Land transfer worth all the work

The land that encompasses the Debert Air Industrial Park has a varied and well-documented history. More than 11,000 years ago a tract served as a Mi'kmaq wintering habitation and that makes the area the oldest dated Paleo-Indian archaeological site in Canada. During the Second World War as many as 50,000 Canadian soldiers trained at Camp Debert in advance of shipping off to European battlefronts.

Today, the land plays host to growing secondary industry numbers and why not? The Debert Air Industrial Park is in close proximity to the province's main highway. The CN rail line passes through and there is potential for expanded delivery service at the smallish airfield.

Monday, Premier Rodney MacDonald, Chief Lawrence Paul from the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs, the Colchester Regional Development Agency (CoRDA), Colchester County and the Confederacy of Mainland Micmacs outlined another chapter in this important economic and historical part of central Nova Scotia.

In a deal that has been more than 10 years in the making, Colchester County has acquired 2,300 acres of land from the province, opening doors to further business development in this already expanding economic locale.

Further, the agreement guarantees protection of historic Mi'kmaq sites and provides land for a future First Nations cultural centre as well as space for business development. The three-player agreement is the first of its kind in the country.

Another key component of this development is that it reflects the growing commitment to regional co-operation among Stewiacke, Truro and Colchester County. Gone are the days where each municipality would compete to bring an industry to its turf.

It has been seen – and here is the crux of the matter – central Nova Scotia will prosper when all work together. Colchester County has appointed CoRDA to administer its share of the 2,300 acres, a move that reflects such a commitment.

The value of new construction in Colchester County increased 61 per cent between 2006 and 2007 – from $56.4 million to $90.7 million.

We recognize the acquisition for the Debert Air Industrial Park represents an important advancement toward even more development in central Nova Scotia. As important, the transfer guarantees preservation of historical First Nations cultural sites.