



ANTIGONISH REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

# 2011 MID YEAR REVIEW

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ARDA is proud to report on our accomplishments for the first six months of 2011-12 under the eight service areas from our business plan:

1. Strategic Planning
2. Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) and Recruitment
3. Skills, Learning and People Development
4. Project & Program Development
5. Infrastructure, Sites and Premises
6. Innovation and Productivity
7. Marketing and Communications
8. Information and Research

Under the eight service areas, the business plan identified 19 initiatives. In this report we have inserted an achievement section as an update for each of these initiatives in the logic model format.

Highlights from the first six months of the year include:

### *Gateway to Antigonish: Strategic Master Plan*

Implementation of the Gateway Master Plan is the top priority of ARDA and the municipal partners. ARDA will continue to focus our efforts on signage, iconic roundabouts and a visitor information centre.

### *Experience Antigonish*

Experienceantigonish.ca continues to expand and is a valuable tool in promoting the community. Over 20 videos for the Experience Antigonish YouTube channel and the “Stroll the Main” section were added to the site this year.

### *BRE*

ARDA conducted 22 BRE visits and generated over 27 referrals so far this year, only eight away from our goal. ARDA has received significant positive feedback from BRE clients, the LAT and numerous community stakeholders regarding the program.

### *Capacity Building*

ARDA continues to work with community groups in advancing their projects. The new turf field and baseball field are welcome pieces to our recreational infrastructure. ARDA has worked with Antigonight; Art After Dark Festival, Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL), Positive Action for Keppoch Society, Société Acadienne Sainte-Croix, and the Antigonish Food Security Coalition.

Prior to reporting on our achievements, we feel that it important to provide a snap shot of a few changes in our region. Over the last number of months Antigonish, not unlike other regions, has seen developments that have changed the economic environment. While some of these changes have an immediate negative impact on the region, efforts to mitigate the effect have been made for what we believe will be a strengthened economy in the long term.

### *New Page*

On August 22<sup>nd</sup>, New Page Corporation announced their plan to shut down PM1 (the newsprint machine) on September 10<sup>th</sup> and PM2 (the machine that produces glossy paper for magazines) on September 16<sup>th</sup>. The closure affects 400 people who work in the woods and 600 people in the mill. Many others depend on the plant for indirect employment.

The impact of this announcement that a facility which has been producing paper for 50 years would no longer continue to do so, has been huge on the Antigonish region. From the employees, to the pensioners, to the contractors, to individual woodlot owners, to the businesses that are left with large receivables and dependence on one customer, this is devastating. A significant amount of money has been taken out of circulation in our regional and provincial economy.

ARDA has been actively involved with weekly planning meetings with the Municipal Advisory Committee, which include all the mayors and wardens and RDA's from the counties of Antigonish, Guysborough, Richmond and Inverness. We remain engaged in the process and are hopeful and optimistic that the mill will be operational in the near future under new management.

### *Regional Tourism Industry Association*

AESTA (Antigonish Eastern Shore Tourism Association) and PCTA (Pictou County Tourism Association) members agreed to dissolve and combine their resources into a Destination Marketing Organization called DEANS (Destination Eastern and Northumberland Shores). The new association will be a key player in our area as the new highway realignment, way finding, and product development projects advance.

### *ARDA's Strategic Plan*

ARDA's Board of directors participated in a board development workshop in June. The session included an overview of the strategic planning process, the role of the board in developing the plan and the climate required to have a successful planning process. The board's strategic planning committee also had a facilitated discussion on the development of ARDA's strategic plan. The committee's recommendation to the Board (which has been accepted) was to defer the development of our plan and to focus our efforts on planning our two strategic projects (implementation of the Gateway to Antigonish: Strategic Master Plan and the Antigonish Exhibition Grounds Master Plan).

### *Priority and Funding Alignment*

Within the last year, the pendulum in community economic development (CED), has swung towards economic development with the province's Jobs Here Strategy and with ACOA's project evaluation criteria focusing on direct and measureable benefits to the economy. This is a normal shift when the economy struggles and budgets tighten. The challenge has been educating the community and municipal councils and managing the expectations within the community. In some cases, new planning exercises are required to ensure the community and municipal projects align with the federal and provincial priorities.

## 2.0 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND EVALUATION

### 2.1 Strategic Planning

2010/11 saw an increase in long term planning with respect to some critical land masses in the region, specifically the Gateway Strategy for Antigonish and the Eastern Nova Scotia Exhibition Grounds Master Plan. The visioning process for each of these projects consisted of an inclusive community consultation exercise. The products achieved are two valuable plans that will guide land development in the Antigonish area for years to come with tremendous buy-in from the community. With these plans adopted, ARDA feels that this is an opportune time for ARDA board to revisit the strategic plan and begin the exercise of developing a new strategic plan that is relevant to the community's vision. ARDA's proposed activity for 2011/12 under the Strategic Planning Service Area covers three levels of planning; regional, local and micro.

#### 2.1.1 Regional Planning

Planning at a regional level occurs between two or more municipal units or covers a geographic region greater than that covered by ARDA's service area of the town and county of Antigonish.

**Strategic Direction:**

- Business Dev.
- Community Dev.
- Market Antigonish
- Population Attraction & Retention

**Objective:**

To implement ARDA's 2007/2008 strategic plan as well as to lead, facilitate, and support the development and implementation of regional initiatives.

