

Cape Breton Partnership
Year in Review
2023–2024



The Cape Breton Partnership is Unama'ki – Cape Breton's private sector-led economic development organization. As the Island's one-stop shop for economic development, the Cape Breton Partnership connects entrepreneurs and businesses across all sectors to the resources and supports they need to succeed.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Cape Breton Partnership providing independent, non-partisan and collaborative support as the Island's trusted economic development partner. As we celebrate our milestones, we also are steadfast in our approach of looking at what's on the horizon – a thriving Unama'ki – Cape Breton, one that encompasses a great place to live, work, and invest; growing a culture that values and celebrates creativity, innovation, risk-taking and entrepreneurship.

By working with partners, entrepreneurs and businesses all over Unama'ki – Cape Breton, we have a unique advantage – an Island-wide perspective about economic development. We bring this perspective into everything we do.

Our Vision

A thriving Unama'ki – Cape Breton.

Our Mission

To transform Unama'ki – Cape Breton into the most creative and prosperous place on Earth.

Our Mandate

- 1 PROMOTE** Unama'ki – Cape Breton as a great place to live, work, and invest;
- 2 GROW** a culture that values and celebrates creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship; and
- 3 CONNECT** entrepreneurs and businesses to the resources they need to succeed.

Letter from President & CEO and Board Chair

On behalf of the Board and Staff of the Cape Breton Partnership, we are pleased to share with you the 2023-2024 Year in Review. This past year has been another one full of activity as we move **forward together**, celebrating our 20th year of supporting businesses, entrepreneurs, and communities across Unama'ki – Cape Breton.

From April 2023 to March 2024, the Cape Breton Partnership has welcomed 23 new Investors to support our organization's vision, totaling 159 Investors representing various industries and communities across the Island as of March 31, 2024.

20 years is a big milestone, and we wouldn't have achieved it without the generous and unwavering support from the Province of Nova Scotia through the Regional Enterprise Network (REN) model, local First Nation Communities and Municipal partners, and our Investors who all believe in building a thriving Unama'ki – Cape Breton.

The Cape Breton Partnership is grateful to all of our Investors, partners and supporters who believe in the work being done to build a stronger, prosperous, and more sustainable economy here in Unama'ki - Cape Breton.

This last year was a busy one as we welcomed new members to our team:

Danielle Cassagrande, Welcome Network Coordinator joined our team later in the 2023 – 2024 year and has hit the ground running, as she is no stranger to the work of the Cape Breton Partnership due to her past experience with the Sydney Downtown Development Association.

Tyler Cole, Economic Development Officer, CBRM joined our team as one of two Economic Development Officers in the CBRM. Making the move from Fort McMurray, Alberta, Tyler, his fiancée and newborn daughter Eloise are settling into their new home on the Island.

Ocean Le, Cape Breton Connector Program Coordinator joined the team early in the 2023 – 2024 year, bringing his trademark positive energy into the Cape Breton Connector Program Coordinator role.

Sincerely,



Tyler Mattheis
President & CEO

Tara Paon, CBLIP Coordinator joined our team supporting the Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership as Program Coordinator, previously calling many communities former homes, and now proudly lives in River Bourgeois in Richmond County.

Rachelle Samson, Economic Development Officer, Richmond County and the Town of Port Hawkesbury joined the team earlier this summer. Rachelle hails from Arichat on Isle Madame, Richmond County, and is a proud Cape Bretoner with a deep knowledge of the region.

Rachelle's addition comes on the heels of a development opportunity that was provided to Martin Thomsen, who previously held the role of Economic Development and Innovation Officer for the Strait Region. Martin has been seconded to the Town of Port Hawkesbury and Richmond County as a shared resource to further advance the momentum toward building a growing and sustainable green energy industry in the Strait Region. Rachelle and Martin will work closely to support this new and exciting industry in the area and throughout the Province of Nova Scotia.

At our Investor Summit in the fall of 2023, we launched **Forward. Together. Unama'ki – Cape Breton's Economic Development and Population Growth Plan**. The plan includes six guiding principle and strategic pillars that ensure this is a plan for all of Unama'ki – Cape Breton, the Mi'kmaq families who first called this place home, those who arrived and lived here long ago, those who call Unama'ki – Cape Breton their new home, and those we look forward to welcoming soon. By embracing and rolling out this plan across the Island, our belief lies in one simple but important idea that the only way to move forward, is to do so together.

Included in the following 2023-2024 Year in Review are updates and highlights on a number of initiatives, programs and services the Cape Breton Partnership has led and delivered over the past year.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Cape Breton Partnership team, we thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to continuing moving **Forward. Together.** and serving partners, businesses, communities, newcomers, and Investors on the Island for the next 20 years and beyond.



Brian Purchase
Board Chair



Tyler Mattheis



Brian Purchase



Board of Directors

The Cape Breton Partnership is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of community leaders from both the public and private sectors who are dedicated to the economic growth and future prosperity of Unama’ki - Cape Breton.

Thank you to the 2023-2024 Board of Directors for their outstanding leadership over the past year.

