

Information and Activity Report

CBRM Regional Enterprise Network

Q2 – FY 2024/25
(July - September 2024)

Subject: CBRM REN Information and Activity Report
To: Cape Breton Regional Municipality
Date Prepared: October 15, 2024
Prepared by: Tyler Cole, Economic Development Officer, CBRM
Lan Zheng, Economic Development Officer, CBRM

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.

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2024/25 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

2024/25 CBRM REN Liaison Oversight Committee:

- **Co-Chair** – Steve Gillespie, Councillor, CBRM
- **Co-Chair** – Jennifer Campbell, Chief Financial Officer, CBRM
- Steve Parsons, Councillor, CBRM
- Karen Neville, Acting Director of Planning and Development, CBRM
- Marilyn Hay, Nova Scotia Department of Economic Development
- Donald Ferguson, Nova Scotia Department of Labour, Skills & Immigration

Additional information about the CBRM REN

Full information on the CBRM REN, including the CBRM Forward Strategic Plan, annual business plan, quarterly reports and more is located on the [CBRM REN webpage](#).

Reporting Period

Your CBRM REN team and the CBP are pleased to share highlights, milestones achieved, and metrics from **July 1 – September 30, 2024**.

Highlights and Events

- **Partners Day: July 10** –The Cape Breton Partnership hosted an annual Partners Day event in Sydney. 22 attendees from the partner organization across the island and Province of NS and key staff to share highlights of our programs and key services.
- **Mill Creek Solar Project Open House: July 10** – Cape Breton Partnership representatives attended a community information session hosted by ABO Energy in Millville, highlighting a proposed solar project in the area. The project is seeking approval through the Government of Nova Scotia’s Community Solar Program.
- **CBRM Housing Strategy Focus Group: July 16** – CBRM REN staff participated in the CBRM Housing Strategy Focus Group sessions, providing input on the direction of housing policy in the region.
- **Build Nova Scotia Site Visit to Sydney: July 18** – CBRM REN staff were approached by Build Nova Scotia to help facilitate a site visit for some of their Planning team to the CBRM. Areas of focus on the site visit included the major regional healthcare projects, NSCC Sydney Waterfront Campus, and the Sydney Waterfront Boardwalk.
- **Cape Breton Eagles / Centre 200 Economic & Community Impact Study: July 18** – A project kickoff meeting for the study was held with representatives from the consulting firm, Cape Breton Eagles, and Centre 200. The project is set to conclude in early October with reports on the economic and community impact of both the hockey club and the arena.
- **CBRM Moving Forward Roundtable: August 14** – A meeting of key regional stakeholders was hosted by Cape Breton University, with the goal of updating on individual organizational priorities and fostering deeper connections between regional leaders from government, post-secondary education, non-profits, and the private sector.
- **CBRM REN Presentation to CBRM Council: August 20** – The CBRM Economic Development Officers made a virtual presentation to Mayor and Council, sharing the information contained in the Q1 CBRM REN report and answering questions from elected officials on current projects and priorities.
- **Grand Opening of Eskasoni Shipyard: August 28** – Cape Breton Partnership team members attending the Grand Opening of Eskasoni Shipyard in Sydport. This joint venture project of Eskasoni First Nation and Marine Recycling Canada will bring new economic opportunity to the Sydport Industrial Park, while providing employment pathways for Indigenous people in the region.
- **Digital Nova Scotia AGM: September 5** – Digital Nova Scotia hosted a multi-location AGM, with the event held concurrently online and at venues around the province, including the Membertou Trade & Convention Centre, which were attended by Cape Breton Partnership staff. This event was an opportunity to learn about the supports provided by this organization to the tourism sector and other small businesses and organizations.
- **Funding Announcement for Ski Ben Eoin: September 13** – The CBRM REN team attended this event at Ski Ben Eoin which announced a \$300,000 federal grant for snowmaking and chairlift infrastructure at the ski hill, which aims to extend the snow sports season and improve the visitor experience.
- **NSCC Sydney Waterfront Campus Grand Opening: September 13** – Cape Breton Partnership staff attended this official grand opening event, which highlighted the investments made in Sydney by the Government of Nova Scotia and NSCC to open the wonderful new campus in Downtown Sydney.
- **Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia Meet & Greet: September 18** – CBRM REN staff attended this meet & greet session at the James McConnell Memorial Library in Sydney, alongside restaurant owners from around the

CBRM and RANS staff. This event provided an opportunity to learn more about the work RANS is doing to support the restaurant sector, and network with restaurant owners in the region.

