

Q3 Western REN CEO Report  
October 1<sup>st</sup> – December 31<sup>st</sup> 2018

The activities laid out in the following report aim to *inform and connect* partners and clients while *accelerating* process and action.

### Strategic Actions

The following is a summary of *BusinessNow*'s Business Retention & Expansion program results extracted from Executive Pulse (CRM database) from the 2018-19 fiscal year-to-date.

<b>2018-19</b>	<b>Company Touch</b>	<b>Action Item Referrals</b>	<b>Journal Entries</b>
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	0	0	0
<b>Total 2018-19</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>66</b>
<i>Target</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>60</i>
<b>Total since program launch</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Notes:</b>			

Company Touch - a company which has been contacted and engaged with  
Action Item Referrals - Referrals made to Action Team Members (ACOA, CBDC, NSBI, etc)  
Journal Entries - Specific interactions made with client companies

The *BusinessNow* EDO met with several new companies in aquaculture, manufacturing, boat building and forestry extending from Digby to the Municipality of Barrington. Referrals were made covering staff training, start-up financing, employment services, and consulting assistance. The BRE survey was converted to electronic format in the form of an on-line survey, which provides broader reach than ever before. BRE training and certification was completed by *BusinessNow* EDO through BRE International.

The *Western REN Investment Opportunities & Strategies* has been completed, and the work has become known as '*Why Western NS?*'. It is the roll-out of FDI Tools for the value proposition and communications & engagement strategy. The Western REN, and its regional municipal partners, will work closely with NSBI on any investment attraction initiative in overlapping target sectors. 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](http://www.westernren.ca)). In Q3, the Renewable Energy component was presented at the Energy Ambassadors Symposium: The Future of Energy in Digby at the Digby Pines on October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Presenters discussed how the energy system in Nova Scotia and Digby is changing, proposed energy projects and companies that are working and want to work in the community and what other communities in Nova Scotia and

across Canada are doing. CEO LeBlanc presented regional Renewable Energy projects and opportunities, and underscored limitations of local grid capacity – a significant barrier to economic growth.

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 Western REN has been awarded \$55,000 towards this project (total project cost is \$165K – \$110K cash, \$55K in-kind). With a shift towards green energy across Nova Scotia, and wind, solar, biomass, and tidal energy generation opportunities within the Western Region, there is potential to lower greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, alleviate pressure on the grid, and find opportunities for efficiencies to save municipalities, businesses and residents money. The project will create a baseline of energy consumption, identifying opportunities for efficiencies, and energy performance benchmarking; identify areas that would benefit from local energy storage from locally generated green energy facilities; and identify opportunities for district energy and heating models.

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 program pairs individuals with local employers, civil servants and community leaders. Both agree to **one informal meeting** for discussing expertise, interests, industry news, current market issues, and hidden job opportunities in the Western Region. Several other Connector Programs have been launched (or extended) with other RENs across the province including Cape Breton, the Valley and Eastern Strait.

<b>2018-19</b>	<b>New Connectors</b>	<b>New Connectees</b>	<b>Initial Connections</b>	<b>Known jobs found in the region</b>
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	0	0	0	
<b>Total 2018-19</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>39</b>	
<i>Agreement Target</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>n/a</i>	
<b>Total since program launch</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>32</b>

The new Connectees who were registered in Q3 were referred to the program from various sources including two CBDCs, a previous Connectee who found employment through the program and a social media push using the Western REN and partners’ social media channels. Events at Université Sainte-Anne and NSCC are planned to inform graduating students who are now eligible to begin the connection process about the program. The Western REN will also be involved in a Newcomer Entrepreneurs’ event at Ignite Labs and planning the annual Connector Recognition luncheon.

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, along with Cape Breton Partnership, Now Lunenburg, Halifax Partnership and CDENE, were invited by the NS Office of Immigration to attend Destination Canada, a mobility forum held in Paris November 13-15<sup>th</sup> and Belgium on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018 which highlighted opportunities to live in work in provinces and territories other than Quebec. Western REN CEO shared information about working and living in the region and promoted opportunities through participation on a Nova Scotia panel, as well as through a booth set up to promote the area. Not only was it an opportunity to talk face to face with individuals exploring a move to Canada, it was a chance to promote the vibrancy of our region and consider what we may be lacking when we think of welcoming newcomers.

