



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

APRIL 2024 - MARCH 2025

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

As someone who has worked across the region's tech industry for many years—and is now supporting the growth of a Series B startup—I've come to understand that a thriving ecosystem is more than a backdrop; it's a driving force that helps founders grow their ventures, connects talent to meaningful opportunities, and fosters a shared sense of purpose and community.

My own journey was shaped early on by WEtech Alliance, and today, it's an honour to serve as Chair of the Board for an organization that continues to fuel the connections, resources, and momentum that founders need to succeed.

This past year was a clear reflection of that impact: WEtech supported nearly 200 entrepreneurs and companies, with 73 new founders joining the growing ecosystem. Through tailored business advisory services, expert growth coaching, peer groups, and signature foundational education programs like Innovation Blueprint, the organization continued to build capacity and strengthen connectivity across the region.

What sets this year apart is the scale and significance of outcomes. Flagship programs such as ScaleUP Accelerator, Fierce Founders, and the i.d.e.a. Fund didn't just provide mentorship—they delivered hundreds of thousands of dollars directly into the hands of local founders. And across the broader ecosystem, we witnessed two tech startups secure multi-million-dollar investments, proof that the region is gaining traction on national and global stages.

As a judge at this year's ScaleUP Accelerator Showcase & Pitch Competition, I saw firsthand what this looks like in motion: confident founders, collaborative partners, and a community that shows up. I saw the same energy throughout the year—whether it was a room full of women entrepreneurs and aspiring founders, or the summer-long Tech Connect

Summer Socials series, where alumni returned, artists contributed, and visioning sessions invited us to imagine what a vibrant tech-powered downtown could be.

As we reflect on these successes, we must also acknowledge the headwinds. Regionally and nationally, we're facing economic uncertainty, shifting policies, and changing funding landscapes. WEtech sees these challenges as opportunities to rethink, to reimagine, and to recommit to our role in building a resilient innovation economy.

As WEtech sets its sights on the next strategic plan, we remain committed to a founders-first philosophy, while anchoring our work in strong partnerships, data-driven impact, and innovative programming that evolves with the needs of founders. Our goal is clear: to ensure Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent continue to be a launchpad for innovation, a magnet for talent, and a community where entrepreneurship thrives.

On behalf of the Board, thank you to the WEtech team, our partners, our fellow board members, and most importantly—the founders. We're proud to support your journey, and we're ready for what's next.

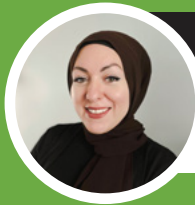


Aisling Douglas, Board Chair



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FY2024-2025 TERM



Board Chair

Aisling Douglas
Functionize



Co Vice-Chair

Sanela Stefanovski
Rocket Innovation Studio



Co Vice-Chair

Tom Schnekenburger
University of Windsor



Treasurer

Paul Mancini
Ottit



Past Chair

Barry Leavitt
ENWIN (retired)



Neil Cesario

Sterling Information Technologies



Dave Fortin
DataRealm



Dr. Karamjeet Dhillon
St. Clair College



Steve Renaud
Centerline



Joe Goncalves
Invest WindsorEssex



Steve Truong
Libro Credit Union



Ana Friesen
Tapona Foundation



Brian Hendel
Splice Digital



Sheryll Westcarr
Lighthouse Labs (formerly)



Hector Frias
Aptiv (formerly)

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Here at WEtech Alliance, we give entrepreneurs and companies the mentorship, connections, talent and community they need to build technology and innovation-based ventures. We achieve this through three main pillars:



We help innovation and tech-based businesses start. sell. scale.

HELPING BUSINESSES START & GROW



We provide comprehensive business advisory services, valuable connections, and tailored programs to support entrepreneurs and businesses at every stage of their journey, from start to scale.

WHY IT MATTERS

Entrepreneurs and innovators are the key drivers of job creation, and technology and innovation are crucial in addressing society's pressing challenges.

CONNECTING TALENT



We work with industry, academia, and community partners to connect talent with high-growth companies, skills development, and community.

WHY IT MATTERS

Talent is the driving force behind any startup's success, and a skilled and engaged workforce is vital to a region's economic growth.

