

## MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
July 15, 2008

### **ASSISTANCE NOW AVAILABLE FOR EXPANSION INTO NEW EXPORT MARKETS**

**TORONTO** – Ontario small businesses have a new partner in their drive to expand to foreign export markets. Export Market Access, A Global Expansion Program launched by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) and funded by the Ontario Government, will help Ontario small and medium sized businesses enter markets that otherwise would have been beyond their reach.

“Export diversification is proven to be an effective strategy in today’s global marketplace and leads to higher performing companies, more jobs for our workforce, and stronger economic growth for Ontario,” explains Len Crispino, President & CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. “By providing a hand up to our home grown firms, and reducing the risk just enough for them to bridge the gap, we’ll help them go where they haven’t gone before.”

Export Market Access is a cost sharing program funded by the Ontario Government that will assist Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Ontario in their efforts to expand into new export markets. In recognition of the abundance of opportunities in markets around the globe, preference will be given to those outside of the United States.

“In today’s challenging economic climate, it is more important than ever that we strengthen the competitiveness of Ontario’s small and medium-sized enterprises,” said Harinder Takhar, Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services. “The Export Market program will help Ontario companies enter and expand into new markets, generating prosperity here and strengthening our presence on the world stage.”

In the 2008 budget, the Ontario government announced \$5 million in funding to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce for a Global Expansion Program to help SMEs increase access to global markets.

Assistance is available in four areas:

- Direct Contacts (international trade shows, fairs, exhibitions, and incoming and outgoing trade missions);
- Marketing Tools (development of electronic media, promotional materials, and generic branding material)

- Market Research; and
- Foreign Bidding Projects

SMEs that have been in business for a minimum of 2 years are eligible to apply. An application guide is available at [www.exportaccess.ca](http://www.exportaccess.ca).

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*The OCC represents over 60,000 businesses through 160 local Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, and has been Ontario's business advocate since 1911. Its advocacy and policy initiatives focus on six areas key to the economic well-being of the province: health; education; energy; finance & taxation; transportation & infrastructure; and border issues.*

For further information:

Amy Terrill, Ontario Chamber of Commerce  
W: (416) 482-5222, ext. 241  
C: (416) 605-8205  
[amyterrill@occ.on.ca](mailto:amyterrill@occ.on.ca)