

# Beyond the Information Age is the Broadband Age

Laurentian University professor Sylvie Albert sees the growing advanced telecommunications “broadband economy” as world changing. Dr. Albert, speaking at this year’s annual meeting of the Windsor and Essex County Smart Community, stressed that the region’s telecommunications

infrastructure should be used to capture new knowledge jobs. She is optimistic that even cities and towns devastated by the loss of their primary industries can restore their economies by embracing new technologies. WindsorEssex’s smart community initiative is working to give the region access to the type of

comprehensive on-line services that Dr. Albert says are critical to economic development, particularly for entrepreneurs. It should, she said, give them unique business ideas so “people do not open the same kinds of businesses” that are known to fail.



DR. ALBERT

WINDSOR-ESSEX COUNTY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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# Good



# News

# Quality Workforce

## **A J.D. Power survey spotlights the quality of the region’s workforce.**

**M**ore than 7,000 WindsorEssex workers assemble vehicles at DaimlerChrysler’s operations in the region. It turns out the quality of their work is superior. This year’s just released J.D. Power & Associates annual Initial Quality Study rates the Town & Country minivan, made at DaimlerChrysler’s mid-town Windsor plant, on Tecumseh Road, as the quality leader in the mini-van category. New owners of the product reported considerable overall satisfaction.

Participants in the survey must have driven their new vehicles for at least 90 days and are asked to comment on such factors as the quality of design and production, as reflected in defects and malfunctions.

Stuart Schorr, DaimlerChrysler senior manager of communications, told the Windsor Star that the results of the survey validate his company’s quality standing.

But that’s not all. DaimlerChrysler’s Tecumseh Road plant, which also supplies the market with Pacificas and Grand Caravan



MADE IN THE REGION, SOLD THROUGHOUT NORTH AMERICA. MIKE HERBERT, PROPRIETOR OF LEAMINGTON CHRYSLER, STANDS BESIDE ONE OF THE NEW TOWN AND COUNTRY MINI-VANS AVAILABLE AT HIS DEALERSHIP.

mini-vans, tied as the second-best automotive assembly plant in North and South America.

“The results are proof positive of the quality of the WindsorEssex workforce and will provide positive reinforcement that the region can meet the most stringent quality demands of new investors,” notes Roman Dzus, acting executive director, Windsor Essex-County Development Commission.

In his work he fields many inquiries from

companies interested in building plants or establishing high-end service operations in the region.

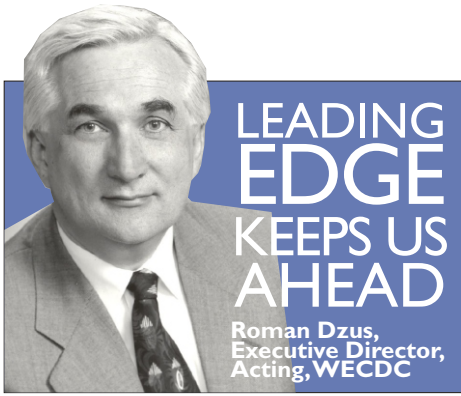
“Investors are always interested in workforce quality. Clearly the availability of well-trained, skilled and experienced employees is one of the critical advantages that we have that is highly valued in today’s intense competition between business locations.”

Reports such as J.D. Power’s Initial Quality Study are important in the business attraction process.

“In very few words, augmented with considerable and reliable statistics, investors have a very clear view of the benefits that they can achieve by locating here.”

While the J.D. Power report is focused on automobile manufacturing, Mr. Dzus believes that it also provides ample evidence that the region can provide the same level of highly competent and dedicated employees across many different industrial sectors.

Particularly he notes, the region’s training and skill development infrastructure that is, he says “well-suited to the changing needs of our ever-evolving economy.”



# Lakeshore Takes First Step to Being Ontario's **Leading Business Address**

## **Economic development strategy now being developed.**

**W**ith considerable public input, the Town of Lakeshore is about to create an economic development strategy that will be designed, as Mayor Bob Croft explained at a June 14, 2006 economic summit, to take the community to a higher level of business attraction.



LAKESHORE MAYOR BOB CROFT LISTENS INTENTLY AT THE TOWN'S RECENT ECONOMIC SUMMIT

For him, it is an effort that is all about the future and one in which the ultimate goal is to find ways to make his community the number one place for business in the province.

More than 50 senior business and community leaders spent the day reviewing progress to date on the strategy. Discussions were lead by consultant Geoff Dobilas.

Over the past two months he and fellow specialist Eric McSweeney have been studying the Town's economy. Collectively they reported finding both issues and opportunities. High on their to do list is the need to diversify the economy. Sectors such as pharmaceutical, bio-

technology and plastics were identified as possible targets to augment the Town's current automotive success. Mr. Dobilas expects that it is likely strengths that now exist in auto parts could be applied to other industries.

