

Information and Activity Report

CBRM Regional Enterprise Network

Q3 – FY 2024/25
(October - December 2024)

Subject:CBRM REN Information and Activity Report
To:Cape Breton Regional Municipality
Date Prepared: January 30, 2025
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Background:

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

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

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

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

NOVA SCOTIA



2024/25 CBRM REN Board of Directors

- **Chair:** Ron Blinkhorn - Casino Nova Scotia
- Tracey Boutilier - Vibe Creative Group
- Brad Jacobs - Colbourne Auto Group
- Shaowei Xu - SW East Trading & Consulting
- Howie Doiron - Lindsay Construction
- Darrell Gallant - Marine Atlantic
- Nicole Morrison - Mabel Systems
- Mary Jane Morrison - Cape Breton University

2024/25 CBRM REN Liaison Oversight Committee:

- **Chair:** Steve Gillespie - Councillor, CBRM
- Dave MacKeigan - Councillor, CBRM
- Jennifer Campbell - Chief Financial Officer, CBRM
- Tyson Simms - Director of Planning and Development, CBRM
- Evan Williams - Nova Scotia Department of Growth and 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 **October 1 – December 31, 2024**.

Highlights and Events

- **Charlotte Street Grand Opening: October 18** – Members of the CBRM REN team attended the Grand Opening event on Charlotte Street, alongside elected officials, CBRM staff, Cape Breton Regional Chamber of Commerce staff, Downtown Sydney Development Association staff, and members of the business community.
- **Cape Breton Partnership Investor’s Summit: October 24** – CBRM EDOs attended the Summit to network with the Island’s business community and host a panel titled “Big Things, Small Places”.
- **Etuaptmunk/Two-Eyed Seeing Workshop: October 31** – Members of the CBRM REN team attended this event at CBU to learn more about the two-eyed seeing philosophy.
- **Community Dialogue on Sustainable Futures in Unama’ki – Cape Breton: November 5** – This event, focused on the “just transition” was hosted by KAIROS Canada at the Eltuek Arts Centre in Sydney and offered opportunities to consider the broader impacts of the sustainable future on the environment and community.
- **Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP) Partner Update Event: November 8** – The CBLIP’s annual Partner Update event, hosted this time in Eskasoni, is a chance to connect with newcomer support organizations and community groups about their role in making Unama’ki – Cape Breton accessible to newcomers.
- **Unama’ki – Cape Breton Island Tourism Summit: November 12** – Destination Cape Breton organized this event which offered opportunities to connect with tourism operators, prospective tourism businesses, and industry funding partners.
- **Nova Scotia Offshore Wind Research & Development Conference: November 18** – This conference, hosted in Halifax, brought together industry leaders and sector partners to explore opportunities to maximize Nova Scotia’s impact on the offshore wind sector.
- **Community Connections Welcoming Event: November 25** – This event, hosted by the Cape Breton Welcome Network, aimed to introduce community members to cultural experiences from around the world and was hosted in New Waterford.
- **Lunch & Learn with BDC: November 27** – Hosted in partnership with the Cape Breton Regional Chamber of Commerce at the Port of Sydney, this Lunch & Learn highlighted BDC’s knowledge in employee attraction and retention strategies.
- **Regional Assessment for Offshore Wind – Workshop: December 6** – This workshop, targeting elected officials around Nova Scotia, was hosted virtually by members of the Regional Assessment committee.
- **Coffee & Connect Event, CBRM: December 9** – Part of our Island-wide series of Welcome Network events, this Coffee & Connect was hosted at the new Whale House café in Downtown Sydney.
- **Sustainable Tourism Plan Engagement Session: December 11** – Destination Cape Breton, working with an agency, consulted with industry stakeholders on a sustainable tourism plan for the Island. Sessions were hosted across the Island, including at the Cape Breton Centre for Craft & Design on Charlotte Street in Sydney.

