

Q2 Western REN CEO Report

July 1st – September 30th 2019

Strategic Theme: Supporting Private Sector

The *BusinessNow* program is one the pillars of service offered by the Western REN. The program entails contacting local businesses, meeting with them and determining what their needs are to grow and succeed. The process also identifies what challenges and roadblocks business may be facing that impedes growth. This information is gathered through various means, but mainly involves on-going dialogue and a diagnostic survey. The goal is to provide economic developers a tool to improve business climate, revitalize a community, and connect to business building a more vibrant economy. The model is an on-going relationship-based system where after meeting with clients, the *BusinessNow* Lead seeks out resources that the client may require to grow. These resources could be access to capital, staff training, assisting in talent recruitment, accessing new markets and business planning assistance. The relationship continues long after connections are made.

After the position being vacant for seven weeks, a new *BusinessNow* Lead, Andrew Melanson, began on July 22nd, and began visitations on August 7th. A portion of Q2 was spent on training, getting up to speed on the new Continuous Improvement program and looking into CRMs to manage an ever-growing client database.

The following is a summary of *BusinessNow*'s program results for Q2:

2019-20	Clients	Referrals	Company interactions
Q1 Apr 1-June 30	10	10	23
Q2 Jul 1-Sept 30	10	9	10
Total 2019-20	20	19	33
<i>Target</i>	n/a	90	100
Total since program launch	206	270	243

The Western REN's **succession project**, funded by Global Affairs and NSCC, has successfully launched. The Western REN is issuing coupon codes to businesses interested in selling to give them access to the SuccessionMatching.com platform where matchmaking between buyer and seller can occur. Tremendous interest has occurred so far, with very little promotion of the program needed beyond the initial launch event and word of mouth. An extremely close working relationship continues with SuccessionMatching.com to ensure successful matches occur.

Succession 2019-20	Coupon Codes Issued	Types Sellers (S) Buyers (B)	Be Your Own Boss Coupon Codes Issued
Q1 Apr 1-June 30	9	7 S 2 B	0
Q2 Jul 1-Sept 30	5	5 S	0
Q3 Oct 1-Dec 31			
Q4 Jan 1-Mar 31			
Total 2019-20	14	12 S 2 B	0
<i>Agreement Target over 12 months</i>	<i>40 Codes issued to either buyers or sellers</i>		7

Looking ahead: The Be Your Own Boss component of the Succession program, which will promote succession opportunities to local alumni, is to launch in Q3.

The Western REN partnered with ACOA, Perennia and Ignite Labs on The **Lobster Bait Challenge** launched on July 18th, with a workshop hosted at Ignite Labs on August 14th. The objective of the project is to identify an alternative lobster bait utilizing seafood byproducts as an ingredient in the lobster bait. The Western REN is providing oversight on the program.

*Looking ahead: Based on a successful pilot program, the Western REN's **Continuous Improvement Program** has been approved with funding support from ACOA. Call for consultants has closed, launch is expected in Q3.*

Strategic Theme: Supporting Public Sector

The Western REN continues work on the **Western Regional Energy Investment Plan (WREIP)**, funded in part by the NS Department of Energy and Mines. Data has been collected from each of the Western REN's partner municipalities, as well as Nova Scotia Power, Waste Check and the province's Geomatic Information Systems (GIS) team. The consultants are now calibrating the above data with their modelling software and creating the baseline energy consumption model for the region. This will provide an educated estimate of the present amount of energy being consumed in the region, along with expenditures and emissions.

Looking ahead... the model will also be created for a business as usual scenario that outlines expenditures up to the year 2050 if no changes are made. This model, and the baseline consumption model, will be outlined in a report to be received in early December 2019. Low Carbon Scenario models will be created in February 2020 to identify opportunities for energy efficiencies, local energy storage, local green energy generation, and district energy/heating facilities.

Develop Nova Scotia launched and closed their Request for Proposal (RFPs) for Short-Term projects under the Province of Nova Scotia's **Internet Funding Trust**. With assistance from Western REN staff,

the Municipalities of Argyle, Barrington, Digby and Yarmouth were able to select a partner Internet Service Provider (ISP) that was able to identify projects within the region that could be completed within the time constraints of this RFP's build requirements. The combined three projects would reach a total of roughly 1,900 civic addresses with fibre to the premises by the end of Q2 2020-21 in the Municipalities of Barrington, Digby and Yarmouth. These units were willing to offer letters of support to the ISP for their submission to the RFP, with amounts of up to 12.5% subsidy to strengthen their submission. A separate, privately funded development has begun in the Municipality of the District of Argyle. Proposed solutions provided by the partner ISP for the above units were presented to select staff and council members at the Municipality of the District of Clare, who requested proposed solutions be created for their unit as well. There have been no new developments on this project in Q2.