2023-2024 Board of Directors (As of March 31, 2024)	■ Board Chair	
	Brian Purchase, Schwartz Furniture	
	■ Vice-Chair	
	Dan MacDonald, DMDE Engineering Ltd.	
	■ Treasurer	
	Alisha Mombourquette, Grant Thornton	
	■ Secretary	
	Tracey Boutilier, Vibe Creative Group	
	■ Executive Member	
	Alyssia Jeddore, Eskasoni Corporate	
	■ Past Board-Chair	
	Sandra Kanchuk, Nova Scotia Power	
	■ Board Members	
	Adam Bateman	BDC
	Brad Jacobs	Colbourne Auto Group
	Darrell Gallant	Marine Atlantic
	Geoff Clarke	Port Hawkesbury Paper LP
	Howie Doiron	Lindsay Construction
	James Wooder	JBW Consulting Inc.
	Jen Ryan	Quincy Street Market
	Kelsea MacNeil	Membertou Corporate
	Mary Jane Morrison	Cape Breton University
	Nicole Morrison	Mabel Systems
	Paul Breski	Nova Scotia Power
	Pearlene Cormier	East Coast Credit Union – Chéticamp
	Ron Blinkhorn	Casino Nova Scotia – Sydney
	Shaowei Xu	SW East International Trading & Consulting
	Storm Gould	We’koqma’q Corporate
	Vivek Saxena	Strait Area Campus, Nova Scotia Community College

See full details and current board members at:
CapeBretonPartnership.com/About/#Board

Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network (CB REN) Board of Directors

The CB REN is governed by a Board of Directors, which represents the regional business community, develops the strategic plan, and plays a pivotal governance role for the regular activities of the CB REN.

Jen Ryan, Quincy Street Market (Co-Chair)
Adam Bateman, BDC (Co-Chair)
Kelsea MacNeil, Membertou Corporate
Vivek Saxena, NSCC Strait Area Campus
Geoff Clarke, Port Hawkesbury Paper LP
Pearlene Cormier, East Coast Credit Union

Cape Breton Regional Municipality Regional Enterprise Network (CBRM REN) Board of Directors

The CBRM REN is governed by a Board of Directors, which represents the regional business community, develops the strategic plan, and plays a pivotal governance role for the regular activities of the CBRM REN.

Tracey Boutilier, Vibe Creative Group (Chair)
Brad Jacobs, Colbourne Auto Group
Shaowei Xu, SW East International Trading & Consulting
Howie Doiron, Lindsay Construction
Darrell Gallant, Marine Atlantic
Ron Blinkhorn, Casino Nova Scotia – Sydney
Nicole Morrison, Mabel Systems

Cape Breton Partnership 2023-2024 Investors

As of March 31, 2024, there are 159 businesses and organizations who invest in the Cape Breton Partnership. Our Investors share our proactive and progressive attitude toward partnerships, collaboration, and growing the population and economy of Unama’ki – Cape Breton. By taking a leadership role and investing in the Cape Breton Partnership, you are helping to shape a more prosperous and vibrant future for the Island. Thank you to all of our Investors. Your continued support is greatly appreciated and we look forward to continuing supporting you as your trusted economic development partner into our shared future.

101.5 FM The Hawk	DMDE Engineering Ltd.	Mabou River Inn
21FSP	Domtor Energy	MacLeod Lorway
3C Wealth Partners	Dora Construction	Marine Atlantic
Aaron Lee Renovations Ltd.	Doucet Developments	Marine Renewables Canada
Anchored Ideas Ltd.	East Coast Credit Union	Maritime Environmental Training Institute
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency Cape Breton	Eskasoni Corporate Division	Maskwiomin
Atlantic Lottery Corporation	Eskasoni Kitpu Security Ltd.	Massage Addict
Bear Head Energy Inc.	Ethical Swag	Mayflower Mall
Big Spruce Brewing	EverWind Fuels	MBS Radio Sydney
Blue Float Energy International, S.L.	Export Development Canada	Membertou Trade and Convention Centre
Boston Pizza Sydney	FBM	Mercer Fuels Ltd
Breton Ability Centre	Flavor by Creative Catering	Mulgrave Machine Works Ltd.
Breton Commercial Truck Training	Fortress of Louisbourg Association	Munro Academy
Build Nova Scotia	Friends United	Navigate Startup House
Business Development Bank of Canada	Futurpreneur	NEDAC
By the Bay Properties	Grant Thornton	Net Zero Atlantic
Cabot Group	Group ATN Consulting Inc.	New Dawn Enterprises
Cabot Links	Halifax Biomedical	Nova Scotia Association of Realtors
Cape Breton Capital Group	Harbour Logistic Services	Nova Scotia Community College: Sydney Waterfront Campus
Cape Breton Centre for Craft & Design	Harbour Royale Development Ltd.	Nova Scotia Community College: Strait Area Campus
Cape Breton China Corporation	Hardwire IT Solutions Inc.	Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council
Cape Breton Farmers’ Market	Highland Landscapes	Nova Scotia Power
Cape Breton Island Building and Construction Trades Council	Highland Village Museum	NovaPorte
Cape Breton Pest Control	Holiday Inn Sydney Waterfront	NovaStream
Cape Breton Regional Chamber of Commerce	Home Instead Senior Care Sydney	Origin Coast Inc.
Cape Breton University	Hunston Kachafanas CPA	Parkland, Cape Breton
Cape Smokey Holdings Inc.	ICEAP	Parks Canada
Casino Nova Scotia	Inverary Resort	Polysteel Atlantic Ltd. / East Coast Rope Ltd.
CBBC Career College	Invest Nova Scotia	Port Hawkesbury Paper LP
CBCL Limited	Island Sauce Company	Port of Sydney Development Corporation
Celtic Colours	J. Francis Investments Ltd.	Portside Law LLP
Chartered Professionals in Human Resources of NS	J.A. Douglas McCurdy Sydney Airport	Protocase Inc.
City Print +	Jay’s Chicken	Quincy Street Market
Coastal Business CBDC	JBW Consulting Inc.	Ramsay’s Honda
Colaisde na Gàidhlig / The Gaelic College	Keltic Lodge at the Highlands	Safety Check Inspections
Colbourne Auto Group	Kim Long & Associates	Schwartz & Company
Construction Association of Nova Scotia	Learnability Nova Scotia	Scotia Logic - IT & Development / Maritect Solutions
Construction Safety Nova Scotia	Leijsa Wilton Limited REMAX Park Place Inc.	Seaboard Industrial
Copol International Ltd.	Lindsay Construction	Seaside Wireless Communications Inc. / Rogers Communications
Destination Cape Breton	Lobsters ‘R’ Us Seafood	
Devantec	Louisburg Seafoods	
	Mabel Systems	