BUILDING COMMUNITY



We host events, organize activities, and tell stories that inspire, onramp, and accelerate new and existing entrepreneurs, talent, and community.

WHY IT MATTERS

We know that storytelling and planned and chance encounters can lead to meaningful collaborations, and ultimately, a stronger community.

HELPING BUSINESSES START AND GROW

WEtech Alliance is an organization with a roster of business acceleration programs and services designed to help bring new ideas to market and scale to the next level.

Every year, WEtech Alliance's Venture Services team works with hundreds of entrepreneurs and companies.



Participants of the **WEsecure** pilot: **WEtech Alliance, University of Windsor, Sterling Information Technologies, and Scelta** — a six-month project delivering dedicated cybersecurity supports.

VENTURE SERVICES IMPACT

How we've helped our portfolio clients (Fiscal Year April 2024 - March 2025)



ANNUAL REVENUE

combined portfolio

\$153,339,837*



TOTAL FUNDING RAISED

by clients from public and private sources

\$9,568,479*



NEW JOBS CREATED **168***

(gross total) by portfolio clients

1,523* EMPLOYEE COUNT
active portfolio

ADVISORS & COACHES

supporting clients:

17



HOURS

of service provided:

1,864



PORTFOLIO CLIENTS

unique clients engaged:

147

new clients:

73

ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING & WORKSHOPS



sessions held:

35

attendees:

909



INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

number of
IP filings:

65*

protections
granted:

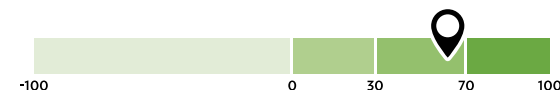
46*



NEW PRODUCTS & SERVICES

brought to market:

317*



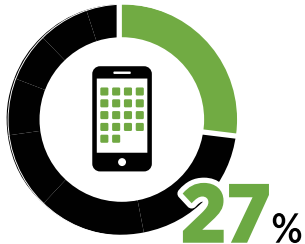
NET PROMOTER SCORE

63

* self reported by portfolio clients

CLIENT BREAKDOWN: SECTOR

INFORMATION AND
COMMUNICATION + TECHNOLOGY =
DIGITAL MEDIA/ICT



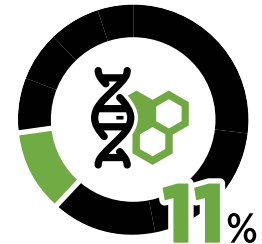
MANUFACTURING + TECHNOLOGY =
**ADVANCED
MANUFACTURING**



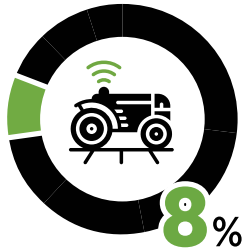
ENVIRONMENT + TECHNOLOGY =
CLEANTECH



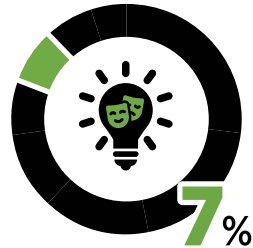
MEDICAL + TECHNOLOGY =
MEDTECH



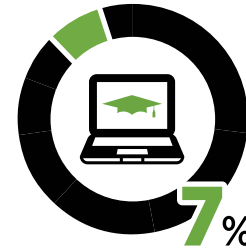
AGRICULTURE + TECHNOLOGY =
AGRITECH



CULTURE + TOURISM + TECHNOLOGY =
**CULTURE & TOURISM
INNOVATION**



EDUCATION + TECHNOLOGY =
EDTECH



FINANCE + TECHNOLOGY =
FINTECH



CLIENT BREAKDOWN: STAGE

WE help entrepreneurs with ideas, create their business reality.

START | 28%

WE help innovative new businesses launch into market.

SELL | 44%

WE help established businesses accelerate and scale.

