
Cape Breton Partnership

Year in Review 2024-2025

24
25



The Cape Breton Partnership is Unama’ki – Cape Breton’s private sector-led economic development organization that supports companies and entrepreneurs by promoting our Island as a great place to live, work, and invest; growing a culture that values and celebrates creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship; and connecting entrepreneurs and companies to the resources they need to succeed.

OUR MISSION

To support the growth of Unama’ki – Cape Breton’s economy through the sustainable attraction and retention of investment, population, and innovation.

OUR VISION

A stronger and more prosperous Unama’ki – Cape Breton that leads the surrounding region into the future.

OUR VALUES

Sustainability

Support the sustainable growth of our communities, population, and economy.

Reconciliation

Be a respectful partner in economic reconciliation, working with local and regional Indigenous partners.

Inclusivity

Work to enable the equitable and inclusive representation of all residents in this region.

Optimism

Be an ambassador of optimistic and open-minded attitudes that seek real-world solutions to real-world problems.

Innovation

Build on Unama’ki – Cape Breton’s innovative past and present to further grow a culture that values creative thought and entrepreneurship.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Grow Strategic Sectors of our Economy

Supporting the growth of Strategic Sectors that are key to Unama’ki – Cape Breton’s economy.

Increase Productivity

Connecting businesses of every size to the supports and resources they need to succeed and thrive.

Support Investment in Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Developing current investments and investors in Unama’ki – Cape Breton and attracting new investment to the region.

Grow our Communities

Growing the region’s communities by promoting Unama’ki – Cape Breton as the best place to live, work, and invest.

Corporate Leadership

Being a regional leader in Economic Development and Organizational Management.



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 our 2024-2025 Year in Review.

Last year marked a significant milestone as we celebrated our 20th year of serving Unama’ki – Cape Breton. While our operations continued smoothly, we also made notable progress as an organization. Two years ago, we launched our Three-Year Strategic Plan, guided by the input of our Board of Directors, Investors, and Partners, aligned with Unama’ki – Cape Breton’s Economic Development & Population Growth Plan and CBRM’s Forward Economic Development Strategy.

The Cape Breton Partnership’s leadership also worked closely with Mi’kmaw Communities and Municipal Partners to establish longer-term agreements, ensuring more seamless economic development support now and into the future.

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

From April 2024 to March 2025, our team welcomed 21 new investors that have committed to investing in our Island’s future, our organization’s vision, and our strategic priorities in building a stronger and more resilient economy for the Island.

Additionally, this year we initiated a strategic efficiency and effectiveness initiative, with support from Charity Coach and Anchored Recruiting & HR Solutions. We understand that a strategic plan is only as successful as its implementation. With fresh insight from our Board, Staff, and Partners, we are excited to accelerate the goals of our plan and bring our vision for a more prosperous Unama’ki – Cape Breton to life.

We look forward to advancing a sustainable and thriving future for Unama’ki – Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, and Atlantic Canada. We are deeply grateful for the collaboration of our valued Investors, Partners, and friends in this shared journey.

Sincerely,

Tyler Mattheis
President & CEO

Brian Purchase
Board Chair

2024-2025 Board of Directors

(As of March 31, 2025)

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 2024-2025 Board of Directors for their outstanding leadership over the past year.

■ **Board Chair**

Brian Purchase, Schwartz Furniture

■ **Vice-Chair**

Dan MacDonald, DMDE Engineering Ltd.

■ **Treasurer**

Alisha Mombourquette, Doane 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	Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC)
Darrell Gallant	Marine Atlantic
Geoff Clarke	Port Hawkesbury Paper LP
Howie Doiron	Lindsay Construction
Jen Ryan	Quincy Street Market
Kelsea MacNeil	Membertou Corporate
Brittany Erickson	Membertou Corporate
Mary Jane Morrison	Cape Breton University
Nicole Morrison	Mabel Systems
Paul Breski	Nova Scotia Power
Pearlene Cormier	East Coast Credit Union
Ron Blinkhorn	Casino Nova Scotia – Sydney
Shaowei Xu	SW East International Trading & Consulting
Gioia Usher	We’koqma’q Corporate
Vivek Saxena	Strait Area Campus, Nova Scotia Community College

■ **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	Business Development Bank of Canada (Co-Chair)
Brittany Erickson	Membertou Corporate
Vivek Saxena	Strait Area Campus, Nova Scotia Community College
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
Shaowei Xu	SW East International Trading & Consulting
Howie Doiron	Lindsay Construction
Darrell Gallant	Marine Atlantic
Ron Blinkhorn	Casino Nova Scotia – Sydney (Chair)
Nicole Morrison	Mabel Systems