**Actions:**

- ARDA's five year strategic plan - ongoing implementation
- Seek funding and develop new strategic plan for ARDA 2012-17
- StFX Rural Leadership Program - continue to support and advise the program to continue the successful pilot project completed in February 2010, now graduating its second round of students
- Eastern Nova Scotia Woodlot Conference - continue to take an active role in coordination
- Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) - relevant planning aspects as identified through BRE
- Northumberland Shore Tourism - continue to work collaboratively with neighboring RDA's and other stakeholders toward implementation of key recommendations from the Roger Brooks Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report
- ARDA's communications plan – implementation
- Regional Immigration Navigator – continue to guide and support the project that is a successful model of a regional approach to providing settlement services to an area covering Antigonish, Guysborough, Richmond and Inverness.
- Other regional initiatives as relevant to ARDA's strategic plan

**Target Groups:**

- Municipal units
- Regional organizations

**Outputs:**

- Development and assistance in implementing plans for regional initiatives as relevant to ARDA's strategic plan

**Measureable Outcomes:**

1. Increased regional collaboration and a better understanding of the strategic planning process and its benefits
2. The participating organizations and partnerships will have an enhanced understanding of their needs, priorities and the methods by which they will accomplish the tasks necessary to satisfy their goals and objectives
3. A completed strategic plan for ARDA

**Evaluation Framework:**

- Positive client feedback
- Number of partnerships formed
- Number of plans complete

**Achievements**

- ARDA continues to implement the strategic directions identified in the January 2008 strategic plan.
- ARDA secured funding for the development of a new multi-year strategic plan
- A successful Eastern Woodlot Owners Conference was held attracting operators to workshops and sharing of best practices during the one day event
- ARDA has completed 22 BRE visits as of the end of September, the data gathered continues to provide direction to ARDA on a number of initiatives
- The four RDA's located on the Northumberland Shore continue to implement suggestions from the Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report for the Northumberland Shore done by Roger Brooks
- ARDA has implemented a inclusive communications plan that includes quarterly newsletters, news releases, and Twitter updates resulting in increased awareness and understanding of ARDA within the community
- ARDA continues to provide settlement services to the area covering Antigonish, Guysborough, Richmond, and Inverness through a shared Newcomer Navigator and our guidance and involvement in the regional management team

## 2.1.2 Local Planning

### **Strategic Direction:**

- Business Dev.
- Community Dev.
- Market Antigonish
- Population Attraction & Retention

### **Objective:**

To facilitate and support municipal stakeholders in planning processes and to assist in implementation of these plans.

### **Actions:**

- Town of Antigonish - ongoing assistance with the implementation of their five year strategic plan 2011 - 2016
- Municipality of the County of Antigonish - assist with the implementation of their Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP)
- Town of Antigonish - assist with the implementation of their ICSP

### **Target Groups:**

- Town of Antigonish
- Municipality of the County of Antigonish

### **Outputs:**

- Advances on implementation of the Municipality of the County of Antigonish ICSP
- Advances on implementation of the Town of Antigonish ICSP and strategic plan

### **Measureable Outcomes:**

1. The Municipality of the County of Antigonish and the Town of Antigonish will have a better understanding of the strategic planning process and its benefits
2. The Municipality of the County of Antigonish and the Town of Antigonish will have an enhanced understanding of their needs, priorities and the methods by which they will accomplish the tasks necessary to satisfy their goals and objectives

### **Evaluation Framework:**

- Positive client feedback
- Number of partnerships formed
- Number of initiatives advanced

### **Achievements:**

- ARDA has facilitated the formation of a steering group of local stakeholders to explore opportunities for public transit in Antigonish as a response to a request received from the Municipality of the County of Antigonish.

### 2.1.3 Micro Planning

#### **Strategic Direction:**

- Business Dev.
- Community Dev.
- Market Antigonish
- Population Attraction & Retention

#### **Objective:**

ARDA will facilitate and assist community organizations in the creation and implementation of their planning activities.

#### **Actions:**

- Gateway Strategy for Antigonish – assist with the implementation of priorities identified from the Strategy
- Eastern NS Exhibition Grounds planning - assist with the implementation of recommendations from the master plan
- Antigonish Arena - assist with implementation of the initiatives identified in their planning documents
- Antigonish Highland Society - ongoing assistance to implement their five year plan that will incorporate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Society and the Games
- St. Andrews - facilitate the completion of a year strategic plan for the community
- Harbour Authorities - assist local harbour authorities with implementation of their master plans
- Local merchants - work with the group to identify and collaboratively address initiatives
- Antigonish Farmer's Market - provide operational assistance
- Antigonish Investment Ltd. - provide operational assistance
- Music on Main - assist with their marketing planning for the upcoming season
- North Shore Development Association – provide ongoing support to implement their master plan
- Other planning activities as relevant

#### **Target Groups:**

- Community groups
- Community economic development organizations

#### **Outputs:**

- Development and assistance in implementing plans for community groups and organizations

#### **Measureable Outcomes:**

1. Community groups and organizations will have a better understanding of the strategic planning process and its benefits
2. The participating community groups and organizations will have an enhanced understanding of their needs, priorities and the methods by which they will accomplish the tasks necessary to satisfy their goals and objectives

#### **Evaluation Framework:**

- Assist a minimum of 15 groups
- Positive client feedback
- Number of partnerships formed

**Achievements:**

- ARDA and its partners have prioritized a number of items from the Gateway to Antigonish: Strategic Master Plan for advancement
- The Antigonish Exhibition Grounds Master Plan has moved into implementation and the Antigonish/Guysborough Federation of Agriculture supports the community's effort to explore further development
- ARDA is providing support to the Antigonish Highland Society to implement their strategic plan as they move towards the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the games in 2013.
- Assisted Music on Main with this year's marketing plan
- Provided assistance to Antigonish Culture Alive in the planning of the expanded Antigonight: Art after Dark Festival
- Continue to provide operational assistance to the Antigonish Farmers' Market and Antigonish Investment Ltd.
- ARDA continues to assist with the priorities set by the group of downtown merchants

## 2.2 Business Retention & Expansion and Recruitment (BRE)

### 2.2.1 BRE Program

#### **Strategic Direction:**

●Business Dev. ○Community Dev. ○Market Antigonish ●Population Attraction & Retention

#### **Objective:**

To work collaboratively with the Local Action Team (LAT) to address opportunities and challenges faced by local businesses. To gather business climate intelligence that enables stakeholders and all three levels of government to positively affect change through policy and program development. To assist ARDA in identifying appropriate responses to local business needs e.g. workshops, programs, etc. ARDA plans to take a targeted approach to BRE visits focusing on artisans, exporters, manufacturers and the IT sector.

