

# Information and Activity Report

*Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network – Inverness County*

Q3 – 2024/25  
(October - December 2024)

**Subject:** CB REN Information and Activity Report  
**To:** Municipality of Inverness County  
**Date Prepared:** January 16, 2025  
**Prepared by:** Lynne MacLennan, Economic Development Officer, Inverness County

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## Background:

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



The Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network (CB REN) includes the Municipalities of the Counties of Inverness, Richmond, and Victoria, the Town of Port Hawkesbury, as well as the First Nations communities of We'koqma'q, Wagmatcook, Eskasoni and Membertou.

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

The Cape Breton Partnership maximizes the value of the CB 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 Municipality of the County of Inverness.

## 2024/25 CB REN Board:

- **Co-Chair** - Jen Ryan, Quincy Street Market
- **Co-Chair** - Adam Bateman, Business Development Bank of Canada
- Geoff Clarke, Port Hawkesbury Paper
- Pearlene Cormier, East Coast Credit Union
- Capt. Vivek Saxena, NSCC Strait Area Campus
- Kelsea MacNeil, Membertou Corporate
- Storm Gould, We'koqma'q Corporate

## 2024/25 CB REN Liaison Oversight Committee:

- **Chair** - Keith MacDonald, CAO, Municipality of the County of Inverness
- Warden Bonny MacIsaac, Municipality of the County of Inverness
- Warden Lois Landry, Municipality of the County of Richmond
- Troy MacCulloch, CAO, Municipality of the County of Richmond
- Mayor Brenda Chisholm-Beaton, Town of Port Hawkesbury
- Terry Doyle, CAO, Town of Port Hawkesbury
- Chief Terry Paul, Membertou First Nation
- Jennifer Deleskie, Membertou First Nation
- Warden Jackie Organ, Municipality of Victoria County
- Leanne MacEachen, CAO, Municipality of Victoria County
- Chief Norman Bernard, Wagmatcook First Nation
- Donald Hanson, CEO, Wagmatcook First Nation
- Chief John Leonard Bernard, We'koqma'q First Nation
- Gioia Usher, CEO, We'koqma'q First Nation
- Chief Leroy Denny, Eskasoni First Nation
- Steve Parsons, CEO Eskasoni Corporate, Eskasoni First Nation
- Evan Williams, Nova Scotia Department of Growth and Development
- Donald Ferguson, Nova Scotia Department of Labour, Skills & Immigration

## Reporting Period:

Your CB REN team and the Cape Breton Partnership are pleased to share highlights, milestones achieved, and metrics from **October 1 to December 31, 2024**.

## Highlights & Events:

- **Investor Summit 2024** – This year's sold out event brought together over 230 business leaders for a day focused on collaboration and connection. Marking the Cape Breton Partnership's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, current and former leaders Tyler Mattheis, Carla Arsenault, and Keith MacDonald shared insights on the organization's evolution and impact. Inverness County was well represented on the *Big Things, Small Places* panel by Kendall Clancy, General Manager of Cabot Cape Breton. In addition, recipients of this year's *Economic Impact Awards* included Ben Cowan-Dewar of Cabot Cape Breton and Port Hastings-based Celtic Air Services.
- **Invest in Cape Breton Podcast** – Episode six in the podcast series, *An Under Saturated Market for Tourism Investment*, was released on October 1. In this episode, Andre Bourgeois shared details about an investor who recognized the untapped tourism potential in the community of Chéticamp. Kirk Hoppner, the founder of Nautical Lands Group, now has multiple projects on multiple properties in development, including a museum, gastropub, hotel, and housing projects. Robert Bernard also shared details about the work of the Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITEN) on projects such as the Skye River Trail in We'koqma'q, which provides visitors with an immersive experience in Mi'kmaq history and culture. Adam Langley, President and CEO of Superyacht East Coast, rounded out the episode speaking about the potential for Cape Breton to become a marine tourism destination. The podcast series can be found here - [Invest in Cape Breton Podcast Series](#).
- **Welcoming Spirit Awards** – The Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP) presented the inaugural *Welcoming Spirit Awards* at the annual CBLIP Partner Update Event in November. The awards recognize organizations and individuals across Unama'ki – Cape Breton who have made significant contributions in fostering welcoming and inclusive communities for newcomers to Canada. L'Arche Cape Breton received the *2024 Welcoming Spirit Award for an Organization*.
- **Safety in the Strait Lunch & Learn** – This year's event took place in Port Hawkesbury on December 2 and featured updates from event partners NS Labour, Skills and Immigration and the Workers Compensation Board of Nova Scotia, as well as a keynote address from safety leader Calum MacPhee. Attendees also had the opportunity to hear from training providers Construction Safety Nova Scotia, St. John's Ambulance and Maritime Environmental Training Institute (METI).

