



**BusinessNOW**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 30th, 2020**

***The Valley Regional Enterprise Network, in partnership with the Municipality of the County of Kings, initiates a Business Retention and Expansion Program in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic***

The Valley Regional Enterprise Network (Valley REN), in partnership with the Municipality of the County of Kings, is implementing a strategic Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) outreach program to support and identify opportunities for businesses in the Annapolis Valley. BRE programs are being utilized in recovery efforts across the country to build a positive business environment for the success of local businesses and the community. The Valley REN will conduct a series of interviews with businesses based on internationally standardized questions, that will provide the REN and its partners with an overview of the current business climate.

BRE is a structured action-oriented and community-based approach to business and economic development. It promotes job growth by helping communities learn about issues as well as opportunities for local businesses and sets priorities for projects to address these needs. BRE supports local businesses to grow, create jobs and stay in the community, as well as collect business and market data to support economic development planning.

This will provide an overview of the business climate of the region, by identifying trends, challenges and opportunities.

If the need for business support is identified during this process, the business will be integrated into the Valley REN's Business NOW service. Business NOW is also a free service that provides support to entrepreneurs and businesses by connecting them with resources to:

- Start-up a business
- Finance a business
- Expand a business
- Overcome challenges
- Join business networks
- Find new opportunities
- Plan for succession

“Small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of the region. By investing time and getting to know and better understand our existing businesses, we can help create an environment that allows these businesses to thrive,” says Jennifer Tufts, Valley Regional Enterprise Network CEO.

Businesses can participate by visiting: [www.valleyren.ca/businessnow](http://www.valleyren.ca/businessnow), by calling 902-678-2200, or by contacting Richelle Brown Redden at [rbrownredden@valleyren.ca](mailto:rbrownredden@valleyren.ca). To participate, businesses must be within the Valley RENs catchment area, and available for a 1-hour interview, either by phone or in person. All interviews are strictly confidential.

The Valley Regional Enterprise Network (Valley REN), incorporated in March 2014, is the regional economic development organization for the Annapolis Valley Region. They carry out the economic development priorities of their members, which include Glooscap First Nation, the Municipality of the County of Kings, West Hants Regional Municipality, and the Towns of Berwick, Kentville, and Middleton. Funding for the Valley REN is provided by its members and is matched by the Province of Nova Scotia to support economic development on a regional level.

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