

Information and Activity Report

CBRM Regional Enterprise Network

February 2024

Subject: CBRM REN Information and Activity Report
To: Cape Breton Regional Municipality
Date Prepared: January 10, 2024 (final edits, February 16th, 2024)
Prepared by: Tyler Cole, Economic Development Officer, CBRM
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Background:

The Cape Breton Partnership (CBP) provides economic development support to the Cape Breton Regional Municipality under the Regional Enterprise Network (REN) model in partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia.

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality Regional Enterprise Network (CBRM REN) serves all of the communities of the CBRM from the CBP offices in Sydney.

The CBRM REN is part of a larger network of Regional Enterprise Networks across Nova Scotia.

The CBP maximizes the value of the CBRM REN's funding partners, leverages that investment to have a greater impact, and collaborates with other partners, funders, and projects that it is responsible for (like the Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership) to deliver operational synergies across Unama'ki – Cape Breton and to benefit the CBRM.

NOVA SCOTIA



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Cape Breton
Partnership

Regional
Enterprise
Network
CBRM

2023/24 CBRM REN Board of Directors

- **Chair** - Tracey Boutilier, Vibe Creative Group
- Brad Jacobs, Colbourne Auto Group
- Shaowei Xu, SW East Trading
- Howie Doiron, Lindsay Construction
- Darrell Gallant, Marine Atlantic Inc.
- Nicole Morrison, Mabel Systems
- Ron Blinkhorn, Casino Nova Scotia – Sydney

2023/24 CBRM REN Liaison Oversight Committee:

- Steve Parsons, Councillor, CBRM
- Steve Gillespie, Councillor, CBRM
- Michael Ruus, Director of Planning and Development, CBRM
- Jennifer Campbell, Chief Financial Officer, CBRM
- Ross MacDonald, Government of Nova Scotia
- TBD, Government of Nova Scotia

Reporting Period:

Your CBRM REN team and the CBP are pleased to share highlights, milestones achieved, and metrics from **October 1 – December 31, 2023**.

Highlights & Events

- **Partners for Progress REN Conference** – In November, the CBRM REN team travelled to New Glasgow to attend the annual Nova Scotia REN conference. The conference focused on Nova Scotia-wide economic development challenges and trends including housing, green energy investment, infrastructure, Indigenous partnerships, the creative economy, and re-imagining traditional industries.
- **Muiwatmnej Etuaptmunk Conference** – In November, the CBP team attended this conference at the Membertou Trade and Convention Centre. Hosted by the Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative, the event focused on the Indigenous learning concept of “Two-Eyed Seeing”, or Etuaptmunk in the Mi’kwaw language. Two-eyed seeing emphasizes viewing the world through the lens of traditional knowledge as well as Western knowledge, and combining the two to find the best results.
- **Invest in Cape Breton Podcast** – In October, the CBP launched its second podcast series, *Invest in Cape Breton*. This series was developed to challenge assumptions about the Island’s economy through in-depth interviews with local change makers. Episode 2, released in November, focuses on the opportunity for investment in Sydney Harbour, especially focused around an offshore wind marshalling yard and Novaport. Listen to the episode [here](#). To date, the podcast has attracted over 1,100 downloads.
- **Investor Summit** – The CBP’s 2023 Investor Summit was held October 26th at the Inverary Resort on Baddeck Bay. The 2023 Investor Summit was a sold-out event for the second year in a row, counting a record-number 230 registrants, and featuring panels with representation from across Unama’ki – Cape Breton.
- **Opening Doors to Collaboration** – The Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership hosted its fourth annual partner update event on Friday, November 17th in Ben Eoin. *Opening Doors to Collaboration* brought together Unama'ki - Cape Breton organizations and service providers who are working to support newcomers to Canada as they settle on the Island.
- **Marine Renewables Canada Conference** – In December, members of the CBP team alongside the CBRM’s Deputy Mayor attended this conference in Ottawa to focus our efforts on attracting offshore wind investment to the CBRM. This conference was a great opportunity to meet with federal leaders, develop relationships with investors and developers, and push forward an emphasis on the CBRM as a future base for offshore wind projects.
- **Offshore Wind Community Information Sessions** – On December 6, two community engagement sessions were co-hosted in the CBRM by the CBP, Net Zero Atlantic, and the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada. These sessions were organized to give folks a chance to learn more about potential offshore green energy projects. The sessions were hosted in North Sydney and Louisbourg, and were well-attended by the community.

