



Regional Review

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM DEPARTMENT

Energy minister visits Ontario's 'Energy Capital'

The Honourable George Smitherman, Deputy Premier and Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, addressed the issues of sustainability, conservation and green investments in front of a sold-out audience at the International Leaders Breakfast Club, presented by the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance at the Tosca Conference Centre in Oshawa on March 27.

The keynote presentation highlighted opportunities and challenges that Ontario and the Greater Toronto Area face in building a renewable energy industry. Minister Smitherman stressed the importance of encouraging conservation as a way of life and building strategies that appeal to foreign direct green investors. Recognizing the audience's enthusiasm, he noted that all should look to Durham region for positive developments on the energy front.

Minister Smitherman also engaged the audience by discussing the volatility

of the energy sector, emerging shifts in energy consumption, as well as the contributions to an investment-ready climate by local communities and educational institutions.

"Durham Region is very well positioned, even in these tough economic times, to grow the local economy, particularly the energy sector," said Doug Lindeblom, Director of Economic Development and Tourism. "This was a great opportunity to communicate this positive message directly to the Minister and indicate to him our readiness to support the Province's direction in energy and sustainability initiatives."

The Region of Durham co-sponsored this event along with the Durham Strategic Energy Alliance, the non-profit organization that works to advance energy initiatives in Durham region. More than 280 officials and guests attended the ILBC breakfast, making it the largest to date.



Minister Smitherman discusses opportunities in Durham region's energy sector.

MAKING BUSINESS HAPPEN

Resources for Success

Tapping into business resources has never been easier.

A resource list is now available right at your fingertips—online at www.durhambusiness.ca by selecting Advanced Manufacturing, then Business Resources for Success. You can also visit any of the eight local area municipalities' websites.

Working with municipal partners, The Regional Municipality of Durham's Economic Development and Tourism Department has developed this easy-to-use list, which includes a wide range of resources from general information for existing businesses and start-ups, to support programs for exporters, funding opportunities and human resources support.

Print format is also available at the Regional and municipal economic development offices.

Preparing Your Best Bid

Learn how to prepare and submit your best bid from experts at some of Durham region's largest organizations.

WHEN: Friday, May 8
8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

WHERE: Durham Regional Headquarters, room 1D
605 Rossland Rd. E., Whitby

This event features purchasing representatives from:

- Gerdau Ameristeel
 - Ontario Power Generation
 - Office of Small and Medium Enterprises at Public Works and Government Services Canada
 - Government of Ontario Ministry of Government Services
 - The Regional Municipality of Durham
 - Durham District School Board
- To register, please call 1-800-706-9857.

Each organization will present a 30 to 35-minute overview of their procurement process. Each presentation will be made twice during the morning. For a detailed schedule, please check upcoming events at www.durhambusiness.ca.

Preparing the Best Bid is brought to you by The Regional Economic Development and Tourism Department and its municipal economic development partners.

Students become farmers for a day at Durham Farm Connections

Grade 3 students from across Durham region experienced life as a farmer and learned the importance of agriculture at the fourth annual Durham Farm Connections event last month.

From April 7 to 9, more than 100 volunteers including local farmers, teachers and community members helped make this event, held at the Vipond Memorial Arena in Brooklin, a huge success.

Eight themed stations educated students on the different areas of farming and agriculture through demonstrations and hands-on activities. In addition to tractors, apple cider and corn, students had the chance to see live cows, chickens, pigs, sheep and even pet lambs.

"Farm Connections provides more than 1,200 Grade 3 students and teachers from across Durham region with an excellent opportunity to experience agriculture first-hand," explained Marlene Werry, Rural Economic Development Officer for Durham Region. "They learn about crop production, livestock handling and care, agricultural technology and land stewardship from Durham region farmers in an educational and fun atmosphere that is geared toward their school curriculum. It helps

students gain an appreciation and understanding of where their food comes from."

An open house on the evening of April 8 allowed all Durham region residents to participate in this educational event, providing a forum to meet local farmers and their livestock, discuss agricultural issues, and learn about Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (CLOCA) land stewardship and how to do their part to protect the environment.

Farm Connections was sponsored in part by Ontario Power Generation, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada through the Agricultural Adaptation Council, Durham Region's Economic Development and Tourism Department, CLOCA and Farm Credit Canada, Durham Region Local Training Board, Durham Federation of Agriculture, Junior Farmers, Durham Region Commodity Organizations and many local businesses.

To learn more about other agricultural education activities offered year-round by Durham Farm Connections, visit www.durhamfarmconnections.ca.

UOIT researcher poised to benefit advanced manufacturing

The manufacturing industry is continuously demanding higher performance of its general purpose robots. With a \$500,000 Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Robotics and Automation recently awarded to Dr. Dan Zhang, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) is poised to improve manufacturing capabilities, particularly in the automotive and aerospace sectors.

Dr. Zhang, director of the Automotive, Manufacturing and Mechanical Engineering programs and a professor at UOIT, will further advance his research of parallel robot systems with this award. The parallel robot has a greater advantage over its counterpart, the serial robot, because of its multi-leg design.

"Parallel robots can offer manufacturers greater benefits because of their high rigidity, accuracy and loading capacities," explained Dr. Zhang. "The multi-leg design allows quick rotations and translations, and multi-dimensional movements. In comparison, the serial robot's single-leg design is prone to accumulated errors that greatly decrease overall performance."

Dr. Zhang's work on the parallel robot began 10 years ago at Laval University, Quebec. His research has thus far led to a patented prototype



Dr. Zhang's patented parallel robot prototype. (Picture: Dan Zhang)

capable of reaching five different sides of an object, which works efficiently with contours, and allows for precision surface polishing and finishing. Now, Dr. Zhang hopes to improve the reliability and accuracy of current robotic technology systems. His research will continue in the "macro" direction for manufacturing, as well as "micro" for biomedical and semiconductor applications.

"We need to innovate in order to improve productivity," he said. "Research collaborations with industry are extremely valuable to advancing technologies in manufacturing." ATS Automation Tooling Systems, the parent company of Micro Precision Plastics in Bowmanville, is currently a partner.