Stantec
Stingray Group (Hot 101.9/New Country 103.5 Cape Breton)
Strait Area Chamber of Commerce
Strait Area Safety Services
Subway (Pelley Operations Ltd.)
Superport Marine Services
SW East International Trading and Consulting Limited
Sydney Credit Union
TapNbe
TD Canada Trust
The Breton Law Group
The Chronicle Herald
The Farmer’s Daughter Country Market
The Lakes at Ben Eoin Golf Club & Resort
The Sandbar Restaurant & Lounge
The Savoy Theatre
Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia
Trans-Atlantic Preforms
Trifos Design Consultants
Two Men and a Truck
Verschuren Centre
Vibe Creative Group
Victoria Co-operative Fisheries Ltd.
ViewPoint Realty
VMP Group
We’koqma’q Corporate
Workers’ Compensation Board of Nova Scotia
YMCA of Cape Breton

The Cape Breton Partnership Team

The Cape Breton Partnership team is known for its energy, enthusiasm, collaborative nature, expertise, and moving the Island forward. The Cape Breton Partnership consists of a dedicated team of experts in the fields of economic development, business development, administration, immigration and labour market, and communications and marketing.

Diamond Investors

Diamond-level Investors, including First Nation Communities and every municipality, play a crucial role in both the CBRM REN and CB REN on Unama’ki - Cape Breton. Their continued support empowers us to make a significant economic impact by nurturing and strengthening local private sector businesses throughout the Island.

Eskasoni First Nation

Membertou

Wagmatcook First Nation

We’koqma’q L’nue’kati

The Cape Breton Regional Municipality

The Municipality of the County of Inverness

The Municipality of the County of Richmond

The Municipality of the County of Victoria

The Town of Port Hawkesbury



Regional Enterprise Networks

The Cape Breton Partnership is the trusted economic development partner to four First Nation Communities and all five municipalities across the Island under the Regional Enterprise Network (REN) model, in partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia.

As part of this model, the Cape Breton Partnership administers two RENs: The Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network (CB REN), and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality Regional Enterprise Network (CBRM REN).

The CB REN includes the Mi'kmaq Communities of Eskasoni, Membertou, Wagmatcook, and We'koqma'q; the Municipalities of the Counties of Inverness, Richmond, and Victoria; and the Town of Port Hawkesbury.

The CBRM REN is represented by the Cape Breton Regional Municipality and the many communities within its borders.

Both RENs are part of a network of seven RENs across the province of Nova Scotia.



Forward. >>> Together.

Unama'ki – Cape Breton's Economic Development & Population Growth Plan

At the 2023 Investor Summit, the Cape Breton Partnership officially launched **Forward. Together.**, Unama'ki – Cape Breton's Economic Development & Population Growth Plan. Unlike other plans, this strategy encompasses the entire Island, uniting us all as one Island, working in stride to make Unama'ki – Cape Breton a place of economic strength, growth, and prosperity. We all have a role to play in putting this plan into action. Whether you represent an organization, a community, or have a vested interest as a resident or investor, we are all part of the mosaic that contributes to a growing economy, workforce, and population that will help grow a successful future for years to come.

The plan was built around **six strategic pillars** through public consultation that took place with First Nation Communities, municipalities, community members, institutions, businesses, and many organizations across the Island.

Forward. Together. has been intentionally designed synergize with CBRM Forward, the CBRM's Economic Development Strategy, and is being presented to all all First Nation Communities and Municipalities across Unama'ki – Cape Breton, some of whom have already adopted it as their economic development strategy. The responsibility for the execution of the plan belongs to Unama'ki – Cape Breton's Island-wide Growth Network and embodies the values and objectives of the Cape Breton Partnership, whose mission is to grow the economy, workforce, and population.



