

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The community of Glace Bay can be found hugging the eastern coastline of Cape Breton Island. The island is located on the north eastern tip of Nova Scotia and joined to the mainland by a rock-filled causeway. Alexander Graham Bell, who spent many years living in Cape Breton, once said, " I have seen the Canadian and American Rockies, the Andes, the Alps and the Highlands of Scotland, but for simple beauty, Cape Breton out rivals them all."

Bell's sentiment has recently been echoed by a number of travel writers who have extolled Cape Breton not only for its unsurpassed physical beauty but also for the friendliness and generosity of its people. Travel and Leisure Magazine has ranked Cape Breton as the number one (1) island to visit in the continental US and Canada. National Geographic has described Cape Breton as "the most scenic island in the world" and has called it one of the "50 places of a lifetime" to visit. During the 2016 American election campaign the island garnered worldwide attention when a local radio DJ's tongue-in-cheek website suggested Cape Breton as a place for Americans to move if Trump becomes President. The so-called "Trump Bump" was a boom for local tourism.

Glace Bay was incorporated as a town in 1901. In 1995, its municipal government was dissolved and Glace Bay joined six (6) other municipalities and the County of Cape Breton to form a larger municipal unit known as the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM). The CBRM covers 2,470 square kilometers and is home to approximately 94,000 residents. According to the 2016 census data, 17,556 people listed Glace Bay as their home. Although it is now part of the CBRM, Glace Bay maintains its own identity and "bay byes" are proud of their unique history.

The growth and development of Glace Bay is closely linked to the coal industry. As early as the 1720s the French were mining coal in the area in order to supply its Fortress at nearby Louisbourg. The French named the place Baie de Glace (literally, Ice Bay) because of the sea ice that filled the ocean during the winter. During the latter part of the nineteenth century a number of small communities grew up around the dozen mines that opened in the area. In 1901, they joined together to form the Town of Glace Bay.

Early in the 20th century Cape Breton was producing 40% of all coal mined in Canada. By the 1940s the population of Glace Bay topped 28,000 and the town was recognized as the largest in the country. At its peak, Glace Bay boasted the largest underground mining operation in the world. Demand for coal, however, decreased following World War II. By the 1960s the coal industry in Cape Breton was nationalized by the federal government intent on closing the mines. Coal mining in Glace Bay came to an abrupt end in April, 1984, when a fire at No. 26 Colliery forced its permanent closure. When the Prince Mine at Point Aconi closed in 2001 more than 280 years of underground coal mining in Cape Breton came to an end.

Despite the fact that more than thirty (30) years have passed since coal has been mined in Glace Bay, the community still considers itself a "mining town". The Cape Breton

Miners' Museum, located on a fifteen acre site about a mile from downtown Glace Bay, pays tribute to the region's long and rich history of coal mining and offers tours of an underground mine. The internationally acclaimed coal miners' chorus, The Men of the Deeps, made up of former mine workers, still performs locally and tours regularly.

After years of eager anticipation, underground coal mining has returned to the Glace Bay area. In the summer of 2017, a mine was opened in the nearby community of Donkin. The Donkin mine is a welcome boost to the local economy and offers the prospect of high paying jobs that will allow workers to stay at home rather than commuting elsewhere for work.

Despite the potential of the Donkin mine project, the future of Glace Bay nevertheless remains dependent on its successful transition from a resource based economy to a more service oriented one. Since modern mines depend more on mechanization than large pools of labour, job opportunities will be limited. The mine still needs to secure a reliable long-term customer for its product, such as Nova Scotia Power. At the same time the federal government is intent on phasing out coal-fired electrical generation by 2030.

Following the closure of the coal mines, the federal government had put in place numerous financial incentives to attract new industry to the area. One of those which responded was Stream International which began operating a call centre in downtown Glace Bay in 2001. In 2014, Convergys merged with Stream and took over the Glace Bay operation. The call centre has employed up to one thousand (1000) people at a time.

Besides coal mining, fishing was the other main industry in Glace Bay over the years. The town was once the site of a very busy commercial fishing operation and in the early 1950s was the center of sword fishing in Canada. With the decline of the east coast fishery, the importance of Glace Bay as a port also declined. Nevertheless, Glace Bay still has an active lobster fishing fleet and several processing plants. Concern that seismic testing planned in the ocean near the Donkin mine may negatively impact the local fishery has representatives from the fishing and mining industries trying to work out an arrangement that will permit both industries to grow and thrive.

A local community development organization, Bayitforward, is actively working to build partnerships that will promote and advance economic, cultural and social growth in Glace Bay. Its aim is to attract people to live, work, play and invest in the community. Over the past year it has sponsored a community market; networking events for current and prospective businesses in Glace Bay; a conference for young people that focused on creating opportunities in Glace Bay that will encourage youth to remain in the community; and brought back community spirit with its successful Christmas light up that attracted more than 3000 participants to downtown Glace Bay. As part of its plan to rejuvenate downtown Glace Bay, the group is currently raising money to erect a bandshell in the downtown area to promote local music and theatre.

