



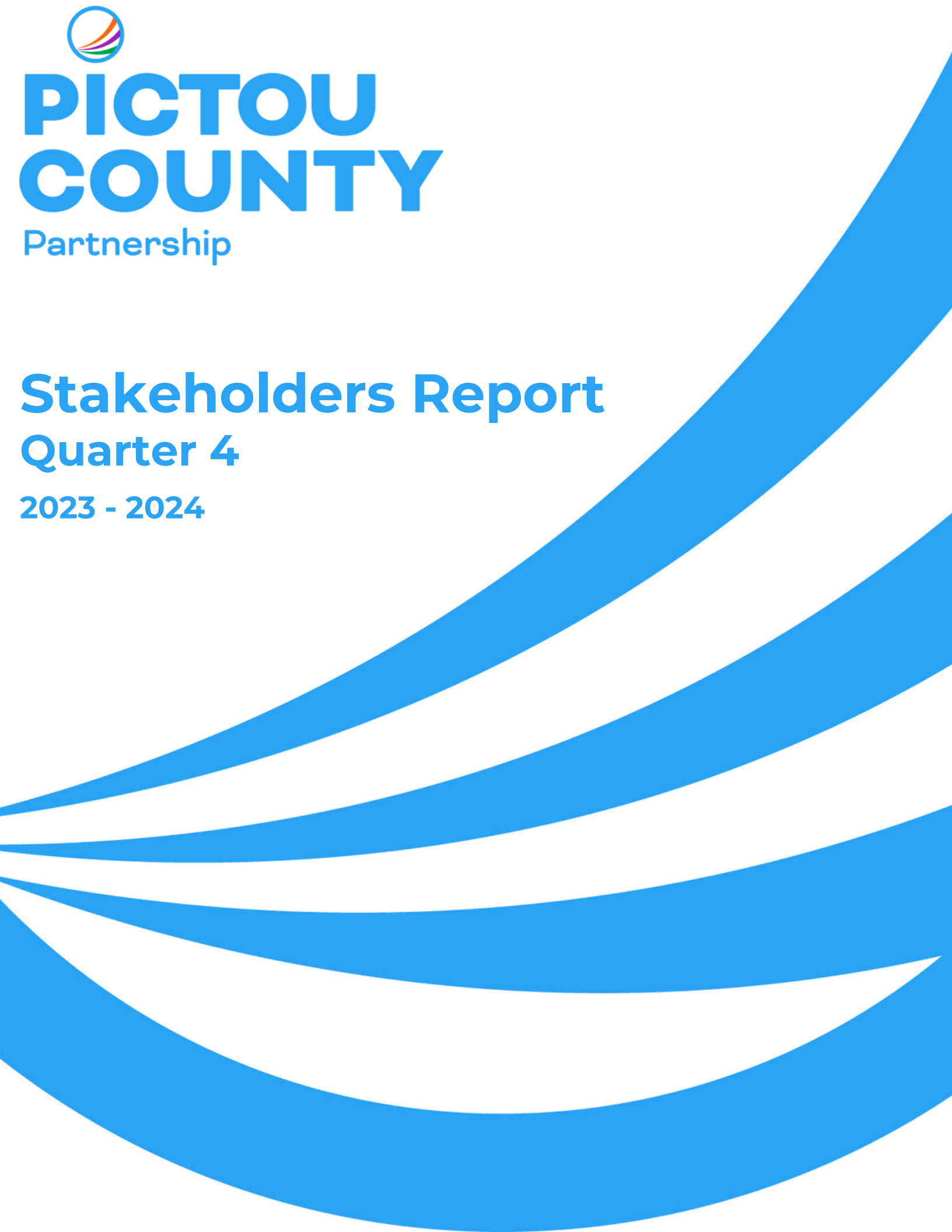
PICTOU COUNTY

Partnership

Stakeholders Report

Quarter 4

2023 - 2024



CEO Message

Another impactful quarter is behind us. The 2023/24 fourth quarter was marked by significant milestones, each a testament to our dedication towards fostering a more prosperous Pictou County for everyone.

Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion was underscored through a DEI workshop for municipal and community leaders, an initiative that promises to enrich our community's fabric with greater understanding and unity.

A highlight of this quarter was the launch of the 3rd cohort of the Side Hustle coaching program. 35 entrepreneurs in this quarter alone connected to this innovative program through our Starter Kit webinar with about a third of those getting accepted into the invaluable one-on-one, 10-week, coaching program. This program reinforces our commitment to nurturing local talent, ambition, and inclusivity. Fun fact, the vast majority of entrepreneurs utilizing this program are women.

Further elevating our impact was the introduction of our second cohort of ELEVATE, designed to propel six additional businesses to the next level through a combination of continuous improvement and innovation. This program embodies our mission to elevate local businesses, ensuring they thrive and contribute meaningfully to our economy.

Our business transition workshop, Elevate Your Business Value, was another milestone. This workshop reached full capacity and provided businesses with the crucial starting point for growth and succession planning. This initiative helped participants assess their current value and devise actionable plans to achieve their aspirations, a cornerstone for sustainable business development in our region.

A tour of the Atlantic Home Building and Renovation Sector Council spotlighted Pictou County as a hub of activity in the home building sector. Visiting Twin Rivers, Trenton Woodworks, and affordable housing projects undertaken by the Nova Scotia Cooperative Council showcased our county's vibrant contribution to the sector, highlighting our community's capacity for innovation. We will be working alongside our partners to address workforce challenges in the construction sector to help alleviate pressures on the housing supply in the region, so we are able to attract more people to our community.

These are just some of the highlights of our work in Q4. I encourage you to read the entire report and look at our scorecard which highlights the impressive amount of work our team has accomplished. As always, please feel free to reach out to me directly should you wish to chat about any of the work we are doing, or if you see gaps the Partnership can help address to ensure an inclusive, sustainable, and thriving Pictou County.



Wade Tibbo, CEO
Pictou County Partnership

Pictou County Partnership 2023-2024 Scorecard

Supporting Business Growth and Sustainability	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL YTD	GOAL
# of business interactions (outreach, BRE, mainstreeting etc.)	75	60	160	101	396	300
# of businesses receiving program navigation support (providing navigation to other programs & organizations etc.)	45	36	96	31	208	200
Work with businesses on their start-up, growth or succession plans	26	20	56	23	125	80
Elevate program - # participants	8				8	8
Speaker series (business to business interactions)	Planning for launch in Q2	1	1		2	4
Business networking event (in partnership with other economic organizations)	Open House	1	1	1	3	2
Strengthening Sectors for Investment & Attraction	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Source funds for sector exploration and development		1		2	3	3
Immigration and Community Integration	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL YTD	GOAL
Collect labour market data	4	15	10	48	77	100
# of employers engaged in AIP, PNP, and EMPP	17	23	25	11	76	20
# of workforce events (AIP & PNP)	6	1	4	1	12	2
# of attendees	60	15	40	30	145	40
Participate in LIP committee	3	2	2	2	9	
Tool development	Employer Immigration Ready Workbook & Employer Guide to Inclusive and Welcoming Workplaces launched	Workplace Orientation Template Guide	Workplace Orientation Template Guide Payroll section: content complete	Workplace Orientation Template Guide - Research Complete. New Immigration sub-brand developed.		
Promote DEI initiatives (# of events)	Sourcing Workshop Facilitator	DEI workshops scheduled for October & February	2	DEI workshop held with 34 registered	2	
Partnering & Communicating Economic Success	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
# of stories developed	6	6	3	7	22	24
# of Pulse surveys	1	1		1	3	4
# of newsletters	3	2	5	7	17	10
Social media posts	104	104	185		393	104
Small business social media campaign			1	2	3	3
Small business appreciation event (October 17, 2023)			1		1	1
# of media releases	5	1	1	4	11	4
Cross-organizations collaboration events		15	4	3	22	2

What's Been Happening at The Partnership

Business Development Updates

ELEVATE PROGRAM

March - June

- Elevate is a business improvement program designed to offer customized support to entrepreneurs to address challenges, explore opportunities and reach new heights in their business. The program consists of workshops and one-on-one coaching and runs from March to June.
- 12 applicants, 6 accepted participants.

