



# Windsor-Sarnia Labour Market Monitor

~November 2009~

An overview of the Economic Region 570, ranging from Windsor to Sarnia, includes the census division of Chatham-Kent, and the counties of Essex and Lambton. The Labour Market Monitor is a monthly report focusing on labour market information produced by local Labour Market Information Analysts. For further information, contact:

[patrick.mcduff@servicecanada.gc.ca](mailto:patrick.mcduff@servicecanada.gc.ca)

## Labour Force Trends / Survey

Employment in the Windsor-Sarnia economic region declined by 18,900 from November 2008 to November 2009. Job losses came mostly from full-time employment (-15,100) and some from part-time employment (-3,900). Declining employment caused the employment rate to drop by 3.7 percentage points to 56.5%. The labour force contracted by 12,100 due to a decline in the number of people working and searching for work. The number of unemployed people increased by 6,800 from November 2008 to November 2009, causing the unemployment rate to rise from 7.7% to 10.0%, the highest rate among all economic regions in Ontario. Over the same period, the provincial unemployment rate rose from 6.2% to 8.4%.

For more information, visit the Statistics Canada website at:

<http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/lfs05d-eng.htm>

## Labour Market News by Industry

### Accommodations and Food Services

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation authorized construction starts on seven service centres on Highway 401 in early November. In Windsor-Sarnia this includes: Tilbury South (eastbound) between Windsor and Chatham-Kent; and Tilbury North (westbound) west of Chatham-Kent. An estimated 350 construction

workers will be at each site during construction. Once completed each service centre will employ between 100 to 150 people.

### Agriculture

The Town of LaSalle received a portion of a \$410,000 federal government grant from the Great Lakes Sustainability Fund to build new fish habitat.

### Construction

A new \$114 million engineering centre will be built for the University of Windsor. The project is expected to create approximately 1,600 jobs. The federal government's Knowledge Infrastructure Program and the province each contributed \$40 million to the construction project. The first phase is expected to begin shortly.

The Town of LaSalle will receive \$6 million in federal and provincial infrastructure stimulus funds to upgrade the Vollmer Culture and Recreation Complex. The upgrades, which include a skateboard park, a 5,000 seat festival plaza and eight baseball diamonds, will begin in February 2010.

Chatham-Kent Utility Services (CKUS) announced the construction of a \$2.5 million Green Data Centre to provide local businesses with information technology services, products and training. The project is expected to create 30 local jobs and 10 to 15 new permanent full-time employees at the completed facility by next summer. CKUS will also support the creation of 20 to 30 technology-related jobs in Chatham.

Work is underway to improve the Ganatchio Trail in Windsor. The work includes the widening and asphaltting of the trail, improving drainage, installing access ramps and the provision of signage and bollards. The \$600,000 reconstruction project is funded by the Government of Canada's Infrastructure Stimulus Fund, the Province of Ontario and the City of Windsor.

Provident Energy Trust's acquisition of the former Dow Chemical site in Sarnia will create new work opportunities. Approximately \$17 million will be invested to expand existing rail facilities, improve facility maintenance and construct a truck-loading terminal.

Construction will begin shortly to convert a former Salvation Army building into a \$5 million state of the art St. Clair College media and public relations school in Windsor. The \$5-million grant is provided by the federal government.

A \$9 million investment is planned for the construction of a health complex, trades and technology centre and five new student residence blocks at the Chatham campus of St. Clair College. Construction is anticipated as soon as November 2009.

Construction activity in Sarnia has increased from last year. Projects already underway are currently worth \$92 million, compared to \$86 million the same time last year. The city issued 180 permits at the end of October 2008, compared with 108 permits this year.

A 57-unit affordable housing project in Lambton will begin construction in early 2010. Federal and provincial governments are contributing \$5.9 million to the \$10 million project through the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program.

Chatham-Kent council approved an additional \$652,500 in funding through its social housing reserve for the construction of 24 affordable housing units. The Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing program supplied \$2.88 million for this project.

Construction of a \$25 million Tecumseh Academy has been approved and is expected to begin next summer. The building will accommodate 800 elementary and 500 high school students.

Construction of a new town hall in Leamington is set to begin in a few weeks. Federal and provincial stimulus funding is providing \$8 million of the total \$9.3 million expenditure.

Construction of a \$1.4 million paramedic facility in Leamington is underway and expected to be completed in June 2010.

According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), single-detached home construction in Windsor will increase 30% in 2010.

### **Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Leasing**

According to the Sarnia-Lambton Real Estate Board, sales dollar volume for October 2009 was \$25.3 million, an increase of 8.8% from last October. The number of homes sold in October was 133 units, up five units from last year. However, the year-to-date sales volume was down \$46 million from last year's \$297 million. A single-family home in Sarnia - Lambton sells at the average price of \$184,455, up slightly from September 2009.

CMHC predicts the average price of a resale home in Windsor will increase to \$160,000. Home sales in Chatham-Kent increased 4% from September to October 2009.

In October 2009, Desjardins Caisse Populaire Pointe-aux-Roches-Tecumseh Inc. opened a financial centre for businesses in Southwestern Ontario. The centre currently has employees.

### **Health Care and Social Services**

A newly constructed 10-bed residential hospice located in Sarnia will start receiving patients in December 2009. This residence will employ a staff comprised of 34 full-time and part-time nurses, personal support workers, housekeepers and administrators.

A new cosmetic treatment centre, Rejuven-Age Cosmetic Laser, opened in Chatham.