Mr. McSweeney mentioned a number of human resources issues, and in particular recommended that the Town consider finding ways to

increase the technical skills of its residents and establish closer links with the University of Windsor and St. Clair College.

Both agreed that networking opportunities should be examined as a means for the local business community to get linked into the global economy by establishing relationships with their colleagues in other parts of the country and even the world.

At the end of the meeting, attendees agreed that the town should first focus on agri-business, manufacturing, tourism, small business and retail, including creating a downtown core.

**Y**ou may notice that many of the stories that are in Good News are about the innovation that is going on in our region. Barely a day goes by in which we do not hear of another interesting and exciting innovative development.

It is not always the case that we can publish what is happening, often for competitive reasons particularly with companies that are just launching their products or taking the first step in bringing new products to market.

What is also impressive is the interest local companies have in incorporating new technologies and concepts into their operations. In most cases it helps reduce their costs and makes our region even more competitive.

If you have an innovation, please feel free to call us and ask how we can help you grow. There is probably much we can do, even if we have to keep it secret.



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Suite 215, 333 Riverside Drive West  
Windsor, ON N9A 5K4 519.255.9200  
email: info@choosewindsor.com  
Web: www.choosewindsor.com

- Roman Dzus - Executive Director, Acting
- Elaine Prior - Manager, Administration
- Jim Glasier - Manager, Business Attraction
- Robert Tuomi - Business Development Officer
- Lina Williams - Publications Officer
- Wendy Stark - Research Officer
- Roxana Gosman - Project Analyst
- Sandy Smith - Administrative Assistant

**SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTRE**  
Sabrina D'Agostini - Business Consultant  
Penny Gallagher - Information Coordinator



# Neudorf Stamping Contemplates Significant **Expansion In Kingsville**

## **Kingsville Stamper needs more room to meet demand from its customers.**

**A**s it prepares to celebrate its 20th anniversary, Neudorf Stamping Corporation is also contemplating a significant expansion to its Kingsville facility. The current company has been operating there since the Neudorf family took over an abandoned factory that opened its doors in the 1960s at the current site, not too far from downtown Kingsville.



JAKE NEUDORF, PRESIDENT OF NEUDORF STAMPING

of services including metal stamping, part assembly and production welding. Its customer base of parts makers can be found in Windsor and further up the 401 as far as London and beyond.

These days the staff complement of about 20 are just as likely to be working on auto parts as they are on greenhouse equipment. Many of the heavy metal parts used to open windows or guide equipment in a greenhouse are now being made in Canada by Neudorf.

Expansion plans being formalized could see a 6,000 square foot addition to the plant to house additional stamping capability.

# People Chef is Working on the Next Generation of Fast Food, which happens to be ‘Replacement’ Food

Two Shell retailers in the region have something new on offer - replacement meals. Shell is now experimenting with a packaged meal concept

developed by Leamington-based People Chef. Headed by Mike Vourakes. He is confident his new initiative will



MIKE VOURAKES

hold it will not only increase kitchen activity but also put People Chef in the forefront in the development of a new industry for the region.

While Mr. Vourakes is closely watching sales at the two Shell stations, he is also meeting with grocery chains and is looking forward to establishing a large distribution network for his product line. The company also markets “Healthy Lifestyle” and “Special Diet” customized programs of three meals and two snacks a day. These are delivered daily to each customer’s home or business. Menus for the program are based on each customer’s specific dietary needs. Individual meals are prepared with ingredients recommended

by People Chef’s staff nutritionist.

The company also offers individually planned selections of low-fat, fat-free, vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, lactose or dairy-free, sugar-free or low-carb meals that are designed to meet its customers’ personal nutritional goals.

HOW THE REGION'S INNOVATORS ARE CHANGING THE WORLD

become the “leading complete home meal replacement company.”

Meal replacement products are a new venture for a family operation that has been preparing food in a former H.J. Heinz warehouse since 1959, the year the Vourakes family opened the Dock pier-side restaurant. Now equipped with a 20,000 square foot kitchen, the Dock’s five rooms can accommodate more than 600 diners. If the new venture takes

## Agrilab Proves the Feasibility of a New Source of Energy - Cattle Manure

A Windsor-based company is leading the advance in one form of alternative energy - cattle manure. Agrilab Technologies, the energy transfer division of Acrolab Ltd., has constructed and tested its first commercially sized prototype system for the extraction of thermal energy produced by water vapor generated as a byproduct of aerobic decomposition (composting) of cattle manure.

The energy transfer system is located at Diamond Hill Custom Heifers in Sheldon, Vermont. There partners Terry and Joanne Magnan take care of 2,000 calves being raised to be milk cows.

Acrolab president, Joe Ouellette is encouraged by the results. “This is no longer a process that has only worked in a lab setting under optimum conditions. We just needed an opportunity to do it on a scale large enough to convince farmers and others that it was commercially viable,” he noted in a Windsor Star report.

During two months of testing, the process generated continuous commercially viable thermal energy, in the form of hot water stored in an insulated 800 gallon tank used for both radiant floor heating in a calf barn as well as process water.

