

**20  
21**

# Annual Activity Report





# OVERVIEW

## Our Mission

To advance economic opportunity in Sarnia-Lambton through leadership, collaboration, and strategic direction.

## Our Vision

Economic growth and diversification to expand prosperity and elevate Sarnia-Lambton as an exceptional place to live and invest.

## Strategic Plan

All activities and initiatives undertaken by SLEP are anchored by its Strategic Plan which identified five priority areas, known as the Five Pillars, that help shape the direction of the organization into 2023.

[www.sarnialambton.on.ca](http://www.sarnialambton.on.ca)

The Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP) is the lead economic development agency for the Sarnia-Lambton area. Funded by the County of Lambton, we have a focus on promoting the distinct advantages that Sarnia-Lambton proudly offers companies and residents. By coordinating community-based economic development initiatives and working to maintain a commercially attractive environment, we foster new business creation, help ensure that established firms remain and grow here, and work to attract growing businesses to the Sarnia-Lambton area.



## Current Board of Directors

Katherine Walker – Chair  
Jerry Beernink - Vice- Chair  
Ron Van Horne – Secretary/Treasurer  
Mike Bradley – Director  
Nick Dochstader – Director  
Don Kabbes – Director  
Rob Kardas – Director  
Adrienne Lee – Director  
Kevin Marriott – Director  
Carie McEachran - Director  
Rick Perdeaux – Director  
Mark Peters - Director  
Paula Reaume-Zimmer - Director

## 5 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

These strategic priorities align with the vision and mission and provide the basis for the establishment of the actions for the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership.

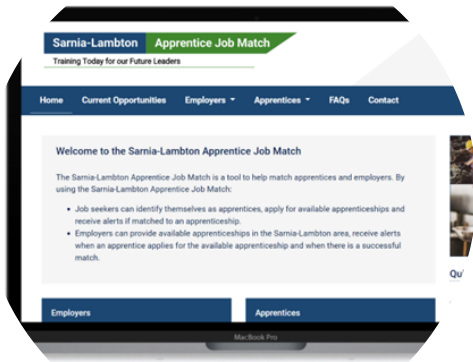




# 2021 HIGHLIGHT OF ACHIEVEMENTS

## Investment Attraction & Readiness

- Sarnia-Lambton was named one of Canada's Best Locations from Site Selection Magazine
- 138 new investment leads, and 52 new investment prospects generated
- \$3.9 Billion in potential investment
- \$93 million in active expansion potential
- 40% of new leads are represented along hybrid chemistry value chain



## Workforce Attraction

- Outreach to 4000 potential new residents
- Over 50 employment referrals made
- New apprentice Job Match Tool created with over 200 apprentices registered
- Sarnia made list of top 25 growth cities in Canada
- Sarnia named the most affordable medium-sized city in Ontario

## Entrepreneurship

- Over 400 Small Business Enterprise Centre consultations in 2021
- SLEP hosted 75 workshops and seminars
- 50 entrepreneurs participated in the Starter Company Plus program
- 240 Digital Mainstreet grants issued to local entrepreneurs
- Business Visits with 185 employers representing over 5900 employees
- Celebrated over 20 years of offering the Summer Company program

**Summer  
Company**



## Local Partnerships & Participation

- Launch of Ontario's Hydrogen Hub in Sarnia-Lambton
- SLEP secured \$365,000 in external funding
- SLEP saw a notable increase in our social media following
  - Facebook : 1530
  - Twitter: 2580
  - Linked-In: 1695
  - Instagram: 844

# INVESTMENT ATTRACTION & READINESS

## Launch of Ontario's Hydrogen Hub

A new stakeholder group was brought together including industry, academia, not-for-profit experts to advance the progress of the Ontario's Hydrogen Hub. The working group aims to expand and develop the immediate and long-term local opportunities associated with low-carbon intensity hydrogen production, fuel cells, hydrogen storage, hydrogen blending, ammonia production while supporting the traditional hydrogen industry to move to lower carbon intensity production and usage. SLEP also submitted comments to the Ontario Environmental Registry in support of hydrogen initiatives in Ontario.