#### **Actions:**

- ARDA will conduct surveys to identify issues, opportunities and challenges and gather intelligence
- ARDA will host LAT meetings to share the findings and generate referrals
- ARDA will promote the findings of BRE to key community stakeholders
- ARDA will take a team approach with multiple staff participating in BRE surveys
- ARDA will promote productivity and innovation based programs to BRE clients e.g. Productivity Investment Program

#### **Target Groups:**

- Local businesses and major service providers

#### **Outputs:**

- Development of a more efficient process for local service providers to assist businesses
- A populated Executive Pulse database to assist stakeholders and ARDA identify action items

#### **Measureable Outcomes:**

1. ARDA and service providers will develop strong relationships with the business community and this collaborative approach allows them to assist business more effectively
2. Fewer business closures and more expansions of existing businesses
3. Stakeholders and each of the three levels of government will be aware of the aggregate findings
4. ARDA's staff will be engaged in the BRE program

#### **Evaluation Framework:**

- 30 completed BRE surveys
- A minimum of three ARDA staff will each conduct BRE surveys
- Positive client feedback

#### **Achievements:**

- As of September 30<sup>th</sup>, ARDA had completed 22 visits and generated over 27 referrals
- The two main referral categories were financial assistance and marketing/branding under business expansion
- Four of ARDA's staff have conducted BRE visits, however the same two staff have conducted the majority of visits ensuring a more cohesive approach
- ARDA has been working, through the Gateway to Antigonish: Strategic Master Plan, to ensure that businesses are prepared for the new highway

- Some of the initiatives ARDA is working on to assist business readiness include highway signage sessions and discussions on a potential new Visitor Information Centre and its placement, to draw road traffic into the community of Antigonish

## 2.2.2 Investment Attraction

### Strategic Direction:

● Business Dev. ● Community Dev. ● Market Antigonish ○ Population Attraction & Retention

### Objective:

To promote the online community profile within the community as a current and relevant tool to convey information about the community, and more specifically, investing in the community.

### Actions:

- Launch and promote investment attraction website
- Distribute target sector factsheets
- Explore potential for further funding for Investment Attraction strategy

### Target Groups:

- Potential investors and developers
- Partner organizations

### Outputs:

- A toolbox of resources available to those seeking to promote investment opportunities in Antigonish e.g. website, factsheets
- Increased awareness of investment opportunities

### Measureable Outcomes:

1. The community profile will assist our community and stakeholders to promote the area as a place to invest
2. The community profile will assist land owners in the area of the new highway development and interchanges to capitalize on the potential created by the project

### Evaluation Framework:

- Positive client feedback
- A minimum of five partners/stakeholders using this investment recruitment tool

### Achievements:

- ARDA has launched the investment attraction/community profile website; a useful tool for investors displaying statistical data on the area and important resources and links for developers
- ARDA is seeking funding through ICCI for the development of a renewable energy/clean technologies investment attraction strategy

### 2.2.3 Antigonish Farmers' Market

In the past year, ARDA has taken the lead on a project to facilitate the development of a Master Plan for the Eastern Nova Scotia Exhibition (ENSE) Grounds. Among the numerous recommendations is the call for the construction of a new building that will house, including other things, the Farmers' Market.

#### **Strategic Direction:**

● Business Dev. ● Community Dev. ○ Market Antigonish ○ Population Attraction & Retention

#### **Objective:**

To continue to support the agriculture sector, specifically the Antigonish Farmers' Market in their endeavors to have a permanent home at the ENSE Grounds.

#### **Actions:**

- Facilitate negotiations/discussions with the Municipality of the County of Antigonish for the commitment of land area for the Farmers' Market
- Prepare a business plan for the facility
- Facilitate to formation of partnerships for the capital campaign
- Explore private / public partnership opportunities

#### **Target Groups:**

- Primary producers
- Greater community

#### **Outputs:**

- A parcel of land dedicated to a new building for the Farmers' Market
- A completed business plan

#### **Measureable Outcomes:**

1. Number of partnerships formed
2. Number of viable funding options identified

#### **Evaluation Framework:**

- Positive client feedback

#### **Achievements:**

- ARDA received support from the Antigonish/Guysborough Federation of Agriculture to explore the option of further development on the site
- ARDA secured funding for the preliminary design of a new Farmers' Market building to be located on the ENSE Grounds.
- ARDA in partnership with the N.S. Department of Agriculture is developing a new governance model for the ENSE Grounds.

## 2.3 Skills, Learning and People Development

### 2.3.1 Capacity Building

#### **Strategic Direction:**

○Business Dev. ●Community Dev. ○Market Antigonish ○Population Attraction & Retention

#### **Objective:**

To assist organizations and individuals with the planning, development and implementation of their projects while building capacity within the organization or individuals. To facilitate the development of community infrastructure by assisting community groups.

#### **Actions:**

- Facilitate the formation and training of a governing body for the ENSE Grounds
- Work with community groups to identify, support and implement capacity building activities
- Continue involvement with Network of Networks as an outreach contact
- Coordinate the 2012 Eastern Woodland Conference
- Coordinate the 2011 Small Business Week activities

#### **Target Groups:**

- Municipalities
- Businesses
- Community organizations
- Sector organizations

#### **Outputs:**

- ENSE board of directors
- Eastern Woodland Conference
- 2010 Small Business Week

#### **Measurable Outcomes:**

1. Increased capacity within the community to plan, develop and implement projects
2. Increased interest in experiential tourism
3. Continued development of community infrastructure
4. Enhanced knowledge for local woodlot owners

#### **Evaluation Framework:**

- Positive client feedback
- Assist a minimum of 10 groups

#### **Achievements:**

- Downtown Antigonish: Open for Business
  - In the Fall of 2010, ARDA gathered downtown merchants and business owners together to discuss numerous opportunities and challenges that were identified through BRE visits
  - That group continues to meet on a monthly basis and has taken the steps to work collectively on issues such as parking, consistent hours, Christmas festivities, and collective marketing
- Local Food Producers
  - ARDA has provided marketing assistance to local producers with developing the second edition of the Local Food Guide and is working on an online version

