

MEDIA RELEASE

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**WINDSORESSEX ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION'S
2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND RIBBON-CUTTING OF THE VIRTUAL REALITY CAVE**

Windsor-Essex County, Ontario, Canada – Wednesday, May 29, 2019 – Over 160 people attended the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation's (WE EDC) 2018 Annual General (AGM) today that was held at the Institute for Border Logistics and Security (IBLS) a department of the WE EDC. Attendees included stakeholders, funders, government officials and business leaders from the Windsor-Essex Region and across Ontario and the United States.

In addition to reporting on the 2018 business development accomplishments and activities, a ribbon-cutting ceremony took place following the AGM to officially unveil its state-of-the-art and fully immersive **Virtual Reality CAVE for Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Technologies**, located in the IBLS facility. The Virtual Reality CAVE is a resource provided as a part of the Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network (AVIN) Regional Technology Development Site (RTDS) in Windsor-Essex. This program focuses on bolstering regional capacities and providing business and technical resources to small and medium-sized enterprises to enable them to develop new products and solutions that will create jobs and global exports for Ontario. The Windsor-Essex RTDS focuses on cross-border technologies.

The partners – **Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE)**, which delivers AVIN on behalf of the Government of Ontario, **ANSYS, SimuTech Group Canada and Barco** that were involved in the creation of the VR CAVE - were also on hand for the ribbon cutting and to lead the VR CAVE demonstrations to those in attendance. In the afternoon, the partners hosted tours of the VR CAVE for their clients and the public.

"The people of Windsor and Essex are resilient, and have a tremendous ability to innovate and adapt. Over the past few years, we've really seen this resilience pay off in parts-production and the high-tech sector. Just look at how Tecumseh is expanding and integrating with Essex in an unprecedented manner. Congratulations to the Windsor-Essex Economic Development Corporation on the launch of the AVIN Windsor RTDS VR Cave."
Rick Nicholls, MPP for Chatham-Kent Leamington

"As one of the top auto-producing regions in North America, and with more than 200 companies pioneering connected and autonomous vehicle technologies in the province, Ontario is at the forefront of developing and building the next generation of vehicles. I'm delighted the Windsor-Essex region is playing a key role in Ontario's Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network by harnessing its expertise in cross-border technologies. This is another example of how effective partnerships between the public and private sectors are helping to make Ontario open for business."
Todd Smith, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade

“This region truly is like no other, and it is growing, developing, getting stronger and diversifying. The City of Windsor and the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation are committed to promoting local economic development and diversification, nurturing cross-border relationships and ensuring that we are a key player in the future of high-tech. Our efforts are paying off. In the last year, we saw continued strength in our local economy. Government and business investments brought new jobs and plant expansions, while positioning us at the centre of autonomous vehicle technology testing, and the development of safer, more environmentally friendly cars. International corporations opened their North American headquarters in our city, bringing high-tech research and development positions, and partnering with our educational institutions and local manufacturing firms to take advantage of all that Windsor-Essex has to offer. People are hearing the Windsor-Essex story, and they like what they hear. There is recognition now that Windsor-Essex, the proud International Gateway between Canada and the United States of America, is one of our country’s best places to live, work, visit and invest.” **Drew Dilkens, Mayor City of Windsor**

“The Windsor and Essex County region enjoyed tremendous success and momentum in 2018 and is poised for continued growth and diversification. We have so many reasons to be proud and so many great things on the horizon. The work of the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation produced results last year in terms of investments, expansions and jobs. But it is the seeds WE EDC planted and the connections it made that should give us the greatest sense of optimism. Every new job that is created and every new business that opens is a calling card to the investment world, here and overseas, that Canada begins in Windsor-Essex.” **Gary McNamara, Warden of Essex County**

“The 2018 Annual Report highlights the accomplishments of the corporation as well as outlines the strategic initiatives underway which will benefit our region throughout this year and well into the future. The number that jumps out to me is the 5.4% unemployment which is a historic turnaround from just a few years ago. The organization continues to focus on a diversified economy, one that builds on the inherent strengths of the area and puts us in a position to make this area thrive for generations to come. The launch today of the Virtual Realty CAVE for Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Technologies demonstrates our future.” **Tal Czudnar, Chair WE EDC**

“Overall our performance metrics in 2018 shows very positive outcomes, an indicator we are well positioned to continue this momentum in 2019 and beyond. One of WE EDC’s major accomplishments in 2018 was being selected as one of the six Regional Technology Development Sites under Ontario’s Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network Program with the goal of building capacity in the autonomous vehicle field by assisting start-ups and SMEs to develop, test, validate and commercialize their technologies. We will continue to build on our 2018 accomplishments that has provided significant positive impacts to the region, while supporting initiatives such as the VR CAVE to support economic prosperity for the Windsor-Essex Region now and into the future.” **Stephen MacKenzie, President and CEO WE EDC**

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