People

A growing population with a focus on workforce development.

OBJECTIVE

Develop and attract talent to the region aligned with workforce demand.



Inclusion

An economy that works for everyone.

OBJECTIVE

Facilitate greater participation and economic benefit for under-represented and marginalized people.



Reconciliation

Reconciliation through economic development partnerships.

OBJECTIVE

Work with First Nation Communities to achieve their economic development goals.



Strong Communities

Capacity to support growth throughout the region.

OBJECTIVE

Strengthen economic development, population retention and related infrastructure development at the community level.



Entrepreneurship & Business Growth

A culture of entrepreneurship and high-quality companies.

OBJECTIVE

Foster a culture of entrepreneurship and attract and grow high quality companies in our region.



Innovation

A resilient, progressive economy.

OBJECTIVE

Grow key sectors of the economy through innovation.



Green Energy Engagement Program

In the last year, the Green Energy Engagement Program (GEEP) began the work of in-person community engagement by hosting a series of Offshore Wind Information sessions in partnership with Net Zero Atlantic in communities across Unama’ki – Cape Breton.

Approximately 160 residents across 10 communities in Unama’ki – Cape Breton attended the Offshore Wind Community Information Sessions held in late 2023 and early 2024. The sessions were held in Baddeck, Louisbourg, North Sydney, the Town of Port Hawkesbury, D’Escousse, St. Peter’s, Chéticamp, Port Hood, Sydney, Glace Bay, and New Waterford. As partners in Net Zero Atlantic’s Capacity Building for the Sustainable and Inclusive Development of Nova Scotia’s Offshore Wind Resource project, funded through the Smart Renewables Electrification Pathways Program from Natural Resources Canada, the focus of these sessions was to engage with rural communities. Net Zero Atlantic’s project also includes a stream of engagement for First Nation Communities across Nova Scotia.

Information and two-way knowledge sharing were captured at these events. A What We Heard report was provided to the Regional Assessment committee who are working with key stakeholders; including First Nation Communities, fishers, and other ocean users to ensure their voices are captured in the regulations that will be created to govern this new and emerging industry across Canada.

With the introduction of this plan, the GEEP is evolving to adapt to meet community needs, with a strategic path forward focused on engaging with communities about green energy and fostering an inclusive, sustainable energy transition for the region. The work of engaging with communities will continue with follow-up sessions planned for the fall and winter of 2024.



OFFSHORE WIND

Community Information Sessions

February 5 Monday	New Waterford New Waterford Fire Hall 3336 Walsh Ave. 6 - 8 p.m.	
February 6 Tuesday	Sydney Holiday Inn Sydney – Waterfront 300 Esplanade 1 - 3 p.m.	Glace Bay Glace Bay Fire Hall 87 Reserve St. 6 - 8 p.m.
February 7 Wednesday	Chéticamp Club des Retraités 15108 Main St. 1 - 3 p.m.	Port Hood Port Hood Fire Hall 304 Main St. 6 - 8 p.m.
February 8 Thursday	Ingonish Ingonish Volunteer Fire Department 35938 Cabot Trail 12 - 2 p.m.	

Come join us to learn the basics about offshore wind energy and how it could help Nova Scotia achieve a net zero future.

For questions or inquiries please email: info@capebretonpartnership.com

Approximately 160 residents across 10 communities in Unama’ki–Cape Breton attended the Offshore Wind Community Information Sessions.



Building Tomorrow

The work of the Building Tomorrow campaign continued and expanded as we highlighted the ongoing construction of five historically significant infrastructure projects across CBRM this year. To express gratitude to the hardworking workforce driving these milestones, the Cape Breton Partnership partnered with the Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council to visit over 350 construction workers and contractors at several sites and offices, offering them a catered lunch from Subway and insulated Building Tomorrow lunch bags filled with useful items for both on and off the job.

In addition to site visits, members of the team also visited the Carpenters Union Local 1588 classroom and Women Unlimited, recognizing those who are investing in our Island's future by acquiring the skills needed to build impactful structures that strengthen our community. We further amplified our appreciation by publishing two success stories: one highlighting the Women Unlimited program and another focusing on the trade's classes at Breton Education Centre in New Waterford. These articles have increased community awareness about the exciting opportunities on our Island and showcased the skilled workforce educating the next generation to build tomorrow.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BUILDING TOMORROW CAMPAIGN AND ITS PROJECT MILESTONES, VISIT www.Building-Tomorrow.ca.

Immigration for Employers – Virtual sessions

Through the Cape Breton Partnership's Immigration and HR Advisory Services, the team partnered with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Nova Scotia Labour, Skills and Immigration, and Nova Scotia Works to host a series of Immigration for Employers virtual sessions.

Those who attended were able to learn how to navigate the Canadian immigration system, and how to support employees and newcomers with staying and living, working, and investing in Unama'ki – Cape Breton.