## Project Updates - Local Economic Development Initiatives:

- **Business and Entrepreneur Supports** – Your EDO and CB REN team members continue to provide customized support for small and medium sized businesses and exploring entrepreneurs across Inverness County. The CB REN team is also available to support and guide individuals considering Inverness County as a place to invest and to do business.
- **Mabou Waterfront Development Project** – A meeting was coordinated, on behalf of the Mabou and District Community Development Association, to allow the association to provide an overview of the proposed waterfront development project to a cross section of organizations and government departments. Meeting participants included representatives from Destination Cape Breton, the Nova

Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network, ACOA, the province and the municipality. The coordination of meetings such as this allow for the sharing of information, resources and recommendations to support the collaborative advancement of economic development projects across the county.

- **Investment Readiness Training** – Your EDO participated in *Empowering Communities for Investment Readiness* training in early December. The session looked at foreign direct investment and the importance of communities and regions being investment ready to capitalize on opportunities and to prepare for sustainable growth through smart investments.
- **Sustainable Tourism Plan** – Your Inverness County EDO Participated in a Community Engagement Session in Chéticamp regarding the development of a sustainable tourism plan for the island. The plan will focus on three goals: preserving and celebrating cultural heritage, protecting the natural environment, and supporting a strong, resilient tourism workforce.
- **Unama'ki – Cape Breton Tourism Summit** – Your Inverness County EDO also attended the 2024 Tourism Summit on November 12 in Membertou. The day included industry updates on partnerships and investments shaping the future of tourism on the island.

### Project Updates – Creative Economy:

- **Hollywood Executives Tour** – The Cape Breton Partnership's Creative Economy Development Officer, Bill Culp, worked with Screen Nova Scotia to coordinate a visit from Hollywood Executives to Cape Breton in October. This year's visit included a helicopter tour along the coastline of the Cabot Trail, golf at Cabot Links, and a hike around Egypt Falls. Familiarization tours such as this promote the island as an attractive location for film and television productions.
- **Cape Breton Reads** – The Creative Economy Development Officer is producing a new TV series, *Cape Breton Reads*, which airs on Telile TV and features authors from around the island. Episode One featured Richard Eagles Sr. author of *Terror in the Highlands*.
- **The ABC's of Oysters TV Series** – Filming of the Bell Fibe TV series *The ABC's of Oysters* continued in October, with The Annex restaurant being one of the filming locations.
- **Sea Class Premiere** – The EDO and Creative Economy Development Officer both attended the screening Cape Breton Film's *Sea Class* at the Inverness County Centre for the Arts in November. The six part series is available on Bell Fibe TV.

### Project Updates – Green Energy Engagement Program:

- **Offshore Wind Community Information Sessions** – A series of information sessions, hosted in partnership with Net Zero Atlantic, took place across the island in November. Unfortunately, two sessions scheduled for Inverness County on December 4 were cancelled due to weather. Information gathered at these sessions is being compiled by the Green Energy Engagement Coordinator, Jennifer MacNeil, and will be shared with decision makers in a second *What We Heard* document. Green Energy Engagement Program details are available on our website here: <https://capebretonpartnership.com/geep>

- **Offshore Wind Research & Development** - The Green Energy Engagement Coordinator was a panelist at a recent Research & Development Forum in Halifax, sharing best practices in social acceptance and community education. The Engagement Coordinator has also developed a directory of businesses and organizations across Unama'ki - Cape Breton that could be connected to a future Offshore Wind supply chain.
- **Electricity Sector Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Team** – The Green Energy Engagement Coordinator continues to participate on this province-wide initiative.

