

# Information and Activity Report

*Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network – Victoria  
County*

Q4 – FY 2024/25  
(January – March 2025)

**Subject:** CBREN Information and Activity Report  
**To:** Municipality of the County of Victoria  
**Date Prepared:** May 23rd, 2025  
**Prepared by:** Parker Horton, Economic Development Officer, Victoria County

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## Background:

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



The Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network (CBREN) 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 CBREN is part of a larger network of Regional Enterprise Networks across Nova Scotia.

The Cape Breton Partnership maximizes the value of the CBREN'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 Victoria.

## 2024/25 CB REN Board

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

## 2024/25 CB REN Liaison Oversight Committee:

- **Chair** - Keith MacDonald, CAO, Municipality of the County of Inverness
- Warden Bonny Maclsaac, 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 **1 January – 31, March, 2025**.

## Highlights & Events

- **GST/HST Tax Break Information Session for Business** – The Cape Breton Partnership, in collaboration with 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](#).

## Economic Development Officer

- Provided close support to Theatre Bedeck in relation to their ongoing expansion and development plans.
- Coordinated business planning advisory support and continue to provide direct assistance to Àros na Mara as they advance their feasibility study for a marine research station development in Iona.
- Continue to provide direct support to Lillianah Technologies, a carbon removal company establishing their base of operations in Iona. This initiative holds significant potential for long-term employment and regional economic opportunities. I have assisted with community engagement efforts, including outreach to local First Nations and residents, and facilitated connections to leverage local support and services during the development of their operational base.
- Provided direct support to several new business startups, offering tailored business advisory services to help guide their development and growth.
- Assisted one local business in successfully navigating the Micro-Loan Program to support their expansion into a new food truck operation.
- Facilitated and finalized the launch of the Victoria County Tourism Extension Program — the first of its kind in Nova Scotia — which will provide grant funding to incentivize businesses to expand their service offerings beyond the traditional tourism season, creating year-round economic opportunities

## 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, the Baddeck Theatre, the Municipality of Victoria 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.
- Presented to municipal council on a status update of the creative economy and proposed a pathway forward for the municipality to enhance their regional asset database for attracting film industry opportunities in Victoria County.

## 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.

## People and Labour Market Team:

# People & Labour Market Team

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## Cape Breton Connector Program

In Q4, the Connector Program welcomed 1 new Connectee in Victoria County this quarter.

### *Community Engagement*

We **piloted a Coffee & Connect networking session at Bean There Café**, which received overwhelming positive feedback. This successful pilot contributed to the formal establishment of **Coffee & Connect as a monthly event across Unama'ki-Cape Breton**, creating sustainable opportunities for meaningful networking and cultural connection. Through initiatives like this, the Connector Program continues to build bridges, foster professional growth, and enhance newcomer integration across the region.



## Immigration Advisory Services

The Cape Breton Partnership continues to support employers and newcomers through both *Immigration Advisory* and *Immigration Representation* services.



### *Advisory vs. Representation*

Both of our staff dedicated to immigration provide Advisory services. Kelly MacKinnon, a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC), can also act as the legal immigration representative for employers – submitting applications and communicating directly with government partners on their behalf. This added level of support reduces the administrative burden for employers seeking to strengthen and retain their work force.

Dani Mombourquette successfully completed the Entry-to-Practice licensing exam on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and is expecting to become licensed as an RCIC in the coming fiscal year.

### *Immigration Metrics, at end of Q4*

- 5 individuals received immigration quick support.
- 25 active immigration advisory files were in progress at year-end.

### *Community Engagement*

The team was also active in community and employer engagement, delivering sessions to raise awareness about provincial pathways to permanent residency:

- Participated in a Services Fair and Career Fair at CBU, reaching approximately 900 students and 70 employers/service providers. While this is not a Victoria County event, international students choose to settle

and live in all areas of Unama’ki-Cape Breton, and retention and promotion of communities and immigration pathways is integral to their success.



### Cape Breton Welcome Network

The Coordinator attended an **ARAISA professional development session** in New Brunswick focused on supporting **LGBTQ+ newcomers**, and promoted the Welcome Network through **Coastal Radio**, reaching new audiences and potential volunteers across Unama’ki. Ongoing collaboration with other Welcome Networks across the province ensures the continued exchange of best practices and resources.

#### *Buddy Program*

In preparation for the upcoming changes to the Cape Breton Welcome Network, further development of the new Buddy Program took place. This included refining intake forms, advancing branding work, and planning for a soft launch in Q1 of 2025.