- **Supporting Newcomers, Employers & Community Event: September 20** – This event at the Glace Bay Miner’s Forum, organized by the Cape Breton Partnership’s People & Labour Market Team, highlighted the supports and services available to newcomers to the Island, including the Welcome Network, Connector Program, and Immigration Services. It was attended by community organizations, residents, CBRM representatives and local business owners.
- **Sydney Innovation Ecosystem Meet & Greet: September 27** – Organized by Volta and Ignite, two innovation ecosystem leaders from elsewhere in Nova Scotia, this event at the Old Triangle in Sydney brought together entrepreneurs and support organizations like the Cape Breton Partnership to discuss the creation of a local hub for innovative businesses. This hub would offer supports and services to businesses who are providing innovative products and services in Cape Breton.

Select Project Updates

Economic Development Project Updates:

- **Industry Sector Pages** – In September, the [Invest Tab](#) on [WelcomeToCapeBreton.ca](#) was expanded with 9 new Sector Pages, highlighting the key economic sectors on the Island. These new pages provide information on Agriculture, Tourism, the Creative Economy, Technology & Innovation, Fisheries, Green Hydrogen, Onshore Wind, Commercial Real Estate, and Residential Real Estate. These pages are an excellent resource for folks on and off-Island looking to learn more about the economic opportunity here if they are looking to invest in or start a business here.
- **Centre 200 / Cape Breton Eagles Economic & Community Impact Study** – Starting in July, the Cape Breton Partnership, Centre 200, and Cape Breton Eagles Hockey Club began work with a consultant to quantify the community & economic impact of the hockey club and the arena. The project includes budgetary analysis, community engagement, and business engagement. The final report is due in October 2024.
- **CBU Session with CEED-** The CBRM REN staff, in partnership with Cape Breton University and the Centre for Education, Entrepreneurship, and Development (CEED), held a workshop on Introduction to Entrepreneurship on September 11th. Fifteen MBA students attended the session and learned about important considerations for starting a business in Cape Breton.
- **MUCU Market-** The CBRM REN staff supported the Multicultural Association of Cape Breton (MACB) in starting a weekly Multi-Cultural (MUCU) Market at the Eltuek Arts Center on August 31, 2024. The MUCU Market offered an affordable platform for 25-30 vendors, including arts and food vendors, to share their food and culture with the local community.¹
- **Northside Business Park (NBP) lots for sale-** The CBRM REN staff assisted businesses in applying for lots at the Northside Business Park. Currently, three applications are in progress for purchasing lots at NBP.
- **Community Solar Projects** – The CBRM REN Staff have been actively supporting the development of community solar projects in CBRM. Recently, they participated in a presentation on September 9th, 2024, along with the Community Solar Program Coordinator to gain crucial insights into the Community Solar Program (CSP).
- **Energy Sector Development** – The CBRM REN team continues to work with interested parties who are seeking to develop green energy projects in the CBRM, including solar, green hydrogen production, offshore wind, and

¹ Note that CBRM REN Staff are also contributing their own personal volunteer efforts to the MUCU market. The Cape Breton Partnership / CBRM REN is pleased to support its employees in their volunteer efforts, and CBRM REN staff work diligently to ensure clarity between their volunteer and paid position roles to both internal and external partners whenever necessary.

onshore wind. The team collaborates with CBRM staff, the Department of Natural Resources & Renewables, and other stakeholders when required to support these interested parties.

Green Energy Sector:

- Release of [What We Heard: Community Offshore Wind Information Sessions Report](#)
 - Report was publicly released at the end of August. Shared through e-blast, social media posts, and discussed in a CBC Information Morning interview. The reception has been positive. The community feedback obtained is being used to develop content for the second round of information sessions.
 - The [Offshore Wind Community Engagement Survey Report](#) was also released in conjunction with the What We Heard Report. The report highlights the results of a preliminary engagement survey conducted by the Cape Breton Partnership and Net Zero Atlantic from June-August 2023.
- Tentative dates have been scheduled for the second series of OSW Information Sessions with Net Zero Atlantic in Cape Breton. 4 sessions will be held in CBRM:
 - November 13 – Sydney and Louisbourg
 - November 14 – Dominion and North Sydney
- The official list of dates, times, and venues will be released in the coming weeks, with emails sent out to our partners. We hope to see you there.
- The Green Energy Engagement Coordinator attended the Marine Renewables Canada (MRC) Offshore Wind Supply Chain Forum in Halifax. This event focused on opportunities and challenges connected to the offshore wind supply chain in Nova Scotia. The session was supported by the Government of Nova Scotia's Department of Natural Resources and Renewables as part of Module 2 of Nova Scotia's Offshore Wind Roadmap. The key takeaways have been published by MRC [here](#).
- The Canadian German Chamber of Commerce and Innovation (CGCCI) is bringing a delegation of German businesses to Canada for an educational trip focused on offshore wind and hydrogen. The Cape Breton Partnership wrote a letter of support for the CGCCI in their application for federal funding. A conference is being held in Halifax on November 6, where local businesses and other parties can hear presentations from German businesses and participate in B2B networking. Conference registration [here](#). Through the Green Energy Engagement Program, we have compiled an extensive list of businesses and organizations from across Unama'ki – Cape Breton to present to the CGCCI for direct invitations to the event and to ensure those who cannot attend in Halifax are included as contacts for the delegation.
- The Green Energy Engagement Coordinator continues to participate in the Nova Scotia Electricity Sector Strategy Implementation Team, focused on participation in working groups responsible for implementing the climate adaptation strategies outlined in Nova Scotia's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Nova Scotia's Electricity Sector