Project Updates:

Creative Economy Sector

- The Creative Economy Development Officer conducted regular meetings with the Unama’ki - Cape Breton Culture Sector Team, a group comprised of stakeholders in the arts, culture, and heritage sector including the Cape Breton Centre for Craft & Design, Celtic Colours International Festival, Eltuek Arts Centre, Cape Breton Music Industry Cooperative, Cape Breton Miners Museum, Savoy Theatre, CBU Boardmore Theatre, Highland Arts Theatre, Vibe Creative Group, Highland Village, the Gaelic College, Conseil des arts de Chéticamp, La Société Saint-Pierre, Theatre Baddeck, and the Cabot Trail Writers Festival.
- The Creative Economy Development Officer facilitated a 2-day tour of Hollywood studio production executives across Cape Breton in October 2023 to promote the Island as a potential destination for the lucrative motion picture / TV industry. Working in conjunction with Screen Nova Scotia, the group of 6 executives included prominent studios such as HBO, 20th Century Fox, and Steven Spielberg’s Amblin Entertainment. The bus tour commenced with an Indigenous welcoming ceremony provided by Graham Marshall (Sons of Membertou), and included a variety of stops designed to highlight the spectacular scenery options in Cape Breton combined with a sampling of culinary delights and Celtic music. In order to give the executives a complete picture of the wide variety of CBRM locations, the group was also shown a video compilation including spectacular, high-res, drone footage featuring Sydney Harbour, Sydney downtown, the old courthouse from Wentworth Park, historic buildings, a stunning Bras’d’Or Lakes summer sunset, Fortress Louisbourg in winter, and the Louisbourg Lighthouse in winter. The executives were all impressed at the diversity of locations offered by Cape Breton.
- The Creative Economy Development Officer has provided guidance, advice, and grant-writing support to the CBU-based organization “Sound Communities Inc.” in their exciting project work that will provide Cape Breton musicians with the opportunity to have their music distributed worldwide by the world-renowned Smithsonian Folkways Record label. The first album slated to be released in 2024 is from the Sons of Membertou.
- The Creative Economy Development Officer has connected the CBU Art Gallery with a documentary film company from New York City producing a feature film on legendary photographer Robert Frank, a longtime resident of Mabou, and strong supporter of the CBU Gallery. An exciting event that combines a movie showing with a CBU gallery display is being planned in conjunction with the film’s worldwide theatrical premier for the fall of 2024.
- The Creative Economy Development Officer provided support to the Cape Breton Music Industry Cooperative (CBMIC), connecting the organization with industry partners, raising awareness of CBMIC, and helping to raise funds.

Other Project Updates

- **Louisbourg Waterfront Development** – Late in 2023, the CBP received word from Build Nova Scotia that the current development plans for the Louisbourg waterfront would not be proceeding, due mainly to significant inflationary pressures on project costs. Engagements with the community and the many stakeholders involved in this project will continue in 2024 to seek a path forward for this important development opportunity.
- **Beechmont Copper Deposit** – The CBRM REN team continues to work with numerous stakeholders, with direction from and in consultation with CBRM Staff, to connect Nova Copper with local contacts and resources as they explore their opportunity surrounding this project’s development.

- **Industry Sector Pages** – The CBRM REN team has continued to work on the content for the [Industry Sector Pages](#) on the Welcome to Cape Breton website’s Invest Tab. These pages highlight key areas of focus for investment on the Island. New pages covering Housing; Agriculture, Farming and Food processing; Innovation and Technology; Ocean and Aquaculture; Retail; Tourism, Natural Resources & Renewables; and the Creative Economy will be launching in early 2024.
- **Individual Client Work** – While most individual file work remains confidential, there are some good news stories that we are happy to share with the businesses’ permission. The big picture on the client work is detailed in the numbers shown in the metrics table below.
 - **Kai Ping’s Restaurant** – CBRM REN staff provided succesion planning support to Kai Ping’s Restaurant in Sydney. The new owner has taken over the business in December 2023.

Upcoming Events:

