



ST.THOMASEDC



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For immediate release

Small Business Enterprise Centre is now open for business Creating jobs for Elgin and St. Thomas

St. Thomas, ON – The Elgin Business Resource Centre, Elgin County Economic Development and the St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation are pleased to announce the opening of the Elgin – St. Thomas Small Business Enterprise Centre.

The Small Business Enterprise Centre will provide business counselling and related business services to residents wishing to start their own business, to those businesses that are new or in a growth stage or even those that want to wind down their operation or are looking for information on succession. The SBEC will be co-located with the Elgin Business Resource Centre.

“In this first year of operation we will continually find ways to reach out to potential clients through our existing networks and those of our partners and sponsors,” said John Regan, General Manager of the Elgin Business Resource Centre.

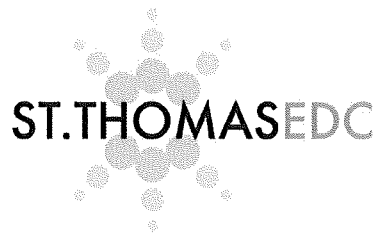
“We are pleased to partner with the EBRC and St. Thomas EDC on this important project to invest and support small business in Elgin and St. Thomas,” said Alan Smith, General Manager of Elgin County’s Economic Development.

“This partnership will result in an expansion of local services available to entrepreneurs and small business people looking to make use of the many advantages this area has to offer,” said Dennis Broome, President of the St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation.

In conjunction with the Elgin Business Resource Centre the goal will be to provide a seamless service from introductory counselling to business plan writing, guiding the research and marketing process through to business registration and start up and ongoing monitoring and preparation for loan presentations.

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Small Business Enterprise Centre Backgrounder

The Elgin/St. Thomas Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC) is embarking on its first year of operation. The SBEC will provide business counselling and related business services to residents wishing to start their own business, to those businesses that are new or in a growth stage or even those that want to wind down their operation or are looking for information on succession. The SBEC will continue to be co-located with the Elgin Business Resource Centre. The primary geographical area to be served is all of Elgin County, including St. Thomas and adjacent areas.

As this is the inaugural year of operation, there are some activities and services that will be developed and added to the list. Currently, the projected services and activities will include:

- One-on-one business counselling and guidance with business plan, financial plan, operational plan and marketing plan development
- Seminars, training programs, workshops, information sessions
- Resources related to a variety of business topics including but not restricted to; business registration, statistics, benchmarking tools, business planning tools, export/import information, government programs and services
- Computer stations with internet access and business software
- Summer Company, Youth Entrepreneurship Program, Youth Partnership Programs (more coming - locally developed)
- Outreach to local schools to develop partnerships in business programs promoting entrepreneurship
- Lunch and Learn networking and seminar sessions
- Support local Entrepreneur Networks
- Support and attend Chamber of Commerce events
- Regular contributions to newsletters put out by Elgin County and Elgin Business Resource Centre
- Participate in a Bridges to Better Business for local businesses
- Plan and Participate in Small Business Week events in partnership with local partners/sponsors
- Develop and deliver Small Business Week events including workshops and key note speakers
- Maintain a database of clients in TEA (category, dates, times and durations of contacts as well as content).
- Maintain regular contact with clients through electronic means (newsletter, points of interest, upcoming events, etc.)