

# Information and Activity Report

*Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network – Inverness County*

Q1 – 2025/26  
(April - June 2025)

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

**To:** Municipality of Inverness County

**Date Prepared:** July 10, 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 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 **April 1 to June 30, 2025**.

## Highlights & Events:

- **Unama'ki – Cape Breton Job Fair Series** – The Cape Breton Partnership, in collaboration with Nova Scotia Works, and Le Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDENE) hosted the job fair series across the island during the month of April. The Inverness County job fair took place in Cheticamp on April 9, providing 14 employers with the opportunity to connect with job seekers.
- **Safety First Symposium** – The 2025 annual event took place on May 24 in Membertou and featured a full day of speakers, networking, panels, and a trade show for an audience focused on making Unama'ki – Cape Breton safer for workplaces and employees. Partners for this event include the Nova Scotia Department of Labour Skills and Immigration and the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia.
- **Welcoming Workplaces Video Series** – This five-part series, a collaboration between the Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership and Rogers TV, was released this spring. The series features local employers and newcomer employees across Unama'ki – Cape Breton. Each short video offers a snapshot of what happens when workplaces make space for diversity. The series includes voices from the Strait Richmond Hospital, Victoria Cooperative Fisheries Ltd., L'Arche Cape Breton, Rimeks Bags & Brands Inc., and NSCC Strait Area Campus. The series can be found here [Welcoming Workplaces](#).
- **The Future of Cape Breton Seafood Exports Podcast** – Episode seven of the Invest in Cape Breton podcast series explores the seafood industry's long and rich history in Unama'ki – Cape Breton. The island exports an estimated \$342 million worth of lobster, snow crab, and other species, much of it processed by one of the island's eleven active processing facilities. In this episode, Victoria Co-operative Fisheries General Manager Osborne Burke and Louisbourg Seafoods Sales Manager Shaowei Xu lend their insights about exporting seafood, current challenges, and potential opportunities. The Invest in Cape Breton podcast series can be found here [Invest in Cape Breton Podcast](#).

## Project Updates - Local Economic Development Initiatives:

- **Unama'ki – Cape Breton Business Insights Program** – The Business Insights Program, which officially launched on April 1, is the Cape Breton Partnership's revised Business Retention and Expansion Program. Through the Business Insights Program, Cape Breton Partnership team members will actively engage with the Island's business community to identify key opportunities, challenges, strengths, and concerns that matter most to our local business community. 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. Information collected through the program will be compiled into the *Unama'ki – Cape Breton Business Insights Annual Report*. This report will guide the development of

supports offered by the Cape Breton Partnership and will be shared directly with policy and decision-makers.

- **Mukk Nqa'Itultuk: Community Connections Symposium** – Your Economic Development Officer and other members of the Cape Breton Partnership team participated in the Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn's Community Connections Symposium in May. The event brought together First Nations' Economic Development Officers, Indigenous Employment Offices and Industry partners to connect, share ideas, and explore the opportunities in procurement, energy, mining, and tourism.
- **Partners for Progress REN Conference** – Your Economic Development Officer and CB REN team members attended the 2025 provincial conference, which brought together business leaders, policymakers, and economic development professionals to explore strategic opportunities in growth, productivity, export expansion, and innovative financing. Conference sessions included Market Diversification & Export Growth, Making Housing More Affordable & Available, Renewable Energy Growth & Exports, Innovation & Growth in Strategic Sectors, and Productivity, Trade & Prosperity.
- **Business and Entrepreneur Supports** – Your EDO and CB REN team members continue to provide customized support for small and medium sized businesses and exploring entrepreneurs across Inverness County. The CB REN team is also available to support and guide individuals considering Inverness County as a place to invest and to do business.

## Project Updates – Creative Economy:

- **Creative Careers** – The Cape Breton Partnership joined the Municipality of Inverness County, Nova Scotia Works, Nova Scotia Health, and Cape Breton University at Dalbrae Academy in Mabou for a Career Day which offered students a chance to gain a better understanding of the career opportunities available in the creative sector.
- **Sea Glass Festival** – The Cape Breton Partnership's Creative Economy Development Officer provided support for the inaugural festival, which took place at the Inverness County Centre for the Arts on June 21 and hosted over 400 participants.
- **Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council** – The Creative Economy Development Officer worked alongside the Council and the Nova Scotia Department of Communities Culture Tourism & Heritage on an island-wide Community Outreach Session focused on the creative sector.
- **Creative Sector Business Supports** – The Creative Economy Development Officer and CB REN team members continue to provide individualized support to those working in the creative economy including musicians, artists, authors, photographers, and filmmakers.

## Project Updates – Green Energy Engagement Program:

- **What We Heard: Second Series of Offshore Wind Community Information Sessions** – The report, released this spring, highlights the key themes identified in feedback obtained from communities. The top five themes were fisheries co-existence, marine species and habitat impacts, placement, technology, and supply chain. The report is available here [What We Heard Report](#).
- **Electricity Sector Climate Change Adaptation Implementation Team** – The Green Energy Engagement Coordinator participates on this provincial team, which is working on public engagement pieces, related to adaptation activities connected to the electricity sector. The team is currently compiling information that could be circulated to the public about such issues as storm preparedness, hurricane preparedness, spring flooding, and heatwaves.
- **Canada – Scotland Collaboration: Coastal Futures** – The Green Energy Engagement Coordinator participated in discussions with Aros Na Mara, professors and researchers from Scotland and Dalhousie University, the Bras d’Or Lake Biosphere Association, and community members to identify opportunities for initiatives in the Bras d’Or Lake. This not only included research, but also the idea of research tourism and other economic opportunities for coastal protection, coastal tourism, and blue carbon sequestration.