Looking ahead... Submissions for short-term projects under the Province of Nova Scotia's Internet Funding Trust continue to be reviewed, with awards expected in by the end of 2019. Discussions have continued between the Western REN and the selected Partner Internet Service Provider (ISP) in order to prepare for the upcoming funding being made available through Develop Nova Scotia's Long Term RFP, which will be for solutions that could not be completed within the time constraints of the short term projects build requirements. A proposed solution has been developed by the Partner ISP for the Municipality of the District of Clare and has been presented to their CAO by Western REN staff. Western REN and Municipal staff continue to work with Develop NS to ensure the most futureproof and effective solutions for the region.

Strategic Theme: Addressing Talent Needs

The *Connector Program* is a networking initiative that helps local businesses and organizations connect with new graduates, immigrants and international students interested in starting and growing their career in Nova Scotia. The following is a summary of results for Q2:

2019-20	New Connectors	New Connectees	Initial Connections	Known jobs found in the region
Q1 Apr 1-June 30	21	13	33	3
Q2 Jul 1-Sept 30	9	9	13	4
Q3 Oct 1-Dec 31				
Q4 Jan 1-Mar 31				
Total 2019-20	30	22	46	7
<i>Agreement Target</i>	46	58	n/a	
Total since program launch	135	110	170	45

The two-year *Immigration pilot* project between Western REN, Nova Scotia Office of Immigration (NSOI) and ACOA was extended to the end of March 2020 with pro-rated targets. The project focuses on building awareness of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP) and identifying and connecting employers looking to fill labor gaps to NSOI for the support required to become a designated employer under the AIP. The following is a summary of AIP results for Q2:

2019-20	Companies Designated	Known Positions Endorsed	Known families receiving PR status
Q1 Apr 1-June 30	6		
Q2 Jul 1-Sept 30	6		
Q3 Oct 1-Dec 31			
Q4 Jan 1-Mar 31			
Total 2019-20	12		
<i>Agreement Target over 24 months</i>	<i>42+20 (extension)</i>	<i>190</i>	
Total since program launch	49	45	14

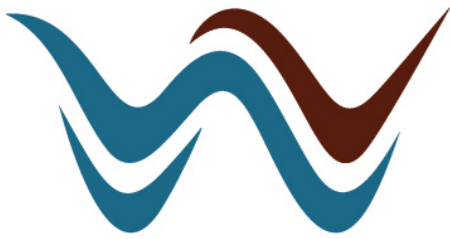
Looking ahead –Rob Stephenson, the new AIP manager started on October 23rd, 2019.

*Looking ahead - CEO LeBlanc was invited by the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration to take part in **Destination Canada 2019**, an outbound mission to Paris and Brussels to promote francophone areas of Canada (outside of Québec) to potential francophone immigrants.*

*Looking ahead - The Western REN's proposal to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to establish a new **Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)** for the Western Region was green lighted for a feasibility study in Q1 next fiscal, with the intent to fund based on the results of the study. The goal of this partnership will be to enhance collaboration, coordination and strategic planning at the community level in order to develop a regional immigration strategy and targeted action plan; to increase the overall number of newcomers and produce a more welcoming and inclusive community. This new LIP will ensure strategic recruitment based on labor market needs, improve newcomer settlement and integration outcomes and strengthen the region's ability to better address the needs of newcomers.*

Current significant issues/opportunities

On Wednesday August 18th a rural housing forum was held at Cornwallis Park with the purpose to connect stakeholders and municipal leaders to identify regional solutions to address housing and homelessness issues across Western NS communities. Western REN CEO sat on the steering committee and Research EDO Evan Nemeth presented a session on housing as economic development.



Western Regional Enterprise Network

AT A GLANCE - SECOND QUARTER - JULY - SEPTEMBER 2019

Increasing investment within Western Nova Scotia through collaborative actions.

<p>Engaging Private Sector <i>Direct client-facing services support businesses and provide needed data about strategic economic development needs.</i></p>	<p>Engaging Public Sector <i>Coordinating and supporting municipal and business development partners to maximize investment opportunities.</i></p>	<p>Targeting Talent Gaps <i>Work with all partners to increase successful recruitment and retention of needed workforce into the region.</i></p>
<p>Business Transitions</p> <p>Succession Program and Be Your Own Boss launches. Coupons issued: 14/40</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 12 sellers ▪ 2 buyers <p><i>Be Your Own Boss coupons, free of charge, are available to NSCC and Sainte-Anne alumni with interests in business ownership.</i></p>	<p>Energy Investment Plan</p> <p>After extensive data requests from all municipal partners and many others, the Western REN consultants are creating a baseline energy use model for the region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Baseline report Dec 2019</i> ▪ <i>Low Carbon Scenario models to be created in Feb 2020 for use in identifying investment opportunities</i> 	<p>Immigration Pilot</p> <p>Since the beginning of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP), 49 Western NS companies have been designated.</p> <p><i>Designated companies are able to have position offerings endorsed and recruit directly from foreign labour markets.</i></p>