GET READY FOR TAX TIME

February 22

- Workshop specially designed for sole proprietors with valuable insights and tips to ensure a smooth tax season.
- 10 registrants - 90% were in business for 2 years or less.

NEWCOMER WORKSHOP

March 19

- Workshop for participants to learn about the ISANS Market Ready Project.
- Was offered both in person and virtually.
- 6 registrants.

SIDE HUSTLE PROGRAM

February - June

- The Side Hustle program is designed for early-stage and aspiring entrepreneurs seeking to turn their passion into a successful side hustle. This empowering coaching program helps participants conquer mindset barriers and develop the skills needed to navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship.
- 35 future entrepreneurs registered for the introductory Side Hustle Starter Kit Webinar.
- Cohort 3 began on March 12th with 9 accepted participants in the 10-week program.

Elevate Your Business Value Workshop



Workbook

Elevate your Business Value

Exercise #1: Future Self and Freedom.....	5.
Exercise #2: Mindset Shortcuts.....	7.
Exercise #3: The Owner's Trap.....	9.
Exercise #4: The Scalability Finder.....	11.
Exercise #5: Rank Your Employees.....	13.
Exercise #6: Cash Flow.....	15.
Exercise #7: The Monopoly Control.....	17.
Exercise #8: Report Review.....	19.
Exercise #9: Action Planner.....	21.
Exercise #10: 30 - 60 - 90.....	23.



Wendy Brookhouse, Black Star Wealth

The Elevate Your Business Value Workshop, hosted by The Partnership and facilitated by Wendy Brookhouse of Black Star Wealth, proved to be an impactful and enriching experience for all who participated. Crafted as a day-long endeavor tailored specifically for entrepreneurs looking to enhance the value of their businesses, which may some day be sold to employees, or a third party, the workshop delivered a comprehensive blend of practical insights, interactive sessions, and motivational guidance.

Prior to the workshop, participants engaged in a preparatory process, including completing an assessment of their businesses, and engaging in one-on-one consultations with Wendy. This personalized approach set the stage for a highly tailored and focused workshop experience, ensuring that each attendee's unique circumstances and aspirations were addressed.

One of the standout features of the workshop was its inclusivity, welcoming participants from various stages of business ownership. From those on the cusp of retirement, anticipating a sale within the year, to budding entrepreneurs with plans a decade (or more) away, the diverse representation added depth to the discussions. Through collaborative exercises, group discussions, and expert guidance, attendees gained actionable insights and concrete strategies for enhancing their businesses' value.

As the workshop concluded, participants departed with newfound knowledge and a clear set of action items tailored to their specific goals and circumstances.

The event served as a catalyst for empowering local entrepreneurs to take proactive steps towards maximizing the value of their businesses, setting them on a path towards long-term success and fulfillment.

- Participants created 30, 60, and 90 day action items for their businesses.
- The Partnership will be following up with all participants.
- Given the success of the workshop, The Partnership anticipates offering it again in the future.

What's Been Happening at The Partnership

Immigration & Community Integration Updates

DEI WORKSHOP

February 16

- Workshop Facilitator: TK Manyimo (Shumba Consulting).
- Next steps: Community Network Grant proposal submitted to the Office of Equity and Antiracism to support development of a regional DEI strategy for Pictou County (\$25,000 requested).
- 38 registered participants – with strong representation from Municipalities and partner organizations.



METROPOLIS CANADA CONFERENCE

March 13 - 15

- Director of Immigration & Community Integration presented on a panel with Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada.
- Shared work using the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP).



Community Connections

SKATING EVENT

February 2

- Partnership with the YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs (YREACH).
- 15 volunteers recruited during this Community Connections event.
- Transportation, food and venue rental funded through The Partnership's agreement with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).
- 35 participants attended.