Select Project Updates

Economic Development Project Updates:

- **CBU Session with CBDC: October 11** – The CBRM REN staff, in partnership with Cape Breton University (CBU) delivered a series of workshops to the BMBA students at CBU. The session invited Patricial MacNeil from CBDC to talk about financial options for start-ups and small businesses in Cape Breton.
- **CBU Capstone Project: Louisbourg Waterfront Development** – Worked with a group of CBU students to study waterfront development opportunities for retail and housing in Louisbourg. The group presented the final report on November 25.
- **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 reports were submitted to the project partners in October. A summary and the full reports can be found on the Partnership website:
<https://capebretonpartnership.com/research-report/economic-community-impact-study-cape-breton-eagles-and-centre-200/>
- **CBU Session with Business Navigator**- The CBRM REN staff hosted a session at CBU with Nova Scotia Business Navigators on November 7. Evangeline Chrisovergis from Business Navigators in Nova Scotia introduced their services to the entrepreneur. Twenty MBA students attended the session and gained insights into the various types of support available from the Business Navigator program.
- **Louisbourg Waterfront Development** – A new approach is being taken to waterfront development opportunities in Louisbourg, with a focus on collaborating with community groups and CBRM's Community Development Officer and CBRM Public Works to create a refreshed and programmable public space on the waterfront, with space for vendors and seasonal markets & events.
- **The Whale House**- On December 5, the CBRM REN staff supported the Multicultural Association of Cape Breton (MACB) in opening the Whale House Cafe in Downtown Sydney. The Whale House is a space to support newcomers and for residents to share cultures and celebrate the diverse talents in our communities, the Whale house has a bistro, a market, and a space to hold events and workshops. ¹

Green Energy Sector:

- A second round of **Offshore Wind Community Engagement Sessions**, co-hosted by the Cape Breton Partnership and Net Zero Atlantic, were hosted around the Island. Sessions in the CBRM were held in Sydney, Glace Bay, Louisbourg, and North Sydney on November 13 & 14.
- The Canadian German Chamber of Commerce and Innovation (CGCCI) brought a **delegation of German businesses to Nova Scotia in November** for an educational trip focused on offshore wind and hydrogen. The trip included a 1-day conference program, where local businesses and other parties heard presentations from German businesses and participated in B2B networking with industry leaders. The Green Energy Engagement Program, with support from the CBRM Economic Development Officers, compiled an extensive list of businesses and organizations from across Unama'ki – Cape Breton to participate in the event and/or be a continued part of the conversations around this emerging industry.
- 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

¹ Note that CBRM REN staff are also contributing their own personal volunteer efforts to the Whale House project. 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.

climate adaptation strategies outlined in Nova Scotia's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for Nova Scotia's Electricity Sector.

- The Green Energy Engagement Coordinator was a panelist at the **Net Zero Atlantic OSW R&D Forum** in Halifax on November 18, to share best practices in social acceptance and community education.

Creative Economy Projects and Sector Initiatives:

- **October activities:**
 - Hollywood Exec Tour to targeted filming locations around the Island
 - Starmaker Academy Bell Fibe TV Series filming in CBRM
 - Shipwreck Kings History Channel series filming on location in Louisbourg
 - "Cape Breton Reads" TV Series highlighting local authors
- **November activities:**
 - First Annual CBU Creative Awards
 - NSCC MicroCredential Programs at Sydney Waterfront Campus for creative industry training opportunities
 - Doors Open Annual Museum/Gallery Event Meeting Launch
 - Jeffrey's Turn feature film pre-production
 - Film Rescue and Reel Eats new business ventures starting in CBRM

People and Labour Force Attraction:

- 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 was held in Eskasoni on November 8th, bringing together partners engaged in welcoming newcomers across the island. Visit the event webpage for full details and recording at: <https://welcometocapebreton.ca/new-beginnings/>. Several new members were welcomed to CBLIP working groups, Immigrant Advisory Table, and Council, including new representatives for YMCA NS Works, Immigration Francophone Nouvelle-Écosse (IFNÉ), and the Filipino Association of Cape Breton.
- **Connector Program Updates:**
 - The Connector Program launched the Coffee & Connect networking event at the Whale House as a pilot project. The event was a resounding success and has since become a monthly initiative in Unama'ki - Cape Breton.
 - We attended the CBU Career Fair, supported and hosted the Diwali Gala, which brought together over 200 attendees celebrating one of the biggest event in the Indian calendar.
 - Additionally, the Connector Program Coordinator emceed Hello Cape Breton, a cultural celebration that attracted thousands of locals and newcomers, showcasing talent from across the island.
 - We also mentored students at Challenge Nova Scotia at the NSCC Waterfront Campus and co-organized a Cultural Workshop in New Waterford in partnership with the Cape Breton Regional Library and the Welcome Network. This event featured immersive workshops in Nigerian drumming, a traditional milling frolic, Mexican art, and chai tea making, promoting cross-cultural exchange.
 - The Connector Program spoke in over 10 classrooms at CBU and NSCC. Through these initiatives, the Connector Program continues to bridge gaps, foster meaningful relationships, and support the professional growth of newcomers and local graduates across the island.

