

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Survey Reveals Residents' Views On Economic Prospects

Residents asked for their opinions on living and working in Windsor-Essex

WINDSOR-ESSEX, ON – Residents of Windsor-Essex enjoy living in the region and are generally optimistic about its prospects for economic growth, according to a recent survey conducted for the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation (WEEDC).

Over 1,300 people participated in the online study designed to assess how Windsor-Essex residents feel about a range of economic and quality-of-life topics. This first annual survey will be shared with key stakeholders across the region to assist in strategic planning efforts for 2012.

"This study is about people's perceptions – not necessarily the actual realities -- of our market," said Ron Gaudet, CEO of WEEDC. "We're pleased to see that people overall are feeling pretty good about our prospects."

On average, respondents rated the region's "overall economic potential" 7 out of 10. They gave the same score for their "overall quality of life".

"Obviously we've still got work to do, but these are encouraging results," said Gaudet. "The study reflects a sense of optimism and resiliency. It says a lot about our community and its readiness to embrace new opportunities."

Not surprisingly, the factors cited as the greatest barriers to economic growth were unemployment and diversification of our manufacturing industries. Other survey highlights:

- Most residents feel the economy continues to struggle. 64% rated the current economic situation as "somewhat weak to very weak", while only 8% rated it as "somewhat strong to very strong".
- 76% of respondents are optimistic about the region's prospects for economic growth over the next five years.
- Attracting new business and helping current businesses diversify are considered the best ways to replace the region's lost jobs.
- Over 80% felt that Windsor-Essex is a great place for raising a family and for retiring.
- Police and ambulance services, post-secondary education, affordable housing and climate received the highest ratings among quality-of-life factors. Employment opportunities received the lowest score.
- Over two-thirds of respondents believe that the region suffers from a poor "self-perception" while over 80% feel that the region is underappreciated by the rest of Canada.

The study was conducted in the summer of 2011 by Windsor-based market research firm Sentiens Research Inc.

A complete summary of survey responses can be found on the WEEDC website at www.choosewindsor.essex.com

About the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation (WEEDC) - The WEEDC is the lead economic development agency proudly representing Windsor-Essex, Ontario, Canada's fastest growing economy (Conference Board of Canada), one of the world's Top 7 most intelligent communities (Intelligent Community Forum) and FDI's 2011 #2 Large City in which to invest. Acting as a catalyst and network developer WEEDC works to positively impact the region by providing services including business attraction, retention and expansion, small business and entrepreneurial development, and community development activities.

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