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MEDIA RELEASE
Wednesday, May 29, 2019

WINDSORESSEX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION'S
2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND RIBBON-CUTTING OF THE VIRTUAL REALITY CAVE

Windsor-Essex County, Ontario, Canada – Wednesday, May 29, 2019 – Over 160 people attended the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation's (WE EDC) 2018 Annual General (AGM) today that was held at the Institute for Border Logistics and Security (IBLS) a department of the WE EDC. Attendees included stakeholders, funders, government officials and business leaders from the Windsor-Essex Region and across Ontario and the United States.

In addition to reporting on the 2018 business development accomplishments and activities, a ribbon-cutting ceremony took place following the AGM to officially unveil its state-of-the-art and fully immersive **Virtual Reality CAVE for Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Technologies**, located in the IBLS facility. The Virtual Reality CAVE is a resource provided as a part of the Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network (AVIN) Regional Technology Development Site (RTDS) in Windsor-Essex. This program focuses on bolstering regional capacities and providing business and technical resources to small and medium-sized enterprises to enable them to develop new products and solutions that will create jobs and global exports for Ontario. The Windsor-Essex RTDS focuses on cross-border technologies.

The partners – **Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE**), which delivers AVIN on behalf of the Government of Ontario, **ANSYS, SimuTech Group Canada and Barco** that were involved in the creation of the VR CAVE - were also on hand for the ribbon cutting and to lead the VR CAVE demonstrations to those in attendance. In the afternoon, the partners hosted tours of the VR CAVE for their clients and the public.

"The people of Windsor and Essex are resilient, and have a tremendous ability to innovate and adapt. Over the past few years, we've really seen this resilience pay off in parts-production and the high-tech sector. Just look at how Tecumseh is expanding and integrating with Essex in an unprecedented manner. Congratulations to the Windsor-Essex Economic Development Corporation on the launch of the AVIN Windsor RTDS VR Cave." **Rick Nicholls, MPP for Chatham-Kent Leamington**

"As one of the top auto-producing regions in North America, and with more than 200 companies pioneering connected and autonomous vehicle technologies in the province, Ontario is at the forefront of developing and building the next generation of vehicles. I'm delighted the Windsor-Essex region is playing a key role in Ontario's Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network by harnessing its expertise in cross-border technologies. This is another example of how effective partnerships between the public and private sectors are helping to make Ontario open for business." **Todd Smith, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade**

“This region truly is like no other, and it is growing, developing, getting stronger and diversifying. The City of Windsor and the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation are committed to promoting local economic development and diversification, nurturing cross-border relationships and ensuring that we are a key player in the future of high-tech. Our efforts are paying off. In the last year, we saw continued strength in our local economy. Government and business investments brought new jobs and plant expansions, while positioning us at the centre of autonomous vehicle technology testing, and the development of safer, more environmentally friendly cars. International corporations opened their North American headquarters in our city, bringing high-tech research and development positions, and partnering with our educational institutions and local manufacturing firms to take advantage of all that Windsor-Essex has to offer. People are hearing the Windsor-Essex story, and they like what they hear. There is recognition now that Windsor-Essex, the proud International Gateway between Canada and the United States of America, is one of our country’s best places to live, work, visit and invest.” **Drew Dilkens, Mayor City of Windsor**

“The Windsor and Essex County region enjoyed tremendous success and momentum in 2018 and is poised for continued growth and diversification. We have so many reasons to be proud and so many great things on the horizon. The work of the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation produced results last year in terms of investments, expansions and jobs. But it is the seeds WE EDC planted and the connections it made that should give us the greatest sense of optimism. Every new job that is created and every new business that opens is a calling card to the investment world, here and overseas, that Canada begins in Windsor-Essex.” **Gary McNamara, Warden of Essex County**

