



**TOWNSHIP OF RIDEAU LAKES
Economic Development Committee
AGENDA**

**Tuesday, September 2, 2025, 10:00 a.m.
Municipal Office, Chantry**

	Pages
1. CALL TO ORDER	
2. ROLL CALL	
3. ADDITIONS/AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA	
4. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA	
5. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST	
6. BUSINESS ARISING	
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Community Engagement Plan

11. NEW BUSINESS

11.1 Committee Roundtable

- 11.1.1 Councillor Paula Banks - Sound System for
Portland Community Hall: Municipal Services
Committee Item (For Information)

- 11.1.2 Councillor Paula Banks - Doors Open Rideau 267 - 278
Lakes presentation: Municipal Heritage Advisory
Committee Item (For Information)

12. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

13. CLOSED SESSION

- 13.1 Economic Development Committee Closed Meeting
Minutes July 7, 2025

- 13.2 Nominations for Bill Thake Memorial Award for Economic
Development Leadership

14. REPORT REGARDING CLOSED MEETING

15. ADJOURNMENT



Rideau Lakes

Locally Owned Businesses 2025

The Township of Rideau Lakes would like to gratefully acknowledge the Leeds Grenville Economic Development for hosting and maintaining the online Business Directory.

View the full directory at the following link:
<https://www.rideaulakes.ca/directory>

Note: This list was edited in order to count the number of locally owned business in Rideau Lakes. As a result, the following employers that are part of the Rideau Lakes Business Directory are not included in this list: Schools, Churches, Societies, LCBO's, Landowner Associations, Conservation Areas, Lockstations, OPP Offices, Fire Stations, Masonic Lodges, Halls, Health and Employment Organizations, Libraries, Legions, Canada Post outlets and Banks.

1.	23&Co.
2.	3 Continents B & B
3.	4 Paws Inn Boarding & Grooming
4.	A & B Cleaning Company
5.	A & S Improvements
6.	A & J Hennessy Income Tax & Bookkeeping
7.	A Cut and a Trim Lawn Services
8.	Abelan Designer/Builder
9.	Access Storage
10.	Aman Farms
11.	Amplitude Consulting
12.	Amy's Country Cooking
13.	Angela's Cookie Jar

14.	Arctic Acres
15.	Armstrong & Carter Ironworks
16.	Arykat Otter Lake
17.	Aunt Molly's Antiques
18.	Autumn Moon Holistic Wellness
19.	Aussie Tree Care
20.	B. Beach Building Services
21.	B-You-Tiful Essence
22.	Baker & Son Tire Repair
23.	Baker's Feed Store Ltd.
24.	Bark Productions Inc.
25.	Barker Willson - Elgin
26.	Barry Baker Carpentry
27.	Barnes Protection Services Inc.
28.	Bass Bay Cottage Rental
29.	Bass Lake Lodge Cottages and Campground
30.	Bastard Coffee House
31.	Battams Camp
32.	Bayview Yacht Harbour Ltd.
33.	Bear Mountain Boat Shop
34.	Belfor Property Restoration
35.	Bernie's Nearly New Shoppe
36.	Beverley Shores Honey Vincent Family Farm
37.	Bichelangelo
38.	Big Rideau Lake Boat Rentals
39.	Bill Kendall Taxidermy
40.	Bill's Repair Sales and Service
41.	Bin Haulin'
42.	Blair Brothers Maples
43.	Blue Leaf Pottery
44.	Bond's Electrical & Plumbing
45.	Box Arrow Farm
46.	Bread! and More!
47.	Brew Bye You

48.	Brown's Contracting
49.	Brown's Marina
50.	Bryan's Septic Service
51.	Bushgarden Farmstead Cheese
52.	C & M Superior Systems
53.	C5 Solar Farm
54.	Cairnbrae Elevator
55.	Camp Otterdale Ltd.
56.	Campbell's Trucking
57.	Cannabis Fields
58.	Canning Greenworks
59.	Carol Lee's Studio
60.	Carquest Auto Parts
61.	Casi's Hair Studio
62.	Cedar Cove Cottages
63.	Cedar Knoll Camp
64.	Cedar Valley Property Maintenance
65.	Chaffey's Lock Antiques and Collectables
66.	Chantland Farms
67.	Charles Nichols Plumbing and Electrical
68.	CJ's Auto Service
69.	Claire Jacobs Fine Art
70.	Clean Choice
71.	Clean Fuels Pipeline Inc.
72.	Clear Lake Cottages
73.	Clearly Auto Glass
74.	Clover Gardens
75.	Colleen's Medi Spa
76.	Connell Septic Systems
77.	Cooligan Carpentry
78.	Corn Acre Farms
79.	Cory Sly Small Engines
80.	Cottages at Turtlehill, The
81.	Country Fries

82.	Country Road Rentals
83.	Countryside Elegance Nail Technician
84.	Crosby Cookhouse
85.	Crosby Self Storage
86.	Curtis Vally Farms
87.	CW Roofing
88.	D & J Financial Services
89.	Dan's Tree Service
90.	Dave's Auto Glass and Upholstery
91.	David Ambrose, Furniture Maker
92.	Davis Cottages on the Rideau
93.	Davis Lock Cattle Co.
94.	Day / Simpson Roofing & Repairs
95.	Debbie's Bees
96.	Delta Country Market (Delta Foodland)
97.	Delta Design Co.
98.	DeltaTop Farm
99.	Deltawood Farm
100.	Diggin It Nursery
101.	Dixie Chips
102.	Don Palmer Haulage
103.	Don's Septic Systems and Landscaping
104.	Donna Welch Cleaning Company
105.	Dorothy's Lodge
106.	Doucet Farm
107.	Dr. Donald Freeman
108.	Dr. Ian Shiozaki
109.	Dr. Richard Putnam, N.D. Naturopathic Medicine
110.	Dreamscapes Rideau
111.	Duncan's Appliance Sales & Service
112.	E. Covell General Contracting Ltd.
113.	Edwards Custom Service

114.	Electrician - Tim Crowder
115.	Elgin Auctions
116.	Elgin Bowling Lanes
117.	Elgin Drugs PharmaChoice
118.	Enchanted Paw Pet Designs & Spa
119.	Equicare Plus
120.	Ethereal Massage Therapy
121.	Evergreen Golf Course
122.	Everline Coatings and Services
123.	Extreme Landscape and Construction
124.	Farm Forest Research
125.	Fair Field Farm
126.	Falls Décor MF Paints
127.	Fat of the Land Farm
128.	Fern Construction
129.	Fern & Fox Wellness (The Hip Wellness Collective)
130.	Fern & Fox: Thrift & Curiosities
131.	Fin Freaks
132.	Forfar Dairy Ltd.
133.	Forgotten Orchards Farm
134.	Fox EPS
135.	Franklin's Marina
136.	French's Auto & Welding
137.	French's Trucking
138.	Front Porch Flowers
139.	Furnace Falls Coffee Co.
140.	FYI Appliance Repair
141.	G & N Contracting
142.	G Beck Electric Plumbing & Heating
143.	G. M. Exterior Solutions
144.	G. Varley Gallery
145.	Gallery-15 Multi-vendor Antique Market
146.	Gary Neal Septic Services

147.	Gilded Corner Picture Frame Shop
148.	Go Fudge Yourself
149.	Golden Moment Farm
150.	Gordanier Freshmart
151.	Gordon's Custom Farm Services
152.	Gourmet Goodies
153.	Graham's Mobile RV Repair
154.	Grass Point Lodge B & B
155.	Green Valley Cottages & Trailer Park
156.	Greg Fleming Septic Services
157.	Gunnebrooke Farms Ltd.
158.	Hagan Livestock
159.	Hales Excavating & Trucking
160.	Handyman
161.	Hank's Fries
162.	Hanks on the Run
163.	Harlem Stonegate Bed and Breakfast
164.	Hartin Automotive & Truck Repair
165.	Hartin's Wheel Alignment & Auto Repair
166.	Hawkridge Institute
167.	Hawk's Nest Kitchen and Catering
168.	Hebden House B & B
169.	Hello Friday Marketing
170.	Henhouse Harvests
171.	Heritage Seed and Produce
172.	Holly Kendall, RMT
173.	Holman Electric
174.	Horseman's Way
175.	Hotel Kenney Rideau
176.	Howard Burns Equipment Rentals Inc.
177.	Howling Hideaway Rescue
178.	Indian Lake Marina and Campground
179.	IntegraSpec-Rideau / Teixeira Construction

180. Intoxicated Cakes by Rasa
181. J & J's Big Rideau Resort
182. J & S Goodies
183. J. Looby Construction
184. J.A.C.'s Chip Wagon
185. J.C. Electronics
186. JDF Plumbing & HVAC
187. Jamesview Builders & Electrical Ltd.
188. Janet Wykes, Barrister & Solicitor
189. Jeannie's Fries
190. Joe Burns Heating & Cooling
191. John Shea - Rosal Bay Studio
192. Just like Home Doggie Daycare
193. K. C. Spas and Pools
194. Kelly's Building Service
195. Ken Davies Logistics & Development
196. Kendra Armstrong Nursing
197. Kenney Murray Grading Ltd.
198. Kerr's Firewood
199. Kevin Greene Carpentry Ltd.
200. Kilborn's On The Rideau
201. Kim Ethier Massage & Sport Therapy
202. Kingsgate Lake House
203. Lakeland Cottages
204. Lakeside Log Homes
205. Lambtrax Farm
206. Lanark Drywall
207. Landmark Property Solutions
208. Lapointe Excavation
209. Layerstone Ranch
210. Leave It With Linda
211. Leave the Books to Me
212. Leeds Transit Inc.
213. Leggett's Maple Sugarbush
214. Len's Cove Marina (Cottage Rentals)

215. Leroux Lumber Ltd.
216. Little Rideau Farm
217. Lloyd's Cottages
218. Local Massage Therapy
219. Lombard Auto
220. Lombard Glen Golf & Country Club
221. Lone Oak Equine Photography
222. Lord Byron's Kitchen
223. Lost Woods Farm
224. Lower Beverley Lake Campground
225. Luna Moth Blooms & Bounty
226. Lynn Brothers Construction
227. M.G. Mechanical
228. Madden's Tree Service
229. Magill Family Farms and Services
230. Mancino Gallery, The
231. Maple-Ain Farms
232. Maple Hill Farm Stand
233. Maple Rock Holsteins
234. Maples Golf & Country Club
235. Maple Shores Estates
236. Marion's Honey
237. Marketing Uncomplicated
238. Mary's Threads
239. Matthews Auto Collision
240. McCaffrey Farrier Service
241. McCulloch Cottages
242. McEwen Acres
243. McMullan Appliance & Mattress
244. McNichols Trades Group Ltd.
245. McParland Cottages
246. Merlot Sunset B & B
247. Michael Doxey Artist and Technician
248. Michael's Hair Styling
249. Michael Rousseau WETT Inspector

250.	Miller's Bay Farm Market Garden & Berry Patch
251.	Miller's Wheel Alignment
252.	Mobile Small Engine Repair
253.	Moccasins Canada
254.	Moe's Waterside Cantina on the Rideau
255.	Mon O'Kel Cottages
256.	Moon Valley Farms Apple Orchard
257.	Moongate Garden Yoga Studio
258.	Moonlight Bay Campground on Otter Lake
259.	Mr. French Fry
260.	Mulville's Turf & Till
261.	Napa Auto Parts
262.	Narrows Lock Campground Corp.
263.	Nature's Magic Photography
264.	Newboro Farm Gate Gardens
265.	Newboro House Bed & Breakfast
266.	Newboro Lawn & Garden
267.	Newboro Soap Company
268.	No. 9 Gardens
269.	Nopper's Tollers
270.	Nora Brown Art Studio
271.	Norris Automotive
272.	Norris's Live Bait & Tackle Hunting Centre
273.	Northland Power
274.	Norwood Family Farm
275.	Nut-Free Gourmet Cookies & Dough
276.	O'Hearn's Garage
277.	Old Delta Canoeworks
278.	Olde-Port Automotive
279.	Old World Country Antiques
280.	Opinicon Pines Resort
281.	Otter Lake Park Motel and Campground

282.	Our Cottage Glass
283.	P3 Panel Company
284.	Palmer's Vegetable and Berry Farm
285.	Paradise Ranch
286.	Pattinson's Paddles
287.	Past Life and Spiritual Journeys (Suzette O'Hearn Raison)
288.	Paula's Pizza
289.	Paw-Fect Pet Sitting by Liv
290.	Pedherney Performance Automotive (Jay's Auto Service)
291.	Phalanx 3D
292.	Pharmasave Portland
293.	Pheasant Ridge Studio
294.	Phoenix Rising Equestrian Centre
295.	Photo Richard
296.	Pine Glen Lodge
297.	Pleasant View Farms
298.	Poplars Resort
299.	Portland Family Restaurant and Pizza
300.	Portland Foodland
301.	Portland Mini Storage
302.	Portland Outdoors
303.	Portland Window and Door
304.	Portside Pub & Eatery
305.	Powellsbay Pillow Co.
306.	Precious Moments Carriages
307.	Project Wakesurf
308.	R. E. Howard Painting & Wallpapering
309.	R. R. Equipment
310.	Ralph Oosting Saw Mill
311.	Ravenwood Garden Services
312.	Raymond Marine Services Inc.
313.	RCL Automotive Ltd.

314. Recess Café
315. Revolve Farms
316. Rick Simpson Building Service
317. Rideau Antiques
318. Rideau Aquatic Weed Control
319. Rideau Carpentry & Construction
320. Rideau Classics Rental
321. Rideau Docks Ltd.
322. Rideau Driving School
323. Rideau Insurance
324. Rideau Lake Bengals
325. Rideau Lakes Building Centre / Castle Building Centre
326. Rideau Lakes Car Wash
327. Rideau Lakes Chiropractic
328. Rideau Lakes Cottages
329. Rideau Lakes Country Condo
330. Rideau Lakes Electric
331. Rideau Lakes Exteriors
332. Rideau Lakes Golf & Country Club
333. Rideau Lakes Lodge
334. Rideau Lakes Power Sports
335. Rideau Lakes Storage
336. Rideau Lakes Taxi
337. Rideau Mac Resort
338. Rideau Paintworks Inc.
339. Rideau Power Greens
340. Rideau Realty Limited
341. Rideau Roots
342. Rideau Tax Service
343. Rideau Tours
344. Rideau Town & Country Realty Ltd. - Elgin
345. Rideau Town & Country Realty Ltd. - Newboro

346. Rideau Valley Landscape Supplies RVLS Inc.
347. Rideau Vapes
348. Ridgecraft Garden Centre Products
349. Riley Construction Inc.
350. Rilie Baker Photography
351. Rob Chant Holsteins
352. Robb McManus Contracting
353. Rob's Ultramar (Rob's Corner Garage & Store)
354. Rogers Motel
355. Rona
356. Rosebush Energies
357. Royal Red Farm
358. Rue Royale Caststone
359. Ryan, Earl J Contracting
360. SBSeward Roofing & Carpentry
361. S.D.R.R. Management Ltd
362. Sage and Seed Photography
363. Sand Lake Campground & Cottages
364. Sand Lake Marine
365. Sandy Beach at Otter Lake
366. Scheuermann Vineyard & Winery
367. Scotia Stoneworks
368. Scotland Funeral Home
369. Scott Blair Construction
370. Scott's Bike Hosting Service
371. Scotty's Cool Breeze Rentals
372. Scotty's Fresh Cut Fries
373. Scotty's Garden Centre
374. Scotty's Lawn Care
375. Scott's Small Engines
376. Seahawk Farm
377. Sean Price Building Services
378. Secondhand Stories
379. SellingWorx Plus Inc

380.	Service Master
381.	Shabby Chic Vintage Chicks
382.	Shangri-La Cottages and Campground
383.	Sharon's Health & Wellness
384.	Shimmer Alterations
385.	Shillington General Contracting
386.	Simmons Cottages
387.	Silva Scapes (opening 2025)
388.	Sky's the Limit Ranch (The Horseman's Way)
389.	Small Business Bookkeeping
390.	Smiths Falls Ford
391.	Smiths Falls Golf & Country Club & Tina's Catering
392.	Smiths Falls Veterinary Services
393.	Snider's Plumbing & Pumps
394.	St. Lawrence Tree Service
395.	Stacey's Oasis Spa
396.	Stagecoach Fine Foods and Bistro
397.	Stealing the Bloom Farm Tours and Barnyard Zoo
398.	Stevenson Performance Wellness
399.	Stirling Lodge, Post & Beam Restaurant
400.	Stone Manor Studios
401.	Stoodley's Kitchen & Beverage
402.	Street Motor Sales
403.	Strickland Tire Service
404.	Sub Zero
405.	Sugar Maple Farms
406.	Summit Sound Inc.
407.	Sun on the Brow Cottages
408.	Sunflower Bake Shop
409.	SunnyFarm
410.	Sunnyside Family Retreat
411.	Sure Fire Cube

412.	Taylor Designs Inc.
413.	Ted Henry's Automotive
414.	Ted Theelan Small Engine Repair
415.	TerraUtopia Inc.
416.	The Barn at Elgin
417.	The Body Shop
418.	The Dirt Road Designer (Niki Basten)
419.	The Drapery Den
420.	The Frugal Farm
421.	The Galley Restaurant
422.	The Gathering Place
423.	The Horse Effect
424.	The Little Brown Barn
425.	The Opinicon
426.	The Pie Bar
427.	The Septic Store
428.	The Tipped Ship
429.	The Trailer Company
430.	Thompson's Plumbing
431.	Thompson's Septic and Gravel
432.	Truelove Carpentry
433.	Tobin's Stump Removal & Services
434.	Tom's Saw Shop
435.	Torrence Photo
436.	Town & Country Bookkeeping & Business Services
437.	Tri-Tech Computer Services
438.	Twin Pines Campground
439.	United Edge Structural Components
440.	Upper Narrows Retreat
441.	Upper Rideau Resorts
442.	Veldman Family Opinicon Cottages in Brooks Bay
443.	W.C. Gasworks
444.	Walker Family Farm
445.	Warehouse Storage Solution

446. Warren Kerr Excavating
447. Waterways RV Resort
448. Welch's Drywall Ltd.
449. Wendy Martin Financial Services
450. Wendy's Country Market
451. Westport Lakes Inc. Self Storage Units
452. Whole Home Spaces
453. Whitefish Falls Woodworking
454. Wild Wing Restaurant
455. Wildfowl Sculptor and Wildlife Artist Ted Stewart (Niska Studios)
456. Willow Bay Naturals
457. Willows Agri-services Ltd.
458. Wills Transfer Ltd. - Head Office
459. Windfall Studio
460. Wolfe Springs Golf & Waterfront Resort
461. Writing by the Lake
462. Wykes Boat Repair
463. Young Signs
464. Zipper Thrift Co. Family Boutique

If you know of a locally owned business that should be on this list, please let us know!
Contact Marie White at 613-928-2251 ext. 288
or mwhite@rideaulakes.ca

Report to Municipal Services Committee
 Meeting Date: September 2, 2025
**Report Title: First Impression Community
 Exchange (FICE) Program**

Author's Name: Marie White
 Position: Economic Development and Cultural
 Heritage Coordinator
 Report No. ECD-2025-07



RECOMMENDATION:

Be it resolved that the Economic Development Committee recommends to Council that staff be authorized to submit an application to the First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE) program at an expense of approximately \$1,000 subject to the 2026 Budget process, as presented in the Report ECD-2025-07.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMMENTS:

Recommendations directly relate to several areas in the Strategic Plan 2030:

Sector #1 – Economic Prosperity. Strategic Initiative #1

Sector #3 – Infrastructure. Strategic Initiative #1 and #2

Sector #10 – Heritage and Culture. Strategic Initiative #2 and #4

The Economic Development Action Plan 2023-2026 identifies Village Renewal Projects within Priority #2 - Physical Infrastructure (Active Transportation) and Priority #3 - Community Revitalization.

BACKGROUND:

The First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE) program partners communities to visit each other for the first time to offer fresh perspectives and unique insights about your services, transportation, accommodations and tourist attractions. It is a learning exercise that can help municipalities and community organizations find ways to better attract tourists, residents and investors.

The Process:

1. Application submission

2. Build a team

To organize the visit to your partner community, you'll need a team with money and resources.

- an organization that leads the project (e.g., economic development organization, business improvement area, chamber of commerce)
- a project coordinator

- a budget of at least \$500 to run the project
- plan the visit and develop key documents, such as the itinerary, surveys and maps.

3. Pair with a partner community

Once approved, a community that's within 100 to 200 kilometres will be matched with us, and has similar characteristics such as:

- size
- distance to a major population centre
- population and demographics (e.g., number of school-aged children, seniors)
- tourist attractions

4. Plan your exchange

After you're paired with a community, you'll decide:

- what to evaluate during the visit (e.g., health and community services)
- the structure of the visit (e.g., one-day visit or two half-days)
- when to visit each other and report back (you can't tell each other the date of the visit but you can agree on the time of year (e.g., summer, winter))

5. Recruit volunteers

You'll need to recruit four to eight volunteers, depending on the size of the community you'll visit. We help out by training the volunteers.

Your volunteers will:

- travel to your partner community to anonymously make observations
- follow the instructions in your itinerary
- record their feedback in a survey during the visit

Remember that you'll need to cover your volunteers' costs for travel, accommodations and meals.

6. Complete the exchange

The exchange visits are where volunteer teams visit their exchange community and note observations in order to prepare a report back.

7. Share reports and take action

After the visit, you and your exchange partner will present your observations to each other. You can then create an action plan based on what you learned in your partner's report.

Evaluation Options:

You can evaluate your community in three ways. Each option takes at least one day to complete, at a cost of about \$500 for travel, meals and accommodation.

1. Evaluate the **full community** and get insights about:

- services that make your community visitor-friendly (access to transportation, information centres, signage, location of attractions)
- physical spaces (historic sites, buildings and entrances)

- community services (housing, education, jobs, health)
 - businesses, retail stores and restaurants
 - natural areas (parks, cycling and walking paths)
2. Evaluate how **visitors** are served and get insights about:
- what makes your community visitor-friendly (access to transportation, information centres, signage, location of attractions)
 - tourist attractions (landmarks, events)
 - natural areas (parks, cycling and walking paths)
3. Evaluate **downtown area** and get insights about:
- the look and feel of downtown areas
 - businesses, retail stores and restaurants
 - entertainment (events, festivals, arts and culture activities)

DISCUSSION:

The Economic Development Committee may recommend to Council that an application be submitted for the First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE) program. The project, its budget and timeline are for discussion.

Example resources and project support:

- Rideau Lakes Economic Development Committee
- Rideau Lakes Business Network (RLBN)
- Newboro & Area Business Network (NABN)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Guidelines estimate the cost to be approximately \$1,000 (\$500 per day) for consideration as part of the 2026 budget process.

The proposal from Rideau Lakes would recommend up to 6 villages be evaluated over a 2-day period. At \$500 per day, the cost is estimated at approximately \$1,000 for expenses related to travel, meals and accommodation for Rideau Lakes volunteers or committee members to evaluate the partner communities.

ATTACHMENTS:

- FICE Manual
- FICE Worksheet

e-signed

August 25, 2025

Marie White

DATE

Economic Development & Cultural Heritage Coordinator

e-approved

August 26, 2025

Shellee Fournier, CAO

DATE

First Impressions Community Exchange Program



Coordinator's Manual

3rd Edition

In 2005 the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs introduced the First Impressions Community Exchange Program (FICE). Since then more than 200 FICE projects have taken place in communities across Ontario.

This manual is designed to support communities that want to use FICE as a way of identifying economic development opportunities. It provides a step-by-step guide and the resources to assist a Coordinator with the completion of the tasks associated with each of the four stages in the FICE process.

For more information, please contact the Agricultural Information Contact Centre
At 1-877-424-1300 or visit www.Ontario.ca/Rural.

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Introduction

The First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE) provides an opportunity for communities to gain a fresh perspective on how they are seen through the eyes of first-time visitors. The program provides a structured opportunity for communities to learn about the first impressions they convey to visitors.