SCALE | 28%

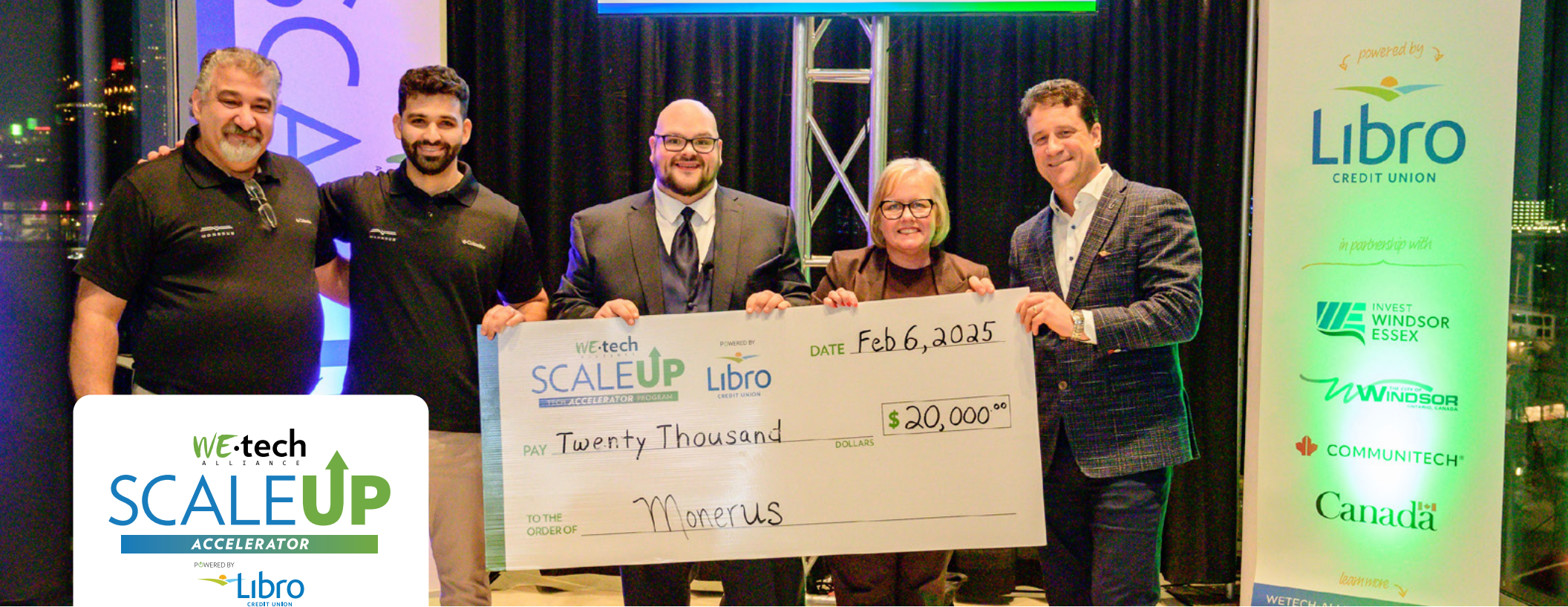


Louis Odette

NORTH IS

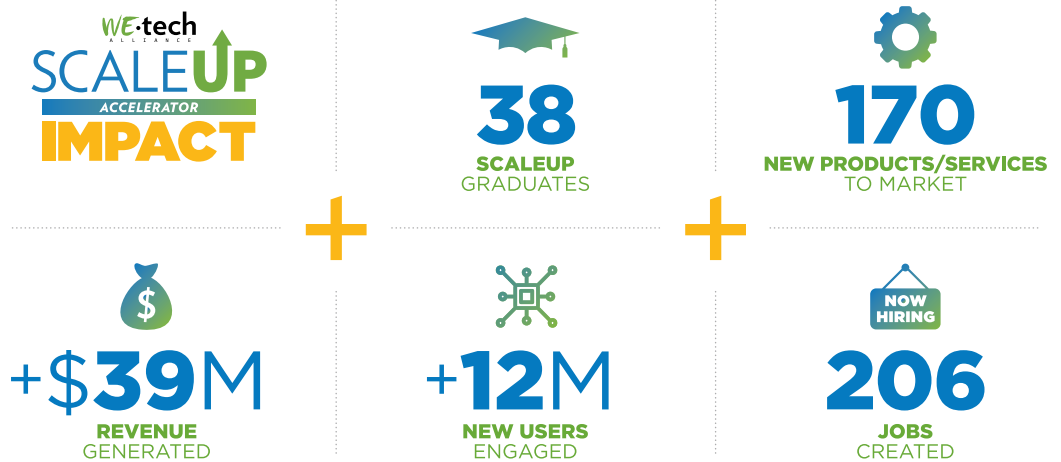
HELLO
PATRICK

SCALEUP
PITCH
COMPETITION



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: SCALEUP ACCELERATOR

This year, WEtech Alliance launched **ScaleUP Accelerator 2.0**, the next evolution of its award-winning, flagship growth program for tech and innovation-based entrepreneurs in Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent. Thanks to a renewed four-year partnership with Libro Credit Union, and a new partnership with FedDev Ontario and Communitech, the enhanced program doubled its cohort size, extended its duration, and increased in-kind support valued at up to \$85,000 per participant. New program offerings include more curated mentorship, deeper strategic support, a \$20,000 pitch competition and a \$2,500 People's Choice Award, all designed to drive greater impact and long-term business growth.



AS OF JUNE 2025



Mitch White (l) and **Eric VanPuymbroeck** (r) of **Handy Bros.**, an **i.d.e.a. Fund** supported company.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: I.D.E.A. FUND

The **i.d.e.a. Fund** program offered by WEtech Alliance in partnership with Ontario Regional Innovation Centres (RICs); Boundless Accelerator, LaunchLab, Innovate Niagara, WEtech Alliance, Innovation Factory and TechAlliance of Southwestern Ontario, is designed to support a more sustainable economy while fostering an inclusive and equitable recovery in Southern Ontario. This program provides specialized industry expertise to develop growth plans and related strategies along with non-repayable seed funding of up to \$20,000 with matching funds.

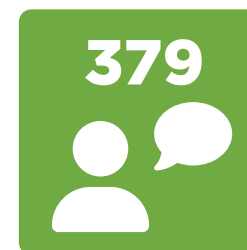
COHORT 3 RESULTS:



**WEtech
Supported
Companies**



**Funding
Provided**



**Expert
Advisor
Hours**

