



2014

The Annual Lighthouse Relay, Race to the Sea



LEADING EDGE

Leading Edge Credit Union

January 2015

The Project: A relay race?! Here?!

Welcome to Channel-Port aux Basques, Newfoundland and Labrador, population: 4319. We are the “Gateway to Newfoundland”; the home port of the Gulf of St. Lawrence ferry service, known for our friendly people, rugged landscape, and famous relay race – wait, what?! Ok, so maybe we are not famous yet, but we hope that someday we are known for the **Leading Edge Credit Union Annual Lighthouse Relay “Race to the Sea”**. Watch the video to get a better picture of what our race is all about. You can access the video via this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VPtfn6DvxM>.

The *Annual Lighthouse Relay Race, Race to the Sea* was designed to integrate fitness into the tourism sector in a fun and interactive way for the betterment of the local tourism economy. The Race begins at a picturesque lighthouse in Cape Anguille, and ends 120 kilometers later at the 143-year-old stone heritage structure, the Rose Blanche Lighthouse. The race route consists of 11 individual legs and it takes runners over a variety of terrains, including pavement, gravel, rail bed, and sandy beach. The Race travels through 14 communities and some of the most beautiful scenery in the province, incorporating the region’s four lighthouses along its path (pictured here from top, left to right: Cape Anguille Lighthouse; Channel Head Lighthouse, Cape Ray Lighthouse, and Rose Blanche Lighthouse).



Humble Beginnings

The *Annual Lighthouse Relay, Race to the Sea*, is an initiative that was first developed in 2003 by the *Marine and Mountain Zone Corporation*, a local economic development board in Channel-Port aux Basques, Newfoundland. The Race was designed to integrate fitness and tourism in a fun and interactive way, while providing a much needed boost to the local economy. The Race has been held each summer since 2003, usually during the second weekend of August. The first race had only eight teams (88 athletes) and, since then, the Race has experienced steady, organic growth to its current count of 14 teams (154 athletes) in 2014. The Race participation peaked at 15 teams (165 athletes) in 2012, which celebrated the Race's 10th anniversary.

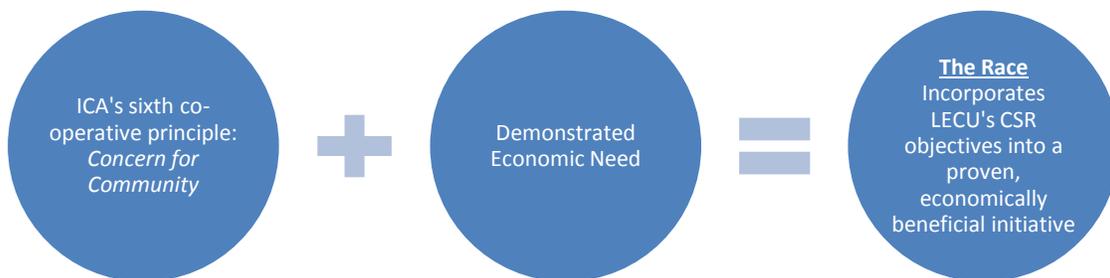
Leading Edge Credit Union (LECU) has been involved with this race, in one form or another, since its inception. This event also benefits from a very dedicated and passionate group of volunteers who, year after year, give their time, talent, and experience to making this an exceptional running (and exceptionally well-run) event. And as with nearly all community events, our staff members have been participants, volunteers and cheerleaders. Throughout the years, the *Race to the Sea* has experienced a number of ownership challenges. In 2008, when government mandated the economic development boards of the province to divest the initiatives under their ownership to community partners, Leading Edge Credit Union saw an excellent opportunity to put our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) vision to work.

OUR CSR VISION

"Leading Edge Credit Union will be a leader in enhancing the long-term viability of the communities it serves; Our CSR practices will be integrated throughout our business operations and will deliver social, economic and environmental benefits to our members, communities, and other stakeholders".

From 2008 to 2013, Port aux Basques and Area Chamber of Commerce partnered with LECU to plan and implement this important community initiative. With the guidance of the credit union and through access to its resources, the Race prospered. In fact, it was starting to become a little too big for the resource-strapped Chamber of Commerce, so in late 2013, they announced that they were taking themselves out of the Race (pardon the pun). The time had come; LECU was faced with an important decision: allow this amazing community initiative to falter, or step-up, step-in and use its special co-op powers to make this Race something that the community could continue to be proud of.

...and the Leading Edge Credit Union's Annual Lighthouse Relay, *Race to the Sea* was born!



