

INNOVATION

CAPE BRETON Summit

Background:

Following several meetings of key stakeholders representing community development, culture, heritage, the arts, education and the private sector discussion led to a consensus that a Cape Breton Island-wide strategy to develop a broad based culture strategy is timely and needed. The scheduling of the *Innovation Cape Breton Summit* relates to a number of antecedent factors including:

- Conclusions of the Ivany Report
- Results of the Creative Economy Conference
- New Dawn's Holy Angels Culture and Art Centre Revitalisation Project
- Cape Breton Partnership's forming of the Prosperity Framework
- NS government commitment to develop a Provincial Culture Strategy

Several common themes have emerged from these initiatives, but critical to the *Innovation Cape Breton Summit* is entrepreneurialism and economic growth tied to local cultural assets.

Preparation for the May 12 Summit involved Annette Verschuren, Dr. David Wheeler, Mayor Cecil Clarke, Tiffany Swanson, Tanya Collier-MacDonald, Norma Boyd, Erika Shea, Paula MacNeil, Lori Burke, and Catherine Arseneau.

The two-hour event was an interactive workshop bringing together island-wide representatives and decision makers in the arts, culture, and heritage sectors, municipal units, the private sector, education, and provincial and federal governments. The goal was to build consensus toward the development of an Island-wide culture and heritage strategy. The event was chaired by Dr. David Wheeler, CBU President, and included statements from Annette Verschuren, Chancellor CBU, and comments from Minister Lisa Raitt. Other important contributions were made by Marcel McKeough, NS Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage, Lori Burke, Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design, Catherine Arseneau, Beaton Institute, and Keith MacDonald, Cape Breton Partnership.

Participants were drawn from the various cultural networks of organisers including museums and heritage organisations, artists and artisans, performers and musicians, festival and events planners, private sector operators, municipalities and municipal councillors, educators, and interested individuals. Final attendee list numbered 100 participants, with a few additional walk-ins.

Wendy Bergfeldt of CBC Mainstreet broadcast the session live, allowing for the public to hear the progress and content of the event. [NOTE: no longer available:] The proceedings can be heard at: <http://www.cbc.ca/mainstreetcb/blog/2014/05/12/cbu-innovation-conference/>

The event included two round-table discussions. The first had participants share with their group their successes and what inspires them in the work they do. The table was asked to craft a future vision for Cape Breton Island's creative, cultural, and heritage industries. During the second discussion session, participants shared amongst their table what role they/their organisation could play in Cape Breton Island's economic future, to identify key factors for success of an Island-wide strategy.

Tables then put forward one person to present one key item in one minute to the group at large. These reports are captured on the Mainstreet broadcast. Other topics of discussion were gathered following the session, and are documented here.

Findings:

The session reports were all favourable of engaging stakeholders in a collaborative approach to advance and economically develop the creative, cultural, and heritage sectors. Participants articulated the research which would need to be done to support the planning. Comments captured from the table notes provide insight into what the strategy could include, and also what it should avoid and work towards. The Island-wide approach was supported, even to the tune of "Kelly's Mountain is falling down..." courtesy of Jim St Clair. The participants felt the time was right and expressed a commitment to work together toward an Island cultural framework. The notion of using the strengths of our authentic cultural and natural assets for entrepreneurial and economic growth was broadly supported.

There were also notes of caution shared. Some warned against the commodification of the arts, others shared that this is about people, not profits. It was also noted that, while it is good to work together, we cannot reinvent the wheel or simply mirror each other's activities.

Next Steps:

Participants shared a variety of next steps, both short and long term, ranging from asset mapping and identification of resource persons, to potential partnerships and future projects to initiate.

The Cape Breton Partnership's Prosperity Framework was identified as the mechanism where this discussion and initiative could take life, and live within a broader Island economic plan. Cape Breton University was identified as one possibility to spearhead research and help provide the future dialogue and process leadership.

Innovation Cape Breton Summit Discussion Session One

Success Stories of Organisations:

- 80% of clients from outside of Canada, 99% outside Cape Breton (exporting product) with Marcato, a developer of Events software
- Education and engagement of youth within organisations
- Celtic Colours engages all of Cape Breton—a great example of an event that singlehandedly extends tourism
- Cape Breton Music Industry Cooperative (CBMIC) \$500,000 into export and career development and events
- Holy Angels for arts and culture
- Open Hearth Park—a place within the community that represents the community
- Victoria County connectivity
- Seaside Broadband—largest fixed wireless network in the world
- Big Spruce success
- Louisbourg 300—massive success with many partnerships, many visitors, and lots of revenue generated
- Membertou—heritage park, new shopping centre, new education complex