■ **2024/2025 Investors (alphabetically):**

As of March 31, 2025, there were 156 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 making an investment in the Cape Breton Partnership, you are investing in 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	FBM	Origin Coast Inc.
21FSP	Flavor by Creative Catering	Parkland, Cape Breton
3C Wealth Partners	Fortress of Louisbourg Association	Parks Canada
Aaron Lee Renovations Ltd.	Friends United	Polysteel Atlantic Ltd. / East Coast Rope Ltd.
Anchored Ideas Ltd.	Futurpreneur	Port Hawkesbury Paper LP
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency	Glencoe Carbonate Corp.	Port Hawkesbury Reporter
Big Spruce Brewing	Golden Touch Accounting Services	Port of Sydney Development Corporation
Boston Pizza Sydney	Grant Thornton	Protocase Inc.
Breton Ability Centre	Greenfoot Energy Solutions	Quincy Street Market
Build Nova Scotia	Group ATN Consulting Inc.	Ramsay’s Honda
Business Development Bank of Canada	Halifax Biomedical	Relaunch Immigration
By the Bay Properties	Harbour Logistic Services	RISE Results
C.S. Boudreau Holdings Inc.	Harbour Royale Development Ltd.	Safety Check Inspections
Cabot Group	Hardwire IT Solutions Inc.	Saltwinds Financial
Cabot Links	Highland Village Museum	Sari Sari Story
Cape Breton Capital Group	Home Instead Senior Care Sydney	Schwartz & Company
Cape Breton Centre for Craft & Design	Hunston Kachafanas CPA	Scotia Logic – IT & Development
Cape Breton Island Building & Construction Trades Council	CEAP	Seaside Wireless Communications Inc. / Rogers Communications
Cape Breton Pest Control	Inverary Resort	SolarBank
Cape Breton Regional Chamber of Commerce	Invest Nova Scotia	St. John’s Ambulance
Cape Breton University	J.A. Douglas McCurdy Sydney Airport	Stantec
Cape Smokey Holdings Inc.	JBW Consulting Inc.	Stingray Group
Casino Nova Scotia	Kim Long & Associates	Storied Places Media
CBBC Career College	Lindsay Construction	Strait Area Chamber of Commerce
CBCL Ltd.	Lobsters ‘R’ Us Seafood	Strait Area Safety Services
Celtic Colours	Louisburg Seafoods	Subway (Pelley Operations Ltd.)
Chandler	Mabou River Inn	SW East International Trading and Consulting Limited
Charlene’s Restaurant	MacLeod Lorway	Sydney Credit Union
Chartered Professionals in Human Resources of Nova Scotia	Marine Atlantic	TapNbe
City Print +	Marine Renewables Canada	TD Canada Trust
Coastal Business CBDC	Maritime Environmental Training Institute	The Chronicle Herald
Colaíside na Gàidhlig / The Gaelic College	Mayflower Mall	The Coast
Colbourne Auto Group	MBS Radio Sydney	The Farmers’ Daughter Country Market
Connors Basics	McInnes Cooper	The Lakes at Ben Eoin Golf Club & Resor
Construction Association of Nova Scotia	McNally Construction	The Savoy Theatre
Construction Safety Nova Scotia	Membertou First Nation	Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia
Copol International Ltd.	Mercer Fuels Ltd.	Trans Atlantic Preforms
Destination Cape Breton	Mulgrave Machine Works Ltd.	Trifos Design Consultants
Devantec	Multicultural Association of Cape Breton	Unique Foodee Ltd.
DMDE Ltd.	Munro Academy	Verschuren Centre
Domtor Energy	NEDAC	Vibe Creative Group
Dora Construction	Net Zero Atlantic	Victoria Co-operative Fisheries Ltd.
Doucet Developments	New Dawn Enterprises	Viewpoint Realty
East Coast Credit Union	Nova Scotia Association of Realtors	VMP Group
Eskasoni Corporate Division	Nova Scotia Community College: Sydney Waterfront Campus	We’koqma’q Corporate
Eskasoni Kitpu Security Ltd.	Nova Scotia Community College: Strait Area Campus	Workers’ Compensation Board of Nova Scotia
Ethical Swag	Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council	YMCA of Cape Breton
EverWind Fuels	Nova Scotia Power	
Export Development Canada	NovaPorte	
Fawn Memories	NovaStream	

■ Diamond Investors

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

- Eskasoni L'nue'kati
- 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

The Cape Breton Partnership Team at the 2024 Investor Summit at the Inverary Resort on Baddeck Bay

■ The Cape Breton Partnership Team

The Cape Breton Partnership team is recognized for its dynamic energy, passion, and commitment to driving progress across the Island.

Our staff brings together a group of skilled professionals specializing in economic development, business growth, administration, immigration and labour market solutions, as well as communications and marketing.

With a collaborative spirit and deep expertise, we're focused on shaping a brighter future for Unama'ki - Cape Breton.



People & Labour Market

■ Human Resources Advisory Services

This past year, the Human Resources (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, selection and hiring. The HR Advisor also manages the Cape Breton Job Board and leads the annual Unama'ki – Cape Breton Job Fair Series.

■ Cape Breton Job Board

The Cape Breton Job Board remains a strong resource for Cape Breton employers and job seekers. 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.