Safety First in Cape Breton Network

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, the Safety First in Cape Breton Network was excited to once again host the Safety First Symposium on May 24, 2023, at the Membertou Trade & Convention Centre. The event featured keynote speaker Tara Beaton who spoke about the importance of health and wellness in a post-pandemic world. Attendees also enjoyed a panel discussion about women in the trades, and a series of breakouts with a wide range of topics and trends impacting workers and employers.

As the reach and membership of the Safety First in Cape Breton Network continues to expand across Unama'ki – Cape Breton, so did the Safety First initiative.

In an effort to ensure employers and employees have what they need to create positive change in their workplace health and safety culture, the Cape Breton Partnership, together with Labour, Skills and Immigration and the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia hosted Safety in the Strait, a Lunch & Learn that included a story of workplace injury, networking, and a brainstorming opportunity to better support organizations and industries in the Strait region.

The Safety First Planning committee took the information and momentum developed in the brainstorm session to help plan future events in the region, with a focus on creating more engaging OH&S-oriented events in the Strait Area, in addition to the annual Symposium held in the CBRM.

The work of the Building Tomorrow campaign continued as we highlighted the ongoing construction of five historically significant infrastructure projects across CBRM this year.





Adventure Tourism

Adventure tourism is the fastest-growing sector globally. This year, the CBREN and CBRM REN supported partners, investors, and entrepreneurs in rural Unama’ki - Cape Breton to develop opportunities, guided by the Mountain Bike Tourism Action Plan and Destination Cape Breton’s Adventure Tourism Strategy. Our Economic Development Officers continue to support current and future operators, fostering a thriving adventure tourism sector in Unama’ki – Cape Breton.

A major project currently underway is the Jajiktek Seawall Trail, which will provide a significant eco and adventure tourism boost to the Island’s tourism sector. The coastal section of the trail will be a 48-kilometre wilderness hike through varied terrain. It will be hut-based and will require up to five days (four nights) to complete.

This coastal trail will expand upon existing trails and will complete the route from Meat Cove to Pleasant Bay.

A series of nested loops - day hikes will also be developed as part of this project. This is just one of the many adventure tourism projects currently underway.

International Investment Attraction

Over the past year, the Cape Breton Partnership’s Economic Development team were able to support local and international business, industry, and community development in a number of sectors.

Lan Zheng, Parker Horton, and Tyler Cole represented the Cape Breton Partnership, and the CB REN and CBRM REN by attending the 2024 International Council of Shopping Centres Conference in Whistler, BC. The Cape Breton Partnership’s presence at the conference helped support current urban and rural/ retail commercial development across Unama’ki - Cape Breton, while meeting industry representatives to discuss new opportunities and build relationships with North American real estate and retail professionals.

Supporting the same industry, as well as mixed-use development, the Cape Breton Partnership was excited to partner with the Nova Scotia Association of Realtors (NSAR) to promote investment opportunities in Nova Scotia and Unama’ki - Cape Breton at MIPIM, the world’s largest real estate market event, in Cannes, France. Jeremy Martell, Director of Communications, attended this event presenting in panel discussions with counterparts from Winnipeg and rural Manitoba, attended conference networking events, and sat in on community and economic development-focused learning sessions with subject matter experts from across the world.

Expert Delegation Trip to Germany

International Investment Attraction trips also took place in the form of an Expert Delegation Trip to Germany in June 2023. The trip served as a knowledge exchange on Offshore Wind Deployment in Canada and Germany, and provided an opportunity to build relationships with German counterparts in the Canadian German Chamber of Industry and Commerce, adelphi, and the Renewables Academy (RENAC). Relationships were also built with important leaders in Offshore Wind regulatory development in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, which has facilitated ongoing learning and input into these processes regionally. Knowledge gained through the exchange was used during the Offshore Wind Community Information Sessions to share the experience of other jurisdictions with local communities.

2024 World Hydrogen Summit

In the spring of 2024, a small delegation from the Cape Breton Partnership, the Town of Port Hawkesbury, and Richmond County were invited by the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Renewables to attend the 2024 World Hydrogen Summit, the world’s largest and most senior global hydrogen event in Rotterdam, Netherlands. The trip involved participation in conference activities, as well as several site visits (Including a tour of the Port of Rotterdam), and meetings with businesses, ports, and local government.

Winter Tourism Best Practice Mission

In February, Inverness County EDO, Lynne MacLennan, joined representatives from Destination Cape Breton, the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, the Municipality of the County of Victoria, and several tourism operators on a best practice mission to Charlevoix, Quebec. The Charlevoix region has become a premium winter destination with a diverse array of tourism experiences, accommodation options, and dining opportunities. The mission provided insight on how to best develop and grow Unama’ki - Cape Breton’s winter tourism through package development and operator collaboration.

The Cape Breton Partnership team continues to promote Unama’ki – Cape Breton as a great place to live, work, and invest locally, nationally, and internationally.

Human Resources Advisory Services

This past year, the Human Resource (HR) Advisor provided employers in Unama’ki – Cape Breton with human resource guidance and advice to sustain and grow their businesses. The services offered focused on recruitment and retention and selection and hiring. The HR Advisor also manages the Cape Breton Job Board and leads the annual Unama’ki – Cape Breton Job Fair Series.

