

MEDIA RELEASE  
FRIDAY APRIL 17, 2020

## **A PULSE OF THE WINDSOR ESSEX ECONOMY – HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM**

### **#YQGStandsStrong**

Windsor-Essex County, Ontario, Canada – April 17, 2020 – Led by [Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island](#), the Hospitality and Tourism Committee for the [WindsorEssex COVID-19 Economic Task Force](#) has been extremely active and attentive to the massive economic challenge facing the sector.

Though active, the Hospitality and Tourism sector has been all but decimated. Many of the restaurants, breweries and wineries have been able to pivot to accommodate immediate needs, while tour operators and attractions are closed. Hotels are running at reduced capacity with single digit occupancy or have closed based on the public needs. Some have pivoted to assist with front line staff and safe accommodations during physical distancing measures.

A survey was completed by the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO) between April 1<sup>st</sup> through April 8<sup>th</sup>, and the following data was provided from 161 businesses or entities in Southern Ontario:

- 66% have closed temporarily
- 43% have laid off staff
- 28% have reduced services

In terms of short- and longer-term outlook, the 161 respondents had the following responses:

- 53% are looking at further staff layoffs
- 56% are looking at continued business closure
- 22% may close their businesses permanently
- 35% may be unable to pay their staff
- 54% will be looking for federal or provincial funding

The Hospitality and Tourism committee expects to see a very localized scope of sales throughout Q2. Local visitation is projected to be larger than normal – road trips and day trips from residents. To support this localized scope of sales, focusing on the unique stories and experiences available within the Windsor-Essex region will be paramount. Additionally, the committee and other partners plan on continuing with education to individuals and businesses on how to interact with the public moving forward – with suggestions of low cost and complimentary marketing initiatives that will be available to leverage limited dollars.

The current lull in the hospitality and tourism sector is anticipated to continue through Q3, 2020 with a return to a stable base in 2021.

Initiatives developed by TWEPI and championed by many influential stakeholders in the region have helped with both sales and morale throughout the region.

Initiatives include:

**#YQGStandsStrong** – a social media campaign designed to highlight positive stories in the region, as well as images of things people miss and/or can't wait to explore once social distancing is removed.

Product services themed days created through engagement with local stakeholder collectives, including:

- **#TakeOutTuesday** – to promote [restaurants who are currently offering take-out and delivery meals](#).
- **#WineOrderWednesday** - to promote [local wineries during curbside takeout and delivery](#), in collaboration with the [EPIC Winegrowers Association](#).
- **#FillUpFriday** – to promote local breweries offering take-out and delivery, in collaboration with the [Barrels Bottles & Brews](#) beverage producers.

#### QUOTES:

*“As with most other facets in our society today, the tourism industry is also experiencing massive disruption. In accordance, we have pivoted to ensure our destination and thereby communities within Windsor Essex are not forgotten. Through the creation of our campaign **#YQGStandsStrong**, we have combined forces with other local organizations to let fellow residents know we are all in this together. With strategic messaging and timely initiatives, we are engaging with our partners and looking towards a time in the no-so-distant future where we can encourage visitation and associated experiences once again.”*

~ Gordon Orr, CEO, Tourism Windsor Essex Pelee Island

*“Being within the industry for almost two decades, we have gone through some challenges but none quite like this before. This pandemic has made many in food & beverage and hospitality learn to pivot and adapt to survive. With the G.O.A.T. Tap & Grill located in LaSalle and Lakeshore, we are offering contactless grocery delivery service featuring produce, proteins, breads, dairy, beer, wine and liquor, while at the Bull & Barrel Urban Saloon we have both a take-out and delivery service. The fact that so many other restaurants, wineries and breweries in the area have gotten on board to provide similar offerings is a testament to the ingenuity and perseverance of the industry to succeed and ensure our customers are never overlooked.”*

~ Christian Komsa – Owner/Operator, WKND Entertainment Group

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**ABOUT THE WINDSOR ESSEX COVID-19  
ECONOMIC TASK FORCE**

The Windsor Essex COVID-19 Economic Task Force was established March 18, 2020 and is comprised of 40 members who represent a broad cross-section of industries in Windsor-Essex, Ontario Canada. The Task Force is sub-divided into six separate committees, each with upwards of 15 members.

The mission of the Windsor Essex COVID-19 Economic Task Force is to collect, coordinate and disseminate information on strategies, programs, and other remedies that are available to mitigate the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on the economic well-being of workers, entrepreneurs, businesses and the regional economy. The Task Force has, and will continue to, strategize and formalize re-ignition plans for their respective industries in the context of the overall Windsor-Essex, provincial and national economies. Learn more [choosewindsoressex.com](https://choosewindsoressex.com).

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