

Q4 Western REN CEO Report
January 1st – March 31st 2019

Strategic Actions

The following is a summary of *BusinessNow*'s Business Retention & Expansion program results:

2018-19	Company Touch	Action Item Referrals	Journal Entries
Q1 Apr 1-June 30	13	7	3
Q2 Jul 1-Sept 30	25	26	36
Q3 Oct 1-Dec 31	21	18	27
Q4 Jan 1-Mar 31	22	27	36
Total 2018-19	81	78	102
<i>Target</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>60</i>
Total since program launch	186	251	210
Notes:			
Company Touch - a company which has been contacted and engaged with			
Action Item Referrals to Action Team Members (ACOA, CBDC, NSBI, etc)			
Journal Entries - Specific interactions made with client companies			

Much of the focus of the *BusinessNow* program in Q4 has been continued visitations. There was a noticeable emphasis on the fishing sector this quarter. Several large seafood companies are looking at major expansions, employing new technologies in their processes. Numerous meetings have been coordinated with representatives from both ACOA and the Atlantic Fisheries Fund to work with these entrepreneurs. Substantial time has also been spent on organizing the new Succession Planning program for businesses in our region, with several companies already signed up.

'*Why Western NS?*' is the roll-out of FDI Tools for the regional value proposition and communications & engagement strategy. Regional opportunities, in forestry, fisheries and renewable energy are highlighted on a microsite accessible by clicking on the *Invest* heading on the Western REN's home page (www.westernren.ca). In January Western REN had an introductory meeting with Chris Somers, Business Solutions Advisor with NSP and underscored limitations of local grid capacity – a significant barrier to economic growth. The work was shared in a meeting with Town of Yarmouth's planning and economic development team and was later presented to their Planning Advisory Committee, as well as the Municipality of Yarmouth's council. It was also shared and discussed with Intergovernmental Affairs at the Province of NS and NSBI with the goal of better identifying, aligning and supplementing regional economic opportunities. In Q4, the Western REN supported partners on **3 investment inquiries**.

The Western REN has secured funding through the Low Carbon Communities program offered by Nova Scotia Department of Energy and Mines for a project titled the “**Western Regional Energy Investment Plan (WREIP)**.” The project will create a baseline of energy consumption, identifying opportunities for efficiencies, and energy performance benchmarking. Areas will be identified that would benefit from local energy storage from locally generated green energy facilities and identify opportunities for district energy and heating models. An RFP was put out and awarded to Sustainability Solutions Group, a full-service climate and sustainability planning firm.

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.

2018-19	New Connectors	New Connectees	Initial Connections	Known jobs found in the region
Q1 Apr 1-June 30	11	10	13	
Q2 Jul 1-Sept 30	10	5	16	
Q3 Oct 1-Dec 31	9	8	10	
Q4 Jan 1-Mar 31	14	19	18	
Total 2018-19	44	42	57	
<i>Agreement Target</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
Total since program launch	105	88	124	38

The 19 new Connectees who were registered in this quarter were referred to the program from various sources including 5 who are upcoming grads from NSCC or USA, 3 were from a presentation to a group of “older workers” who were taking a social media training course organized by NS Works. The rest were from colleagues as well as from past clients. Activities that took place during this quarter included co-hosting a Newcomer's Entrepreneurs Ignition event with Ignite Labs in Yarmouth; hosting a Connector Recognition Event with attendance of 60 people where new Connectee and Connector promo videos were launched; a Connector Lunch and Learn with upcoming NSCC graduates in Digby; presentations to NSCC students in Yarmouth, Université Sainte-Anne Business faculty and students.

The two-year *Immigration pilot* project between Western REN, Nova Scotia Office of Immigration (NSOI) and ACOA 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. As partners in the AIP program, the Western REN was invited to attend an information session on March 1st regarding the development of a francophone immigration action plan for Nova Scotia, along with representatives from francophone Municipalities and Economic Development organizations. The action plan is a priority initiative of both the Office of Acadian Affairs and the Office of Immigration and outlines the strategic direction for furthering francophone immigration. The Western REN is pivotal in engaging and communicating with employers

to increase their participation in the recruitment of francophone immigrants, maximize existing immigration programs and streams and supporting recruitment efforts. The following is a summary of AIP results for the year:

2018-19	Companies designated	Known positions endorsed	Known families receiving permanent resident status
Q1 Apr 1-June 30	13		
Q2 Jul 1-Sept 30	6		
Q3 Oct 1-Dec 31	11		
Q4 Jan 1-Mar 31	6		
Total 2018-19	36		
<i>Agreement Target over 24 months</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>160</i>	
<i>Total since program launch</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>14</i>

