

Information and Activity Report

Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network – Inverness County

Q4 – 2024/25
(January - March 2025)

Subject: CB REN Information and Activity Report
To: Municipality of Inverness County
Date Prepared: April 15, 2025
Prepared by: Lynne MacLennan, Economic Development Officer, Inverness County

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
- Pearlene Cormier, East Coast Credit Union
- Capt. Vivek Saxena, NSCC Strait Area Campus
- Kelsea MacNeil, Membertou Corporate
- Gioia Usher, 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 **January 1 to March 31, 2025**.

Highlights & Events:

- **GST/HST Tax Break Information Session for Business** – The Cape Breton Partnership, in collaboration Regional Enterprise Networks across the province and the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia, hosted an information webinar on January 29. Local experts shared details on what businesses should know about the GST/HST Holiday Tax Break and what to do next as they prepared to remit GST/HST to the Canada Revenue Agency. The webinar attracted 79 participants and a recorded version was made available to business operators unable to attend.
- **Response to Tariffs** – The Cape Breton Partnership continues to provide information and responses to the Tariffs on Canadian Products by the United States. The latest update can be found here: [Cape Breton Partnership Statement on the US Tariff Response](#).

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.
- **Winning Strategies for Financing Webinar** – Your Economic Development Officer and Lan Zheng, Economic Development Officer for CBRM, were panelists on this *Celebrating Women in Business* webinar hosted by Le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDÉNÉ). Other panelists included Futurpreneur Canada, TD Bank, and CBDC. The Cape Breton Partnership's presentation focused on the Women+ Entrepreneur Micro Loan Program, offered in collaboration with the East Coast Credit Union and the Sydney Credit Union.
- **Women in Business Networking** – Your Economic Development Officer participated in a Women in Business networking event on March 17 in Port Hawkesbury. The well-attended event included several business owners and entrepreneurs from across Inverness County.
- **Unama'ki – Cape Breton Business Insights Program** – The CB REN team has spent the past several months developing this program, which will consist of a series of in depth interviews with businesses across the island. The goal of the program is to gain insights about the current challenges and opportunities facing our business community. The program, which launched April 1, will culminate with a *Unama'ki – Cape Breton Business Insights Annual Report*.

Project Updates – Creative Economy:

- **Futures in Film Information Series** – The *Unama’ki – Cape Breton Futures in Film Information Series* took place from March 25 – 27 in communities across the island. Attendees learned about ways they could fit into the island’s growing film industry. The event featured the Cape Breton Partnership, Screen Nova Scotia, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Arts (ACTRA Maritimes), and more. The information session at the Inverness County Centre for the Arts attracted over 40 Inverness County residents interested learning more about the television and film industry.
- **Futures in Film Program** – The Cape Breton Partnership launched the *Cape Breton Futures in Film* program in February as a way to connect Cape Bretons with the growing film industry. By joining the program, participants will receive access to training, job opportunities, workshops, and networking events.
- **Creative Careers Symposium** – The Creative Economy Development Officer, Bill Culp, continues to collaborate with Nova Scotia Works, Dalbrae Academy, the Municipality of Inverness County and local artists to offer a symposium for Inverness County high school students focused on the wide variety of careers available in the creative sector.

Project Updates – Green Energy Engagement Program:

- **Green Future Summit – Pictou County** - The Green Energy Engagement Coordinator, Jenn MacNeil, participated in a panel discussion about engagement and social acceptance of renewable energy at the *Green Future Summit* on March 31. The Summit’s keynote speaker was Premier Tim Houston, with Nova Scotia Energy Minister Trevor Boudreau participating in a separate panel. Of note, the Summit’s overarching message was workforce readiness for renewable energy, the gaps that exist in Nova Scotia, and the urgency to focus on building our local workforce with the appropriate skills and training.
- **Net Zero Atlantic Ports Study** - The Cape Breton Partnership is involved in Net Zero Atlantic’s *Assessment of Atlantic Canadian Ports to Support Offshore Wind Development*. The kick-off webinar took place this quarter and ports are submitting technical details to the consultant independently to highlight capabilities, identify gaps, and provide conclusions and recommendations related to potential involvement by Atlantic Canadian ports in offshore wind development.
- **Development of Ocean Technical Capacity with African Nations** – The Cape Breton Partnership will act as a partner hub for this group’s *Women and Youth Technical Capacity for the Blue Economy* (WYTEC) program in Unama’ki – Cape Breton. The goal of the program is to identify and assemble a network of local stakeholders in Nova Scotia and West African partnering countries. The work would identify key topics in ocean technology and maritime safety/security that are of common interest in all participating countries, and will prepare women and youth for sustainable livelihoods in the ocean economy space.

Project Updates – People and Labour Market Team:

- **Coffee & Connect** – The Cape Breton Connector Program and the Cape Breton Welcome Network continue to host *Coffee & Connect* sessions in Inverness County in partnership with the Municipality of Inverness County. The sessions provide networking and connection opportunities for both longtime residents and recent newcomers. Recent sessions have taken place in Inverness in January and February and an April session is planned for Cheticamp.
- **Welcoming and Inclusive Communities** – The Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP) continued its collaborative work to foster welcoming and inclusive communities for newcomers. Members engaged in the development of a new *Theory of Change* for the CBLIP. New representatives were welcomed to the CBLIP Council, including Councillor Claude Poirier representing the Municipality of Inverness County. Under the guidance of the CBLIP Mi'kmaq Advisory Committee, the CBLIP also continues to deepen its work to build stronger newcomer-Mi'kmaq relationships.

Upcoming Events and Activities:

- **Unama'ki – Cape Breton Job Fair Series** – The Cape Breton Partnership, in collaboration with Nova Scotia Works offices, and Le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDENE) are hosting a Job Fair series across the island during the month of April, including Cheticamp on April 9.
- **Safety First Symposium** – The Cape Breton Partnership is once again collaborating with the Safety First in Cape Breton Network on the 2025 symposium. The annual event, focused on enhancing and celebrating Unama'ki – Cape Breton's safety culture will take place May 14 at the Membertou Trade & Convention Centre.
- **Mukk Nqa'Itultuk: Community Connections Symposium** – Members of the CB REN team will attend this symposium on May 22 and 23. The event will bring together Economic Development Officers, Indigenous Employment Officers and Industry partners in Nova Scotia to connect, share ideas, and explore the opportunities in procurement, energy, and tourism.

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 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 (January 1 – March 31, 2025)			Apr 1/24 – Mar 31/25
Activities	Total Started	Total In Progress	Total Completed	YTD Total Completed
Business Support, Sustainability, & Growth	Total - 18	Total - 17	Total - 21	Total - 50
Continuous Improvement & Business Advisory Services	6	6	10	36
Entrepreneurship, Start Up & Business Planning Services	11	7	11	8
Micro-Lending Program	1	2	-	6
Creative Economy	-	2	-	-

Economic Development Projects, Strategic Sector Supports & Investment Attraction Activities	Total - 6	Total - 16	Total - 7	Total - 12
Economic Development Projects	5	15	6	11
Investment & Business Attraction Activities	1	1	1	1

Addressing Talent Needs (Labour & Population)	Total - 2	Total - 61	Total - 6	Total - 13
Immigration Advisory Services	-	3	1	10
Immigration Engagement & Quick Support Files	2	14	5	3
HR Advisory Services/CB Job Board	-	44	-	-

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.