

**Western Regional  
Enterprise Network**

*Informed*

**2018-2019  
Annual  
Report**

*Connected*

*Getting  
Results*



# Leadership Messages

## The Western REN an example of what effective economic development looks like.

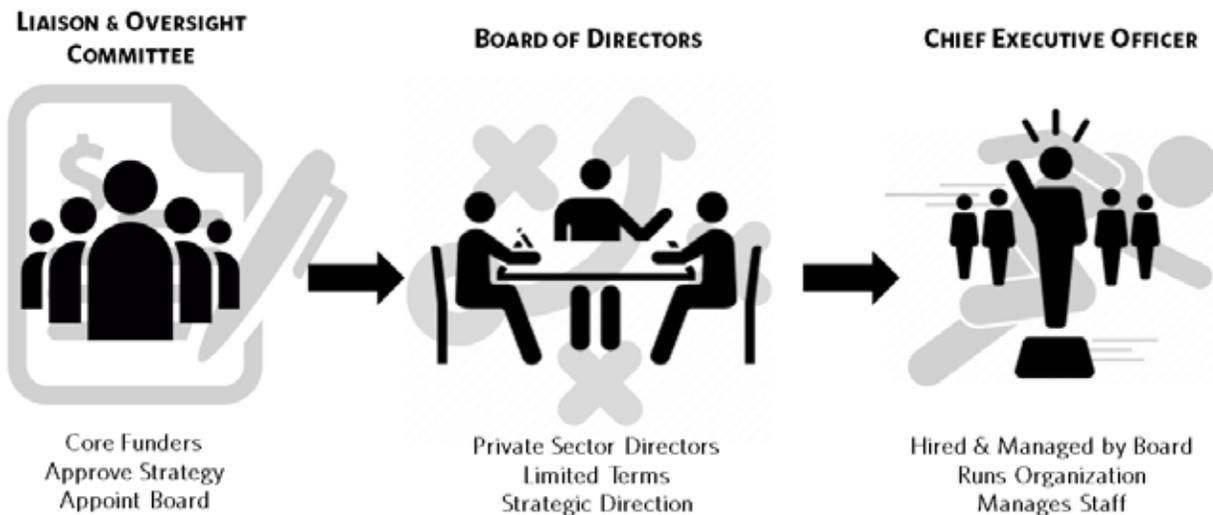
From the perspective of local government, the REN model is challenging silos and strengthening relationships, both of which will ultimately grow our economy - our shared end goal.

We are already seeing the impact as a region, due in large part to our ability as municipal units to trust the model and understand that what is good for one is good for all. As we say in our part of the world, a rising tide floats all boats. The willingness of the partners to trust this process means we are now sharing risks and rewards. It is great to witness the entire team at work.



*Yarmouth Mayor Pam Mood  
Chair, Liaison and Oversight Committee*

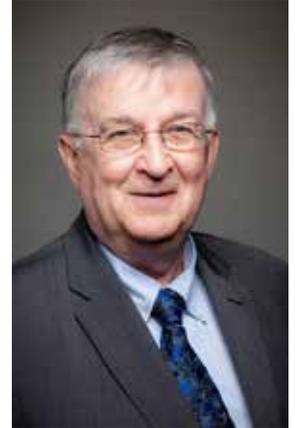
## Organizational Structure



# Leadership Messages

**The Western REN is dedicated** to maintaining and improving the prosperity of the people and businesses who live and work from Digby to Barrington.

We all share the challenges and benefits that come with being in this beautiful corner of the world. The REN's Directors are proud to be supporting a committed and professional staff team as they connect with businesses, identify issues, research solutions and make a difference in our local economy.



*Ron Smith*  
Chair, Western REN Board

**Economic development is a long-game.** Lasting impact and sustainable growth is the goal of the Western REN's economic development work.

We are committed to working with public partners towards overcoming the infrastructure barriers to economic development.