- **Immigration Updates:**
 - The Cape Breton Partnership hosted a Work Permit Options for Employers immigration session on October 2 in Sydney.
 - On October 18, the Immigration Engagement Coordinator and the People and Labour Market Immigration Advisor hosted an information session at CBU, outlining the International Graduate Entrepreneur stream of the Provincial Nominee Program to assist prospective grads in navigating immigration pathways that may be available once they have graduated.
 - On November 19, 2024, the Cape Breton Partnership hosted a Work Permit Options for Employers virtual session, where CBRM employers were in attendance.
- **Welcome Network** - Many events were held in partnership with various community organizations, in efforts to strengthen relationships with service providers, and grow the reach of the Welcome Network program to attract more volunteers and increase newcomer awareness. Events in the CBRM included partnering with CBRM Active in support of a community Halloween movie night in October.
- **Cape Breton Job Board** - In Q3, there were 62 new job posts in the CBRM. The *Cape Breton Job Board* currently has 460 organizations in CBRM registered. <https://capebretonjobboard.com/>
 - Also of note, the *Cape Breton Job Board* powers **Destination Cape Breton's "Tourism Job Postings"** page: <https://destinationcapebreton.com/tourism-job-postings/>
- **HR Advisory Services** - The HR Advisor was connected with 1 new CBRM-based business for job description development and recruitment support. The HR Advisor continues to provide guidance to 2 other CBRM-based businesses on an ongoing basis.

Recent and Upcoming Events in Q4:

- **Grand Opening of Village People Coffee Company at The Whale House: January 8** – Baddeck-based coffee roasters Village People have opened a seasonal café in Sydney, at The Whale House.
- **Nova Scotia Cross-Sectoral Housing Summit: January 20** – This event, rescheduled from a fall 2024 date, highlighted opportunities for development and collaboration in the non-profit housing sector, including here in CBRM. Members of the CBRM REN team will be in attendance at Casino Nova Scotia in Halifax.
- **Cape Breton Vital Excellence Awards: January 24** – The Vital Awards, hosted at the Port of Sydney, focused on the next generation of community and business leaders on the Island.
- **Coffee & Connect Event, CBRM: January 28** – The Cape Breton Connector program and Welcome Network will be hosting another Coffee & Connect Event at Whale House in Downtown Sydney, aiming to cultivate a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere for expanding networks among newcomers, local professionals, and community leaders.
- **Construction Association of Nova Scotia Member Mixer: January 30** – CANS hosted this annual event, which focused on building connections between construction sector stakeholders.
- **Net Zero Atlantic Geothermal Energy Workshop: February 25** – Net Zero Atlantic is hosting a workshop at CBU, focused on geothermal energy opportunities in Unama'ki – Cape Breton, particularly in the CBRM due to the region's rich coal mining history.

- **CBU Career Fair: March 6**
- **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 (October 1 – December 31, 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.

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:

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Addendum(s):

- ***CBRM REN Metrics (October 1 – December 31, 2024)***

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Addendum I - CBRM REN Metrics: October 1 - December 31, 2024

	Q3 CBRM Metrics			YTD
	October 1 - December 31, 2024			Since April 1
Activities	Total Started	Total In Progress	Total Completed	Total Completed
Business Support, Sustainability, & Growth	Total: 9	Total: 6	Total: 20	Total: 31
Business Planning & Startup/Entrepreneurship	0	0	0	0
Business Productivity & Growth Services	2	2	2	7
Business Quick Support			1	2
Continuous Improvement & Business Advisory	5	3	13	15
Succession Planning	0	0	5	9
Micro-Lending	1	1	0	4
Creative Economy	3	2	2	3

Economic Development Projects & Strategic Sector Support	Total: 9	Total: 4	Total: 1	Total: 12
Economic Development Projects	9	4	1	12
Sector Analysis (Strengths & Weaknesses)	0	0	0	0

Addressing Talent Needs (Labour & Population)	Total: 67	Total: 173	Total: 63	Total: 232
Human Resources Advisory Services	0	3	0	0
Immigration Advisory	60	80	58	197
Business Immigration Consultancy	7	90	5	35
Retention Activities	Total: 26	Total: 0	Total: 0	Total: 44
New Connectors	5			0
New Connectees	21	0	0	12
Welcome Network - Newcomers Welcomed	0	0		18
Welcome Network - Welcomers/Volunteers	0	0		14

Note on Addendum 1: The data provided is sourced from our Insightly CRM software and, at times, CBRM 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.