CAPE BRETON JOB BOARD	
Stats	Total
Number of Jobs Posted	457
Number of New Employer Sign-ups	72
Total of Employers (Organizations) Signed up	518
Number of New Job Seekers who Signed up	493
Total Number of Job Seekers Signed up	2,321

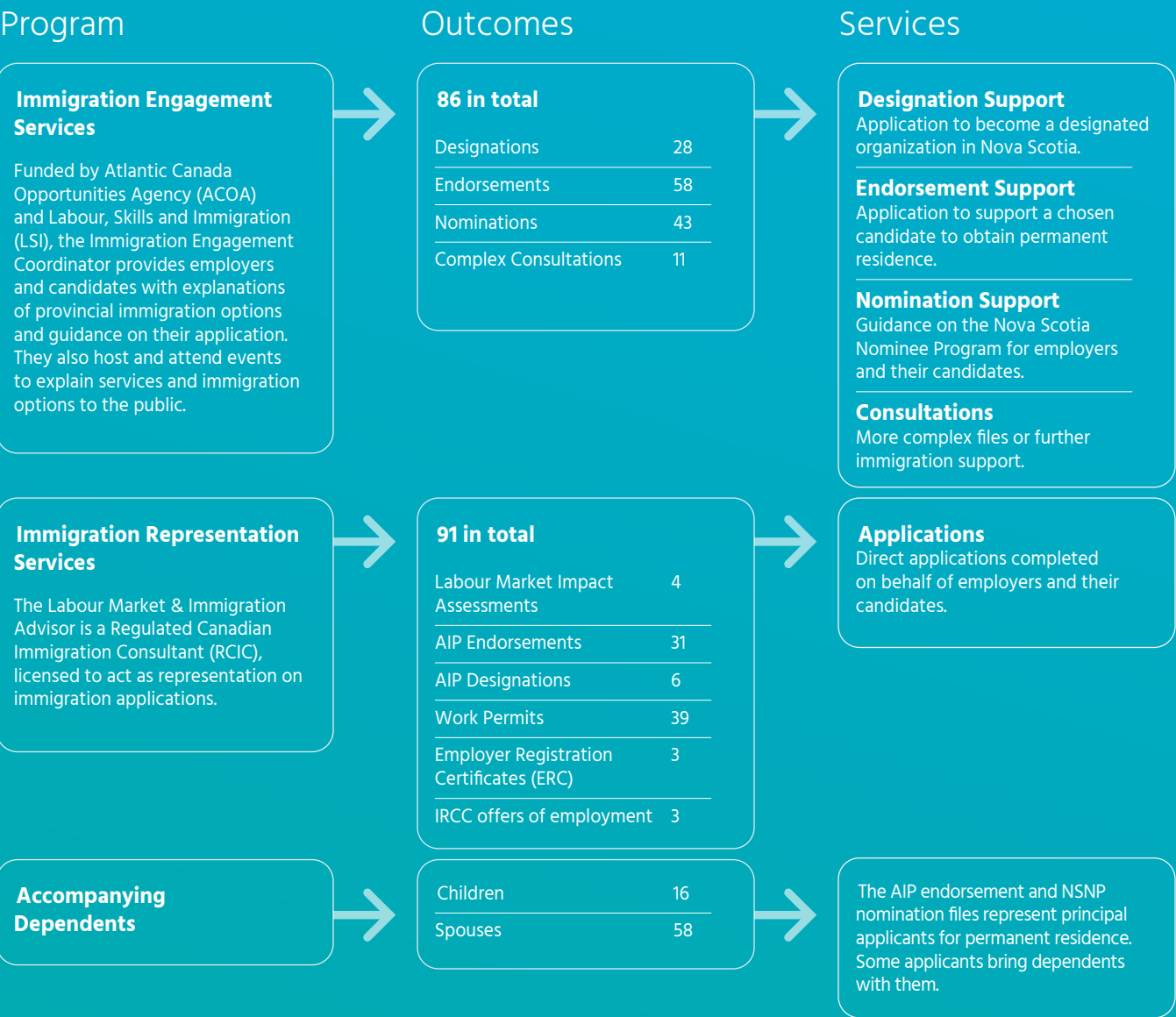
Attracting and Retaining Talent

■ 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. The Cape Breton Partnership also hosts and attends events to explain services and immigration options to the public. In the year 2023-24, the Cape Breton Partnership engaged over 200 employers in the following initiatives:



The Cape Breton Partnership’s Immigration Engagement Coordinator has completed the education and licensing process to become an RCIC, and in the 2025-26 year, the Cape Breton Partnership will expand its immigration service support for employers.



Supporting Immigration & Newcomers

■ Immigration Representation

The Cape Breton Partnerships’ 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 a representative for 12 employers, and has completed 21 Immigration Applications.



■ 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 2024/2025, over eight cohorts were administered, benefiting more than 100 participants.