A new cosmetic laser business, Leah's Laser Aesthetics, opened in Petrolia.

### **Information, Culture and Recreation**

Lambton County will build a new public art gallery in downtown Sarnia. The Government of Canada has funded the project in the amount of \$3 million, with the county contributing \$2.6 million.

A new community radio station, CKXS 99.1 on the FM dial, opened in Wallaceburg last month. It employs eight full-time and two part-time staff.

Open auditions for the upcoming musical Cinderella will be held on November 24 and 25 at the Imperial Theatre in Sarnia.

The 65th Annual Chatham Kiwanis Music Festival will be held from April 6 to April 16, 2010. Registrations begin on November 1 and end on November 16 for entries and December 1 for bands and choirs.

The Kildare House Pub in Walkerville, Windsor, has closed.

### **Manufacturing**

OYA Solar Inc. plans to invest up to \$180 million in a solar energy project, creating 100 jobs in Windsor. OYA plans to start manufacturing racking systems for solar panel installations as early as next month.

Jamieson Laboratories Inc., a vitamin manufacturer, is expanding its production facilities in Windsor. The \$15 million expansion plan includes the purchase of a new Twin Oaks industrial facility which is expected to open in approximately one year.

Due to increased demand, Chrysler's minivan Windsor Assembly Plant will return to full production levels on December 7. The 4,800 employees will work on three eight-hour shifts rotations.

On November 5, Chrysler's CEO Sergio Marchionne unveiled the company's five-year plan to keep production of the minivan in Windsor. The Chrysler Town and Country minivan will get significant upgrades in 2010, before undergoing a complete redesign in 2014. An electric version of the minivan should be introduced in 2011.

Daymond Aluminum, an aluminum extruder located in Chatham, went into receivership on November 6, 2009. As a result, 60 workers were laid off.

Woodbridge Foam Corp. in Corunna will shut down by May 2010, putting 75 people out of work. The rising Canadian dollar, higher operating costs and cheaper competition were the reasons cited for the closure. Woodbridge produces energy-absorbing foam products for the automobile industry.

### **Public Administration**

The City of Windsor eliminated six general manager positions and plans to eliminate 12 positions at Windsor Fire and Rescue. These cuts are expected to save the city about \$1.6 million. Additional cuts are expected.

### **Other Services**

Former President Bill Clinton will be the opening speaker at the 2010 Enviro-Expo held at Caesars Windsor on April 15-18. It is anticipated Enviro-Expo, an event hosted by the Essex Region Conservation Foundation, will host over 350 vendors and 20,000 participants.

Directors are needed to fill vacant positions on the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce Board.

Transit Windsor, the city's public transit system, is looking to hire five new drivers.

Local driving schools have been affected by the extended strike by unionized Ontario driver examiners. Close to 600 DriveTest workers, the provincial private firm in charge of driving tests, have been on strike since August 21, 2009.

### **Retail and Wholesale Trade**

The 2009 seasonal Petrolia Farmers' Market resulted in over \$88,700 in gross sales by vendors and created 32 seasonal jobs. Funded by a federal government grant, a 24 stall permanent seasonal market in Petrolia is expected to open by March 31, 2010.

Sears expanded into a second location in Chatham Centre.

A new Shoppers Drug Mart, employing 42 workers, opened in Sarnia at the end of November.

### **Professional, Scientific and Technical Services**

BBDO, an advertising agency, announced it will be closing its Windsor office placing 80 people out of work at the end of January 2010. This decision comes after Chrysler and BBDO failed to reach an agreement on a new contract.

## Transportation and Warehousing

The Michigan Department of Transportation plans to double the toll rate to cross the Blue Water Bridge linking Sarnia to Port Huron. The increase is scheduled to take effect January 5. The toll increase will help pay for infrastructure projects and to offset a decrease in bridge traffic.

Utilizing \$6 million in funding provided by the federal government's Economic Action Plan, Chatham-Windsor VIA Rail is set to undergo \$17 million worth of construction to improve VIA's Toronto - Windsor route. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2010.

## Utilities and Communications

Enbridge Inc. and Renewable Energy Systems Canada Inc. have invested approximately \$285 million in a wind energy project in Chatham. It is estimated that 300 construction jobs and eight operation jobs will be created. The project is expected to be completed by December 2010.

The Town of Petrolia received two infrastructure loans to replace street sewers from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Municipal Infrastructure Lending Program (MILP) as part of Canada's Economic Action Plan. Over \$1.2 million in low-cost loans will be used to replace existing storm, sanitary and water services and to reconstruct Queen, Nelson and West Streets; as well as pay for

recently completed resurfacing and storm sewer replacement on Garfield Avenue. The reconstruction will be funded with equal payments from the federal and provincial governments and the town. The town is paying its share with the CMHC loans.

Dresden will soon start the second phase of sewer upgrades and will replace water mains. Phases three and four of the approximately \$900,000 project will be combined and completed by the end of next year. The federal government contributed to the project through the infrastructure stimulus fund.

Waste Management's landfill-gas-to-energy project (LFGTE) in Petrolia will produce energy from garbage. The site is expected to be fully operational by July 2010. Two full-time operator jobs will be created by the project.

*Note: In preparing this bulletin, Service Canada has taken care to provide clients with labour market information from reliable sources that is timely and accurate at the time of publication. Since labour market conditions are dynamic, some of the information presented here may have changed since the bulletin was published. Readers are encouraged to also refer to other sources for additional information on the local economy and labour market. Information contained in this bulletin does not necessarily reflect official policies of Service Canada.*