



CHATHAM-KENT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ANNOUNCES 78TH ANNUAL RURAL URBAN AWARD RECIPIENTS

“The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce the recipients of the 78th Annual Rural Urban Awards to be held on Wednesday, November 27th, 2024 at the Chatham-Kent John D. Bradley Convention Centre. Chatham-Kent is known for being a leader in agriculture, and not just farming, but also as innovators and vibrant forward-thinking entrepreneurs and business people. From farm to greenhouse to fisheries, Chatham-Kent is a trusted global supplier of food, innovative food products, retailing, production equipment manufacturing, process engineering, business services, agriculture sciences, and sustainable bio-based energy. The sector plays a major role in the economy of Chatham-Kent and has been celebrated by the Chamber for 78 years and we are looking forward to our continued recognition of these contributions.” **Billy-Jo Griffiths, Chair, Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce.**

Presentations will be made honouring the following:

FUTURE LEADER OF THE YEAR

Meredith Anderson

FRIEND OF AGRICULTURE

Louis Roesch

AGRICULTURE INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR (Individual)

Emma Butler

AGRICULTURE INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR (Business)

Farm Lending Canada
c/o Robb Nelson

Reception: 6:00 p.m. | Dinner & Awards Program: 7:00 p.m. Tickets: \$65.00 each (+ hst)

Tickets are available online at www.chatham-kentchamber.ca

The 78th Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce Rural Urban Awards is a celebration of local pride in our agriculture/food producing sector, recognizes the contributions of those that lead, operate in the sector and all who are committed to the future of agriculture in Chatham-Kent. The event connects farmers, producers, innovators and consumers to our agriculture and food system in celebration of those making amazing things happen.

DID YOU KNOW:

Chatham-Kent's agriculture sector is one of the most significant and productive in Ontario. Here's how it compares to other regions:

Agricultural Output

- Chatham-Kent is a leading agricultural producer in Ontario:
- The agriculture and agri-food industries in Chatham-Kent are valued at \$4 billion, making it a major economic driver for the region.
- Chatham-Kent leads the world in the production of over 70 crop varieties, including fruits, vegetables, plants, and grains.

Crop Diversity and Production

- The region excels in various agricultural products:
- Chatham-Kent is the number one producer in Canada for tomatoes, seed corn, carrots, cucumbers, brussels sprouts, and pumpkins.
- The area's unique combination of rich soil, abundant fresh water, and warm climate contributes to its agricultural success.

Farm Assessment Value

- Chatham-Kent ranks high among Ontario municipalities in terms of farm assessment value:
- It has the fourth-highest farm assessment value in Ontario.
- The high assessment value indicates the significant agricultural land and productivity in the region.

Greenhouse Operations

- Chatham-Kent has a strong presence in greenhouse agriculture:
- The region has over 370 acres of greenhouse operations.
- These operations are at the forefront of innovation in reducing costs and increasing yields.

Commercial Fishing

- In addition to land-based agriculture, Chatham-Kent is a leader in commercial fishing:
- Wheatley, located in Chatham-Kent, is the largest freshwater commercial fishing port in the world.
- The Lake Erie commercial fishing sector, which is largely based in the region, has a significant economic impact.

Economic Resilience

- The agriculture sector in Chatham-Kent has shown strong performance:
- During the pandemic, the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting sector in Chatham-Kent operated at 110% of pre-pandemic levels, outperforming other sectors.

Exporting and the Domestic Market

- Ontario plays a significant role in Canada's agricultural export market.
- The province's agri-food industry contributes \$48.8 billion to the provincial GDP, which is about 6.4% of Ontario's total GDP.

- Ontario is known for leading in several farming categories, including soybeans, corn for grain, and greenhouse products.

Compared to other regions in Ontario, Chatham-Kent stands out for its diverse and productive agricultural sector, its leadership in specific crop productions, and its significant contribution to the provincial and national agricultural output. The region's unique climate and geographical advantages, combined with innovative practices, position it as one of the premier agricultural areas in Ontario.