“The 2018 Annual Report highlights the accomplishments of the corporation as well as outlines the strategic initiatives underway which will benefit our region throughout this year and well into the future. The number that jumps out to me is the 5.4% unemployment which is a historic turnaround from just a few years ago. The organization continues to focus on a diversified economy, one that builds on the inherent strengths of the area and puts us in a position to make this area thrive for generations to come. The launch today of the Virtual Realty CAVE for Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Technologies demonstrates our future.” **Tal Czudnar, Chair WE EDC**

“Overall our performance metrics in 2018 shows very positive outcomes, an indicator we are well positioned to continue this momentum in 2019 and beyond. One of WE EDC’s major accomplishments in 2018 was being selected as one of the six Regional Technology Development Sites under Ontario’s Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network Program with the goal of building capacity in the autonomous vehicle field by assisting start-ups and SMEs to develop, test, validate and commercialize their technologies. We will continue to build on our 2018 accomplishments that has provided significant positive impacts to the region, while supporting initiatives such as the VR CAVE to support economic prosperity for the Windsor-Essex Region now and into the future.” **Stephen MacKenzie, President and CEO WE EDC**

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BACKGROUND

Funding from the Province of Ontario through the Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) supporting the Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network (AVIN) is helping to drive innovation and collaboration within the Windsor-Essex Region and across Ontario. The establishment of the Virtual Reality (VR) CAVE is an example of how innovative thinking combined with partners leads to access of specialized equipment and services.

> ***"The Windsor-Essex Region has a unique position in the province, both as an automotive hub and a cross-border city. The regional capacities made the Windsor-Essex Region an ideal choice for one of AVIN's Regional Technology Development Sites, which will support and enable small and medium-sized enterprises to develop, prototype, test and validate new technologies, access specialized equipment, and obtain technical and business advice. This will lead to the creation of high-quality jobs and economic development opportunities."*** **– Raed Kadri, Ontario Centres of Excellence**

> ***SimuTech Group is proud to be a part of bringing this immersive technology to the Windsor-Essex Region. Not only will the CAVE provide opportunity for advancing the autonomous vehicle industry, but many other sectors as well. Anyone that needs to visualize, check operations, or collaborate on design can utilize this 3D technology.***
> **– Alan McKim, SimuTech Group**

The following is a listing of the key partners that helped make the VR CAVE a reality:

About Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) Inc. - www.oce-ontario.org
OCE drives the creation of high-quality jobs by accelerating the commercialization of cutting-edge research across key market sectors to build the economy of tomorrow and secure Ontario's global competitiveness. In doing this, OCE fosters the training and development of the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs and is a key partner with Ontario's industry, universities, colleges, research hospitals, investors and governments. A champion of leading-edge technologies, best practices and research, OCE invests in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, digital media and information communications, advanced health, cleantech, automotive and ag-tech to drive economic growth and foster made-in-Ontario solutions.

About SimuTech Group Inc. - www.simutechgroup.com
SimuTech Group, is a simulation services company specializing in ANSYS finite element analysis (FEA), computational fluid dynamics (CFD) and electromagnetic (Emag) simulation software as well as turbomachinery, wind turbine, and testing services. SimuTech Group is the largest full-service provider of ANSYS FEA, CFD, and Emag engineering simulation software in North America. Their offices across the US and Canada provide sales, technical support, training, and consulting services for ANSYS simulation software.

About ANSYS - www.ansys.com
If you've ever seen a rocket launch, flown on an airplane, driven a car, used a computer, touched a mobile device, crossed a bridge or put on wearable technology, chances are you've used a product where ANSYS software played a critical role in its creation. ANSYS is the global leader in engineering simulation. Through our strategy of Pervasive Engineering Simulation, we help the world's most innovative companies deliver radically better products to their customers. By offering the best and broadest portfolio of engineering simulation software, we help them solve the most complex design challenges and create products limited only by imagination. Founded in 1970, ANSYS is headquartered south of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

About Barco - www.barco.com
Barco designs technology to enable bright outcomes around the world. Seeing beyond the image, we develop visualization and collaboration solutions to help you work together, share insights, and wow audiences. Our focus is on three core markets: Enterprise (from meeting and control rooms to corporate spaces), Healthcare (from the radiology department to the operating room), and Entertainment (from movie theaters to live events and attractions). In 2018, we realized sales of 1.028 billion euro. We have a global team of 3,600 employees, whose passion for technology is captured in 400 granted patents.

