

# Information and Activity Report

*Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network – Inverness County*

Q2 – 2025/26  
(July – September 2025)

**Subject:** CB REN Information and Activity Report

**To:** Municipality of Inverness County

**Date Prepared:** October 9, 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.

## 2025/26 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
- Jennifer Deleskie, Membertou Corporate
- Gioia Usher, We'koqma'q Corporate

## 2025/26 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 **July 1 to September 30, 2025**.

## Board and LOC Meetings:

- **2025 AGM** – The CB REN held its annual AGM virtually on August 18<sup>th</sup>.
- **Board Meetings**
  - Last Board Meeting: July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 (Virtual and Strait Superport, Mulgrave)
  - Next Board Meeting: October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 (Virtual and Inverary Inn, Baddeck)
- **LOC Meetings**
  - Last LOC Meeting: April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (Virtual and Fox Harb’r)
  - Next LOC Meeting: November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (Location TBD)

## Highlights & Events:

- **Partner Day Event** – The Cape Breton Partnership hosted the 2025 Partner Day event at Inverness County’s Glenora Inn and Distillery in July. The session included updates from Partnership staff on a number of programs and initiatives. The day also offered our partners an opportunity to meet with members of the Board of Directors and staff. Partners attending this year’s event included the Municipality of Inverness County, Invest Nova Scotia, Centre for Entrepreneurship Education & Development (CEED), Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDÉNÉ), Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA).
- **Welcoming Spirit Awards** – Nominations are now open for the 2025 awards, which celebrate individuals and organizations for their contributions to fostering welcoming and inclusive communities for newcomers. Individuals who were born outside of Canada and now call Unama’ki – Cape Breton home are encouraged to nominate someone who helped them navigate local systems, offered support or guidance, invited them to community events, and showed kindness when it mattered most.

## Project Updates - Local Economic Development Initiatives:

- **Unama’ki – Cape Breton Business Insights Program** – Business Insights interviews are continuing to take place throughout Inverness County. The Business Insights Program will help the Cape Breton Partnership identify key opportunities, challenges, strengths, and concerns that matter most to our local business community. Information collected through the program will be compiled in the *Unama’ki – Cape Breton Business Insights Annual Report*. This report will guide the development of programs and supports offered by the Cape Breton Partnership and will be shared directly with policy and decision-makers.
- **Development Supports and Studies** – Your Economic Development Officer and Cape Breton Partnership team members continue to work on projects supporting economic growth throughout Inverness County, as well as promoting investment and development opportunities. A ***Municipal Planning & Development Guide*** is nearing completion and, once finalized, the document will be made available to developers and

builders seeking information on municipal processes, land use regulations, and development opportunities in Inverness County.

- **Business and Entrepreneur Supports** – Your Economic Development Officer and CB REN team members continue to provide customized and individualized support and advice to 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.

## Project Updates – Creative Economy:

- **Cape Breton Film Industry** – Creative Economy Development Officer, Bill Culp, is providing on-going support for workforce, locations, accommodations, and business services for two feature films and one television series with a combined production spending of \$18 million. Potential locations for upcoming 2026 productions are being explored throughout the island, including Inverness County.
- **Little Lorraine Film** – The Creative Economy Development Officer supported the highly successful *Little Lorraine* world film premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in early September, as well as at the Atlantic International Film Festival in Halifax. Notably for Inverness County, the final dramatic scene of *Little Lorraine* was filmed in Chéticamp.
- **Cape Breton Comedy Festival** – The Creative Economy Development Officer provided support to the third annual comedy festival, including the sold-out *Margaree Mic Drop*, which took place at the Margaree Forks Firefighters Club and was presented by the Dancing Goat Café & Bakery.
- **Inverness County Centre for the Arts** – Bill Culp is providing on-going support to the Inverness County Centre for the Arts, including the prospect of a Film Festival event in 2026.
- **Cape Breton Creative Arts Awards** – The Creative Economy Development Officer is working with Cape Breton University on the Unama’ki – Cape Breton *Creative Arts Awards*, which will take place on November 6 at the university’s Boardmore Playhouse. The initiative will spotlight individuals and organizations throughout the island whose work has significantly enriched the region’s creative arts sector.

## Project Updates – Green Energy Engagement Program:

- **Energy Conversations and Collaborations** – The Green Energy Engagement Coordinator participated in a *Community of Practice* session with the Nova Scotia Department of Energy, Net Zero Atlantic, COVE, Discovery Centre, Atlantica Centre for Energy, and Skills Nova Scotia. Participants discussed engagement efforts related to Nova Scotia’s energy transition. Jenn MacNeil also assisted with planning efforts for the *Clean Energy Conversations* in communities across Unama’ki – Cape Breton, including an event in Port Hood on September 16.
- **Indigenous Energy Engagement** – The Cape Breton Partnership’s e Indigenous Engagement Intern, Kelly Paul, is focused on outreach to Mi’kmaq communities related to Nova Scotia’s energy transition. Conversations are taking place about equitable and accessible participation in the transition process

specifically related to information sharing, training and skills development, as well as supply chain opportunities.