Unama’ki – Cape Breton Job Fair Series

The Cape Breton Partnership worked alongside friends and Investors at YMCA Nova Scotia Works to re-launch the Unama’ki – Cape Breton Job Fair Series in the 2022-2023 year, holding five fairs, one in each of the five municipalities on the Island. This past year, we continued to host the series, by hosting three job fairs across Unama’ki – Cape Breton to support our growing Island and workforce.

Hosted in the Town of Port Hawkesbury, Inverness, and Sydney, the job fair series provided the perfect opportunity for job-seekers to connect with a variety of employers from a number of industries. The three job fairs attracted 70 Employers and over 700 job-seekers from across the Island!

Cape Breton Job Board

The Cape Breton Job Board continues to evolve as a strong resource for Unama’ki - Cape Breton employers. This past year, we made updates to the Job Board including accessibility features, employer resources, and making the job post process more seamless for employers.



	YTD
Employers (Organizations)	355
Jobs Posted	1,613

THE STRAIT

Invest in Cape Breton Podcast

In October 2023, the Cape Breton Partnership launched the Invest in Cape Breton podcast. This series was created to challenge assumptions about the Island's economy through in-depth interviews with local changemakers. These conversations go beyond the headlines to uncover the Island's untapped potential for investors and entrepreneurs, offering a glimpse into the Island's coming transformation. Since its successful launch, five episodes have been released, each featuring diverse voices and experts from various sectors across the Island. With more episodes on the way, Invest in Cape Breton has consistently ranked in the top 50 per cent of all podcasts worldwide.

In the Podcast's first four episodes, listeners have already downloaded segments of the podcast over 1,500 times, bringing Unama'ki – Cape Breton's investment opportunity to the world!

LISTEN HERE:

www.welcometocapebreton.ca/invest/invest-podcast/

Welcome to Cape Breton Podcast

Throughout the year, listeners from across the globe were able to listen to existing and new episodes of the Welcome to Cape Breton Podcast, an evocative podcast of change, arrival, discovery and home. Hosted by Norma Jean MacPhee-Zinck, a seasoned journalist of more than 20 years, and passionate volunteer and Cape Bretoner, MacPhee-Zink guides listeners as newcomers share their adventures, discoveries and how Unama'ki – Cape Breton has become the home of their hearts.

LISTEN TO THE FULL SERIES HERE:

www.welcometocapebreton.ca/choose/welcome-to-cape-breton-podcast/

Strait of Canso Port Development

The CB REN continues to assist with efforts to further develop and promote the Strait of Canso as one of the best deep-water, ice-free ports on the east coast of North America. The Cape Breton Partnership, Strait Area Chamber of Commerce, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and Invest Nova Scotia have been working together on this project and have formed the Strait Area Working Group which is working to build and launch an investment attraction website that will highlight the Strait of Canso's strategic advantages and opportunities.

THE WEBSITE CAN BE ACCESSED BY VISITING:

www.thestraitofcanso.ca

Business & Breakfast and Unama'ki – Cape Breton Business Dinner

This past year the CBRM REN and CB REN continued to host the popular Business event series, hosting both a Business & Breakfast and an Unama'ki – Cape Breton Business Dinner.

Business & Breakfast: Let's Talk Tourism

In the last year, the Business community was invited to Let's Talk Tourism which was held on May 17, 2023 at the We'koqma'q Fire Hall & Community Centre. Attendees were greeted by a beautiful traditional Mi'kmaq welcome, courtesy of Robert Bernard and Graham Marshall, followed by a delicious breakfast prepared locally by Indigenous Elders.

The session was moderated by Parker Horton, Economic Development Officer for Victoria County, and featured Robert Bernard, Executive Director of Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITEN), Eleanor Anderson, Project Manager of Cape Breton Island Tourism Training Network, and Jody MacArthur, Director of Sales & Marketing at Destination Cape Breton.

Date: **May 17, 2023**

We'koqma'q Fire Hall and Community Centre

54 attendees

Unama'ki – Cape Breton Business Dinner

The Cape Breton Partnership and Richmond County were honoured to host the Unama'ki – Cape Breton Business Dinner, presented by **Bear Head Energy** in June 2023 for an evening of networking and a keynote address by Doug Griffiths, renowned community strategist and author of 13 Ways to Kill Your Community. Over 140 attendees visited La Picasse in Petit-de-Grat, Richmond County for this event from across Unama'ki – Cape Breton.

Works for You Program

The Works for You program, funded by Employment Nova Scotia is designed to help individuals, particularly from underrepresented groups, overcome employment barriers and enhance job readiness. These initiatives collaborate with local resource centres and non-profits to select participants who undergo 8-10 weeks of comprehensive employability skills training. The training covers various topics such as first-aid, résumé writing, and communication skills, followed by a paid work experience. In 2023/2024, over 12 cohorts were administered, benefiting more than 125 Participants.



Attracting and Retaining Talent Global Skills Strategy

The Cape Breton Partnership is 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 and enhanced customer service. This past year, the Cape Breton Partnership made two referrals to the Global Talent Stream.