Creative Economy Projects and Sector Initiatives:

- The Creative Economy Development Officer provided location and workforce assistance to the **feature film *Little Lorraine***, shooting across Cape Breton from June 20 to July 25, 2025. The entire island was considered for potential filming sites, and both Richmond County and CBRM were utilized to shoot the entire film, all in Cape Breton.
- The Creative Economic Development Officer worked with the provincial government, Bonny MacIsaac, the Unama'ki Motion Picture Cooperative, Cape Breton Film, NSCC, and Screen Nova Scotia, to launch the new [Distant Location Incentive](#) program for motion picture and TV production in rural areas such as Cape Breton.

- The Creative Economy Development Officer connected the new **History Channel series *Shipwreck Kings*** with resources including Zodiac boats and an editing suite. The series filmed in Louisbourg and Sydney from July until September, and will be returning in late October and December 2025 for another season.
- The Creative Economy Development Officer provided consultation to the new **Bell Fibe Series *Star Academy***, which starts shooting in Louisbourg on October 16.
- The Creative Economy Development Officer provided consultation, guidance and connections to 4 new business ventures in CBRM, providing **services to the growing motion picture industry** including transportation, casting, catering, and location assistance.

People and Labour Force Attraction:

- **The People & Labour Market Team** covers several projects. Some are funded by the RENs and some are through project funding. The People & Labour Market Team held a series of events in rural areas of Cape Breton in September 2024, called "Supporting Newcomers, Employers and Community" to provide information on supports and services, and hear from community on highlights and challenges regarding immigration in their communities.
- **Connector Program** - In Q2, the Connector Program hosted several high-profile events, such as Movie and Mingle, and partnered on numerous community initiatives, including meet-and-greets, service fairs, the Mayor's Recognition Event, and multicultural markets. Additionally, we actively engaged with local campuses, delivering Connector Program presentations at both Nova Scotia Community College and Cape Breton University, helping to build awareness, foster meaningful connections with students and professionals and commitment to growing the program's reach.
- **Immigration Updates** - In Q2, the Cape Breton Partnership submitted 24 applications on behalf of employers in the CBRM. We are currently listed as the licensed immigration representative for 13 businesses. Also, the Cape Breton Partnership provided Immigration Engagement services to 21 employers, and 21 employees/newcomers. One event was held in Glace Bay, with 20 in attendance, to provide information on immigration and other services.
- **Welcome Network** - Most of Q2 was focused on rebuilding the structure of the Welcome Network to best support newcomers and volunteers in their welcoming initiatives. Another main focus was on building relationships with organizations that support newcomers in their communities and identifying potential opportunities for collaboration. A crafting social and Movie and Mingle event were hosted to foster community connections. Information about the WN was presented in Glace Bay as part of the People & Labor Market Roadshow.
- **Cape Breton Job Board** - In Q2, there were 85 new job posts in the CBRM. The Cape Breton Job Board currently has 256 organizations in CBRM registered.
- **HR Advisory Services** - Also in Q2, the HR Advisor was connected with three CBRM-based businesses for support. One of these companies is larger, and employs a Finance Manager who is also responsible for HR functions, but has no background. She is reaching out for guidance and support on an on-going basis and has been connected to relevant events and services. The other companies are smaller, one is owned by Newcomers and the other is a local Association - both seeking recruitment and compliance support. We are in the initial stages of contact.

