

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**RESULTS OF THE CONSOLIDATED REGIONAL BUSINESS SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS
GROWTH AND LOCAL BUSINESS PRIORITIES**

Windsor-Essex County, Ontario, - Wednesday, May 10, 2017– During Economic Development Week - March 27 -31, 2017 a collaborative effort was made by WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation (WE EDC), the regional Economic Development Officers (EDO), Workforce WindsorEssex, WEtech Alliance and the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth as they met face-to-face with approximately 100 companies and encouraged them to complete the business retention and expansion survey.

The **‘one survey’** concept was developed by participating organizations to prevent ‘survey fatigue’ by the business community as well as to share the aggregated collected data results. Since all participants are using the same survey data they are able to analyze trends which improves the validation of the information. The data collected will help the city, county and region identify specific issues and challenges faced by Windsor-Essex companies and will help promote continued collaboration and teamwork among the partners. The partners were pleased to see that over 200 surveys were completed.

Drew Dilkens, Mayor of the City of Windsor said, “The City of Windsor is booming right now, of the businesses surveyed, we now know almost 60% of these companies are planning to expand within the next 18 months. This is consistent with the Conference Board of Canada’s Outlook report for the Windsor Census Metropolitan Area as the second fastest growing economy in all of Canada for 2017. Data from this collaborative initiative will help the city focus our attention in the right places and help businesses navigate barriers that may be in their way.”

Tom Bain, Warden of Essex County added, “The face-to-face outreach meetings with businesses within Essex County during Economic Development Week coupled with the valuable feedback we have received from the survey is vital information for the County and the City. It gives us first-hand insight into the needs of our local businesses and our role in helping them stay competitive and successful. The ‘one survey’ concept is an example of like-minded economic development professionals collaborating to make a difference for businesses in the Windsor-Essex region. Teamwork is essential to the prosperity of every community and teamwork will continue to move the region in the right direction.”

Katie Renaud, Research Associate at Workforce WindsorEssex commented, “Workforce WindsorEssex appreciated the opportunity to work in collaboration with economic development organizations and officers to carry out this survey. We were particularly pleased to see participation from all municipalities and from a diversity of businesses, which has ensured the survey is representative of our region. The results of the survey are encouraging, with participating businesses hiring over 4,500 people in the last year. As “workforce skills shortage” was identified as the top barrier to growth in Windsor-Essex, we will continue to work to improve the availability and stability of the workforce in our region.”

“On behalf of the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation we are very pleased with the overall survey results, particularly that 53% of the businesses surveyed reported that the outlook for their industry is growing and over one third indicated that exporting to international markets was of interest to them in the future. WE EDC will study the survey results thoroughly to ensure we respond and understand local business needs and provide the economic development tools needed for businesses in our region to stay, grow and be successful,” added **Stephen MacKenzie, CEO, WindsorEssex Economic Development Corp.**

The WE EDC is the lead economic development agency in the region working in collaboration with the municipalities of Amherstburg, Essex, Kingsville, Lakeshore, LaSalle, Leamington, Pelee Island, Tecumseh and Windsor and assisted by Workforce WindsorEssex, WEtech Alliance, WindsorEssex Small Business Centre and the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth.

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