DID YOU KNOW? Through the first three cohorts of i.d.e.a. Fund, WEtech Alliance has supported 52 companies, providing a total of \$1.44M in capital to help accelerate innovation and growth across Southwestern Ontario. The impact? 97 new products, \$12.5M in revenue, 113 jobs, 33 new intellectual property holdings, and nearly 1,988 hours of expert mentorships.

UDB

DUROBYTE



Serge Misković (l) and **Curtis Laurie** (r)
of **DuroByte**, an **i.d.e.a. Fund** supported
company, with WEtech's **Susy Kustra**
(2nd from l) and **Alma Alao**.



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: INNOVATION BLUEPRINT

Our **Innovation Blueprint** program teaches aspiring entrepreneurs about the power of a growth mindset and its role in fueling their entrepreneurial journey. Participants learn the key steps to defining the problem their idea solves, describing its value, standing out from the competition, and assessing market size. The program also covers the importance of a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) and its role in launching a successful idea.



**Sessions
Held**



**Attendees
Supported**



**Workshop Toolkit
Impressions**



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: PEER GROUPS

At WEtech Alliance, peer groups are more than just recurring meetings, they're one of our ecosystem's most powerful (and often underrated) tools. We host a range of active groups that bring together entrepreneurs across stages, diverse sectors and business functions. We've designed these groups for a broad cross-section of our community, from

start ups, to scale-ups. Each group is designed to spark connection, foster candid conversation, and encourage collective learning. Whether tackling funding hurdles, navigating growth, or exploring emerging technologies, members gain valuable insights from guest speakers and each other.

