

Creating a path to success

by Stella Shepard

The Eastern PEI Entrepreneurial Forum provided business information for people considering starting or expanding a business. About 200 people attended.

The event was hosted by the Montague and Souris Rural Action Centres at the Kings Playhouse in Georgetown.

“It was a day full of information, inspiration, networking opportunities and making connections to help overcome any obstacles that may be in the path to starting your own business,” says **Martina MacDonald**, General Manager of the Rural Action Centre, Montague.

“You can do business anywhere you want in rural PEI because of the supports and resources that are readily available,” says **Heath MacDonald**, Minister of Economic Development and Tourism. “Eastern PEI is home to some of the most hard working, unique, and imaginative entrepreneurs on the Island.”

For more information about the **Rural Action Centre**, visit www.ruralactioncentres.ca or call 1-855-297-9898.



John Rowe, Founder and President of **Island Abbey Foods Ltd.**, inspired the audience by sharing his entrepreneurial journey. He is also the founder of the Timeless Group Of Companies which includes Timeless Technologies, Timeless Medical Systems, and Timeless Veterinary Systems. The two companies employ a total of 110 staff.

Island Abbey Foods is a 20-year success story that started in John’s basement. He tapped into PEI resources that helped him turn a concept into an award-winning product.

“Research is the most important thing you can do when you are thinking about a new business idea or expanding a business,” says John. “There is no excuse to not do the research because the tools are free. It’s very important to research before spending piles of money.”



John Rowe.
Photo submitted

For more information, email john.rowe@islandabbeyfoods.com
Visit www.islandabbeyfoods.com



Panelists provide a snapshot of their self employment story

PEI Seaglass Shanty, PEI Seaglass Store, and Relic’s Ice Cream House, Souris

Patricia McLean Ettinger has collected sea glass most of her life. With a house full of sea glass collected over the years, she rented a space on Main Street, Souris and began making and selling sea glass jewelry. She now has three stores in the area and sells online as well.

“You can grow your business very quickly and be successful. Don’t market the product, market yourself. You are selling a product you have passion for. People are buying because of you. They want to know it’s coming from a genuine person.

“When running a business, you want it to represent you. You want your employee to be everything you are, and appreciate what your business means to you.”



Patricia McLean Ettinger

For more information, contact **Patricia** at 902-940-9171.
Visit www.wildfiregifts.weebly.com



East Coast Paddle Adventures, Souris

“For 15-plus years, I worked in kitchens across Canada,” says **Matthew Doiron**. “In my last job in Alberta, I worked in camps as a Head Chef. It was a stressful job working 14 hours a day for weeks at a time.

“While I was home in the summer of 2015, I started thinking about what makes me happy. I was hooked on paddleboarding the first time I tried it that summer, and I realized that being out in nature is what makes me truly happy. I decided I wanted to do this for a living.

“No one was renting paddle boards in my home town of Souris. It was an opportunity to start a business doing what I had a passion for.

“I still work in kitchens during the winter, and now I have something to look forward to in spring and summer. Being your own boss is amazing. If you have a dream job, pursue it, because life is so short and you might as well be happy.”



Matthew Doiron

For more information, contact **Matthew Doiron** at 902-316-1641.
Visit www.eastcoastpaddle.ca



Along the Edge, Seal River

Jim Conohan attended the Eastern PEI Entrepreneurial Forum last year by chance, which led to starting his own business by connecting with service providers located at the Rural Action Centre in Montague.

“While I was at the forum, I talked about my business idea with people from Active Communities and SkillsPEI. I showed people my pot holders and other products I had made from juniper trees harvested on my property.

“Rural Action Centres and SkillsPEI is where to begin if you are thinking about starting a business.”



Jim Conohan

For more information contact **Jim Conohan** at 902-969-0799.



Arbonne Independent Consultant, Georgetown

Kerri O’Brien is a married, stay-at-home mother to four children. She is passionate about being an independent Arbonne Consultant and helping others in the industry become self employed.

“I am an absolute advocate for marketing through networking. It’s one of the fastest growing industries in the world. I help people create an income opportunity in the health and wellness industry through networking and Internet-based business.

“This company has given me the opportunity to be more present with my family, which is invaluable to me. It has allowed me to travel and has also helped me grow as a person. It’s a type of business where you can work around a busy lifestyle or as a second job, and work as little or as much as you like.”



Kerri O'Brien

For more information, contact **Kerri O’Brien** at 902-969-2758.
Visit www.kerrijenkinsobrien.arbonne.ca



Mary and Bill Kendrick

Experience PEI

“We established **Experience PEI**, a home-based company, to create unique, personal hands-on experiences designed to provide you with lifelong memories,” says **Bill Kendrick**.

Some experiences offered:

- Comb a beach in search of tasty treasures
- Join a ship’s crew and try your hand at sailing on the open water
- Create your own candle out of Island sand.

“We do what we do best and partner with other people who do what they do best. We look for experience providers to enhance what we provide for tourists. We are always looking for partners to create interesting experiences.”

For more information, contact **Bill and Mary Kendrick** at 1-844-368-1670.
Visit www.experiencepei.ca