Community Connections: Lunch & Learn Volunteer Event



On February 29th, the Pictou County Partnership hosted the Volunteer Appreciation Lunch & Learn, a special event dedicated to recognizing the invaluable contributions of volunteers who play a vital role in supporting newcomers as they integrate into the community. This gathering also marked the official launch of The Partnership's expanded Community Connections newcomer volunteer matching initiative.

Funded through The Partnership's agreement with Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the Community Connections program fosters meaningful connections between newcomers and volunteers in Pictou County as a welcoming community hug.



The Partnership invites volunteers and organizations to get involved, and we look forward to coordinating a community effort, so that Pictou County is experienced as a welcoming community by newcomers.

The event featured compelling insights from distinguished guest speakers: Bahati Ernestine: As a labour mobility consultant with RefugePoint and a Registered Nurse with the Nova Scotia Health Authority, Bahati shared her experiences and reflections on the impactful role of volunteerism in supporting newcomers' settlement and contributing to the creation of a welcoming community.

Tinaye (TK) Manyimo: TK, the Principal and Founder of Shumba Consulting, provided valuable insights into life skills enhancing cultural competency for individuals and volunteers dedicated to helping newcomers settle.



The Volunteer Appreciation Lunch & Learn event exemplified the Pictou County Partnership's commitment to recognizing and celebrating the dedication of volunteers while launching initiatives that enhance the community's inclusivity and support for newcomers.

Media Coverage:

Click [here](#) to read the Saltwire article:

[Welcoming Newcomers With Open Arms: Pictou County Partnership Expands Program and Celebrates Volunteers](#)

What's Been Happening at The Partnership

Partnering & Communicating Economic Success

VALENTINES DAY

February

- Asked public to 'send the love' to a favourite locally owned business by nominating them on the Facebook Post.
- Post received 167 comments, with 99 individual businesses being nominated.

INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY

March

- Asked public to nominate their favourite women-led businesses to be featured in a Spotlight Story on our website.
- Post received 287 comments, with 122 individual businesses being nominated.

NEWSLETTERS

January - March

- Currently, our mailing list includes 167 contacts.
- The Partnership sent out 7 newsletters between January and March

Click [here](#) if you would like to subscribe to Pictou County Partnership's biweekly newsletter, '[Pictou County Chronicles](#).'

SPOTLIGHT STORIES

January - March

- The following 6 businesses were featured on The Partnership's website in Quarter 4:
 - McKean's Flowers
 - The Meadow's Retreat & Creative Space
 - Green Escape Properties
 - Radiant Health Solutions
 - Raw Edge Pet Health
 - Ansen Hair Salon

Click [here](#) to read past [Spotlight Stories](#).

Tour with Atlantic Home Building and Renovation Sector Council

The Partnership is working to enhance our relationships with Industry Sector Councils to better understand labour market conditions and explore opportunities to support initiatives that will result in economic benefits in our region.

We recently connected with the Atlantic Home Building and Renovation Sector Council (AHRBSC) who have funding in place to offer micro-credential programs to address training gaps in the housing construction sector. Still in the planning phase, the AHRBSC was interested in connecting with local home builders to learn about skill sets shortages and explore potential sites for the training programs.

On March 1st, the Partnership hosted a tour for Kerri Marshall (Workforce Development Manager) and Kevin Hooper (Project Manager of Social Enterprise and Workplace Equity) from the AHRBSC to highlight the innovative work being done right here in Pictou County.

The day started with a tour of Coady's Place, a 36-unit co-op housing site where people's rent is based on 30 per cent of their annual income. Formerly the Tara Motel, the building was purchased by the Nova Scotia Cooperative Council in 2022 and renovated into small bachelor suites. Phase Two of Coady's Place is currently under construction and will include larger units more suitable for families. With financial support from 3 levels of government, Coady's Place is a living example of cooperative impact at work to fulfill the need of communities.

We then moved on to Twin Rivers Home Builders in Granton, the only manufacturer of mini and modular homes in Nova Scotia. Here we gained insights into the efficiencies of constructing homes at their central 34,000 square foot facility, then transporting them, rather than building each unit onsite. Our guests from AHRBSC were impressed with the facility and were able to have discussions with owner Blair Van Veld about specific labour markets skill gaps.

