

# With Vid: Oil Sands Alliance kicks Windsor's tires

By Dave Hall, The Windsor Star

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Patricia Nelson, right, vice chair of In Situ Oil Sands Alliance speaks with Keith Taylor, left, and Nihar Biswas of the University of Windsor during an informational exchange session organized by the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce and held at Giovanni Caboto Club of Windsor, Monday June 25, 2012. (NICK BRANCACCIO/The Windsor Star) Photograph by: Nick Brancaccio, The Windsor Star

With millions of dollars in contracts available in Alberta's oilsands developments, it's a perfect opportunity for Windsor-area companies to attract new customers and diversify their businesses, according to the vice-chair of the In Situ Oil Sands Alliance.

"We expect to triple our development in the next 20 years and there are many opportunities, particularly looking ahead to the future," said Patricia Nelson, leader of a delegation which met Monday with Windsor companies.

Partnerships are being sought with companies in such sectors as fabrication, electronics, technology, manufacturing, water filtration, pumps, rotating and drilling equipment as well as processing equipment.

"We're here to introduce ourselves and start the dialogue which could lead to long-term, relationships," said Nelson, whose group is also visiting Sarnia and London.

There are already 200 companies across Ontario doing business in the oilsands but very few are located in Windsor.

But Andrew Killing, business development manager for Dieffenbacher North America, hopes that will change.

Dieffenbacher specializes in metal fabricating, machining and assembly of component parts on a large-scale basis.

“We’re looking for sub-contract machining opportunities,” said Killing. “We’re not your average small job-shop so it’s the large-scale projects that would be of interest to us.

“We don’t know yet how we can help so it was important to be here today to gather more information and see if there are any opportunities where we can participate in oilsands developments,” said Killing.

Organized by the Windsor Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Windsor Essex Economic Development Corporation, the meeting also drew representation from the University of Windsor where a pair of professors are working on new water filtration technology.

The technology removes large amounts of carbon from boiler water through an enzymatic process using soy beans. Carbon is a good insulator but when it’s left behind in boilers and pipes, they don’t work as efficiently.

“We believe our system deserves a longer look and we’re here to see if there’s a central clearing house for new technology in the oilsands,” said Keith Taylor, who has been working on the project with Nihar Biswas. “We’ve managed to remove 60 per cent of the carbon from boiler water with very little effort.

“Obviously, it would cost less because of economies of scale if it were used on a widespread basis,” said Taylor. “We’re not working towards a drinking water standard, just trying to prevent coking of boiler water tubes.”

Matt Marchand, president of the chamber, said the meeting was designed to let local businesses know there are opportunities in Alberta for both manufacturing and services.

“It’s a perfect chance to help create more local jobs while at the same time diversifying our economy,” said Marchand.