Things that **inspire**:

- Youth, Hope for Youth, Youth involvement
- Working with young, talented, creative people who seek a place to do their work in a supportive, high-energy community
- Cultural Infrastructure
- Nature
- Music
- History
- Cultures are valued
- Vibrant cultural communities
- Hard work and leadership
- Potential for growth (needs improvement)
- Social Media as a source of arts and culture awareness
- Volunteer talent
- Newcomers to small communities

- “Cape Breton—wherever you are from, when you are here, you are home.”
- Power of industrial Cape Breton
- Cape Breton optimism, our potential
- Create a home for the next generation so that they won’t leave
- Hosting and engaging visitors
- Community development facilitation
- People starting businesses here
- Vibrant cultural communities
- When culture is valued and recognized by its citizens

Future **vision** for Cape Breton’s Creative/Cultural/Heritage Industries:

- Revenue producers
- Cooperation and partnerships
- Export products and services
- Authentic cultural representation
- Create an adaptable business model to graft onto organisations, institutions, and resources to flesh-out, grow, sustain, and prosper
- Identify successes—success breeds success!!
- Time to eliminate political, geographical, and cultural barriers
- Collaborative approach to addressing change
- Committing to long-term success; strategy for the long term
- Raise awareness of shared challenges
- “Someone has to employ us” is a phrase that is no longer true
- Use storytelling, oral history, naturally found culture and heritage
- Increase accessibility to nature, beaches, history
- Increase CEDIF investments (benefits local business)

Innovation Cape Breton Summit **Discussion Session Two**

Key **Success** Factors:

- **Partnerships and Collaborations**
 - Cultural officers should show an organisational aspect—you need reps within the organisational structure
 - We must ignore boundaries (geographical, cultural, etc.)
 - Inclusion of the municipalities
 - Eliminate the Kelly’s Mountain divide
 - Convene a diverse group: private sector, culture practitioners, government
 - Experiment with aligned activities and projects
 - Using technology to benefit our Island’s Creative economy through communication
 - Continual dialogue, bravery, and openness to sharing between cultural institutions, organisations, etc.
 - “Amazing partnership with all communities, all cultures, all people.”
 - Business sector must be linked to artists and arts events
 - Work together but don’t reinvent the wheel or steal ideas; we don’t have 2 mining industries, we do have an incredible craft sector and Centre for Craft
 - Partners are key
 - More collaboration and partnerships
 - Open communication about cultural activities
 - Cultural mapping
 - More communication is needed, and we need an IT platform for sharing

- **Improving our infrastructure related to the arts, culture, and heritage community**
 - Community development facilitators should be in each municipality
 - Develop assets that we know we have (e.g., heritage facilities); add value to what we have
 - Charge the value placed on the product—don’t lessen value of our assets; people need to pay what products are worth; people will pay for an authentic experience
 - Look after present assets first: Cabot Trail, Alexander Graham Bell, Fortress of Louisbourg, Celtic Colours

- Using technology to benefit our Island
 - Make known a listing of available resources for people who want to start businesses, the cultural community, etc.—people are our biggest resource
 - Start-up assistance for cultural/art entrepreneurs
 - 12 months open, only 6 months of tourists. We need to fix this! We need community engagement. We need to look at locals as potential consumers
 - Cater to amateurs with passion and money
 - Encourage visitors to experience the unique but shareable culture
 - People are our assets; we need to support them, encourage them, praise them, invest in them
- **Ideas for new or improved products/services/events**
 - Sustainable eco-tourism
 - Extend Celtic Colours (Baroque for 1 week, Classical for 1 week, Celtic for 2 weeks), bring internationally recognized artists to Cape Breton. Why not aboriginal music?
 - Take an idea like Celtic Colours, expand to other genres, use the music to build a global brand to attract innovators in green tech, in energy, in tourism, in export, and to link with the families of our international students
 - Create a central calendar—non-partisan, a cultural manual for the island. Focus the voices and create outreach to all areas
 - Island Expo
 - A recognition that we're using a modern outlook with an old culture
 - Export, export, export—tourism is important, but export is also important (including talent, products, etc.)
 - Create a destination membership that offers access to all Cape Breton sites, organisations, and partners
 - Bring people into downtown Sydney, including both local residents and visitors
 - A new library on Sydney's waterfront, showing the value placed on our community
 - What about north of Smokey? How we do attract people there after Celtic Colours?
 - Connect culture to tourism—do it for the locals, the visitors are welcome
 - Diverse projects and services
 - Encourage the creation of 65 new businesses, creating 400+ new jobs