The final stop for the day was East Cut Wood Building Solutions (Trenton Woodworks) where we toured their massive facility and gained a new appreciation of the benefits and opportunities of prefabricated construction. At Trenton Woodworks, they leverage their unique fabrication technology to construct multi-unit buildings and other commercial and residential-type buildings efficiently. While their main products are building components, such as floor cassettes and wall and roof panels, we were fortunate to see how these modular components are being assembled into classrooms that will then become a new school. The benefits of prefabricated construction include shorter construction cycles, cost-effectiveness, enhanced consistency and quality control.

The AHRBSC sees many possibilities of partnerships to develop hands-on skills training opportunities. The Partnership will continue to work with them to provide local opportunities for skill development and filling workforce gaps in the construction sector. The shortage of housing is often cited as a barrier to attracting people to our region and supporting economic growth – and at the Partnership we want to help alleviate any barriers to economic development. While we can't build the houses –we can do our part by connecting businesses and organizations to create local opportunities.



What's Been Happening at The Partnership

Networking Event



- Co-hosted by the Federation of African Canadian Economics (FACE) and TRIBE, this event brought together Black business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs for an evening of networking at the IGNITE Auditorium.
- This new partnership helps our team gain insights on how to help pave the way for empowerment and growth of support this sector of the business landscape.
- 16 attendees.



New Faces at the Partnership

Victoria Curtis



Victoria has joined our Immigration and Community Integration team in the role of Immigration Readiness and Support Coordinator. Victoria will be connecting with employers to understand their labour market challenges and opportunities, while supporting them through the process of hiring international talent through the Atlantic Immigration Program or Nova Scotia Nominee Program. Victoria has lived immigration experience having successfully navigated the immigration process through the Atlantic Immigration Program when she and her husband came to New Glasgow in 2018 from Rugby, England.

Jean-Luc Lewis



Jean-Luc joined our team as a Project Intern, Economic Growth in March and will be working on the Investment Attraction project supported by the CanExport Community Investment grant agreement. His main role will be to complete an asset map for Pictou County that will be a key component of materials to support a Foreign Direct Investment strategy for the region. Jean-Luc is new to New Glasgow, having relocated here from Jamaica in December 2023. He holds a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of East London (UK) and a Bachelor of Science in Management Studies from the University of the West Indies (Jamaica). With over 8 years of experience in community and business development work he brings much enthusiasm to his new role.

Business Spotlight

Angela Cromwell - Ansena Hair Salon

When doors continue to shut on you, an entrepreneurial path can become a necessity over a choice. Though she's been busy for 13 years now, it hasn't been an easy journey for Angela Cromwell. In the early 2000's, after living in Toronto for 20 years working as a restaurant manager, divorce brought Cromwell, her son, and twin daughters' home to Pictou County.

Her endless search for work here continued to result in disappointment. "Coming home and not finding anything was hard," she said. "You weren't going to find something appear, you had to create it." There are many tasks that come with relocating, and finding a new hairdresser is often among the difficult ones. Countless calls to every town left her with nowhere she could take her daughters to get their hair done. The girls wanted relaxer, a chemical hair straightener treatment. "They said, 'just buy the pack and do it yourself mom,'" said Cromwell. "My brain said, 'go back to school.'" So, she began considering applying for the cosmetology program at Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC). "I was thinking, 'why was there still no one doing this?'" She couldn't believe that in the 20 years she had been gone, there was still a gap in the services available for ethnic hair.

In 2003, at 40-years-old, Cromwell became a student again. She was the first person of colour to attend the cosmetology program at NSCC in 17 years.

When she finished the year-long course, she began her job hunt. She applied everywhere, some places multiple times, with no success. "They found ways to say, 'we don't want you here,'" said Cromwell. "I applied one place and was told they didn't need anyone to clean their floors," she said. "But I remembered my ex-husband saying I was never going to find a job, and I said, 'want to bet?'" She persisted in her employment search, and after facing constant rejection, she was offered a position at a salon chain from Halifax that had opened in the County.