Visions of Grandeur

We have a dream. Well, lots of dreams, actually. As the saying goes, “anything worth doing is worth doing well”. Up to this point, the *Race to the Sea* has been a break-even project; it has experienced peaks and valleys (another pun!), and LECU has been there through every one. The 2013 decision by LECU to take over ownership of the Race brought with it the need for some real soul-searching. As a credit union, we had to look closely at what the strategic direction of the Race would be.

The *Race to the Sea* has seen slow but steady growth since its inaugural run in 2003. The growth has largely been based on the word-of-mouth promotion from its small, but dedicated, group of returning runners. We feel we are on the cusp of something big. Our little race has been [gaining recognition](#) from serious runners who love the race’s atmosphere of fun, informal competition. This race really has something for every runner. The semi-professional and professional runners can compete in the same sphere as those who are new to the lifestyle; the race provides challenges and supports for all participants.

We’re not kidding!
Click [here](#)
for the full article!

So, the question becomes: where do we see this all going? In 2014, this became a major focus for the CEO and the Board of Leading Edge Credit Union. It sounded simple enough, but the first order of business was to determine the project’s objectives.

Project Objectives

Raise Awareness for the Tourism Sector of the Southwest Coast of Newfoundland

Raise Awareness of LECU and the Credit Union Difference

Identify and Support Charitable Objectives

Provide Social and Economic Benefits to the Community

Tourism Awareness

If you’ve turned on a T.V. in the past decade, you know that the tourism sector in Newfoundland and Labrador is alive and well. It is one of our biggest industries with total visitor expenditures of an estimated \$1 billion in 2011. Between 55% and 60% of tourism spending is generated by the resident market—those living and traveling within the province¹. One of the identified objectives of the *Race to the Sea* initiative is to increase the awareness amongst both resident and non-resident visitors about the unique tourism product here on the Southwest coast of Newfoundland. The provincial government has indicated that

¹ <http://www.economics.gov.nl.ca/E2014/TravelAndTourism.pdf>

resident tourism will benefit from solid growth in household income; it is important that the Race be effectively marketed to the provinces residents to ensure that they are aware of this unique event and this beautiful region of the province.

Furthermore, it is the intention of LECU to leverage the co-operative nature of the national credit union system and its partners to generate interest in this event. This could happen in a number of ways:

- Credit Union employees from across Canada could participate in the Race;
- Sponsorships from other credit unions and system partners could help us build our initiative;
- Other credit unions across Canada could help raise awareness of this event by sharing the marketing materials with their own members;
- Think: CONTESTS! We see the potential to develop some great membership incentives or rewards that are built around an opportunity for members of other credit unions to win the chance to visit Newfoundland and participate in the *Race to the Sea*.

We really feel that the *Race to the Sea* could be a signature event for the credit union movement in this country!

LECU Awareness and the Credit Union Difference

In today's highly competitive financial services environment, it is becoming increasingly difficult to set ourselves apart from our chartered bank competitors. Credit unions must remain steadfast and true to our co-operative principles and become better self-advocates when it comes to touting our commitment to community. We feel that the Race can serve as a reminder to all about the credit union difference. It perfectly demonstrates the International Co-operative Alliance's co-operative principle *concern for community* in a very unique way.

It was felt that by aligning the Race with a high-profile community minded organization like LECU, the committee members would be able to focus their attention on growing the event, reaching more participants and using the credit union channels to gain more exposure. LECU has maintained close ties to the Race since inception through its team sponsorship and its many employees and members that have volunteered in many capacities to make it a successful event. This community mindedness has not gone unnoticed by the public. Enhancing its public role as Race to the Sea organizer and sponsor could generate additional positive publicity for the organization, leading to expanded membership.

Charitable Objectives

When considering the projects objectives, the CEO and Board of LECU felt strongly that, going forward, this event should include a charitable component. Although, to-date, this has been a strictly break-even initiative - the sole purpose of which to provide a boost to the local economy - the Board expressed concerns about the optics of an LECU driven initiative charging registration fees and seeking sponsorships without an identified charitable component. This objective will be one of the focuses of the 2015 Race. The Race committee has been working with the CEO of LECU to identify suitable charitable organizations that will appeal to the Race participants and where contributions made can be meaningful and impactful to the identified charity or charities. The Race committee has suggested identifying a select few charities and allowing each participating Race team to select the charity that they wish to support. Donations would then be allocated proportionally to the charities based on the teams' choices. The challenge with realizing this objective will be generating enough profit from the Race to allow for meaningful donations. Growth and sustainability must be a key focus of the Race; this will drive profit, increase social and economic impact and make charitable donations possible.