## Project Updates – People and Labour Market Team:

- **Supporting Newcomers, Employers & Community** – The Cape Breton Welcome Network and Cape Breton Connector Program made extensive efforts to establish strong relationships throughout Inverness County last quarter. Some partnership opportunities that arose from this relationship included co-hosting a newcomer welcome event for Dr. Annalee Coakley in collaboration with the Municipality's Healthcare Navigator. *Coffee and Connect* sessions have also taken place in Inverness, Port Hood and Whycomagh in an effort to bring community members together in a casual environment and to share information about programs and services that may be of interest.
- **Welcoming Communities** - The Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP) continued its collaborative work to foster welcoming and inclusive communities for newcomers. The CBLIP's annual partner update event took place in Eskasoni on November 8, bringing together partners engaged in welcoming newcomers across the island. The CBLIP also looks forward to collaborating with the Welcoming Francophone Community initiatives in Chéticamp
- **Cape Breton Job Board** – During this quarter, there were four new job posts from Inverness County organizations and businesses. The Cape Breton Job Board currently has 44 registered Inverness County employers and, in total, approximately 7200 users. [www.CapeBretonJobBoard.com](http://www.CapeBretonJobBoard.com)
- **Work Permit Options for Nova Scotia Employers** – The Cape Breton Partnership and Margaree-based Immigration Lawyer, Jamie Taylor, hosted a virtual event on November 19 to provide an overview of work permit options for employers, including a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA), and LMIA-exempt work permit possibilities.

## Upcoming Events:

- **Information Session for Businesses: GST/HST Holiday Tax Break** – Nova Scotia's Regional Enterprise Networks and the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia are hosting a webinar on January 29 to share details on what businesses should know about the GST/HST tax break and what to do next as businesses prepare to remit GST/HST to the Canada Revenue Agency.  
Register today at [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_UO0gc0w6Shq6LkA8vJPQiA](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UO0gc0w6Shq6LkA8vJPQiA)

- **Inverness County Coffee & Connect** – The next Inverness County *Coffee & Connect* session will take place on January 30 at the Inverness County Centre for the Arts at from 12 noon until 1:45. A cursive writing workshop, facilitated by Lauren Tran, will follow the session. Coffee and Connect is co-produced by the [Connector Program](#) and the [Welcome Network](#), both programs administered by the Cape Breton Partnership.

## Additional Information:



**CB REN Website:** Additional Information on the CB REN can be found on the CB REN 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 Inverness County - 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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Respectfully submitted by:

*Lynne MacLennan*

Lynne MacLennan  
Economic Development Officer - Inverness County  
Cape Breton Partnership

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Mattheis".

Tyler Mattheis  
President and CEO  
Cape Breton Partnership

## Addendum I – CB REN Inverness County Metrics

	Inverness County Metrics (October 1 – December 31, 2024)			Apr 1/24 – Dec 31/24
Activities	Total Started	Total In Progress	Total Completed	YTD Total Completed
<b>Business Support, Sustainability, &amp; Growth</b>	<b>Total - 12</b>	<b>Total - 7</b>	<b>Total - 12</b>	<b>Total - 43</b>
Continuous Improvement & Business Advisory Services	6	3	7	30
Entrepreneurship, Start Up & Business Planning Services	2	2	2	7
Micro-Lending Program	0	1	1	6
Creative Economy	4	1	2	-

<b>Economic Development Projects, Strategic Sector Supports &amp; Investment Attraction Activities</b>	<b>Total - 2</b>	<b>Total - 11</b>	<b>Total - 2</b>	<b>Total - 8</b>
Economic Development Projects	1	9	1	7
Investment & Business Attraction Activities	1	1	1	1

<b>Addressing Talent Needs (Labour &amp; Population)</b>	<b>Total - 3</b>	<b>Total - 11</b>	<b>Total - 5</b>	<b>Total</b>
Immigration Advisory Services	2	3	3	-
Immigration Engagement & Quick Support Files	1	5	2	-
Human Resources Advisory Services	-	3	-	-

### Note on Addendum 1:

- The data provided is sourced from our Insightly CRM software and, at times, CB REN metrics may not be complete due to data availability from all programs and projects at the time of report preparation. Year-to-date data will be adjusted accordingly in subsequent quarterly reports to ensure accuracy.