## Collision Conference

We developed over 50 new connections and leads at the 2021 Collision conference with companies and senior government officials and built awareness around the information and communication technology opportunities available in Sarnia-Lambton for an international audience.



## World Petrochemical Virtual Conference

SLEP presented Sarnia-Lambton's petrochemical value proposition to VIP program attendees. We also organized individual meetings promoting investment and job creation in the area to 10+ expanding companies while continuing to foster long term established relationships in the sector globally.

## Hydrogen Impact Virtual Conference

SLEP showcased the opportunities in Sarnia-Lambton to hydrogen investors at the Hydrogen Impact 2021 Virtual Conference through a presentation identifying the potential for investment, innovation and job creation in Ontario's Hydrogen Hub.

## Sarnia-Lambton Site Selector Tool Developed

An online system helping businesses look for opportunities to locate and expand in the Sarnia-Lambton area was launched. The tool provides prospective investors with maps and comprehensive detail about available buildings and land. SLEP collaborated with the Sarnia-Lambton Real Estate board on designing this tool which includes an automatic feed of MLS listings in the area.

## ABLC & Bio Impact Conferences

SLEP presented Sarnia-Lambton's hybrid-chemistry value proposition to VIP program attendees. We also organized individual meetings promoting investment and job creation in the area to 25+ expanding companies while continuing to foster long term established relationships in the sector globally.

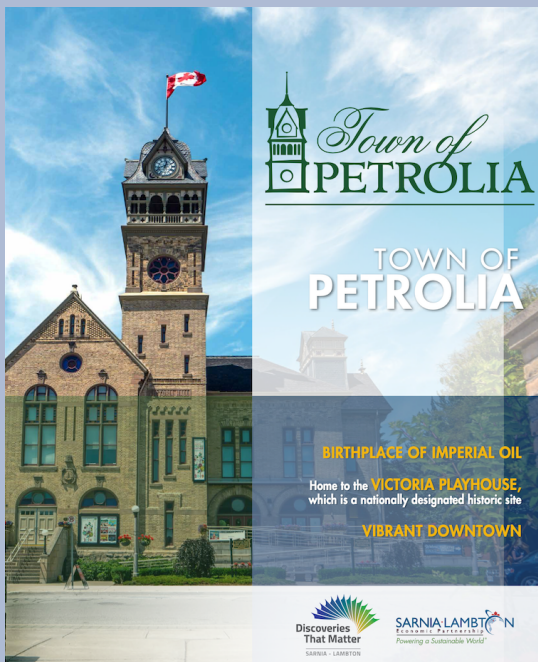




# INVESTMENT ATTRACTION & READINESS

## Award for Marketing Brochures

SLEP was internationally awarded a gold medal from Hermes Creative Awards for its creative marketing initiative that showcased the 11 municipalities of the Sarnia-Lambton area. The brochures consolidated information from each municipality to use for resident and business attraction.



## Invest Ontario Officially Certifies Forest Industrial Park

Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership assisted the Forest Industrial Park in Lambton Shores in achieving the status of being an Ontario Investment Ready: Certified Site. This industrial park is one of only six active investment sites pre-qualified by the Ontario government through the program.



## Investment Attraction Site Analysis Project

The project focused on a review of the investment readiness and competitiveness of eighteen properties/sites within Sarnia-Lambton with a focus on data related to the Ontario Investment Ready: Certified Sites Program.

## Site Selection Magazine- one of Canada's Best Locations

The Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership was recognized by Site Selection Magazine among the top 20 economic development groups in the country representing "Canada's Best Locations". This is the fourth consecutive and eighth time overall that SLEP has been recognized. The awards consider excellence in regional partnerships, proactive and innovative programming, and quality data, web tools and resources.



