

**MEDIA RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

**Expanded Supports for Local Businesses**

March 25, 2020

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In light of the sweeping economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP) has proactively mobilized to support local businesses in navigating these uncertain times. We are here to help in every way we can, and any business or entrepreneur with questions is encouraged to review our online resources for the latest information or reach out to the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership team through our website or by calling our office at 519-332-1820.

“The Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership team understands the crucial role that our businesses and workforce play in our diverse economy. We continue to work collaboratively with our partners to ensure that any questions and concerns businesses have during these uncertain times are addressed and our local economy remains sustainable,” said Stephen Thompson, Chief Executive Officer of the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership.

“Accessing information is key,” added Thompson. “Our office has experienced a significant increase in inquiries from local businesses as they seek the most up-to-date information on the COVID-19 situation and resources available from government in these uncertain times.”

As of last week, the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership has refined our strategic focus and launched a number of new initiatives and resources to assist businesses in an effort to ensure businesses in the Sarnia-Lambton area have access to factual up-to-date business information, resources, and funding opportunities during this rapidly evolving situation.

Immediate actions to support the sustainability of local business include:

**1. COVID-19 Economic Taskforce**

SLEP has formed a business and economic focused Taskforce that is being chaired by our CEO. Also central to the Taskforce are the Sarnia-Lambton Business Development Corporation, Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Development Board, along with business, tourism, and chamber of commerce representatives, coming together to develop strategies and resources to support business and employment.

**2. Sarnia-Lambton Business Impact Survey**

We are collaborating with the Sarnia-Lambton Chamber of Commerce and the Taskforce on a COVID-19 Business Impact Survey to gather important research to support our local needs and strategies as well as Regional and Provincial efforts. The survey can be found [HERE](#).

**3. Business Resources Toolkit**

SLEP has developed a mini-toolkit that is available online. Our Resources for Business

webpage is updated daily as new information becomes available from Provincial, Federal, and Local resources. The Resources webpage can be found [HERE](#).

**4. Providing immediate response to business inquiries**

SLEP is responding to inquiries and proactively reaching out to local businesses offering information to help navigate available resources and also to supplement any “needs-related” information for local and regional strategies as well as those Provincially and Federally. While increasing our support of local businesses through our Business Retention and Expansion Campaign, we are also continuing to generate and serve new business and investment leads.

**5. Engaging partners and levels of government for urgent business needs**

SLEP has initiated daily calls with the Provincial Government to act as a conduit and connector for emergency economic response to businesses in the Sarnia-Lambton area and is connecting key local and regional businesses, such as safety/emergency equipment suppliers and specialty chemical producers to help strengthen Provincial and Federal supply chains in this critical time of need.

“We encourage each and every business in the Sarnia-Lambton area to visit our online resource page and contact us through our website or by phone with any additional questions. We understand that these are uncertain and potentially difficult times and will do our best to help businesses navigate the information available and connect businesses with the appropriate advice and resources,” Thompson noted.

To stay up-to-date on health related information regarding COVID-19, please visit the [Lambton Public Health website](#) and the [Province of Ontario website](#).

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