



# Message from our Board Chair & CEO

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff of the Pictou County Partnership, we are pleased to share with you our 2022-2023 Community Report.

Our organization continues to practice “grassroots” economic development by adapting, changing, and responding to current conditions in the businesses that we serve, our community, and the greater global economy.

The first change that the Partnership saw in 2022-2023 was a change of name **moving towards putting ‘partnership’ at the forefront of our efforts to support businesses and economic growth of the region.** Our success as a region is only possible with strong relationships and partnerships with the local municipal units, Pictou Landing First Nation, business leaders of all stages and sizes, and economic partners.

Our efforts to provide support to businesses in the region grew, as we added staff members to work one-on-one with entrepreneurs and business leaders on expanding, growing, and transitioning – **making more than 700 connections this year to programs and supports.** Our team began to explore the possibilities for sector attraction with two initial opportunities in the blue economy. Sector and investment attraction is an area of great growth for the Partnership and the region in 2023-2024 and beyond.

The Partnership continued its strong leadership in supporting entrepreneurs and business leaders in accessing skilled

international talent. In the fall, the Partnership was asked to support **a recruitment mission in Kenya with the Health Association of Nova Scotia’s (HANS) based on the Partnership’s experience and expertise through its Labour Mobility pilot program.** Additionally, the Partnership **attended recruitment fairs in Paris and Morocco** with the Province of Nova Scotia and colleagues at regional enterprise networks across the province.

The Board of Directors completed a new strategic plan for 2023-2026 which focuses on creating healthy businesses, **embedding a grassroots approach, supporting all businesses, and working in partnerships.** These themes are weaved through its five pillars.

1. **Supporting Business Growth and Sustainability**
2. **Strengthening Sectors for Investment and Attraction**
3. **Supporting Workforce Development and Population Growth**
4. **Partnering and Communications Economic Success**
5. **Ensuring a Sustainable Organization**

**We invite you to review our strategic plan found at [pictoucountypartnership.com](http://pictoucountypartnership.com)**

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff, we thank you for your support and commitment to the economic growth of the Pictou County region.

Sincerely,

**Scott Ferguson** CEO, Pictou County Partnership &  
**Ryan Fraser**, Board Chair, Pictou County Partnership.



**Connected with more than 178  
entrepreneurs and business leaders...**

**making more than 700 connections to  
resources, programs, and grants.**

## **ELEVATE**

ELEVATE, the business support initiative resulting from the MITREAP (Massachusetts Institute of Technology Regional Entrepreneurship Acceleration Program) has been an informative and learning experience for both the participating entrepreneurs but as well as the Partnership team.

The ELEVATE program is modelling an adaptive and flexible process that is allowing the participating entrepreneurs and the Partnership team to respond to the most pressing issues and opportunities for these entrepreneurs.

There are eight participating entrepreneurs who are exploring areas, such as brand value, expansion, acquiring new contracts, growth and more through the one-on-one support of the Partnership team.

This program is possible through a \$60,000 contribution from Onside, as well as the time invested by the local MITREAP team.

“

While trying to recover our market we are also trying to grow - we have a plan but as a small family-owned business, we do not have much time to look for expertise and funding that can help us grow. We are very fortunate to have a small team who are interested in seeing us grow and now by some great fortune we are a part of the ELEVATE program with the Pictou County Partnership. What a great program. They are working with us first to find out what we are all about, next, what our plans are and best of all they have expertise on tap that can hands on help us to achieve our dream which is expansion of our brand.

Through Elevate we are working with people who know business, have been in business for themselves, and can work with us to put together a plan for funding and making our dream a reality. This is the first time we have felt so positive about our chance of growth. ”

I would recommend this program to anyone who is planning to start, has started, or wants to grow their business.

- *Lynn MacDonald, Backstage Brewery*



**Wade Tibbo and Cindy James from the Pictou County Partnership with Elevate participant Carissa from Meadowville House at the Start Up Canada event.**

## Celebrating Small Business Week

Small Business Week is an annual celebration of entrepreneurship that takes place across the country in the month of October.