At the same time, we are working one-on-one with regional businesses, employers, and hidden talent to address immediate and pressing concerns. Our *BusinessNow* services help businesses clearly identify their need and navigate their way to solutions. From recruitment and training to expansion and marketing to start-ups and succession strategies - the Western REN is helping.



*Angélique LeBlanc*  
Chief Executive Officer

# Western REN Services & Programs

How can I retire from my business without closing the doors?

How can I increase the bottom line of my business?

I'm new to the region, how can I get to know the people in my field of work?

I keep hearing about great career opportunities in the region, but I can't seem to get an interview. How can I get a foot in the door?

I graduate soon and want to find a career in my chosen field. And I want to stay in the region.

I cannot find anyone to fill important positions in my business.

How can I help attract more people to the region?

**YOU HAVE QUESTIONS.  
WE HAVE ANSWERS.**

## ***BusinessNow***

A visitation program designed to identify and address internal business challenges and opportunities

## **Connector**

Intentional networking to uncover hidden talent and hidden jobs

## **Atlantic Immigration Pilot**

Employer-driven immigration stream to recruit talent from foreign labour markets

## **SuccessionMatching**

Access tools and services to best plan for buying or selling your business

## **Investment Readiness**

Supports to improve chances of successful investment attraction

# Testimonials

*"It was a joy to work with a newcomer to our area in connecting her with members of our community. These connections lead to a job placement with potential full-time employment, and ALL of us were able to share in her excitement as we witnessed the power of networking firsthand!"*

**Connector** from Yarmouth

*"From the idea stage through financing and business strategy, my BusinessNow contact showed a genuine passion for small business and a drive for the success of that business. BusinessNow is an integral service to our local entrepreneurs who need assistance and extra support."*

**BusinessNow** client from Yarmouth County

*"Western REN support throughout the AIP was invaluable, it made navigating the process much easier. That support helped me, as a small business, hire a foreign national for an essential position for which I could not find any local candidates. It means being able to open full hours and maintain and increase hours for other positions."*

**Atlantic Immigration Pilot** client from Digby Town

*As someone who has lived in Alberta for six years, I had lost a lot of my Nova Scotia connections and did not think it was possible to get a job so quickly. But with the connections I made through Western REN Connector Program, I was able to accept a job position close to home in my field of work."*

**Connectee** from Barrington

# BUSINESSNow

## 2018-19

2018-19 <i>BusinessNow</i> ACTIONS			
Action	Targets	Achievements	Desired Outcomes
Business Retention & Expansion Program Delivery Continues	60 visitations, referrals, & actions	Companies touched: 81 Referrals: 78 Actions: 102	Improved access to programs. Increased client program enrollment
Maintain and update the regional business directory; use to set strategic BRE targets.	Business directory with over 2000 listings.	2150 listings	Balanced distribution of BRE services across geography and target sectors
Continue to develop and promote information tools demonstrating the full continuum of services available to meet business needs	Three (3) industry/issue specific tools developed and in use	BusinessNow intake survey  HR Continuum and Immigration Continuum	Increased referrals and shared actions on behalf of businesses.
Guide businesses to succession planning and implementation	25 succession opportunities identified and tracked	50 coupon codes purchased 51 participants at program launch	Continuity for both business and clients. Attract entrepreneurs to existing business opportunities