The Western REN has received funding from both Global Affairs and NSCC for its **succession project**. The Western REN will purchase and issue coupon codes to businesses interested in selling to give them access to the SuccessionMatching.com platform where the matchmaking between buyer and seller can occur. Working through the steps with prospective sellers adds value to the Western RENs services, opens the doors to potential new immigrants to the region and uncovers new business opportunities. The coupon codes may be issued to a business in any sector, and a mix of activities and tools can be employed to: find suitable buyers/successors; employ trusted valuation processes; communicate and test financing for buyers; make referrals to partners who can help mitigate the financial costs of succession readiness; provide space for the dialogues around fear, family visions and employee related matters. The Western REN is well situated as a leader among the REN's to lead this pilot and lead in the on-boarding of continuous succession support to private sector firms.

Current significant issues/opportunities

The Western REN has received proposed solutions to the internet gaps in the Western Region through non-disclosure agreements from Internet Service Providers (ISPs) operating in Nova Scotia. The Western REN has since presented these proposed solutions to The Municipalities of Argyle, Barrington, Digby and Yarmouth. The upcoming Province of NS Internet Funding Trust has been split into short term and long-term Request for Proposals (RFPs), with the short-term RFP expected to launch Spring 2019. Timelines for the proposed solutions are now being considered in order to have shovel ready projects ready for submission to each of these RFPs, along with any other funding pools. The proposed solutions received thus far are heavily in favor of wired internet access to most homes, delivering the most

futureproof solution available. The Western REN and Develop Nova Scotia continue to strengthen their relationship, with Develop leading the internet file on behalf of the provincial government.

Matters for noting

- The Western REN's next 3-year strategy was drafted after a consultation with Board, staff and stakeholders. The strategy is a refresh rather than a rebuild for the next three years to ensure continued momentum.
- REN CEOs met in Cumberland county on January 17 & 18th. Agenda items included a presentation from FP Innovations on Resources for Value Added Forestry Opportunities; Valley REN Large Manufacturing Taskforce results and REN program discussion with Department of Municipal Affairs.
- CEO LeBlanc hosted the first meeting of the Regional AMANS Population sub-committee on January 22nd, 2019.
- CEO attended a Minimum Planning Standards session hosted by DMA at the Rodd Grand Hotel on January 25th, 2019.
- CEO met with NSCC Foundation Chair Dave Saxton, president Don Bureaux and principal of NSCC Burrige, Shelburne Campus and Digby Site Mary Thompson on February 20, 2019 to discuss common interests and projects.
- CEO LeBlanc presented Western REN priorities and services to Digby and Area Board of Trade on February 27th, 2019.
- Western REN hosted a Continuous Improvement Information session in Yarmouth on March 7th.
- CEO asked to participate on a National Advisory Council for Community Solutions Network, a new platform for communities to connect by providing valuable information, learning opportunities and advisory services in key areas of data and technology for municipal and community leaders helping to improve the lives of residents.

Looking ahead

CEO is a member of the **Rural Housing Forum** Committee planning committee, to take place in September 2019. The forum will be an opportunity for councillors, organizations, business sector and government from across Western NS to establish a strategic direction for addressing housing challenges collaboratively.

As an outcome of the Regional AMANS Population sub-committee the Western REN submitted a proposal to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to establish a new **Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)** whose objective will be to create a partnership council for the Western Region. The goal of this council 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.



Western Regional Enterprise Network

At a Glance—Fourth Quarter—January-March 2019

Guiding and navigating regional economic development,
and supporting business through:

BusinessNow

Our flagship service delivery program: a professional business visitation to support growth or succession.

Investment Readiness

Setting the table to attract investment to Nova Scotia.

Partnerships & Communications

The people part: energizing the talent, skills, and positivity to address current and future business needs.



Succession Project

Western REN has purchased and is issuing coupon codes to business sellers and potential buyers, providing access to a number of services and tools important to the succession process.

BusinessNow Results

Exceeded annual targets. The goal was 60 in each of the categories measured.

- Business touches = 81
- Referrals = 78
- Journal entries = 102



Western Regional Energy Investment Plan (WREIP)

Actively working with contractors to provide data required to establish baseline for planning work.

Rural Internet

Continue relationship with ISPs most likely to successfully complete projects in the region.

Working with Develop Nova Scotia to insure momentum is maintained as DNS takes over the internet file.



Western Connector

Since its launch, this program has amassed 105 Connectors and 88 Connectees.

These connections have led to 38 known jobs found, in the region.

Atlantic Immigration

More than tripling its target goal of 12 designations, the AIP has seen 43 Western companies designated throughout the region.

There are 14 (known) families moving into the region.