■ Youth Employment Skills Strategy (YESS) Program

The Youth Employment and Skills Strategy Program, funded by Employment and Social Development Canada, is designed to help youth with a particular focus on underrepresented groups, overcome employment barriers and enhance job readiness. These initiatives collaborate with local resource centres and non-profits to select participants who undergo 6-8 weeks of comprehensive employability skills training. The training covers various topics such as first-aid, résumé writing, and communication skills, followed by a 10-week paid work experience. In September 2024, a new YESS program was launched and aimed to support 60 youth. As of March 31, 2025, nine youth have successfully completed the program.

Breakdown of Applications:

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



■ Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership



The Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP) held its annual partner update event in Eskasoni on November 8, 2024, titled *New Beginnings – Shared Futures*, where more than 100 attendees participated. This was the fifth year for

what has become an anticipated annual event for newcomer-serving organizations on the Island. It is a chance to come together, learn from each other, and explore how to build robust connections and strong referral pathways between local organizations that support newcomers to Canada. The 2024 event included the launch of the Welcoming Spirit Awards, recognizing local community champions for their efforts to foster welcoming communities. This year's winners were Rickey Lanting (Individual Award) and L'Arche Cape Breton (Organizational Award).

CBLIP working groups continued in 2024-2025 to implement activities related to areas of CBLIP focus: housing, awareness, community belonging, employment, and demonstrating impact. With members from across Unama'ki – Cape Breton, the CBLIP Immigrant Advisory Table (IAT) continued to bring their ideas and insights to CBLIP groups, on both strategic and project activity levels.

In 2024, the first CBLIP Mi'kmaw Advisory Committee formed, bringing together Elders and Knowledge Keepers to advise the CBLIP and support the strengthening of newcomer-Mi'kmaw relationships in Unama'ki.

■ The Cape Breton Welcome Network

The Cape Breton Welcome Network focused its efforts this year on restructuring to better support individual volunteers, moving away from a group-based model. This shift allows the Coordinator to tailor opportunities to each volunteer's interests, strengths, and capacity, encouraging more meaningful contributions to welcoming efforts across Unama'ki – Cape Breton through building one-on-one relationships and interactions while still supporting groups activities and efforts as able.



This year also saw a focus on consistent, inclusive programming to help grow the Network and create more opportunities for newcomers and volunteers to connect. In collaboration with the Cape Breton Connector Program, the Coffee & Connect series launched as a casual, friendly networking event held in various locations monthly across the Island—including a recurring session with the Municipality of the County of Inverness.

Another popular initiative was Around the World in One Kitchen, a bi-monthly cultural cooking workshop that celebrates global cuisine and brings people together through food and storytelling.

Most recently, the Cape Breton Welcome Network Buddy Program was launched to pair newcomers with community volunteers for one-on-one connection and support. While still in its early stages, the program holds promise for building friendships and deepening community ties.

Through this renewed structure and engaging programs, the Welcome Network continues to foster a stronger, more inclusive sense of belonging throughout Unama'ki – Cape Breton.

Number of total
active network participants

151

“ The Connector Program welcomed 125+ new Connectees and 30+ new Connectors in 2024/2025 ”



■ Cape Breton Connector Program

CAPE BRETON
CONNECTOR
PROGRAM

This year, the Connector Program strengthened professional networks across Unama'ki – Cape Breton, supporting both newcomers and local graduates. The program onboarded 125+ Connectees and engaged 30+ Industry Connectors, helping to build meaningful connections that support career growth and community integration. The program partnered on major events including TEDx at CBU, job fairs across all counties, and Coffee & Connect sessions Island-wide. It also introduced Networking Through Sports with disc golf and tennis, creating inclusive and informal networking opportunities.

Team members served as hosts and MCs at key community events like Hello Cape Breton, the Mid-Autumn Celebration at CBU, and more. The program was also featured on local radio and in a documentary, amplifying its impact and reach. Thanks to community partners and a growing network of connectors, the program continues to create pathways for talent to thrive in Unama'ki - Cape Breton.

Matches	117
Connectees	121
Connectors	37

Economic Development Initiatives

■ Regional Enterprise Networks

The Cape Breton Partnership is the trusted economic development partner to four Mi'kmaw 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'kmaw Communities of Eskasoni L'nue'kati, Membertou, Wagmatcook Mi'kmaw Nation, and We'koqma'q L'nue'kati; the Municipalities of the Counties of Inverness, Richmond, and Victoria; and the Town of Port Hawkesbury.

The CBRM REN collaborates with the Cape Breton Regional Municipality.

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 launched **Forward. Together., Unama'ki – Cape Breton's first Island-wide Economic Development & Population Growth Plan.** Developed through public engagement, the plan unites the region around six strategic pillars:

People Inclusion Reconciliation

Strong Communities

Entrepreneurship & Business Growth

Innovation

Guided by the Island-wide Growth Network and aligned with local strategies, the Plan is already being adopted by communities across the Island.

 To learn more, visit:
www.CapeBretonPartnership.com/ForwardTogether



■ Business Insights Program



The Unama'ki – Cape Breton Business Insights Program officially launched on April 1, 2025. The Business Insights Program is designed to actively engage with the Island's business community to identify key opportunities, challenges, strengths, and concerns that matter most to local businesses. Its primary goal is to support the viability and growth of existing businesses, an essential step in building a strong and resilient economic environment that not only sustains current businesses but also attracts future investment.