- ARDA in partnership with the Antigonish Food Security Coalition completed and submitted a concept letter/proposal to the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation in the spring under the Sustainable Regional Food Hubs category for the development of a mobile farmers' market and a local food education program. The group recently received feedback and has been invited to submit a concept under the new Regional Value Chain Program that will focus on start-up, implementation, and learning support for projects that develop or strengthen regional food chains around values of sustainability, accessibility and equity. The program has not been designed to replace support from government or private sector sources, but to help remove barriers to accessing this support.
- Antigonight: Art after Dark Festival
  - ARDA has facilitated the placement of a coordinator for next year's festival through the Job Creation Partnership Program
- CACL
  - ARDA assisted the organization to develop a business plan outlining a strategy to expand their services
- Positive Action for Keppoch Society
  - Reviewed business plan and provided information from business case that was completed in 2008 to help implement the strategic plan
- 2011 Eastern Woodlot Conference
  - Assisted in the organization and coordination of the 2011 conference which has over 60 paid participants in attendance
- Small Business Week
  - ARDA continues to work with XEDC, the Antigonish Chamber of Commerce and NOBL to organize activities for Small Business Week
- Societe Acadienne Sainte-Croix
  - Assisted with the securing of funding for the development and delivery of a series of 11 workshops geared for the not-for-profit sector
  - These workshops have been developed for three separate target audiences: board members, staff, and volunteers

## 2.3.2 Board Development

### Strategic Direction:

○Business Dev. ●Community Dev. ○Market Antigonish ○Population Attraction & Retention

### Objective:

To increase the skills and knowledge of the board to ensure they have the ability to perform their duties as required.

### Actions

- Hire Human Relations Officer (youth intern) to:
  - Assist ARDA in creating an effective personnel committee
  - Review core competencies (directors and staff)
  - Create staff and board development plans
- Participate in general and position-specific training and workshops (i.e. leadership, management, communications, etc.)
- Participate in NSARDA's peer to peer sessions and other NSARDA coordinated activities including the annual general meeting
- Host board development workshops
- Research best practices and collaborate with other RDA's

### Target Groups:

- Board of Directors

### Outputs:

- Board and will attend and participate in professional development workshops.
- Updated Personnel Committee terms of reference
- Director development plans

### Measureable Outcomes:

1. More dedicated, knowledgeable, committed and empowered board of directors
2. More teamwork and collaboration between the staff and board of directors
3. More networking opportunities for the staff and board members
4. Improved human resources practices

### Evaluation Framework:

- Completion of at least two board development workshops

### Achievements:

- ARDA has hired a Human Resources Officer for an eight month youth intern position
  - ARDA has compiled a terms of reference document for the proposed personnel committee.
  - Completed employee engagement interviews with all staff to gather input eg: core competencies to update job descriptions
- ARDA's board participated in a board development workshop presented by Frank Schwartz on strategic planning in June

### 2.3.3 Staff Development

#### Strategic Direction:

○Business Dev. ●Community Dev. ○Market Antigonish ○Population Attraction & Retention

#### Objective:

To increase the skills and knowledge of the staff to ensure they have the ability to perform their duties as required. To increase the staff's capacity to take on additional roles as required increasing ARDA's capacity to provide better service to the community.

#### Actions

- Hire Human Relations Officer (youth intern) to:
  - Assist ARDA in creating an effective personnel committee
  - Review core competencies (directors and staff)
  - Review and revise job descriptions
  - Review and revise employee handbook
  - Establish performance based management system
  - Create staff and board development plans
- Participate in general and position-specific training and workshops (i.e. leadership, management, communications, etc.)
- Participate in NSARDA's peer to peer sessions and other NSARDA coordinated activities including the annual general meeting
- Provide opportunities for staff to complete year one and year two of EDAC training
- Ongoing ISO 9001:2000 training and implementation
- Research best practices and collaborate with other RDA's

#### Target Groups:

- ARDA staff

#### Outputs:

- Staff will attend and participate in professional development workshops.
- Updated job descriptions
- Revised employee handbook
- Staff development plans

#### Measureable Outcomes:

1. More dedicated, knowledgeable, committed and empowered staff members
2. More teamwork and collaboration between staff members
3. More teamwork and collaboration between the staff and board of directors
4. More networking opportunities for the staff and board members
5. Improved human resources practices
6. Continuous updates and improvements to ISO quality manual and procedures

#### Evaluation Framework:

- Each employee will have at minimum one new qualification or training evaluation form
- Updated HR policies

#### Achievements:

- Four staff attended Cape Breton's Second Annual Social Media workshop
- A staff member completed EDAC (Year Two)
- Three staff and one board member attended NSARDA's Professional Development Conference and AGM

- Three staff have attended NSARDA's peer-to-peer sessions for BRE and Communications and Marketing
- ARDA successfully passed ISO recertification audit in August
- Three staff attended the NS Tourism Innovation Days workshop in April
- All staff participated in a strategic planning workshop offered by Frank Schwartz in Antigonish in June
- Two staff completed BRE&I certification training in June
- A staff member attended a COMFIT project planning workshop in June
- Two staff attended Population Forum II in April

### 2.3.4 Immigration

#### **Strategic Direction:**

○Business Dev. ○Community Dev. ○Market Antigonish ●Population Attraction & Retention

#### **Objective:**

The short term objective of this initiative is to continue to provide support to newcomers through the Regional Immigration Navigator (RIN) position. Work with RIN to identify opportunities for further development of immigration support in Antigonish for 2011/12.

