

OCTOBER 2019

Cape Breton Partnership 2019 Year in Review



Who we are: Cape Breton – Unama'ki's private sector-led economic development organization with employees based across the Island.

What we do: **Promote** our Island as a great place to live and invest; **Grow** a culture that celebrates creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship; **Connect** entrepreneurs and companies to the resources they need to succeed.

Our oversight: The Cape Breton Partnership is led by a private sector Board of Directors. Regional Enterprise Network oversight is provided by Liaison Oversight Committees comprised of municipal and provincial partners.

Funding model: Private sector investors and government funded projects and programs.

Why are we different? The Partnership is a one-stop shop to connect companies and entrepreneurs. We are independent, non-partisan, and collaborative. We can connect people from any industry or sector to the supports they need to succeed. We can and do work with everyone, giving us a unique advantage: **an island-wide perspective about economic development.** We bring this perspective into everything we do.

Message from President & CEO



On behalf of the Cape Breton Partnership, I am pleased to share with you an overview of our activities for 2019. As Cape Breton – Unama'ki's private sector-led economic development organization, it has been a tremendous year as we enter a time where the Island is truly united under one economic development umbrella.

As President & CEO, I want to take this opportunity to thank our investors, partners, and stakeholders from both the private and public sectors for your support. We often rely on you for your expertise and experience to guide our work. Identifying and understanding the needs of our business community directly contributes to our ability to provide strategic and relevant support.

As we approach our 15th anniversary, it's a time to reflect on the longstanding relationships the Partnership has developed and maintained over the years. It has been my privilege to work with many of you towards the common goal of increasing our Island's economic opportunities and transforming Cape Breton – Unama'ki into the most creative and prosperous place on earth.

We have seen tremendous success with a number of our programs and services that are highlighted within this report. One area of significant importance was bringing all of our municipal units and First Nation communities together to work towards joint economic development activities. Earlier this year, the Partnership signed an agreement with the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) to deliver economic development support through the newly formed Cape Breton Regional Municipality Regional

Enterprise Network (CBRM REN). 2019 also saw the addition of the Town of Port Hawkesbury and Wagmatcook First Nation to the Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network (CB REN), which includes the Municipalities of Inverness, Victoria and Richmond and the First Nation communities of We'koqma'q, Eskasoni and Membertou.

With the growth of the Regional Enterprise Network model in Cape Breton, a key priority for the Partnership is the development of an island-wide economic & population growth strategy to guide Cape Breton – Unama'ki's efforts in the next three to five years. Our hope is to have this completed in early 2020.

The Cape Breton Partnership takes great pride in growing our economy and I hope the work reflected in this report demonstrates that. Cape Breton Island is our home and like you, we want to see it thrive for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink that reads "Carla Arsenault". The script is fluid and cursive.

Carla Arsenault

Our Investors

101.5 FM The Hawk
2020 Consulting Inc.
ACAP Cape Breton
AG Research
Anchored Ideas Ltd.
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency Cape Breton
Atlantic Lottery Corporation
Bear Head LNG
Big Spruce Brewing
Boston Pizza
Breton Ability Centre
Breton Technologies
Business Development Bank of Canada
Cabot Links
Cabot Shores
Canmac Economics Ltd.
Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design
Cape Breton Island Building and Construction Trades Council
Cape Breton Post
Cape Breton Radio
Cape Breton Regional Chamber of Commerce
Cape Breton Resorts
Cape Breton University
Cape Easy
Casino Nova Scotia
CBBC Career College
CBCL Limited
CEED – Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development
Centre for Distance Education
Celtic Colours
Celtic Music Interpretive Centre
City Print +
Coastal Business CBDC
Colaisde na Gàidhlig / The Gaelic College
Colindale Consultants Inc.
Collegio Technologies Inc.
Connors Basics
Copol International Ltd.
Custom Employee Benefits
Destination Cape Breton
Devantec IT Solutions
Develop Nova Scotia
Dillon Consulting Limited
Dora Construction
East Coast Credit Union
East Coast Metal Fabrication
Eastlink