This past year, the Partnership celebrated entrepreneurship and small business owners by hosting several events and promotions.

The week kicked-off here in Pictou County with five “Coffee and Conversation” sessions held in the towns of New Glasgow, Trenton, Stellarton, Pictou, and Westville. Additionally, the business development team visited more than 75 business locations from across the region, meeting with business owners and leaders to better understand the challenges and opportunities of small businesses in Pictou County.

Throughout the week the Partnership promoted entrepreneurship and small businesses via its social media platforms and partnered with the Advocate to run a small business week promotion that twelve businesses participated in.

The week wrapped up with a Small Business Appreciation Breakfast in collaboration with the Pictou County Chamber of Commerce and Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC). Guest speakers from Regulatory Affairs spoke to the attendees about its work to make government practices and policies easier for the business community. The event had 60 guests and was sponsored by the East Coast Credit Union.

Over the past year, the Partnership team has been exploring opportunities and is in ongoing conversations about the Blue Economy, specifically the establishment of an Aquaculture Development Area (ADA), as well as securing a Bioeconomy Development Opportunity Zone designation for the region.

**More about a Aquaculture Development Area (ADA) in Pictou County.** Prince Edward Island has a \$50M+ industry in shellfish aquaculture, where we currently have a \$4M industry. We share the same waters, and the potential for the growth of that industry is significant; not to mention the indirect potential that may come from it including gear supplies, skilled trades, etc. An example of an established ADA is [argyleaquaculture \(aquacultureargyle.com\)](http://argyleaquaculture.com)

**More about the Bioeconomy Development Opportunity Zone Designation.** On November 7, 2022, the Municipality of the County of Pictou Council voted to pursue a Bioeconomy Development Opportunity Zone designation for the county. As such, we have applied to the federal government’s Clean Fuels Fund – Establishing Biomass Supply Chains stream for funding to complete this work. The BDO Zone initiative aims to increase investment and economical development in the bioeconomy in key areas with a sustainable supply chain and infrastructure. Examples of global investment that result from these ratings for designated areas include the development of Sustainable Aviation Fuel, natural gas and more.

**Birgir Robertsson opens the Little Pástry House in Stellarton providing unique baked goods.**



# 42 businesses have been supported with “becoming immigration ready”

## Connecting to Talent

The Employer Forum made its in-person return on November 30th in partnership with Nova Scotia Works, ISANS, Pictou County Chamber, and the Pictou County Partnership. This year’s event included an introduction from our local economic development and workforce development partners and a mini job fair. An immigration panel shared information on the immigration supports available to employers, and organizations who support underrepresented groups shared how employers can make direct connections to their respective talent pools – thank you to Autism NS, CNIB, EDGE, Career Connections, and the Native Council of NS for presenting. During this event, the Partnership also participated on a panel to share with employers the support offered by our organization to businesses, including support in program/resource navigation, scale-up activity, succession planning, and more.

## Employer Immigration Workbook

The Pictou County Partnership has developed an Immigration Ready Employer Workbook to support employers in identifying emerging employment gaps and how to use the Nova Scotia Nomination (NSNP) Program and the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP). The workbook contains information and tools to support businesses with their human resource planning to help identify opportunities for hiring international talent, and checklists and information to help employers become immigration ready. As the Canadian labour market declines, the Partnership is committed to continuing to raise awareness and support employers in using immigration to fill labour shortages. This resource was created with support from Labour, Skills, and Immigration – branch of Immigration and Population Growth and ACOA.

## Employer Guide to Inclusive and Welcoming Workplaces

The Pictou County Partnership has created a tool to help employers in creating more inclusive and welcoming workplaces in Pictou County.

Through this resource, employers will gain awareness about cultural sensitivity and the benefits of implementing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) strategies and initiatives to foster organizational growth. This resource also shares insights and best practices learned during our Pictou County Labour Mobility Pilot to support employers on their DEI journeys and as they prepare to welcome skilled refugees and other talented individuals into their workplaces.