#### **Actions:**

- Provide support to the Newcomer Settlement Project through active participation on the steering committee to advance the following:
  - Provide immigrant settlement services to newcomers in Antigonish
  - Organize two newcomer settlement events in Antigonish
  - Distribution and promotion of Relocation and Settlement Guide
  - Promote the newly launched Newcomer Friendly brand
  - Increase communications related to the project
- Continue to promote the Nova Scotia Nominee Program's Community Identified Stream and issue letters of identification to newcomers meeting the criteria

#### **Target Groups:**

- Newcomers to Antigonish Town and County
- Businesses
- Stakeholders

#### **Outputs:**

- Newcomer settlement events will be hosted in Antigonish
- A workshop series will be held
- The newcomer friendly brand will be visible in the community

#### **Measureable Outcomes:**

1. Relevant settlement information will be provided to newcomer
2. The community will know how to become a more welcoming community
3. Increased profile of the RIN

#### **Evaluation Framework:**

- A minimum of two events being held
- Positive client feedback

#### **Achievements:**

- Ongoing regional management team meetings are held. The regional management team consists of one member from each RDA (Guysborough, Antigonish and Strait-Highlands)
- ARDA continues to respond to inquiries which relate to the Community Identified Stream on an ongoing basis, meeting and corresponding with potential nominees and providing follow-up service with those nominated
- Continues to promote and market the Newcomer Friendly Brand throughout the community, as well as immigration support, welcoming communities activities, stakeholder support, sustainability and reporting, and of course general newcomer settlement
- Distributes and promotes the Relocation and Settlement Guide
- Newcomer Navigator was hired (September 15<sup>th</sup>) for the Quad Counties

- 11 newcomers added to the program so far this year
- Over 50 stakeholder organizations identified for the Newcomer Friendly Program
- Over 20 referrals made to partnering organizations
- The Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority (GASHA) has expressed an interest in using the Newcomer Friendly brand on materials related to doctor recruitment

## 2.4 Project & Program Management

### 2.4.2 Gateway to Antigonish Strategic Master Plan

#### **Strategic Direction:**

●Business Dev. ●Community Dev. ●Market Antigonish ○Population Attraction & Retention

#### **Objectives:**

To work with the Municipality of the County of Antigonish and the Town of Antigonish following their adoption of the Gateway to Antigonish Strategic Master Plan to begin to implement projects based on the priorities outlined in the plan.

#### **Action:**

- Re-convene project steering committee
- Seek funding and develop a signage and way finding master plan
- Complete landscaping specifications and design for the highway roundabouts including the iconic gateway elements
- Explore and identify funding opportunities and potential partnerships regarding the development of the Addington Forks Visitor Information Centre (VIC)
- Identify and secure parcel of land for the VIC

#### **Target Groups:**

- Town of Antigonish
- Municipality of the County of Antigonish
- Antigonish Eastern Shore Tourism Association
- StFX
- Antigonish Chamber of Commerce
- Eastern District Planning Commission

#### **Outputs:**

- Construction ready designs for signs
- Detailed landscape designs for roundabouts
- Land secured for the VIC and potential partners identified

#### **Measurable Outcomes:**

1. Number of completed plans
2. Number of partners identified
3. Number of engaged steering committee members

#### **Evaluation Framework:**

- Number of partnerships formed
- Positive client feedback

#### **Achievements:**

- The Master Plan continues to be a clear municipal priority
- ARDA has facilitated prioritization sessions with both the town and county councils as the project has shifted to implementation
  - Priorities identified in the sessions were:
    - Iconic features to be displayed in the roundabouts
    - Relocation of the Visitor Information Centre
    - Signage and way finding (provincial signage on the new TCH and municipal signage to direct traffic once off the highway)

- ARDA reconvened the Gateway Steering Committee for a project update and to determine the level of interest in remaining a formalized group as the project moves into implementation
- ARDA has assembled a committee to consider the various opportunities regarding a new Visitor Information Centre and is conducting a needs analysis in partnership with DEANS.

## 2.4.2 Festivals and Events

With funding recently announced for a second artificial turf field and regulation track and field facility, the community has dramatically increased its potential to host sporting events requiring such infrastructure. This initiative was previously designed to assist event hosts to realize the economic benefits of their event on the community and to assist in promoting these economic benefits to the community.

### **Strategic Direction:**

● Business Dev. ● Community Dev. ○ Market Antigonish ○ Population Attraction & Retention

### **Objectives:**

To provide awareness and education on the benefits of event hosting by means of the economic impact assessment. To work collaboratively with organizations to increase event hosting capacity through bid preparation

### **Action:**

- Conduct economic impact assessments of local events
- Collaborate with Event N.S.

### **Target Groups:**

- Town of Antigonish and recreation department
- Municipality of the County of Antigonish and recreation department
- Event Planners/Hosts
- StFX

### **Outputs:**

- Completed economic impact studies
- Formation of a group of various stakeholders

### **Measurable Outcomes:**

1. Increased awareness within the community of the economic benefits of festivals and events.

### **Evaluation Framework:**

- Minimum of three completed economic impact assessments
- Number of partnerships formed
- Positive client feedback

### **Achievements:**

- ARDA, as well as various organizations and community groups, continues to use completed economic impact assessments to support funding applications
- ARDA continues to work with Events NS to identify events that could be hosted in Antigonish in partnership with the Strait area

## 2.5 Infrastructure, Sites and Premises

### 2.5.1 Highway 104 Community Liaison Committee (CLC)

The Nova Scotia Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is undertaking a project to twin the 104 Highway. The Highway 104 at Antigonish Project is scheduled for completion and opening in the spring of 2012.

#### **Strategic Direction:**

● Business Dev. ● Community Dev. ● Market Antigonish ○ Population Attraction & Retention

#### **Objective:**

ARDA is a fully engaged participant of the CLC which consists of representatives from the local community. The CLC acts as a window to the project, disseminating information to area residents and businesses, and providing a vehicle for affected stakeholders to bring issues, ideas and concerns to the project.

