

Oral Presentation to City Council's Special Meeting on Short-Term Border
Issues, Wednesday, July 24th, 2002, 5:00 p.m.

YOUR WORSHIP AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL:

**GOOD EVENING, I AM TED FARRON PAST CHAIRMAN OF THE WINDSOR
& DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. WITH ME TONIGHT IS LINDA
SMITH, PRESIDENT OF THE CHAMBER AND PAUL INNES, VICE-
CHAIRMAN OF THE CHAMBER'S TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.**

**LET ME EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF ACHIEVING A SAFE AND
EFFICIENT BORDER TO THE WINDSOR /ESSEX BUSINESS COMMUNITY
AND INDEED THE ONTARIO AND CANADIAN ECONOMIES.**

**THE ECONOMIES OF SOUTH EASTERN MICHIGAN AND SOUTH WESTERN
ONTARIO ARE CLOSELY INTEGRATED. WE ARE EACH OTHER'S
LARGEST TRADING PARTNERS.**

**WE ARE ALSO KEENLY AWARE OF THE PRESSURE AND FINANCIAL
DIFFICULTIES BEING FELT BY OUR MEMBER BUSINESSES IN THOSE
PARTS OF THE CITY SUFFERING FROM TRAFFIC GRIDLOCK.**

**THIS IS A COMPLEX PROBLEM INVOLVING LONG STANDING
DEFICIENCIES OF STAFFING, INADEQUATE INFRA STRUCTURE, POOR
USE OF TECHNOLOGY ETC.**

**GOVERNMENT AT EVERY LEVEL IN BOTH COUNTRIES MUST SHOW
COOPERATIVE LEADERSHIP TO RESOLVE THIS. THE BUSINESS
COMMUNITY HAS A ROLE TO PLAY AS WELL. YOUR CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE HAS BEEN AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT.**

(Over to Linda Smith, President)

The following summarizes the major activities, and milestones of the Windsor & District Chamber of Commerce on Border Management since August 2001:

In August 2001, the Windsor and District Chamber of Commerce submitted a draft resolution to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce at its Annual General Meeting in Winnipeg called "The Canada-US Border Relationship" calling on the federal government to:

1. Make it a priority to work with provincial governments to provide necessary road and other infrastructure improvements at border crossings.
2. Increase the staff available at border crossings during peak travel hours, and encourage its US counterparts to do the same
3. Seek automation and other border crossing streamlining initiative in a manner, which facilitates the movement of goods, and services in the most efficient and effective manner while ensuring adequate security at the border.
4. With the input and assistance of the business community, continue to work with its US counterparts, through initiative such as the Canada-US Partnership, to facilitate continuing short-term improvements on both sides of the Canada-United States border but also to develop a longer term, coordinated strategy for border management including the consideration of perimeter clearance.
5. Seek the advice and expertise of the business community in the larger debate on the overall Canada-US relationship.

On September 16th, 2001, 5 days after the tragic events of September 11th, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce adopted our resolution.

On **September 18th**, this Chamber in conjunction with the Detroit Regional Chamber began polling its members regarding the present and future impact of the terrorist attacks on their business. Nearly 75 percent of responding Chamber members indicated that the tragedy had affected their sales. Two-thirds of Chamber members polled reported that transportation issues have negatively impacted their business in the days following the attacks. Of the 71% of members experiencing border-crossing problems, over 60 percent of those said the problem was severe.

Since **September**, we have been regular and active participants in partnership with the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce in NBEST, Northern Border for Efficient and Secure Trade, which has proven a highly effective lobby group in America on border issues.

In **October 2001**, the Chairman of the Board calls the border issue “the most serious threat to the economy of Windsor in decades” The Chamber traveled to Ottawa to meet with then Deputy Prime Minister Herb Gray. Where they discussed the affect of border crossing on the local business community.

On **November2**, the Chamber helped facilitate a business round-table with Minister Herb Gray, MP Susan Whelan, and International Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew.

On **November 5th**, your Chamber joined the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers Association and MP Susan Whelan in welcoming members of the U.S. House of Representative including the Honorable J.C. Watts. The business leaders were give the opportunity to inform the Congressional Delegation of the obstacles to cross-border trade caused by the heightened security at the border.

We attended the CBC's Counter Spin Show as a primary audience participant on behalf of this Chamber.

On **November 27th**, we participated in Border Management Task Force hosted by the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce. Two of the four Co-chairs were Canadian. Chamber Chair Mike Robinson, and former Mayor John Millson.