Water temperatures of 130 degrees F, at rates as high as three million BTU’s per day were generated solely through the capture and conversion of waste water vapor naturally occurring during a four to eight week composting process of 400 to 800 tons of manure and bedding materials.

About the only external energy needed to capture this energy is that required by the continuous operation of one 1/8 horsepower 120 VAC air fan blower. As the first of its kind worldwide, the system demonstrates the commercial viability of capturing usable thermal energy at essentially no cost operationally from what has, until now, been lost thermal energy in the form of dissipated water vapor generated by the composting process.

Another advantage is that the system permits a no cost capture of commercially viable quantities of thermal energy while providing other significant value streams in terms of the production of high-grade compost as well as the successful rededication of manure to permit safe field spreading. Agrilab’s website, [www.agrilab.ca](http://www.agrilab.ca), provides additional information.

## Need to know what's new in Tool, Die and Mold?

### THE TIP SHEET INFORMATION TO HELP YOU SUCCEED IN WINDSOR ESSEX COUNTY

Export Development Canada, Windsor-Essex County Development Commission and PriceWaterhouseCoopers have scheduled this year's annual Automotive, Tool, Die and Mold Seminar for Tuesday, October 17, 2006 at Windsor's Caboto Club, 2175 Parent Ave. For information contact Lillian Gagnon Business Development Event Planner, Ontario Region. She can be reached at

519.963.5405 or 1.888.332.2360 or email at: [lgagnon@edc.ca](mailto:lgagnon@edc.ca). Information can also be found at [www.edc.ca](http://www.edc.ca).

## Would You Like to See One of The Region's Newest Wineries?

It turns out that this year's 2006 Vintage Wine Tasting event, which will showcase the region's finest wines paired with regional cuisine, art and music, will be held at one of the area's newest wineries - Viewpointe Estate Winery in Essex's Colchester village on the shores of Lake Erie. The August 12, 2006 event will run from 1- 4 pm with tickets priced at \$50. and available at local Southwest Ontario Vintner Association wineries.

## Interested in Joining A Central Europe Supplier Mission?

A number of Canadian government departments, including Industry Canada, Foreign Affairs and International Trade, as well as Export Development Canada have scheduled an automotive mission to Central Europe September 20 to 22, 2006.

Organizers hope to attract Canadian auto parts suppliers, tool, die, mold and machinery makers and others in the auto industry. A flexible agenda is being prepared with visits to both car and part supplier plants as well as customized meetings to meet individual participant needs. Countries to be covered are



ONE OF THE MANY WELL-MAINTAINED HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN KINGSVILLE

Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

Participants will be required to pay their own travel costs with the government picking up the cost of hotels and ground transportation. Those interested must register by July 15, 2006.

Call Maria Stihovic, Foreign Affairs & International Trade, Toronto Regional Office, at 416.954.6452 for more details or email her at [maria.stihovic@international.gc.ca](mailto:maria.stihovic@international.gc.ca).

## Could Representation in Hong Kong be Your Gateway to China?

Warren Yao, a marketing executive with ICS Trust, says his company can guide "businesses through the convoluted and sometimes risky period of establishing successful operations in China."

Services include the establishment of a "Virtual Office" which could give investors maximum control of operations in China, with minimal cost and risk, while they gain access to new international markets and the ability to ship to any Asian port.

ICS can also handle letters of credit, provide practical advice on deals and how to handle local taxes with Mr. Yao's firm serving as what he calls a "firewall to shield the parent company from liability."

Additional services cover day-to-day trading, sourcing and administration. For details visit [www.icstrust.com](http://www.icstrust.com).

# Where's The Money?

Companies in the region needing operational capital could consider factoring, selling their receivables to a third party. It was one of several concepts explored May 25, 2006 at an alternative financing conference jointly hosted by the Canadian Association of Moldmakers, First Vancouver Finance, the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development & Trade, and the Windsor-Essex County Development Commission.

Judi Johnstone, First Vancouver's Vice-President of Business Development, detailed the two types of factoring now in use: recourse and non-recourse. In recourse situations, funding firms take on their client's receivables for a set period of time. If accounts can't be closed in that period, they are replaced with fresh receivables. In non-recourse deals, funders are on the hook even if the bill is not paid.

Those who select this option will get about 80 to 90% of the money owed to them with the factor firm keeping the difference.

Other alternative sources include sale and leaseback in which a company sells its buildings and then leases them back. Becoming a tenant can turn money locked in real estate into cash. Venture capitalists might also be interested in providing funding, particularly for companies seeking larger sums of capital.

David Weaver of Michigan-based Great Lakes Angels explained that today venture firms are less interested in start-up companies. The void that is left is often being filled with angel investors prepared to take on considerable risk. In return, Mr. Weaver noted, angels will expect "a five to ten times" investment return and usually get involved after companies have exhausted the financial support they can arrange with family and friends.