

Coalition Launched to Bring Green Collar Jobs to Region

Windsor, Essex and Chatham-Kent are open for business and ready to repower Ontario with Sustainable Energy

Windsor, July 18 / CNW / -Windsor, Essex and Chatham-Kent are open for business! With their access to North American markets, skilled manufacturing labour and existing manufacturing facilities, the regions are poised to capitalize on their natural potential and are positioning themselves to become a sustainable energy powerhouse for Ontario, Canada and the northern US States.

The WindsorEssex Economic Development Commission, Chatham-Kent Economic Development Services, and representatives from local renewable energy companies, announce the launch of the Green Collar Jobs Coalition to attract sustainable energy manufacturing opportunities to southwestern Ontario.

"Today, a large percentage of all manufacturing in the renewable energy sector, certainly in the wind industry, is done offshore," says David Timm, Vice President of Strategic Affairs with AIM PowerGen, a wind development company active throughout the regions. "With stabilizing markets in North America, increasing shipping costs and demands for local content, companies are looking for opportunities to establish engineering, manufacturing and assembly locations closer to markets. These resources exist right here."

Ontario has plans to double its renewable energy capacity by 2025. The Ontario Power Authority's Integrated Power System Plan outlines the province's goals to dramatically increase the role of wind, solar, hydro and biomass in Ontario's energy system. Combine these goals with the renewable energy goals in bordering US States and the potential to recast Windsor, Essex and Chatham-Kent as a renewable energy manufacturing hub becomes abundantly clear.

"The Windsor, Essex and Chatham-Kent regions provide easy access to markets and a skilled labour force. The infrastructure, resources and support available in the region remain competitive and attractive to the right investors," says Rakesh Naidu, Director of Business Attraction with the WindsorEssex Development Commission. "Couple this with the increasing promotion and deployment of renewable energy technologies in Ontario and across North America and the region has potential to retool itself to capture these opportunities."

"We are excited to be working with Chatham-Kent, our partners in the wind industry, including AIM, Suncor Energy, and Wind Prospects, the CAW Windsor Regional Environment Council, and others in the region, such as SOBIN and the University of Windsor, to explore and transform this idea into a reality. This is truly a unique and diverse group working towards this goal," says Naidu.

"The CAW Windsor Regional Environment Council is excited to be a partner in this unique coalition of business labour, research, and academic institutions sharing a common goal of creating new green collar jobs in our region," say Mark Bartlett, President of the CAW Windsor Regional Environment Council.

Over the next few months the Coalition will be developing a business plan and marketing materials for the region and initiating discussions with key manufacturers.

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