

Major Success: Michigan and Ontario Companies Find New Business at First Binational Meet the Buyer Expo in Port Huron, Apr, 22, 2015

Over 125 companies discovered new business in the first Binational Meet the Buyer Expo April 22, hosted by the St. Clair County Economic Development Alliance (SCCEDA), in Port Huron, Michigan. The Expo provided real opportunities for businesses in the binational Blue Water Region, and many from outside the region, to showcase their products/services and identify potential new trade partners. Eighteen companies and municipalities were set up at the Expo to purchase products and services from 120 businesses, start-ups, and entrepreneurs. The Expo program also highlighted eight “Quick-Pitch” presentations with each five minute presentation jammed-packed with info on new products, services, and ideas.

Major buyers included:

- County of St. Clair
- City of Sarnia
- Eissmann Automotive
- Consumers Energy
- City of Lansing
- Michigan State University

The Expo was the first binational activity resulting from the Binational Memorandum of Understanding on economic collaboration that was signed last year at the Binational Blue Water Collaboration Conference (June 11, 2014) in Sarnia, Ontario. Organized over a six-month span, U.S. and Canadian planning organizations included:

- St. Clair County Economic Development Alliance (EDA)
- Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership (SLEP)
- Sarnia-Lambton Chamber of Commerce
- Blue Water Area Chamber of Commerce
- I-69 International Trade Corridor/Next Michigan Corp.
- Southwest (Ontario) Economic Alliance (SWEA)
- MSU Center for Community and Economic Development

On-site trade support was provided by the U.S. Export Assistance Center and Export Development Canada with their staffs answering questions and providing guidance to participants interested in exporting and international trade.

Overwhelmingly positive feedback was provided from an on-site survey with the overall Expo rating being either “Excellent” or “Very Good.” No lower ratings were received. New international business was clearly facilitated by the Expo, with 64% of survey respondents expecting to do new business with a new international trading partner as a result of the Expo.