

# **Jobs top priority for Windsor**

By Grace Macaluso, The Windsor Star

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## **Jennifer Jones is chairwoman of the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce.**

**Photograph by: File photo, The Windsor Star**

Job creation, reliable and affordable energy and business taxes have surfaced as key issues in the Oct. 6 Ontario election, according to a survey of members of the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce.

"The one significant change from the previous two surveys, one being the federal campaign a few months ago and last year's municipal campaign, was the issue of energy and power - the supply costs, reliability," said Matt Marchand, a chamber spokesman. "That issue did not show up before, but has shown up significantly in this survey."

While broadly supporting the Green Energy Act, chamber members expressed concerns with the use of smart metres by the province and the protection of significant business investments in the areas of renewable solar and wind energy, said Marchand. "Many businesses are closed during the off-peak hours and don't benefit from smart meters," he explained.

"Another concern is many of our membership have invested dollars in the solar projects that haven't been connected to the grid. The issue of connectivity is a key issue."

When asked which party they would likely vote for if a provincial election were held today, 47 per cent of respondents said they would support the Conservative, 31 per cent would vote Liberal, while six per cent would back the New Democrats.

Fifteen per cent were undecided.

Seventy-six per cent said the province would be best served by majority government, while 24 per cent were hoping for a minority provincial parliament.

If they had a chance to ask questions of local election candidates, chamber members would ask about candidates' strategic priorities for the region, plans for job creation, an overall energy plan, and what measures they would undertake to control government spending, according to the survey.

The membership was evenly split as to whether the Ontario government was on the right track with 41 per cent of respondents saying it was on the wrong track and 40 per cent saying it was on the right track.

"We are very pleased with our members' engagement in this election," said chamber chairwoman Jennifer Jones.

"We had a record response in the first day. The survey gives us a big boost in addressing the issues that matter to our members.

"I am looking forward to a lively and important debate later this month."

As part of its election strategy, the chamber will host three all-candidates provincial election debates on Sept. 23 at the Caboto Club featuring candidates in all three Windsor-Essex ridings. The debates will begin at noon and end at 1:30 p.m.