), as well as a robust digital-paid and organic advertising campaign to promote the event. Read the [media release](#).

2024 Canada's Infrastructure Conference



▲ Panelists from the Windsor-Essex region include second from left, Jim Lyons, Windsor Construction Association; Joe Goncalves, Invest WindsorEssex and Charl van Niekerk, Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority.

On Nov. 4, Joe Goncalves, Interim CEO and vice president, investment attraction and strategic initiatives took part in the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships' 2024 Canada's Infrastructure Conference. Joe joined a powerful panel to discuss economic development in the Windsor-Essex region, showcasing how transformational projects like the Gordie Howe International Bridge, the Highway 3 widening, the Southwest Detention Centre and the future regional acute care hospital project can serve as a model for other cities. These initiatives are making a tangible impact, strengthening our region's economy and fostering growth.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Media Coverage

Invest WindsorEssex opens applications for new \$3.8-million EV battery training program

Virtualware Canada joins forces with Invest WindsorEssex and NextStar Energy in \$3.8 million battery manufacturing training program

Invest WindsorEssex facing major financial deficit

Charged Coaching: Federal government to invest in VR training for 400 EV sector workers in Windsor area

New battery manufacturing training program accepting applications

Want to work at NextStar Energy? New training is available

Funding announced to train 400 workers in battery manufacturing careers program

Battery boost: Feds to help train 400 would-be EV sector workers in Windsor, Ont. With VR

Irek Kusmierczyk, Windsor-Essex MP joins CKLW The Morning Drive to talk about the federal government's partnership with Invest WindsorEssex and Palette Skills to launch Battery Boost Program (audio)

Windsor's high unemployment rate doesn't paint the whole picture: Experts

WEtech Alliance gets \$1.275 million in funding to expand Windsor programs

Unwrap serenity: The ultimate guide to gifts of rest and relaxation for the holidays

Bring used batteries, clothing, eyeglasses... to the WFCU Centre

Invest WindsorEssex describes services, expresses need for properties to be shovel-ready

Expert from IBM to pitch embracing AI for local businesses at Windsor conference today

Mercedes-Benz targets Windsor for automotive innovation centre

Record number of Windsor-Essex companies open doors on Manufacturing Day

Windsor-Essex pop-up small businesses featured at Devonshire Mall

Giving thanks to small businesses and the people behind them (page 18)

Young entrepreneurial journey begins with the SBEC (page 21)

Dream big, start small (page 22)

6 small businesses to showcase wares at Devonshire Mall pop-up

Devonshire Mall pop-up showcases local small businesses

Pop-up sales event held at Devonshire Mall to promote local small businesses

Devonshire Mall showcasing local small businesses with pop-up sales event

Media Releases

Windsor-Essex, Ontario workers to receive high-demand, advanced simulation skills training for immediate placement in EV supply chain

Emerging technologies conference attracts hundreds to experience the latest in automation and artificial intelligence

Windsor-Essex to host annual automation conference showcasing leading industry innovations

Manufacturers open doors to students and jobseekers to highlight local career opportunities for 10th annual Manufacturing Day

Devonshire Mall pop-up showcases local small businesses



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

\$204,403,590

(IA/BRE/SBEC/AI)

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

29 Expansions Facilitated (IA/BRE/SBEC)

323 New Jobs Facilitated (IA/BRE/SBEC)

48 Priority Files (IA)

18 Business Startups (SBEC)

Business Support Sessions

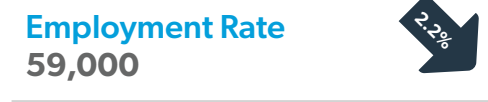
48 Sessions (BRE/SBC/AI)

634 Attendees (BRE/SBC/AI)

Top Economic Priorities as reported by Windsor-Essex Businesses

- 1 Potential US tariffs – Over 80% of local manufacturers export to the U.S. Many also import raw materials from the U.S. The impact of 25% tariffs on all imports from Canada announced by incoming President Donald Trump would have a devastating impact on local industry.
- 2 Labour force challenges - Many companies across multiple sectors continue to have unfilled positions. Filling those positions along with jobs available with employers new to the region will depend to a large extent on attracting new talent to Windsor-Essex.
- 3 Rising energy costs (electricity and natural gas) – Energy costs remain high and continue to impact companies across all sectors, particularly greenhouse operators and manufacturers.
- 4 Interest rates and input costs – Although the Bank of Canada has started reducing interest rates, the changes are .25% at a time and don't help companies who already have loans locked in at a higher rate.
- 5 Supply chain issues - Many businesses are still facing supply chain issues, both in terms of raw materials and in terms of machinery and equipment they need to order.

Regional Economic Indicators †



Note: The above figures reflect all of Windsor and Essex County Q3 2024 to Q4 2024.
Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey custom tabulation.