On **December 3rd** we attended Senate Committee on Economic Development, International Trade and Regulatory Affairs chaired by Senator Bill Schuette. On Friday December 14th, our Chamber together with the NAFTA Superhighway Coalition was proud to host Mr. Paul Cellucci, U.S. Ambassador to Canada who spoke on the U.S. Canada Border management.

December 6th we joined local Ministers and the Honourable Martin Chauchon, then Minister of Canada Customs and Revenue Agency at the announcement of Customs Self Assessment Program that streamlines customs procedures for pre-approved importers carriers and rivers, while balancing trade and security concerns.

In **January 2002**, we took part in the Canadian Chamber's "action call" on border issues, consisting of a letter to be sent to all local Members of Parliament from Chamber's across Canada. The Chamber wants to keep the pressure on, and ensure that our government follows through on its commitments to design and implement a Canada – U.S. border that works for business.

At the end of the month, we met with the General Accounting Office in support of the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce's recommendations for border improvements on the U.S. side.

In **April** we participated in a Border Management Consultation Group with the Consul General and the Privy Council Office.

In **May** the Windsor Chamber presented to the Ontario Chamber what it's like to be a Chamber at the busiest border crossing in Canada.

In **May - July**, our Transportation Committee has hosted round table luncheons for new crossing proponents.

On **May 6th** we facilitated a business stakeholders roundtable with municipal officials with Deputy Prime Ministry John Manley.

On **May 9th** we provided witness testimony at the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Relations Committee on the Ontario – US Relationship and Border Management

On **June 13th** and at the request of the Deputy Prime Minister John Manley, we are Co-Chairing and acting as the Secretariat for the Business Transportation Task Force. Which is still conducting its hearing s and is looking for ward to making their report in the coming weeks.

(Back to Ted Farron with closing comments)

MANY AGENCIES AND COMMITTEES ARE WORKING HARD ON PLANS AND SOLUTIONS, WHICH OFFER POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE MID TO LONG TERM. WE ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE *BUSINESS TRANSPORTATION TASK FORCE* WITH LOCAL BUSINESS LEADERS AND THE *NORTHERN BORDERS FOR EFFICIENT AND SECURE TRADE* WITH THE DETROIT CHAMBER. WE LOOK FORWARD TO THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS.

OUR COMMUNITY IS ALSO SEARCHING FOR IMMEDIATE RELIEF TO THE DIFFICULT AND EXPENSIVE BACK UPS AND DELAYS, WHICH HAVE HINDERED COMMUTERS AND RECREATIONAL TRAVELLERS AND DISRUPTED THE JUST IN TIME DELIVERY SYSTEM CRITICAL TO THE AUTO INDUSTRY.

FEW IMMEDIATE MEASURES OFFER RELIEF BUT LET ME DRAW YOUR ATTENTION TO TWO AREAS.

A MAJOR SOURCE OF DELAY IS THE LONG STANDING INADEQUATE MANNING ON THE AMERICAN SIDE ESPECIALLY AT PRIMARY INSPECTION. FOR EXAMPLE WITH SIX PRIMARY TRUCK INSPECTION BOOTHS, INSPECTION CAPACITY AT THE BRIDGE IS EXCEEDED BY 1 1/2 TO 2 1/2 TIMES AT PEAK PERIODS. THE POWER TO RESOLVE THIS LIES WITH THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT. OUR MAYOR HAS RECENTLY WRITTEN TO MAYOR KILPATRICK EMPHAZING THE SEVERITY OF THE PROBLEM AND WE ARE COMMUNICATING THIS MESSAGE THROUGH OUR COLLEAGUES AT THE DETROIT CHAMBER. WE URGE THE CITY TO LOBBY AGGRESSIVELY THE PROVINCE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS TO URGE THEIR AMERICAN COUNTER PARTS TO STAFF UP THE EXISTING PRIMARY INSPECTION BOOTHS AND ADD CAPACITY ESPECIALLY AT PEAK PERIODS. EVEN A MODEST INCREASE IN STAFFING WOULD RELIEVE A LOT OF PRESSURE AND DELAY.

AS WELL, WE URGE THE CITY TO PRESS FOR THE IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEXUS, THE PRECLEARANCE SYSTEM FOR FREQUENT LOW RISK TRAVELLERS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BORDER. THIS IS PRESENTLY PLANNED FOR THE WINDSOR DETROIT CROSSINGS FOR YEAR END.

IN CLOSING, LET ME THANK YOU THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL FOR YOUR CONTINUING EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THESE PRESSING ISSUES AND FOR PROVIDING THIS FORUM. THANK YOU.