The Buddy Program will aim to match newcomers with volunteers in Unama’ki-Cape Breton based on a number of factors. They will be matched based on location, lifestyle preferences, and meeting preferences. For example, a newcomer with young children in the Sydney area may be matched with a volunteer in a similar situation who is open to connecting. All volunteers will be required to obtain a criminal record check.

#### *Community Engagement*

In Q4, the Welcome Network focused on strengthening connections with **newcomer-serving organizations, volunteers, and newcomers** throughout Victoria County.



### Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP)

CBLIP advanced several strategic initiatives to foster inclusive, welcoming communities:

- Members engaged in the development of a new Theory of Change framework.
- Welcomed new members to the CBLIP Council, including Councillor Claude Poirier of Inverness, William Roy of the CBRM, Denise Bantegeyeko from Immigration Francophone Nouvelle-Ecosse (Sydney-based settlement for Francophone newcomers) and Megan Penney, the CEO of the Cape Breton Regional Chamber of Commerce.
- The Program Manager attended the national Metropolis Conference to build knowledge and networks with immigration stakeholders across Canada.
- Under the guidance of its Mi’kmaq Advisory Committee, CBLIP continues to deepen its commitment to building meaningful relationships between Mi’kmaq communities and newcomers.



### Labour Market Support

In preparation for the Unama’ki–Cape Breton Job Fair Series, the team focused on employer outreach and partner collaboration throughout Q4. While Victoria County did not have a job fair due to low employer participation, outreach and employer engagement efforts continue in preparation for future events.

- There are currently 49 employers in Victoria County registered for the Cape Breton Job Board.
- 15 new jobs were posted in Q4, bringing Victoria County's YTD total to 21.

## Upcoming Events:

- **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'ltultuk: 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 Victoria 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/>



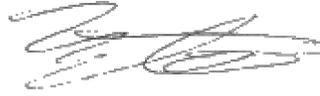
**News and Updates** – Elevate Magazine, and articles from Pulse Newsletter, new podcasts, news releases and more can be found on our website here: <https://capebretonpartnership.com/cbp-news/>

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Respectfully submitted by:

*(no longer employed as of the  
preparation date of this report)*

Parker Horton  
Economic Development Officer - Victoria County  
Cape Breton Partnership



Tyler Mattheis  
President and CEO  
Cape Breton Partnership

## Addendum(s):

- ***CB REN Victoria County Metrics (1 January – 31 March, 2025)***

---end report---

## Addendum I – CB REN Victoria County Metrics ( Jan – Mar 2025)

<b>Victoria County Metrics Jan – Mar 2025</b>			
<b>Activities</b>	<b>In Progress</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>YTD Completed</b>
<b>Business Support, Sustainability, &amp; Growth</b>	<b>Total – 12</b>	<b>Total - 12</b>	<b>Total- 48</b>
Continuous Improvement & Business Advisory	3	3	12
Business Planning & Startup/Entrepreneurship	3	3	12
Succession Planning	3	3	12
Creative Economy	3	3	12
<b>Economic Development Projects &amp; Strategic Sector Support</b>	<b>Total - 26</b>	<b>Total - 26</b>	<b>Total - 84</b>
Sector Analysis (Strength & Weaknesses)	15	15	60
Other Economic Development Projects	6	6	24
<b>Addressing Talent Needs (Labour &amp; Population)</b>	<b>Total - 26</b>	<b>Total - 27</b>	<b>Total - 108</b>
Human Resources Advisory Services	0	0	0
Business Immigration Consultancy	23	24	95
Immigration Advisory Services	3	3	13
<b>Retention Activities</b>	<b>Total - 6</b>	<b>Total -0</b>	<b>Total - 7</b>
New Connectors	4	0	6
Welcome Network	2	0	1

### Metrics Overview

- Your Economic Development Officer, and CB REN team members continue to provide business support and advisory services to entrepreneurs, business clients, and individuals throughout Victoria County, with 70 client files and economic development projects currently open and in progress.

#### **Notes on Addendum 1:**

- The data provided is sourced from our Insightly CRM software, representing each business advisory with a file. However, our actual engagement is broader, encompassing various supports like brief consultations and connections not always recorded in routine work.
- At times, CB REN Victory County Metrics may be less complete than normal due to the schedule of data availability not matching the schedule of council meeting calendars, and CB REN Staff's ability to input data prior to quarterly report production. If this is the case, year to date data in following quarterly reports will be adjusted to ensure accuracy.