

# Monthly Report

## Business Development

### April 2024

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The result of the application to the NS Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund for an LED Streetlighting pilot project with the inclusion of an Adaptive Controls network is still pending and is expected to be announced in April.

As part of the 2023 Emerging Destinations Program, media content produced from a social media influencer's visit to Amherst last fall is being used to refresh the Amherst landing page on [novascotia.ca](http://novascotia.ca). More stories, businesses and attractions will be added to the page in the coming month. In addition, the 2023 Compelling Tourism Communities Travel Media Project produced a large collection of YouTube videos, website articles, and social media posts that were generated from a week-long tour of the Cumberland Region. These productions can be accessed at: [thegate.ca](http://thegate.ca). Future tourism promotion will use this fresh content pool to promote the area to potential visitors.

Moving forward, another Digital Content Marketing Program in 2024 will include a Digital Marketing Project and a Content Production Project. This project, cost-shared with Tourism NS, will run throughout the summer and fall of 2024. Media Agencies will be visiting Amherst during this period to collect images and videos to be used in a digital marketing campaign leading into 2025.

An RFP for ACOA's Destination Market Readiness Program will be released in April for a consultant to review Cumberland Region's tourism assets and assess the feasibility of a Marketing Levy. This project will also include a tourism-focused digital presence analysis of the region.

Magazine advertisements will run in 2024 edition of SaltScapes Food and Travel Guide and the SEA Nova Scotia Staycation Guide. Each magazine targets a different demographic. The 2024 SaltScapes guide has a tightly targeted distribution to high-end consumers and primary grocery shoppers with an estimated viewing of over 500,000 people in Eastern Canada. The Sea Nova Scotia Staycation Guide will be distributed locally and displayed at visitor centers across Nova Scotia targeting the 100,000 travellers in our Province.

The five-year, Nature 1 Challenge Funding Program is closed with the final report summarizing the activities and land acquisition submitted. The Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change has confirmed a new program called the Nova Scotia Nature Agreement, which has been signed with the Federal government. If the Town of Amherst decides to enter into another program contract, any open projects or opportunities for trade and land acquisition will be able to continue under the new agreement.

Town staff and the CEO from the Cumberland Business Connector met with Invest NS's Regional Investment Attraction Executive, Heather Hennigar, to discuss investment strategies and review strategic sectors for growth for the Amherst Industrial Park. Commercial and Industrial market interest continues to build along the Moncton to Halifax corridor generating an increase in opportunities for the area.

Staff continue to participate in Clean Energy Financing best practices seminars to help advance and grow participation in the Town of Amherst/Clean Foundation's Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE). Other municipalities in Nova Scotia are advocating expanding PACE programs to ensure participation is accessible and affordable regardless of income and making Nova Scotia become Canada's leader in affordable deep energy retrofit programming. The Town of Amherst has been asked to support this effort.

The 2023-2024 Gritty to Pretty Program closed on March 31, 2024, final reporting will be submitted in the month of April. A 2024-2025 Provincial Beautification and Streetscaping funding program is expected to be released in May. The Cumberland Chamber of Commerce has informed staff that due to capacity restraints they will not be able to manage a Gritty to Pretty Program for this year. Staff are investigating potential alternatives to administer the program for the coming year.

An Immigrant Information Session put on the by the Federal Government is scheduled for May. This Town sponsored event will teach businesses how to leverage the immigration system as an option to address their labour needs by bringing together the key organizations involved in hiring and retaining foreign nationals. This event has an expected attendance of 50-75 persons.

The monthly workshop in the Team Cumberland series of "2024 Wednesday Workshops" was held on March 20<sup>th</sup> at the NSCC Springhill Campus lecture room. This event was an evening session on "The Dos and Don'ts of HR" hosted by Industry Professional, Alex Cann. The next scheduled workshop focusing on Supply Chain is on Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> from 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm.

NS Works Job Fair at the Amherst Stadium is scheduled for Thursday, May 16<sup>th</sup>. Organizers are expecting 50 local businesses and organizations to participate as vendors. The Town of Amherst continues to be a sponsor and participant of this event.

The Amherst Downtown Business Association did not hold a meeting in March due to scheduling issues.