Immigration Engagement & Advisory Services

The Cape Breton Partnership engages with the labour market and provides employers and candidates with explanations of provincial immigration options and guidance on their application. In addition, the People & Labour Market team also host and attend events to explain services and immigration options to the public. In the year 2023-24, the Cape Breton Partnership has engaged with over 200 employers through the following initiatives:

Program	Outcomes	Services Provided by the Cape Breton Partnership
Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP)	114 in total 51 Designations 63 Endorsements	Designation support: Application to become a designated organization in Nova Scotia Endorsement support: Application to support a chosen candidate to obtain permanent residence.
Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP)	20 Occupations in Demand 41 Skilled Worker	Guidance on the NSNP for employers and their candidates.
Immigration Consultations	31	Provided consultations on complex files, employers who need more support to choose an immigration stream, or those outside of our Immigration Engagement scope.
Accompanying Dependents	44 children 60 spouses	The 62 AIP endorsements and 61 NSNP files represent principal applicants for permanent residence.

Immigration Representation

Cape Breton Partnership Labour Market & Immigration Advisor is a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC) and offers further immigration support to employers or individuals who are unsure of their immigration needs or who don't fit the requirements of the AIP or NSNP. In the year 2023-24, the Cape Breton Partnership acted as representative for 12 employers, and has **completed 21 Immigration Applications.**

BREAKDOWN OF APPLICATIONS:

14 Atlantic Immigration Program (Designations and Endorsements)
2 Nova Scotia Nominee Program
2 LMIA-exempt Offer of Employment
3 Employer Registration Certificate (ERC)

Micro-Loan Program – supporting women+ entrepreneurs in Unama'ki – Cape Breton

The Cape Breton Partnership Economic Development team was passionate to once again collaborate with partners at the Sydney Credit Union, East Coast Credit Union, Cape Breton Regional Chamber of Commerce, Strait Area Chamber of Commerce, the Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development (CEED), and the Centre for Women in Business to administer the program for its fifth year.

In addition to coordinating the program and acting as a first point of contact for interested entrepreneurs, this year the team made changes to the program's messaging, delivery, and application process to make the program more inclusive and barrier-free for interested participants. Additionally, the team continued to provide entrepreneurs with access to mentorship, programs, and additional resources that help encourage growth and success through their business venture.

TIMELINE: APRIL 1, 2023 – MARCH 31, 2024

Total Initial Applications:	59
Total funded amount from both Sydney Credit Union and East Coast Credit union:	\$110,000

Awards Recipients Honoured at 2023 Vital Awards

Since 2014, the Vital Unama'ki - Cape Breton Excellence Awards have honoured young individuals, employees, and employers who have made significant contributions to communities across the Island. In January 2024, co-hosts NextGen Unama'ki - Cape Breton and the Cape Breton Partnership were thrilled to celebrate the 2023 award winners in person at the Port of Sydney. These outstanding recipients were recognized for their talent, drive, and achievements in making Unama'ki - Cape Breton a better place for youth to live, work, and play.

2023 VITAL AWARD WINNERS:

L'nuk Excellence:

Armand Paul
Kalolin Sylvester

Newcomer Excellence:

Ankit Wadhwa
Guntas & Parteek Brar
Tam Campbell & Julia MacMillan

Employer Excellence:

AB Mechanical
Anchored Ideas
BGC Cape Breton

Employee Excellence:

Melissa Vickers, Cape Breton Regional Chamber of Commerce
Nicole MacDonald, YMCA – Cape Breton
Shane MacSween, New Dawn Enterprises

Entrepreneur Excellence:

Basil Doucet – L'abri café, restaurant et bar, Marguerite, and the Archie & Isidore Hotel
Hazel Sparling, Painted Dance Collective
Meghan Finney, LaQuaintrelle

Individual Excellence:

Chloe MacDonald, Accessibuild
Ethan Merlin, athlete and volunteer
Paige Cox, Seton Community Complex
Peter MacInnis, host of Cape Breton Chats
Saralyn Gillan, community advocate and educator





Supporting the Nova Scotia Film Industry

In the fall of 2023, the Cape Breton Partnership's Creative Economy Development Officer (CEDO), Bill Culp worked with Screen Nova Scotia for the second year to coordinate and host a full-day tour of the Island with major motion picture and network representatives from Los Angeles, New York, and Toronto. The tour served as a great opportunity to highlight the scenic filming opportunities that exist in Unama'ki – Cape Breton and opened the door for relationship building, and an opportunity to grow the rural film and television landscape of rural Nova Scotia. This past year, the CEDO was appreciative of the support received through CBU's Community Student Research Connections Program that allowed them to hire a student from CBU who assisted in the development of a five-year Strategic Plan for the Unama'ki Motion Picture Cooperative, a volunteer, Indigenous-led not-for-profit organization dedicated to assisting in the development of the film industry in Unama'ki – Cape Breton.

In 2023, meetings were held between the CEDO, the Unama'ki Motion Picture Cooperative, Screen Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Community College, Cape Breton Film, Bonny MacIsaac, Warden of Inverness County, and the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage to provide guidance, advice and consultation regarding a Distant Location Film Incentive, which was announced this past summer. The Long-Distance Incentive is projected to help Nova Scotia increase its revenue from motion pictures made in Nova Scotia significantly.