Eidas Investments Ltd.
Elantec IT
Enterprise Rent-A-Car
Eskasoni Corporate Division
Eskasoni Kitpu Security Ltd.
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Flavor by Creative Catering
Fortress of Louisbourg Association
Gillis Seafood
Grant Thornton
Group ATN Consulting
Hampton Inn Sydney
Harbour Royale Development Limited
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Health Outcomes Worldwide
Highland Village Museum
Holiday Inn Sydney – Waterfront
Home Instead Senior Care Sydney
Horizon Achievement Centre
Innovacorp
Island Sauce Company
J. Francis Investments Ltd.
J.A. Douglas McCurdy Sydney Airport
JBW Consulting Inc.
Keltic Lodge at the Highlands
Kempt Head Institute
Kim Long & Associates
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Lobsters 'R' Us Seafood
Louisbourg Seafoods
Mabou River Inn
MacLeod Lorway
Marine Atlantic
Maritect Solutions
Maritime Environmental Training Institute
Maritime Inn Port Hawkesbury
Mayflower Mall
Membertou First Nation
Membertou Trade and Convention Centre
Mi'kmaw Economic Benefits Office of Nova Scotia
Molson Coors
Mulgrave Machine Works Ltd.
New Dawn Enterprises
Nova Scotia Association of Realtors
Nova Scotia Community College: Marconi Campus
Nova Scotia Community College: Strait Area Campus

Nova Scotia Lands Inc.
 Nova Scotia Power
 Novastream
 Parkland, Cape Breton
 Parks Canada
 Polysteel Atlantic Ltd. / East Coast Rope Ltd.
 Port Hawkesbury Paper
 Port of Sydney Development Corporation
 Preferred Office Environments Inc.
 Protocase Inc.
 Railroad Recording Productions
 Ramsay's Honda
 Robert L. Sampson
 Safety Check Inspections
 Sampson McPhee Lawyers
 Schwartz & Company
 Seaboard Industrial
 Seaside Wireless Communications Inc.
 Strait Area Chamber of Commerce
 Strait Area Safety Services
 Strait of Canso Superport
 Sydco Fuels Limited & Scotia Propane Limited
 Sydney Credit Union
 TD Canada Trust
 The Breton Law Group
 The Chronicle Herald
 The Coast 89.7 FM
 The Factory
 The Farmer's Daughter Country Market
 The Inverness Oran
 The Lakes at Ben Eoin Golf Club & Resort
 The Municipality of the County of Inverness
 The Municipality of the County of Richmond
 The Municipality of the County of Victoria
 The Reporter
 The Town of Port Hawkesbury
 The Victoria Standard
 Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia
 Trans Atlantic Preforms
 Trifos Design Consultants
 Vibe Creative Group
 Victoria Co-operative Fisheries Ltd.
 VMP Group
 Waycobah First Nation
 Westjet
 Wood Wyant
 Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia
 YMCA of Cape Breton

Board of Directors

September 2019

■ Board Chair

Alex Paul
 Mi'kmaw Economic Benefits Office of Nova Scotia

■ Board Vice-Chair

Sandra Killam
 Seaside Wireless Communications Inc.

■ Secretary

Jennifer MacLeod
 MacLeod Lorway Insurance

■ Treasurer

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 Grant Thornton

■ Board Members

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Allan Eddy	Port Hawkesbury Paper LP
Dan MacDonald	CBCL Ltd.
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Jennifer Martin	Membertou First Nation
Beth Mason	Cape Breton University
Amanda Mombourquette	Strait Area Chamber of Commerce
Steve Parsons	Eskasoni Corporate Division
Brian Purchase	Schwartz Furniture
Sean Reid	Mulgrave Machine Works
Chery Smith	Celtic Interpretive Music Centre
Fred Tilley	NSCC
Jim Wooder	JBW Consulting Inc.



What We've Been Up To

■ **Support for Immigration** - Recognizing that growing our population is critical to growing our economy, the Cape Breton Partnership has grown its current labour market and immigration programming by engaging in a number of new initiatives since October 2018.