The purpose of the Business Insights Program is to identify and provide assistance with issues businesses face; offer support and resources to help businesses grow and expand; provide information to help attract new business and enable entrepreneurship; and provide insights to inform policy decisions and program planning.

“ The GEEP continues to play a vital role in sharing critical information, supporting informed decision-making, and elevating the voices and values of Unama'ki – Cape Breton ”

The Unama'ki – Cape Breton Business Insights Program will be an ongoing effort, with business interviews conducted year-round across the entire Island, engaging businesses from all sectors. The information collected through the program will be compiled into a Unama'ki – Cape Breton Business Insights Annual Report. This report will guide the development of supports offered by the Cape Breton Partnership, through both the Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality Regional Enterprise Network, and will be shared directly with policy and decision-makers.

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

The Cape Breton Partnership Economic Development team has continued to collaborate with its 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 it 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, 2024 – March 31, 2025

Total Accepted Applications:	14
Total funded amount from both Sydney Credit Union and East Coast Credit union:	\$140,000

■ Green Energy Engagement Program

Over the past year, the Green Energy Engagement Program (GEEP) advanced its community outreach efforts by delivering a second round of Offshore Wind (OSW) Community Information Sessions in partnership with Net Zero Atlantic. Held in November and December 2024, these sessions visited nine communities across Unama'ki – Cape Breton, including Baddeck, Sydney, Glace Bay, North Sydney, Louisbourg, Port Hawkesbury, Arichat, St. Peter's, and Ingonish. This second round built upon initial engagements, with a continued emphasis on two-way dialogue and knowledge sharing through local perspectives as the region prepares for emerging OSW opportunities. A new “What We Heard” report released in May 2025 captured community feedback on topics such as marine habitat and species protection, offshore wind technology, and fisheries co-existence. Many community members participated in discussions about the future of traditional industries, the need for ongoing engagement, and opportunities to participate in the OSW supply chain through local business diversification, innovation, workforce training, and infrastructure planning.

The GEEP continues to play a vital role in sharing critical information, supporting informed decision-making, strengthening relationships with diverse partners, and elevating the voices and values of Unama'ki - Cape Breton.

Since March 2025, the program has extended its efforts through targeted initiatives aimed at building long-term community capacity for the energy transition. These include securing funding for a role dedicated to Mi'kmaw community engagement; exploring follow-up engagement activities with youth, ocean users, and supply chain participants; and enhancing collaboration with regional post-secondary institutions. These ongoing efforts reflect the GEEP's evolving mandate to ensure that Unama'ki – Cape Breton's energy transition is community-led, inclusive, and rooted in the values of sustainability, transparency, and respect.

 For further information and updates, visit
www.CapeBretonPartnership.com/GEEP

GREEN ENERGY
ENGAGEMENT
Program



■ **Welcome to Cape Breton Website:
Invest in Cape Breton**

In 2024 we set out to highlight the key economic sectors in Unama'ki – Cape Breton that are ready for investment and the supports available to help businesses in those sectors. The Invest in Cape Breton section on [WelcomeToCapeBreton.ca](https://www.WelcomeToCapeBreton.ca) is a hub of information about investment opportunities on the Island. A number of pages were updated and created under the Invest section for each of these key sectors – these pages include an overview of the sector, relevant industry facts, the competitive advantage that Unama'ki - Cape Breton offers in the sector, an overview of the investment opportunities to fill needed gaps, and a list of key resources from government, industry organizations, and more that are relevant to each sector.

Sectors now actively being promoted through the Invest in Cape Breton section include: Agriculture, Farming, & Food Processing; Real Estate & Development; Creative, Arts, & Culture; Fisheries, Ocean, & Aquaculture; Technology & Innovation; Tourism; Green Energy; and Retail.

 All of these investment profiles can be found by visiting: www.WelcomeToCapeBreton.ca/Invest

■ **Ocean Innovation Centre**

The Ocean Innovation Centre, located in the Town of Port Hawkesbury, saw increased activity in 2024, hosting a variety of meetings and events that highlighted its potential as a collaboration hub. A marketing webpage has been developed to further promote the space and its potential and will soon be updated to actively promote the space to the local Strait Area business community.

■ **CB REN Mi'kmaw Community Projects**

The CB REN proudly partners with local Mi'kmaw Community Partners across Unama'ki – Cape Breton to collaborate and support projects identified as priorities with community leaders. Economic development projects initiated by CB REN Mi'kmaw Community Partners in 2024 and 2025 included the expansion of the Goat Island Indigenous tourism experience in Eskasoni L'nue'kati and sustainable tourism community development projects led by Wagmatcook Mi'kmaw Nation including visual improvements, website development, photography, and business case development for the expansion of community businesses.

■ **www.TheStraitOfCanso.ca
Strait of Canso Investment Attraction Website**

The Strait Area Working Group, a collaboration between the Cape Breton Partnership, the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), Invest Nova Scotia, the Guysborough District Business Partnership, and the CB REN, continues to advance the development and promotion of the Strait of Canso as a premier deep-water, ice-free port on the east coast of North America.