## Project Updates – People and Labour Market Team:

- **Immigration Access+** - This newly launched program is the Cape Breton Partnership’s immigration representation option, available exclusively to Investors of the Cape Breton Partnership. Investor support plays a key role in keeping service fees well below market rates while expanding access to the skilled workers that local businesses need to grow and thrive. Immigration Access+ offers a deeper level of support, including full application preparation and submission, delivered by a licensed Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC). This service is for employers and entrepreneurs who need hands-on, start-to-finish immigration assistance. Through this service, Investors receive personalized guidance on selecting the most appropriate immigration stream, verifying eligibility, and managing every step of the application process.
- **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.
- **Community & School Connections** – Members of the People & Labour Market team delivered four school presentations throughout Inverness County this spring, reaching over 100 youth and educators. In addition, team members met with the Cape Breton Highlands Education Centre’s School Advisory Committee to share information and support.

- **Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP)** - The CBLIP Council held its quarterly meeting in Inverness County on June 12, with a guest speaker from IRCC Outreach on francophone immigration. Planning is now underway for the 2025 Immigrant Survey, which will gather insights from people born outside of Canada who now live in Unama'ki – Cape Breton.
- **On Our Radar Updates** - The People and Labour Market Team created this brief publication sharing updates and trends in immigration and labour with Cape Breton Partnership team members and community partners.
- **Cape Breton Job Board** – During this quarter, six new job posts from Inverness County organizations were added to the Job Board. Forty-seven Inverness County based organizations are now registered and active on the Job Board.

## Upcoming Events and Activities:

- **OffshoreWind4Kids Interactive Showcase with COVE** – Our Green Energy Engagement Coordinator is collaborating with COVE to bring two free OffshoreWind4Kids events to Cape Breton this July. The hands-on, family-friendly sessions will provide children and families an opportunity to build and launch model wind turbines and to learn about renewable energy during beach demonstrations. The Cape Breton events will take place on July 19 at Point Michaud Provincial Park and July 20 at Dominion Beach.
- **Coffee and Connect** – The next Inverness County Coffee and Connect session will take place from 12:30 to 2:30 pm on Thursday, July 31, at the Inverness County Centre for the Arts.
- **Investor Summit 2025** – Planning is well underway for the Annual Investor Summit, which 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.

## Additional Information:



**CB REN Website:** Additional Information on the CB REN can be found on the CB REN webpage: <https://capebretonpartnership.com/initiative/cape-breton-regional-enterprise-network/>



**Welcome to Cape Breton Website:** Additional Information on Living, Working, Investing, Studying and Moving to Inverness County - including community profiles and economic data - can be found on the Welcome to Cape Breton website:

<https://welcometocapebreton.ca/invest/invest-in-cape-breton-unamaki/cape-breton-unamaki-community-profiles/>



**News and Updates** – Elevate Magazine, and articles from Pulse Newsletter, new podcasts, news releases and more can be found on our website here:

<https://capebretonpartnership.com/cbp-news/>

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Respectfully submitted by:

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**On Behalf of**  
**Tyler Mattheis**  
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Cape Breton Partnership

## Addendum I – CB REN Inverness County Metrics

Activities	Q1 Metrics Q1 April 1st - June 30th, 2025		YTD Since April 1st
	In Progress	Completed	Total Completed
<b>Business Support, Sustainability, &amp; Growth</b>	<b>Total: 18</b>	<b>Total: 17</b>	<b>Total: 17</b>
Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) Surveys Completed		3	3
Continuous Improvement & Business Advisory Services	4	1	1
Business Quick Support		6	6
Succession Planning & Support	1	0	0
New Businesses Supported in Navigating Resources	12	2	2
Microloan Participants	1	0	0
Other Business Support Services	0	5	5

<b>Major Projects &amp; Strategic Sector Support</b>	<b>Total: 17</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>	<b>Total: 0</b>
Sector Development Projects	1	0	0
Major Economic Development Projects	16	0	0

<b>Addressing Talent Needs (Labour &amp; Population)</b>	<b>Total: 19</b>	<b>Total: 8</b>	<b>Total: 8</b>
Projects Assessing Local Labour Market	0	0	0
Cape Breton Job Board Advertisements		6	6
Immigration Advisory Services	14	1	1
Immigration Applications Submitted	5	0	0
Business Immigration Quick Support		1	1

<b>Newcomer &amp; Talent Retention Programs</b>	<b>Total: 12</b>	<b>Total: 19</b>	<b>Total: 19</b>
Connector Program Matches	12	2	2
Newcomers Welcomed Through the Welcome Network	0	3	3
Local Immigration Partnership Members		0	0
Events Aimed at Talent Attraction & Retention		14	14
Other Activities Addressing Talent Needs	0	0	0

- Note on Addendum 1:**  
*The data provided is sourced from our Insightly CRM software and, at times, CB REN metrics may not be complete due to data availability from all programs and projects at the time of report preparation. Year-to-date data will be adjusted accordingly in subsequent quarterly reports to ensure accuracy.*