

# RISING IN THE EAST

MOVE OVER, REST OF CANADA — THE CITIES OF THE EAST COAST ARE SHOWING THE WORLD THEY'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO ATTRACT RETAILERS TO THEIR SHORES. BY MEGAN VENNER

While most Atlantic Canadians wouldn't want to call anywhere else home, out-migration has long been a fact of life for families on the East Coast. During tough economic times, its people have gone elsewhere to find work, taking their shopping dollars with them.

But better economic times in Atlantic Canada means that is changing. In response, retailers are opening new locations in retail developments across the region, offering more shopping choices than ever for residents of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador. Millions of square feet of retail space are opening up and chains that once saw limited opportunities out East are opening new stores, sometimes in multiple locations.

"It's all part and parcel of what's happening with the economy," says Pam MacFarlane, research director for Colliers International (Atlantic) Inc. in Halifax. "A lot of it's driven

by the office and industrial rate because, as they go down, that means jobs and the economy are taking off. Retail follows behind the office and industrial sectors in real estate."

Indeed, economic numbers for the entire region are strong. While western prosperity is still a big pull for East Coasters, those who once left for work are starting to come home for jobs in the now booming energy sector. Tens of thousands of jobs are being created in Saint John, Moncton is seeing a major influx of people from northern New Brunswick, Halifax is attracting new businesses, and consumer confidence in St. John's is being driven by the strongest economic numbers that province has seen in decades.

All of this is good news for East Coast residents, as well as the retailers who serve them. But for those retailers who haven't yet made the move to the East Coast, we've found a few reasons why the four largest urban areas in Atlantic Canada should be next on your list of places to set up shop.

## SAINT JOHN



## MONCTON



## ST. JOHN'S



## HALIFAX



## RCC opens East Coast office

Retail Council of Canada is proud to announce it has formalized an agreement with Pathfinder Association Management Group of Halifax to establish a more formal presence in Atlantic Canada.

Christine James, RCC's contact person in Halifax, is taking on the role of monitoring all legislation affecting retailers in Canada's four easternmost provinces, allowing RCC's team of Government Relations managers a better view of what's happening on the East Coast.

"Whether it's new legislation for security guards in Nova Scotia, eco-fees in New Brunswick, or retail organized crime in Newfoundland and Labrador, there are a number of issues of interest to retailers in Atlantic Canada," said Diane J. Brisebois, RCC's President & CEO. "Thanks to this partnership, we will be in a better position to stay on top of the issues that mean the most to our members and act accordingly."

RCC's new contact information for Atlantic Canada is:  
Christine James  
Retail Council of Canada — Atlantic  
P.O. Box 9410, Station A  
Halifax, NS  
B3K 5S3  
(902) 406-4350  
atlantic@retailcouncil.org



PHOTO: ENTERPRISE SAINT JOHN

# SAINT JOHN

### MOTTO

O Fortunati Quorum Jam Moenia Surgunt (O Fortunate Ones Whose Walls Are Now Rising)

### POPULATION

122,389 (metro)\*

### POPULATION CHANGE, 2001-2006

-0.2%

### STATUS

Largest city in New Brunswick; oldest incorporated city in Canada

\* ALL POPULATION FIGURES FROM STATISTICS CANADA'S 2006 CENSUS

Front-runner for the title of Atlantic Canadian retail king has to be the city of Saint John. Traditionally known as New Brunswick's blue-collar industrial city, it is experiencing record employment and rapid growth. Saint John has been named one of the top 10 cities for doing business by *Canadian Business* three years in a row and is consistently ranked as one of Canada's most affordable cities. Over the last seven years, more than a million square feet of retail space has been developed and more is under construction. "Right now the community is really undergoing a renaissance and has seen a decade of transformational change," says Wendy Papadopoulos of Enterprise Saint John, the area's economic development arm.

The energy sector in Saint John is booming and \$19 billion in capital projects are planned or under construction, all activity that translates into good numbers for retailers. Forty-seven percent of the province's new employment was created in or around Saint John, housing starts are up 21.6%, and retail sales are expected to top \$1.4 billion in 2008, 32% above the national average with projected growth at 2.8%.

Troy Northrup of the Northrup Development Group is behind East Point Shopping, a major development on the city's east side that is opening up tens of thousands of square feet of new retail space. He says East Point Shopping is part of a new reality for gritty old Saint John. And with job creation from the new energy projects expected to top 33,000, Northrup says retail becomes a big part of attracting people away from big cities. "Having these amenities, people don't feel that they're giving up things to move from some of the larger centres," he said.

Northrup is also aiming to make Saint John a shopping destination for tourists. The city is leading Eastern Canada in hotel occupancy rates and cruise ships are making the Port of Saint John a regular stop, thanks in part to the 2.2 million square feet of shopping soon to be offered by East Point and surrounding retailers. Thirty-five cruise ships with nearly 90,000 passengers stopped by last year and city officials say preliminary numbers show that could more than double in 2008. Add that to the city's proximity to the U.S. border and its location on one of the major highways into Atlantic Canada, and the city is poised for retail success. ■