Volunteer teams from partnered exchange communities each conduct an unannounced visit and record their observations on a variety of topics such as community entrances, downtown amenities, services available in the community, and tourist attractions. The observations from the visit serve as the basis of a report back to that community. The report can assist decision makers with economic development planning.

There are three FICE assessment options:

- Full Picture (the entire community)
- Downtown
- Tourism

FICE can be undertaken as a stand-alone project for communities who are seeking information that will help guide future economic development plans, or as a component part that will support a broader strategic plan.

FICE can help communities:

- Source new ideas to improve competitiveness
- Identify its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities
- Support a strategic or community action plan
- Foster community linkages

There are four stages to every FICE. The first two stages involve the preparation for and execution of the community exchange. The third and fourth stages involve the report back meeting that will take place when your exchange community will present their observations to you. This report back will then allow your community to develop and implement action plans.

1. **Prepare:** Preparation is critical to the success of any project. A realistic assessment of community readiness, and a clear understanding of the resources required, will help the project run smoothly.
2. **The Exchange:** The exchange visits are where volunteer teams visit their exchange community and note observations in order to prepare a report back. Ideally exchange visits occur within a month of each other so each team is visiting at a time when there are some similarities such as the season.
3. **Report Back and Action Plans:** A presentation of the report back will be made to you by your exchange community coordinator. This meeting should take place

while the information is still fresh. The information you receive will help support your community when developing specific action plans.

4. **Implement and Monitor:** Implementation of your action plan/s and then monitoring is at the heart of the FICE program and requires commitment and resources from your community.

To make FICE a success you will need the right team in place:

- Lead Organization – has the commitment and resources to complete the project
- Coordinator – appointed by the lead organization to manage the project
- Visiting Team Members – volunteers visit the exchange community, note observations and contribute to a final report back

The best matches are communities that are similar but not identical. The geographic area covered may include a single town or village, or multiple communities within a region.

In southern Ontario, staff from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) can help communities determine whether a FICE will help support broader planning initiatives. Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (MNDM) staff provide this service in northern Ontario.

For more information on FICE, please contact the Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300, visit Ontario.ca/rural, or contact the OMAFRA advisor in your region: Ontario.ca/bxb3.



1. Prepare

There are four steps in the first stage:

- 1) Assess Community Readiness
- 2) Choose an Assessment Focus
- 3) Find an Exchange Community
- 4) Build the Team

1.1 Assess Community Readiness

Before your community decides to undertake a FICE, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- **Do you have an organization that will commit to the project?** Is there an organization in your community to lead the FICE? Do you have the support of community partners such as the following:
 - Municipal, county or regional government
 - Chamber of commerce
 - Business improvement area
 - Tourism association
 - Community futures development corporation
 - Sector organizations
 - Citizens' and residents' groups
- **Do you have the necessary financial resources in place to implement the program?** The cost of carrying out the exchange is minimal. The average cost to communities is approximately \$500, not including staff time. However, the real costs for FICE are in implementing action plans developed as a result of the report back.
- **Do you have a team in place?** You will need to identify a:
 - Coordinator who is skilled at organizing, facilitating, report writing and communications.
 - A team of volunteers that represents a variety of perspectives, who are objective and willing to provide constructive feedback.
 - The team should be four to eight people, depending on the size of the community.
- **Are you committed to developing appropriate action plans based on the report back presentation from your exchange community?** FICE strives to provide an honest assessment of your community and the resulting report will offer

constructive praise and identify opportunities. Developing action plans are a critical part of a successful FICE experience.

If you answered yes to all of these questions, your community is ready for FICE.

Not sure or need more information? You might require additional preparation before taking on a FICE project. Contact your OMAFRA Agriculture and Rural Economic Development Advisor in southern Ontario or your MNDM Northern Development Advisor in northern Ontario for more information. It is important to determine if FICE is the right process for your community and if the resources are available to move a FICE forward at this time.

1.2 Choose an Assessment Focus

There are three FICE assessment options to choose from:

1. First Impressions **Full Picture** is a comprehensive guide to help the visiting team evaluate the overall community. This includes entrances, housing, education, health services, business activity, environment and the extent to which new residents are welcomed.
2. First Impressions **Downtown** is focused on downtown revitalization, appearance, businesses, infrastructure, entertainment and recreation.
3. First Impressions **Tourism** is focused on tourist attractions, services, amenities and environment.

1.3 Find an Exchange Community

Provincial staff can help you find your exchange community. This may take some time. Your exchange community should be within a reasonable driving distance to allow for maximum visiting and assessment time, but should be far enough away so the visiting team members are not too familiar with the community. Ideally, exchange communities will be those that are similar to yours in some of these respects:

- Size
- Proximity to a major population centre
- Demographics (e.g., proportion of seniors)
- Unique tourism attractions, including natural features

There should be sufficient differences to enable the communities to learn from each other, but they should not be so different that they cannot relate to each other.

Statement of Commitment

Once the exchange communities have been identified, the communities should discuss and agree on:

- Timing and format for the exchange community visits

- Focus of each community's assessment
- Program costs
- Timing for presentation of report backs

It is advisable to set out the terms of the exchange in writing, which is signed by representatives from both communities. See Appendix 1 for more information.

Timing and Format

The exchange visits should occur within a month of each other to reduce the variability of perceptions due to the change of seasons.

Consider whether to conduct the visit on a weekday or weekend. Your decision about timing will depend on the services being evaluated and FICE focus area. Note that municipal offices and other organizations you will want to visit may be closed on weekends.

The format for the visit should be based on discussions with the exchange community as well as volunteer input and availability. The visit can take place within a day or it can be spread out over two half days.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both formats. The **one day approach** means the visiting team will not require overnight accommodation. However, this format will limit the assessment of night life and some facilities. Breaking the visit into **two half days** requires more volunteer time and is more costly, but provides an opportunity to assess the quality and availability of the community's night life, dining and accommodation. It can also provide the visiting team with more time to review findings and identify gaps yet to be covered by the visit.

Program Costs

Volunteers will incur costs related to travel (gas, accommodations if overnight) and meals. Coordinators can ask volunteers to retain their receipts for reimbursement or provide a per diem.

There may also be costs incurred for:

- Printing the surveys
- Meeting room rental and refreshments
- Preparing and printing the report

The average cost of the visit portion of the FICE program is approximately \$500, not including staff or volunteer time.

1.4 Build the Team

Lead Organization

The Lead Organization is responsible for providing the resources and direction necessary to complete the project.

Coordinator

The Coordinator is responsible for liaising with the lead organization, exchange community and provincial staff. They also recruit and manage the volunteer team; prepare the report back for the exchange community; participate in the action planning for their own community; and provide general administrative support.

Visiting Team Members

Visiting Team Members travel together to the exchange community. While in the community, they complete the First Impressions survey, while playing a designated role (visitor, potential new business, new resident, etc.). At least one team member will accompany the Coordinator to present the report to their exchange community.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES				
PROJECT STAGE	Lead Organization	Coordinator	Visiting Team Members	Provincial Staff
Prepare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure community support for the program Identify a Coordinator for the FICE program Prepare a budget for the exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with Lead Organization, exchange community and provincial staff Recruit Volunteer Visiting Team Sign Statement of Commitment on behalf of the community Plan the visit to the exchange community (timing, format, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend training/orientation meetings to prepare for the visit Work with the Coordinator to assign role-playing responsibilities Review the survey before the visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify community matches Training, coaching and orientation for the Coordinator Share all resource materials Assist the Coordinator with training the Visiting Team Members
The Exchange		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the exchange visit Gather all photos and surveys from the visit Facilitate the preparation of a report back presentation to the exchange community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the First Impressions survey Take photos, as appropriate, and share with Coordinator Participate in the preparation of the report back to the exchange community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide surveys to Coordinators
Report Back & Action Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host the report back meeting Prepare and approve action plans Communicate results with community partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate report back meeting in your community to hear your exchange community's report Present the highlights of the report during a public meeting in the exchange community Arrange planning session to develop action plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one Visiting Team Member will accompany the Coordinator to present the report to the exchange community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend the report back presentations to facilitate action planning, as needed Provide report back and action plan template
Implement & Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate implementation of action plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the program evaluation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the implementation of action plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide advisory services as required Follow-up a year after the report back presentation

Recruiting Visiting Team Members

The Coordinator recruits volunteers who become members of the visiting team. The size of your team will depend on the size of your exchange community and the type of first impression community exchange being conducted (Full Picture, Downtown, or Tourism).

Before trying to recruit team members, decide how they will be reimbursed for their expenses, such as lunch and mileage to the exchange community. Select team members who represent a variety of perspectives in your community. Their varied perceptions will enhance the assessment process and their participation could broaden interest in your own community and economic development efforts. There are no “experts” in this process. Each person’s perceptions and first impressions are valid.

These volunteers should be outgoing, and they should be capable of making an objective assessment and providing constructive feedback to the exchange community. Volunteers who have report-writing and presentation skills, and who are comfortable using a tablet or smart phone will be an asset to the team.

Try to recruit volunteers who are not familiar with your exchange community so that they can truly offer a first impression.

When recruiting, clearly communicate:

- The time commitment
- What you expect from the volunteers
- The learning opportunity that this program offers to them
- Any costs they might incur

Training Visiting Team Members

Provincial Staff (Regional Advisors) will assist the Coordinator with training the Visiting Team Members.

- Introductions of team members
- Overview of FICE program
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Review the survey
- Confirm exchange visit logistics

Your training session will set the stage for a successful exchange process. The more the participants understand the process and their roles and responsibilities, the more likely their experience will be positive

Team Member Role Playing

Depending on the FICE focus area, the volunteer team may find it useful to role play. Here are some roles to consider:

- New resident
- Property developer
- Job seeker in this or a neighbouring community
- Business start-up or expansion
- Tourist
- Shopper
- Student

To play your role convincingly you will have to have your story ready. For example, if you are a visitor and just passing through, where will you say you are from and where will you say you are going? If you are playing the role of a business person, what kind of business do you run and where are you from?

The role you choose will determine some of the places you visit and questions you may ask.



2. The Exchange

The exchange visits are where volunteer teams visit their exchange community and note observations (based on questions from the FICE assessment focus area chosen) in order to prepare a report back. Visits should occur within a month of each other to reduce the variability of perceptions due to the change of seasons.

2.1 Coordinator's Responsibilities for the Exchange

One week before the visit:

- Distribute the links to the online FICE questions or distribute hardcopies to the team
- Have team members complete "Part A – Before the Visit" section of survey
- Confirm time and place to meet on the exchange day
- Send each team member an itinerary for the day
- Remind team members to review and familiarize themselves with the survey questions
- Assign roles for role playing

Day of the exchange:

Encourage team members to split up during lunch or dinner so a variety of dining establishments can be evaluated. Avoid fast food. Encourage each individual to complete his/her survey so that everyone's first impressions are captured.

Supply checklist for the exchange:

- Itinerary
- Maps
- Surveys (digital and print)
- Clipboard, pens and pencils for hard copy surveys
- Smartphone, tablet and camera (charging cables)

2.2 Visiting Team Members' Instructions during the Exchange

- Try to discover not only the community's shortcomings but also the way it shines!
- Pick up materials such as community profiles, tourism brochures and travel guides
- Re-group with the team part way through the visit to identify any sections of the survey that still need to be completed.
- Be observant. Have a good time!

2.3 Example One-Day Visit Itinerary

8:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet in home community and prepare to travel to exchange community
10:30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive in exchange community • Complete "Five Minute Impression" • Drive through to assess community entrances, residential and industrial areas
11:30 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Split up and role-play to assess other areas: municipal services, tourist attractions, etc.
12:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy lunch and assess the downtown and retail areas
1:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to explore retail areas • Continue role playing to assess other areas • Continue to assess public infrastructure • Gather information from community residents
4:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete assessment and review photos before leaving
5:00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel home



3. Report Back and Action Plans

The report back to your exchange community signals the end of the data collection period and the beginning of the development of community action plans. Just as you will provide a report back to your exchange community, they will provide their report back to your community. This will signify the development of action plans for your community.

3.1 Prepare Report Back

After the visit, the Coordinator, along with some Visiting Team Members, will complete a report that summarizes the survey results.

One approach to preparing the report could be that the Coordinator draft report based on each section of the survey. The draft report is then circulated to team members for comments. If possible, the Coordinator should facilitate a group meeting with the team members to finalize the report.

The time required to prepare the report will depend on the amount of discussion amongst team members. Summarizing multiple comments will also take time. Use a couple of bullet point slides for each section of the survey, along with the photos. Include positive images to help the community celebrate its assets and achievements, along with photos that show areas and issues that need to be addressed.

A copy of the report back should be sent to the Coordinator from the exchange community prior to the report back meeting.

Guidelines for giving constructive feedback

Providing constructive feedback is vital to the success of the FICE. Constructive feedback is not the same as advice: it is descriptive rather than evaluative. The challenge is to provide information that will help the exchange community improve while minimizing critical comments that elicit a defensive response. At the same time, most communities appreciate frank, honest comments rather than “sugar-coated” observations. Provide specific rather than general feedback, and focus on things that can realistically be changed.

Give feedback that is accurate and based on observations. Provide positive feedback first and then describe areas that you feel need the community’s attention. Ensure that the feedback message is clearly understood. Focus on the value of your message to the receiver. Use phrases like, “From our/my perspective; we observed that...” as opposed to, “You don’t have, you should have,” etc.

Receiving feedback is an important part of the exchange process. When receiving feedback, listen to the whole message — for positive feedback and suggestions for improvements. Be open. Listen closely without making excuses. Do not explain, defend or deny. Ask for clarification and allow time to absorb the information. Recognize that a community cannot “grow” unless it is open to constructive feedback.

3.2 Hosting a Report Back Meeting

The report back meeting is an opportunity for you to hear from the team that visited your community. The meeting should occur within four to six weeks of the team’s visit to your community. This meeting is an important part of the FICE process and requires careful and thoughtful planning. It can be elaborate or simple —involving just a small group of community leaders or an open meeting with social time to allow for networking.

The meeting is a chance to celebrate the community’s positive features, identify issues that need attention, and inspire other volunteers to get involved in community and economic development activities. Community leaders, business owners, municipal representatives, economic development organizations, residents and the media should be invited to attend.

Example Agenda:

Agenda	Who is responsible?
Welcome and overview of the FICE Program	Host community
Present the report back	Exchange community
Review of lessons from the exchange community visit	Host community
Next steps – schedule Action Plan meeting	Host community

The report back presentation is meant to stimulate thought and discussion around the issues identified by the visiting team.

3.3 Prepare Action Plans

The FICE does not end with the visiting team report back. It is critical that each community consider the observations provided by their exchange community and identify actions to address shortcomings and opportunities. It is recommended that each community channel this feedback into an action planning session to ensure that the issues are addressed or acted on while they are still fresh in everyone’s mind.

Participation at your action planning meeting should include the FICE Visiting Team Members, representatives from the sponsoring organization(s) as well as additional representatives from business related associations, the municipality and residents at large.

As action plans are established, you need to consider which actions:

- Support broader community plans by building on the existing strengths and resources in the community
- Establish Quick Wins – Which actions could be implemented quickly, achieving rapid and visible change
- Could be delegated or affect other groups, events or projects in the community

An action plan should describe, in detail, the specific steps the community will take to meet its goal(s). For each action it is important to clarify the timeframe, performance measures, resources required, and who is responsible. Appendix 3 has a sample action plan as a reference.

Need more help building your action plans? Refer to the Province's Strategic Planning Manual: <http://ontario.ca/cxyy>.

3.4 Communicate Results

It is important to share the findings and associated actions of the FICE project with your community. These could be shared via your local media, social media and presentations to community organizations.



4. Implement and Monitor

4.1 Implementation

The lead organization should ensure that action plans:

- Are adequately resourced (human and financial)
- Have realistic completion dates
- Are implemented and monitored

4.2 Monitoring Progress

Celebrate success! It is important to provide updates to the community on the actions undertaken as a follow up to the First Impressions exchange. Congratulate those who have completed tasks and celebrate what has been achieved.

The lead organization, with the assistance of the Coordinator, should develop a process for tracking the results of the FICE program against the action plans developed. This will help identify the impact the program is having on the local economy and community.

Monitoring the plan will:

- Indicate if the plan is effective
- Identify if changes are needed (e.g., are the action plans helping to reach the goals?)
- Help communicate progress to partners and external funding agencies

Additional benefits of monitoring your plan include:

- Helps to leverage additional resources
- Generates enthusiasm and public interest
- Promotes and celebrates success

Once an action plan has been implemented, the lead organization should work with the broader community in identifying further actions to contribute to and build on community assets. A follow-up FICE project is one method of identifying future priorities.

4.3 Follow up Evaluation

It is important that you also evaluate how effective the FICE was in helping to identify priorities for community change. Assessing the overall results or impacts of the FICE program should consider both quantitative (numerical) and qualitative information (people's perceptions, opinions, experiences).

A FICE program evaluation survey (see Appendix 4) will be sent to the Coordinators after the date of the report back meeting. Provincial staff will follow up with the Coordinators one year after the report back presentation date to see how FICE Program-related action plans are progressing and the impacts they are having in the communities.

The Ontario government provides all resource materials and regional staff support for FICE. In return, the government requires communities to provide feedback on the resources and services provided, in order to ensure quality service to future participating communities.

Appendix 1: Statement of Commitment

The First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE) provides an opportunity for communities to gain a fresh perspective on how they are seen through the eyes of first-time visitors. FICE can be undertaken as a stand-alone project for communities who are seeking information that will help guide future economic development plans, or as a component part that will support a broader strategic plan.

Communities that agree to take part in a FICE commit to:

- Obtaining the commitment of community and organization leaders to the FICE program
- Putting the necessary financial resources in place to implement the program
- Building a team to carry out the responsibilities of the FICE program
- Completing the four stages of the FICE program
- Complete evaluations

Signed -----day of -----, 20____.

FOR Community/Organization

FOR Community/Organization

Name & Position

Name & Position

FOR (The Government of Ontario) OMAFRA/MNDM

Name & Position

Appendix 2: Steps to Completing the Online and Printed Surveys

Steps to complete Online Surveys

Step 1: Coordinators get their visiting teams assembled (and each member's email address).

Step 2: Coordinators send Visiting Team Members email addresses to Provincial Staff.

Step 3: Provincial Staff distribute the survey (Full Picture, Downtown, or Tourism) by email to each of the Coordinators and Visiting Team Members. This way each person has their own customized web link to the survey for inputting their answers.

Step 4: Coordinators and Visiting Team Members answer “Part A – Before the Visit” questions before the exchange visit and “Part B – During the Visit” questions during the exchange visit. Completed survey results are then automatically stored in the Provincial Survey Monkey account.

Step 5: Once all have finished their surveys, the aggregate results will be forwarded by Provincial Staff to each community's Coordinator for preparing the report back presentations to their exchange community.

Steps to complete Printed Surveys During Visit; Online Surveys After Visit

Step 1: Coordinators get their visiting teams assembled (and each member's email address).

Step 2: Coordinators send Visiting Team Members email addresses to Provincial Staff.

Step 3: Provincial Staff send relevant survey (Full Picture, Downtown, or Tourism) to community Coordinators by email in printable PDF format. Provincial Staff also distribute the online survey by email to each of the Coordinators and Visiting Team Members. This way each person has their own customized web link to the survey for inputting their answers after the exchange visit.

Step 4: Coordinators print a copy of the survey for each of the Visiting Team Members.

Step 5: Coordinators and Visiting Team Members answer “Part A – Before the Visit” questions before the exchange visit.

Step 6: Coordinators and Visiting Team Members each bring their own printed surveys to the exchange visit during which they answer their own “Part B – During the Visit” questions.

Step 7: After the exchange visit, Coordinators and Visiting Team Members transfer and record their answers from their printed surveys to their own online survey in the web link provided by Provincial Staff in Step 3. Completed online survey results are automatically stored in the Provincial Survey Monkey account.

Step 8: Once all have finished their online surveys, the aggregate results will be forwarded by Provincial Staff to each community's Coordinator for preparing the report back presentations to their exchange community.

Appendix 3: Sample Action Plan

After visiting the community in the fall, the visiting team suggests that the community's heavily travelled southern entrance could be more inviting and should highlight the community's popular Summer Folk Festival.

The host community discusses the issue and concludes that the community does a good job with the southern entrance during the summer season, but there is room for improvement in the off-seasons. The issue is addressed with the following action plan:

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND ACTION PLANS WORKSHEET

GOAL: Improve the appearance of the community's southern entrance and use it to promote the Summer Folk Festival during the off-seasons					
ACTION:					
PERFORMANCE MEASURES			METHOD (how will you track this)		TARGET
1	Call made, information known within the week				
2	Meet with municipality, Working Group created				
3	Options developed, budget in place				
4	Municipal approval				
5	Beautified southern entrance signage promoting the Summer Folk Festival year-round				
#	ACTIONS Please insert your actions here	TIMEFRAMES What is your timeframe?	RESOURCES What resources (human, financial, other) are required?	CHAMPION / OTHERS WHO ARE INVOLVED? Who is taking the lead in this initiative? Are there partners or stakeholders?	REPORTING STATUS Choose one of: • Complete • In Progress • Incomplete
1	Contact the municipality to determine who is responsible for community entrance beautification and signage	7 days	Human	Art	Complete
2	Meet with the individual responsible and form a working group with interested citizens	21 days	Human	Joanne	Complete
3	Explore possibilities for off-season beautification, new signage, and funding source	90 days	Human, financial	Working Group	Complete
4	Present preferred option to council	30 days	Human	Working Group	Complete
5	Municipal community group implement recommendations	60 days	Human, financial	Municipal or community group	Complete



First Impressions Community Exchange (FICE) Evaluation

FICE Coordinator Evaluation

Based on your experience, rate your level of satisfaction with the FICE tools and process.

1. Overall satisfaction

1 (Very Low) 2 3 (Neutral) 4 5 (Very High)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

2. Initial training/orientation

1 (Very Low) 2 3 (Neutral) 4 5 (Very High)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

3. Comment on the FICE training provided

4. Coaching and advice provided throughout the process

1 (Very Low) 2 3 (Neutral) 4 5 (Very High)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

5. Comment on the FICE coaching and advice provided

6. How satisfied were you with the following FICE assessment resources?

	1 (Very Low)	2	3 (Neutral)	4	5 (Very High)
Coordinator's Manual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Survey(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Report template	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Comment on the FICE assessment resources provided**8. Did you complete the survey(s) online?**Yes ☐No ☐**9. How likely are you to implement your action plans as a result of FICE?**

1 (Very Low) 2 3 (Neutral) 4 5 (Very High)

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

10. What were the goals and/or objectives you wanted to achieve as a result of FICE?**11. Would you undertake a FICE again in the future?**Yes ☐No ☐

Contact Information

Agricultural Information Contact Centre: 1-877-424-1300
www.Ontario.ca/Rural



Également disponible en français



First Impressions Community Exchange



Matching Profile

Community Name	
Municipality/Region/County	
Community Population	
Type of Exchange (Full Picture, Downtown, Tourism, Local Food)	
Preferred Timing for Exchange	
Special Notes (challenges, issues, priorities)	
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion assets	
Heritage/Cultural assets (eg. Galleries, theatre, architecture)	
Key economic drivers/main economic base	
Primary economic sector influence (eg. agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, forestry, mining)	
Proximity to major highways	
Proximity to waterways/waterfront (rivers, lakes)	
Proximity to railways (passenger or freight)	
Schools – high school, post-secondary, number and type	
Municipal office in the community	
Large (neighbouring) city influence	
Industrial Park(s)	
Roofed Accommodation (hotels, motels, B&B)	
FICE Coordinator and Contact Information	
OMAFRA Regional Advisor for the area and contact information	

Report to Economic Development Committee
 Meeting Date: September 2, 2025
Report Title: EDCO Eastern Conference 2025 – Update

Author's Name: Marie White
 Position: Economic Development and Cultural Heritage Coordinator
 Report No. ECD 2025-08



RECOMMENDATION:

For information only.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMMENTS:

Sector #1 – Economic Prosperity. Strategic Initiative #1 – To create an environment where businesses can thrive.

