

Entrepreneurship summit set for May

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Youth entrepreneurs, or those with aspirations of owning their own business, will want to mark May 13 to 15 down on their calendars.

On those dates, St. F.X. Enterprise Development Centre (XEDC) is hosting the inaugural Atlantic YES! Youth Entrepreneurship Summit, at the Schwartz School of Business building on St. F.X. campus.

The summit's goal is to bring together 200 inspiring youth entrepreneurs, innovators, change makers and emerging leaders, age 16 to 29, from across Atlantic Canada.

"For the summit to be a success, we really need participation from all provinces, so we're targeting 90 youth from N.S., 50 from N.B., 40 from P.E.I. and 20 from Newfoundland," Melissa MacMaster, XEDC entrepreneurship coordinator, said.

MacMaster said the summit will focus on making

"entrepreneurship more accessible for youth."

"As well as how to keep youth in our rural and coastal communities because we're facing so much out-migration," she added. "I think a way to do that is to link it to entrepreneurship."

She added that while the XEDC generally concentrates on youth entrepreneurs and small

and medium sized businesses in northeastern N.S., the summit is a chance to branch out to include all the Atlantic Provinces.

Funding for the summit has come from all three levels of government as well as from the business community.

"Youth will be proactively involved in coming up with ideas on how to overcome these hurdles, maybe putting policies in

place to make entrepreneurship more accessible for them as well as different things we need to do to keep youth in our rural and coastal communities," MacMaster said, adding that working on these plans is what will set this summit apart from similar events in the past.

"These provincial action plans will actually be delivered to the minister of Economic and Rural Development for each province that last day of the summit. So they'll be really involved in making our communities and provinces places where young people want to stay."

Those who would like to become involved can contact the XEDC office on St. Mary's Street in Antigonish by calling 867-5543.

Information can also be found on their website at www.xedc.ca.

MacMaster also noted that while there is a fee to attend the summit, bursaries are available so no one should rule out going for financial reasons before contacting XEDC.

"We want this summit to be available to everyone who would like to attend and don't want the fee to discourage people," she said.



Brian Park with Bodhi Nutrition and Jeff Wilson from Garage Pro Flooring join XEDC entrepreneurship coordinator Melissa MacMaster to help promote the Atlantic YES! Youth Entrepreneurship Summit which is coming up in May. Park and Wilson will both be attending the summit. (Richard MacKenzie photo)