Building her clientele was a challenge, but slowly, it grew. She was finally working, finally using the skills she had learned. She was enjoying her working life.

But she had a broader skillset she wasn't utilizing, and desperately wanted to. Cromwell expressed her idea to start offering extension services but was turned down. Later, the salon chain would open an extension shop in Halifax.

The salon wanted her to charge more for her services on clients with ethnic hair, because it took longer. It didn't sit right with her. "I thought maybe it's time to leave," she said. "I became a hairdresser to make a living, not a million," said Cromwell.



She worked in a few other salons before accepting that the only way she was going to do this the way she wanted was with her own shop, and she knew exactly what she would do differently. She found a space and sourced equipment from a retiring hairdresser. All she needed was \$10,000 for supplies to get started.

She was told her business plan wasn't viable by various community resources. Her busy mentor had said to her, "can't you figure it out yourself?"

"So that's what I did," said Cromwell. "But you can only run into so many brick walls until you stop running."

Despite her constant perseverance, her options were exhausted. Then one day, her father-in-law asked her, "how much do you need to make this happen?"

"If it hadn't been for him, I wouldn't have had a shot," she shared. She met her now husband just a few short weeks after moving home to Pictou County. "It was seriously love at first sight," she said. The support from him and his family has been instrumental in Cromwell's journey, and something she is grateful for.

With the funds finally acquired, Ansena Hair Salon, a place where anyone could go to get their hair done, was officially open.

In 2024, Cromwell is the only hairdresser working on ethnic hair from Truro through Cape Breton, with clients coming from around the province.

She's facilitated seminars as NSCC, taken on students, and taught CCA ethnic hair care courses. She has operated her salon with her clients as her top priority. "People are worth it," she said. "They come to the hairdresser not just to get their hair done sometimes ... I enjoy spending time with my clients."

Making her clients feel their best is why she's continued in this business despite every setback. A few years ago, she incorporated wig services into her repertoire.

Making her clients feel their best is why she's continued in this business despite every setback. A few years ago, she incorporated wig services into her repertoire.

When her mom was diagnosed with cancer, she went to Halifax in search of a wig that would help her feel like herself again. Cromwell described the wig she returned with, the only one she could afford, as a "red plastic wig."

She sells her wig line called Zima, meaning "whole," at cost. "Wondering if you can afford to replace your hair should not be a part of considering chemotherapy," she said.

Since carrying her wig line, she has connected with the cancer after care program at the hospital. She recommends these clients see her before starting treatment so she can find a wig that best matches their real colour.

I give back for my mom," she said. "Having the wigs, it fills in that part that feels like it's missing ... It's a great feeling when you see someone come in and know they've found what they were looking for, and if we don't have it, I'll find it," said Cromwell.

Since opening, her business has grown and changed, as all businesses do. Perms are no longer the most popular hair treatment, and she now steers clients away from relaxers and chemicals that damage their hair. “The thing I said I’d never do; I do all the time.”

When her girls were young, they asked for braids. Cromwell spent an entire day and night braiding their hair. When they took them out at school the next day, the frustrated mom vowed to never do braids.

“And what did my first client want? Braids,” she said through laughter.

She has always run Ansena on her own, however, finding someone interested in learning about ethnic hair to join her has been on her radar.

“I will retire,” she said. “It would be wonderful to pass this on.”

She’s lived a full and exciting life, raising her family, running her business, and even performing for the Queen of England. “She stopped me and asked my name and told me I had a beautiful voice and would go far,” said Cromwell. “But helping someone, seeing them get out of the chair and know they’re feeling 100% their best, nothing beats that.”

Angela Cromwell is a firm believer that she was put here for a reason. She’s fought to accomplish every piece of her journey, facing prejudice and adversity but persisting, nonetheless. She didn’t set out to be an entrepreneur, running her own business and servicing a previously unserved clientele, but she is, and she has loved doing it.

“I’ll never make a million, but I love my job,” she said. That’s why she’s still here, doing business in Pictou County, where we’re so fortunate to have her.



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