## **Connecting to Talent**

The Employer Forum made its in-person return on November 30th in partnership with Nova Scotia Works, ISANS, Pictou County Chamber, and the Pictou County Partnership. This year's event included an introduction from our local economic development and workforce development partners and a mini job fair. An immigration panel shared information on the immigration supports available to employers, and organizations who support underrepresented groups shared how employers can make direct connections to their respective talent pools – thank you to Autism NS, CNIB, EDGE, Career Connections, and the Native Council of NS for presenting. During this event, the Partnership also participated on a panel to share with employers the support offered by our organization to businesses, including support in program/resource navigation, scale-up activity, succession planning, and more.

## **Recruiting Internationally**

In November, the Pictou County Partnership took flight to Paris, France and Rabat, Morocco to promote living and working in Pictou County at the Destination Canada Mobility Forum. This annual event organized by the Government of Canada focuses on Francophone and bilingual recruitment. As part of Team Nova Scotia led by Labour, Skills, and Immigration (LSI) Partnership staff were able to connect international talent to local employers and job opportunities

from a wide range of sectors. More than 9000 applications for 32 local job opportunities were received. The Partnership team has been supporting employers on activating on these leads.

## **Supporting Health Care Recruitment**

In the fall, the Partnership travelled to Kenya as part of a team from Nova Scotia who participated in an international recruitment mission with the Health Association of Nova Scotia's (HANS). The Partnership was able to share the experience and lessons learned throughout its Labour Mobility Pilot which has matched skilled refugees to local employment opportunities. This mission resulted in 65 conditional job offers being made to Continuing Care Assistants who will be joining us right here in Nova Scotia.



Becky Cowen from the Partnership in Kenya with Health Care candidates.

# LIAISON & OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Nicole LeBlanc, Chair, Deputy Mayor Town of Trenton

Simon Lawand, Vice Chair, Town of Stellarton

Bernie Murphy, Town of Westville

Dan Currie, Town of Pictou

Nancy Dicks, Mayor Town of New Glasgow

Jonathan Beadle, Pictou Landing First Nation

Robert Parker, Warden Municipality of Pictou County

Ross MacDonald, Dept. of Municipal Affairs, Province of Nova Scotia

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ryan Fraser, Chair

Ruth Martin, Treasurer

Aaron Millen, Director

Andrew Watters, Finance Committee

Amy Ferguson, HR Committee

Dr. Neal Reddy, Director

Ian MacLean, Director

Jaime Smith, Strategy Lead

Jarrold Thorne, Finance and Strategy Committee

Kayla Sutherland, Director

Lindsay Shaw, HR Committee

# PARTNERSHIP STAFF

Scott Ferguson, CEO

Becky Cowen, Manager of Workforce  
Development and Immigration

Cindy James, Business Counselor &  
Entrepreneur in Residence

David Crowell, Finance Officer

Heather Knight, Marketing &  
Communications Officer

Heidi Sinclair, Director of Strategy &  
Communications

Jamie Grant, Business Outreach &  
Engagement Officer

Lynne Jamieson, Project Coordinator  
(Workforce)

Matthew Berrigan, Connector Program

Wade Tibbo, Manager of Business  
Development & Innovation

# Partners

The Pictou County Partnership would like to recognize its partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia, Pictou Landing First Nation, the Municipality of Pictou County, and the towns of New Glasgow, Pictou, Stellarton, Trenton, and Westville.

Additionally, the Pictou County Partnership would like to recognize its partnership with IRCC, ACOA, Pictou County Chamber of Commerce, IGNITE, Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), Nova Scotia Works, CBDC/NOBL, DEANS, YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs, StFX, Mentoring Plus, the REN network and other business and community support organizations in the region and across the province.

## CONNECT WITH US

**Pictou County Partnership**  
151 Provost St. New Glasgow

[pictoucountypartnership.com](http://pictoucountypartnership.com)