The CEDO supports the following initiatives and organizations on the Island:

Theatre Baddeck - The CEDO worked with Theatre Baddeck to launch a new larger, year-round facility and became a proud member of the Board of Directors.

Cape Breton Comedy Festival – Provided guidance and advice to the first annual, Island-wide Cape Breton Comedy Festival, which has since become a reoccurring and well-attended festival.

Outcome: 7 shows in total, including the festival plus one show in Ingonish

Inverness County Centre for the Arts (ICCA): Assisted the centre by providing guidance, support, and input on their strategic plan, and helped direct them to both Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage (CCTH) for funding assistance.

Telile Community TV: Provided guidance, support, and helped direct Telile to CCTH, assisted with a grant application for their 30th anniversary events, which was approved. Additionally, the CEDO is working with Telile to assist with programming and a strategic plan.

The Centre for Sound Communities provides a unique opportunity for Unama'ki – Cape Breton artists to release their music to the world on the legendary Smithsonian Folkways label, which the Sons of Membreto recently participated in this past summer. The CEDO provided guidance around the Centre's agreement with CBU and the Smithsonian, in addition to connecting them with ACOA and CCTH for funding assistance.

Lecture – The CEDO gave a lecture in 2023 to students in the Ethnomusicology program at CBU on music and identity.

Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership

The Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP) held its fourth annual partner update event on November 17, 2023, titled *Opening Doors to Collaboration*. This full-day gathering brought together a number of community partners to explore how strong collaboration between newcomer-serving organizations helps to remove barriers and foster welcoming and inclusive communities.

CBLIP working groups continued in 2023-2024 to implement activities related to the five current areas of CBLIP focus: housing, awareness, community belonging, employment, and demonstrating impact.

The CBLIP Immigrant Advisory Table (IAT) extended its reach and size over the past year, now with 17 members from across the Island whose lived experience of immigration and settlement helps to inform all aspects of CBLIP work.



The Cape Breton Welcome Network

The Cape Breton Welcome Network is currently in a space of transition as we work to restructure the program to better serve both the volunteers and the newcomers across the Island. Previously, the Welcome Network operated through "Welcome Groups" established in various communities across Unama'ki – Cape Breton. Each group had a Chair (and in some cases, Co-Chair), who were responsible for reporting to the Program Coordinator. This structure has served us well, creating a foundation for welcoming newcomers, but we recognize the need to adapt to the evolving needs of our communities.

As we move forward, our goal is to develop a more flexible and inclusive framework that will not only support Welcome Groups but also empower individual volunteers who wish to welcome newcomers in their own unique ways. This new structure is designed to accommodate diverse volunteer styles, capacities, and preferences, ensuring that everyone can contribute meaningfully, regardless of their level of involvement.

While the structure of the program may evolve, our unwavering commitment to fostering a sense of community and belonging across Unama'ki – Cape Breton remains at the heart of the Welcome Network. We believe these changes will enhance our ability to connect, support, and welcome newcomers, creating a stronger, more vibrant community.



Cape Breton Connector Program

The Cape Breton Connector Program is a simple and effective networking program that connects driven individuals with industry leaders who can help facilitate the growth of their careers here in Unama’ki – Cape Breton. In the past year, the Connector Program recruited **11** Connectors and **35** Connectees across Unama’ki - Cape Breton.

In the past year, the Cape Breton Connector Program has been holding networking socials for both Connectors and Connectees, as well as the general public to drive engagement of the program.

Networking 101: Events were held for general networking tips, as well as a special series around in rural communities.

Tennis & Togetherness: A place to learn and play tennis and connect with others. Connectors, Connectees, and community members attended to learn about the Connector Program, make connections, and have fun.

Voices of Diversity: Immigrant Women Making Waves in Cape Breton: A panel discussion to highlight immigrant women in Unama’ki - Cape Breton finding success in their chosen field, networking effectively, and leaving a community impact.

Matches	103
Connectees Recruited	103
New Connectors Recruited	37

2023 Economic Impact Awards

The Cape Breton Partnership was thrilled to celebrate the impactful contributions of businesses, community organizations, and business leaders across Unama’ki – Cape Breton at the 2023 Economic Impact Awards which are handed out annually at the Cape Breton Partnership’s annual Investor Summit.

The 2023 Economic Impact Awards were presented with support from Bear Head Energy, Atlantic Lottery, Nova Scotia Power, Invest Nova Scotia, and Seaside Communications.

The recipients of the 2023 Economic Impact Awards are all organizations from various industries who have worked extremely hard to make a lasting impact on the Island’s economy.

THIS YEAR WE WERE PROUD TO HONOUR WINNERS ACROSS THE ISLAND FROM A NUMBER OF INDUSTRIES:

- Richmond River Roots Market Garden Society
- Larch Wood Canada
- Rose’s Smash Burgers
- Cape Breton Farmers’ Market
- Cape Breton University



The recipients of the 2023 Economic Impact Awards are all organizations from various industries who have worked extremely hard to make a lasting impact on the Island’s economy.

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