TheStraitOfCanso.ca economic development website showcases the Strait Region as a strategic hub for industrial growth and investment by promoting key sectors, infrastructure, and opportunities. Phase one of the site has been completed with ongoing enhancements, including Google Translate integration, updated imagery, and resource links. Planning for Phase two is underway, with an interactive port asset map set to launch in summer 2025.

 Learn more at www.TheStraitOfCanso.ca

“The Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network proudly partners with local Mi'kmaw Community Partners across Unama'ki – Cape Breton to collaborate and support projects identified as priorities with community leaders”



■ CBRM Economic Development Promotion and Investment Attraction

Through the CBRM Regional Enterprise Network, the Cape Breton Partnership supports and partners with the CBRM, the Nova Scotia Department of Growth & Development and other local businesses and organizations like the Port of Sydney Development Corporation and YQY Sydney Airport in efforts to promote the region's economic development opportunities locally and globally. This work includes promoting opportunities for land in the Northside Business Park and throughout the CBRM, supply chain development in emerging industries such as offshore wind, promoting the CBRM's Fast-Track Housing Design Initiative, completing an economic impact study focused on Centre 200 and the Cape Breton Eagles, supporting applicants of the Community Solar Program, and more.

■ Invest in Cape Breton Podcast

The Invest in Cape Breton is a podcast that challenges assumptions about the Island's economy through in-depth interviews with local changemakers. We go beyond the headlines to reveal the untapped potential for investors and entrepreneurs, and offer a preview of the Island's coming transformation.

Three new episodes of the Invest in Cape Breton podcast were released this year, each tackling key topics shaping the region's economy. One episode examined how embracing Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) can help address workforce shortages by attracting talent from underrepresented communities. Another focused on a tourism investment case study in Chéticamp, highlighting the rise of marine tourism and the growth of Mi'kmaq-led ventures. A third episode delved into the challenges and opportunities in seafood exports, including the impact of tariffs on local processors. Now in its second year, the podcast continues to grow, ranking in the top 50% of all podcasts globally.

 Listen here:
www.WelcomeToCapeBreton.ca/invest/invest-podcast

■ Supporting the Creative Economy

In 2024, Unama'ki –Cape Breton saw significant growth across its creative, cultural, and film industries. The first annual CBU Creative Arts Awards, focused on celebrating CBU's 50th anniversary, brought together an Island-wide guest list and recognized artistic contributions with six awards presented. The Cape Breton Partnership served as a planning partner on the event, which will return for its second year on November 6, 2025. Following the July 2nd launch of the provincial Distant Location Incentive, Unama'ki - Cape Breton hosted major productions including Death Coast, Little Lorraine, Starmaker Academy (starring Bette MacDonald), and the award-nominated Sea Class.

In October, the Cape Breton Partnership co-hosted the Screen Nova Scotia Hollywood Tour, offering a curated experience for producers and decision-makers featuring helicopter rides, golf, and culinary showcases across the Cabot Trail. Support for the creative sector continued with Theatre Baddeck's move to the larger Greenwood United Church, enabling year-round programming; the launch of the Richmond Artists Alliance to support local makers; and a partnership between CBU and Sound Communities Inc. that enables Cape Breton musicians, including Sons of Membertou, to distribute music globally through the Smithsonian Folkways label.

■ Futures in Film Program

As part of its commitment to creative industry development, the Cape Breton Partnership launched the Futures in Film Program to help build local careers in the Island's growing film and television sector. With more than 335 participants registered, the program offers hands-on training, workshops, and networking opportunities that connect emerging and experienced talent to job opportunities in areas such as production, set design, camera operation, and audio. Designed to remove barriers and promote access, the program gives Cape Bretoners the tools and connections needed to enter and thrive in the film industry. To raise awareness and generate momentum, a three-day roadshow was held in March 2025, with stops in Inverness, St. Ann's, Sydney, and Isle Madame, featuring industry exhibitors, presentations, and equipment demonstrations.

 To learn more or sign up, visit:
www.CapeBretonPartnership.com/initiatives-services/FuturesInFilm



“With more than 335 participants registered, the Futures in Film Program offers hands-on training, workshops, and networking opportunities that connect emerging and experienced talent to job opportunities in areas such as production, set design, camera operation, and audio.”

International Investment Attraction and Relationship Building

■ MIPIM 2025 – The Global Urban Festival

The Cape Breton Partnership was proud once again 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 leading real estate market event, in Cannes, France.

The 2025 event saw an expanded Team Canada booth, with partners joining from the Halifax Partnership as well as economic development staff from Winnipeg and rural Manitoba. The event annually attracts over 20,000 representatives from large investors, developers, real estate, economic development, and government representatives for countries, cities, and municipalities across the globe. The theme for 2025 recognized a global focus of “Housing Matters”, exploring housing crises experienced across the world and the unique challenges and solutions being developed.

