

May 2026

# Inside the Chamber

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PICTOU COUNTY

## chamber Newsletter

**Hear from our Executive Director  
on attending the Canadian  
Future of Business Summit**

**Meet our newest Member**

**See what other Members are up  
to this spring**

**Learn what events are  
happening this month**

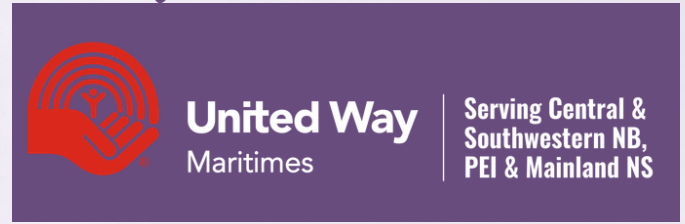
**Read about what's happening  
with Off Shore Oil &  
International Trade**

**Your Source for Local  
Business News and  
Events!**

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[pictoucountychamber.com](http://pictoucountychamber.com)

# New Member

# Welcome



United Way Maritimes is a regional, donor-funded charity dedicated to improving lives and building stronger communities across Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Working in partnership with community organizations, governments, businesses, and volunteers, United Way Maritimes supports collaborative, evidence-based solutions to some of the most pressing social challenges in the region.

Initiatives such as Menstrual May, Backpacks for Kids, and Golf Fore Change are just a few of the ways United Way Maritimes is making a meaningful difference in communities.

## United Way Maritimes



Hundreds of women, girls, non-binary, and transgender individuals in our communities experience period poverty. Menstrual May is a menstrual product collection effort presented by United Way Maritimes in partnership with Halifax Public Libraries and NSGEU, aimed at increasing access to essential menstrual products for those who need them most. Donations can be dropped off at PLFN Health Centre, NSCC Stellarton, PARL, Sobeys, Town of Stellarton, Town of New Glasgow and Town of Trenton.

Through the Backpacks for Kids program, United Way of Pictou County has distributed more than 400 backpacks each year over the past two years. This program helps lessen the financial burden on low-income families and ensures students start the school year with the supplies they need, as barrier-free as possible. Suggested donation items include lunch bags, scientific calculators, rulers, pens, pencils, crayons, colored pencils, binders, loose-leaf paper, and scribblers. Donations can be dropped off at 342 Stewart Street, New Glasgow, from now until August 15.

Golf Fore Change is United Way Pictou County's largest annual fundraiser. The golf tournament takes place on July 3 at the Abercrombie Golf and Country Club, with 30 teams participating. There are still many ways to get involved and help create positive change in your community. To learn more, please contact Ashley Kean at [ashley.kean@unitedwaymaritimes.ca](mailto:ashley.kean@unitedwaymaritimes.ca).

# Looking Ahead: From Local Momentum to National Conversations



April was a full and inspiring month for the Chamber, beginning with our Annual General Meeting earlier in the month and ending with the opportunity to attend the Canadian Chamber of Commerce's first Future of Business Summit in Ottawa.

Our AGM was a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the past year, welcome board members, share updates on the Chamber's work, and look ahead to the priorities shaping our next chapter. The business panel that followed brought the morning to life beautifully, with local leaders sharing their perspectives on confidence, adaptation, growth, and optimism in Pictou County.

Hearing from those voices reminded us once again that our region has so much to build on. Our businesses are creative, committed, and deeply connected to the wellbeing of this community.

Later in April, we attended the Future of Business Summit in Ottawa, hosted by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. The summit brought together more than 600 business and community leaders, policymakers, and economists from across the country to discuss Canada's economic future and the role businesses can play in shaping durable change.



The conversations touched on key issues such as workforce challenges, internal trade, artificial intelligence, investment, productivity, and building stronger, more resilient communities. One of the strongest takeaways for me was the reminder that businesses are not simply reacting to change — they are helping shape what comes next.

And while national conversations are important, they must also reflect the realities of rural communities like ours.

That is exactly what we are building toward this coming year. This fall, the Chamber is working toward hosting our first Pictou County Business Summit, focused specifically on the needs, opportunities, and realities of rural business and community development.

Too often, rural communities are left out of larger conversations, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Our goal is to create a space where those voices are centred, where local businesses, partners, and community leaders can come together to discuss what matters most here.

More details will be shared in the coming months, but we are excited about what is ahead. This will be an opportunity to gather ideas, strengthen connections, and continue building a more vibrant and resilient business community in Pictou County.