Social and Economic Impacts to the Community

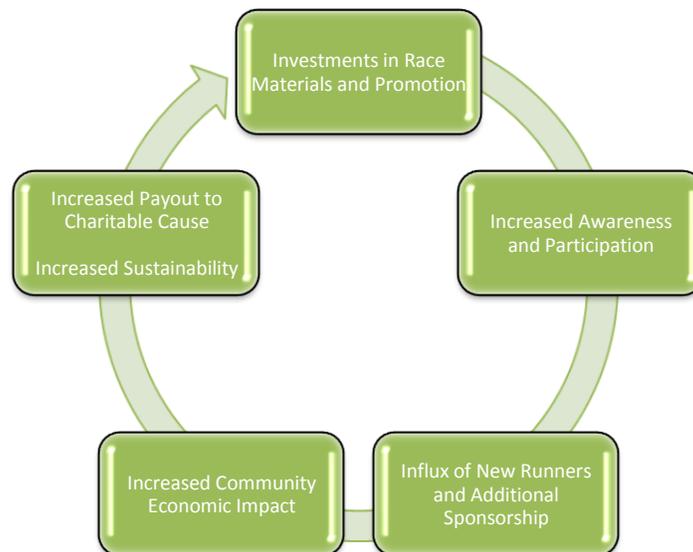
By their very nature, co-operatives are modeled to be attuned to the social and economic needs of their communities. At LECU, we feel that we are uniquely suited to leverage our skills, resources and community knowledge to propel the *Race to the Sea* forward and enhance the benefit of this initiative for the community. The specific benefits and impacts of the Race will be explored in more detail later in this submission.

It's all about that Race, 'bout that Race

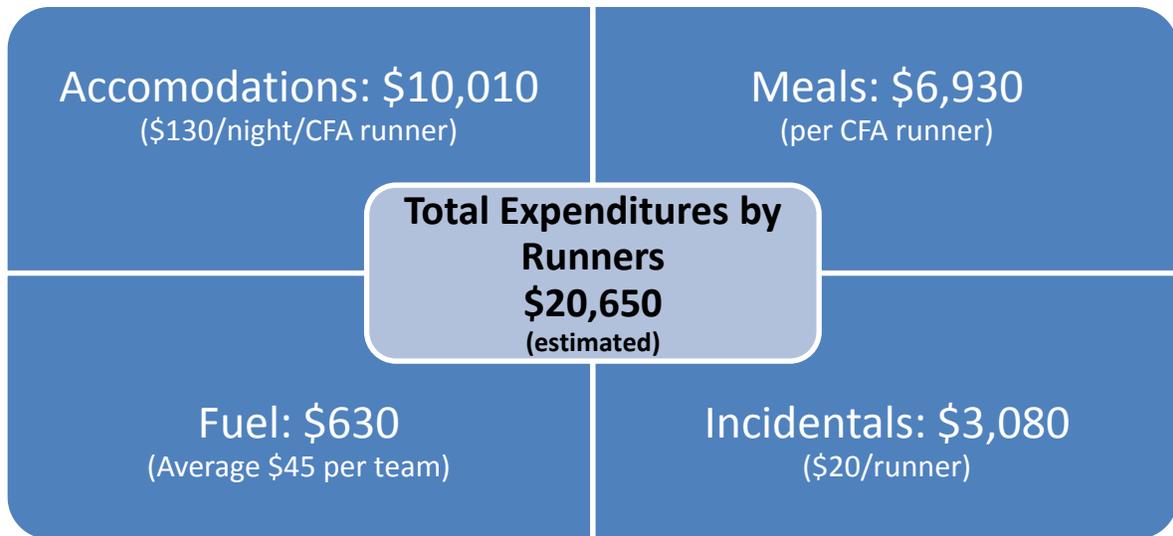
So, now that you have that song stuck in your head, we'd like to talk a little about the project impacts. The Race generates very positive publicity throughout western Newfoundland, promoting the values of health, fitness and community co-operation. The Race attracts a number of participants and their families from outside the area who stay in local hotels, eat at local restaurants and visit many of the area's local tourism attractions. Feedback is very positive with most teams participating every year. The runners have come from all over Atlantic Canada as well as from as far away as the United States (in Newfoundland, we call these people CFAs (come from aways!)). The Race is also popular with former residents of Newfoundland's Southwest Coast with individuals scheduling visits home around this event.

Benefits and Impact

Earlier in the submission, we outlined the project objectives for the *Race to the Sea*. We feel that this event exemplifies LECU's social and economic contributions to our community in a very unique way. In fact, we are not aware of any other such event within the credit union system. As the infographic below demonstrates, investments in the Race's infrastructure directly influence the resulting benefit in all aspects of the project's objectives.