The Cape Breton Partnership was proud to promote regions throughout Unama’ki – Cape Breton to this global audience, exploring how their next development can benefit from the competitive advantages our Island has to offer. Along with region-specific information packets and Unama’ki – Cape Breton branded materials, several local products were also collected and shared with attendees.

■ World Hydrogen 2025

The Cape Breton Partnership attended the World Hydrogen Summit 2025 to work with other local partners to showcase Unama’ki – Cape Breton specifically and Nova Scotia more broadly as a region poised to take a leading role in clean energy production, port connectivity, domestic use of clean fuels, and export of energy to the world. In addition, the team was able to take in knowledge of this growing industry, and came home with the key themes and insights, illustrated on the next page.

Trevor Boudreau, Minister of Energy and MLA - Richmond, Province of Nova Scotia, Kash Chadha, an Exhibitor at the conference, and Tyler Mattheis, President & CEO, Cape Breton Partnership.



1. Hydrogen Goes Mainstream

Hydrogen is no longer niche. Countries and ports like Rotterdam, Antwerp-Bruges, and Lüderitz are shifting from vision to implementation, targeting 2030–2050 goals.

2. Port-Centric Hydrogen Ecosystems

Rotterdam’s 100+ hydrogen projects highlight how ports act as anchors for hydrogen hubs. Cape Breton Island’s port regions (Sydney, Strait of Canso) could follow this model to establish export infrastructure.

3. Atlantic Canada’s Global Emergence

Nova Scotia’s 4.8 GW wind potential and multiple hydrogen export projects position the province—and Cape Breton Island—as major players in transatlantic hydrogen trade.

4. Infrastructure Gaps = Opportunity

Infrastructure remains the primary barrier. Cape Breton Island can proactively pursue investments in storage, pipelines, and port-readiness.

5. Workforce Development Urgency

The global talent race is on. The Island can lead the way by launching hydrogen-focused training programs in collaboration with CBU, NSCC, and other industry players.

6. Anchor Projects & Industrial Clusters

Projects succeed faster when clustered. The Island should position the Strait of Canso as a hydrogen anchor hub through land development and investor readiness.

7. Inclusive & Global Partnerships

Lessons from regions like Namibia stress the value of local engagement and international collaboration, including Indigenous and youth inclusion.



Events: Connecting Businesses with Learning, Networking, and Workforce Solutions

■ 2024 Unama’ki – Cape Breton Job Fair Series

Co-hosted by the Cape Breton Partnership, YMCA of Cape Breton Nova Scotia Works Employment Services Centre, Northside Employment & Resource Centre, and Le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle Écosse, this series connects local job seekers with a wide range of employers across Unama’ki – Cape Breton. Job Fairs were held in Inverness, Port Hawkesbury, D’Escousse and Sydney, bringing together over 250 job seekers and 75 employers.

■ 2024 Safety First in Cape Breton Symposium

Led by the Cape Breton Partnership, the Safety First in Cape Breton Network hosted the 2024 Safety First Symposium on Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at the Membertou Trade & Convention Centre. This full-day welcomed more than 230 health and safety professionals, leaders and those who are dedicated to improving workplace safety across Unama’ki – Cape Breton. Attendees heard an impactful keynote from leadership disrupter Phil Jewell, who delivered bold insights on fostering psychological safety and resilience in the workplace.



The symposium also featured a moving panel discussion, including an injured worker’s lived-experience story that emphasized resilience and successful return-to-work strategies. Participants engaged and networked with peers and vendors at the trade show, and gained tangible takeaways from each interactive segment—all reinforcing the region’s commitment to a stronger safety culture.

 To learn more about the work of the Safety First in Cape Breton Network, visit: www.CapeBretonPartnership.com/initiatives-services/safety-first-in-cape-breton

■ Offshore Wind Community Information Sessions

The Cape Breton Partnership and Net Zero Atlantic led a series of nine community information sessions across Unama’ki - Cape Breton in November 2025. These sessions provided objective information on offshore wind technology, co-existence of ocean users, the environmental, social, and economic impacts; along with updates on the development of Nova Scotia’s regulatory framework. Communities provided feedback, which was compiled into a *“What We Heard”* report that was then shared with communities and decision-makers responsible for creating policy and regulations for the emerging OSW industry. This series, attracting over 150 attendees, was part of the Green Energy Engagement Program, an initiative of the Cape Breton Partnership that aims to build capacity and knowledge-sharing regarding green energy.

 To learn more visit, www.CapeBretonPartnership.com/GEEP

■ Coffee & Connect Series

Coffee & Connect is a welcoming, informal networking series organized by the Cape Breton Connector Program, the Cape Breton Welcome Network and its partners. From November 2024 to February 2025, the Cape Breton Connector Program hosted its Coffee & Connect networking series in Whycocomagh, Baddeck, Arichat, Sydney, Inverness, and the Town of Port Hawkesbury.

