Twinning with Polish city expected to boost trade

BY RENKA GESING

Windsor has a direct window onto business possibilities in Poland through its twinning earlier this year with Lublin, which is also a leader in the automotive industry.

"Just as Windsor is the gateway to North America, Lublin is truly the gateway to Eastern Europe. Lublin is the rising star of Poland," read a report submitted by David Cassivi, **City of Windsor** councillor and leader of the Windsor delegation to Lublin last April.

According to Andrzej Kaczmarek, commercial counselor with the Polish embassy, "Poland stands out against other countries of the Central and Eastern Europe due to its high rate of the GDP growth." The country already has significant trade relationships with Canada. "Canada exports grain and seeds, aircraft industry products, vehicles and electric devices, plastic products, construction supplies, computers and pharmaceuticals. Poland exports machinery, turbines, copper, steel products, furniture, textiles, foodstuff, glass and glassware," Kaczmarek said.

Acrolab Ltd. of Windsor, a company selling its heat transfer technology throughout the world, established a presence in Poland over 10 years ago with the opening of **Acrolab Polska** in Lublin. Acrolab president Joseph Ouellette decided to open a branch plant in Poland after a discussion with a major customer in Vienna who warned that anyone doing business in Europe should be in the Euro-pean Union (EU).

"That was a heads up to me to become a part of the EU rather than be an outsider," said Ouel-lette. He chose Poland since setting up there was considerably less expensive than establishing a presence in a EU member country.

Polish ambassador Pawel Dobrowolski feels there are still deals to be made in Poland. He cited the example of the recent purchase by **Pratt and Whitney** of a 5,000-employee engine building factory close to Lublin – a great deal at $140 million U.S. There is "nearly half a billion Canadian dollars of annual trade between Poland and Canada, an area that will be developed further," he said. **WB**