Upcoming Events:

- **CBU Session with CBDC: October 11** – The CBRM REN staff, in partnership with Cape Breton University (CBU) will deliver a series of workshops to the BMBA students at CBU. The upcoming session will invite Patricia MacNeil from CBDC to talk about financial options for start-ups and small businesses in Cape Breton.
- **Cape Breton Partnership Investor’s Summit: October 24** – This annual event, hosted at the Inverary Resort in Baddeck, brings together the Cape Breton Partnership’s private-sector investors, government officials, and supporters of our organization to learn and network.
- **CBU Session with Business Navigators: November 7** – In the upcoming session, Evangeline Chrisovergis from Business Navigators in Nova Scotia will introduce their services and explain how they can support startup businesses.
- **Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP) Partner Update Event: November 8** – The CBLIP is hosting this gathering of their key partners in Eskasoni.
- **Offshore Wind Engagement Sessions: Sydney & Louisbourg (November 13) and Glace Bay & North Sydney (November 14)** - The Cape Breton Partnership, alongside Net Zero Atlantic, will be hosting another round of Offshore Wind Engagement Sessions around Cape Breton in Fall 2024.
- **Nova Scotia Offshore Wind R&D Conference: November 18** – Net Zero Atlantic is hosting this conference in Halifax focused around research & development in the offshore wind sector. Members of the CBRM REN team will be in attendance.
- **Cross-Sectoral Housing Summit: November 19** – This Halifax-based event is a partnership between the Nova Scotia Association of Realtors and the Nova Scotia Non-Profit Housing Association. It will bring together developers, construction firms, community service providers, and real estate experts to develop solutions for the housing crisis, with CBRM REN team members in attendance.
- **MORE EVENTS** - To be kept informed of all upcoming events as they unfold, follow the Cape Breton Partnership’s social channels or [subscribe to the Pulse Newsletter](#).

Metrics Overview: *(Full Metrics are available in Addendum 1: CBRM REN Metrics (July 1 – September 30, 2024))*

- 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. These projects are reflected in the Addendum below.
- The Women+ Micro Loan program has approved 2 loans in CBRM from July to September, with another applicant currently reviewing their application with the Sydney Credit Union.
- The CBRM REN team is currently providing 150 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 CBRM REN, including the CBRM Forward Strategic Plan, annual business plan, quarterly reports and more is located on the [CBRM REN webpage](#).



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](#).

- **News and Updates** – Elevate Magazine, and articles from Pulse Newsletter, new podcasts, news releases and more can be found on the [Partnership News section of our website](#).



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Signatures:

Respectfully submitted by:

Tyler Cole
Economic Development Officer - CBRM
CBRM REN, Cape Breton Partnership

[Lan Zheng \(Oct 16, 2024 06:32 ADT\)](#)

Lan Zheng
Economic Development Officer - CBRM
CBRM REN, Cape Breton Partnership

Tyler Mattheis
President and CEO
CBRM REN, Cape Breton Partnership

Addendum(s):

- **CBRM REN Metrics (July 1 – September 30, 2024)**

---end report---

Addendum I: CBRM REN Metrics (July 1 – September 30, 2024)

Activities	CBRM Metrics (July 1 – September 30)			Year-To-Date
	Total Started	Total In Progress (as of September 30)	Total Completed	YTD Total Completed
Business Support, Sustainability, & Growth	Total – 100	Total – 81	Total - 104	Total - 141
Business Planning	2	2		
Business Productivity & Growth Services	3	3	1	5
Business Quick Support	1	1		1
Continuous Improvement & Business Advisory	5	5	2	2
Human Resources Advisory Services		3		1
Immigration Advisory Services	1	8	3	3
Immigration Engagement – Business Support	21			30
Immigration Engagement – Candidate Support	17			
Immigration Quick Support	30		30	61
Immigration Representation	21	5	24	24
Investment & Business Attraction Projects	1	1	1	3
Micro-Lending	1	1	2	6
Succession Planning				4
Creative Economy	1		1	1

Economic Development Projects & Strategic Sector Support	Total Started - 2	Total In Progress - 2	Total Completed - 0	Year-To-Date - 4
Sector Analysis (Strength & Weaknesses)				0
Other Economic Development Projects	2	2		4

Addressing Talent Needs (Labour & Population)	Total Active Files – 16
Human Resources Advisory Services	3
Business Immigration Consultancy	
Immigration Advisory Services – for Businesses	13

Retention Activities	Connector Program/Welcome Network - New	Total - 169
New Connectors	9	18
New Connectees	12	43
Welcome Network – Newcomers Welcomed	11	56
Welcome Network – Welcomers/Volunteers	6	52











Oct2-24 - FY24-25 CBRM REN Q2 Report - FINAL

Final Audit Report

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