■ **Global Skills Strategy** - The Cape Breton Partnership signed an MOU with both Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) to become a referral partner on both the Global Skills Strategy and the Global Talent Stream. These programs are for employers who want to attract top talent to work for their company with a fast and predictable process. The strategy features faster application processing times, work permit exemptions, and enhanced customer service.

■ **Mobilité Francophone** - Recognizing the need to sustain our French speaking communities across the Island, the Cape Breton Partnership has partnered with ANAPEC, the Moroccan government's international labour mobility division, to support employers in attracting bilingual French speaking talent to fill skilled labour shortages across the Island. We are also participating in a number of international attraction events such as Destination Canada and Destination Acadie with the purpose of promoting

Cape Breton Island as a great place to live, work, and invest. Since July 2019, we have referred four employers with a total of 16 high-skilled positions to be filled with bilingual French-English speakers.

■ **Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP) Program** – An innovative employer-driven immigration program by the Atlantic provinces and the federal government to help address labour shortages in the Maritimes. As a regional partner to the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, the Cape Breton Partnership raises awareness and supports employers throughout its provincial procedures.

The number of new permanent residents coming to Cape Breton is on the rise, with a 20 per cent increase year-over-year since 2015. Outstandingly, the first two quarters of 2019 saw a 75 per cent increase over the same two quarters in 2018 for permanent residency admissions.

In the past year, we hosted 19 immigration related events reaching over 1,300 individuals. The Partnership supported and directly facilitated 95 Endorsement Applications under AIP for Principal Applicants and their families, with 60 currently in progress. AIP Designations increased by 50 per cent, from 98 to 150. Overall, the Cape Breton Partnership is currently supporting 126 AIP designated employers and this past year, submitted 165 endorsements that included 74 spouses and 109 accompanying children.

■ **Welcoming Newcomers** – The Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP) is a collaborative community initiative funded by Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) and administered by the Cape Breton Partnership. Launched in June 2017, the CBLIP coordinates service providers and stakeholders to help welcome and integrate newcomers.

This year the CBLIP launched ‘Once Upon an Island: Traditional Tales from New Cape Bretoners’, a collection of traditional folktales, legends, myths, and stories from around the world. In partnership with the Cape Breton Regional Library, the CBLIP hosted eight weeks of conversational English practice. The CBLIP Council has completed a three year (2019-2022) strategic plan – identifying four strategic priorities: Improve coordination, raise awareness, support research & planning, and foster welcoming communities. The CBLIP has also officially launched their website (www.newtocapebreton.ca) and service map.



■ **Growing Networks** – The Cape Breton Connector Program connects our business community with top talent. Through the program, recent post-secondary graduates or those new to Cape Breton with post-secondary education meet with Cape Breton business leaders to grow their professional network. This past year, the Program hosted 13 events and recruited 98 connectors, 105 connectees and established 78 matches. In addition, hundreds of students and job seekers directly reached at job fairs and in-class orientations. Since the program began in April 2017, 136 matches have been made between 190 Connectors and 184 Connectees.

■ **Export Growth Service** – The Export Growth Service focuses on making exporting easier for Cape Breton companies. Those exploring the world of export meet with our Export consultant and a team of partners to devise a plan that links Cape Breton companies to the programs, partners and mentors they need to succeed. A one-day Export Growth conference was held in Sydney on September 24 with 125 representatives from partners, businesses, and companies currently engaged in the Export Growth Service.

■ **Talent Attraction** – In 2016, co-owners of the Farmer’s Daughter Country Market posted an ad on Facebook offering free land as an incentive to prospective employees. The ad went viral around the globe. In 2018, the Partnership began working with a local marketing firm, Anchored Ideas Ltd., to develop an inbound marketing campaign to be shared with 36,000 unique email addresses collected based on interest in the Farmer’s Daughter ad. While preparing for the campaign, it became apparent that a one-stop online experience was needed to promote living, working, investing, or immigrating to Cape Breton. As a result, the Cape Breton Partnership developed www.welcometocapebreton.ca, a website to share Cape Breton’s story with people from around the world. The Cape Breton Partnership will manage all follow-up inquiries generated by the marketing campaign and website.