BACKGROUND:

Further to report ECD 2025-02 presented on March 3, Rideau Lakes has been selected to host the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) Eastern Region Professional Development Event on October 2, 2025 in partnership with The Opinicon in Chaffey's Lock.

Hosting EDCO will bring awareness to the benefits of investing in Rideau Lakes, and approximately 50 to 70 delegates will experience the growing community first-hand, strengthening existing business networks.

DISCUSSION:

A sponsorship program was developed for the EDCO Conference Eastern Region Professional Development Event taking place on Thursday, October 2, 2025 at The Opinicon in Chaffey's Lock.

The Township of Rideau Lakes is working with EDCO staff and an event steering committee that includes Jay Amer of Ontario East Economic Development (OEMC) and Alex de Wit with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture (OMAFRA).

Event Sponsors include:

- KEYS Employment & Newcomer Services – Silver Sponsor
- Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation – Silver Sponsor
- ontrac – Bronze Sponsor
- Le Boat - Rideau Canal – In Kind Boat Tours
- Leeds Grenville Economic Development – In Kind Speaker Gifts & Lanyards

Highlights of the agenda include:

- LeBoat mini-tours over the lunch period
- Branded photo booth for group pictures over lunch and afternoon break
- Hand-made ice cream at the 1950's parlour on site
- Optional tour of the Queen's University Biological Station

Informative sessions:

- Canada's Largest Rail Trail Loop Development Project
- Workforce Development Panel
- Agri-Food Panel
- The Border Effect

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

In 2025, \$5,000 is budgeted to host the EDCO Eastern Conference. Cash Sponsorship of \$2,500 has been confirmed.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Digital Event Poster

e- signed

August 25, 2025

Marie White
Economic Development & Cultural Heritage Coordinator

DATE

e- signed

August 26, 2025

Shellee Fournier
CAO

DATE

REGIONAL EVENT

Join us on for the
2025 Eastern
Region
Professional
Development
Event

2025 IN RIDEAU LAKES

OCTOBER 2, 2025



 Rideau Lakes

 Economic
Developers
Council
of Ontario



TOWNSHIP OF RIDEAU LAKES
Economic Development Committee
Minutes

Monday, July 7, 2025, 10:00 a.m.
Municipal Office, Chantry

Members Present: Ken Davies, Dudley Hill, Councillor Deborah Anne Hutchings, Councillor Marcia Maxwell, Councillor Sue Dunfield, Councillor Ron Pollard

Members Absent: Mayor Arie Hoogenboom, Councillor Linda Carr, Councillor Paula Banks

Staff Present: Shellee Fournier, CAO, Marie White, Economic Development and Cultural Heritage Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Regrets received from Mayor Arie Hoogenboom, Councillor Linda Carr and Councillor Paula Banks.

ADDITIONS/AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA

The Chair called for any additions or amendments to the agenda. None were heard.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

RECOMMENDATION # ECD 2025-31

Moved by Ken Davies
Seconded by Councillor Ron Pollard

Be it resolved that the Economic Development Committee adopt the Agenda as presented.

Carried

DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

Chair Maxwell asked if anyone had a pecuniary interest and none were declared.

BUSINESS ARISING**Publications - Update re Early History Statement: Marie White (For Information)**

Committee received a copy of the report entitled, "Review of Draft Text for Township of Rideau Lakes" received from the Algonquins of Ontario dated April 2025 for information purposes and for potential inclusion in the 2026 Rideau Lakes Heritage Road Map.

Members of the committee noted a couple of corrections to the report:

- In the introductory paragraph of Section A, the former townships are listed. Please note that the community of Newboro was missed, and "Bastard and South Burgess" is referred to as two separate townships. At the time of the 1998 amalgamation the townships were, and should read as follows: "Bastard and South Burgess, Newboro (later absorbed into North Crosby), North Crosby, South Crosby and South Elmsley."
- In the third paragraph of section A:
 - please replace "towns and villages" with "villages and hamlets."
 - In the same paragraph, Westport is listed in error. Please note that the community of Westport is politically separated and should be omitted.
 - some Hamlets are listed, but not all. There are eight hamlets; Chantry, Crosby, Forfar, Harlem. Philipsville, Jones Falls. Morton and Rideau Ferry.
 - Historic Settlements such as California are not mentioned.

Points of clarification:

- Frontenac Arch refers to the exposed strip of Precambrian rock, while the Frontenac Arch Biosphere Reserve refers to the geologically sensitive area defined for conservation efforts.
- Flora and Fauna refers to plants and animals.

The Early History Statement as presented does not mention or address the presence of other groups that have resided in Rideau Lakes, such as the Iroquoian speaking peoples. Members of the committee shared that Bedford Mills, just south of Rideau Lakes at Massasauga Road, is noted as an area of indigenous significance.

MINUTES

Minutes of the June 2, 2025 Economic Development Committee Meeting were distributed to the Committee. Chair Maxwell asked for any errors, omissions or questions.

RECOMMENDATION # ECD 2025-32

Moved by Councillor Hutchings
Seconded by Dudley Hill

Be it resolved that this Committee approve the Economic Development Committee Meeting minutes of June 2, 2025 as presented.

Carried

ACTION LISTING: Marie White, Economic Development and Cultural Heritage Coordinator

Staff provided an update on Economic Development Action items.

CORRESPONDENCE FOR ACTION/INFORMATION**EDCO Eastern Region Professional Development Event - October 2, 2025**

A draft Agenda is posted and event registration open.

Eastern Ontario Rail Trail Loop - Tourism Assessment Report - Township of Rideau Lakes

Staff provided an overview of the Eastern Ontario Rail Trail Project:

- The assessment report details the section of the loop within Rideau Lakes. Trail expert Jane McCulloch of Terminus Consulting travelled the Cataraqui Trail from Lombardy to Chaffeys Lock in May 2024.
- A partnership MOU that outlines deliverables was signed prior to the Township's investment of \$3,000 in 2025.
- The assessment is geared to the partnership's future ability to draw international visitors. In addition to cycling, current multi-uses of the trail include equestrian, snowmobile, hiking, and in some areas motorized vehicles such as All Terrain Vehicles. International visitors stay longer and therefore associated with higher spend per trip, which means more dollars infused into our local economies.
- The Cataraqui Trail has been noted as the most beautiful and scenic part of the loop. To include this authentic natural experience, it benefits the entire loop. Therefore, there is support to collectively invest in resurfacing the Cataraqui Trail.
- For this reason, EORTL is interested in a sustainable financial model / financial support for the Cataraqui Trail.

- The CRCA's Masterplan notes a minimum standard of 5/8 gravel, however stone dust is ideal for all users - so choosing hybrid cycling as the standard for surfacing is actually benefitting all user groups. Although cycling may not be listed as one of top 5 target markets for Rideau Lakes, hybrid cyclists are the right target market for this group project because cyclists are acceptable in all jurisdictions of the loop. It is not only the common denominator, but it is the market that is seeking an experience that this area can offer. Marrying the location's assets with the people who would appreciate them is a strong approach.
- The loop is desirable, as most rail trails are linear.
- The idea is to develop a 5-year plan that will result in a Signature Trail.
- As a year round attraction, the loop as a tourism product has the potential to extend our tourism season and have a real economic impact comparable to the Rideau Canal that draws 900,000 visitors each year. They are both place-specific experiences that cannot be replicated in any other destination. This project is a strategic investment and checks all the boxes for product development - one element of our overall economic development plan. It also supports the development of learning experiences for visitors, quality of life for residents, and creating an environment for businesses to thrive and more.
- The \$3,000 contribution from the Township is leveraged with funding (such as Fed Dev) that advances the project for all the partners. The investment to have this documentation in place will help us to apply for more federal, provincial, and regional funding.
- Beyond promoting experiences along the Cataraqui Trail, the municipality's role will be to plan for a trail network that connects the loop with off shoot trails into all of our villages.
- This fall, 5 in-person community engagement sessions will be held, one in rideau lakes, (September-October) and there will be an opportunity for branding input.
- The landing page will be published on comewander.ca
- Tours will be planned along loop in 2026, an opportunity to promote experiences along Cataraqui Trail (i.e. March Marigolds). Local businesses may expand to address gaps in services or accommodations.

Committee members would like to see the loop on a map (For example, the Cataraqui Trail is on the Rideau Lakes Road Map).

It was suggested that the CECs be involved in the conversation.

ECD Minutes, July 7, 2025 p. 5

Consider local churches "champing" as a year round solution to fill the gap in accommodation.

The report nicely lays out the strengths and weaknesses. The group is working to bring UCLG on board.

Contact the Rideau Trail Association for trail development in Newboro.

NEW BUSINESS

Committee Roundtable

Public Representative Ken Davies:

- Attended Newboro Canada Day, Fireworks in Westport (is there financial support for Fireworks display by the Westport Legion? Yes, through the Community Grant program)

Shellee Fournier:

- Rideau Canal Lockage is free until Labour Day as part of the "Canada Strong" promotion.

Councillor Ron Pollard:

- Rideau Canal traffic impacts water levels in Bobs Lake and Wolfe Lake
- Sand Lake and dam is always full

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

From the Gallery: Canada Day Breakfast in South Elmsley was a huge success.

CLOSED SESSION

Moved by Councillor Sue Dunfield

Seconded by Dudley Hill

Be it resolved that the Economic Development Committee of the Township of Rideau Lakes moves into closed meeting 10:39 a.m. to discuss the following matters under Section 239 (2) of the Municipal Act.

(b) Personal matters about an identifiable individual, including Municipal or local board employee.

Carried

Economic Development Committee Closed Meeting Minutes

Nominations for Bill Thake Memorial Award for Economic Development Leadership

ECD Minutes, July 7, 2025 p. 6

REPORT REGARDING CLOSED MEETING

RECOMMENDATION # ECD 2025-33

Moved by Councillor Ron Pollard

Seconded by Councillor Hutchings

Be it resolved that a Closed Meeting was held and Committee discussed two (2) items. The Minutes from the previous closed session meeting and the Bill Thake Award under a personal matter about an identifiable individual including municipal or local board employees. There is nothing to report on this item.

Carried

ADJOURNMENT

The Economic Development Committee adjourned meeting at 11:31 a.m.

Marcia Maxwell, Chair

Marie White, Secretary

PROJECT/ GOAL	DETAILS	ASSIGNED	BUDGET	STATUS
2025 Economic Development Programs and Projects (Listed as they appear on the Budget)				
Business Recognition Program	Coordinate and advertise the annual program and recognition event. Review of Business Directory by Economic Development Committee and Council. Priority #3 - Community Revitalization.	Marie White, Ec Dev Committee, Council	Net \$1,620 (expenses offset by revenues)	Complete. The 2025 Rideau Lakes Business Recognition Program is in development. Nominations will close on March 7, 2025. The Business Awards Breakfast was held at the Elgin Lions Community Hall from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Wednesday, April 16, 2025. The venue and catering was booked accordingly. Award categories were reviewed and the criteria revised. Nomination Forms and webpage were updated to reflect the revised award category, "New Business Award" for businesses between 1 and 3 years old. Partnership letters were issued in December, and all three sponsors have confirmed 2025 support of the program. Save the date memos were sent to the MP, MPP, Warden, Mayor, Council and Committee. Information was published in the Tax Newsletter and in the Leeds Grenville eNews. Nominations opened Friday, February 7, 2025. The judges panel this year consisted of former Mayor Ron Holman, Cindy James from the Small Business Advisory Centre (Provincial partner) and Amber Coville from Valley Heartland (Federal partner). Previous winners in all three categories were invited to present awards to new recipients (ECD 2025-08). Thirty-one businesses were nominated. Over 90 people attended the Business Breakfast. The winners were announced at the event, and through a media release, eNews, on the website and Facebook page. Name plates for the wall plaque in the lobby are installed. Remaining certificates for nominees that were unable to attend the event are being mailed. An ad was published in the April 22 edition of the Review Mirror to congratulate the winners and thank our sponsors.
	Planning for 2026 (October)			As per February 2025 ECD meeting: Review Award Categories; Consider Long Standing Business award/recognition; Discuss the concept of a trophy to be passed on from one year to another. Suggestions for 2026 include: Add a People's Choice award to be selected as a result of online voting. Judges recommend, in order to reduce duplicate nominations, that the Business of the Year award criteria be changed to 5 years and over, to set it apart from the New Business Award, which is for businesses between 1 and 3 years old. The age and size of the business will determine which award category. In addition, scoring criteria should include one unique factor for each category.

Publications	Rideau Lakes Heritage Road Map. MHAC and ECD to continue to work together to produce and distribute the Rideau Lakes Map including all roads, village maps and heritage landmarks/points of interest. Priority #4 - Focused Sector Development.	Marie White, Ec Dev Committee, MHAC	\$6,400 (50%, cost-shared with MHAC)	Complete. In 2025, a quantity of 5,000 Road Maps were printed for distribution in May, to align with the opening of seasonal attractions. Corrections and edits from the public can be received at any time throughout the year. Digital maps are corrected as needed, and the printed map is revised each year. Draft content was revised and approved by MHAC at the January meeting. Approx. 20 Private Road names were updated in the 2025 edition. Content was approved by ECD in February. A new section on Early History is in development. Consulting agencies were contacted. Specifically: Algonquins of Ontario - Consultation Office; Metis Nation of Ontario - Lands, Resources and Consultations Branch; Mohawk Council of Akwesasne - Acting Director of Technical Services; Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte - Land Officer; Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation, Program Manager, Lands, Estates, Membership. Responses were received from Algonquins of Ontario and Metis Nation of Ontario. A paid consultant was enlisted to develop the Early History statement. The final 2025 map went into production on April 23 and the searchable PDF has been uploaded to the website. The new 2025 map was published and distributed in May. Additional distribution will take place in June (seasonal Ontario Travel Centres requested shipments after June 1, 2025).
	Rideau Lakes Experience Guide. In partnership with MHAC, update the Rideau Lakes Business and Heritage Tour(s) for each Village. Priority #4 - Focused Sector Development.			Complete. The 2025 edition of the guide will be printed in a quantity of 3,000 for distribution in June to align with International Picnic Day. Online versions of each Village Tour are published under "Trip Ideas." have been updated. Approximately 4 copies remain in stock. Printing quotes were received. The page count was reduced to 16 + cover for cost effectiveness. Revised content was reviewed by ECD on April 7 and by MHAC on April 17th. The 2025 guide went into production on May 21. Distribution of the Guide took place between June 9 and 19th.
Marketing Plan Implementation	Continue to follow through with actions identified in Marketing Strategy and Branding Guidelines (Marketing General). Promotion, map and guide distribution fees, advertising, business visits, and partnerships that advance Economic Development Goals. Priority #5 - Business and Workforce Development.	Marie White	\$3,000	Ongoing. Content submitted to Southeastern Ontario (RTO9) for upcoming regional promotions. 1000 Islands Rideau Waterways (DMO) has been copied on submissions. Staff attend quarterly meetings of the Business Support Working Group organized by Leeds Grenville Economic Development. Together with Leeds Grenville Economic Development, businesses including the Portland Family Restaurant, Rideau Lakes Building Centre and Everline Coatings have received a consultation visit in 2025. Met with LeBoat Marketing team in April, and as a follow up our Harbourmaster met with their Operations Manager on May 13. Suggested improvements to Harbour facilities include Wi-Fi access, additional electrical outlets, water fill stations, additional docking, signs or flags to guide boats into the public dock area from the water (especially where private docks are adjacent), public washrooms with showers, improved welcome signs and wayfinding signs into village from Harbour, including local business indicators (i.e. Canoe and Kayak rentals), add interpretive panels (i.e. turtle nesting area), BBQ or fire pits, waste receptacles, and pump out services if possible.

	Photographer/Videographer: Images and Footage to refresh content for both print and online presence.	Marie White	\$3,000	Over 1,000 images are currently in the photo databank. Requests for new images related to Doors Open (Red Brick School) and Community Halls have been noted. Consideration will be given to images needed for the Experience Rideau Lakes Campaign and the Rideau Lakes Website. A photo shoot took place on August 16 & 17, 2025. Video work was completed to edit the Investment Attraction Video and create a series of short clips isolating interviews with Fiona McKeen of The Opinicon, Mark Hales of Hales Trucking, Stefano Ferrante and Dylan Sliter of United Edge and P3 Panel, Elizabeth Okum of Ethereal Massage Therapy/Davis Cattle Co., Timmy McNamee of Project Wakesurf, Jim Summers of Rideau Lakes Building Centre, Wendy Banks of Wendy's Country Market, and Dana McCullough of Wolf Springs Resort. This will allow flexibility to use the footage should any of the businesses change ownership.
	Promotional Items: Lapel pins and canvas bags for welcome packages.	Marie White	\$1,500	Lapel Pins have been ordered to replenish stock.
Digital Content Strategy	Implement recommendations of the Digital Content Strategy by TD Graham and Associates. In particular, the Experience Rideau Lakes Campaign. This program supports workforce development, tourism attraction and business development efforts. Priority #5 - Business and Workforce Development.	Marie White, Consultant	\$9,000	Ongoing. The Digital Content Strategy was adopted by Council on December 6, 2021. The resulting Experience Rideau Lakes Campaign including a Facebook Page, Instagram Page and Online Blog (website content/newsletter articles) was launched on January 6, 2022. The 2025 Digital Content Calendar has been developed and is in implementation. Together, campaign results total 1,273,891 people reached (2022-2024). A media release was issued to share the campaign results, and a story was on Kingston Global News and printed in the Review Mirror. Daffodil Days was included in an article by Ottawa Road Trips and posted by 1000 Islands Rideau Waterways. Blog articles are posted each week, advertised on Facebook and Instagram.

Investment Attraction Campaign	Implement recommendations outlined in the Investment Attraction Campaign strategy by TD Graham & Associates. Streamline Operations to excel at serving the business community by enhancing communications. Priority #1 - Investment Attraction.	Marie White, Consultant	\$3,750	Ongoing. The Investment Attraction Campaign strategy document was adopted by Council on December 6, 2021 and the InvestRideauLakes.ca URL was purchased and activated in 2022. In partnership with Leeds Grenville Economic Development, a total of 24 Success Stories are highlighted on the Rideau Lakes website. The Campaign was launched on Friday April 14, 2023, targeted to entrepreneurs in Ontario seeking Quality of Life in their next phase of development, expansion or start-up. To follow up with leads generated, a kit folder in both print and online is available which includes an updated Community Profile document, a Planning Application FAQ, Building Permit FAQ, and Waterfront Best Practices Information Sheet. As of November 2023, the Investment Attraction Video is being highlighted online through targeted Google ads, resulting in over 32,140 impressions and 12,647 video views. The Google ad continued from January to May 2024 and 2025, and again from September to December 2024 and 2025. A LinkedIn Profile for the Township was activated in 2024, featuring the Investment Attraction Video. The Community Profile document and video were approved and published in 2024. The community profile video was launched at the Business Breakfast and a media release was issued. A social media policy is in development. Nomination of the Investment Attraction video was successful and Rideau Lakes is the recipient of the 2024 EDAC Marketing Canada award, and recognized as a contender for the EDAC Cup. The Investment Attraction campaign project was nominated for the EDCO Awards of Excellence. Thirteen (13) success stories are in development for 2025 (Business Recognition Program Award Winners). Reports acquired from OMAFRA regarding top industries in Rideau Lakes (as reported in February). A media release announcing the 2024 EDAC Cup Contender award was released following a group photo taken at the Business Breakfast in April 2025. This announcement was shared in the eNews, on Facebook, and the Rideau Lakes website. The group photo was also shared on the Rideau Lakes Linked In Profile page, tagging partners pages such as Tom Graham and The Opinicon (89 Followers).
Investment Attraction	Increase number and diversity of businesses. Working with businesses to explore expansion in Rideau Lakes. Fill vacant and underutilized buildings. Priority #1 - Investment Attraction.	Marie White, Facilities and Parks Staff	n/a	Ongoing. Wills Transfer is looking to expand services and undergoing certification processes to warehouse food, beverage and pharma. Working with new businesses and existing businesses to explore expansion in Rideau Lakes. Surplus properties were identified and listed for sale. The Portland Grocery listing was highlighted in the Leeds Grenville eNews. Actively maintaining Business Directory. Investment Ready Properties page updated and shared with Leeds Grenville. Demolition of the Delta Maple Syrup Factory building is in progress.
Strategic Projects	Outlined in the Economic Development Action Plan 2023-2026		\$15,000	Complete. \$500 committed to the "Spring into Rideau" initiative from Strategic Projects (ECD 2024-63). Signs were ordered for Spring into Rideau on April 23, 2025.
	Continue to identify opportunities for Broadband Projects. Priority #2 - Physical Infrastructure. Improve Connectivity throughout the Township and at municipal buildings.	Marie White, UCLG staff		In progress. To identify next steps for enhanced wi-fi access and upcoming cell coverage projects, partners at the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) were contacted. The Rideau Lakes webpage, "Internet Connectivity" was updated accordingly, with information about how people can participate in a survey to identify internet service gaps. An update is included in the September 2 meeting package.

<p>Promote the Rideau Lakes Community Improvement Plan for Villages. Priority #1 - Investment Attraction. Priority #5 - Business and Workforce Development.</p>	<p>Development Services Ec Dev Staff</p>		<p>Complete. Four approved CIP applications in 2025. CIP grants totalling approximately \$11,693 were approved. [CIP-01-2023 (Legion) for \$2,000; CIP-01-2024 (Stone Manor Studios) for \$5,298; CIP-02-2024 (Poplars Resort) for \$3,999.53; CIP-2025-01 (Sub Zero) for \$396.09]. All approved CIP projects have been completed.</p>
<p>Village Renewal Projects. Priority #2 - Physical Infrastructure (Active Transportation). Priority #3 - Community Revitalization.</p>	<p>The Eastern Ontario Rail Trail Tourism Loop project (EORTL)</p>		<p>In progress. Rideau Lakes has formally joined the Eastern Ontario Rail Trail Tourism Loop Partnership (EORTL) with a contribution of \$3,000. Partners include Rideau Lakes, Frontenac, Lanark, Leeds & Grenville, Renfrew and the Town of Smiths Falls in an effort to establish a 350-kilometre loop connecting the multi-use trails: the Cataraqui Trail, the K & P Trail and the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail. Funding applications were successful in 2024 and a trail assessment was conducted in May 2024, as the first phase in a 5-year goal to launch this loop as a world class tourism attraction, aimed to bring cyclists to the area. In phase two, "Trail Towns" will be highlighted. Tourism along the Cataraqui trail will positively impact the communities of Lombardy, Portland, Forfar and Chaffeys Lock. The trail assessment report is in development. Preparations for trail resurfacing, parking areas and experience development projects along the loop should be considered as funding opportunities are announced. Information is posted at: https://ohto.ca/regional-trail-dev-partnership. An updated report Consolidated report of all Village Vision recommendations to date was provided at the October ECD meeting and was included as information on the November 4th Council Agenda. Rideau Lakes has been selected to host the EDCO Eastern Conference in Fall 2025. The application to the Tourism Growth Fund submitted by Leeds Grenville with for a joint initiative related to experience development for the 200th Anniversary of the Rideau Canal was unsuccessful. The EORTL draft Engagement Strategy (next steps) has been circulated to project partners for review and comment. Report ECD 2025-04 (Village Vision Program Summary of Recommendations) proceeded to Council on June 2, 2025 and then circulated to CECs as a status report. Report ECD 2025-06-02 Village Renewal Projects was discussed at the regular committee meeting in June. The Community Engagement Plan has been completed and included in the September 2 meeting package.</p>

		Parks Canada Partnership		A partnership meeting with Parks Canada and NAHS took place on February 11 at Newboro Hall for a discussion with the committee about Parks Canada properties within villages. Takeaways from the meeting are as follows: The Director's Office at Parks Canada will work with their Realty team to provide the Township with a template for unsolicited proposals to guide future submissions; The Director's Office at Parks Canada will inquire with their Realty team about options to deal with the boat house in Newboro that is in disrepair, and this process if successful can guide our collective actions for similar situations in the future; The Director's Office at Parks Canada will ensure that the Royal Visit suggestion for Rideau 200th is included in the upcoming visioning exercise with the Parks Canada Stakeholder Advisory Committee; The Township has been invited to resubmit the Chaffeys trail / pedestrian pathway initiative for consideration (resurfacing of a pedestrian pathway along Marion Dunn Trail in Chaffeys Lock to increase pedestrian safety); The Township of Rideau Lakes is welcome to propose a parking lot plan or design for Newboro on Parks Canada property; The Township may propose a pedestrian pathway as illustrated on the "Newboro Cut" design as a step towards the overall vision (developed by Dudley Hill); that Parks Canada staff are open to participating in passport programs such as Spring Into Rideau by stamping/signing passports at lock stations during the regular operating season. A letter was received from the Newboro and Area Historical Society to advance the "Newboro Cut" project, seeking support in principle for a proposal to Parks Canada regarding a canal-side walking path, linking waterfront docking areas to village businesses. ECD 2025-30 was ratified by Council on July 7, 2025 and a letter of support was provided to the NAHS dated July 11, 2025.
		Event Signs		Complete. Report ECD 2025-05 was ratified by Council on June 2, 2025. Seven Event Flags were ordered and received. Correspondence to CEC chairs was issued. An event lending form has been created. A second sandwich board, portable screen, 2 event tents, blue tablecloths and event signs (event, washroom, parking with arrows) are now in stock.
2025 EDCO Conference	Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) Eastern Conference 2025	EDCO Steering Committee, Marie White, The Opinicon	\$5,000	In progress. The Opinicon has partnered with the Township of Rideau Lakes to host the EDCO conference on Thursday, October 2, 2025 in Chaffeys Lock. An agreement has been signed. EDCO has brought a steering committee together to confirm speakers and formalize agenda details. Sponsorship packages have been sent to Economic Development partners. Leeds Grenville has come on board to provide 10 speaker gift bags and lanyards for attendees. OnTrac Employment Resource Centre has joined on as a Bronze Sponsor with a contribution of \$500. KEYS Employment and Newcomer Services has joined on as a Silver Sponsor with a contribution of \$1,000. Valley Heartland Community Futures Development Corporation has joined as a Silver Sponsor with a contribution of \$1,000. LeBoat has joined on as an in-kind sponsor providing mini-tours over the lunch hour. A draft agenda has been posted.

