

Business and civic leaders convene to hear the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers discuss regional economic and environmental issues

Last month, the annual meeting of the New England Governors/Eastern Canadian Premiers took place on Prince Edward Island. With summer weather cooperating to the fullest extent, attendees were able to hear insightful dialog on US-Canadian relations and shared regional issues while enjoying all that the region had to offer.

During the first day's proceedings, the governors and premiers passed four resolutions concerning cross-border trade, a regional climate change action plan, regional emergency response in a changing climate and transportation. In between the official proceedings, leaders from business, government and civic communities presented and moderated panels on issues important to the region, ranging from how the lumber industry will be impacted by NAFTA to how public-private partnerships can spur innovation and enhance competitiveness. Education was also a common thread in several of the presentations in terms of the role governors and premiers can play in linking the region's largest employers and academic institutions to positively impact workforce development, and for employers to enhance existing STEM curricula with practical mentoring and internship opportunities.



On day two of the conference, attendees were treated to tours of PEI's food and beverage industry or the island's energy infrastructure.

Visitors on the energy leg of the tour started in Charlottetown heading toward the western island city of Summerside.

The first stop along the route was a visit with executives from Maritime Electric to learn about the recently completed upgrade to underwater submarine cables connecting Borden, PEI with the province of New Brunswick. The infrastructure upgrade addresses growing demand for electricity on PEI and enhances connectivity to the mainland. Next, participants were able to tour a biofuel facility at Cavendish Farms.



Finally reaching the small city of Summerside, participants toured the solar array connected to the city's 6,000-seat event and sports arena, Credit Union Place, and visited Prince County Hospital's wood chip furnace. The group concluded the day at a nearby wind farm. Summerside is known throughout eastern



Canada for its entrepreneurial culture and deep commitment to renewable energy, fostering a "Living Lab" environment which made many of the visited sites possible.

The daylong site visits concluded with a networking event in a bucolic setting, highlighting regionally sourced foods and craft beer from a local brewery.

Vermont will host the next NEG/ECP conference on August 12-14, 2018.