As demonstrated by the tables on the next page, the economic impact of the Race on the local and regional economies is significant at an estimated \$40, 615 annually.



*Estimated "Come from Away" Runners: 77

Race to the Sea: Income Statement 2014

Revenue	
Team Registrations	7,000
Concentra Grant	10,000
Sponsorships	6,145
Other revenue	
Total Revenues	\$23,145
Expenses	
Race Bibs	144
Banner	559
Food	2,566
Port-a-potties	735
Insurance	1,050
Mileage	1,369
Plaque	9
Prizes	440
Shirts	3,814
Supplies	226
Venue	283
Video	8,340
Disco	300
Committee Final Meeting	130
Total Expenses	\$19,965
Net Income	\$3,180 *

* Balance remaining from Concentra Grant and other excess funds to be held for 2015 Race promotion as sponsorships are unknown year to year.

Community Involvement and Leadership

We feel that when we took over this event, LECU demonstrated our commitment to the co-operative principle, *Concern for Community*. The *Race to the Sea* is more than just an athletic event; it provides an opportunity for many local residents to volunteer or participate in a well-organized sporting event that encourages a healthy lifestyle. The *Race to the Sea* links most of the area's communities and tourism attractions in a single package. It is one of the many positive initiatives that help to make this area a special place to live and to work. The Race has the potential to attract additional teams from this region and across the province. With a good marketing effort, the Race could also attract teams from across Canada and beyond, creating very important local economic benefits. This is a major influx of money into the community and an important product differentiator in the highly-competitive provincial tourism market.

The chart below details the volunteer hours that go into the successful implementation of the *Race to the Sea*. LECU plays a leadership role in structuring, organizing and supervising the volunteer requirements: no small feat! This is a well-oiled machine! It takes an unbelievable amount of organization to keep this event running smoothly.

Breakdown of Volunteer Hours for the <i>Race to the Sea</i>		
Group	Details	Total Hours
Committee Meetings	5 meetings at 2 hours each x 5 people	50
Timing Team #1	4 LECU volunteers x 15 hours each	60
Timing Team #2	4 Chamber of Commerce volunteers x 12 hours each	48
Channel- Port aux Basques Volunteer Fire Department	6 Volunteer Firefighters (in shifts)	15
Traffic Control Volunteers	All Day: 5 volunteers x 15 hours each Codroy Valley Area: 3 volunteers x 3 hours each Port aux Basques Area: 12 volunteers x 2 hours each	108
Volunteer for T'railway Section of Race	2 volunteers x 4 hours each	8
Committee Volunteers	Day of Race: 3 members x 15 hours each Registration: 5 members x 6 hours each Painting directional lines along race route: 30 hours	105
Statistics Recording	1 LECU Volunteer	15
Total Volunteer Time		409 Hours

This project matters to LECU because it matters to our members and to our community; our leadership has not gone unnoticed by our members and the general public. Our ownership of the *Race to the Sea* has directly resulted in new membership for LECU. It is eye-opening for some of our community residents that a financial institution would take on a project of this size for no other reason than the fact that it is in the community's best interests to do so.

Leading Edge Credit Union has a number of key staff members who are an integral part of the implementation of the Race year after year. Randi Alexander, LECU's Marketing Specialist, has made this Race her passion, serving on the committee since 2008, and volunteering her time and talent each year as LECU's team captain. Many other LECU staff members volunteer on Race day as timing teams, statistics recorders, and traffic controllers. Some of our staff members have even participated as runners in past races!



LECU Staff Members (L-R): Cory Munden, CEO, Trudy Skinner-Keeping, Manager of Lending Services, Roger Hardy, Manager of Operations. Also pictured: runner from "Burgeo Rookies" crosses the finish line with LECU team support in the background.



Every year, LECU puts in a team and covers the cost of the \$500 registration and the purchasing of race day supplies, including water, fruit, sunscreen, bug spray, and first aid material to help keep our team in good form. This team consists of employees and/or their family members, and is also open to our current membership. LECU's team is often a mish-mash of runners! We pick up individual runners, those without a team, who often are first time runners. We are happy to give those individuals the opportunity to experience the *Race the Sea* for the first time. All we expect is that the runners show up ready to have a great time; no pressure!

In 2014, Leading Edge Credit Union developed a partnership with our local campus of the College of the North Atlantic (CNA). The College had identified that in the Port aux Basques region, they often experienced difficulties with sourcing meaningful work-term placements for their future graduates. LECU saw a perfect opportunity to enhance our own organization by adding much needed human resources to assist with the Race while providing meaningful work experience for these future graduates.