Capital				
Rebranding - Sign Replacement	Staff to implement the approved Sign Design and Replacement Strategy. Per 2020 Branding Guidelines approved by Council.	Marie White Leila Stafford (Corporate Services), Facilities and Parks	\$1,500	In progress. Signs to be ordered in 2026 include (1) a second sign for Shillington Park, (2) Seven amenity tag bars for park signs (3) Road Sign and arrow for Sand Lake and Shillington Park (5) a second sign for Newboro Branch. May add facility signs to Red Brick School and Chaffeys Lock Community Hall, to be determined. A sign was ordered and installed "Home of the Old Stone Mill" as a tag bar on the Delta Village signs. A review of signs was completed and some outstanding signs were ordered, totalling approximately 115 signs. Library signs were added for consideration, including Newboro Branch, South Elmsley Branch and Portland Branch. Signs installed in May 2025: (1) Portland Community Hall sign (2-sided), (2) George Morton Park Sign, (3) at Ronald E Holman Municipal Complex, tag bars for the South Elmsley Hall, the Library branch (4) Millstream Park (2-sided), (5) Beverley Centre with 3 tag bars for the Delta Branch of the Library, the Fire Station and the Addictions & Mental Health centre (6) Historic Settlement signs: Briar Hill (near Morton), Esthertown (near Jones Falls), Halladay Quarry (near Elgin) and Fosterville (on Davis Lock Road). Replacement signs for The Bush and Freeland have been installed. [Note: The last two Historic Settlement signs to be installed include Ballentine (near Golf Club Road) and the second side on Halladay Quarry (near Elgin).] Welcome at Toledo and Rideau Ferry have been installed. The gateway sign for Morton has been delivered and is ready for installation. Request for additional signs at municipal harbours will be considered as part of the 2026 budget process.
Other				
Message From the Chair	Messages on the Economic Development Section (Grow) of the Rideau Lakes website, listed under Newsletters on the Rideau Lakes website, and shared through eNews as an Economic Development update.	Marie White /Chair	n/a	



**TOWNSHIP OF RIDEAU LAKES
Regular Council Meeting**

RESOLUTION 180-2025

Title: MHAC Rec #2025-30 - Statement to be Included on the 2026 Rideau Lakes Road Map

Date: Tuesday, August 5, 2025

Moved by Councillor Dunfield

Seconded by Councillor Bulloch

WHEREAS at the Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee (MHAC) Meeting held July 17, 2025 Recommendation #2025-30 was passed recommending to Council that the following statement be included in the 2026 Rideau Lakes Road map:

"Early History of Rideau Lakes Archeological evidence shows that Indigenous peoples have continuously lived in the Rideau lakes area for at least 9,000 years. Indigenous artifacts have been found around all of the lakes in this area."

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved, that the Council of The Corporation of the Township of Rideau Lakes hereby recommends that MHAC Rec #2025-30 be referred to the Economic Development Committee for discussion.

Carried



**TOWNSHIP OF RIDEAU LAKES
Regular Council Meeting**

RESOLUTION 181-2025
Title: MINUTES
Date: Tuesday, August 5, 2025

Moved by Councillor Pollard
Seconded by Councillor J. Banks

Be it resolved, that the Corporation of the Township of Rideau Lakes Approves and adopts the Minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held July 7, 2025.

Carried



**TOWNSHIP OF RIDEAU LAKES
Municipal Services Committee (PW)**

RECOMMENDATION 144-2025

Title: Marie White, Economic Development and Cultural Heritage
Coordinator: Rural Ontario Development (ROD) Program

Date: Monday, July 14, 2025

Moved by Councillor Bulloch

Seconded by Councillor Pollard

Be it resolved that the Municipal Services Committee recommends to Council that staff be authorized to submit an application to the Rural Ontario Development (ROD) program in an amount up to \$170,000 (total project cost over a two-year period) with at least 65% municipal funding (approximately \$55,000 per year) being included in the 2026-2027 budget(s), as presented in MSC report ADM-2025-09.

Carried

Report to Municipal Services Committee
 Meeting Date: July 14, 2025
Report Title: Rural Ontario Development (ROD Program)

Author's Name: Marie White
 Position: Economic Development and Cultural Heritage Coordinator
 Report No. ADM-2025-09



RECOMMENDATION:

Be it resolved that the Municipal Services Committee recommends to Council that staff be authorized to submit an application to the Rural Ontario Development (ROD) program in an amount up to \$170,000 (total project cost over a two-year period) with at least 65% municipal funding (approximately \$55,000 per year) being included in the 2026-2027 budget(s), as presented in MSC report ADM-2025-09.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMMENTS:

Recommendations directly relate to several areas in the Strategic Plan 2030:

Sector #1 – Economic Prosperity. Strategic Initiative #1

Sector #3 – Infrastructure. Strategic Initiative #1 and #2

Sector #10 – Heritage and Culture. Strategic Initiative #2 and #4

The Economic Development Action Plan 2023-2026 identifies Village Renewal Projects within Priority #2 - Physical Infrastructure (Active Transportation) and Priority #3 - Community Revitalization.

BACKGROUND:

The Rural Economic Development (RED) Program has been expanded to become the Rural Ontario Development (ROD) Program. Correspondence from Ontario Minister of Rural Affairs, Lisa M. Thompson announced that the (ROD) program is now open for applications. Find full program details at www.ontario.ca/RODprogram

This enhanced program is part of Ontario's Rural Economic Development Strategy. The province is investing \$20 million to support rural municipalities, not-for-profits, Indigenous communities, local service boards and rural small businesses to attract investment and create new jobs and opportunities for rural workers.

The ROD program introduces four new enhanced funding streams and expands program eligibility to include more rural communities and rural small businesses. Staff are recommending that the Township apply to Stream 3.

Stream 3:

Community Infrastructure Enhancements

Projects that update or transform community assets that have been identified as important to the community's economy. Applicants can apply for up to \$25,000 (35% cost share) for small projects or up to \$250,000 (35% cost share) for large projects.

Rehabilitation of cultural, heritage or tourism attractions

Minor Capital Costs Projects that rehabilitate an existing cultural, heritage, or tourism attraction, as identified through previously completed strategies and Projects that establish its significance for Economic Development.

Example Projects:

- rehabilitation of a historic building or structure
- rehabilitation of an established tourism asset
- rehabilitation of a recreational trail

Redevelopment of vacant and/or underutilized buildings

Minor Capital Costs Projects to redevelop vacant and/or underutilized buildings to achieve an Economic Development outcome.

Example Projects:

- expansion of an incubator or innovation hub
- development of a co-working space
- youth centre
- agri-food hubs

Streetscaping and landscaping

Minor Capital Costs Projects identified through previously completed strategies that improve the design quality of public areas.

Example Projects:

- wayfinding signage
- beautification (for example, decorative lighting, banners, murals, street furniture, public art, trees)
- wi-Fi equipment for public use

Ineligible Projects

The following Projects are ineligible:

- submissions with incomplete applications
- Projects that do not meet the outcomes of the ROD Program (as outlined in the "Program outcomes and performance measures" section below) or align with the program streams
- Projects that do not benefit Rural Ontario

- Projects receiving any amount of other provincial funding
- Projects seeking funding for academic research
- debt restructuring, fundraising, or financing (for example, re-granting ROD Funds)
- Projects that will influence or lobby any level of government
- Projects seeking funding for major capital Projects (for example, new building construction, roads, bridges, paved or concrete surfaces, water/wastewater treatment facilities, utility distribution, broadband)
- regional marketing and outreach Projects that do not have an impact across at least 2 lower-tier or least 2 communities within a single-tier Municipality, or that focus exclusively on tourism events
- Projects that host events with the intent to primarily attract tourists or general community attendance
- those primarily benefitting an individual business
- Projects that the primary purpose is to ready a property or asset for immediate or imminent sale
- Projects that the primary purpose is to support compliance efforts with current Requirements of Law

DISCUSSION:

The Municipal Services Committee may recommend to Council that an application be submitted for the Rural Ontario Development (ROD) program. The project, its budget and timeline are for discussion. Projects should be completed in 2 years.

Applications for the first intake are being accepted until September 24, 2025, at 5 p.m.

Proposed Project: Township-wide Historic Village renewal: Streetscape, Wayfinding and Landscape Project

In response to community input collected between 2012 and 2025 as reported in ECD 2025-04 and ECD 2025-06, this project will implement the Village Visions of Chaffey's Lock, Delta, Elgin, Lombardy, Newboro and Portland in partnership with Community Enhancement Committees.

Items	Description
Streetscapes	Specific to village identity, decorative benches as rest stops in key locations within villages and hamlets.

Example



*i.e. Newboro
"Heritage" Bench*

Wayfinding Signs Further to the Rideau Lakes Sign Strategy 2020, additional wayfinding signs are needed within villages.



Landscaping Enhance community spaces with decorative planters and pedestrian pathways in strategic locations within villages.



Other Elements

- **Heritage:** Highlight historic buildings identified on walking tours, historic settlements and heritage storyboards with villages.
- **Accessibility:** design for seniors, people with disabilities, strollers, clear sightlines and good lighting.
- **Connectivity:** consider connections to nearby trails, parks and waterways.

Potential Project Partners:

Partners are organizations or community groups that contribute financial or In-kind resources to the Project. (In-kind support could include a commitment of resources such as staff time, expertise, equipment, or other non-monetary support.)

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

In 2025, there is no budget impact.

Township-wide Historic Village renewal: Streetscape, Wayfinding and Landscape Project

Should the application be successful, 65% of eligible costs of up to a total project value of \$170,000 would be placed in the 2026 and/or 2027 budget. Contributions may be received from partners. Options to be discussed.

Example Budget

If the total project cost is \$170,000 over two years in 2026 and 2027 as shown below: This may enable, for example, an investment of approximately \$28,000 into each of our 6 villages over the two-year period.

2026-2027 Municipal Contributions (65%)	\$50,250 / year)
2026-2027 CEC Contribution (approximately \$1,000 each)	\$5,000 / year
2026-2027 ROD program Contributions (35%)	\$29,750 / year)
2026-2027 Annual Project Cost	\$85,000 per year
2026-2027 TOTAL Project Cost (2 years at \$85,000 per year)	\$170,000

ATTACHMENTS:

None

e-signed

July 8, 2025

Marie White

Economic Development & Cultural Heritage Coordinator

DATE

e-approved

July 9, 2025

Shellee Fournier

CAO

DATE

LMI BULLETIN

Issue #4 | July 2025

EASTERN WORKFORCE
INNOVATION BOARD



Land Acknowledgement

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Section Two	Global Efforts to Reduce Trade Barriers between Provinces
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bulletins continue to serve as a useful and interactive forum for discourse in our evolving economic times. Please send any comments to me at frank@workforcedev.ca.

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Section Two: Efforts to Reduce Provincial and Federal Trade Barriers

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employers and the Canadian economy in general. Setting aside historic political animosities which have existed between Federal and Provincial parties since Confederation, many politicians are now working actively to promote collaboration, including the reduction of Provincial trade barriers to address the new economic reality we are facing.

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3	Health occupations	219	183	153	36	66
4	Occupations in education, law and social, community and government services	209	193	209	16	0
5	Occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport	32	26	25	6	7
6	Sales and service occupations	574	608	489	(34)	85
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Source: Lightcast

EWIB Region includes Leeds & Grenville Counties, Frontenac County and Loyalist Township

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73300	Transport truck drivers	35
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Leeds Grenville Economic Development and Small Business

Quarterly Update | Business Survey | Strategic Areas of Focus

Counties Council
July 24, 2025

where **lifestyle**
grows good **business**

Leadership and Capacity Building

- Economic Development Summit
 - 2025 – Friday, November 21st
 - Bill Thake Memorial Award – Deadline September 19th
- Business Support Working Group – June 13th
 - 2025 Business Survey
 - Regional Business Support Campaign



Investment Readiness / Investment Attraction – Business and Industry

- Industrial / Business Parks
 - Augusta Industrial Park
 - Elizabethtown-Kitley on their future business lands
 - Edwardsburgh Cardinal
- eNews Real Estate Feature



Real Estate



[View listing details](#)



Township of
**Leeds and the
Thousand Islands**

Opportunity to own a prime retail location on Seeley's Bay Main Street. This staple of the community is a large retail space with an office, break room, two washrooms and plenty of room for storage and supplies.

New heating and air conditioning systems 2024. There is a drive-in workspace to the back of the building for small engine repairs or deliveries. The inventory is NOT included in the sale of this property. On just over one acre of land, you have the opportunity to further develop the property. View [Map](#) for 139 Main Street, Seeley's Bay.

Business Retention and Expansion

- Business Visitations
 - Goal is 24-36 per year
 - 2025 – 22 business visits
 - 1000 Island Miniature Golf Centre & Driving Range, Elizabethtown
 - Kitley | Stonemarx Masonry & Landscape Supplies, Elizabethtown
 - Kitley | Portland Family Restaurant and Pizzeria, Rideau Lakes | Stone Mannor Studio, Rideau Lakes | Everline Coatings, Rideau Lakes | Brown's Lawn & Garden Care, Rideau Lakes | Wellington Kids, North Grenville | Quality Inn, Prescott | Main Dock, Athens | P3 Panel Company, Rideau Lakes | Stealing the Bloom Farm, Rideau Lakes



Business Retention and Expansion

- Wholesale Food Trade Show – May 1
 - 9 vendors
 - 20+ business attendees
- Golden Moment Farm, Rideau Lakes | Spicy Riffs Hot Sauce, Front of Yonge | Bushgarden Farm, Rideau Lakes | Windmill Brewery, Edwardsburgh Cardinal | The Barking Bee Company, North Grenville | African Bronze Honey, Edwardsburgh Cardinal | Janine's Gardens, Augusta | Hall's Apple Market, Elizabethtown-Kitley | Little Rideau Farm, Rideau Lakes



Small Business



STARTER
Company
PLUS

Launch – June 10th
Summer Company Grad
August 21st
Thake Board Room

Summer
Company

Small Business



BRIDGES
to Better Business



HOLD THE DATE
October 23, 2025

**International
Women's Day**



March 5, 2026
North Grenville
Municipal Centre



Lifetime Achievement Award
Nominations Open September 22
Deadline December 5

Talent Attraction and Workforce Development

CAREER AND TRAINING EXPO

October 7, 2025



Rural Economic Development
through Immigration

www.investleedsgrenville.com/redi

- 124 enquiries
- June 3 – EOI draw – 74 invites
- June 12 program change announced
- July 2 Employer portal opened

Marketing and Communications



Your Big Idea Deserves the Right Space

New Businesses Welcome

Join many entrepreneurs who've found their place where **Lifestyle** grows good business.

www.investleedsgrenville.com
econdev@leedsgov.ca
613-342-3890



United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Economic Development and Small Business



Sarah McGuire
LaSalle Charlotte Boutique



Phil Audet
Artisan Solar Brewery



Mayana Kholer
Mallorytown Pharmacy



Natalie Corbett
Cetered Affairs



Erin Kerpen
Pickle and Myrrh



Ed Patel
Athens Physiotherapy

Leeds Grenville invites highly skilled immigrants for in-demand careers to be part of the Ontario Regional Economic Development through Immigration (OREDI) pilot programs. For more information see www.investleedsgrenville.com/OREDI





where lifestyle grows good business



Economic Development eNews | May 27, 2025

Business Profile

A Village-Sized Slice of the Good Life

ATHENS - Founded by Angie Mackie and Master Baker Gerry McLellan, **Big Waters Bakery** opened in May 2024 and offers an irresistible range of handcrafted baked goods, including sourdough breads made from Gerry's starter named **Lucille**.

A popular stop on the 1000 Islands Rideau Canal Waterways Adventure, the Athens shop makes fresh brioche, focaccia, savoury sausage rolls, and seasonal specialties like hot cross buns that are perfect alongside a meal or with Angie's delicious soups, salads, and sandwiches. They curate all ingredients as close to home as possible. "We offer the best of what I've learned to create," says Gerry.

As a baker in Toronto, Gerry spent twenty years gaining experience in British, Italian, and French-style patisserie. "Each one has different elements, but all require rigorous traditional training, and the lifestyle is demanding," he says.

Originally from the Ottawa area, Angie and Torontonian Gerry often visit the Chatham Lake from the city. They brought baked goods to share with friends and family and "became endeared to the recipients," Angie recalls. "People knew us as the ones with the great baking," she adds.

The couple met in Toronto, where Angie worked in customer service at the same place where Gerry baked. She later transitioned into real estate sales, an experience that sharpened her eye for promising investment properties. After considering multiple locations for the bakery, they chose Athens as the place to bring their vision to life.

"The community welcomed us with open arms," Angie says. "We hit the ground running," baking fresh breads and desserts before expanding into lunch offerings. Big Waters catering service prepares lunches for Meadowview School's program, feeding around 100 people each week.

Their first step into community support began with a



Grow your Business Choose your Lifestyle


Find Out More

4,149 Subscribers
46% Open Rate

Business Directory

directory.leadsgrenville.com

- TOTAL – 4563 (+10)**
- Athens – 101
 - Augusta – 184
 - Brockville – 1156
 - Edwardsburgh Cardinal – 198
 - Elizabethtown-Kitley - 296
 - Front of Yonge – 97
 - Gananoque – 317
 - Leeds and the Thousand Islands – 370
 - Merrickville-Wolford – 232
 - North Grenville – 727
 - Prescott – 258
 - Rideau Lakes – 514
 - Westport – 113
- (as of June 30, 2025)




1000 Islands Septic & Construction

1000 Islands Septic & Construction

403 Skydeck Lane
Lansdowne, Ontario K0E 1L0
[Visit Website](#)


[View Details](#)



1000 Islands Tower

716 Highway 137 Highway
Lansdowne, Ontario K0E 1L0
[Visit Website](#)

[View Details](#)




Yoga 1000 Islands

1000 Islands Yoga

120 Pine Street
Gananoque, Ontario K7G 1C7
[Visit Website](#)

[View Details](#)




Lansdowne Tel
Serving Lansdowne and the surrounding area since 1907

1000island.net / Lansdowne Tel

42 King Street
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A BETTER VIEW TREE SERVICE

A Better View Tree Services

155 Lyndhurst Road
Seeley's Bay, Ontario K0H 2N0
[Visit Website](#)

[View Details](#)



AJ's WATER TREATMENT

A.J.'s Water Treatment

110 Quabbin Road
Mallorytown, Ontario K0E 1R0
[Visit Website](#)

[View Details](#)

Diversified Economy - Tourism Implementation



**Adventures Launch
April 23rd**

Like * Follow * Share

Tourism Destination Strategy – Social Media

	Facebook						Instagram					
	2024					2025	2024					2025
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Followers	507	1,475	1,534	2,136	2,393	2,875	61	885	877	1,275	1,256	1,275
Number of posts	101	136	169	115	108	122	20	13	25	44	55	69
Reach	59,363	70,361	81,464	433,229	260,191	294,929	246	686	1,032	75,736	10,361	13,101
Organic	59,363	70,361	64,338	130,793	76,953	36,421	246	686	863	3,208	2,313	3,580
Paid	--	--	17,018	317,427	197,446	166,162	--	--	173	73,499	8,217	9,547
Views	--	--	42,625	1,175,286	548,722	599,598	--	--	2,051	148,793	25,375	28,551
Organic	--	--	47%	22%	23%	24%	--	--	89%	31%	39%	44%
Paid	--	--	53%	78%	77%	76%	--	--	11%	69%	61%	56%
Content Interactions	1,656	1,732	2,155	11,429	10,178	14,330	0	0	56	4,851	2,349	1,622
Engagement rate	2.79%	2.46%	2.65%	2.64%	3.91%	4.86%	0%	0%	5.43%	6.41%	22.67%	12.38%

Diversified Economy - Tourism Implementation



Hon. Stan Cho Minister of Tourism, Culture and Gaming
July 4th



Quarterly Update Questions

Next Business Survey & Economic Strategy Sessions

where **lifestyle**
grows good **business**

Economic Status

- Bank of Canada holding at 2.75%, next announcement July 30
- Inflation high due to import costs and tariffs
- 2025 growth forecast – 1.5% Canada | .8% Ontario
- Travel Trends
 - May 2019 - 2.3M Canadian resident return trip from US by auto
 - May 2025 - 1.3M (38% decline in the last 5 months)
 - May 2019 - 1.2M American visits to Canada
 - May 2025 - 1.04M (8.4% decline)

Survey Period - Tariffs

- March 4 - U.S. tariffs ranging from 10-25% on Canada products
- Canadian 25% retaliatory tariffs on some U.S. products
- Some CUSMA - compliant products were exempt
- June 3 - U.S. announced a 50% tariff on steel and aluminum effective June 4
- Constant changes in tariff messaging occurred through the survey period



2025 Survey Results

- 360 responses / 285 for profit businesses

Business Size

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A – Self-employed / Solopreneur / No employees	29.92%	76
B – Small Business – 1-49 full-time equivalent employees	62.20%	158
C – Medium / Large Business – 50 and above full-time equivalent employees	7.87%	20
TOTAL		254

2025 Survey Results

Businesses by Municipality

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Township of Athens	2.83%	8
Township of Augusta	3.89%	11
City of Brockville	14.49%	41
Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal	6.71%	19
Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley	7.42%	21
Township of Front of Yonge	2.12%	6
Town of Gananoque	2.83%	8
Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands	11.31%	32
Village of Merrickville-Wolford	9.19%	26
Municipality of North Grenville	17.67%	50
Town of Prescott	5.65%	16
Township of Rideau Lakes	10.95%	31
Village of Westport	4.95%	14
TOTAL		283