#### **Actions:**

- Attend regular CLC meetings and bring information and community concerns to the group for consideration
- Continue to direct interested persons to the website <http://www.104antigonish.ca/> for general project information
- Continue to sit on signage sub-committee offering input and acting as a sounding board to the project staff with respect to provincial signage to be erected on the HWY 104 by-pass as per provincial regulations
- Promote Gateway Strategy for Antigonish and the recommendations of the report

#### **Target Groups:**

- Residents
- Businesses

#### **Outputs:**

- An updated project website
- Community information sessions as necessary
- Community displays of relevant project information

#### **Measureable Outcomes:**

1. Better informed project staff that are able to respond to the requests of the community
2. Better informed community and stakeholders with respect to the Highway 104 at Antigonish Project
3. Community input reflected in HWY 104 signage

#### **Evaluation Framework:**

- Positive client feedback

#### **Achievements:**

- Attended monthly CLC meetings acting as a conduit from the community to NSTIR and vice versa regarding matters related to the Highway 104 at Antigonish twinning and realignment
- ARDA continues to disseminate information on the Gateway project to the HWY 104 CLC at regular intervals

## 2.5.2 Way finding

ARDA has presented the findings from the Roger Brooks Assessment Finding and Suggestions Report to community stakeholders. It was outlined that way finding is identified as the number one tourism issue in the community and ARDA is committed to addressing the issue.

### **Strategic Direction:**

● Business Dev. ○ Community Dev. ● Market Antigonish ○ Population Attraction & Retention

### **Objective:**

To create a way finding sign system for the community that reflects the character of our region, welcomes visitors, helps provide a sense of place and knits the whole community together; all the while considering the work recently completed on the Northumberland Shore way finding project.

### **Actions:**

- Draft project terms of reference
- Identify and source project funding partners
- Issue a request for proposals
- Provide project management

### **Target Groups:**

- Municipality of the County of Antigonish
- Town of Antigonish
- Businesses
- Residents

### **Outputs:**

- A community way finding system that:
  - Provides a distinct and unified image of the community
  - Attracts, welcomes and orientates visitors
  - Guides visitors to major destinations and promotes tourism
  - Reduces sign clutter
  - Provides “seamless” connectivity between sites

### **Measureable Outcomes:**

1. Increase in visitors to the community visitor information centre
2. Increase in visitors and sales for local businesses
3. Increase in visitors at local attractions (ie community museum)

### **Evaluation Framework:**

- Positive client feedback from community stakeholders

### **Achievements:**

- ARDA facilitated a meeting with the Town of Antigonish to discuss the benefits of a municipal signage and way finding system and coordinated a presentation from a way finding expert
- Preliminary signage program development report completed including a baseline audit of existing municipal signage and primary and secondary vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns into and throughout the town. Preliminary signage hierarchy was developed as well as an initial layout plan

## 2.6 Innovation & Productivity

### 2.6.1 Advanced Network Opportunities

CANARIE is an Industry Canada funded organization that provisions an advanced research network across Canada. The "point-of-presence" for this network is in Halifax. A provincial organization, ACORN-NS, is responsible for distributing this network from Halifax to points across the province.

ACORN has received funding from CANARIE to provide fibre (or equivalent service) to St. Francis Xavier University and the surrounding community. Potential community and economic development opportunities have been identified for this infrastructure over and above its primary research mandate.

#### **Strategic Direction:**

● Business Dev. ● Community Dev. ○ Market Antigonish ○ Population Attraction & Retention

#### **Objective:**

To realize advanced network opportunities that were identified by ARDA for the community in partnership with ACORN.

#### **Action:**

- Assemble steering committee
- Work with ACORN and their project funding to:
  - provide free community Wi-Fi centered on the downtown area
  - implement a spur line to a potential innovation and research / incubation facility

#### **Target Groups:**

- The new library
- Schools and school board
- Town of Antigonish
- Municipality of the County of Antigonish
- IT/High Tech sector
- StFX
- Businesses

#### **Outputs:**

- A free wireless network that is accessible in the downtown Antigonish area
- A lot or facility that is fully serviced with advanced network capabilities

#### **Measurable Outcomes:**

1. Increase in the coverage area serviced by community owned wireless infrastructure

#### **Evaluation Framework:**

- Positive client feedback
- Number of users of the service

#### **Achievements:**

- Preliminary talks have been held with funders, and service providers regarding the implementing this service in our community
- ARDA has also talked with and learned from other RDA's who have undertaken similar projects
- A summary document has been prepared to discuss the funding possibilities with proposed funders

- An expression of interest is nearing completion to be released to service providers to gather information and pricing on proposed solutions to developing the Wi-Fi mesh
- ARDA has met with members of AceNet and the Atlantic Organization of Research Networks (ACORN) as well as STFX to discuss possibilities which align with the goals of CANARIE. We will continue to investigate opportunities and partnerships which could help capitalise on advanced network infrastructure, currently what can be done with the CANARIE fibre line is limited to pre commercial and educational endeavours

## 2.7 Marketing and Communications

### 2.7.1 Marketing

#### **Strategic Direction:**

○Business Dev. ●Community Dev. ●Market Antigonish ○Population Attraction & Retention

#### **Objective:**

To create and build upon marketing initiatives for Antigonish and to provide marketing support to local community groups, events, and organizations.

#### **Actions:**

- To continue to be a member of the steering committee for the Northumberland Shore Craft Theme Trail and to assist them in developing and implementing marketing material
- Work with community members, local business owners, and community partners to implement the recommendations from the Roger Brooks Assessment Report
- Support community groups and events with developing marketing strategies
- Support Small Business Week committee by developing a marketing strategy
- To continue to facilitate discussions with Downtown merchant group to outline their joint marketing goals
- Update and distribution of Local Food Guide, explore potential for online presence
- Provide assistance to other groups as necessary

#### **Target Groups:**

- Residents
- Visitors and prospective visitors
- Tourists and prospective tourists
- Businesses
- Community groups and organizations
- Stakeholders

#### **Outputs:**

- Marketing strategies for community groups and events
- Marketing strategy for 2011 Small Business Week

#### **Measurable Outcomes:**

1. Increased profile for the region among visitors and tourists
2. Attracting more visitors and tourists off the highway and into Antigonish

#### **Evaluation Framework:**

- Producing at least 12
- pieces of collaborative material for community groups/events

#### **Achievements:**

- Grow your Business with Video marketing
  - Approached by XEDC to develop a presentation on video marketing, particularly online using YouTube and social media outlets
- Beaver Dam Farm/Old Barn Gallery & Design
  - Contacted ARDA for assistance in online marketing; in particular social media. ARDA has added photos to the Experience Antigonish Facebook page and a short video was done by ARDA's 'Nish Correspondent
- RCMP Musical Ride

