

Windsor Star feature articles: April 2009

April 06, 2009 Front Page: "Region's renewable energy potential cited"

Region's renewable energy potential cited

Businessman says county is a good fit for industry

BY CRAIG PEARSON
STAR STAFF REPORTER

Entrepreneur Klaus Dohring has a warm feeling for Windsor. And it's not just because the global traveller has chosen to live here — but because he envisions the area as an alternative-heat capital.

"My vision is that Essex County becomes a renewable energy technology centre, which would showcase different renewable energies," Dohring said Sunday at the Teutonia Club, before giving a presentation on the topic during a meeting of the German Canadian Business and Professional Association.

"I could, if given proper support, bring six leading European renewable-energy technology companies to this region." The idea is to mix government and private investment to bolster an underdeveloped industry.

Dohring hopes his Windsor-based company Green Sun Rising, which imports and distributes solar thermal collectors — the panels collect direct and indirect sunlight for heat, not electricity — will one day manufacture high-tech energy equipment in this area.

Besides solar-heat collectors, Dohring wants to distribute or manufacture biomass heat equipment. Such boilers in Europe already burn wood chips or pellets, and are capable of burning residential solid waste.

ENTREPRENEUR: Guest speaker Klaus Dohring, Green Sun Rising, explains his cutting-edge solar and biomass energy.

Star photo: Tyler Brown/ProQuest

SEE GREEN SUN, A3

INDEX

Births/Deaths	C4	Crosswords	C6	Lotteries	A4
Business	B6	Editorial	A6	Sports	D1
Canada	B1	Entertainment	B4	Sudoku	C8
Classified	C1	Horoscopes	C6	Weather	C9
Comics	C7	Life	B3	World	B2

canada.com 51

Green Sun boss high on Windsor

CONTINUED FROM A3

Born in Nuremberg, Dohring has lived and worked in Japan, and holds German and Canadian master's degrees.

He considers Windsor ideally situated to capitalize on the growing renewable-energy industry.

"I was born and raised in Germany but I've been a global nomad for 25 years, and I see an incredible opportunity here," said Dohring, who comes to the area five years ago.

"Within one day's drive we can reach 50 per cent of North American consumers. We're right here between Ontario and Michigan."

Area perfect

Dohring also said the area is perfect for the renewable-heat industry because if the excitement can warm Canadians during winters, it can work anywhere.

Furthermore, Dohring said that this area already has manufacturing expertise to offer a fledgling energy industry — what he sees as the hot business of the future.

"I chose renewable-energy technology for two reasons," said Dohring, who worked in and ran car parts divisions for two decades, until founding Green Sun Rising a year ago.

"One, it's an incredible business opportunity. And two, I am deeply convinced it's the right thing to do."

April 11, 2009 Opinion:
"Solar could light recovery path"

"Looking forward"

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LETTER OF THE DAY

THE WIN

Guest speaker Klaus Dohring, founder of Green Sun Rising, explains his cutting-edge German technology for solar and biomass energy Sunday at the Teutonia Club in Windsor.

TYLER BROWN/PROQUEST, THE WINDSOR STAR

Solar could light recovery path

Re: Region's renewable energy potential cited; Businessman says county is a good fit for industry, April 6.

I am a recent retiree who has returned to Windsor and was an attendee at the Klaus Dohring presentation.

In preparation for my retirement from an auto parts supplier in which I formerly worked in Mexico, I continued to keep in touch with my hometown. I was struck by the Windsor Star online story in Texas.

I am struck by the spirit of the article of economic recovery of your recent reportage will facilitate the crystallization of my point. Namely:

- Imminent major infrastructure projects for the beleaguered and newly demonstrated approaches to labour agreements — witness the new "two-strike" Magna contract which the CAW has approved — this approach in itself could have a huge impact on future developments if applied in a wider range.
- The recently announced first level of feasibility for the downturn caused as a tourism magnet (Hershey about 100 miles one of the major tourism industry generators in North America, San Antonio attracts more than eight million tourists per year, more than all of Mexico).
- The mayor's resourceful proposal to initiate an investment ment is a proven concept which Windsor could exploit successfully.
- In the solar collector presentation, it was clearly brought out how blessed Windsor/Essex is with abundant and valuable solar radiation, far better than other communities.
- Windsor's skilled unemployed gain productive employment, endorsed a shuttle to the Alberta tar sands.
- Sunday's presentation showed how Windsor/Essex has the equivalent energy potential of a tar sand deposit.
- In other words, for each square metre of solar collector, Windsor/Essex will generate the energy of one cubic metre of tar sands annually for up to 100 years, and do it without harming the environment.
- Furthermore, the deep root manufacturing capacities

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A8 SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 2009 • THE WINDSOR STAR

OPINION

Looking forward

Region's success stories

It's sometimes difficult to focus on all the positive things happening in this community, given our preoccupation with the auto industry and the fate of the Detroit Three.

Yet, in less than a week, we've witnessed some extraordinary events, each of them highlighting our achievements and the potential for more to come.

On Wednesday the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce honoured area business people who continue to excel even in tough times. Each of them, from Athena Award winner Melissa McCormick to the Windsor Spirit Award winners, who received the Belleville Windsor-Essex Award, had something in common. They all exhibited the same spirit of enthusiasm and optimism.

"What we share with everyone in this room is our faith in Windsor because we all know we live in the best kept secret in Canada," said Jack Jorgensen, winner of the Entrepreneur of the Year award. "We can succeed at anything in this community if we put our minds to it."

That attitude has not gone unnoticed. In fact, it's been enticing entrepreneurs from other areas to look at Windsor and Essex County as a great place to invest. Just days before the awards ceremony, Green Sun Rising founder Klaus Dohring talked about the potential to make this area the hub of renewable energy technology, saying that with support, six leading European companies would be interested in coming to our region.

"Within one day's drive we can reach 50 per cent of North American consumers. We're right here between Ontario and Michigan," he said of our proximity to major markets.

Two days later, Russian delegates touring the province held a workshop in Windsor to promote the fledgling nanotechnology field. Russian physicist Roman Mavc, a professor at the University of Windsor, not only helped facilitate that gathering, he predicted nanotech jobs could come to Essex County within a year.

These are the kinds of stories that give us hope and inspiration. The businesses recognized by the chamber show us what can be done when owners are flexible and forward-thinking. At the same time, potential entrepreneurs are reaching out, showing us that new opportunities exist for diversification into high-tech fields. Both are exciting, and the timing couldn't be better.

Despite the economic challenges, this was a very good week for Windsor and Essex County.