

Subject: Economic Development Update Q1 and Q2

Report to: Planning and Economic Development Committee

Report date: Wednesday, July 9, 2025

Recommendations

1. That Report ED 7-2025 Economic Development Update Q1 and Q2 **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to provide PEDC with an update on the division's activities for Q1 and Q2, 2025.
- Economic Development continues to implement on the 10 Year Economic Development Strategy 2022-2032 (Inspire, Invest, Grow) approved by Council in 2022.
- Niagara Economic Development's (NED's) core activities include: Foreign Direct Investment Attraction; Strategic Marketing; Business and Economic Research and Analysis; Business Growth Services; Area Municipal (AM) and Sector Support; and Strategic Economic Initiatives.

Financial Considerations

The activities described in this report are within the Council approved 2025 Economic Development operating budget.

Analysis

Investment Attraction

NED continues to grow and diversify the economy through targeted business attraction in sectors where Niagara has a competitive advantage, as well as in emerging sectors, where NED can demonstrate a strong business case for investment.

In the first and second quarters of 2025 the team has had meetings with 31 new businesses expressing interest in investing in Niagara Region. Those 31 meetings lead to 12 new opportunities, where NED has had multiple meetings with prospects

considering Niagara for investment. Within this pipeline of activity conversations remain active, and NED continues to work towards converting leads to completed investments.

In partnership with Team Niagara, NED hosted a three-part webinar series to provide trade insights to local businesses during the ongoing trade negotiations. Topics discussed included financing options and the Canada, United States and Mexico (CUSMA) agreement. On average, there were 20 participants in each webinar. Future webinar topics are being discussed and will reflect the current state of trade discussions with the US and globally.

NED continues to work with our Provincial and Federal partners such as Ministry of Economic Development Job Creation and Trade, the Trade Commissioner Service, Invest Ontario/ Invest Canada, Consider Canada Cities Alliance and Global Affairs Canada to navigate the current trade negotiations and understand opportunities that exist to expand trade and supply chain to international markets and across Canada.

Strategic Marketing

NED continues to position and market Niagara region as a choice destination for businesses to locate and we continue to promote Niagara as a global community.

There are 35,447 visits to our website, with 318 returning visitors, demonstrating strong interest and engagement from both new and repeat visitors.

A new Physician Recruitment Video is currently in production, which will highlight Niagara's high quality of life and thriving healthcare ecosystem. This video will be launched in August 2025, emphasizing the region's appeal as a prime destination for medical professionals.

The Shop, Support, Share Niagara campaign was launched and continues to exceed expectations, with a total of 586,836 impressions. This performance is well above the typical range for regional awareness campaigns, signaling strong community engagement.

NED also launched dedicated landing pages for Electric Mobility, Tariff Support, and the Niagara Business Directory to better showcase Niagara's strengths in innovation, local supply chain options and to attract investment from high-value sectors. The Niagara Business Directory was the most popular page, reflecting the growing demand for local business connections, further bolstering our local supply chain network.

Business and Economic Research and Analysis

These initiatives focus on Niagara's economy through regional economic and business research and analysis and inform policy development and economic development initiatives. This work includes support to area municipalities with economic data, and support to businesses, investors, and other economic development partners in Niagara.

Research projects and collaborations for this period involved the Niagara Economic Update report and presentation, Business Analytics project with Niagara College and the Niagara Industrial Association, Active Economy update with Brock University, Niagara Tourism Economic Profile report and presentation, Niagara Employment Inventory support, and Tariff and Trade research and analysis.

Research inquiries and responses to data and information requests involved 72 inquiries from a variety of organizations. These requests supported inquiries from Brock University, Niagara College, Niagara Region (Community Services, Planning, Finance, Public Health, Public Works), local municipalities, private businesses, news media, and economic development partners (ex. Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Partnership of Niagara, and Niagara Industrial Association).

Strategic Growth Services

NED in partnership with interdepartmental functions participated in a Development Charges Roadshow across Niagara's local municipalities. The primary mandate was to inform local partners on the Region's Employment Incentive Programs, focusing on policies and procedures for Development Charge Grant programs.

NED engaged in consultations with Telefilm Canada and Ontario Creates to leverage resources for local municipalities involved in film sector development, one of our key emerging sectors as outlined in the 10 Year Economic Development Strategy. NED also attended the Ontario Creates Film Forum in April 2025 and hosted Film Sector Development meetings with area municipalities to foster collaboration and growth of the sector.

Area Municipal (AM) and Sector Support

Engaged Six Nations / Farmers to provide feedback on the Niagara Agricultural Action Plan. As a result of that feedback a one-page plan executive summary was created and used as a quick reference guide for all partners assisting with implementation of the plan. NED also confirmed the Niagara Federation of Agriculture (NFA) as the "unified

voice" and champion of the plan. The partnership was officially announced at the February meeting of APAC.

NED facilitated collaborative discussions with local and provincial Agriculture associations such as the Niagara Federation of Agriculture, Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers, and Grain Farmers of Ontario to study best practices and close gaps within the agricultural market.

Introductory meetings were facilitated with members of the Ministry Rural Affairs, and Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming to discuss rural economic development and funding supports. NED received and shared funding announcement(s) related to the current open intakes for the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (CAP). This is a plan to enhance Ontario's food supply chain and address vulnerabilities, with research and adoption of innovative new technologies and practices that enhance competitiveness.

Strategic Economic Initiatives

NED looks to develop strategic initiatives that will strengthen the regional economy. These initiatives can include projects that investigate opportunities in core and emerging sectors; build and expand local supply chains; help advise on developing sector policy and planning; and reaffirm and develop relationships with outside organizations of influence such as Invest Canada (IC), Invest Ontario (IO) and the Consider Canada Cities Alliance (CCCA).

As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen interprovincial collaboration and reduce trade barriers, Niagara Economic Development is partnering with Investissement Québec International and the Québec Office in Toronto to host Québec & Niagara Region Day – A Collaboration for Growth. This event will bring together businesses and industry leaders from both regions to foster connections and explore growth opportunities. The agenda will include an expert panel, B2B networking, and discussions on procurement processes and investment trends. By facilitating direct engagement between Québec and Niagara-based companies, this initiative supports broader Provincial and Federal Government objectives to promote seamless interprovincial trade, deepen economic ties between Canadian regions and further develop the strongest economy in the G7.

Alternatives Reviewed

No alternatives reviewed.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

This report supports the Prosperous Region priority by helping to grow Niagara's economy and create a strong, healthy business environment. Through marketing campaigns, workforce development, and partnerships with local and international organizations, we are making Niagara an even more attractive place for businesses to invest and grow. These efforts not only help local businesses thrive, but also bring new opportunities, ensuring long-term success and prosperity for the region.

Other Pertinent Reports

There are no other pertinent reports.

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This report was prepared in consultation with Niagara Economic Development staff.

Appendices

N/A