	<b>Companies designated</b>	<b>Known positions endorsed</b>	<b>Known families receiving permanent resident status</b>
<b>2018-19</b>			
Q1 Apr 1-June 30	13		
Q2 Jul 1-Sept 30	6		
Q3 Oct 1-Dec 31	11		
Q4 Jan 1-Mar 31			
<b>Total 2018-19</b>	<b>30</b>		
<i>Agreement Target over 24 months</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>160</i>	
<b>Total since program launch</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>6</b>

The 5<sup>th</sup> annual **Western REN Summit Building Prosperity, Building Community** took place on October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018. Public sector partners and private sector companies gathered to learn more about how to be attractive to the talent the region needs in its labor force. The goals were to increase acknowledgements by firms (inwardly) that their respective corporate cultures significantly impact recruitment and retention as it relates to immigration; deliver a positive message of the resources and supports available (mitigate fear); point clients to AIP, NSOI, Immigration Services Association of NS and YREACH. The Summit was facilitated by Atlantic Restorative Company and co-sponsored by the Western REN, NS Office of Immigration, and the CBDCs of Yarmouth, Digby/Clare, and Shelburne. 73 participants attended – 38 from the private sector and 35 from the public sector.

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 been meeting directly with **Internet** Service Providers (ISPs) within the region to identify shovel ready projects for the Province of Nova Scotia's upcoming Request for Proposals for enhancing broadband coverage in rural Nova Scotia. Western REN staff have signed non-disclosure agreements with these ISPs to get maps, costs, and ISP contribution amounts for proposed solutions that would fit the provincial RFP. These maps, and their related information are being presented to the councils of the Municipalities of Argyle, Barrington, Digby and Yarmouth, so that they may select a preferred ISP partner, prepare Letters of Support, and set aside potential financial contributions for the RFP. The proposed solutions received thus far are heavily in favor of wired internet access to the vast majority of homes, delivering the most futureproof solution available. Discussions continue with Develop Nova Scotia, who lead the file on behalf of the provincial government.

### **Matters for noting**

- The Western REN's L&O Chair, Board Vice-Chair and CEO presented to the Nova Scotia Deputy Ministers on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018 in Yarmouth. The presentation focused on the Western REN's work in the region and why the model is working, as well as a case study on workforce challenges.
- The Western REN assisted in the planning and delivery of an Innovation fête held in Yarmouth on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. This event was a celebration of Nova Scotia's entrepreneurial and innovation culture and was hosted by partners in the Innovation Districts (the Province of Nova Scotia, Halifax and Cape Breton Partnerships, Dalhousie, Cape Breton University and NSCC).
- A stakeholder and partner consultation session for the Western REN's next 3-year strategy took place on October 16<sup>th</sup> 2018. Board, staff and stakeholders have indicated that a strategy refresh rather than a rebuild is needed for the next three years to ensure continued momentum. A Municipal CAO consultation session took place via conference call on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018.

### **Looking ahead**

- One year after the completion of Western REN's Continuous Improvement pilot project, a Fam Tour was organised with partners from ACOA, Labor and Advanced Education, the Department of Fisheries and NSBI for December 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> 2018 to revisit four of the original participants, re-affirming that the impacts of the pilot were significant and ongoing. Discussions are underway with ACOA to launch a smaller CI program specific to the Western REN.



# Western Regional Enterprise Network

At a Glance—Third Quarter—October -December 2018

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.



### ***Succession Project***

Funding confirmed from Global Affairs Canada and NSCC.

*SuccessionMatching.com* provides an online platform to match business buyers and sellers.

Western REN will purchase and issue coupon codes to sellers and potential buyers. The coupons provide access to a number of services and tools important to the succession process.

*Program Launch: April 1, 2019*

## **Investment Readiness**

Setting the table to attract investment to Nova Scotia.



### ***Western Regional Energy Investment Plan (WREIP)***

Project will: create a regional baseline of energy consumption, identify efficiencies, identify opportunities for local energy storage and production, and identify district energy and heating opportunities.

## **Partnerships & Communications**

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



### ***Fam Tour***

One year after the Continuous Improvement Pilot, organized a Fam Tour to revisit pilot firms, confirming the ongoing impacts.

Organized by Western REN, and included: ACOA, Labour & Advanced Education, Fisheries, and NSBI.

In discussions with ACOA to launch a smaller CI program specific to Western REN.