Raising Capital

For Your Business

Featuring:

Ron Spreeuwenberg



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: INVESTMENT READINESS DAY

Hosted at the Walker Power Building, Investment Readiness Day brought together entrepreneurs, investors, and experts for a series of educational sessions designed to strengthen early-stage investment knowledge and connections across the region. A featured session, “Raising Capital for Your Business,” was led by Ron Spreeuwenberg—Wallaceburg native, founder of HiMama, and WEtech Growth Coach—who shared hard-earned insights from his experience raising over \$90 million in venture capital. The day also featured sessions from the Ontario Securities Commission on new investor exemptions and from Osler LLP on structuring seed rounds, offering practical tools and regulatory updates for both entrepreneurs and emerging investors.



Speakers



**Entrepreneurs and
Investors Engaged**



**Partners
Engaged**



REGIONAL STARTUP INVESTMENT SPOTLIGHT: OPTIMOTIVE AND PICSUME

This year marked a significant milestone for the regional tech ecosystem with two standout startup investments. **Picsume**, a regional HR tech company and WEtech ScaleUP alumni, secured \$1 million CDN in seed funding to expand its sales team and further develop its AI-powered recruitment platform. Meanwhile, robotics firm and WEtech ScaleUP alumni, **Optimotive** (formerly Optimotive Technologies) raised \$2 million USD to scale operations and grow its cross-border footprint. These investments signal growing investor confidence in the region's innovation potential and showcase the strength of homegrown talent and technology.





PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: FUELING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting women entrepreneurs through education, connection, and business acceleration, WEtechAlliancecontinuestodevelopprogramming tailored to the unique needs of women-led ventures.

This year, we hosted **Big Gorgeous Goals: Masterclass & Mingle** with Julie Ellis. The empowering evening brought together women and women-identifying entrepreneurs for a high-impact masterclass on setting bold goals and embracing personal and professional growth.

The event also marked the official launch of WEtech’s **Women Entrepreneurs Peer Group**, a new initiative designed to further support regional founders on their growth journeys.



EPIC
Speaker



Registrants
Engaged



Keynote speaker **Julie Ellis**, co-founder of **Mabel’s Labels** and author of **Big Gorgeous Goals**.



Cedar Valley Co-Founder **Surria Fadel**, alumni of ScaleUP Accelerator cohort 2, and i.d.e.a. Fund cohort 1.

REGIONAL WOMEN FOUNDERS INVESTMENT SPOTLIGHT: RESIMATE, CEDAR VALLEY AND CANGRO AGRIFOODS

Through WEtech's partnership with Communitech's **Fierce Founders** program, three regional entrepreneurs—Sarah Cipkar (Resimate), Surria Fadel (Cedar Valley), and Fuseinat Brimah (CanGro AgriFoods)—have received a combined \$110,000 in funding and support to grow their businesses. Beyond funding, the program offers expert coaching and mentorship to help founders scale with confidence. Powered by FedDev Ontario, the City of Kitchener, Google, and the Province of Ontario, Fierce Founders is driving inclusive growth across the region.

CanGRO
AgriFoods Inc.

**CEDAR
VALLEY**

 **resimate**

CONNECTING

TALENT

WEtech Alliance works with industry, academia, and community partners to connect talent with high-growth companies, knowledge and skills development, and community.





PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: WOMEN IN MOBILITY PEER GROUP

Through regular gatherings and tailored experiences, the **Women in Mobility Peer Group** facilitates educational sessions, discussions, experiences, and knowledge-sharing initiatives, aimed at empowering and connecting women in and around the mobility sector in Windsor-Essex and beyond. This year's meetups showcased presentations and tours on topics like micro-mobility, air and port industries, and BEVs, with participation from Bird Canada, St. Clair College Research & Innovation, YQG International Airport, Windsor Port Authority, and Ford Rawsonville Plant.



Members



**Women in
Mobility Meetups/
Events Hosted**



**Registered
Attendees**



EVENT SPOTLIGHT: WOMEN DRIVEN MOBILITY YQG BREAKFAST

The **Women Driven Mobility YQG Breakfast** is an annual gathering of women in the fields of mobility, entrepreneurship, and transportation innovation across Windsor-Essex and beyond. This year's 3rd annual event brought together nearly 100 attendees for a morning of networking and thought leadership, featuring keynote speaker Dr. Josipa Petrunic, President & CEO of the Canadian Urban Transit Research & Innovation Consortium (CUTRIC). Dr. Petrunic delivered an inspiring keynote on the theme "Innovative Urban Transportation: Smart Vehicles and Sustainable Cities," highlighting advancements in zero-emissions transit technologies and strategies to foster more inclusive, sustainable mobility systems.