Since LECU first took a leadership role in the *Race to the Sea*, we have become the driving force in bringing together a number of community partners to facilitate successful races. Many runners have provided feedback saying that the organization and implementation is seamless. This can only be accredited to the fact that our community partners have been instrumental in our success. This is no accident. Many hours and much work have gone into developing these strategic partnerships. The Race committee enjoys representation from individuals and community organization representatives and this has help garner buy-in from the community as a whole.

Our community partners include:

- The Port aux Basques and Area Chamber of Commerce
 - The Gateway Community Business Development Corporation
 - The Channel-Port aux Basques Volunteer Fire Department
 - The Department of Transportation and Public Works
 - The Municipality of Channel-Port aux Basques and the Bruce II Sports Centre
 - The Newfoundland English School District
 - St. Kevin's Guild and Mountain View Community Centre
 - The Isle aux Morts Community Lodge
 - The Town of Rose Blanche
 - The Rose Blanche Lighthouse Committee
 - The Cape Ray Lighthouse
 - The Cape Anguille Lighthouse and Inn
 - E.W. Gale Limited (Clover Farms)
 - Marine Atlantic
 - RCMP, Channel-Port aux Basques detachment
 - ... and the many other business and organizations that support us either financially or in spirit!
- (For a complete list of sponsors, click [here](#))

Remember back on the income statement where we referenced a Concentra grant? No? Flick back... we'll be here waiting...

In March 2014, Concentra Financial issued a call for nominations for the emPOWERING *Your Communities* Campaign! The campaign was awarding \$10,000 grants to organizations that demonstrated a commitment to co-operative social responsibility. LECU submitted on behalf of the *Race to the Sea* initiative and was selected for this exciting award along with 17 other organizations across Canada. These funds allowed us to invest in promotional material that would have otherwise been out of our financial reach. We hope you enjoyed the video at the beginning of this submission; it would not have been possible to commission such professional quality work without the help of the Concentra grant. We feel that this video and the accompanying visual materials will help us reach out to those passionate runners and help convince them to consider the challenge of the *Race to the Sea*.



Ken Kosolofski, President and CEO, Concentra Financial and Cory Munden, CEO, LECU, at the Concentra emPOWERING *Your Communities* reception held in Charlottetown, PEI

This Race thing has Legs, right?

As I hope we have demonstrated, we have an exceptional initiative in the *Race to the Sea*. It embodies everything that a great community economic development initiative should be; it has meaningful social and economic impacts to this little town on the Rock and it has the support of the community as a whole. Being a “Gateway” town, Channel-Port aux Basques sees an abundance of vehicular traffic from the Marine Atlantic ferry service. Our challenge has always been to give both residents and CFAs a reason to stop. With every runner, supporter and partner that experiences and shares in this event, we are increasing the awareness of all that this region has to offer.

We have a long way to go, but we know that we will get there. Our Board is planning to invest in a part-time staff person to not only assist with the planning and implementation of the Race, but also to give it the attention it deserves with respect to pursuing growth opportunities.

We know that we have a great thing going; but you don’t have to take just our word for it!



Genny Russell: member of the Stephenville Turtles and running convert!

The Race to the Sea invite is the reason I started running and now I am hooked. Thanks again for the great job organizing and you know at the end of the day the experience was amazing. That’s really the most important part.



Kate Bazeley: Tely 10 champ 2014, 2011, 2010 best time of 55:57. Winner of BMO Vancouver Half Marathon 2014 in 1:15:18. 7th at the Houston Marathon 2014 in 2:40:49, Winner of Canadian Half Marathon Champs 2012. Member of the 2011 Canadian Chiba Ekiden Team and a member of the 2008, 2010 and 2011 Canadian cross-country teams.

I loved the Race to the Sea. It was so much fun to be part of a relay team and the course was so beautiful. I loved running my leg and also cheering for my team during the other legs. The finish at Rose Blanche was one of the most beautiful places I have ever been and definitely one of the nicest places on the island, which is saying a lot! The atmosphere was great. There was always people cheering on the course as team members follow their teammates running the whole time. It was such a positive day. We will definitely be back!

Want to learn even more about the Race to the Sea?

Visit our website at www.lecu.ca/Home/InOurCommunity/Racetothesea

Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/race2c?ref=br_tf.

There is a popular saying in Newfoundland: “stay where yer to, ‘till I comes where yer at”. Basically, it means, “stay there, I’m coming over”. Well, credit union world, we’ll be right here waiting for you. Bring your running shoes.

