

Event showcased world-class businesses operating in Eastern PEI

by Stella Shepard

The **Eastern PEI Chamber of Commerce (EPEICC)** kicked off Small Business Week by hosting an Explore Economics East conference in Georgetown. More than a 100 participants attended the event.

“People are always surprised at how many world-class businesses operate out of Eastern PEI, and most do it very quietly,” says **Keir White**, President of the EPEICC. “We decided it’s time to celebrate, bring our success stories out of the shadows, and share them with the world.”

“We plan to make this a yearly event, with our local businesses sharing their success and providing a forum to pass their knowledge and experience to the next generation.”

The keynote speaker, **John Ellis**, is a Partner with **Global Investment**, based in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). He works with businesses and governments to facilitate investments and partnerships in the UAE.

“The population is set to double in cities like Dubai, and as a result all types of companies can excel in this market,” says John.

“Industries of particular interest are food, fish, beverage, bioscience, manufacturing, cosmetics, aviation, and marine. Many other areas would do equally well.”

“Manufacturing in Middle Eastern countries does not meet demand, so products are imported from all over the world. There is a lot of interest in Canadian companies. Products and services from Canada are considered to be high quality.”

“The culture of face-to-face meetings is very prominent in the Middle East, and the use of emails less so. We find serious potential investors, partners and clients, and carry out initial meetings on the behalf of PEI companies. We also follow up with clients to ensure maximum success.”



Keir White, President of the EPEICC.

For more information, email johnellis@gbi-uk.com or visit www.gbi-uk.com



Panelists talk about their businesses

Colville Bay Oyster Company, Souris

This family-run oyster farm grows and sells oysters in the global marketplace. Their oysters are known worldwide for their flavour. They also fish and sell lobsters and other shellfish at a retail outlet, **The Lobster Shack**, on the Souris boardwalk.

“We started growing oysters 25 years ago after the closure of the cod fishery in the early 90s,” says **Johnny Flynn**. “We did our homework to see what works best on PEI and decided to grow oysters because they are native to the area.”



Leo Flynn and Alvin Doiron, employees.

“When we started out, it took six years before we actually sold oysters and received a cheque in the mail. We started out selling our product to Island restaurants. A few years later, our name became known, and we began to sell off-Island and around the globe.”

For more information, visit www.colvillebayoysterco.com



Unleashed Potential, Stratford

Duke Ferguson is a certified professional dog trainer who started a business out of the back of his truck in Montague. **Unleashed Potential**, now based in Stratford, is a registered private dog training school.

Dog trainers from around the globe travel to the school to learn training techniques. As well, Duke provides obedience training for companion pets, trains service dogs, and trains sniffer dogs to detect anything from bombs to drugs to bedbugs. He travels the globe giving seminars, and he’s worked with many animal trainers, including those who have worked for Universal Studios, Sea World, and other production companies.



Duke Ferguson, Owner and Dog Trainer.

“I always knew I wanted to work with dogs,” says Duke. “It’s having a passion for what I do that has made the business so successful. You can work from anywhere and be successful, if you have a passion for the job.”

For more information visit www.unleashedpotential.ca



Navigate Food Safety Solutions, Montague

This business has been in operation for three years. **Navigate Food Safety Solutions** is currently located in the Launch Pad building on Main Street in Montague.

“Food Safety is more complicated than ever before,” says **Maureen Hanley**. “Our expertise makes food safety simpler in a very complicated world. Our customers present us with a food safety issue, and then we work with them to find a solution that makes sense.”

For many years, Co-founder **Alex Hanley** audited hundreds of food plants throughout North America and abroad. He noticed that many processing facilities were dealing with a lot of the same food safety issues, which, more often than not, resulted in food recalls.

“We developed a training process with tools and templates that allow processing facilities to create a simplified, yet highly effective food safety management system that makes sense to everyone in the plant. Clients buy a license through the company and we deliver the customization for that plant through coaching.”

“Currently, we are focusing on the 200,000 food plants in North America and working with 30 of them at the moment. We are experiencing rapid growth with a team of four Island-based staff.”

“Today you can live anywhere you want and work anywhere in the world. We chose to do business on PEI because we want to work and live here.”

For more information, visit www.navigatefoodsafety.com



Maureen Hanley, Co-founder.

Other businesses on the panel

Rossignol Estate Winery, Little Sands
www.rossignolwinery.com

Artisans on Main, Souris
www.sourisartisans.com

Center for Aquaculture Technologies, Souris
www.aquatechcenter.com

NorCan Marine Inc., Montague
www.norcanmarine.com

Aspin Kemp & Associates, Montague
www.aka-group.com

Wicked Eh?, Charlottetown
www.wickedeh.net

AOR Web Solutions, St. Peters
www.aorweb.ca

For more information about the Eastern PEI Chamber of Commerce, visit www.epeicc.ca



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