- **Women and Youth Technical Capacity for the Blue Economy (WYTEC Blue)** – The Green Energy Coordinator has been providing extensive support to this program which is a free, 10-week training program for women and youth. Participants from across Nova Scotia, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria will learn about different marine sectors and future opportunities from experts in the field, both locally and abroad.
- **Nova Scotia Offshore Wind** – The Cape Breton Partnership attended the 2025 Offshore Wind Research & Development Forum hosted by the Nova Scotia Department of Energy and Net Zero Atlantic. The forum brought together researchers, innovators, Indigenous and community leaders, policymakers, and industry professionals to align research with practical, technical, and regulatory needs for Nova Scotia’s offshore wind development.

## Project Updates – People and Labour Market Team

- **Inverness County Healthcare Professionals Welcome Event** – The Cape Breton Welcome Network participated in a dinner hosted by the Municipality of Inverness County to welcome healthcare professionals and their families. Welcome Network staff shared information about community resources and services.
- **Coffee & Connect** – The Cape Breton Connector Program and the Cape Breton Welcome Network continue to host regular 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, as well as local employers. Sessions recently took place at the Inverness County Centre for the Arts and the Mi-Carême Centre in Grand Étang.
- **In Focus: Newcomer Experiences in Unama’ki – Cape Breton** – This photo project by the Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP) shares personal stories of newcomers through photographs of places, objects, or moments significant to their life on the island. The project aims to celebrate diversity, foster community understanding, and offer a window into the newcomer journey, with a virtual gallery and physical exhibits.

## Upcoming Events and Activities:

- **Investor Summit 2025** – The Cape Breton Partnership’s Investor Summit will take place on Thursday, October 23, at the Inverary Inn on Baddeck Bay. The Investor Summit offers a full day of presentations, updates from local and emerging businesses, and valuable opportunities to connect with key business and community leaders from across the Island. The Inverness County business community will be well represented on discussion panels taking place throughout the day. The event will also include a **networking cruise** the day before, and the presentation of the **2025 Economic Impact Awards**.
- **Cape Breton Partnership AGM** – the Cape Breton Partnership’s annual AGM is planned to be held on October 22<sup>nd</sup> (the days before the Investor Summit) where the new board of the CB REN will be finalized for 2025/26, and the regular business of the AGM conducted.

## 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/>

**Want news in your inbox? Subscribe to Pulse!** <https://capebretonpartnership.us14.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=5a27bb58874a3faa869009652&id=aaae9f5ca0>

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

Activities	Q1 Metrics Q2 July 1st - September 30th, 2025		YTD Since April 1st
	In Progress	Completed	Total Completed
<b>Business Support, Sustainability, &amp; Growth</b>	<b>Total: 16</b>	<b>Total: 20</b>	<b>Total: 37</b>
Business Insights Interviews		2	5
Business Advisory & Continuous Improvement Services	2	3	4
Business Quick Support		3	9
Succession Planning & Support	1	0	0
New Businesses & Entrepreneurs Support	7	8	10
Microloan Participants	1	2	2
Other Business Support Services	5	2	7

<b>Major Projects &amp; Strategic Sector Support</b>	<b>Total: 14</b>	<b>Total: 5</b>	<b>Total: 5</b>
Sector Development Projects	3	0	0
Economic Development Projects	11	5	5

<b>Addressing Talent Needs (Labour &amp; Population)</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>Total: 12</b>
Projects Assessing Local Labour Market			
Cape Breton Job Board Advertisements			6
Immigration Advisory Services			2
Immigration Applications Submitted			
Business Immigration Quick Support			4

<b>Newcomer &amp; Talent Retention Programs</b>	<b>Total: 2</b>	<b>Total: 9</b>	<b>Total: 173</b>
Connector Program Matches	1	3	5
Newcomers Welcomed Through the Welcome Network	1	6	9
Local Immigration Partnership Members		0	145
Events Aimed at Talent Attraction & Retention		0	14
Other Activities Addressing Talent Needs	-	-	-

- Notes 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.*

*The Cape Breton Partnership is working to continuously improve its ability to measure and report its impact, as well as increase its productivity for the benefit of all our partners. To that end, in 2026 we plan to shift from Insightly to another provider. Ideally, there will be little change seen in reports such as this, however we believe this will improve accuracy and improve efficiency.*