■ **Elevate Magazine** – Every quarter, the Cape Breton Partnership, in collaboration with Saltwire Network, creates and distributes Elevate Business Magazine, a publication that highlights Cape Breton success stories and promotes the Island as a great place to live and invest. This past year's publication themes included Creative Island, Immigration, and the Creative Economy. The next edition will be published in December and focus on New Developments on the Island. With each publication, 3,000 copies are distributed across Atlantic Canada.

■ **Regional Enterprise Networks (RENs)** - This year has seen significant advances in collaboration between our municipalities and First Nation communities through the Regional Enterprise Network model.



In April 2019, the Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network (CB REN) which encompasses Victoria, Richmond and Inverness counties and the First Nation communities of Eskasoni, Membertou, and We'koqma'q welcomed the Town of Port Hawkesbury and the First Nation community of Wagmatcook into the network.

Earlier this year the Partnership also signed an agreement with the Cape Breton Regional Municipality to deliver economic development support in the CBRM through the newly formed

CBRM Regional Enterprise Network (REN). This is of significant importance as it sees municipalities and First Nation communities all working together through the Cape Breton Partnership.

Each REN has dedicated Economic Development Officers and Communications Staff who work closely with businesses to ensure they have the tools and resources they need to succeed within the Cape Breton economy. Shared REN resources include a Business Planning Advisor who has worked with 75 new or existing businesses since April 2019; a Creative Economy Development Officer who is responsible for championing the creative sector and pursuing projects that will effectively boost the creative economy; and a Labour Market Development & Immigration Officer focused on fostering inclusive labour market participation, aligning skills with labour market needs, creating efficient labour markets, and attracting/retaining talent on Cape Breton Island. In addition, the role will focus on increasing Cape Breton's share of provincial allocations under the Provincial Nominee Program (NSPNP) and the Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP) Program.

REN Focus: Business Growth & Development, Labour Market Attraction, Immigration, Investment Attraction, Investment Readiness, Municipal Priority Projects, Rural Broadband and Cellular, Support for Business Planning, and Industrial Park Development.





Photo: Corey Katz

■ **Creative Island** - In 2018, the Cape Breton Partnership launched the Creative Island Innovation District project. Creative Island is a movement to foster creative courage while attracting and retaining creative people in Cape Breton; grow and celebrate a culture that values and supports creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship; and increase the ability of entrepreneurs, inventors, makers, creators, and companies to be more innovative. Under Creative Island, the Cape Breton Partnership is working on three projects.

1 Creation of a network of innovation spaces across Cape Breton - In May 2019, the Cape Breton Partnership, along with the Nova Scotia Department of Business and Cape Breton University announced the first Innovation Hub. Located at Cape Breton University, the hub provides entrepreneurship supports and training to students and the Cape Breton community. The next planned spaces will be located in Baddeck, Port Hood, and Glace Bay. Other locations are currently being explored.

2 Advancing inclusive innovation for women entrepreneurs in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities - The Cape Breton Partnership completed a study with funding from the federal Status of Women to identify barriers for female entrepreneurs. As a result, the Partnership is developing a Cape Breton – Unama’ki Gender Equity Action plan which will see new programs developed or current services adapted. From this, individual action plans will need to be created for individual service providers (NSBI, ACOA, etc.).

A second study was completed with funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage to identify barriers to successful entrepreneurship for Indigenous women in Cape Breton. Partnerships with all five First Nation communities in Cape Breton – Unama’ki were established with over 40 participants. The report

was completed based on research findings and recommendations were made to break down barriers women face when starting, growing, or exiting their businesses.

As a result of these two studies, two advisory committees have formed made up of service providers, entrepreneurs, and advocates. Over 500 women were engaged using social media, partners, and word of mouth. Both studies will be finalized this fall.