Held in local cafés and community spaces, the events offered newcomers, volunteers, and professionals a welcoming space to build connections over free coffee and refreshments, with some sessions featuring workshops—such as a cursive writing workshop in Inverness. These events have been so successful that the Cape Breton Partnership team has been encouraged to continue to host them into 2025 and 2026!

■ Safety in the Strait

Safety in the Strait was held in early December 2024 in the Town of Port Hawkesbury. The event, attracting over 60 attendees, was a lunch-and-learn event focused on enhancing workplace safety in the Strait Area. Hosted by the Cape Breton Partnership and Safety First in Cape Breton Network, the event featured updates from WCB Nova Scotia and Labour, Skills & Immigration, a keynote on building strong safety cultures by Calum MacPhee, and a panel of safety training providers. The session provided networking and practical insights for businesses and safety professionals.





2024 Investor Summit

In October 2024, the Cape Breton Partnership hosted its annual Investor Summit at the Inverary Resort in Baddeck, presented by Nova Scotia Power, celebrating the Cape Breton Partnership's 20th anniversary. The event brought together over 200 leaders from business, government, and the community to discuss economic opportunities and celebrate successes and efforts over the past year.

To celebrate this significant milestone, the event was kicked off with a leadership-focused panel discussion between the three individuals who have represented the Cape Breton Partnership's leadership since 2004: Keith MacDonald (now the CAO of the Municipality of the County of Inverness), Carla Arsenault (now the Principal of NSCC: Sydney Waterfront Campus), and Tyler Mattheis (current President & CEO of the Cape Breton Partnership). Attendees also heard insights and experiences from several local business leaders from every corner of the Island representing several industries in engaging panel discussions and a once-in-a-lifetime fireside keynote chat between Arlene Dickinson and Kelsea MacNeil of the Cape Breton Partnership Board of Directors.

The evening concluded with a Gala Dinner with evening keynote address from Chief Terry Paul of Membertou and presentation of the 2024 Economic Impact Awards, recognizing individuals making a significant impact on the Unama'ki – Cape Breton economy.

2024 Economic Impact Awards

The Economic Impact Awards annually recognize individuals and organizations from multiple industries for their outstanding contributions to the economy. Award recipients are chosen based on their significant contribution to the Unama'ki – Cape Breton economy through innovation, entrepreneurship, and new investments.

The recipients of the 2024 Economic Impact Awards include:

Ben Cowan-Dewar of Cabot Cape Breton

The Verschuren Centre

Kiknu Long Term Care

Celtic Air Services

Chief Terry Paul of Membertou

Colleen Wheeliker of the Cape Breton Partnership, in recognition of long-standing service to the Cape Breton Partnership and the Island's economy



Cape Breton Futures in Film Information Series

The Cape Breton Futures in Film Series through Unama'ki – Cape Breton Creates (March 25–27, 2025) included sessions in Inverness, St. Ann's, Sydney, and Isle Madame, connecting locals with careers in film and television. Over 250 attendees met industry representatives and explored behind-the-scenes roles, with guidance from unions and guilds like IATSE, ACTRA, the Directors Guild of Canada, and Screen Nova Scotia on how to get started in Unama'ki – Cape Breton's growing film and television sector.

Connecting our Island's Business Community

The Cape Breton Partnership, through the CB REN and CBRM REN, regularly hosts learning-focused events across the Island that connect the local business community with experiences, skills, and insights from subject matter experts on important topics as identified and suggested by the community. These include Business & Breakfasts, Lunch & Learns, workshops, seminars, webinars, and more. These activities bring businesses and resources together for panel discussions, question and answers periods, presentations, and networking sessions, as a platform to facilitate ongoing connections that support communities and address gaps.



The following sessions were hosted or co-hosted by the Cape Breton Partnership with the help of many valued partners during the past year and attracted over 750 attendees:

Kick-Off to 2024 Tourism Training (April 2025) in St. Ann's, Inverness, Port Hawkesbury, and Membertou

Procurement Information Session (May 2024) in Sydney

Impact of Transportation Town Hall (May 2024) in Sydney

Business Networking Socials with the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce (August 2024) in Port Hawkesbury, St. Peter's, and Inverness

Business Social with YQY Sydney Airport (August 2024) in Sydney

Supporting Newcomers, Employers & Community Information Sessions (September 2024) in Chéticamp, Port Hood, Glace Bay, Cleveland, and Ingonish

Work Permit Options for Employers Lunch & Learn (September and November 2024) in Port Hawkesbury & Sydney

Labour Solutions in the Hospitality Industry Business & Breakfast (September 2024) in Iona.

Newcomer Meet & Greet and Welcoming Reception (October 2024) in Inverness

Lunch & Learn with BDC and the Cape Breton Regional Chamber of Commerce (November 2024) in Sydney

GST/HST Holiday Tax Break for Businesses (January 2025) Online Webinar

Resume Writing Workshop (January 2025) Online Webinar

Weather & Emergency Preparedness for Newcomers (January 2025) Online Webinar

Immigration Information Sessions (February 2025) in Sydney

Activate Richmond – Food Industry Networking Event (February 2025) in Louisdale



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