

MEDIA RELEASE

TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2020

WINDSOR-ESSEX COUNTY MANUFACTURERS PIVOT TO MAKE PRODUCTS THE WORLD NEEDS

Manufacturers are critical to the regional, provincial and national economy

Windsor-Essex County, Ontario, Canada – Tuesday, May 19, 2020 - The COVID-19 pandemic has affirmed how essential Windsor-Essex manufacturers are to the regional, provincial, and national economy. The Windsor-Essex manufacturers are innovative, flexible, and capable of pivoting in times of crisis. There is clearly more work to do as we navigate the pandemic and the eventual recovery period, and a growing number of Windsor-Essex manufacturers are up to that task.

The WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation (WE EDC), Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing, and industry associations such as the Canadian Tooling & Machining Association, Automate Canada, and the Canadian Association of Mold Makers have identified [many local manufacturers that have pivoted](#) in the past few weeks. Some have shifted production away from traditional products such as automotive parts, molds, automation equipment, and distilled beverages, to medical devices and supplies, personal protective equipment (e.g. face shields, masks, gowns) and sanitizer. Others have adapted highly-sophisticated manufacturing technologies developed locally for use in healthcare and other sensitive environments. Others still are actively seeking to contribute to local, provincial, national, and international efforts.

In order to further understand the local need and capacity for this production, WE EDC surveyed companies (see backgrounder) that had expressed interest or were currently involved in COVID-19 related projects. Of those surveyed, over 60% indicated that they were directly supplying local needs and, of those companies, 60% plan to continue the production of medical products, materials and/or provide related services post the COVID-19 pandemic.

‘WE EDC’s Business Retention and Expansion team has been working to support and connect the many Windsor-Essex companies who are reshaping their operations to produce COVID-19 related items. It has been heartening to see evidence, yet again, of our region’s ability to work together, to design and produce what is needed in times of crisis and uncertainty.’

- Wendy Stark, Manager, Business Retention and Expansion

‘If it wasn’t before, it is certainly clear now how important a diverse and innovative manufacturing ecosystem is to Ontario’s economy and to the well-being of Ontarians generally. Within that ecosystem, Windsor-Essex manufacturers have taken a leading role in pivoting, often as part of a collaborative effort, to support efforts to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, and should be commended.’

- Brendan Sweeney, Managing Director, Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing

One of the more interesting and innovative pivots has come from Windsor’s Vista Solutions. Vista Solutions traditionally develops and integrates machine vision solutions used in automotive manufacturing, food processing and consumer products, to name a few. Recently, however, they have adapted their knowledge of thermal technologies - more commonly used in the production of electrified vehicles - to measure skin temperature.

Eric Parker, Technical Sales Engineer, Vista Solutions said, “Our Elevated Skin Temperature Monitoring system is contactless, non-invasive and can be used to detect persons with elevated body temperature and can screen for potential illness in a variety of workplaces including large manufacturing facilities or institutional environments like hospitals. This type of technology will play a critical role in ensuring employees’ and visitors’ health and safety during the recovery period.”

Local manufacturers have also noted an increased spirit of collaboration in the region and throughout the province leading to additional capabilities and creative solutions to the challenges arising from COVID-19.

ABOUT TRILLIUM NETWORK FOR ADVANCED MANUFACTURING

The Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising public and investor awareness of Ontario's advanced manufacturing ecosystem in a manner that supports growth and improves competitiveness. trilliummfg.ca

ABOUT WINDSORSESSEX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation is the lead economic development agency for the Windsor Essex region. The focus of the organization is to develop and execute strategies to retain, expand, attract and help new businesses start up in the Windsor-Essex region. The WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation is led by a board of distinguished community leaders. A team of professional staff will assist you with all your location and investment decisions by working one-on-one with businesses, to facilitate the process of starting, growing or locating in Windsor-Essex. choosewindsorsex.com

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