# Member Spotlight

On Earth Day, we had the pleasure of visiting Go West Homestead in Merigomish, where entrepreneurs Tracy and David Hutchings are redefining what sustainable, small-scale agriculture can look like in Pictou County.



As newcomers to Nova Scotia, Tracy and David saw an opportunity to contribute to their community in a meaningful way. Noticing a gap in year-round access to fresh, locally grown produce, they turned to microgreens. Microgreens are nutrient-dense crops that thrive in small spaces and support sustainable growing practices. By producing greens year-round in their greenhouse, they're helping reduce reliance on imported produce, lowering transport emissions, and strengthening our local food system.



Sustainability is central to their approach. Nothing goes to waste: unused crops and harvested planters are repurposed to feed their farm animals, creating a closed-loop system. Their growing methods rely on natural conditions rather than artificial lighting or chemical treatments, resulting in clean, fresh produce grown with care right here at home.



Innovation continues beyond the greenhouse. In response to customer feedback, Go West Homestead recently launched a ready-made salad delivery program, making it easier for residents across the county to enjoy healthy, locally sourced meals. These salads feature ingredients from regional partners, such as artisan cheeses and locally made dressings, showcasing the power of collaboration in our food economy.

When asked what she wishes more people knew about microgreen farming, Tracy's message was simple: "They can do it." She sees tremendous potential for growth and creativity in Nova Scotia's farming sector, especially as the next generation embraces new approaches to agriculture.



# Celebrating Community at the 15th Annual Buoy Awards Gala

On April 16th, Chamber representatives had the pleasure of attending the 15th annual Buoy Awards Gala, hosted by our valued community partner Coastal Nova Scotia at the Pictou County Wellness Centre. The evening carried a wonderful sense of joy, elegance, and pride as guests gathered to celebrate the people and organizations shaping arts and tourism across our region.

Throughout the night, speakers emphasized a powerful message: arts and tourism are not separate sectors, but deeply interconnected forces that strengthen rural communities, fuel economic growth, and help tell the story of Nova Scotia to the world. Their words were a reminder of how creativity, culture, and community spirit continue to define our province's identity.

The event was guided with warmth and humour by Wes Surrett, whose charismatic presence as Master of Ceremonies kept the room engaged and smiling. A standout performance by Gordie "Crazy Legs" MacKeeman & His Rhythm Boys had the crowd wanting to get up and dance as their high-energy Maritime medley had the entire room clapping and stomping along.

This year's award recipients showcased the breadth of talent and dedication across our coastal communities:

- Event Award: Antigonish Highland Games
- Partnership Award: Guysborough District Business Partnership
- Services Award: Glasgow Square Theatre
- Destination Award: Riverside International Speedway
- Ambassador Award: Alex Theriault

Community Excellence Optimizer Recognitions were presented to:

Pictou Landing First Nation Mawio'mi, Terry MacDonald (Sherbrooke Village), Henderson Paris (Run Against Racism), Emma MacDonald (Justamere Café), and Joe Jellow (Jellow Holdings Limited).

Each recipient reflects the passion, innovation, and community leadership that keep our region vibrant.

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who organized, sponsored, attended, or was nominated at this year's gala. Your work is vital to our local economy and to preserving the voice, heart, and soul of Nova Scotia for generations to come.



# May Events

# May 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## Events

**May 14<sup>th</sup> /4-7pm - Spring Social  
Hosted with Ignite**

**May 19<sup>th</sup> /5-6pm- Meet & Greet:  
Meet Our New Board Members**

**May 21<sup>st</sup> /12-1:30pm - Lunch &  
Learn: Cyber Security in  
Partnership with Ignite**

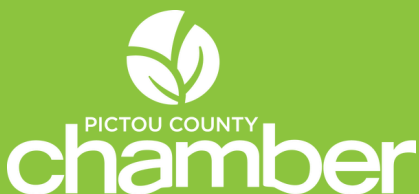
**May 29<sup>th</sup> /9am-3pm - Pictou  
County Climate Summit: 10  
Tables Dialogue**




**PICTOU COUNTY  
chamber  
Board Member**

# MEET & GREET

**MAY 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2026  
5-6PM  
IGNITE AUDITORIUM**

# Events



**IGNITE** PICTOU COUNTY chamber

*Welcome to Spring*  
**SOCIAL**

**IGNITE Northern, New Glasgow**  
Thursday, May 14  
4:00PM - 7:00PM

## Welcome to Spring Social – May 14

We're pleased to partner with IGNITE for this year's Welcome to Spring Social, an opportunity for entrepreneurs, innovators, and community members to connect and celebrate the season.