- Approached by the Antigonish Town and County Crime Prevention Association to design the posters and tickets for the RCMP Musical Ride
- Antigonight: Art after Dark Festival
  - ARDA designed and cost-shared an ad for The Casket
  - Video was also done by ARDA's 'Nish Correspondent
- Saltscape Expo
  - In partnership with ARDA, the Antigonish Chamber of Commerce and AESTA, Antigonish, for the first time, had a presence at the annual Saltscape Expo in Halifax from April 29<sup>th</sup> to May 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Five booths were purchased and cost-shared from many different organizations and businesses including:
    - Six restaurants
    - Three accommodations
    - Festival Antigonish
    - Antigonish Highland Games
    - Riverside International Speedway
    - Five Main Street retail shops
    - Riversbend Wood Products
- My Nova Scotia Contest
  - Antigonish won one of 21 slots for a Nova Scotia Tourism commercial
  - Ad was shot at locally at Columbus Field and aired for one week in all of the Maritime provinces, the northeastern USA, and Ontario
  - ARDA had promoted the contest with contacts via a newsletter, Facebook, and Twitter
  - An ARDA staff member also auditioned
- Innovacorp I-3 Technology Competition
  - ARDA is in-kind sponsor and has been promoting the competition through its website and various social media channels

## 2.7.2 Communications

Please refer to Appendix B for the 2011/12 Communications Plan.

### **Strategic Direction:**

○Business Dev. ●Community Dev. ●Market Antigonish ○Population Attraction & Retention

### **Objective:**

To continue to increase knowledge and awareness of ARDA and its projects within the Antigonish community, and beyond.

### **Actions:**

- To implement the Communications Plan for 2011/2012
- To provide communications support for special projects, events, etc.

### **Target Groups:**

- Partners
  - Funding
  - Community
- Board of Directors
- Community
- Staff

### **Outputs:**

- Implementation of ARDA's 2011/2012 Communications Plan

### **Measureable Outcomes:**

1. Increased understanding of ARDA's strategic goals among target audiences
2. Key community members are aware and understand ARDA's role, services and initiatives

### **Evaluation Framework:**

- Increase in media coverage from 2010/2011
- Increased awareness of ARDA within the community

### **Achievements:**

- ARDA now uses Constant Contact for the annual review and newsletter distribution
- ARDA submitted a piece on Experience Antigonish for NSARDA's Annual Report
  - Theme of the report was "Innovation in a Creative Economy"
- ARDA participated in the Making the Career Connection Job Fair at StFX on September 28<sup>th</sup>
- ARDA continues to execute the communications plan and be active in using social media (YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook)
- ARDA is seen as a leader in using social media among other RDA's

### 2.7.3 Experience Antigonish

Following a successful social media pilot project which saw the creation of seven YouTube videos focusing on all there is to see and do in Antigonish and the development of an Experience Antigonish website; ARDA is committed to carry the momentum forward into 2011/12.

#### **Strategic Direction:**

○Business Dev. ○Community Dev. ●Market Antigonish ●Population Attraction & Retention

#### **Objective:**

To effectively use social media networks to promote and increase public awareness of ARDA and the greater Antigonish community.

#### **Actions:**

- Implement social media strategy
- Update Twitter account with Antigonish success stories and news releases
- Update and increase traffic to Experience Antigonish YouTube channel
- Explore potential for funding to create additional videos

#### **Target Groups:**

- Community partners
- Current and past residents of Antigonish
- Local and provincial media
- NSARDA network

#### **Outputs:**

- Tweets via Twitter
- Experiencing Antigonish blog posts

#### **Measureable Outcomes:**

1. Increased public awareness and knowledge of Antigonish

#### **Evaluation Framework:**

- Increased number of Twitter followers
- Increased number of Experience Antigonish website visits

#### **Achievements:**

- Received \$10,000 from NSERT
- Hired a 'Nish Correspondent for 12 weeks
  - Produced over 20 videos for the Experience Antigonish YouTube channel
  - Continuously blogged and posted to Twitter and the Experience Antigonish Facebook page
- Developed a new section of ExperienceAntigonish.ca to promote downtown Antigonish; "Stroll the Main" highlights shops, restaurants, and services in the downtown core.
- ARDA received a request from the organizers of the Antigonish International Film Festival to use a few of our videos for a workshop to teach participants how to deconstruct a film and see how the pieces come together to make a video

## 2.8 Information and Research

ARDA incorporates information and research into each initiative under the other seven Service Areas, therefore it will not appear in the same format. Rather, we have included a list of examples of information and research for each Service Area as follows:

- Strategic Planning: Information and research are essential to strategy development at any level, whether it be regional, local or macro. The nature and goals of the individual plans will dictate the detail of the information and research required.
- Business Retention & Expansion and Recruitment: data collected coincides with that of the Executive Pulse database, community profile data, producer data, etc.
- Skills, Learning and People Development: board development tool, client tracking, training and skills development, etc.
- Project & Program Management: consultant reports, economic impact assessments, land use plan, community needs assessment, etc.
- Infrastructure, Sites and Premises: architectural and engineering plans, website, cost analysis, etc.
- Innovation and Productivity: site or community needs assessment, cost analysis, etc.
- Marketing and Communications: print ads, radio ads, pamphlets, postcards, websites, blogs, tweets etc.