*Partners in Succession Matching Pilot*

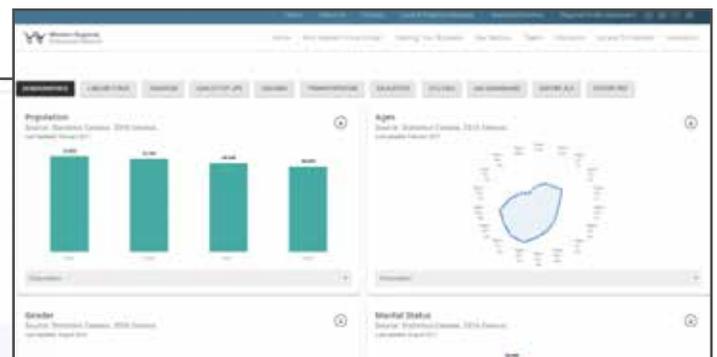
# INVESTMENT READINESS

## 2018-19

2018-19 INVESTMENT ATTRACTION ACTIONS			
Action	Targets	Achievements	Desired Outcomes
Incorporate familiarization tours within and between sectors into relationship building	Four (4) familiarization tours organized and conducted	Continuous Improvement follow-up tour (4 businesses) Ignite Labs Annapolis Basin Conference Centre	Private sector partners more aware of opportunities and challenges shared between businesses
Investment Readiness Training	Second round of IR training for municipalities	Leading investment inquiry responses Learned lessons by doing	Increased preparedness and response capacity across the region
Actively promote innovator and entrepreneur cross pollination	Platform identified, expanded, or created	Partner on Newcomers' Entrepreneur Ignition event	New businesses or growth opportunities created
Continue infrastructure working group with focus on rural internet	Follow-up work from Connect to Innovate proposal	Municipal collaboration on internet approach	Coordinated efforts underway, building solutions to internet infrastructure needs



Screenshot [www.investinwesternns.com](http://www.investinwesternns.com)



Screenshot Regional Profile Dashboard

# INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNICATIONS

## 2018-19

2018-19 IP&C ACTIONS			
Action	Targets	Achievements	Desired Outcomes
Implementation of Investment Opportunities and Strategies	Collateral materials of key sector value propositions	Why Western NS: 946 hits  Published collateral	Improved awareness of regional investment or growth opportunities.
Promote participation in the Atlantic Immigration Pilot	Support twelve (12) regional businesses to AIP designation	36 designations	More businesses permanently filling labour gaps through immigration
Fully implemented communications plan includes using partners to share messages	Increased amount of business content on partner platforms	1,009 hits on Westernren.ca 750 FB post likes 546 Twitter followers	Build confidence among businesses and partners. Raise profile of work in Western NS.
Continue to deliver Western Connector Program	Fifty (50) each of Connectors and Connectees	This fiscal: 44 Connectors 42 Connectees Since launch: 105 Connectors 88 Connectees	Increase retention of skilled workers in regional businesses.



*Promoting Connector Program*



*Building relationships*

# NEXT UP...

## INCREASING INVESTMENT

<i>ENGAGING PRIVATE SECTOR</i>	<i>ENGAGING PUBLIC SECTOR</i>	<i>ADDRESSING TALENT NEEDS &amp; GAPS</i>
<p><b>Building capacity and improving competitiveness within the region's business community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>BusinessNow</i> to support firms towards growth</li> <li>▪ Promote investment opportunities within the region and beyond</li> <li>▪ Partner to create solutions for infrastructure challenges</li> <li>▪ Uncovering hidden talent for employers</li> <li>▪ Create and lead opportunities to partner with the region's Chambers and Boards of Trade</li> </ul>	<p><b>Increasing Western Nova Scotia's ability to collectively capture economic opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue efforts towards improvements in internet and energy infrastructure</li> <li>▪ Collaborate with municipal economic development offices to broaden the impact of everyone's work</li> <li>▪ Provide lead handling services for investment inquiries within the region</li> <li>▪ Coordinate and lead training and skills development among regional partners</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reversing the trend of persistent labour shortages within the region</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Connector program continued and expanded to attract boomerangers</li> <li>▪ Take a lead role in coordinating immigration services that relate to workforce and regional talent</li> <li>▪ Continue delivery of Atlantic Immigration Pilot</li> <li>▪ Support and encourage a regional placemaking plan of action in support of talent attraction and retention</li> </ul>



*Creating opportunities for more connections*



# Collaborative Effort Helps Clear Red Tape To Bring New Anesthesiologist To Yarmouth

Posted on Wednesday, May 1, 2019 12:59 PM

There was letters to of May, w

...major collaborative effort among all three levels of government, the Western REN, the NSHA and the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce

While that from the Yarmouth Regional Hospital this week.