3 Programming for entrepreneurs - The Cape Breton Partnership partnered with Mashup Lab, a Bridgewater-based organization that supports rural entrepreneurs, to bring the Mashup Lab Dream Business Program to the Island. The program works with people from Cape Breton communities and takes them through a six-month boot camp, a start-up kit (valued at up to \$5,000 worth of services) that helps them develop their idea into a viable business. To date, there have been five Mashup Lab Dream Business Program cohorts with ten participants per cohort. Over the next year, three additional programs will run across the Island, at no cost to participants. This translates to potentially 80 new business startups in Cape Breton.



■ **Skills and Workforce Training** – Administered on behalf of Employment Nova Scotia (ENS), Department of Community Services (DCS), and Service Canada for the past 12 years, the Cape Breton Partnership has provided services that focus on clients with barriers to employment. In the past year, we have run 10 programs, supporting 140 participants.

■ **Investor Summit** – Every October, the Cape Breton Partnership hosts an annual gathering of close to 200 business, community, and government leaders to discuss building a strong economic future for Cape Breton.

■ **Youth Recognition & Retention** - Each year, the Cape Breton Partnership in collaboration with the NextGen Leadership Society hosts the Vital Awards, an evening that recognizes outstanding Cape Bretoners under 40 as well as employers who create meaningful employment for young professionals. In addition, the Cape Breton Partnership hosts seminars and career fairs for Cape Breton youth to help them begin their careers here.

■ **Excellence Recognition** - The Economic Impact Awards recognize outstanding businesses and entrepreneurs in Cape Breton for their significant contribution to the economy through investment, innovation, and entrepreneurial success. The awards are distributed during the annual Investor Summit.

■ **Safety First** - a network of workplace safety stakeholders from across the Island managed by the Cape Breton Partnership where best practices are shared via a monthly newsletter and an annual conference to grow our safety culture. This year's conference was held in May at Cape Breton University with a focus on overall wellness at work and home, with over 240 in attendance from across the province.

■ **Housing study for seasonal industries** - The Cape Breton Partnership has hired a consultant to undertake a Feasibility Study regarding temporary housing for seasonal employees in Cape Breton. The research includes an environmental scan, an analysis of potential options available for housing and land, and a comparison of a review of what has been done in other jurisdictions. The research will also evaluate the potential effectiveness to attract and retain seasonal workers particular in the tourism and seafood processing sectors. The study will be completed by the end of 2019.

■ **Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) Seasonality Labour Project** - New resources are being made available to Cape Breton's tourism-focused businesses to increase skills for tourism workers in Nova Scotia. The Cape Breton Partnership and Destination Cape Breton Association are working with the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) and the Nova Scotia Tourism Human Resource Council (NSTHRC) to provide local tourism operators with toolkits to improve human resources practices, deliver service excellence training, and provide a wage subsidy to support operating outside the traditional tourism season.

What's next?

Economic & Population Growth Strategy -

The Cape Breton Partnership is leading the development of an Island-wide economic and population growth strategy to help our region work together to grow Cape Breton-Unama'ki. For the first time in Cape Breton's history, our municipal units and First Nation communities are coming together to support regional economic development initiatives through the Regional Enterprise Network model. It is time to grow this opportunity and chart a course for this Creative Island.

This strategy cannot be a report that sits on a shelf. It must be inclusive, it must have goals and most importantly, it must be a vision for Cape Breton-Unama'ki that all communities support. This strategy will shape what we believe is a bright economic future for Cape Breton-Unama'ki. It is our hope that this broader strategy becomes one that will generate the more in-depth economic development plans and goals of specific regions across all sectors on the Island.

We have hired Group ATN Consulting Inc. who are currently in the public engagement and consultation phase of the project. It is our hope to have a strategy ready by early 2020.

www.welcometocapebreton.ca - Continue to manage and follow up on all leads that come in via the newly created website and inbound marketing campaign.

www.entrepreneurcb.com – A website created and managed by the Cape Breton Partnership to help entrepreneurs find the tools and resources they need, no matter which stage of entrepreneurship their business is in. If you have a business idea, want to start a business or want to grow your business, this will be a useful tool. The site is scheduled to go live during the fall of 2019.



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