

Q3 Western REN CEO Report

October 1st – December 31st 2019

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. 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.

A significant amount of time was spent in Q3 implementing a new client database, Insightly. This involved data entry and training for the entire client facing team.

The following is a summary of **BusinessNow**'s program results for Q3:

2019-20	Clients	Referrals	Company interactions
Q1 Apr 1-June 30	10	10	23
Q2 Jul 1-Sept 30	10	9	10
Q3 Oct 1-Dec 31	30	10	21
Total 2019-20	50	29	54
<i>Target</i>	n/a	90	100
Total since program launch	236	280	264

The Western REN's **succession project**, funded by Global Affairs and NSCC, continues. 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.

Succession 2019-2020	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	7	3 S 4 B	0
Q4 Jan 1-Mar 31			
Total 2019-20	21	15 S 6B	0
<i>Agreement Target over 12 months</i>	40 <i>Codes issued to either buyers or sellers</i>		7

The Be Your Own Boss component of the Succession program, which will promote succession opportunities to local alumni of NSCC and Université Sainte-Anne, was launched November 8th at NSCC Burridge.

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 prize for identifying a bait alternative was awarded to Clare Machine Works on November 6th. A follow-up workshop was held on January 15th, 2020 on Opportunities for Seafood By-Products in the Pet Industry.

The Western REN's **Continuous Improvement Program**, which receives partial funding support from ACOA, has launched. A call for consultants went out, and four companies were approved to be on a roster of consultants as part of the program. The program allows for funding of between 10-20 companies and allows for 5-10 days of Continuous Improvement consulting.

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. Consultants at Sustainability Solutions Group (SSG) have processed the data from the Western REN's partner municipalities, as well as Nova Scotia Power, Efficiency Nova Scotia, Waste Check and Property Valuation Services Corporation. This data has been used to create a baseline of energy consumption and carbon emissions that assumes a stable population and no changes in infrastructure up to 2050. This baseline will allow for the creation of targets, and the identification of opportunities for efficiencies, and energy performance benchmarking.

Looking ahead to Q4... Two Energy Planning Workshops took place in the region in January with stakeholders from Public and Private Sectors to assist in the formation of strategies to include in two Low Carbon Future Scenarios for the region. These workshops and the existing data will help identify areas that would benefit from local energy storage from locally generated green energy facilities, as well as district energy and heating facilities.

Awards for Develop Nova Scotia's Request for Proposal (RFPs) for Short-Term projects under the Province of Nova Scotia's **Internet Funding Trust** were pushed from Fall 2019 to January/February 2020. Bell, with support from Western REN staff, and the Municipalities of Barrington, Digby and Yarmouth, submitted an application for three fibre to the premises projects in the region that reach a total of roughly 1,900 civic addresses by the end of 2020. The Municipality of the District of Argyle is not included in this phase as Bell did not identify any projects for the municipality that would be eligible for the strict timelines in this phase.

Looking ahead to Q4... There are two funds launched in early 2020 that allow for Bell to submit projects for the remaining underserved communities within the Western Region. The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has launched a \$750 million fund for internet projects in rural Canada in January 2020. Develop Nova Scotia has released the RFP for Long-Term projects in February 2020. Discussions continue between the Western REN and Bell in order to prepare for these opportunities.

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 Q3:

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	7	11	15	5
Q4 Jan 1-Mar 31				
Total 2019-20	37	33	61	12
<i>Agreement Target</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
<i>Total since program launch</i>	142	121	185	50

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. The following is a summary of AIP results for Q3:

2019-20	Companies designated	Known positions endorsed	Known families receiving permanent resident status
Q1 Apr 1-June 30	6		
Q2 Jul 1-Sept 30	6		
Q3 Oct 1-Dec 31	5		
Q4 Jan 1-Mar 31			
Total 2019-20	17		
<i>Agreement Target over 24 months</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>190</i>	
<i>Total since program launch</i>	51	45	14

To note, Rob Stephenson was hired as AIP manager as of October 23rd, 2019.

Upon invitation from the NS Office of Immigration, CEO LeBlanc attended **Destination Canada 2019**, an outbound mission to Paris and Brussels to promote francophone areas of Canada (outside of Québec) to potential francophone immigrants, from November 12th-20th. The event connects Canadian employers and organizations with skilled French-speaking candidates in various fields. The Western Region of Nova Scotia and its' opportunities were promoted to participants at the event.

*Looking ahead - The Western REN's proposal to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to establish a new **Zonal Immigration Partnership (ZIP)** for the Western Region was green lighted for a feasibility study, 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 ZIP 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

The Western REN is currently exploring a Succession 2.0 concept. It has been demonstrated that working through the steps with prospective sellers adds value to REN services, opens the doors to potential new immigrants to the region and uncovers new business opportunities. Succession is important 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. Details on the evolution of the program will be shared in Q4.

Matters for noting

- The Regional Enterprise Networks' Partners for Progress conference was hosted by the Truro Colchester Partnership in Truro on November 26th-27th with 150 people in attendance. Topics included updates from all seven Regional Enterprises in the provincial network, immigration success, and the nature of new business in NS.
- The Western REN Workforce Committee has been reactivated since the Web.com closure announcement. The goal is to meet as a regional collective to provide a high-level briefing of the Web.com situation as it develops; share and understand partner mandates and discuss mobilization to support the transition.
- The Northern Pulp's impending closure will impact Western NS, with the forestry sector representing \$475 million of economic impact and 2,850 jobs annually. The RENs across the province have input into the transition process through an open line of communication to the Transition Team. The RENs primary role is collecting information and identifying local concerns and perspective to ensure they are considered in the delivery of public support. The Western REN met with the local forestry sector and public sector partners on January 31st and will continue to play a liaison role as the situation unfolds.



Western Regional Enterprise Network

AT A GLANCE - THIRD QUARTER - OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2019

Increasing investment within Western Nova Scotia through collaborative actions.

Engaging Private Sector <i>Direct client-facing services support businesses and provide needed data about strategic economic development needs.</i>	Engaging Public Sector <i>Coordinating and supporting municipal and business development partners to maximize investment opportunities.</i>	Targeting Talent Gaps <i>Work with all partners to increase successful recruitment and retention of needed workforce into the region.</i>
Continuous Improvement (CI) Have approved four companies to be on the roster of CI consultants available to regional participants. Between 10-20 companies will receive 5-10 days of CI expert consulting through this program.	Internet Announcements Three projects to bring fibre to the doors of 1,900 civic addresses will be completed by 2020. Two more funds are open for applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ CRTC \$750M for internet in rural Canada▪ Develop NS has released RFPs for long-term internet projects in rural NS	Connector The 3 rd Connector recognition event is on March 4 in Yarmouth. Will include release of new animated promotion video. Stats (since program launch): <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Connectors = 142▪ Connectees = 121▪ Known jobs found in the region = 50