

Showing our Roots

ARDA Newsletter
Fall 2009



ARDA Launches New Website, Unveils New Brand, and Initiates Photo Contest

ARDA has launched a new website, unveiled a new brand, initiated a photo contest, and has now developed a newsletter.

ARDA's new website and brand represents ARDA's deep commitment to cultivate success and sustainability for a strong Antigonish. "We're very excited to have our new website up and running," says Gerry Grant, executive director at ARDA. "The website and our new brand is a current representation of who we are and what we do. The tagline, "Where ideas take root" fits us perfectly."

The last year has been one of transition for ARDA. With a narrowed focus of its business plan, new staff and programs, ARDA needed a fresh new look and feel to reflect on our new identity. Our new website can be found at www.antigonishrda.ns.ca.

2009 Antigonish Highland Games Economic Impact Assessment Released

ARDA had a busy summer conducting economic impact assessments at some of Antigonish's largest events. An economic impact assessment was conducted at the Antigonish Highland Games in conjunction with the Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance and the report was released in September.

The study measures the increase in economic activity in Antigonish county arising from the operational expenditures of hosting the Games as well as the combined spending of the more than 2,000 out-of-county spectators and 600 out-of-country participants. The combined expenditures of visitors to the county and the operational expenditures of the host organizing committee exceeded \$1 million, which generated an estimated \$2.6 million in economic activity for the Province of Nova Scotia, of which \$1.6 million occurred in Antigonish. The full report can be found on ARDA's website.

"With out-of-country visitors driving \$1.6 million of new economic activity in Antigonish, the Highland Games can be seen as the cornerstone of the local summer tourist season and a tremendous financial boast for the community," says Danny Gillis, president of the Antigonish Highland Society. "The economic impact on the province is also very significant, showing why the Games remain one of Nova Scotia's signature tourist events."

Shannon MacIntyre, development officer at ARDA wants you to keep an eye out for other economic impact assessment reports to be released by the end of October. "We're in the process of finalizing reports for the Allie MacDonald Hockey School, the Nova Scotia Senior Golf Open that was hosted here in Antigonish, and the Komatsu 300 at the Riverside International Speedway." Check our website for updates!



Danny Gillis, president of the Antigonish Highland Society and Shannon MacIntyre, development officer at ARDA look over the Economic Impact Assessment report on the Antigonish Highland Games.



Where ideas take root.

ARDA's Roots

If we were to sum up in one word what we're about, it would be this: Antigonish. Everything we do is about empowering the Town of Antigonish and the Municipality of the County of Antigonish to be a thriving place to do business, a great place to live, and a community of growth. We believe that it's the combination of economic and community development that makes for a strong, sustainable future.

ARDA Focusing on Highway Planning

Contracts are being awarded, the construction phase has begun, and with the new highway coming, ARDA is focusing on the community planning process and the steps that need to be taken to move forward. ARDA is having discussions with members of the Highway 104 Community Liaison Committee and other members of the community to identify opportunities and concerns regarding the highway.

“We know the community, especially the business community, has concerns over the new highway. In order to move forward in such a way that would be best for Antigonish we need to speak to members of the community,” says Alisha Grant, development officer at ARDA. Once those sessions are complete, a prioritization process will occur and from there a timeline and action plan will be developed.

“By speaking to the community, we hope to gain insight on what is important to our business owners and residents,” says Ms. Grant.

“The idea behind this process is to ensure we plan for the new developments, maximize the benefits and minimize the impacts on our community,” says Gerry Grant, executive director at ARDA. “This project will change the face of our community and will have long lasting impressions.”

Antigonish Local Food Guide

In June 2009, ARDA, in collaboration with VOICES Antigonish, Guysborough Antigonish Strait Health Authority, Department of Agriculture, and the Antigonish Farmers Market, published and distributed a Local Food Guide. The guide lists over 20 local food suppliers in the Antigonish area and has been a great method of gaining awareness around community food security.

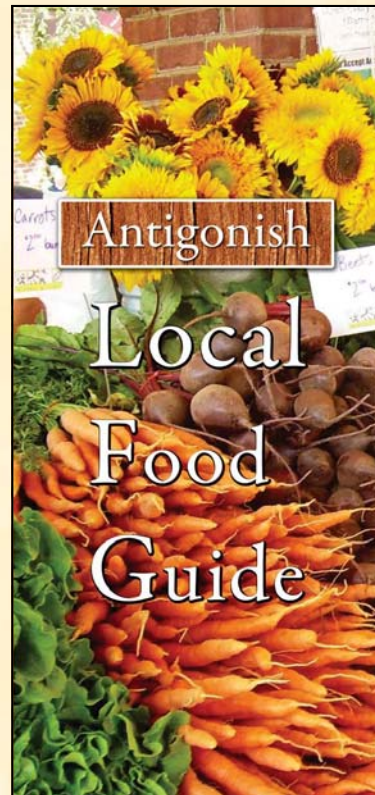
“Not only has it been a great tool for people to find local food producers, but it has helped raise awareness of food security and has generated support for our local farmers and producers,” says Heather Myers, development officer at ARDA.

“Now that the brochure has been out and in circulation for a few months, the feedback has been incredible. People had no idea that so many of our local farms sold their own products.”

Veronica DeYoung, president of the Antigonish Farmers Market agrees about the need for a local food guide. “Much needed,” she says. “A great start to connecting consumers with local producers and products. Everything we need is right in our backyards. We just need to know where.”

“The time was right,” says Sid Taylor of Glen Hill Berry Farm. “More people are looking for local food. Our Farmers Market is well supported for the size of our community, but not everyone can get to the Farmers Market Saturday morning. We’ve always tried to make it more accessible to people. This way they have the information to find local and fresh products.”

“Food is just one of many products produced locally. We have many entrepreneurs that are unique to this area of Nova Scotia and we really should enjoy all they have to offer,” says Ms. DeYoung.



The Antigonish Food Guide includes 26 focal food suppliers.

Business Retention & Expansion (BRE)

The BRE program is an internationally-recognized program that helps existing Nova Scotia business stay and grow in the province. ARDA staff work one-on-one with businesses to identify barriers to growth, develop strategies to overcome those barriers, and seize opportunities for expansion.

Since the launch of the program in May, ARDA has conducted 19 BRE visits to local businesses. A Local Action Team has been assembled consisting of partner service organizations that assist these businesses in addressing any barriers they may face and seizing new opportunities. Examples of some new BRE referrals to partners include strategic marketing plans, funding for IT training, business succession, and human resource recruitment.

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