2025 Year in Review

"The Chatham-Kent Chamber of Commerce exists to cultivate a thriving business ecosystem and collaborate with like-minded stakeholders so that members can broaden their economic horizons, inspire success, and contribute to a prosperous and vibrant community for generations to come."

A message to our members

Your membership is an investment in a stronger business climate — stronger relationships, stronger advocacy, stronger recognition, and a stronger local economy. In 2025, that investment helped keep Chatham-Kent connected and competitive in a year shaped by trade uncertainty and rising costs.

Member-funded impact: a trusted table for business voices, a platform that elevates local success, and partnerships that bring practical tools and opportunities back to our region.

Recognition that lifts the whole community

Business Excellence Awards — A refreshed gala-style celebration recognized 16 recipients from 53 nominees. It wasn't just a night out: it was local pride in action — and a reminder that Chatham-Kent succeeds when we celebrate and support one another.

Rural Urban Awards — Hosted at the University of Guelph Ridgetown Campus, the Rural Urban Awards celebrated leadership in innovation, stewardship, mentorship, and community impact. With a record 18 nominations, the event elevated the region's agri-food advantage.

Tools and opportunities for members only

In 2025, members gained access to workforce and hiring tools (Pathfinder Connect), timely economic insights (through BDC and chamber partners), and relationship-building through BIZconneCKt and fireside chats — the places where opportunities often start with one conversation.

If you weren't in the room for these connections and celebrations, you missed the momentum. We'd love to see you at the tables that shape what's next.

2025

350+ and growing	member businesses represented across Chatham-Kent
16	Business Excellence recipients - 53 nominees
6	Rural Urban Award recipients – 18 nominees
10th	OCC Queen's Park Advocacy Day attended
Addressing local issues	Community Safety Initiatives Study launched (with Loyalist College)
No-cost job posting	member job postings via Pathfinder Connect
Buy Local Love Local	Chamber Perks App

Award spotlights (2025)

Business Excellence: ATHENA - Dr. Angel Biligot; Businesses of the Year - Postma Heating and Cooling (Large), JP Contractors (Medium), Balance Accounting Services (Small); Indigenous Business - Three Sisters Consulting; Non-Profit - Chatham Outreach for Hunger (and 10 more categories, check out their videos at https://www.youtube.com/@chatham-kentchamberofcomme7897).

Rural Urban Awards: Kane Brown-McKerrall (Future Leader); John Zandstra (Friend of Agriculture); Jay Cunningham (Innovator - Individual); Country Market Garden/Alex Wingrove (Innovator - Business); Brad Snobelen (Agriculturist); Sarah Graham (Woman of Agriculture). Videos coming soon.

2025 Advocacy & Partnerships

A competitive community needs more than optimism — it needs organized influence. In 2025, CKCC worked through municipal, provincial, national, and cross-border chamber networks to keep Chatham-Kent priorities in front of decision-makers and to provide members with credible information when markets shifted.

Buy Local. Buy Canadian.

CKCC amplified "choose local first" through member-supported marketing, local media partnerships, and social channels — because local spending keeps dollars circulating in Chatham-Kent and strengthens the whole community.

Partnerships that multiply member value

In 2025, partnerships delivered practical benefits: workforce tools (Picsume/Pathfinder Connect), economic outlook intelligence (EDC, BDC and regional chambers), leadership development (Ontario chamber network), and recognition platforms.

Trade, tariffs, and resilience

CKCC echoed the unified "Team Canada" approach advanced by the Ontario and Canadian chambers, advocating for practical steps that reduce costs, streamline regulation, and strengthen competitiveness.
We translated national analysis into local relevance — highlighting the ripple effects of tariffs and border friction through Chatham-Kent's agri-food and manufacturing supply chains.

Across borders (ACCE & U.S. chamber network)

Through leadership connections with ACCE, CKCC stayed close to U.S. chamber realities and explored "Trade with Canada" outreach — building allyship with U.S. business communities.

Community safety study (Loyalist College)

CKCC launched a province-wide Community Safety Initiatives Study with Loyalist College's Centre for Healthy Communities — identifying what works and strengthening policy recommendations through the Ontario chamber network.

Network strength: Ontario & Canada

Ontario Chamber research described business confidence as improved but fragile — and warned that tariff threats can quickly erode confidence. Those themes aligned directly with what Chatham-Kent employers faced in 2025.

Housing, wellbeing, and safety

CKCC supported conversations on encampments, community safety, and wellbeing — recognizing that homelessness, addictions, and mental health pressures affect staff, customers, downtown confidence, and business costs. As a founding member of the Social Action Working Group of Ontario Chambers we are connecting and communicating that social issues are business issues and dramatically impact business success.

Leading the way for policy development

Authored policy papers accepted by our national and provincial colleagues.

Ontario Chamber

1) Accelerate Youth Leadership Development in Ontario Through Technology and Cross-Sector Partnerships.
2) Unlocking Ontario's Growth: Provincial Infrastructure Investment to Boost Agriculture and Housing

Canadian Chamber:

1) Achieving Canadian Digital and Data Security with Indigenous Communities.
2) Exploring the Potential of a 100% Canadian-Led Original Equipment Manufacturing (OEM) in the Automotive Manufacturing Sector.
3) Building National Prosperity through a Modern Industrial and Advanced Manufacturing Strategy

Member investment, community return: When members invest together, the Chamber can advocate, convene, promote, and partner at a scale no single business can achieve.







Strategic Plan: Engage – Empower – Inspire - Impact

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ENGAGE

We will engage our members, stakeholders and partners through opportunities to connect, learn, collaborate, and support one another to drive economic prosperity.

EMPOWER

"We will unite our diverse members, stakeholders, partners, and all levels of government to advance innovation, advocacy, and engagement–empowering business growth, economic prosperity, and a better quality of life for all."

INSPIRE

We will inspire business and community by fostering a vibrant ecosystem where innovation thrives, collaboration flourishes, and collective success is celebrated. We will future-proof our community through tools, data and methods that align with modern business trends and community needs.

IMPACT

"We will drive economic growth, strengthen community ties, and champion policies that benefit local businesses and residents, transforming our region into a thriving hub of opportunity and prosperity."

Next steps (2026)

- Quarterly KPI tracking aligned to the 2025–2030 Strategic Plan to prove and improve member value.
- Grow adoption of Chamber Perks and other member benefits through a stronger onboarding and “maximize your membership” series.
- Keep the pressure on: trade competitiveness and community wellbeing work (including sharing what we learn through the safety study) as we move toward CKCC’s 80th Rural Urban Awards in 2026.