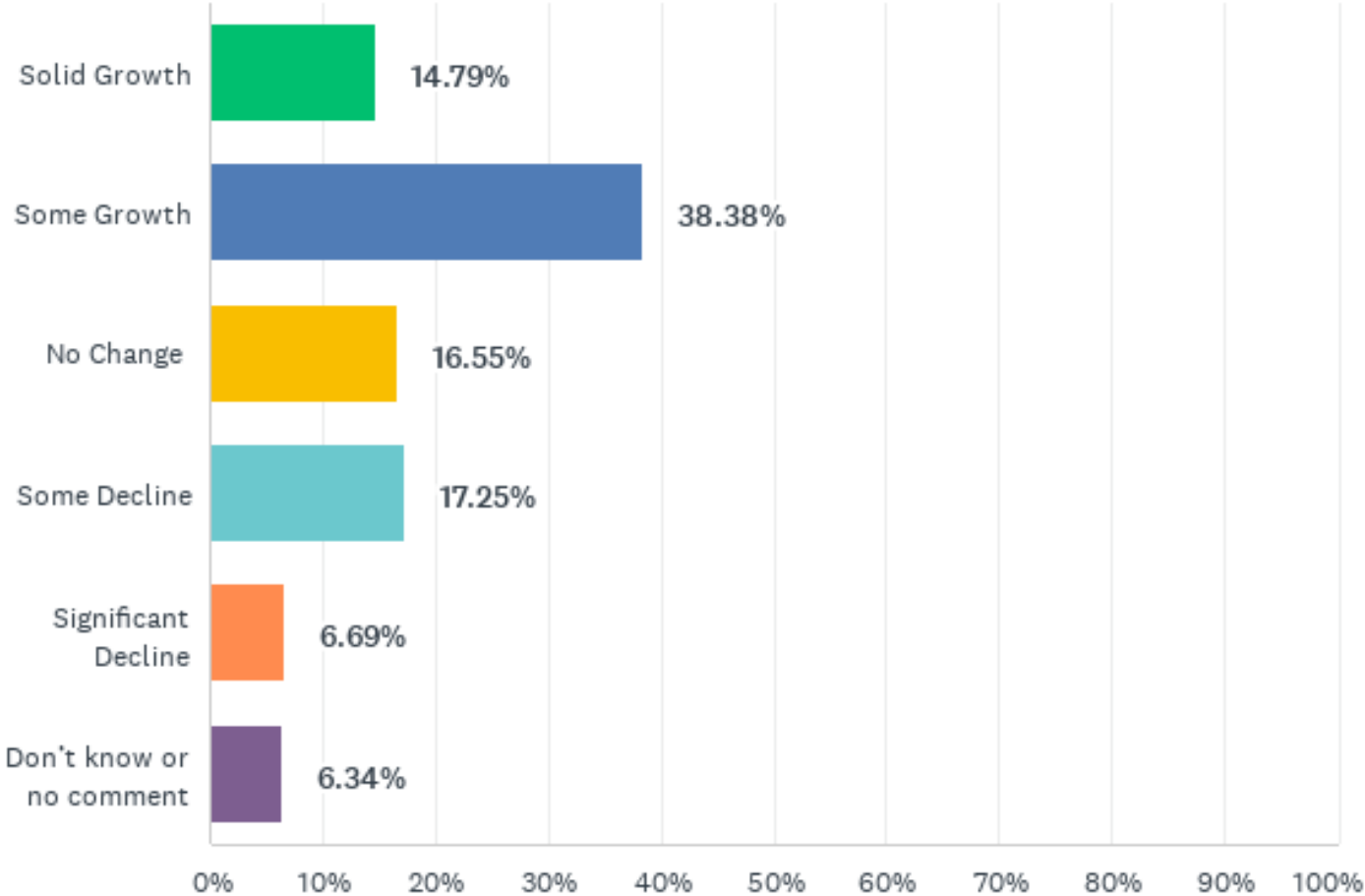
2025 Survey Results

Businesses by Sector

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accommodation	6.36%	18
Administration and Support – Business Services	3.18%	9
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	6.36%	18
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	7.77%	22
Construction	8.48%	24
Educational Services	1.06%	3
Finance and Insurance	2.47%	7
Food Services	7.77%	22
Healthcare and Social Assistance	3.53%	10
Information and cultural industries	0.71%	2
Manufacturing and Production	10.25%	29
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.00%	0
Personal Services	5.65%	16
Professional, scientific and technical services	9.54%	27
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.77%	5
Retail Trade	15.55%	44
Repair and Maintenance	3.18%	9
Tourism Attraction	3.89%	11
Transportation and Warehousing	2.12%	6
Utilities – electric power, natural gas, water-sewage	0.00%	0
Wholesale trade	0.35%	1
TOTAL		283

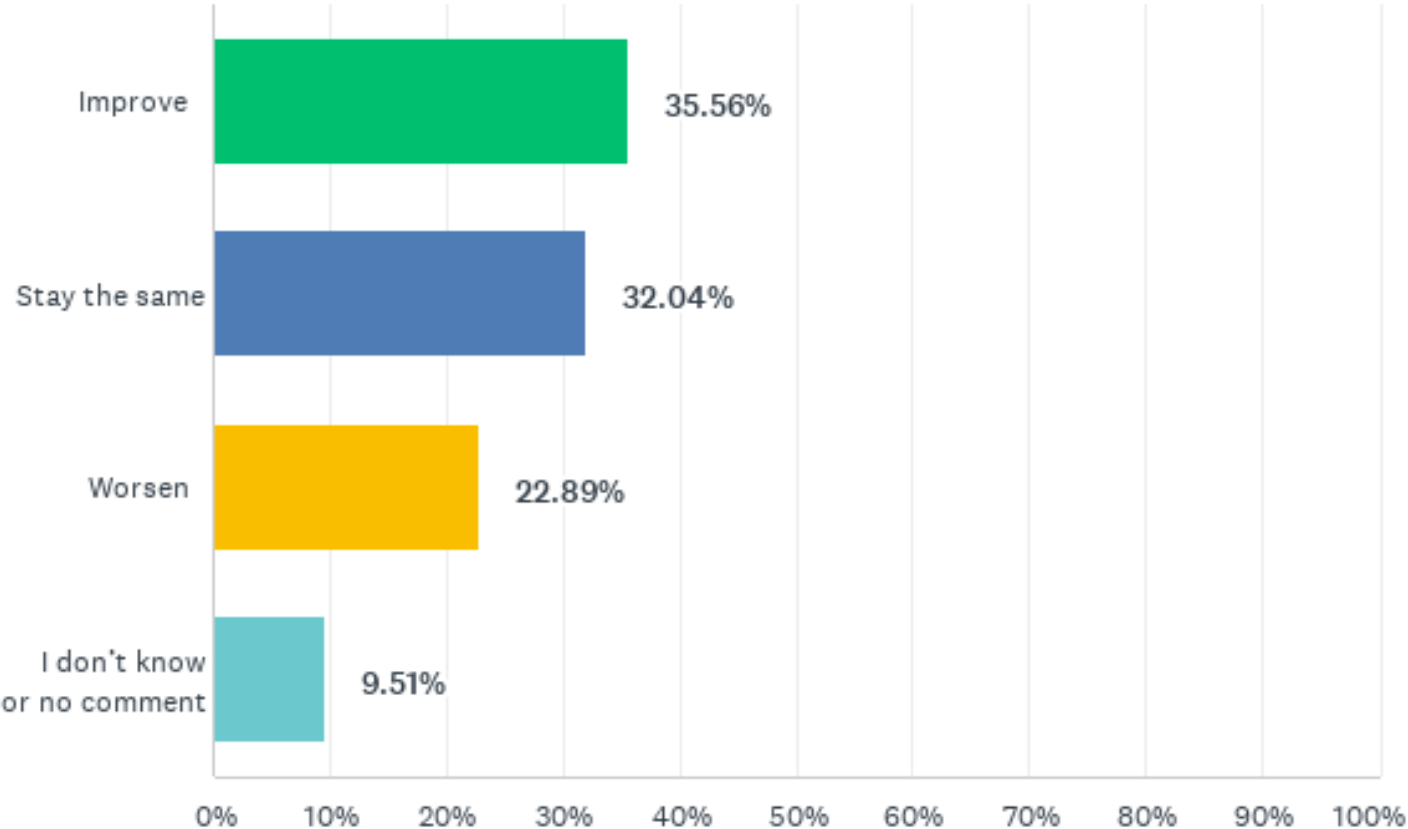
2025 Survey Results

Net Income last fiscal year



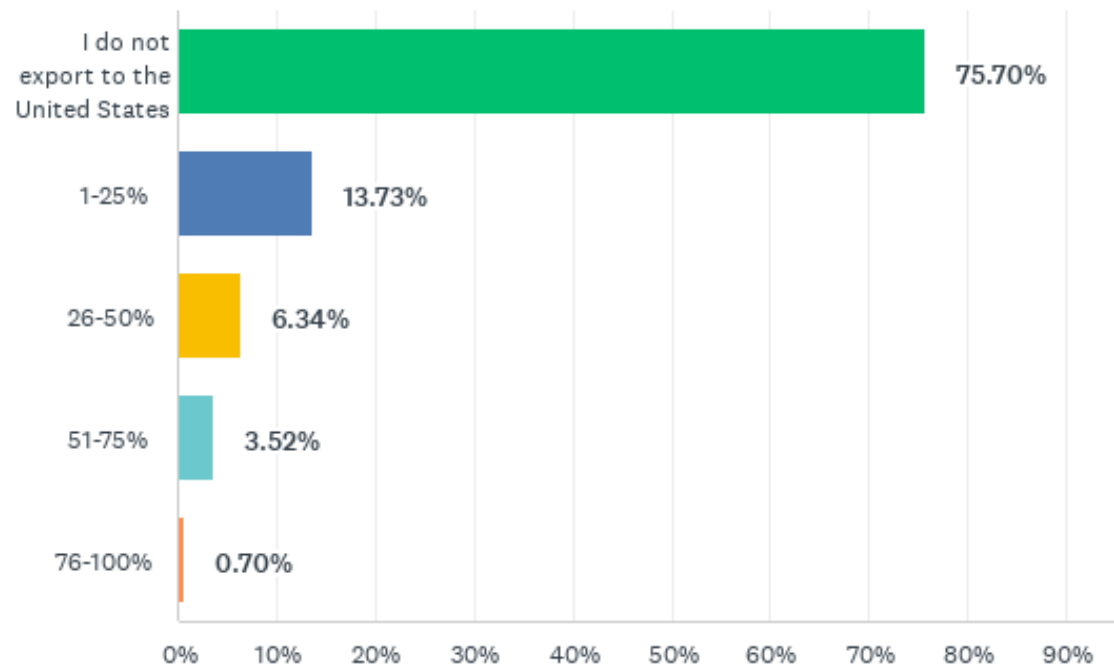
2025 Survey Results

Over the next year, do you expect the market for your business sector to:

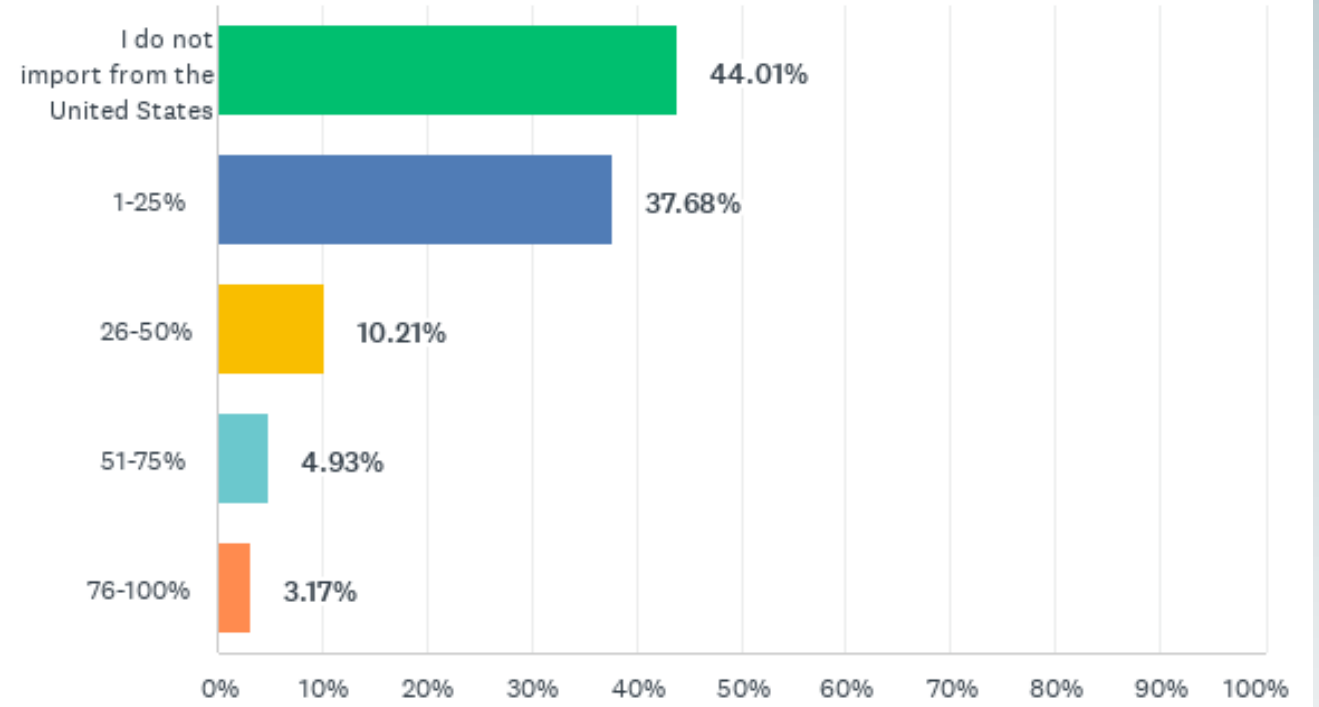


2025 Survey Results

% of business exports to U.S



% of business relies on imports to U.S.



2025 Survey Results

Impact of 25% tariff impact on business operations

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not applicable / I do not export	30.99%	88
No impact	11.97%	34
Minor impact	33.10%	94
Moderate impact	16.55%	47
Significant impact	6.34%	18
Business is now threatened impact	1.06%	3
TOTAL		284

2025 Survey Results

Counties Economic Development focus for next 5 years

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Small business retention and growth	71.26%	181
Small business attraction	44.09%	112
Talent Attraction and Workforce Development	33.07%	84
Marketing and Communications	32.68%	83
Engagement for Infrastructure Development	31.89%	81
Large business retention and growth	21.65%	55
Large business attraction	18.90%	48

2025 Survey Results

Medium / Large Businesses - Counties Economic Development focus for next 5 years

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Talent Attraction and Workforce Development	75%	15
Large business retention and growth	60%	12
Small business retention and growth	40%	8
Small business attraction	30%	6
Engagement for Infrastructure Development	30%	6
Large business attraction	20%	4
Marketing and Communications	5.%	1

Strategic Areas of Focus | 2020 -2025



- Leadership and Capacity Building
- Investment Readiness / Investment Attraction
- Business Retention and Expansion
- Talent Attraction and Workforce Development
- Marketing and Communications
- Diversified Economy

Economic Development Strategy Planning

In-Person Sessions:

Session 1

When: Monday, June 23

Time: 9:30-11 a.m.

Where: The Drummond Building, 22
Ryan Street, Spencerville

in partnership with:



Community Futures
Grenville

[Register](#)

Session 2

When: Monday, June 23

Time: 2-3:30 p.m.

Where: South Elmsley Municipal
Complex, 441 Highway 15

in partnership with:



Valley Heartland
CFDC

[Register](#)

Session 3

When: Wednesday, June 25

Time: 10:30-12 p.m.

Where: Athens Free Methodist
Church, 58 Elgin Street

in partnership with:



1000 Islands CDC
Supporting Business Success

[Register](#)

Session 4: Virtual Zoom

Wednesday, June 25, 7 p.m.

[Register](#)

Economic Development Strategy Planning

Key Initiatives across all consultations



1. Sector-Specific B2B Collaboration and Networking

Develop targeted business-to-business (B2B) events and mechanisms that go beyond traditional networking, fostering collaboration, supply chain integration, and innovation within and across key sectors. This will help local businesses build strategic partnerships and fill supply chain gaps.

2. Comprehensive Small Business Support System

Establish a centralized help line and resource hub to ensure small businesses are aware of, and can easily access, available supports such as grants, mentoring, training, and succession planning. This should include outreach and regular updates to keep businesses informed.

3. Regional One-Stop Business Portal

Create a digital portal serving as a single access point for regional business needs: permits, funding opportunities, commercial real estate listings, and guidance for common business tasks. This streamlines processes, reduces barriers, and encourages investment.

Economic Development Strategy Planning

4. Workforce and Youth Development Strategy

Launch targeted programs to address youth unemployment and future workforce needs. This includes enhanced co-op programs, youth entrepreneurship initiatives, and partnerships with educational institutions to align skills development with regional economic priorities.

5. Regional Tourism Collaboration and Infrastructure

Continue and expand collaborative tourism initiatives across municipalities, focusing on joint marketing, product development, regenerative tourism, and the creation of shared experiences. Invest in regional wayfinding signage and digital tourism tools to enhance visitor experience and drive economic impact.

6. Business Mentoring and Succession Planning Network

Build a robust mentoring network in partnership with community organizations to support entrepreneurs and small businesses post-startup, facilitate succession planning, and connect retiring business owners with prospective buyers.

7. Grant Navigation and Funding Support

Offer hands-on support to help businesses identify, apply for, and manage grants and funding opportunities, reducing administrative burdens and increasing access to capital for growth and innovation.

Economic Development Strategy Planning

8. Sector Development and Innovation Focus

Identify and prioritize sectors for regional development (e.g., health innovation, sustainable manufacturing, green tech, agriculture). Use a clustered approach to leverage regional strengths and drive both short- and long-term growth, with an emphasis on innovation and sustainability.

9. Infrastructure and Digital Connectivity Enhancement

Advocate for and invest in essential infrastructure, including affordable housing, public transport, recreational facilities, and high-speed internet, to support business growth, workforce retention, and rural vitality.

10. Inclusive Economic Participation and Settlement Support

Develop targeted strategies to attract and retain newcomers, women, Indigenous peoples, and underrepresented groups. This includes settlement support, tailored entrepreneurship programs, and initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion in the regional economy.

Labour Force – Q1 2025 Estimate – Jobs by Industry

Leeds & Grenville (13 municipalities)	Total # Jobs (Self-Employed + Employees)
Total	46,347
Unclassified	702
Sub-total, classified	45,645
11 - Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1,165
21 - Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0
22 - Utilities	200
23 - Construction	3,903
31-33 - Manufacturing	4,642
44-45 - Retail trade	5,679
48-49 - Transportation and warehousing	2,032
41 - Wholesale trade	1,503
51 - Information and cultural industries	457
52 - Finance and insurance	947
53 - Real estate and rental and leasing	721
54 - Professional, scientific and technical services	2,614
55 - Management of companies and enterprises	89
56 - Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	2,024
61 - Educational services	2,821
62 - Health care and social assistance	6,318
71 - Arts, entertainment and recreation	1,224
72 - Accommodation and food services	3,663
81 - Other services (except public administration)	1,513
91 - Public administration	4,130

Selected 10 Municipalities in Leeds & Grenville	Total # Jobs (Self-Employed + Employees)
Total	25,890
Unclassified	377
Sub-total, classified	25,513
11 - Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1,051
21 - Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0
22 - Utilities	86
23 - Construction	2,773
31-33 - Manufacturing	1,968
44-45 - Retail trade	2,646
48-49 - Transportation and warehousing	965
41 - Wholesale trade	713
51 - Information and cultural industries	350
52 - Finance and insurance	569
53 - Real estate and rental and leasing	391
54 - Professional, scientific and technical services	1,749
55 - Management of companies and enterprises	67
56 - Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	1,293
61 - Educational services	1,651
62 - Health care and social assistance	2,719
71 - Arts, entertainment and recreation	959
72 - Accommodation and food services	1,753
81 - Other services (except public administration)	987
91 - Public administration	2,823

Strategic Areas of Focus

2020-2025

- Leadership and Capacity Building
- Investment Readiness / Investment Attraction
- Business Retention and Expansion
- Talent Attraction and Workforce Development
- Marketing and Communications
- Diversified Economy

Comments / Thoughts / Considerations

for

2026-2028

Economic Development Strategic Areas of Focus

Items Ahead

3rd Quarter

- Strategic Areas of Focus & Actions Plan – July / August, present in September
- Ontario Funders Forum – July 15
- Bell Canada TV1 / Viva Productions – television shoot – 5 episodes
- Summer Company Graduation – August / Starter Company new session - September
- REDI virtual workshop / promotions / working group
- Digital – CRM / Invest & Discover Websites / Zoom Prospector / Invest ON
- BSWG – Business Services Regional Promotional Campaign
- Event Planning – Bridges to Better Business, Economic Development Summit
- OBJ Career & Training Expo – October 7

Leeds Grenville Economic Development and Small Business

Thank you

where **lifestyle**
grows good **business**

EORN Cell Gap Project Monthly Update

July 2025

Regional view

	Planned	Completed	New this month
Upgrades to existing towers	311	311	n/a
New towers in service	257	144	2
New co-locations	75	66	0
Land use authority	257	251	0
Please note that this information is collected monthly and is subject to change as the project moves forward.			

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

	Planned	Completed	New this month
Upgrades to existing towers	24	24	n/a
New towers in service	18	15	0
New co-locations	6	6	n/a
Land use authority	18	18	n/a
Please note that this information is collected monthly and is subject to change as the project moves forward.			

Note: data is updated by Rogers on the 15th of each month. Data provided for this update was received on July 15, 2025.

