

# Updated: Windsor unemployment rate falls to 5.7 per cent, lowest in 15 years



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Aerial view of the Detroit River looking east. DAN JANISSE / WINDSOR STAR

## For the first time in 15 years Windsor's unemployment rate has dropped to 5.7 per cent.

"It's excellent news," Matt Marchand, president and CEO of the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce, said Friday.

That number could drop even lower if the region focuses on getting people who have been unemployed for more than six months to a year back into the workforce and works on transportation issues to jobs in the growing manufacturing and agriculture sectors in Essex County, Marchand said.

"We can get even more aggressive and even drive that number lower with the amount of companies that we have now looking for people. We're probably leaving about \$500 million on the table right now," he said of the estimate of investments Windsor-area companies could make if they knew they could get the workers.

There's a shortage of skilled trade workers and labourers in general, Marchand said.

The Windsor-area jobless rate fell in September to 5.7 per cent, down slightly from 6.1 in August. The last time it was this low was February 2001.

A year ago in September the unemployment rate was 9.7 per cent.

For years the Windsor region held the title of unemployment capital of Canada ([http://windsorstar.com/business/windsor-unemployment-rate-falls-to-8-9-per-cent?\\_lsa=e7aa-deb4](http://windsorstar.com/business/windsor-unemployment-rate-falls-to-8-9-per-cent?_lsa=e7aa-deb4)) and now has one of the lowest jobless rates in the country among major cities that Statistics Canada tracks. Victoria, B.C., and Québec City have the lowest rate at 4.7 per cent. Vancouver and Guelph are at 4.9 per cent and Regina at 5.2 per cent, the Kitchener-Waterloo area at 5.3 per cent and Kingston at 5.4 per cent are slightly lower than Windsor's 5.7 rate.

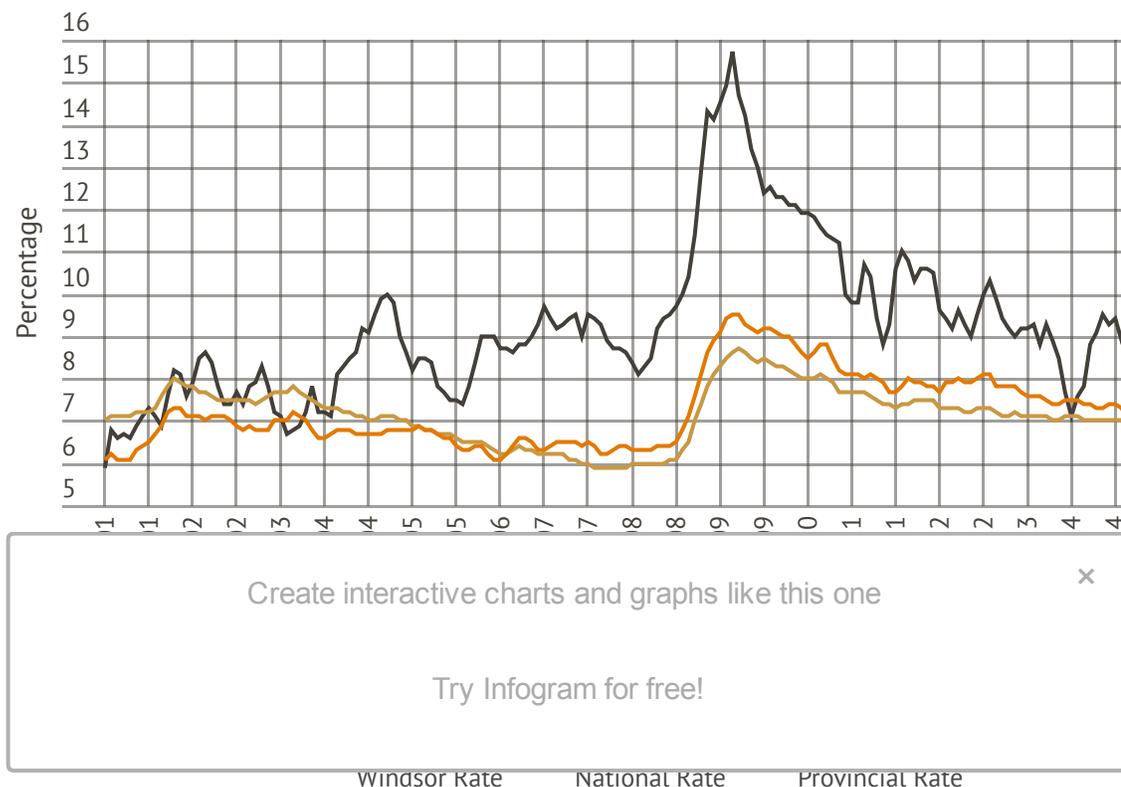
Vincent Ferrao, an analyst with Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, gave much of the credit for the lower rate to growth in manufacturing. There are about 5,000 more people working in manufacturing in the Windsor area than a year ago, he said.

In September there were 40,700 people working in manufacturing in the Windsor area. A year ago that number was 35,900 people and back in

September 2010, there were 29,000 manufacturing jobs, he said.

“It was losing employment for quite some time since the last recession and in the last maybe year or two employment in manufacturing, if I look at it year-over-year, is increasing. I think that’s been the dominant source,” Ferrao said.

## Windsor unemployment rate



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A big part of that growth is [Fiat Chrysler Automobiles which has added about 1,200 jobs in the last year.](http://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/fca-hires-additional-1200-workers-at-windsor-assembly) (<http://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/fca-hires-additional-1200-workers-at-windsor-assembly>)

Marchand said it’s important to get people back in the workforce because people who were employed at some of the auto suppliers were able to get better paying jobs when FCA announced it was hiring.

“Wonderful,” Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens said Friday of a jobless rate that is back to 2001 levels. “Clearly it’s great news. The unemployment rate continues to drop and I would say that the focus and the investments that we’ve made with respect to economic development are paying off and as well this is also a big part of Chrysler and Chrysler’s continued growth in the community.”

Transportation has been an issue for getting people to available jobs. The city and the chamber met with employers in the Patillo Road area in Lakeshore recently to see if there’s a common time to consider adding a bus route (<http://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/busing-needed-to-get-windsor-workers-to-lakeshore>).

The national unemployment rate is holding steady at seven per cent and the Ontario rate was 6.6 per cent in September. Calgary has the highest rate of major Canadian cities at 9.5 per cent.

June Muir, chief executive officer of the Unemployed Help Centre of Windsor, said it’s good to see the rate here drop but the centre is still seeing about 550 people a month looking for a job or help with resumes. In 2015 the average between January and September was 638 people a month. “That’s still a lot of people,” she said.

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