



*SWEA chair, Stratford mayor Dan Mathieson, and SCOR chair, Norfolk mayor Dennis Travale, sign an MOU on behalf of the two groups.*

SCOR EDC and SWEA have entered into an agreement to work together on several key initiatives. The signing took place June 9 in Guelph, at the SWEA Assembly aptly named Growing Prosperity: Tapping into Rural-Urban Synergies.

The two regional economic development organizations have complementary mandates and recognize that working together will enhance their abilities to expand and diversify the economy of Southwestern Ontario.



Dan Mathieson, chair of SWEA and mayor of Stratford notes, "Ever since launching SWEA in 2006 our vision included the establishment of a network of partnerships. The economy of Southwestern Ontario is diverse and it needs a diversity of organizations to support its growth. However, the region also needs to speak with one strong voice. Partnerships like this one with SCOR ensure that vision."

Joint efforts will focus on:

- Advocacy - SCOR EDC and SWEA agree to undertake advocacy on matters of mutual interest with senior levels of government and other public and private agencies.
- Infrastructure - Recognizing the ongoing need for greater regional infrastructure investment, will develop a common list of regionally-significant infrastructure projects and jointly advocate for investment by all levels of government and private interests.
- Research Program -- Together, SWEA and SCOR EDC will seek partnerships with academic institutions, government agencies and private firms for a sustained research program serving the needs of Southwestern Ontario.
- Leadership, Partnership & Cooperation - The Strategy Group will work with other regional organizations such as Western Ontario Wardens Caucus, to increase cooperation within the region.

"The signing of this strategic alliance between SWEA and SCOR is an important step forward in the evolution of Southernwestern Ontario as an economic powerhouse. It also clearly signals the relevance and importance of rural and small urban Ontario as an important driver of Ontario's economy," states Dennis Travale, SCOR chair and mayor of Norfolk County. "This Strategic Alliance can and should be viewed as the Innovation force joining with the Commercialization force to the betterment of the economy of Southernwestern Ontario."

SCOR is a partnership, composed of the five Counties of Brant, Elgin, Middlesex, Norfolk and Oxford, that has developed a Strategic Management Plan for the diversification and expansion of the economy of the region. The partnership has created an economic development corporation (SCOR EDC), to implement the strategy in cooperation with its regional partners. An action-oriented agency, SCOR EDC embraces the potential of both our rural and urban economies, recognizing their potential for growth through innovation and diversification. We are moving quickly to implement several key priority projects: supporting business expansion and new product development; skills training in new and changing economic sectors; introduction of a regional food distribution system; research, development and commercialization in key sectors.— agribusiness and food industry, manufacturing, renewable energy and tourism; renewable energy from biomass; and, maintaining our competitive edge on a regional basis.

SWEA is an alliance of governments, academic and private members promoting economic expansion and transformation in Southwestern Ontario. The primary purpose of the Alliance is to create one strong voice for the region. Key activities include research and advocacy, regional branding and investment attraction. SWEA has been advocating for strategic investment in infrastructure of regional significance. The Alliance is also working at attracting investment with particular focus on cluster development. SWEA has branded the region as the NewSouthwestern Ontario and is promoting the transformation of the region through a variety of cooperative efforts. It was formed in 2006.