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Uplifts Build Schedule

Tower identifier	Site name	Municipality	In-service plan
C3644	Athens	Athens	In-service
C4081	Charleston Lake	Athens	In-service
C2247	Maitland	Augusta	In-service
C3399	North Augusta	Augusta	In-service
C3142	Cardinal	Edwardsburgh-Cardinal	In-service
C0319	Spencerville	Edwardsburgh-Cardinal	In-service
C6518	Hwy 401 and Hwy 16	Edwardsburgh-Cardinal	In-service
C1589	Prescott	Edwardsburgh-Cardinal	In-service
C0321	Brockville	Elizabethtown-Kitley	In-service
C2447	Frankville	Elizabethtown-Kitley	In-service
C6602	Hwy 401 and Halleck's Road	Elizabethtown-Kitley	In-service
C2208	Hwy 401 and Butternut Bay	Front of Yonge	In-service
C6516	Hwy 401 and Jenkins Road	Front of Yonge	In-service
C7753	Thousands Island Casino	Gananoque	In-service

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Uplifts Build Schedule

Tower identifier	Site name	Municipality	In-service plan
C0082	Gananoque	Gananoque	In-service
C0318	Mallorytown	Leeds and the Thousand Islands	In-service
C2210	Morton	Leeds and the Thousand Islands	In-service
C3398	Hwy 401 at Rockport	Leeds and the Thousand Islands	In-service
C1196	1000 Islands	Leeds and the Thousand Islands	In-service
C2517	Merrickville	Merrickville-Wolford	In-service
C1942	Hwy 416 at Kemptville	Municipality of North Grenville	In-service
C6510	Hwy 416 and Beach Road	Municipality of North Grenville	In-service
C2176	Hwy 416 and County Road 20	Municipality of North Grenville	In-service
C2327	Otter Lake	Rideau Lakes	In-service
C0420	Westport	Rideau Lakes	In-service

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Co-location Build Schedule

Tower identifier	Site name	Municipality	In-service plan
C8685	Slab Street and County Road 18	Augusta	In-service
C8484	Hwy 2 and Hwy 401	Front of Yonge	In-service
C8540	Thousand Islands Bridge and Benson Park Road	Leeds and the Thousand Islands	In-service
C8551	Holton Road and Black Church Road	Leeds and the Thousand Islands	In-service
C6371	Todd School Road and Barnard Road	North Grenville	In-service
C8261	Hwy 15 and Hwy 42	Rideau Lakes	In-service

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville New Tower Build Schedule

Tower identifier	Site name	Municipality	In-service plan
C8535	Glenmore Road and Lord Mills Road	Augusta	In-service
C8717	Kyle Road and Branch Road	Augusta	In-service
C8684	Cooper Road and Limerick Road	Augusta	2025
C6514	Hwy 416 and Smith Road	Edwardsburgh-Cardinal	In-service
C8488	Debruge Road at Brockville	Elizabethtown-Kitley	In-service
C8682	Toledo	Elizabethtown-Kitley	In-service
C8266	Hwy 42 and Hwy29	Elizabethtown-Kitley	In-service
C8323	County Road 7 and Atkins Lake Road	Elizabethtown-Kitley	In-service
C7562	Taylor South	Leeds and the Thousand Islands	2025
C8260	Hwy 15 and Hwy 32	Leeds and the Thousand Islands	2025
C8680	County Road 3 at Outlet	Leeds and the Thousand Islands	In-service

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville New Tower Build Schedule

Tower identifier	Site name	Municipality	In-service plan
C8718	Ballycanoe Road and Escott Yonge Townline Road	Leeds and the Thousands Islands	In-service
C8683	Wolford Centre Road and County Road 15	Merrickville-Wolford	In-service
C8681	Daytown Road and Chantry Road	Rideau Lakes	In-service
C8692	Jones Falls Road and Gamble Sly Road	Rideau Lakes	In-service
C8262	Portland	Rideau Lakes	In-service
C8690	Grady Road East at Westport	Rideau Lakes	In-service
C8128	Rideau Ferry Road and Pegg Road	Rideau Lakes	In-service

Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

2025 Business Survey Report

July 3, 2025



Survey Timeframe: April 29 – June 4, 2025

Communities

Athens | Augusta | Brockville | Edwardsburgh Cardinal | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Front of Yonge
Gananoque | Leeds and the Thousand Islands | Merrickville-Wolford | North Grenville | Prescott
Rideau Lakes | Westport

Prepared by:

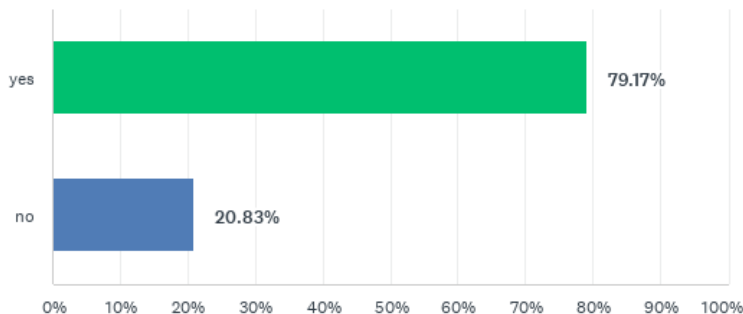
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Economic Development Office
32 Wall Street, Suite 300, Brockville, ON
econdev@uclg.on.ca

invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans

Is your organization a for-profit business registered to carry out business in Ontario? (required)

Answered: 360

Skipped: 0

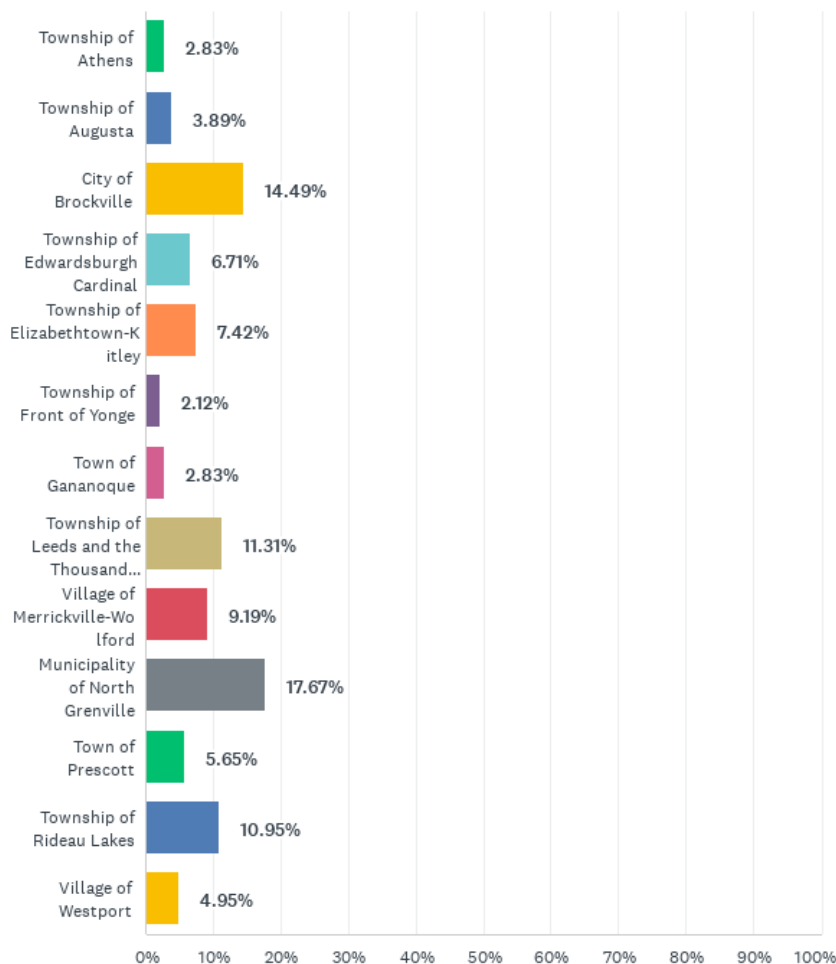


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
yes	79.17%	285
no	20.83%	75
TOTAL		360

#G1. Where is your business located? (if servicing multiple communities, please identify location of your main office)

Answered: 283

Skipped: 2

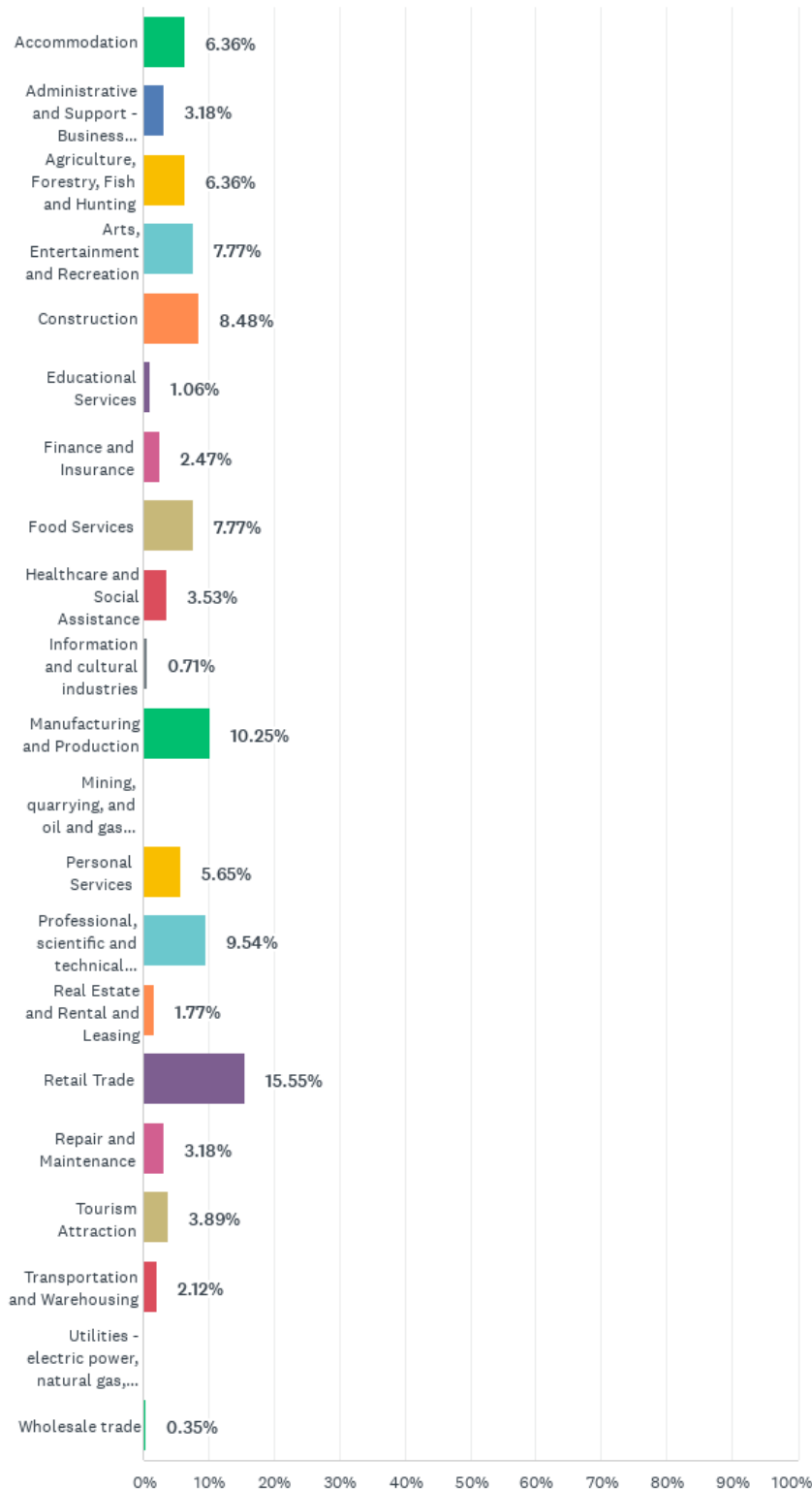


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Township of Athens	2.83%	8
Township of Augusta	3.89%	11
City of Brockville	14.49%	41
Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal	6.71%	19
Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley	7.42%	21
Township of Front of Yonge	2.12%	6
Town of Gananoque	2.83%	8
Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands	11.31%	32
Village of Merrickville-Wolford	9.19%	26
Municipality of North Grenville	17.67%	50
Town of Prescott	5.65%	16
Township of Rideau Lakes	10.95%	31
Village of Westport	4.95%	14
TOTAL		283

#G2. What sector is your business primarily operating in?

Answered: 283

Skipped: 2

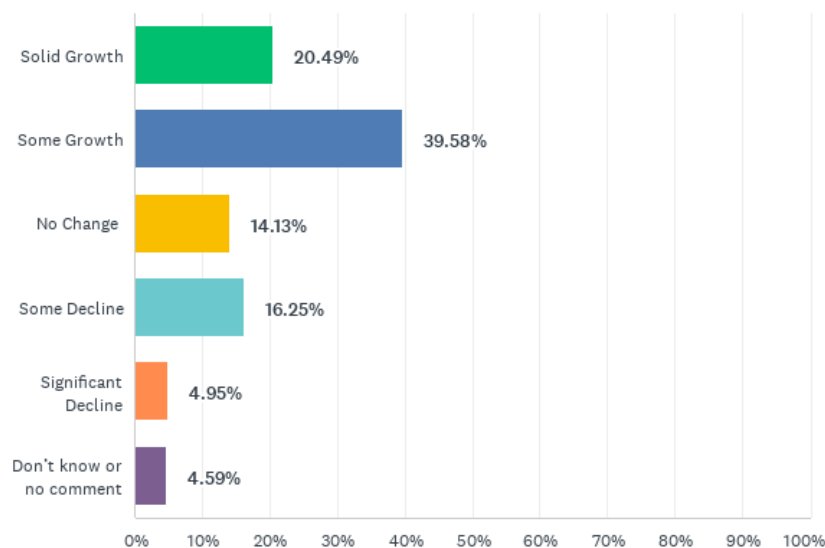


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accommodation	6.36%	18
Administration and Support – Business Services	3.18%	9
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	6.36%	18
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	7.77%	22
Construction	8.48%	24
Educational Services	1.06%	3
Finance and Insurance	2.47%	7
Food Services	7.77%	22
Healthcare and Social Assistance	3.53%	10
Information and cultural industries	0.71%	2
Manufacturing and Production	10.25%	29
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.00%	0
Personal Services	5.65%	16
Professional, scientific and technical services	9.54%	27
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1.77%	5
Retail Trade	15.55%	44
Repair and Maintenance	3.18%	9
Tourism Attraction	3.89%	11
Transportation and Warehousing	2.12%	6
Utilities – electric power, natural gas, water-sewage	0.00%	0
Wholesale trade	0.35%	1
TOTAL		283

#G3. In your last fiscal year, how did your sales / revenues perform?

Answered: 283

Skipped: 2

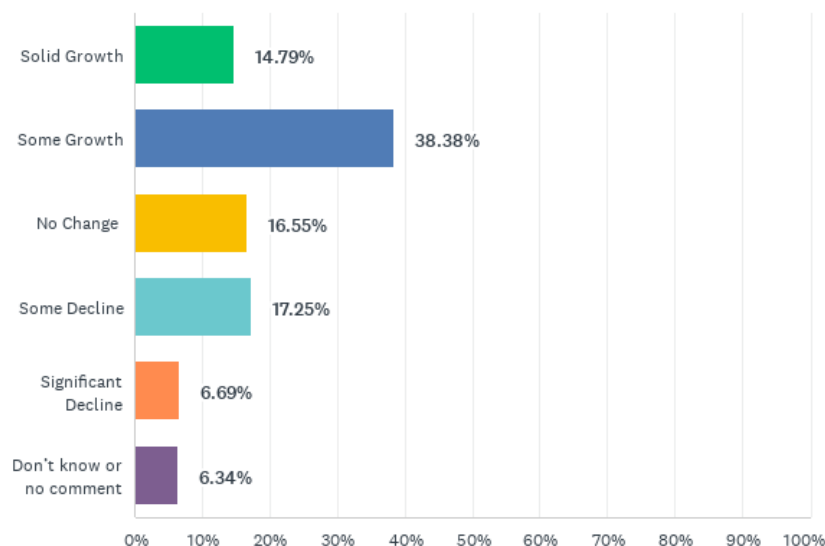


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Solid Growth	20.49%	58
Some Growth	39.58%	112
No Change	14.13%	40
Some Decline	16.25%	46
Significant Decline	4.95%	14
Don't know or no comment	4.59%	13
TOTAL		283

#G4. How did your net income in the last fiscal year compare to the previous year?

Answered: 284

Skipped: 1

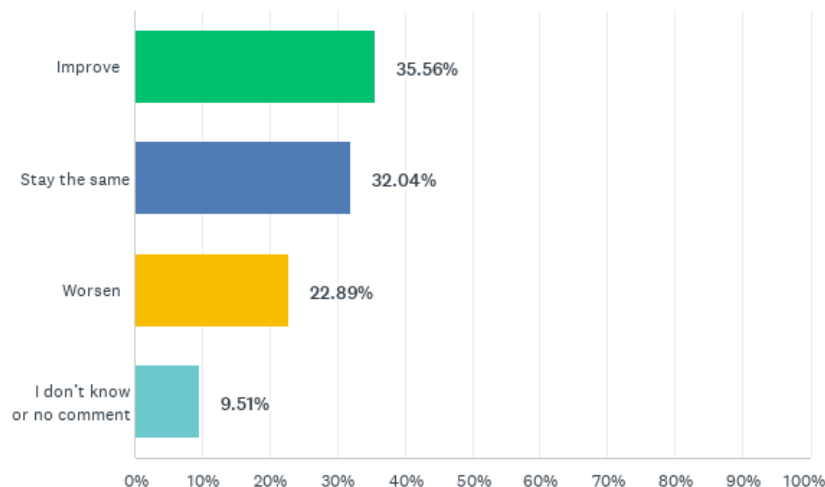


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Solid Growth	14.79%	42
Some Growth	38.38%	109
No Change	16.55%	47
Some Decline	17.25%	49
Significant Decline	6.69%	19
Don't know or no comment	6.34%	18
TOTAL		284

#G5. Over the next year, do you expect the market for your business sector to:

Answered: 284

Skipped: 1

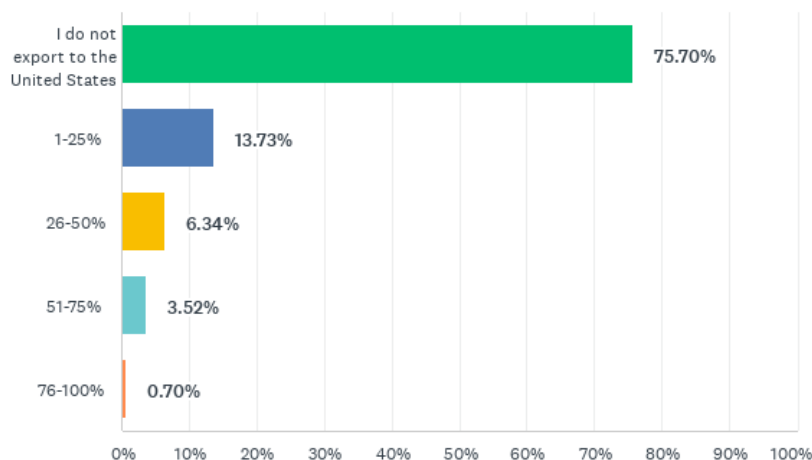


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Improve	35.56%	101
Stay the same	32.04%	91
Worsen	22.89%	65
I don't know or no comment	9.51%	27
TOTAL		284

#G6. What percentage of your business's exports are directed to the United States?

Answered: 284

Skipped: 1

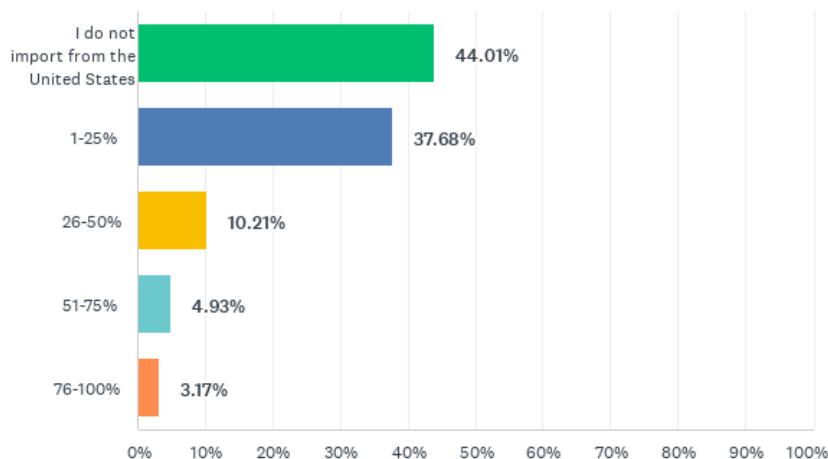


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I do not export to the United States	75.70%	215
1-25%	13.73%	39
26-50%	6.34%	18
51-75%	3.52%	10
76-100%	0.70%	2
TOTAL		284

#G7. What percentage of your business relies on imports from the United States?

Answered: 284

Skipped: 1

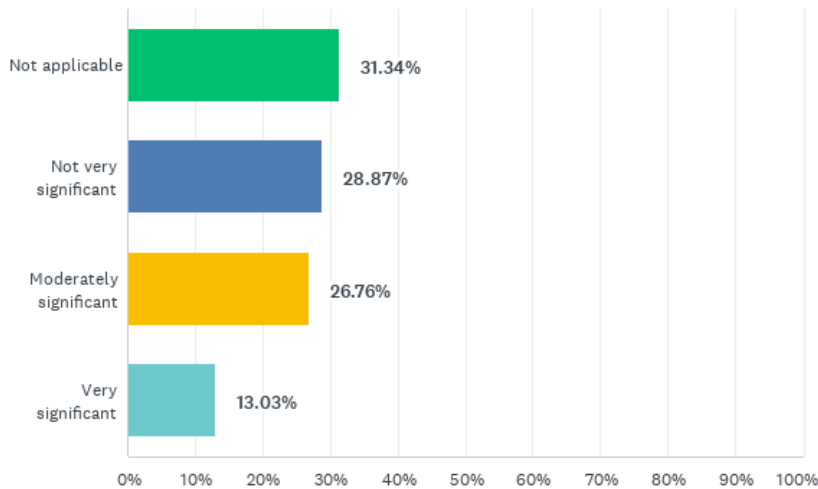


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I do not import from the United States	44.01%	125
1-25%	37.68%	107
26-50%	10.21%	29
51-75%	4.93%	14
76-100%	3.17%	9
TOTAL		284

#G8. How significant is the U.S. market to your business's overall revenue?

Answered: 284

Skipped: 1

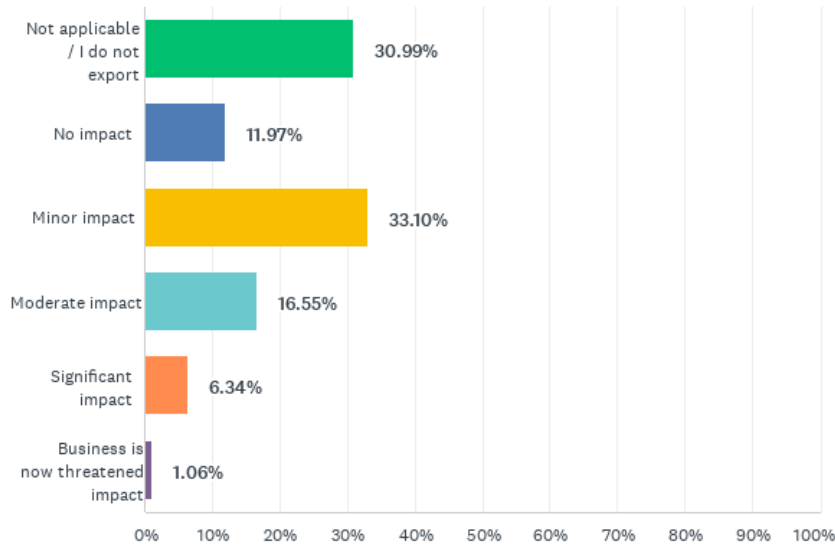


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not applicable	31.34%	89
Not very significant	28.87%	82
Moderately significant	26.76%	76
Very significant	13.03%	37
TOTAL		284

#G9. Has the 25% tariff on Canadian goods impacted your business operations?

Answered: 284

Skipped: 1

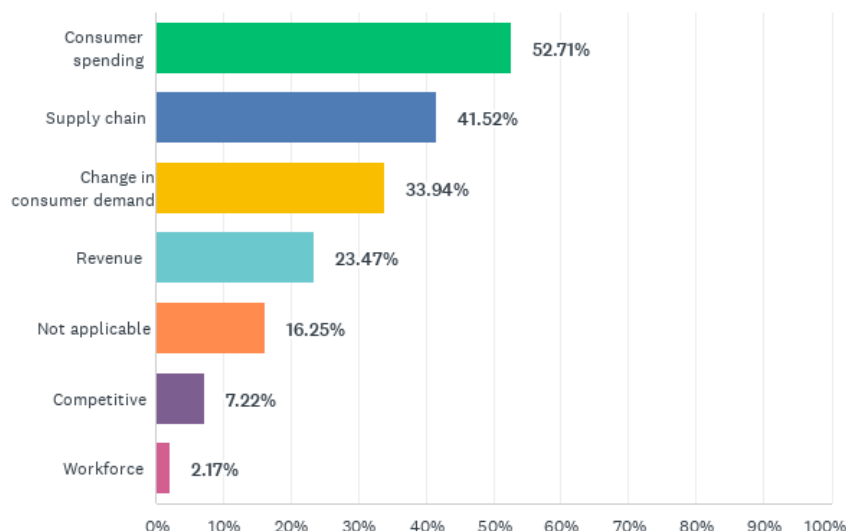


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not applicable / I do not export	30.99%	88
No impact	11.97%	34
Minor impact	33.10%	94
Moderate impact	16.55%	47
Significant impact	6.34%	18
Business is now threatened impact	1.06%	3
TOTAL		284

#G10. What specific areas of your business are or will be most affected by the economic trade war? Choose all that apply.

Answered: 277

Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Consumer spending	52.71%	146
Supply chain	41.52%	115
Change in consumer demand	33.94%	94
Revenue	23.47%	65
Not applicable	16.25%	45
Competitive	7.22%	20
Workforce	2.17%	6

Increased cost of doing business

- Food costs
- Cost of goods
- Retail price
- Cost of supplies increasing
- Equipment/parts pharmaceuticals, etc.
- Business might want to cut costs, and try to do things themselves to reduce costs
- Price of goods went up and less availability of US goods from suppliers
- We may experience an increase in cost of supplies we order in order to run our business
- We travel to the US from Feb–May approximately 4x for business and with the declining value of our dollar the expenses are overwhelming and swallowed all revenue this year

Reduced consumer spending

- Clients are watching their disposable cash more closely
- Fear in the marketplace for buying a new home. Panic. Confusion.
- Considering this will likely lead to our already inbound recession, consumers will be less likely to spend on non-essentials
- Change in consumer spending due to uncertainty

Tourism and cross-border travel impacts

- Tourism
- US tourism traffic
- Tourism decline
- Visitors to Gananoque from the U.S. may change
- Probably not going to be getting American visitors
- Cross Border Tourism Decline Expected
- Unsure what the real impact will be with tourism
- Canadians have drastically reduced travel to the USA, which has resulted in sales declines of 30–40%.

