FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WEDC LAUNCHES NEW SOFTECH ALLIANCE

Windsor — The WindsorEssex Development Commission is launching the region's first alliance of local businesses and researchers, with a focus on system technologies and services.

Dr. Akshai Aggarwal of the University of Windsor's School of Computer Science and the WEDC jointly conceived this initiative. Aggarwal and Dr. Richard Caron, dean of the Faculty of Science, believe that the region's economy will benefit from the continued development of a strong computer software sector.

Softech Alliance (SA) is being developed in partnership with the Ministry for Small Business & Entrepreneurship, Ontario Centres of Excellence, National Research Council and local educational institutions.

"The Alliance will reflect critical interest and investment in current and emerging software and systems technologies," said Rakesh Naidu, WEDC's director of business attraction.

The Softech Alliance has a targeted plan of action:

- identify common needs and means of solution support (e.g., education, training, promotion, employee recruitment of new graduates or from outside the region)
- provide local businesses with additional technology resources to help them grow (gain a sustainable, competitive advantage)
- establish better means of using available hardware/software infrastructure and human resources at educational institutions (e.g., research and product development, advisory support)
- link local companies with ICT needs and interests (e.g. a major utility company in the region has expressed interest in increasing sourcing to qualified local companies)
- build partnerships to support new entrepreneurs, enhance skills development and workforce competitiveness and respond quickly to new market opportunities

Naidu says the objective of SA is to "leverage local technical resources and accelerate the growth of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector of our local economy."

On Aggarwal's blog, called Intelligent Motor City, he advocates joint efforts by the School of Computer Science and local software businesses to make it happen.

SA's first meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 3, from 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. at Beach Grove Golf & Country Club, 14134 Riverside Dr. East, Main Hall. The agenda will focus on the development of the SA.

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