An important partner in the revitalization of Glace Bay is Business Cape Breton, an

organization that has worked with the CBRM and the province to develop an ambitious twenty (20) year plan for Glace Bay and the surrounding area. The plan calls for improvements to the business district and waterfront, the development of a coastal walking trail and a comprehensive tourism strategy. In December, 2017, the first phase of the proposed Glace Bay revitalization program was introduced when Business Cape Breton called for expressions of interest from businesses and organizations wanting to participate in a downtown facade plan and business exterior upgrades.

Glace Bay not only offers all the charms of small town living but it also offers a full range of amenities. It has an acute care hospital, one of four health care centres that are located in the CBRM. Approximately twenty minutes drive from Glace Bay is the Cape Breton Regional Healthcare Centre, the second largest acute care facility in Nova Scotia. It is the major referral hospital for the island and where the Cape Breton Cancer Centre is situated. In Glace Bay there are eight (8) pharmacies as well as dental, chiropractic and physiotherapy services. There are several nursing homes and a number of seniors' complexes and residences.

Glace Bay has three (3) distinctive areas of commercial activity. In the downtown area there are some small shops selling clothing, jewelery, books and gift items; restaurants and bars; a grocery store, a furniture store, a health food store and four (4) drug stores; four (4) banks and a credit union. In the Stirling Road area there are more pharmacies and shops and places to eat, two (2) bakeries and a hardware store. On Reserve Street there are two (2) large supermarkets, a Canadian Tire Store and the Y.M.C.A. Business Enterprise Centre which provides assistance to people wanting to start small businesses. Also headquartered on Reserve Street is The Coast 89.7 Radio Station which received the EMCA (East Coast Music Award) Radio Station of the Year Award in 2011. Additionally, less than fifteen (15) minutes drive from Glace Bay is the Mayflower Mall, the shopping centre for the CBRM which offers more than 75 shops and services, Walmart and Home Depot.

In the heart of downtown Glace Bay you can find the magnificent Savoy Theatre which is commonly referred to as Cape Breton's entertainment and cultural showcase. In 2017, the Savoy celebrated its ninetieth (90th) anniversary. Built in the 1920's to resemble a Victorian show house, the theatre has been painstakingly restored to its original grandeur. A popular venue for showcasing Cape Breton talent, such as The Men of the Deeps, The Rankin Family, The Barra MacNeils and Rita MacNeil, the theatre has also attracted national and international performers like Leonard Cohen and K.D. Lang. The Atlantic Symphony, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and Neptune Theatre have staged productions here. In recent years the Savoy Theatre has returned to its roots and produced its own theatre productions: Les Miserables, Chicago, The Sound of Music and Miracle on 34th Street. The Savoy Theatre regularly hosts dinner theatre and is the home of The Cape Breton Summertime Review, a humorous look at life in Cape Breton.

A new addition to the arts scene in Cape Breton is the Highland Arts Theatre (HAT) in downtown Sydney, approximately twenty (20) kilometers from Glace Bay. When the historic St. Andrew's United Church was decommissioned in 2013 it was transformed

into a state of the art performance venue for music, dance, and theatre. Originally built in 1911 to house a growing Presbyterian congregation (it could seat 1,000 worshippers for Sunday services), the building's 3000 pipe Casavant pipe organ and ten (10) bell chimes are still in use today. In addition to the theatre productions of many famous and beloved plays, HAT hosts a variety of original productions written and performed by local artists who capture the essence of life in Cape Breton, both past and present.

If you cannot find the entertainment you seek at the Savoy or the HAT, you can enjoy live theatre at the Boardmore Playhouse located at Cape Breton University (CBU), situated on the highway between Sydney and Glace Bay. The Boardmores after whom the theatre is named developed a tradition of cooperation between community and college drama enthusiasts that continues today. The theatre presents an annual season of plays, including those aimed at young audiences and a one week one act play festival that emphasizes new play development. The Playhouse offers its expertise to community theatre groups with workshops for young people and summer theatre programs. Many of the academic courses offered as part of CBU's Theatre Arts Certificate Program are taught at the Boardmore Playhouse. Whether you want to watch or participate there is plenty of opportunity to enjoy theatre and music in the CBRM.

For nine days each October, at the height of the island's fall colours, Cape Breton is home to the Celtic Colours International Festival which is a celebration of Cape Breton's living traditional culture. The festival is not limited to one location or venue. Communities throughout the island put on concerts, workshops, demonstrations and lectures celebrating Celtic music, language, storytelling, art and history. Each year the festival attracts internationally renowned artists who perform along side local talent.