Business-to-business impacts

- I am a newspaper, so my clients are impacted by the trade war
- I assist businesses to ship commercial goods into the United States as the majority of my business. The tariffs will affect my clients, and they will possibly ship less into the U.S.

Other

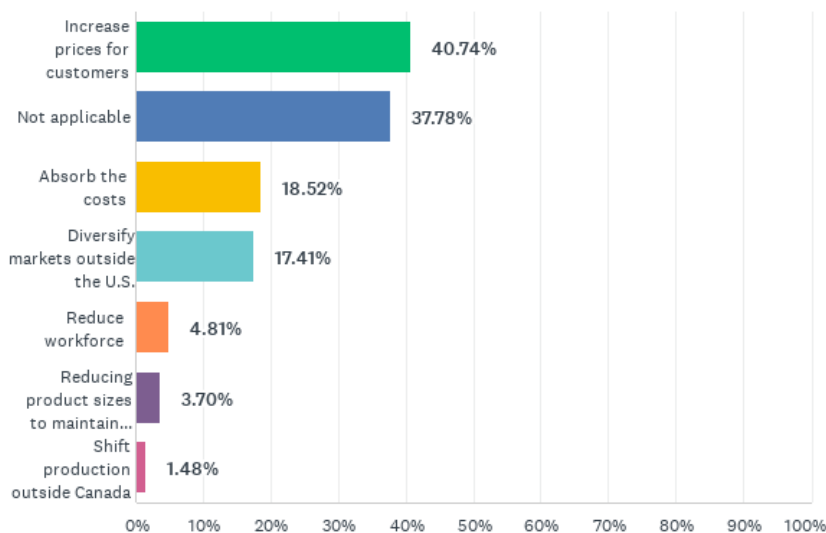
- Effects will be mild only
- Fees, Permits, Taxes
- I've just registered my business within the last month
- Stress impacting individual and community levels; heightened need for mental health support

#G11. How is or will your business be responding to the tariffs?

Choose all that apply.

Answered: 270

Skipped: 15



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Increase prices for customers	40.74%	110
Not applicable	37.78%	102
Absorb the costs	18.52%	50
Diversify markets outside the U.S.	17.41%	47
Reduce workforce	4.81%	13
Reducing product sizes to maintain price for customers	3.70%	10
Shift production outside Canada	1.48%	4

Raising Prices or Adjusting Pricing Strategy

- Large increase in cost of materials will have to raise prices
- 25–50% price increase for American clients
- Some items, pricing have risen. Others we've eaten some of the tariffs. Other items our wholesalers have eaten some. No real consistent answer to this

Avoiding or Replacing U.S. Products

- Avoiding U.S. imports for the time being
- Purchase raw materials from Canada to avoid U.S. tariffs
- Eliminating all U.S. products, replacing with Canadian products
- Stopped purchasing U.S. products when possible, increasing prices on them when a Canadian alternative is not available

Exploring New Markets or Revenue Streams

- Look for other markets
- Diversification foremost
- Focus on Canadian tourism, not increasing prices
- My business will involve marketing for local and regional authors. Revenue stream to be Kobo Affiliate and YouTube within 5 years

Improving Efficiency or Operational Changes

- Become more efficient to minimize the impact
- Seeking alternative supply channel
- Working with clients to help better promote their business with affordable pricing

Limited Flexibility or Severe Consequences

- Potentially shut down
- If sales don't materialize, I may have to reduce workforce.
- We are 100% dependent on cross border traffic by federal regulation. We have no ability to pivot to new markets.

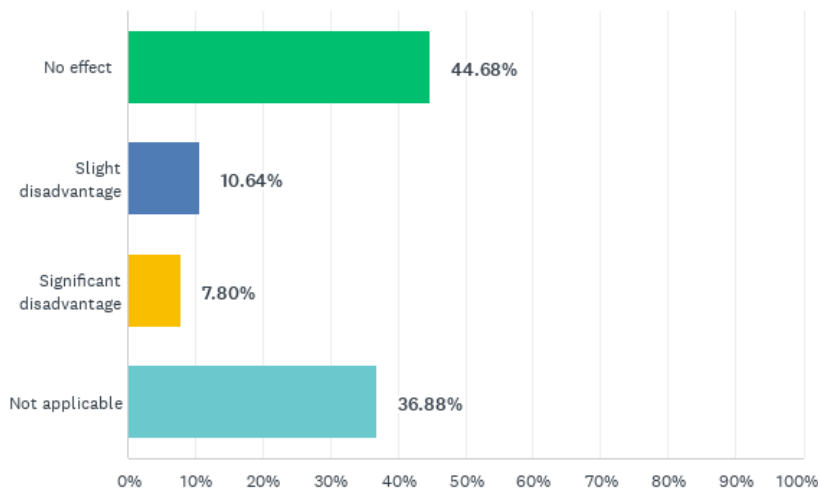
Other

- Not sure yet. Still waiting to see how it will affect us directly in terms of supplies
- Wedding venue, not sure it applies
- Fitness industry is mainly affected by other people's lack of disposable income

#G12. How will these tariffs affect your ability to compete with U.S. based companies in the U.S. market?

Answered: 282

Skipped: 3

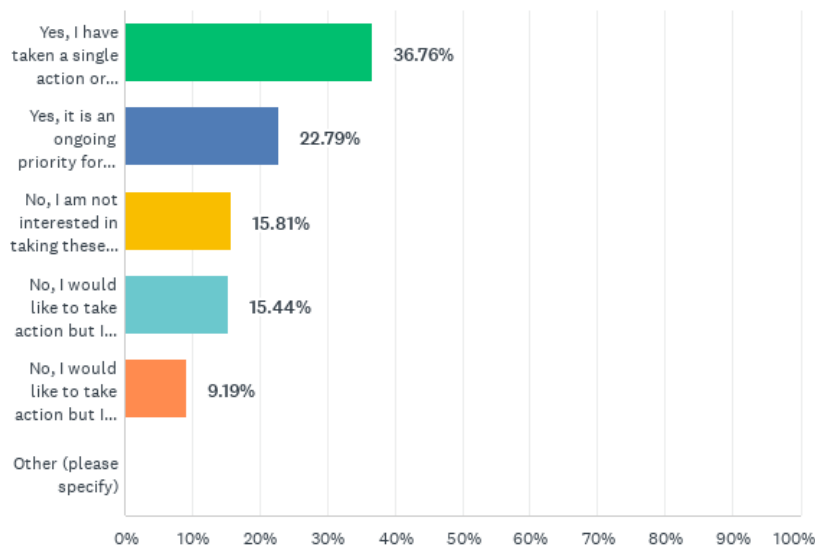


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No effect	44.68%	126
Slight disadvantage	10.64%	30
Significant disadvantage	7.80%	22
Not applicable	36.88%	104
TOTAL		282

#G13. Have you taken action in the last 5 years to increase your business's energy efficiency and/or reduce your business's carbon emissions?

Answered: 272

Skipped: 13

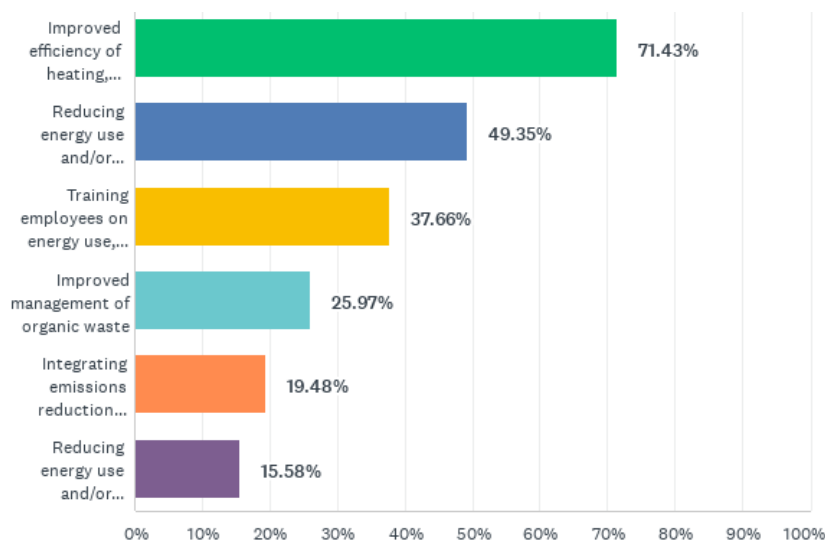


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, I have taken a single action or multiple single actions when possible	36.76%	100
Yes, it is an ongoing priority for the business with multiple and/or impactful actions taken	22.79%	62
No, I am not interested in taking these actions	15.81%	43
No, I would like to take action but I am not sure what action to take	15.44%	42
No, I would like to take action but I am unable to at this time	9.19%	25
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		272

#G13 a. If you have taken action, what were these actions? Check all that apply

Answered: 154

Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Improved efficiency of heating, cooling and/or ventilation systems	71.43%	110
Reducing energy use and/or emissions from business operations	49.35%	76
Training employees on energy use, waste reduction, etc.	37.66%	58
Improved management of organic waste	25.97%	40
Integrating emissions reduction considerations into business strategy	19.48%	30
Reducing energy use and/or emissions from supply chain	15.58%	24

Energy Efficiency Upgrades

- Changing equipment
- Installed new lighting in store
- Conversion to all LED lighting, smart thermostats
- Purchased newer equipment
- I'm a work from home business but we have improved our home's efficiency
- Trying to install solar to offset energy use by Hydro One has been extremely unhelpful
- Changing lights to LED and adding automatic lights that turn on when you enter a room rather than them being on all the time. Buying new fridges/freezers to replace very old ones to increase energy efficiency
- Class A - Reducing hydro usage during peak hours during summer to reduce Global Adjustment fee
Installed automated robotic packaging equipment. Installed new Corayvac radiant heating systems.
- The business building was designed from the start to be very energy-efficient

Sustainable Transportation

- Using freight delivery options instead of several courier deliveries
- Multi-tasking more - deliveries linked with locations travelling to, pickups, etc.
- Looking for better ways to reduce vehicle emissions however I can't afford battery powered cars.

Operational Efficiency

- Prioritizing digital records and signatures over paper/hard copies
- Improvements in efficiency and processing power of computers

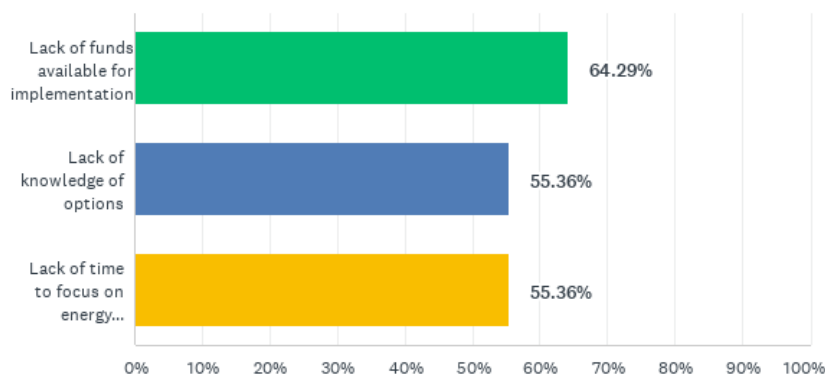
Other

- Purchasing local
- I am a renewable energy business developer
- We are a Regenerative farm, with NetZero emissions
- Added a battery powered product line to our mix of offerings. Encouraging supplies to reduce landfill end products in shipping.
- I stopped using products that are harmful to the environment (epoxy resin), I lease an electric car, re-use canvas, and purchase art supplies from other artists who can no longer use them along with purchasing new from Canadian suppliers

#G13 b. If you have not taken action and would like to, what is preventing you? Check all that apply.

Answered: 56

Skipped: 54



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Lack of funds available for implementation	64.29%	36
Lack of knowledge of options	55.36%	31
Lack of time to focus on energy efficiency and/or carbon emissions	55.36%	31

Home-Based Business Challenges

- I run a home-based writing business and I'm not sure how I can improve my energy efficiency.
- My business is home-based, and I would like to improve energy efficiency within my home. I have purchased a more energy efficient auto for visits to clients.

Industry-Specific or Operational Limitations

- We need certain supplies required to run our healthcare business.
- Our equipment is very industry specific.
- Staffing shortages.

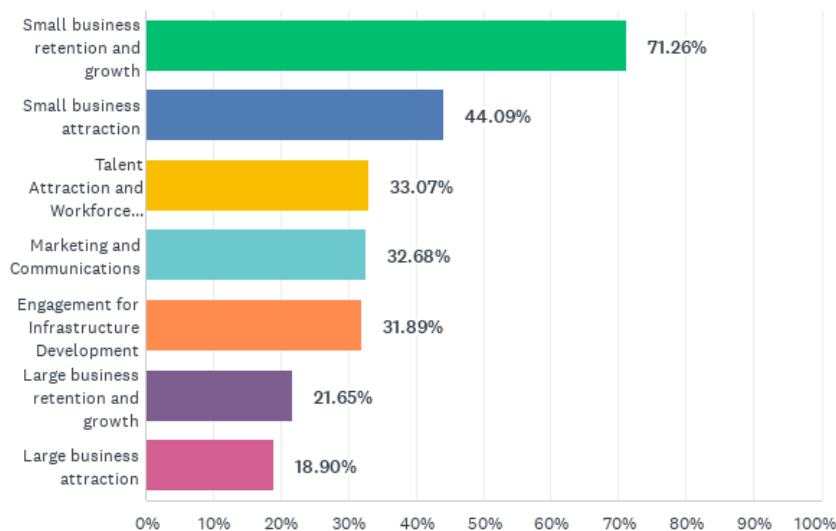
Other

- I rent the space I'm working from and don't have a lot of control over our biggest energy efficiency issues (very large windows bleeding heat in winter and AC in summer).
- Feedback on energy efficient grants put out by the govt fall very short of the promises made while looking into how each work.

#G16. What should the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Economic Development focus on for the next 5 years? Please pick top 3.

Answered: 254

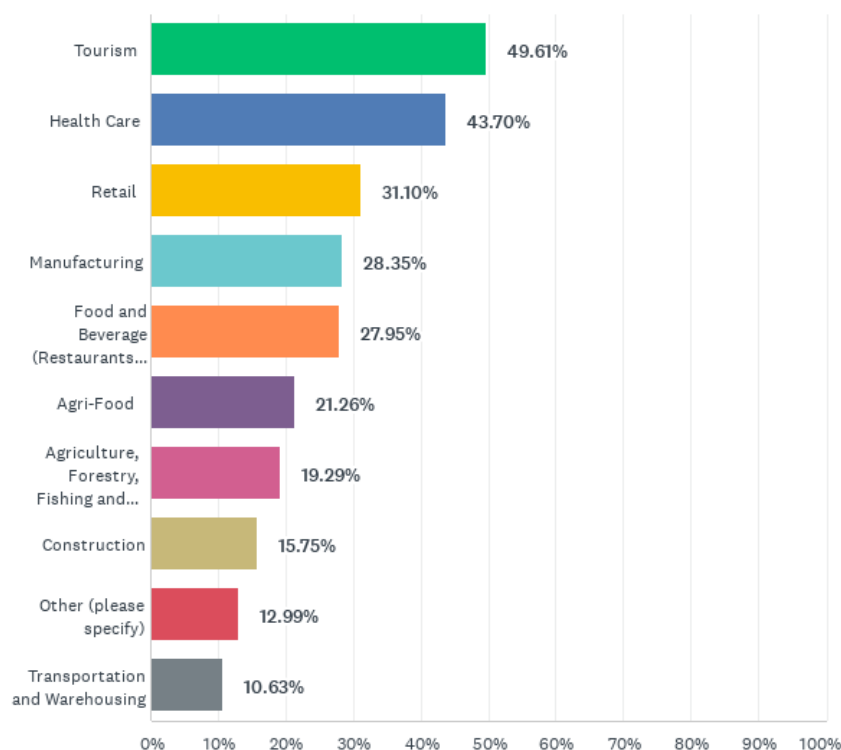
Skipped: 31



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Small business retention and growth	71.26%	181
Small business attraction	44.09%	112
Talent Attraction and Workforce Development	33.07%	84
Marketing and Communications	32.68%	83
Engagement for Infrastructure Development	31.89%	81
Large business retention and growth	21.65%	55
Large business attraction	18.90%	48

#G17. In support of the Leeds Grenville diversified economy, what business sectors require Counties Economic Development support? Please pick top 3

Answered: 254 Skipped: 31



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Tourism	49.61%	126
Health Care	43.70%	111
Retail	31.10%	79
Manufacturing	28.35%	72
Food and Beverage (Restaurants, Bars, Catering, Food Service)	27.95%	71
Agri-Food	21.26%	54
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	19.29%	49
Construction	15.75%	40
Other (please specify)	12.99%	33
Transportation and Warehousing	10.63%	27

Health and Personal Services

- Personal Services.
- Complementary healthcare services that aren't OHIP funded.
- More help for seniors that financially need it.

Trades

- Trades. Technical and Labour.
- Trades training and business support
- Tech trades training and licensing.
- Labour support.
- Automotive service and repair trade support.

Financial and Professional Services

- Money management.
- Data. Huge opportunity for energy development and data storage.

Arts and Culture

- Arts
- Culture and Arts
- Arts and entertainment.
- Helping media in area newsprint especially.
- Arts and Entertainment & programming for youth

Tourism

- Hiking and biking trails to support tourism and the community.
- Multi-use trails to retain/attract young families, health reasons and to improve tourism.
- Destination retail coaching is needed to educate/inform how our 25 new homes per year can help sustain and improve business.

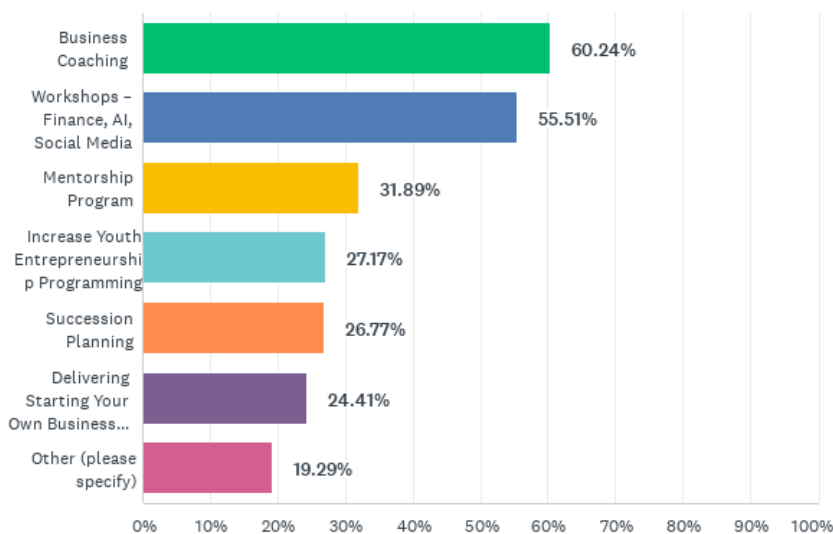
Other

- All
- Sustainability
- Housing
- Recreation
- Event Management
- Local fitness and recreation programs.
- All who need it, I don't believe it can be simplified.
- Support not severing lots up and down the back Concession Roads!!
- Technology. Requires Restaurants and Bars to attract technical talent
- We are a fitness and youth development company. If gyms and sport/fitness programs aren't better supported there will simply be none.
- Work towards bringing branch campus of a university to the region.
- Day Care
- Road improvements

#G18. To grow small businesses, what areas should Counties support? Pick top 3

Answered: 254

Skipped: 31



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Business Coaching	60.24%	153
Workshops – Finance, AI, Social Media	55.51%	141
Mentorship Program	31.89%	81
Increase Youth Entrepreneurship Programming	27.17%	69
Succession Planning	26.77%	68
Delivering Starting Your Own Business Workshops	24.41%	62
Other (please specify)	19.29%	49

Grants, Funding, and Financial Support

- Grants. (3)
- Tax incentives.
- Funding opportunities.
- Small business grants.
- Micro-loans, grants, arts funding.
- Financial support programs for S/M businesses.
- Financial support to counter tariffs, promote shop local.
- Develop CIP Programs like other Counties do.
- Small capital seed funding to kickstart small business and attract STEM based startups.
- Grants for physical signage, marketing and promotion.
- Grants and incentives.
- Funding, incubator program.
- Grants/funding attached to programming
- How to access financial support to ALL small businesses regardless of how long they've been in business and not just those in tourism.
- All of the above has been done. New larger Grants to all SMALL RURAL businesses NEED funding and grants!!! Not ONLY large corporations/manufacturers that have already so often received way too many millions in too many large grants and programs/loans.
- Lower Business Taxes, Grant Programs for Small Business, Funding for Staff Training, Marketing the Area, Infrastructure Development and Maintenance.

Government Regulations

- Reduce regulation.
- LESS RED TAPE.
- Get area to be open for business.
- Dealing with all levels of govt requirements assistance/training.
- Cut red tape, reduce building codes burdens w/ individualized deviations.
- Reduce the statutory and regulatory burden for small business buy aligning with provincial and federal jurisdictions to reduce redundancy.
- Our issues have to do with regulatory hurdles (ESA code).

- Improve roads, less regulation and permits.
- Reduce 'Red Tape': Building permits, decks, outbuildings etc... \$1500 for a deck permit (for a deck that cost less than \$2000) - months of approval time, and public consult, presentation to council etc. It means people don't want to bother to upgrade and build small projects! This is revenue not spent and earned.
- Speak with Townships to set up and support business within the Township. Many Townships don't know how to strengthen existing and support new business to make each Township stronger in this area.

Training and Education

- Business coaching from someone demonstrating strong results.
- Increase in trades training and education.
- Ontario Small Business Centres and BDC courses are terrific for my needs.
- Teach effective transformational methodologies to lower their costs and become more competitive. Remove the 'waste' in their processes - every company has more waste than non-waste in their internal processes and they need to learn how to 'see' and remove it effectively.
- It starts in the schools. Highschool should mandate 4 years of business classes.

Marketing, Promotion, and Visibility

- Assist with marketing.
- Advertising, promotion, consumer awareness.
- Help market and encourage people to come out to local programs.
- Social media strategies to entice business retention, tourism and economic development.
- Support Navigating Systems and Regulations.

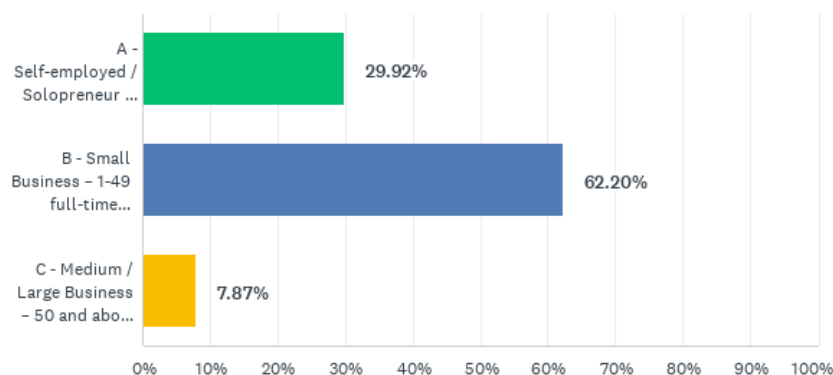
Other

- Skilled workers.
- Professional behaviour.
- Business networking.
- Focus on business operating from home non brick and mortar.
- Multi use office space (Head Office in Ottawa) a shared location where businesses can rent office space in communities
- Increase focus on small independent businesses in the hospitality and tourism sector.
- Invite successful business owners to present once a month a half hour long Lessons Learned as most will pack up as they do not have a business succession strategy. It is estimated 60% of these small shops and businesses will go unbought because no one gave them a transition strategy workshop. Yet successful business owners inspire others. But we need to give them a forum to network and share Lessons Learned.