- **International Council of Shopping Centres Conference** – In January 2024, members of the CBP team will be heading to Whistler for the ICSC’s annual conference, seeking to attract retail investment and new retailers to the CBRM. The team will have a booth at the event where we will be highlighting the growing and changing retail market in the CBRM.
- **Lunch and Learn** - Economic Development Officer Lan Zheng, along with the staff from Sydney Credit Union, will provide an information session on the Micro-Loan Program on January 16 at Membertou Entrepreneur Centre. This program has been newly relaunched and provides micro-loans of up to \$10,000 to eligible women-identifying participants.
- **Spotlight on Cape Breton** – On January 31, members of the Cape Breton Partnership team, including staff from the CBRM REN, will be giving a presentation as part of the “Spotlight on Nova Scotia” webinar series, presented by Invest in Canada. The team will be highlighting the “Cape Breton Investment Advantage”, offshore wind opportunities, and housing / housing manufacturing opportunities.
- **MIPIM** - The Cape Breton Partnership has been invited to accompany the Nova Scotia Association of Realtors and the Canadian Real Estate Association to MIPIM 2024 (March 12-15), the premiere global real estate event that gathers the most influential players from all sectors of the international property industry. A member of the CBRM REN team will be attending to highlight the investment opportunity for Cape Breton Island, with emphasis on CBRM. Following on CREA’s succesful efforts attending the 2023 event with Real Estate and Economic Development groups from Manitoba, we are excited to be attending as part of the Nova Scotia team in 2024.
- **Green Energy Sector Promotion and Support** – Several Green Energy related events on Offshore Wind, Hydrogren, and similar topics are planned both near to the CBRM and far. Currently, CBRM REN EDOs are evaluating the upcoming opportunities for the best match, and determining what partners would be available to attend as well, to maximize the effectiveness of attendance.
- **Green Energy Engagement Program** – Additional CBRM sessions of the Offshore Wind Information Sessions are in the planning stages. Up to date information will be available here: <https://capebretonpartnership.com/initiative/green-energy-engagement-program/>.
- **Scotia Rail Development Society** – On February 15th the Scotia Rail Society, alongside the CBP and the Cape Breton Regional Chamber of Commerce, will be hosting a community engagement session regarding transportation challenges in the CBRM, and the growth opportunitites in the railway sector.

Metrics Overview

- Your Economic Development Officers, and CBRM REN team members, continue to provide business support and advisory services to entrepreneurs, business clients, and individuals throughout the CBRM, with 40 client files and economic development projects currently open and in progress.
- [The Women's Micro Loan program](#) has approved 5 female business in CBRM in the year of 2023. The Micro-Loan Program is a partnership between the Cape Breton Partnership, the East Coast Credit Union and Sydney Credit Union. Successful applicants also receive support from the Strait Area and Cape Breton Regional Chambers of Commerce, the Centre for Women in Business and the Centre for Entrepreneurship, Education and Development. It has just relaunched in January 2024.
- The Cape Breton Partnership team is currently providing 30 individuals and businesses in the CBRM with immigration and human resources supports, guidance, and direction in an effort to grow our population and to assist employers with labour related challenges.

Additional Information:



CBRM REN Website: Additional Information on the CBREN can be found on the CBREN webpage: <https://capebretonpartnership.com/initiative/cape-breton-regional-enterprise-network/>



Welcome to Cape Breton Website: Additional Information on Living, Working, Investing, Studying and Moving to the CBRM - including community profiles and economic data - can be found on the Welcome to Cape Breton website: <https://welcometocapebreton.ca/invest/invest-in-cape-breton-unamaki/cape-breton-unamaki-community-profiles/>

- **News and Updates** – Elevate Magazine, and articles from Pulse Newsletter, new podcasts, news releases and more can be found on our website here: <https://capebretonpartnership.com/cbp-news/>



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Signatures:

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Addendum(s):

1) ***CBRM REN Metrics (October 1 – December 31, 2023)***

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Addendum I: CBRM REN Metrics (October 1 – December 31, 2023)

Activities	CBRM Metrics (October 1/23 – December 31/23)			Apr 1/23 – Dec 31/23
	Total Started	Total In Progress (as of Dec. 31st)	Total Completed	YTD Total Completed
Business Support, Sustainability, & Growth	Total – 10	Total – 40	Total - 30	Total - 51
Business Planning		1		
Business Productivity & Growth Services	1	1	1	43
Business Quick Support		1		
Continuous Improvement & Business Advisory	8	2	14	
Human Resources Advisory Services		1	1	
Immigration Advisory Services		0	1	8
Immigration Engagement – Business Support		6	1	
Immigration Engagement – Candidate Support		16		
Immigration Quick Support		1		
Immigration Representation	1	7	2	
Investment & Business Attraction		2	5	
Micro-Lending			3	5
Succession Planning			2	

Economic Development Projects & Strategic Sector Support	Total - 1	Total - 9	Total - 4	Total - 10
Sector Analysis (Strength & Weaknesses)				
Other Economic Development Projects	1	9	4	10

Addressing Talent Needs (Labour & Population)	Total - 6	Total - 37	Total - 0	Total - 6
Human Resources Advisory Services		3		
Business Immigration Consultancy	1	6		
Immigration Advisory Services	5	28		6
Retention Activities	Total - 0	Total - 3	Total - 0	Total - 0
New Connectors		1		
Welcome Network		2		