

14,000 Jobs at Risk

“The embattled Machine, Tool, Die and Mold (MTDM) industry in Windsor Essex, once the manufacturing Mecca of North America, currently has from 10,000 – 14,000 highly paid skilled jobs, representing the largest industry sector of employment in the region. That’s more than Ford, Chrysler and GM put together in this town,” says Dan Moyhanan, President of Canadian Association of Mouldmakers and Platinum Tool Technologies.

“Locally we can offer more than 600,000 hours of machining capacity for a full variety of operational time, and the ability to machine to tolerances as tight as 1 micron,” Moynahan says. The available capacity combined with the density of skilled labour in this region makes it a very attractive place for alternative markets to contract for work.

Employment numbers are down significantly from 2004 with the permanent closure of 102 MTDM shops and the loss of as many as 10,000 manufacturing jobs without taking into account the automotive assembly plants.

China currently gets the lion’s share of tooling from the “Detroit 3” (Ford, GM and Chrysler) because of cheap labour and cheap materials.

“But not everything can be made ‘Shanghai Simple’ – there is still a need for high quality work and products in industries that we as a region haven’t focused on - like aerospace, medical and oil and gas, for example,” states Sandy Munro, CEO Lean Design Canada, Inc., a global consulting firm focused on lean principles in design and manufacturing.

“The aircraft industry is moving away from aluminum tooling toward composite and thermo-plastic materials – which Windsor Essex toolmakers have the skills and capacity to do,” believes Munro.

As part of the earlier Diversification Study undertaken by the WindsorEssex Development Commission (WEDC) with the grant from MEDT, thanks to Sandra Pupatello local MPP Windsor West and Minister of Economic Development and Trade, the capabilities and equipment of local manufacturers are being catalogued as a tool for investment, attraction and work opportunities.

The WEDC is offering new hope to local MTDM shops by taking steps to help them to be more competitive with sustainable business practices that are profitable and efficient.

Because of the economic impact of the MTDM sector, there are approximately 70,000 jobs that rely on those companies staying in business and those workers remaining employed.

With money from the MEDT, the WEDC is undertaking one-on-one Lean Manufacturing training delivered in partnership with the internationally renowned Lean Design Canada, Inc. for 20 companies as a pilot study for the Communities in Transition program. Companies that responded to the Diversification Survey sent out to local manufacturers earlier this year will be given the opportunity on a

first-come, first-served basis to participate in the program. MEDT will fund 50% of the effort, while the other 50% (approximately \$5,000 each) will come from the companies.

For information on how to participate, or receive a full copy of the Diversification Study report please visit www.choosewindsorsex.com or contact Tracy Pringle, Director Business Retention & Expansion at tpringle@choosewindsorsex.com.