- **Develop a strategy that supports arts/heritage/and culture**
 - Create a common vision
 - Embrace the complexity of the situation
 - Engaging the people who weren't around the table on May 12
 - Measure what is already here and who is already doing what, and who can work together
 - Create an online activities depot that promotes cross-island activities in arts, culture, and heritage
 - Improve the quality of the environment that supports our collective work of organising ourselves to dream, plan, and prioritize inspiration, conversation, reflection, and action
 - Develop a business case for culture
 - Balance tourism and education
 - Decrease reliance on government
 - Engage as a collective (within the Island, the province, the country, and the world)
 - Some positions need to be funded—not everything can be done by volunteers. How can organisations accomplish this?
 - There are industries where you can work from anywhere; you can live anywhere, so why would you live here? What about Cape Breton is the pull to make your life here—we live to create. The island is a living painting. How do we pull people here?
 - We need money, creativity, product, and an audience
 - Recognize that the creative industries include culture and heritage but also stretch into architecture, technology, design, graphic art, marketing...
 - Funding support
 - Different languages on marketing products
 - Cape Breton diversification
 - Key success factors are money, focus, vision, time, and a belief that it can be done

- **Encourage change among citizens**
 - Encourage people to take risks—don't be afraid to fail
 - Entrepreneurship. Support revenue producing ideas
 - Support risk takers, support private sector, treat culture like a business
 - Less reliance on government

- Pride in place—which starts at a young age
 - Mine our talent
 - Necessity to create a legacy
 - Think Big and support Big Thinkers
 - Start ignoring boundaries. Strike out two words from our vocabulary—can't and grant
 - Stop competing with each other
 - Figure out what motivates us (community engagement, service to others, pride in identity)
 - Educate locals on value of partnership. Educate youth on the value of tourism
 - Complete one another vs competing against one another
 - We need people who won't give up, and support so they won't want to
 - Investment **in** community (encourage CEDIF rather than RRSP)
 - Cape Breton parents are pushing their children off the island—how do we stop this?
 - In Cape Breton we assume everything shuts down in the off season
 - People have amazing talents but don't know what to do with them—we need to recognize and foster them
 - Ownership of what Cape Breton is to us
 - Connecting hearts and minds
 - Make people feel welcome.
 - Say yes to innovation: Cape Breton—the Innovation Island
- **What Cape Breton University can do to support Arts/Culture/Heritage.**
 - Statistics about our successes/failings – research on value of creative sector (both social and economic)
 - Better trained work force (align programs with Island needs)
 - Link to international students
 - Organizations need to **quantify** the economic impact to cause an attitude change and increase respect for the sector – CBU could help with this
 - Quantify the impact of the Arts on the economy, which will lead to investment and growth
 - Studies of the cultural/economic impact of this industry in Cape Breton. Economic impact of the music industry in Cape Breton. CBU could make a real commitment to lead these studies
 - Comparative salary analysis between arts admin and business admin positions

- CBU **must** invest in arts infrastructure
- CBU could steer their programs to support development in creative technologies, especially the IT sector
- CBU has a strong footing in Aboriginal and international market development
- “We need to implement the programs to support and educate both the participants and the public in the arts and culture.”
- Funding support
- **What government can do to support Arts/Culture/Heritage.**
 - Cultural policy development for municipalities
 - Develop an immigration strategy similar to Winnipeg’s
 - Tax structure should support the production of artist culture by tax exemptions. Not just to NFP organisations, but for artists as well. This would help attract artists to live here.
 - Municipal leadership on Island-wide basis. Meetings of municipal leaders
 - Invest in the community in a space that is open to everyone!
 - Funding support
 - Municipal units must support each other
 - Community development facilitators should be in each municipality

Further comments

- Stop being about “Something” and start being about “Someone”
- Respect that everyone’s time is valuable. People drove almost two hours to get here. Value that, recognize that. Show us that. Staying to hear all of us is important
- We are on the cusp of a shift—we need to move out of our comfort zones to grow
- “Culture is a hub from which other initiatives grow.”
- More culture/heritage/creative lawyers
- Cape Breton partnership needs to play a role as they oversee a lot of this
- “Walk our talk, sing our song.”
- This is about people, not profits
- How do we get our communities to look further and get rid of the “you can’t do that” attitude? How do we make the cultural industries a commodity?
- *Re: the Summit* -You need to have the people who don’t know each other meet. I see people talking to people they already know, they need to talk to people that they **don’t know**.
- Challenges for Cape Breton going into the future are:
 - Affordable transportation
 - Infrastructure to attract entrepreneurs with families
 - Communication
 - The rural economy
 - A lack of belief in the arts by three levels of government