For the musically inclined there are three community bands in the CBRM (the Second Wind Community Concert Band, the Cape Breton Orchestra and the Donkin Citizens' Brass Band) that meet weekly and welcome new members. Those who like to sing may be interested in joining one of the many singing groups in the local area such as the men's barbershop group, The Cape Breton Chordsmen, the Cape Breton Chorale or Glace Bay's Coal Town Chorus.

Besides the Cape Breton Miners' Museum, there are three (3) other museums in Glace Bay honouring its heritage. The Glace Bay Heritage Museum is located in the century old former Town Hall that sits atop a hill overlooking the downtown core. The museum celebrates the community's proud past, in particular its sports and labour history. The Marconi National Historic Site at Tablehead commemorates a milestone in communications history, the first official transmission of a wireless message from Glace Bay across the Atlantic Ocean to England. The U.N.I.A. (United Negro Improvement Association) Cultural Museum concentrates on the contributions made by Afro-Canadians to the community.

Beyond the borders of Glace Bay, Cape Breton is home to many significant historical events and places. The Fortress of Louisbourg is a partial reconstruction of an 18th century French fortress that serves as a living history museum, complete with costumed

animators. It is the largest reconstruction site in North America and was built by unemployed coal miners during the 1960s and 1970s. In Iona, the Highland Village is another living history museum that tells the story of Gaelic settlement in Nova Scotia. Baddeck is home to the Alexander Graham Bell museum that not only celebrates his most famous invention, the telephone, but also houses a full scale replica of the famous Silver Dart airplane Bell helped build. In 1909, the Silver Dart completed the first controlled powered flight in Canada.

In the early 1990s a number of local high schools were consolidated to form Glace Bay High School, a modern facility that offers a variety of programs. The school supports a number of competitive athletic teams and a strong music program. The Glace Bay Schools Band has performed at various venues in Canada and the United States, including Disney World in Florida and Carnegie Hall in New York City. In 2010, a new and highly modernized junior high school - Ocean View Education Centre - was opened.

Ten (10) minutes drive from Glace Bay is Cape Breton University (CBU), located on the highway running between Glace Bay and Sydney. It is an institution offering a distinctive blend of degree, certificate and diploma programs. At CBU students can study for Bachelor degrees in Arts, Sciences, Business Administration, Community Studies, Hospitality and Tourism Management, Nursing and Education; Masters degrees in Business and Education and commence their studies in engineering, nutrition and agriculture. Cadets from the Canadian Coast Guard College, located in nearby Westmount, can earn a Bachelor of Technology (Nautical Science) in collaboration with CBU. The next door neighbour to CBU is the Marconi Campus of the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) where students have a choice of more than 100 courses and programs in Trades and Technology, Applied Arts and Media, Health and Human Services, Business and Access.

Cape Breton University has a diverse student population. International students make up thirty (30%) per cent of the student body. Today nine (9%) per cent are Aboriginal but that number is expected to rise to fourteen (14%) per cent by 2021. CBU is home to Unama'ki College (Unama'ki is the Mi'kmaw name for Cape Breton) which is dedicated to supporting Mi'kmaw and other First Nations students during their academic pursuits. CBU has, in fact, the highest percentage of Aboriginal student enrollment of any institution in Atlantic Canada and the strongest record in the Atlantic Region for providing post-secondary education and research opportunities to Aboriginal students. Its Department of Indigenous Studies designs courses that allow students to obtain degrees in the Arts, Education and Business Administration with First Nations options.

Cape Breton is home to five (5) Mi'kmaw communities. Membertou is a modern, urban First Nations community located only three (3) kilometers from downtown Sydney. In the past twenty (20) years Membertou has been transformed from a place overwhelmed by poverty, low morale and high unemployment to a thriving community that has successfully partnered with private industry to diversify its economy and bring prosperity and jobs to its people. Membertou is currently developing Churchill Crossing, a forty (40) acre site that will feature retail outlets and light commercial activity and is posed to

be major player in any future container terminal proposed for Sydney Harbour. In 2016, the state-of-the art Membertou Sports and Wellness Centre featuring two (2) NHL sized ice surfaces was opened. In 2018, the facility will play host to the Canadian Aboriginal Hockey Championship.

CBU is one of the few Canadian universities, and the only one in the Maritimes, to offer a folklore program. Celtic Studies students are able to study in the only place in North America where you can find a living Celtic culture; the only place where you can find a Gaelic speaking community outside Scotland. Since its inception in 1938, the Gaelic College at St. Ann's has been dedicated to the promotion and preservation of the Highland Scottish Gaelic culture. The only institution of its kind in North America, the College has an international reputation and attracts students from near and far to study the Gaelic language, Cape Breton fiddling, traditional bag piping and highland dancing.

