

# Chamber urges Ontario to expand Internet access in rural areas



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Matt Marchand is pictured in this 2014 file photo. *TYLER BROWNBIDGE / WINDSOR STAR*

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce called on Premier Kathleen Wynne Thursday to fund the

## development and expansion of broadband Internet access in remote and rural areas of the province.

“Access to high speed internet is also essential for Windsor-Essex businesses to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global economy,” said Matt Marchand, president and CEO of the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce.

“It is critical that all regions across Ontario, especially rural areas, have access to this essential infrastructure.”

While the chamber acknowledged broadband investments made in the recent federal budget, Internet access continues to be an issue in parts of Ontario. The chamber recommended the following steps:

- Develop a robust broadband investment strategy that acknowledges that broadband is an essential infrastructure investment and creates space for continued private-sector investment;
- Build partnerships across all levels of government in order to leverage funding and respond to local need. Recognizing that the private sector has driven investment in broadband infrastructure, the OCC recommends an intergovernmental funds matching formula that will continue to incentivize large private sector investments’;
- Benchmark Ontario’s Internet speeds and access. In order to ensure Ontario is able to compete in a technology-driven global economy, we need to create broadband infrastructure that is equal with those of other globally-competitive jurisdictions.

In April, the Ontario Chamber Network called on the federal government to address broadband access and quality.