**Thursday, May 14, from 4:00–6:00 PM at IGNITE Northern (345 Temperance St., New Glasgow).**

Join us for an evening of networking, live music by Paul Tupper, and fresh spring energy. Guests will also have the chance to explore IGNITE's newly refreshed coworking space, featuring updated furniture and a redesigned layout.

The event is open to everyone! It's a great chance to meet new people, share ideas, and engage with the region's growing entrepreneurial community. Appetizers and light refreshments will be provided.



### WEBINAR

## BUILDING HOMES, BUILDING WORKFORCE: How Non-Profit Housing Can Create Skilled Trades Pathways

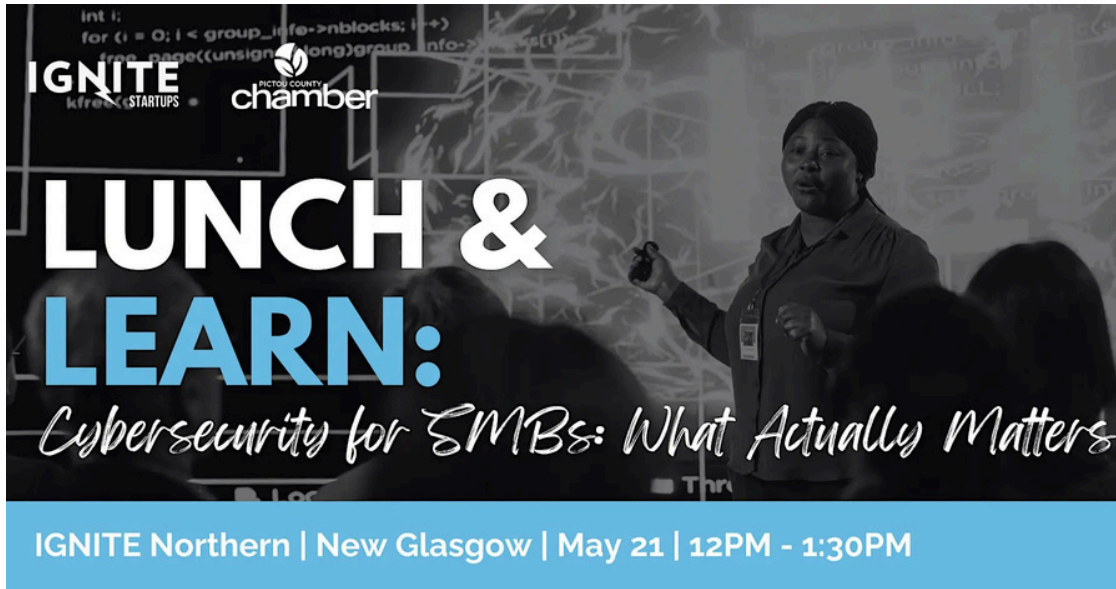
May 20, 2026 | 12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

**REGISTER NOW**



**REGISTER USING THE QR CODE!**

# Events



**IGNITE** STARTUPS **chamber**

## LUNCH & LEARN:

*Cybersecurity for SMBs: What Actually Matters*

IGNITE Northern | New Glasgow | May 21 | 12PM - 1:30PM

May 21  
12:00-1:30 p.m.  
352 E River Road,  
New Glasgow

[Register Here:](#)



## Cybersecurity Lunch & Learn — May 21

Strengthen your business's digital resilience with this practical session led by cybersecurity expert Todd Gibbons. Designed for small and medium-sized businesses, this Lunch & Learn focuses on clear, actionable steps you can take to reduce risk and make confident technology decisions.



## PICTOU COUNTY *Climate Summit* MAY 29 - 30, 2026

**Building a Climate-Ready Future**



## Pictou County Climate Summit • May 29-30

The Pictou County Climate Summit is coming up soon, bringing together residents, businesses, organizations, and municipal partners for two days of climate action and community collaboration.

### Friday, May 29:

10 Tables Dialogue • Exhibitor Showcase • Climate Social

### Saturday, May 30:

Exhibitor Showcase • Art Activities • Climate Summit • Songs for the Earth

Join the conversation, explore local climate initiatives, and help shape a more sustainable future for Pictou County.