In addition to the Mi'kmaw and Celtic influences on Cape Breton culture, French Acadian communities trace their roots on the island back 400 years. In the early part of the twentieth century many people from Europe and the Caribbean flocked to Cape Breton to work in the coal mines and at the steel plant. In recent years, students and immigrants from Asia and the Middle East have brought more diversity to the community. A number of restaurants and shops featuring Asian, East Indian and Middle Eastern food have opened.

Cape Breton offers a multitude of recreational possibilities and opportunities. There are plenty of places to swim, fish and sail along the island's ocean playground or in its many lakes and rivers. Throughout the island there are many picturesque hiking trails and in Glace Bay excellent outdoor walking tracks around Renwick Brook and the Beacon Street Dam. There are several fitness centres in the community, a bowling alley downtown and numerous playing fields throughout Glace Bay that support youth and adult baseball, softball and soccer leagues. In 2017, the Glace Bay Community Commons Society spearheaded a campaign to revitalize the ball field at South Street and create the South Street Recreation Complex that includes a splash pad, lighted walking track, a basketball and road hockey court and a fully accessible playground. The Bayplex, Glace Bay's local rink, will unfortunately be closed for the next few years while extensive renovations to the building are completed but all skating and hockey programs have been temporarily moved to rinks within ten (10) minutes driving distance.

What cannot be found within the confines of Glace Bay is readily accessible in the CBRM.

In nearby Sydney you can join the local curling club (Sydney will host the Scotties Tournament of Hearts National Women's Curling Championship in 2019) or enjoy the Olympic sized swimming pool in the state-of-the-art Y.M.C.A. building. Ben Eoin, an hour's drive from Glace Bay, offers skiing in the winter and golfing in the summer. Located in the Cape Breton Health and Recreation Complex at Cape Breton University, the CBU fitness centre offers members of the community a state-of-the-art training facility. There are a number of community outreach programs, including the 50+ Walk and Tone Program. The facility boasts indoor and outdoor soccer fields and an eight (8)

lane synthetic track. Open Hearth Park, located on the site of the former Sydney Steel Plant, offers a multi-use sports field with synthetic turf and an outdoor concert venue that hosted Aerosmith in 2014.

In Glace Bay, the Minor Hockey League operates a very successful program. Its Little League Baseball teams have won several national titles and participated in the World Little League Baseball Championships in the United States. Glace Bay has, in fact, hosted the National Little League Championships three times. Other activities available for young people are dance, including a local favourite, highland dancing, gymnastics and martial arts. The Lighthouse Church Undercurrent Youth Group is immensely popular, offering youth retreats, concerts, skating contests, dances and parties. The Y's Men's and Women's Club has recently taken over a former senior/junior high school building and gymnasium where they plan to operate a laser tag arena and open up the gym to the public.

For golfing enthusiasts, Cape Breton has become a premiere destination. SCORE Golf magazine has ranked three (3) of the island's courses in the top five (5) in Canada. Forbes magazine calls Cape Breton "the hottest island in golf". Golfers from around the world are flocking to Cape Breton to play the rugged wind-swept links at the recently opened Cabot Links and Cabot Cliffs in Inverness. For over seventy-five (75) years, the venerable Highlands Links in Ingonish has perennially ranked among the best in the world.

In the Passchendale area of Glace Bay there is a nine (9) hole golf course and driving range and approximately ten (10) minutes away is the Lingan Golf and Country Club that features an eighteen (18) hole course. Seaview in North Sydney, The Lakes at Ben Eoin and Bell Bay in Baddeck are no more than an hour's drive away.

The annual Vince Ryan Old-timers' Hockey Tournament held every March is the largest of its kind in North America and money raised from it supports scholarships at local high schools. Hockey fans who want to catch some high caliber Quebec Junior "A" action can watch the Cape Breton Screaming Eagles play at Centre 200 in Sydney. One ex-Eagle is Marc-Andre Fleury, formerly a goaltender for the Stanley Cup champion NHL Pittsburgh Penguins and now with the Vegas Golden Knights. Centre 200 is also the home of the Cape Breton Highlanders of the National Basketball League of Canada.

There are a number of service clubs in Glace Bay including the I.O.O.F., Lions Club, Masonic Lodge, Kinsmen, Y's Men's and Women's Club and Royal Canadian Legion. Other religious denominations with congregations in Glace Bay are Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Salvation Army, Pentecostal, Greek Orthodox and Jehovah's Witnesses. There is also a non-denominational Lighthouse Church and a small Jewish community.

The Sydney Airport, offering a gateway to the world, is less than ten (10) minutes drive from Glace Bay. Any place on Cape Breton Island is no more than two (2) hours drive away. Approximately thirty (30) minutes drive from Glace Bay is North Sydney from

where the ferry to Newfoundland departs. Halifax is located 454 kilometers to the south and is easily reached by road within six (6) hours.