Windsor-Essex AVIN RTDS Virtual Reality CAVE: Ribbon-Cutting
www.wavin.ca

BACKGROUND

The Windsor-Essex Regional Technology Development Site (RTDS) is proud to officially unveil the completed state-of-the-art, fully-immersive Virtual Reality (VR) CAVE[1] for Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (C/AV) Technologies. Funded and supported through the Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network (AVIN) which is managed by the Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) and funded by the Province of Ontario. This facility will help drive innovation in the Province of Ontario. The Windsor-Essex AVIN Regional Technology Development site is located at the Institute for Border Logistics and Security (IBLS) - a department of the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation.

The objectives of Windsor-Essex AVIN Regional Technology Development Site are to:

- Provide access to specialized equipment, hardware and software to spur greater innovation.
- Provide business advisory services to assist in the commercialization of technologies developed to move goods, people and services within Canada and abroad efficiently, effectively and safely.

Why is virtual reality useful to industry?

- Virtual testing is now a standard practice of large product development programs in the auto, consumer products to aerospace systems.
- VR facilities are useful because they enable the evaluation of a multitude of design and procedural alternatives, safely and rapidly and at much lower cost than the construction of functional physical prototypes.
- With VR technology, prototypes and products can be tested virtually (or virtual prototyping) before final verification with physical prototypes is performed. Additionally, users can 'virtually' test and train the use of products before they exist, which can lead to improved usability and better ergonomic design.

VR CAVE Partners:

- SimuTech Group: Located in 14 offices throughout North America, all SimuTech Group offices have a proven and long-term record of providing engineering simulation software products and services to its customers and clients.
- Barco: Is a technology company that develops visualization and collaboration solutions to help professionals work together, share information, and project images in cinemas and elsewhere.
- ANSYS: Headquartered in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, ANSYS develops and markets engineering simulation software, including its automotive suite of software.

[1] A **c**ave **a**utomatic **v**irtual **e**nvironment (CAVE) is an immersive virtual reality environment where projectors are directed to between three and six of the walls of a room-sized cube.

VR CAVE Specifications:

- The system is based on four (4) projectors covering a front wall, two side walls and the floor;
- Each of the screens has an image size of 15.5 ft x 9.68 ft.
- The full-size side screens produce a large horizontal field of view which is critical for an immersive environment, even when moving around.
- This is the largest public VR CAVE display in Canada, and the only one being used for C/AV testing. The lab creates a multi-sided immersive environment that will foster collaboration. Contrary to Head-Mounted Displays (HMDs), multiple people have access to the same 3D image in the same space (so not in a personal virtual environment), it is a lot easier to communicate and collaborate.

Expected Benefits:

- Testing capabilities within a VR CAVE facilitate the development of C/AV sensor software system that cannot easily be done in a physical environment. VR testing allows for safe and cost-effective testing of new technologies like C/AVs.
- Industry Participation: Partner with major companies and industrial associations to raise awareness of VR technologies and their benefits.
- Partnership with the University of Windsor and St. Clair College: Provide access to professors and students to industry-leading technology to help spur innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Supporting the Local Ecosystem: Provide public access to specialized equipment, hardware and software that is not currently available in the Windsor-Essex area to SMEs and others to develop, commercial and deploy new technologies.
- Partnership with Physical Test Sites: ANSYS has been given privileged access to MCity (located in Ann Arbor) to develop a virtual MCity track. Discussions are underway with other physical C/AV test sites in Ontario to develop digital twins.

For more information, to schedule a visit or to discuss how your company can leverage the Virtual Reality CAVE contact:

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