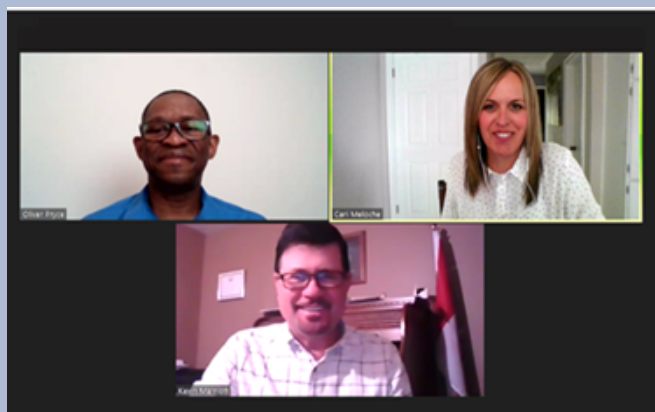
## Lambton College's Energy Symposium

SLEP helped organize Lambton College's Energy Symposium. The purpose of the event was to highlight the potential opportunities and the changing landscape of the hydrogen sector.

# WORKFORCE ATTRACTION

## Newcomer Community Employment Tour

In partnership with the Newcomer Centre of Peel, SLEP organized a virtual community employment tour for over 100 potential new residents. The potential residents met with local leaders and employers during this tour, exposing them to the opportunities in the Sarnia-Lambton region. The tour assisted local employers in sourcing skilled workers to meet their hiring demands.



## Explore Global Talent to Maximize Recruitment Results

SLEP partnered with the Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership to host a virtual event that allowed employers to discover resources for recruiting talent globally and hear from employers who have used these tools to fill their labour force needs.



## National Talent Attraction Event

Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership was promoted at Canada's largest online talent fair. We were able to reach hundreds of attendees interested in relocating to our area while showing them the opportunities in the Sarnia-Lambton area.

## London and Area Works Virtual Job Fair

Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership had the opportunity to promote employment and relocation opportunities at this virtual job fair. One of the largest audiences with skills ranging from novice to expert in multiple sectors was presented with the opportunities that Sarnia-Lambton has.



# WORKFORCE ATTRACTION

## Apprenticeship Project

To keep recent graduates in the Sarnia-Lambton area, and grow the local economy, SLEP launched a new initiative focused on apprenticeships. We supported employers with navigating apprenticeship resources and processes, accessing training incentives, and connecting directly with apprentices through the development of a new online job matching tool. This program provided an opportunity to bolster the skilled trades while creating opportunities to work and live in our community.



## Destination Canada Job Fair

SLEP attended the virtual Destination Canada job fair to promote our community and local jobs with potential job seekers, focusing on bilingual international talent. Local employers had the opportunity to collaborate with SLEP in acquiring new talents from across the globe.

## Digital Marketing Campaign

SLEP continued developing digital marketing campaigns to target specific demographics interested in relocating from larger urban centers. Continuation of investments in social media and programmatic marketing activities furthered SLEP's resident attraction and business development initiatives. These campaigns were used to promote the lifestyle and employment opportunities of Sarnia-Lambton to those with in-demand skills.



# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## Digital Mainstreet

Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership's Digital Main Street program provided main street businesses of the community with the resources to implement free digital tools in order to make them more competitive. In partnership with multiple municipalities and organizations in the community, SLEP provided businesses with workshops to transform their brick-and-mortar point of sale to E-commerce, expand digital branding and implement digital photography into their advertising.



## Summer Company

We supported local students in creating summer businesses which included a lawn care professional, allergy-sensitive soap and cleaner manufacturer, tennis lessons, and a digital marketing company. The students received \$3000 in total funding and guidance from a professional entrepreneur coach.

The logo for Summer Company, with "Summer" in green and "Company" in blue, both in a bold, sans-serif font.

## SBEC Pivot Panel

The Small Business Enterprise Centre hosted a Pivot Panel featuring five locally owned businesses that have pivoted their business or added new revenue streams to grow and diversify their business during the pandemic. The panelists discussed how they have leveraged their expertise to augment their current products and services to meet customer demands.





# ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## Specialized Small Business Advisory Services

Through SLEP's Business Enterprise Centre, local business owners were able to access free specialized services concerning Human Resources, Legislative Compliance, Operations Management, Marketing, Brand Development, and Sales Strategies with professional advisors. Small businesses were able to receive help with the challenges they were facing, and the program allowed them to thrive in the ever-changing environment.



**SARNIA-LAMBT**  
Economic Partnership  
BUSINESS ENTERPRISE CENTRE

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Service  
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519-332-18200  
smallbusiness@sarnialambton.on.ca  
sarnialambton.on.ca/BEC

## Entrepreneurship 101: Library Services

The Entrepreneurship 101 seminar series provided Lambton County residents with the tools they need to enter the world of entrepreneurship while also showcasing the Lambton County Library system's ability to support the development of businesses. The seminar was held in eight different library locations and allowed aspiring entrepreneurs and small businesses to access a variety of free resources and tools.

## Starter Company Plus

Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership offered grants of up to \$5000 plus business education and networking support for start-ups and existing small businesses in the region. SLEP's counsellors helped identify goals and set plans for businesses to experience drastic progress.



**ENTREPRENEURSHIP 101**

Logos for Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, Lambton County Library, and Discoveries That Matter are displayed at the bottom.

# LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS & PARTICIPATION

## Sarnia-Lambton Foreign Trade Zone Point

In partnership with the Sarnia-Lambton Chamber of Commerce, SLEP led the effort to secure the designation of Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) Point for the Sarnia-Lambton area. This designation will help the county business tap into international markets with the help of tax and duty relief programs.

## Lambton Agriculture Engagement & Support Program

In collaboration with the Lambton Federation of Agriculture and with support from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, SLEP received funding from Ontario's Rural Economic Development (RED) Program. The program provided personal support to Lambton farmers and agribusiness owners as well as created 6 Virtual Farm Tour Videos and 7 On Demand Seminars to support learning and growth in the sector including the potential for a Lambton Food Hub. The focus of the program was to help ensure that agriculture-related business continued to be successful and grow.



## Shop Lambton Map

In partnership with the Covid-19 Business and Economic Task Force, the Shop Lambton map project was launched. This project features an interactive database of local stores and restaurants and other businesses, their contact information, hours of operation, and how they are providing their goods or services amidst this rapidly changing economic landscape. As a result, the tool helped consumers find goods and services locally, increasing support for local businesses amidst the pandemic.

## Sarnia Lambton Digital Symposium

In collaboration with Lambton College's Information Technology and Communication Research Centre, SLEP hosted this digital symposium, showcasing new and emerging trends, research and technologies in the Information Technology sector. The audience had the opportunity to hear from experts and be exposed to new developments in artificial intelligence, machine learning and cybersecurity.





# LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS & PARTICIPATION

## Supported Enbridge Line 5

SLEP prepared a brief for the House of Commons Special Committee on the Economic Relationship between Canada and the United States supporting the continual operation of Enbridge's Line 5

## COVID-19 Business and Economic Task Force

SLEP continued to partner with the Sarnia-Lambton Chamber of Commerce, Grand Bend and Area Chamber of Commerce, Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board, Tourism Sarnia-Lambton, Lambton Public Health, Sarnia Lambton Business Development Corporation to communicate updates on funding programs and updates from Lambton Public Health. The Task Force conducted two surveys to gather feedback from area businesses to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on area businesses. The results were shared with the Western Warden's Caucus to provide more insight into funding programs that would help businesses in the hardest hit sectors.

## Western Ontario Warden's Caucus (WOWC)

Supported a regional virtual community consultation to offer Sarnia-Lambton's workforce information to support the creation of the Ontario Workforce Strategy. Fourteen local stakeholders from various sectors participated in the event.

## From Our Hands to Your Table Project

In collaboration with the Lambton Federation of Agriculture, Middlesex County, and Tourism Sarnia-Lambton, SLEP participated in the "From Our Hands to Your Table" project, which offered support to local agriculture and food producers as well as restaurants to promote locally grown products. The campaign has helped provide a locally written story for consumers about the food that they consume.