## APPENDICES

Antigonish Regional Development Authority						
Income Statement						
Period Ended September 30, 2011						
	Budget	Projects*	Actual to Date Core	Pro-Rated Budget	Variance	
<b>Incoming - Receipt of Funds</b>						
ACOA	159,002.00	-	-	79,501.00	(79,501.00)	
NSERD	159,002.00	-	79,501.00	79,501.00	-	
Town of Antigonish	79,501.00	-	39,500.00	39,750.50	(250.50)	
County of Antigonish	79,501.00	-	43,500.00	39,750.50	3,749.50	
Other Revenue	-	50,000.00	-	-	-	
<b>Total Incoming - Receipt of Funds</b>	<b>477,006.00</b>	<b>50,000.00</b>	<b>162,501.00</b>	<b>238,503.00</b>	<b>(76,002.00)</b>	
<b>Outgoing - Operating Expenses</b>						
<b>Payroll Expenses</b>						
Staff / PT Wages / Contract Wages	343,000.00	35,101.95	156,834.10	171,500.00	(14,665.90)	
Total EI, CPP, WCB Expense	25,000.00	2,676.77	10,817.11	12,500.00	(1,682.89)	
Health Package	7,000.00	-	3,841.08	3,500.00	341.08	
	<b>375,000.00</b>	<b>37,778.72</b>	<b>171,492.29</b>	<b>187,500.00</b>	<b>(16,007.71)</b>	
<b>Board / Community Communications</b>						
Board Committee Meetings	1,600.00	-	555.85	800.00	(244.15)	
Board Travel	1,000.00	-	-	500.00	(500.00)	
Committees Expenses	500.00	-	1,693.87	250.00	1,443.87	
Annual Meeting and Report	1,500.00	-	-	750.00	(750.00)	
	<b>4,600.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,249.72</b>	<b>2,300.00</b>	<b>(50.28)</b>	
<b>General &amp; Administrative Expenses</b>						
Advertising / Promotion	8,000.00	-	3,247.10	4,000.00	(752.90)	
Banking / Payroll Administration Charges	350.00	-	158.60	175.00	(16.40)	
Insurance	3,500.00	-	1,125.00	1,750.00	(625.00)	
Business Meetings	2,500.00	-	-	1,250.00	(1,250.00)	
Office Rent	15,000.00	-	7,423.32	7,500.00	(76.68)	
Office Cleaning	2,400.00	-	1,950.00	1,200.00	750.00	
Office Furniture / Equipment Expense	1,500.00	-	384.83	750.00	(365.17)	
Computer - Purchase / Upgrading	2,500.00	813.45	310.06	1,250.00	(939.94)	
Computer - Repairs & Supplies	800.00	107.42	303.25	400.00	(96.75)	
Photocopier Rental / Service	1,200.00	-	450.38	600.00	(149.62)	
Postage / Courier	350.00	-	258.31	175.00	83.31	
Phone / Fax / Internet	12,000.00	884.16	6,599.11	6,000.00	599.11	
Office Stationary & Supplies	2,406.00	17.72	944.38	1,203.00	(258.62)	
Office Leaseholds / Renovations	500.00	-	-	250.00	(250.00)	
Professional - Accounting & Legal	6,000.00	-	4,286.32	3,000.00	1,286.32	
Project Expenses	-	600.00	-	-	-	
Other Expenses	2,400.00	-	-	1,200.00	(1,200.00)	
	<b>61,406.00</b>	<b>2,422.75</b>	<b>27,440.66</b>	<b>30,703.00</b>	<b>(3,262.34)</b>	
<b>Delivery / Response Expense</b>						
Memberships / Subscriptions / Dues	8,000.00	-	5,069.76	4,000.00	1,069.76	
Staff Travel & Expenses	18,000.00	4,842.87	6,274.77	9,000.00	(2,725.23)	
Staff Training -Seminars / Courses	9,000.00	362.75	2,720.92	4,500.00	(1,779.08)	
Miscellaneous	1,000.00	-	239.94	500.00	(260.06)	
	<b>36,000.00</b>	<b>5,205.62</b>	<b>14,305.39</b>	<b>18,000.00</b>	<b>(3,694.61)</b>	
<b>Total Outgoing - Operating Expenses</b>	<b>477,006.00</b>	<b>45,407.09</b>	<b>215,488.06</b>	<b>238,503.00</b>	<b>(23,014.94)</b>	
Net Income	-	<b>4,592.91</b>	<b>(52,987.06)</b>	-	<b>(52,987.06)</b>	
*Projects included in this statement are:						
- Active Communities Coordinator			<b>Source Deductions (August 2011)</b>			
- Youth Intern Program (YIP)			Paid \$9,738.52 (September 13, 2011)			
- Social Media (Experience Antigonish)			Balance Owing: \$0			
			<b>Workers' Compensation (August 2011)</b>			
			Paid \$290.93 (September 13, 2011)			
			Balance Owing: \$0			
**Note: Revenue and expenses are recorded in a cash bases.						
			September payment is due October 15, 2011			

**Antigonish Regional Development Authority**  
**Balance Sheet As at 09/30/2011**

**ASSET**

**Current Assets**

Chequing Bank Account	51,334.76	
Share Equity BCU 36595111	6.59	
Surplus Shares	30.97	
Cash on Hand	1,200.00	
Petty Cash	5.15	
Total Cash		52,577.47
Accounts Receivable	2,653.92	
Total Receivable		2,653.92
Prepaid Expenses		1,866.00
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<b>57,097.39</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSET</b>		<b>57,097.39</b>

**LIABILITY**

**Current Liabilities**

Accounts Payable		8,841.56
Accruals Payable		3,910.00
EI Payable	0.00	
CPP Payable	0.00	
Federal Income Tax Payable	0.00	
Total Receiver General		0.00
Blue Cross Payable		-0.09
HST Charged on Sales	2,624.56	
HST Paid on Purchases	-25,272.20	
HST Ow ing (Refund)		-22,647.64
Prepaid Sales/Deposits		2,748.06
Deferred Revenue - ACC	41,400.59	
Deferred Revenue - ACOA	15,209.00	
Deferred Revenue - Prov N.S.	29,567.69	
Deferred Revenue - Tow n of Ant.	2,032.95	
Deferred Revenue - Co. of Ant	2,033.15	
Total Deferred Revenue		90,243.38
<b>Total Current liabilities</b>		<b>83,095.27</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITY</b>		<b>83,095.27</b>

**EQUITY**

**Retained Earnings**

Retained Earnings - Previous Year		22,155.96
Current Earnings		-48,153.84
<b>Total Earnings</b>		<b>-25,997.88</b>
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>-25,997.88</b>

<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>		<b>57,097.39</b>
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