

**southwest  
economic alliance**

our future is  
**intelligent**

**SWEA ASSEMBLY**

**June 13-14, 2012**

**Stratford, Ontario**

# Cooperative Economic Development in Southwestern Ontario

## ***The SWEA Experience***

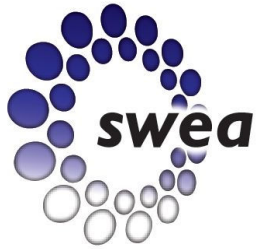
Monday, March 26, 2012

City of London Finance Committee

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# Southwestern Ontario



- 15 counties
- 100 municipalities
- 2.4 million residents (13.4 total Ontario)
- 50% urban, 50% rural
- Up to four levels of government:
  - National
  - Provincial
  - County
  - Municipal



# Members and Partners

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Bruce County

Chatham Kent

Elgin County

Essex County

Grey County

Huron County

Lambton County

Middlesex County

Oxford County

Perth County

City of London

City of Stratford

Town of St. Marys

City of Windsor

Fanshawe College

University of Guelph

University of Waterloo

Western University

University of Windsor

Bruce Power

Libro Financial

Smart Centres

Scotiabank

TD Canada Trust

London-St. Thomas Realtor's Association

PARTNERSHIPS WITH:

- Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus
- South Central Ontario Region (SCOR)
- Ontario Immigrant Network (OIN)
- Sustainable Food Systems/London Training Centre
- i-CANADA Alliance



# SWEA's Governance Structure





# Southwest Economic Alliance

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- Formed in 2006
- A response to declines in manufacturing and agriculture
- Designed as an alliance of:
  - Governments
  - Private sector industries
  - Academic institutions—colleges, universities, research
  - NGO
- SWEA's role is to show leadership and transform the regional economy through co-operation



# Our key activities

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## Research & Advocacy

1

- Joint research projects
- Identification of issues & needs
- Advocating for Southwestern Ontario issues with other levels of government

## Branding

2

- Define a positive image of the region
- Develop a common positioning statement; Develop common messages
- BUT, encourage diverse solutions

## Services to support Foreign Direct Investment

3

- Coordinate joint investment missions
- Foreign Investment Attraction
- Build positive awareness of Southwestern Ontario



# Our Strategic Roadmap

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1. Organize a first regional conference to define the challenge and identify solutions
2. Seek widespread support for regional co-operation
3. Undertake benchmarking research:
  - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
4. Begin advocacy program with senior levels of government
5. Seek funding for regional development programs
  1. FedDev Ontario (2009)
  2. Southwestern Ontario Development Fund (2012)
6. Identify common economic opportunities
7. Learn how investors perceive our region
8. Develop a common branding statement for the region



# SWEA Research

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1. *A benchmarking study by two experts at Ivey School outlines the regions assets.*

**Southwestern Ontario Vision for Economic Competitiveness and Cooperation: Gateway to Canada's North American Trade Corridor**

**David Conklin & Guy L.F. Holburn**  
September 2008

2. *An analysis of the region's existing strategic priorities conducted by Ivey School MBA and HBA students*

**Setting Priorities for Southwestern Ontario: A Collaborative Effort**

Rohan Belliappa & Adam Bortolussi  
**Richard Ivey School of Business**  
February 2010

3. *A survey of business investment attitudes about Southwestern Ontario*

**Ontario Business Leaders Assess Southwestern Ontario as an Investment Opportunity**

**Allan Gregg Strategies**  
Harris Decima  
June 2010





# A need to change misperceptions

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- Not a 'failed manufacturing economy'
- Not an 'ailing' agriculture region

INSTEAD:

- A dynamic, diversified economy in transition
- A unique combination of rural and urban development



## Next: define our future

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- The diversity of the Southwestern Ontario economy is a key asset
- SWEA partners are unanimous on the key growth sectors
  - a. Agriculture
  - b. Tourism, Culture and Recreation
  - c. Green Technologies
  - d. Advanced Manufacturing
  - e. Transportation and Logistics
  - f. Information and Communications Technology
  - g. Health Sciences



## Then: define our value proposition

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- Because of its strong economic heritage, the region has important attributes in place:
  - a. A strong talent pool
  - b. Superior network of colleges and universities
  - c. Innovation and research capabilities
  - d. Advanced manufacturing capacity
  - e. Good access to markets
  - f. An affordable and comfortable quality of life



## Finally: define a brand

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- Southwestern Ontario will be recognized an Intelligent Region by the Intelligent Community Forum (ICF).
- 3 of our communities have achieved Top 7 global status
  - Stratford (2011, 2012)
  - Waterloo (took top honours 2007)
  - Windsor-Essex (2011)
- We will use terms such as:
  - Intelligent Region
  - Intelligent Communities
  - Smart Cities
  - Creative Economy
  - Knowledge-based Industries
  - Innovative Agriculture
  - Smart Manufacturing

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## The Goal:

- Encourage all counties and municipalities, in partnership with universities, colleges, public sector institutions and private business, to pursue **Intelligent Community** status with the aim of creating an **Intelligent Region** across the SWEA territory.



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## Benefits:

- Creates strongly focused narratives about the region:
  - An urban/rural region transitioning to knowledge-based economy
  - Focus on creative economy jobs
  - A strong drive for youth retention and skilled worker attraction
- Gives region a strong focus for cooperation
- Creates focus for government investments
- Supports narratives for investment attraction



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