EPIC Speaker



**Registrants
Engaged**



Partners



PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: TECH CONNECT MEETUPS

Our **Tech Connect Meetups** are gatherings of the regional tech community organized by WEtech Alliance. These events bring together founders, entrepreneurs, professionals, students, and tech enthusiasts to connect, collaborate, and celebrate our region's innovation ecosystem. More than just networking, they fuel meaningful connections that strengthen the fabric of our tech community and create opportunities for growth.

This year featured two special editions: a downtown meetup hosted by Rocket Innovation Studio, and TechHaus, a Bavarian-inspired networking event powered by TekSavvy, which blended Oktoberfest traditions with opportunities to forge new relationships. Together, these meetups underscored the importance of creating spaces where the tech and innovation community can come together to share ideas, build partnerships, and spark collaborations that drive the region forward.



**Meetups
Hosted**



**Registrants
Engaged**



Patrick Van Loon (left) and **Jordan Goure** (right) of Picsume at the Bavarian-inspired **Tech Connect Meetup: TechHaus** edition.

BUILDING

COMMUNITY

WEtech Alliance knows that storytelling and planned and chance encounters can lead to meaningful collaborations, and, ultimately, a stronger community. That is why we work hard to host events and activities that inspire, onramp, and accelerate new and existing entrepreneurs, talent, and community.



Get plugged into
regional tech scene

TECH
JOBS

TECH
UPDATES

CREATE
INNOVATE
ACCELERATE
WE.tech





EVENT SERIES SPOTLIGHT:

TECH CONNECT SUMMER SOCIALS: DOWNTOWN WINDSOR EDITION

This summer, WEtech Alliance launched **Tech Connect Summer Socials**—a downtown event series designed to connect and activate the regional tech community. In partnership with the City of Windsor, Rocket Innovation Studio, the University of Windsor, St. Clair College, and the Downtown Windsor BIA, the series featured a mural walk with WindsorEats and artist DENIAL, a fireside chat with OMERS Ventures' Darrell Etherington, and an activation at Art Windsor-Essex's AWE at Night.

These free, public events brought together students, professionals, entrepreneurs, and partners, aligning with the City's "Strengthen the Core" strategy. The series showcased how tech can play a key role in revitalizing Windsor's core through culture, conversation, and collaboration.



**Meetups
Hosted**



**Registrants
Engaged**

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: THE VENTUREU BOOTCAMP

The University of Windsor, in partnership with WEtech Alliance and Invest WindsorEssex (IWE), led the **VentureU Bootcamp**—a five-day, hands-on program empowering 100 postsecondary students to build skills and confidence in innovation and entrepreneurship. Supported by FedDev Ontario through the Government of Canada, the bootcamp featured team-based problem-solving, expert mentorship, and a pitch competition awarding \$12,500 in cash prizes.



PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: WINDSOR-ESSEX DEVFEST

WEtech Alliance continued its partnership with the **Windsor-Essex DevFest**, hosted by the Windsor Google Developers Group (GDG), supporting one of the region's premier tech conferences. This year's event introduced a dedicated Startup & Career Stream, offering attendees insights on launching a tech venture or career, navigating the journey from developer to entrepreneur, and more. DevFest remains a key opportunity to connect the local tech community with emerging trends in AI, cloud, and security, while fostering collaboration, learning, and innovation across the region.



PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

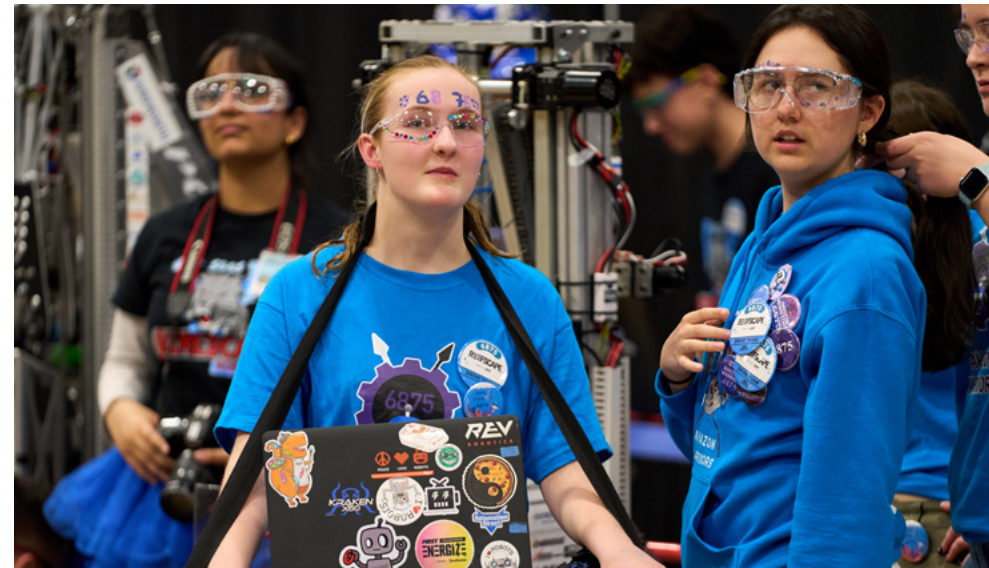
As part of Invest WindsorEssex's **Emerging Technologies in Automation Conference & Trade Show**, WEtech Alliance-supported companies took center stage in the third annual **Start Up Zone**. The event welcomed over 400 attendees, 50 exhibitors, and global leaders in automation, manufacturing, and supply chain. Seven (7) regional startups showcased their innovations, gaining exposure and forging connections at one of the industry's premier gatherings.



PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: WINDSOR-ESSEX FIRST ROBOTICS

WEtech Alliance is a proud founding partner of **Windsor-Essex FIRST Robotics**, helping grow the annual Windsor-Essex Great Lakes District Competition into a key driver of STEM education and workforce development.

In March 2025, the 10th annual event welcomed 29 high school teams from across Ontario to compete in the REEFSCAPE challenge at the University of Windsor. Over the past decade, the competition has become a launchpad for future engineers, trades professionals, programmers, and entrepreneurs—many of whom now work at leading regional companies like CenterLine or have launched startups like Optimotive. With support from partners like St. Clair College, the University of Windsor, CenterLine, and new Gold Sponsor Rocket Innovation Studio, the event provides hands-on learning, mentorship, and pathways into STEM careers, while strengthening the region's innovation ecosystem.



THANK YOU, PARTNERS

WEtech Alliance's public-private funding model means we have a lot of people for whom we are ever grateful.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of our portfolio companies, our sponsors, partners and investors who helped make the past year a success. As well, thanks to the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, and our regional economic development agencies for your ongoing support. It's your commitment and enthusiasm that allows us to do what we do. And for that, we say **THANK YOU!**



We acknowledge the support of the Government of Canada through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

Nous reconnaissons l'appui du gouvernement du Canada à travers l'Agence fédérale de développement économique pour le Sud de l'Ontario





WEtech
SCALEUP
ACCELERATOR



Get plugged into the
regional tech scene

TECH
JOBS



TECH
EVENTS



TECH
UPDATES



LET'S
CONNECT



OUR

REACH

Marketing & Communications Impact (FY24-25)



SOCIAL MEDIA

Followers: **22,194**

Impressions: **1.78M**



WEBSITE

Visitors: **67,800**

Pageviews: **125,589**



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Sent: **42,561**

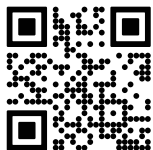
Open Rate: **53.51%**



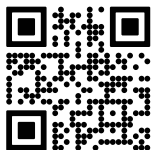
LET'S CONNECT



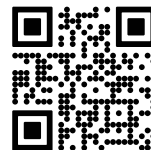
**OUR
TEAM**



**OUR
WEBSITE**



**UPCOMING
EVENTS**



**MAILING
LIST**