For more information and to register use the QR code or visit: <https://cyberimpact.page/g74xf3vp/pictou-county-climate-summit>

# Business Updates - Off Shore Planning

## Nova Scotia Sees Major New Investment in Offshore Oil and Gas

Nova Scotia's offshore energy sector is seeing renewed momentum, with significant new private-sector investment signalling confidence in the province's resource potential. Inceptio Oil and Gas, led by Nova Scotian James Edens, has submitted bids on two offshore parcels in the most recent call for bids. The company has indicated it is prepared to invest more than \$210 million in exploration activity. According to public information, this level of investment reflects a commitment to seismic work and offshore exploration that could support employment and economic activity in the province.

Mr. Edens brings extensive global experience in the oil and gas industry, and his decision to pursue opportunities in Nova Scotia has drawn attention to the province's offshore potential. A bid of this scale represents not just interest, but a requirement to spend the committed amount on exploration should the parcels be awarded.

The Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Energy Regulator (CNSOER) has independently reviewed and vetted the bids, confirming they meet the regulatory standards required to move forward. This arm's-length process is designed to ensure transparency, due diligence, and responsible resource management.

Nova Scotia has a history of successful offshore development. Past projects such as the Sable Offshore Energy Project and the Deep Panuke Offshore Gas Project generated substantial economic activity, provincial revenue, and employment. Public information from previous project cycles notes that offshore revenues have historically contributed to infrastructure, healthcare, education, and community services.

Geoscience assessments indicate that Nova Scotia's offshore margin holds significant untapped potential, with estimates of up to 148 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 49 billion barrels of oil across various parcels. While exploration is only the first step in a long process, renewed industry interest suggests growing attention to the province's energy resources.

The province has stated that it will continue working with industry to encourage future bids and promote opportunities across offshore wind, offshore petroleum, and onshore natural gas. As activity increases, the potential exists for new jobs, increased energy security, and broader economic benefits for communities across Nova Scotia.

For more information, the CNSOER announcement can be found here:  
[cnsoer.ca/news-resources/news-announcements/cnsoer-announces-results-petroleum-related-call-for-bids-ns25-1p](https://cnsoer.ca/news-resources/news-announcements/cnsoer-announces-results-petroleum-related-call-for-bids-ns25-1p)



# The World of Business - Trade Updates

## Federal Update: New Advisory Committee on Canada-U.S. Economic Relations

On April 21, the Government of Canada announced the creation of a new Advisory Committee on Canada-U.S. Economic Relations. According to the federal release, the committee will provide strategic advice on all aspects of the Canada-U.S. economic relationship as the country approaches the 2026 Joint Review of the Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA). The committee will be chaired by Dominic LeBlanc, President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade, and will include leaders from major sectors across the Canadian economy, representing business, labour, investment, and industry expertise. Its first meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2026.

The federal government notes that Canada currently maintains the lowest average tariff rate of any major U.S. trading partner, with 85% of bilateral trade remaining tariff-free. Strengthening this economic relationship, supporting continental competitiveness, and preparing for the upcoming CUSMA review are key priorities highlighted in the announcement.

Key facts shared in the release include:

- Canada, the U.S., and Mexico represent a combined market of 517 million consumers and a GDP of \$48.8 trillion.
- Canada-U.S. trade reached nearly \$3.6 billion per day in 2024.
- Since CUSMA came into force, bilateral trade has grown by more than 27%.
- The CUSMA Joint Review will take place in July 2026, with the option to extend the agreement for another 16 years by consensus.

### What this means for businesses

For businesses in Pictou County and across Nova Scotia, the creation of this advisory committee signals a period of active engagement on cross-border trade issues. As Canada prepares for the 2026 CUSMA Joint Review, federal decision-makers will be drawing more directly on industry perspectives to help maintain tariff-free access, reduce uncertainty, and support a stable environment for investment.

#### A strengthened Canada-U.S. economic strategy could help:

- Protect market access for exporters and manufacturers who rely on predictable cross-border supply chains
- Support competitiveness by keeping tariff and regulatory barriers low
- Provide clearer guidance for businesses planning long-term investments tied to U.S. markets
- Ensure labour and industry voices are represented as continental trade rules evolve

For local businesses, this review period is an opportunity to stay informed, identify potential impacts, and engage through industry associations as Canada shapes its approach to the next phase of North American trade.

For more information visit: <https://www.pm.gc.ca/>

