

Essex CFDC celebrates Small Business Week

Friday, Oct. 20 is the day Ontario celebrates the valuable contribution Community Futures Development Corporations make to our rural communities.

CFDC Day serves to highlight the important role small and medium-sized businesses play in the economic well-being of our communities. The event is held on the Friday of Small Business Week, Oct. 15-21, an initiative of the Business Development Bank of Canada.

"We are proud of the role the Essex CFDC plays in assisting entrepreneurs and rural communities throughout the region," says Martin Breshamer, chair of the Essex CFDC. "As a locally-run, not-for-profit organization, we are in tune with the economic development needs and priorities of our communities."

This year, the Essex CFDC has planned a num-

ber of activities including a treasure hunt available at www.windsor-essex.info (look for the CFDC announcement and follow the instructions). A breakfast networking session called "Staging Your Business" was held on Tuesday.

In Ontario, there are more than 336,000 small businesses with fewer than 100 employees. These account for 97 percent of all Ontario businesses and nearly 50 percent of the total workforce. According to Statistics Canada, the small business sector is responsible for the creation of about half of all new jobs in Ontario.

The Essex CFDC is one of 61 CFDCs in Ontario. In the last five years, Ontario CFDCs have invested more than \$244 million to help the small business sector create or maintain 28,472 jobs.

Small business owners optimistic about future

Toronto/CNW – A new Scotiabank survey shows Canada's small business owners remain upbeat about future economic conditions.

"Small business owners have indicated their optimism about Canada's prospects in the year ahead and that will go a long way toward reinforcing the economy's forward momentum," said Aron Gampel, Deputy Chief Economist at Scotiabank.

The Bank's annual review of Canadian small business probes business owners' major concerns and priorities, as well as trends and prospects for the year ahead. Survey results released Oct. 11 also explore the impact of Canada's economy on small business.

Rising optimism about Canada's economic conditions

The survey shows relative optimism in the short-term direction of the economy, with 28 percent of small business owners believing that general economic conditions will

improve over the next 12 months. Compared to last year, fewer owners expect that conditions will deteriorate (only 23 percent in 2006, compared to 45 percent in 2005), and more expect conditions to remain the same (49 percent, up from 33 percent in 2005).

Stable confidence in business performance

Small business owners are optimistic about the future of their own companies over the next 12 months. About half (46 percent) say they feel their business will strengthen going forward, 47 percent think it will remain about the same, and seven percent anticipate it will not perform as strongly. This level of confidence is similar to results reported last year.

The survey also suggests that most small businesses plan to expand their operations within their own city or town.

"This focus is attuned to the growing urbanization of Canada, a strategy that should help firms deal with

domestic adjustments as the U.S. economy moves to a slower growth trajectory," said Gampel.

Issues facing small business

When asked about major issues of concern to small business, owners most frequently mentioned issues related to: financial, government, labour and competition issues. A solid 60 percent cited financial issues such as, taxes, fuel prices, interest rates and financing, while 25 percent noted that government mat-

ters such as regulations or lack of government support were a concern. Among small business owners, 16 percent highlighted labour issues, such as a qualified labour shortage, while another 16 percent pointed to competition issues, including pressure by big corporations.

Although these topics were also prominent in the 2005 edition of the survey, concerns over government issues rose seven percentage points in 2006.

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Hickey Byrne is pleased to announce that

LIANNE M. BYRNE

has joined the firm. Lianne is interested in developing a general practice of law with a focus on business law. She was previously at McCarthy Tétrault LLP in Toronto incorporated commercial department.



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