

*For Immediate Release*

## **New FirstOntario Business Centre on King William shows its Commitment to Hamilton's Renaissance**

*FirstOntario opens in renovated Empire Times building on King William mixing tradition and innovation in the heart of Hamilton's renaissance.*

**Hamilton, ON, January 28, 2015** – FirstOntario Credit Union will open its doors to a new business centre in downtown Hamilton featuring a stunning renovation of the Empire Times building at 41 King William Street East in the heart of Hamilton's renaissance.

"It's appropriate that we are helping to bring new life to an historic building because we are committed to helping bring new life to businesses and harnessing the momentum that the business community is enjoying in Hamilton," says Dave Schurman, Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President, FirstOntario Credit Union. The credit union, which recently celebrated 75 years in business, also serves businesses through more than 29 full-service branches from Niagara to Ingersoll to Oakville.

Schurman says business people should expect to get a different experience from FirstOntario Business than from big banks. "In fact, credit unions have been providing capital to start-ups and entrepreneurs long before banks," he says.

"We believe we bring a better service model to business owners because we don't exist to serve the interests of investors on Bay Street or Wall Street, we are here to serve the needs of our Customers (Members)." Credit unions continue to outperform banks when it comes to serving the financial needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), according to a recent CFIB research report, *Battle of the Banks*.

"The credit union model and our closeness to our community means we can give businesses a quicker response, creativity and exceptional service including thinking outside the box to put deals together," says Schurman.

"It's a different relationship than at a bank. Business owners tell us that meeting with a bank can be one of the most intimidating meetings they ever have. It shouldn't be that way because the financial institution is supposed to be serving you, not the other way around." Yet, he notes, FirstOntario offers the same security and stability as any major bank.

The historic building at 41 King William Street was built in 1890 and formerly housed the Hamilton Times newspaper (1859-1920). The building features a modern glass elevator on the outside that connects the two buildings. The business centre is located on the top floor and features a rooftop patio. The renovation also includes a business area, a networking space and a parlour for business services staff and clients to enjoy meeting.

In 2014, there were 24,700 jobs within the Downtown Hamilton Urban Growth Centre. “FirstOntario is committed to supporting the revitalization of Hamilton and supporting the local economy”, says Schurman. “We believe you have to be close to a community to really understand it and understand the context in which businesses can thrive. Hamilton is on a roll and business people can certainly benefit from this momentum and from our help.”

FirstOntario not only supports small and medium-sized businesses through competitive rates, products and services, but also by helping businesses grow to the next level through the 1Awards program. The program was established four years ago to help small businesses in the Hamilton community grow faster. Winners receive prizes including cash and top level services from leading experts in business planning, finance, legal, advertising and online services.



## About FirstOntario Credit Union

In business since 1939, FirstOntario Credit Union has more than \$4 billion in funds under management, serves over 100,000 Customers/Members and offers a full suite of banking products including daily banking, mortgages, lines of credit, loans and investments. FirstOntario operates 29 full-service branches, serving 14 communities across the Hamilton, Halton, Niagara, Haldimand/Norfolk, Brant, Norwich, and Oxford regions as well as free access at 2400 ATMs across Canada. Membership at FirstOntario is open to anyone. FirstOntario is a proud advocate of the communities we serve and supports many important community organizations. FirstOntario also supports entrepreneurship through its 1Awards, which assists small businesses with plans for expansion through in-kind and cash sponsorship. For more information please visit: [www.FirstOntario.com](http://www.FirstOntario.com).



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