The doctor is from I... been delayed by lots of red tape.

...collaborative effort among all three levels of the Yarmouth and Area Chamber of Commerce.



## Immigration focus of Western REN summit in Yarmouth

Eric Bourque (eric.bourque@westernren.ca) Published: Oct 19, 2018 at 11:44 a.m. Updated: Oct 19, 2018 at 6:47 p.m.

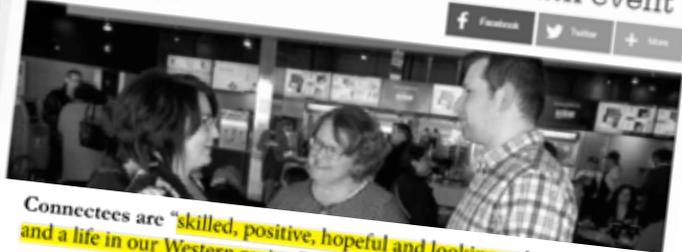
Neutral

...to increase western Nova Scotia's population...we need to embrace diversity in all aspects of our communities...



## Western REN says thanks to participants in 'connector' program during Yarmouth event

Eric Bourque (eric.bourque@westernren.ca) Published: Mar 19 at 6:46 p.m.



Connectees are "skilled, positive, hopeful and looking to build a career and a life in our Western region."

Connectors "believe in the region and are proud and happy to help those connectees build their network ..."



## Southwest Nova bright spot for solar power

Carla Allen (carla.allen@westernren.ca) Published: Apr 17 at 11:57 a.m. Updated: Apr 18 at 12:19 p.m.

...photo voltaic potential on par with some of the major solar generators in Canada."

Region comparable to solar potential

Southwest Nova Scotia has a solar potential similar to that of some of the major solar generators in Canada.



## THEN AND NOW: Rural internet efforts continue as we travel the information highway in southwestern Nova Scotia

Eric Bourque (eric.bourque@westernren.ca) Published: Oct 19 2018 at 12:02 p.m. Updated: Oct 19 2018 at 11:19 a.m.



"To be able to do business from southwestern Nova Scotia, on a global scale, it is critical that we have that information highway."

## Liaison and Oversight Committee - Funding Partners

Municipality of Argyle	Councillors Lucien LeBlanc, Guy Surette (alternate)
Municipality of Barrington	Warden Eddie Nickerson, Councillor Shaun Hatfield (alternate)
Municipality of Clare	Warden Ronnie LeBlanc, Councillor Yvon LeBlanc (alternate)
Municipality of Digby	Warden Jimmy MacAlpine, Deputy Warden Linda Gregory (alternate)
Municipality of Yarmouth	Councillors Patti Durkee, Trevor Cunningham (alternate)
Town of Digby	Mayor Ben Cleveland, Councillor Mike Bartlett (alternate)
Town of Yarmout	Mayor Pam Mood, Councillor Wade Cleveland (alternate)
Municipal Affairs	Ahmad Shawhan
Labour & Advanced Education	Ross MacDonald

## Board of Directors



Ron Smith  
*Board Chair*



Clark Sigfridson  
*Board Vice-Chair*



David Arenburg  
*Committee Chair*



Nick d'Eon



Craig LeBlanc



Warner Comeau



Allister Surette



Mary Thompson



Misty Morrison



Benjamin Shearer



James Symonds

Vacant

## Staff at May 2019



Angélique LeBlanc  
*CEO*



Keval Goreham  
*Accounting Clerk & Office Manager*



Matthew Trask  
*BusinessNow Lead*



Gino Thibeault  
*Immigration Lead*



Erika Rolston  
*Communication & Investment*



Brenda LaGrandeur  
*Connector Manager*



Evan Nemeth  
*Research Lead*

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