#G19. Identify your business size

Answered: 254

Skipped: 31



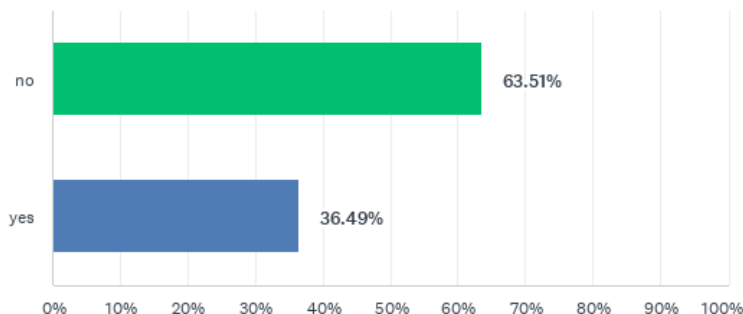
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A – Self-employed / Solopreneur / No employees	29.92%	76
B – Small Business – 1-49 full-time equivalent employees	62.20%	158
C – Medium / Large Business – 50 and above full-time equivalent employees	7.87%	20
TOTAL		254

A - Self-employed / Solopreneur / No employees

#A1. Do you have broadband / internet connectivity challenges?

Answered: 74

Skipped: 2

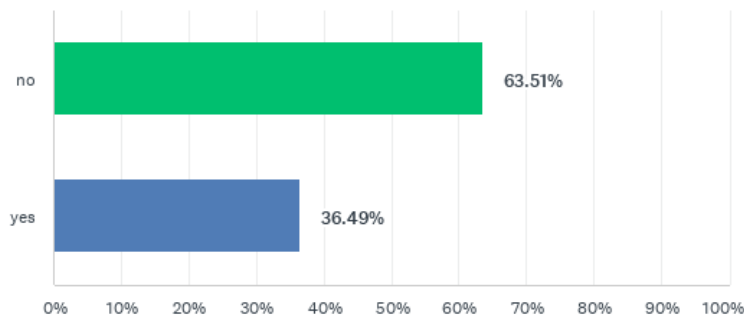


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	63.51%	47
Yes	36.49%	27
TOTAL		74

#A2. Do you have cellular phone connectivity challenges?

Answered: 74

Skipped: 2

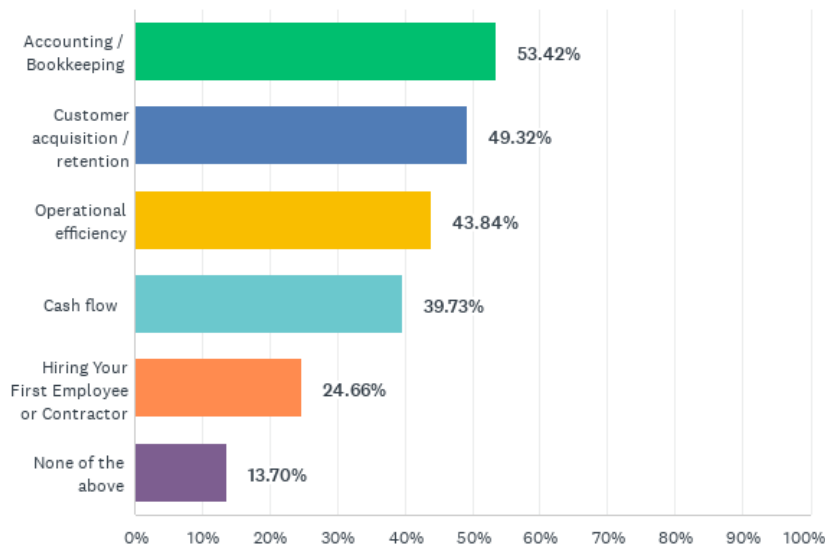


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	63.51%	47
Yes	36.49%	27
TOTAL		74

#A3-a What type of workshops / training would you like to see offered for Small Business Growth? (check all that apply)

Answered: 73

Skipped: 3

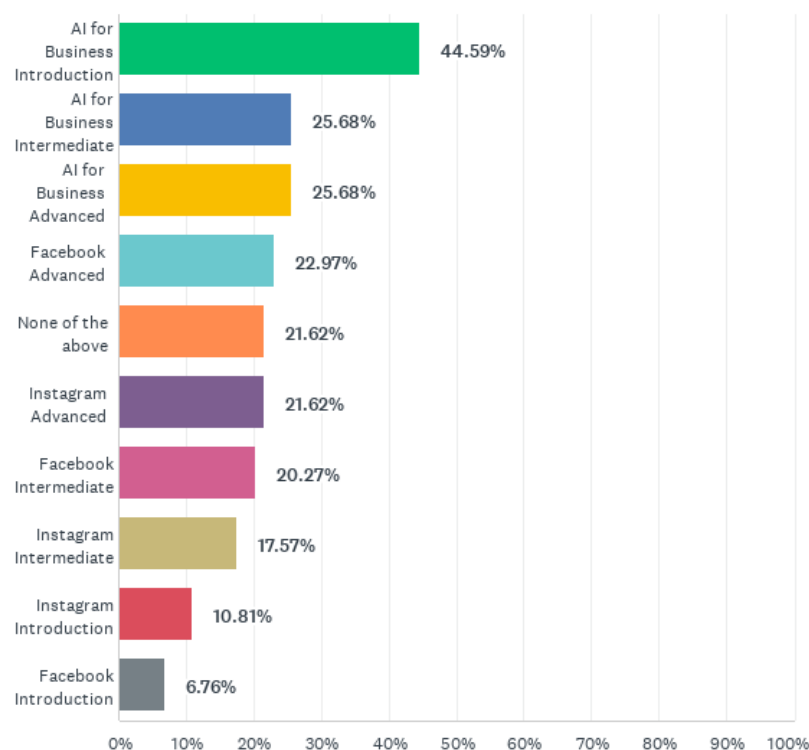


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accounting / Bookkeeping	53.42%	39
Customer acquisition / retention	49.32%	36
Operational efficiency	43.84%	32
Cash flow	39.73%	29
Hiring Your First Employee or Contractor	24.66%	18
None of the above	13.70%	10

#A3-b. What type of workshops / training would you like to see offered for Social Media or AI for Business? choose up to 3

Answered: 74

Skipped: 2

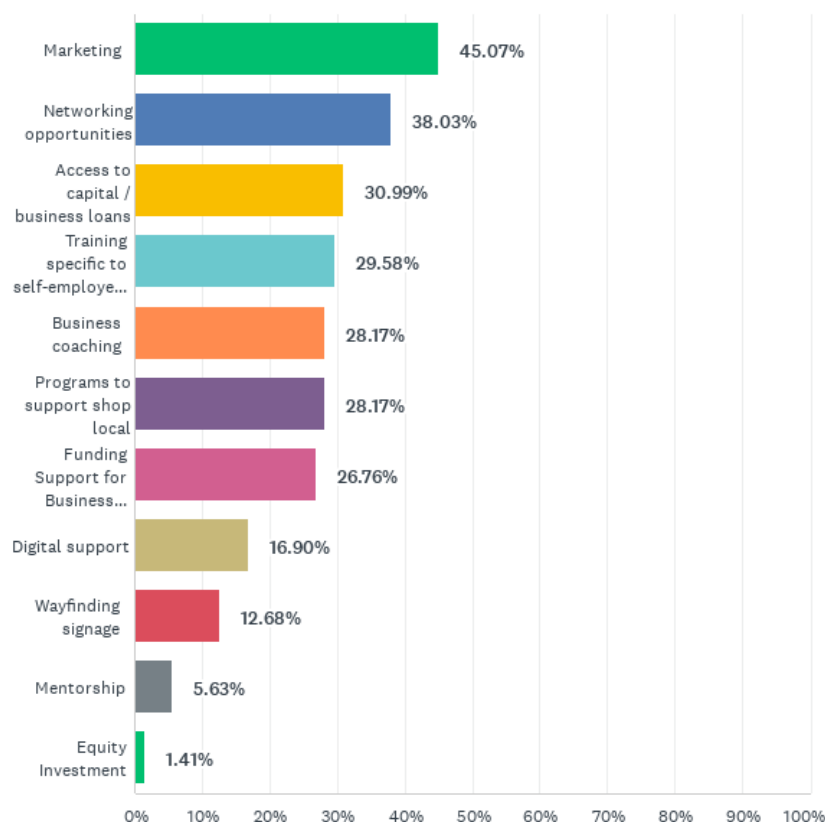


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
AI for Business Introduction	44.59%	33
AI for Business Intermediate	25.68%	19
AI for Business Advanced	25.68%	19
Facebook Advanced	22.97%	17
None of the Above	21.62%	16
Instagram Advanced	21.62%	16
Facebook Intermediate	20.27%	15
Instagram Intermediate	17.57%	13
Instagram Introduction	10.81%	8
Facebook Introduction	6.76%	5

#A4. What are the top 3 areas of support that would be most helpful to your business right now?

Answered: 71

Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Marketing	45.07%	32
Networking opportunities	38.03%	27
Access to capital / business loans	30.99%	22
Training specific to self-employed / solopreneurs	29.58%	21
Business coaching	28.17%	20
Programs to support shop local	28.17%	20
Funding support for business expansion	26.76%	19
Digital support	16.90%	12
Wayfinding signage	12.68%	9
Mentorship	5.63%	4
Equity Investment	1.41%	1

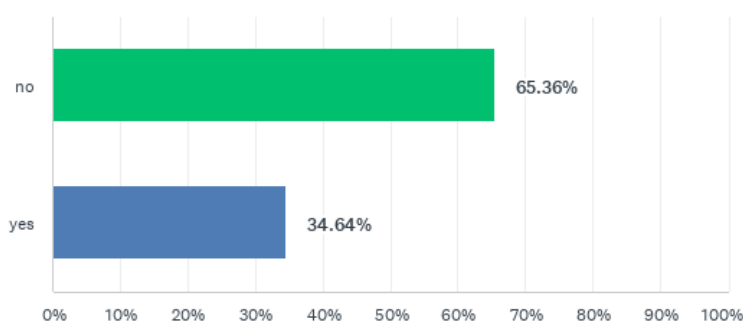
- Not sure more support is needed. Free time to grind and hustle in business is the current need. Not more training.
- Access to a trained workforce.
- None. I am on track to retirement.

B - Small Business – 1-49 full-time equivalent employees

#B1. Do you have broadband / internet connectivity challenges?

Answered: 153

Skipped: 5

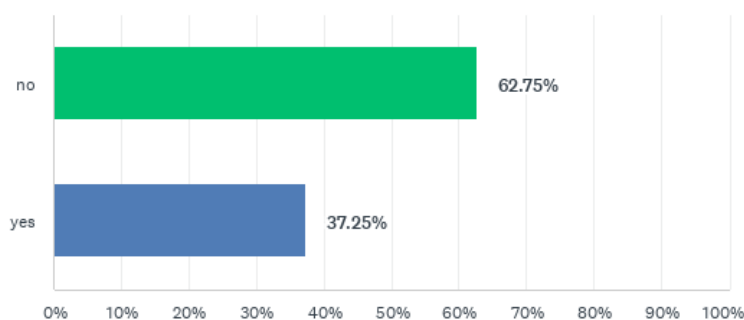


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	65.36%	100
Yes	34.64%	53
TOTAL		153

#B2. Do you have cellular phone connectivity challenges?

Answered: 153

Skipped: 5

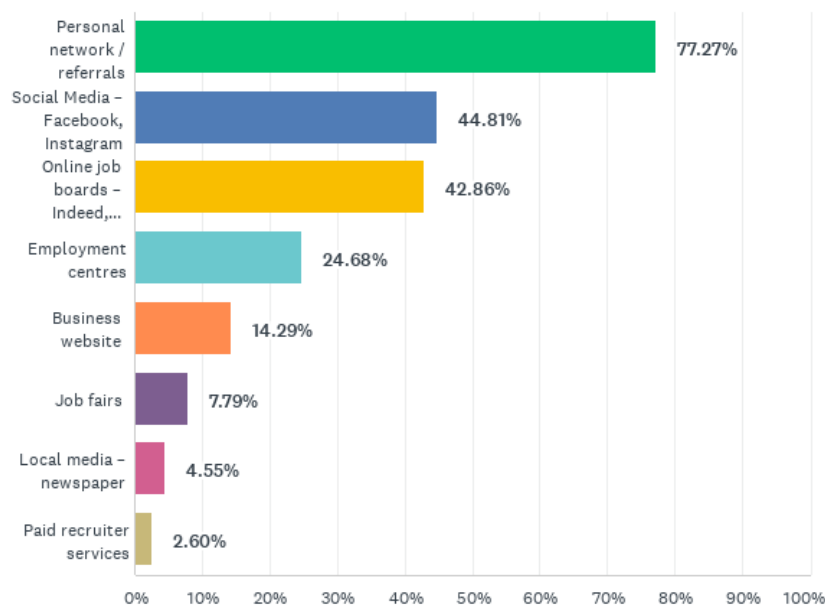


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	62.75%	96
Yes	37.25%	57
TOTAL		153

#B3. What methods do you utilize for employee recruitment that gives you the best results? (Choose your top 3)

Answered: 154

Skipped: 4

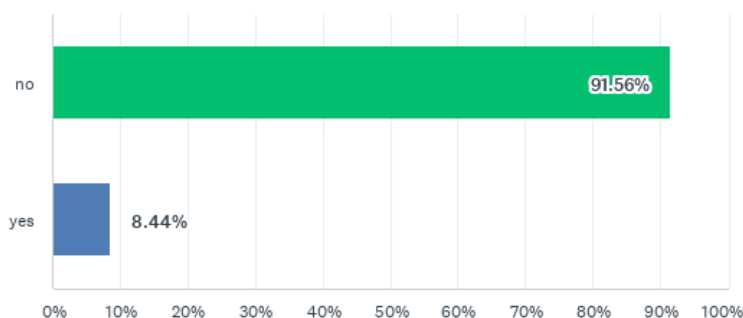


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Personal network / referrals	77.27%	119
Social media – Facebook, Instagram	44.81%	69
Online job boards – Indeed, LinkedIn	42.86%	66
Employment centres	24.68%	38
Business website	14.29%	22
Job fairs	7.79%	12
Local media – newspaper	4.55%	7
Paid recruiter services	2.60%	4

#B4. In the last 2 years have your hired foreign workers on permit, OR refugee / refugee claimants, OR international students?

Answered: 154

Skipped: 4

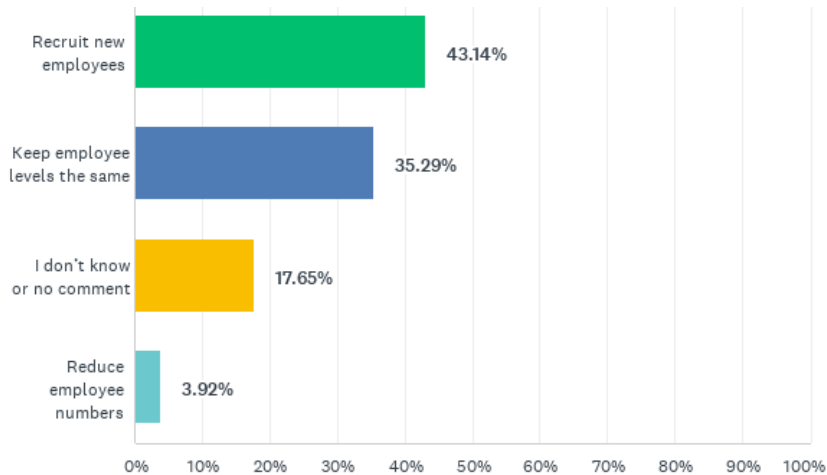


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	91.56%	141
Yes	8.44%	13
TOTAL		154

#B5. In the next year do you plan to:

Answered: 153

Skipped: 5

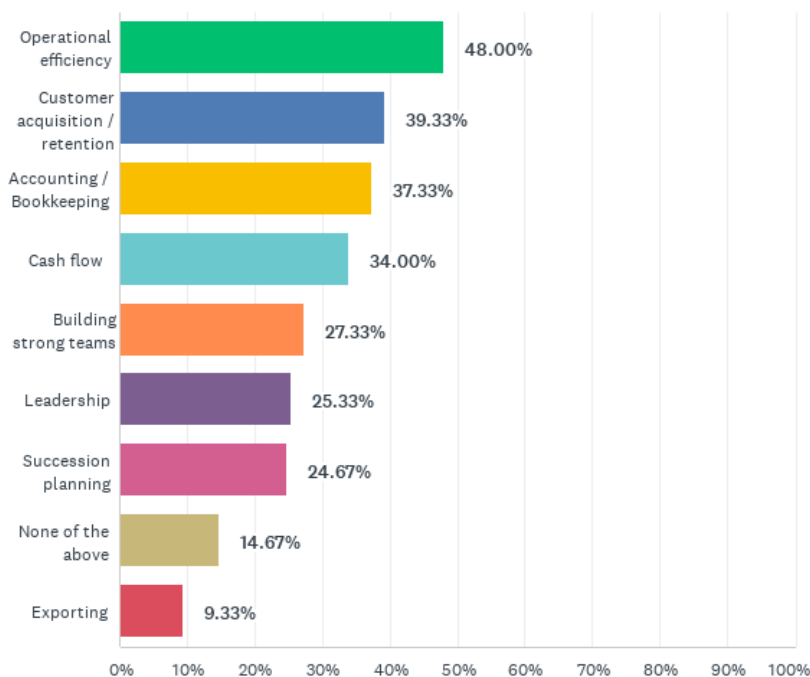


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Recruit new employees	43.14%	66
Keep employee levels the same	35.29%	54
I don't know or no comment	17.65%	27
Reduce employee numbers	3.92%	6
TOTAL		153

#B6-a. What type of workshops / training would you like to see offered to support Small Business Growth? Choose all that apply.

Answered: 150

Skipped: 8

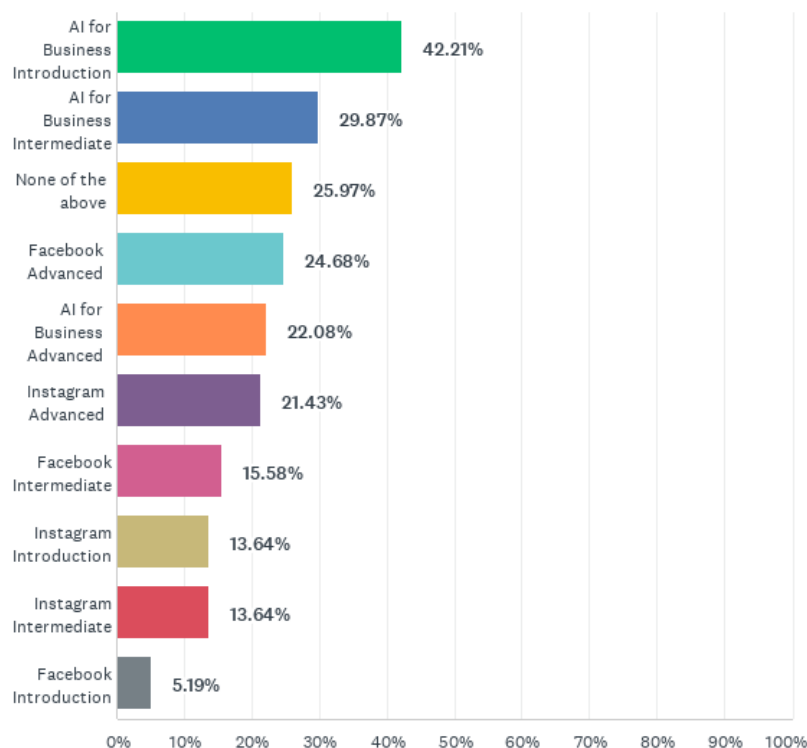


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Operational efficiency	48.00%	75
Customer acquisition / retention	39.33%	59
Accounting / Bookkeeping	37.33%	56
Cash flow	34.00%	51
Building strong teams	27.33%	41
Leadership	25.33%	38
Succession planning	24.67%	37
None of the above	14.67%	22
Exporting	9.33%	14

#B6-b. What type of workshops / training would you like to see offered for Social Media or AI for Business? Choose up to 3

Answered: 154

Skipped: 4

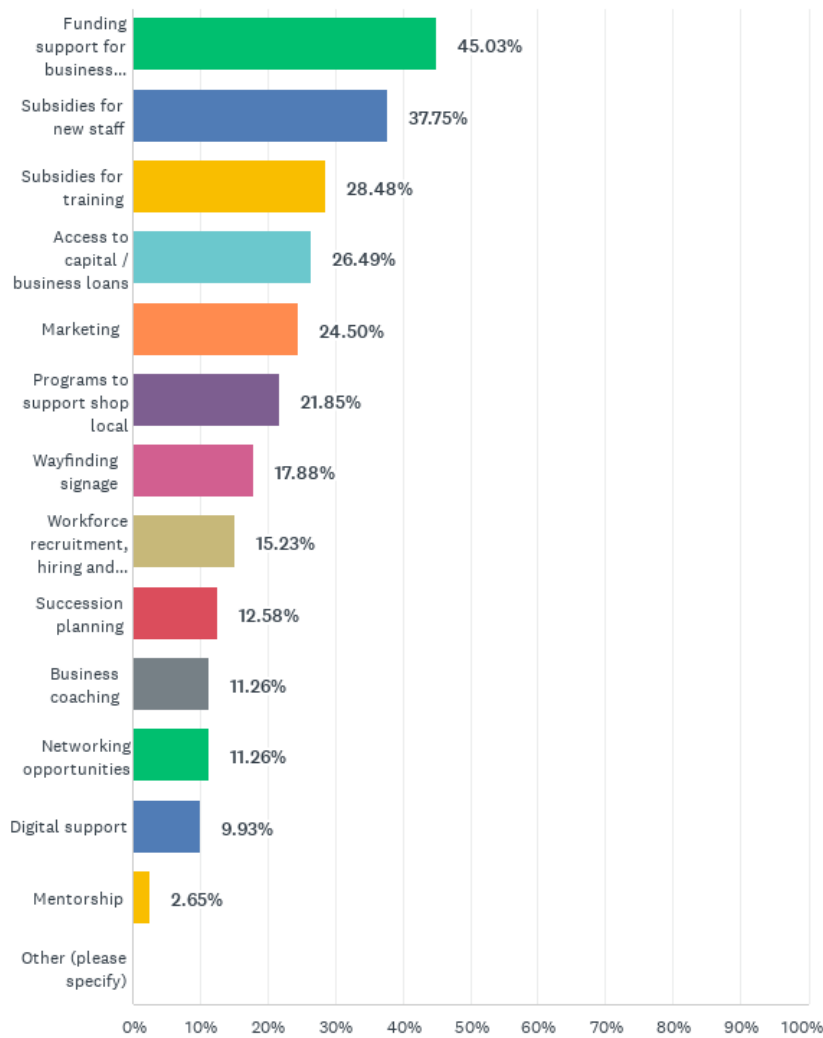


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
AI for Business Introduction	42.21%	65
AI for Business Intermediate	29.87%	46
None of the above	25.97%	40
Facebook Advanced	24.68%	38
AI for Business Advanced	22.08%	34
Instagram Advanced	21.43%	33
Facebook Intermediate	15.58%	24
Instagram Introduction	13.64%	21
Instagram Intermediate	13.64%	21
Facebook Introduction	5.19%	8

#B7. What are the top 3 areas of support that would be most helpful to your business right now?

Answered: 151

Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Funding support for business expansion	45.03%	68
Subsidies for new staff	37.75%	57
Subsidies for training	28.48%	43
Access to capital / business loans	26.49%	40
Marketing	24.50%	37
Programs to support shop local	21.85%	33
Wayfinding signage	17.88%	27
Workforce recruitment, hiring and resourcing staff	15.23%	23
Succession planning	12.58%	19
Business coaching	11.26%	17
Networking opportunities	11.26%	17
Digital support	9.93%	15
Mentorship	2.65%	4
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0

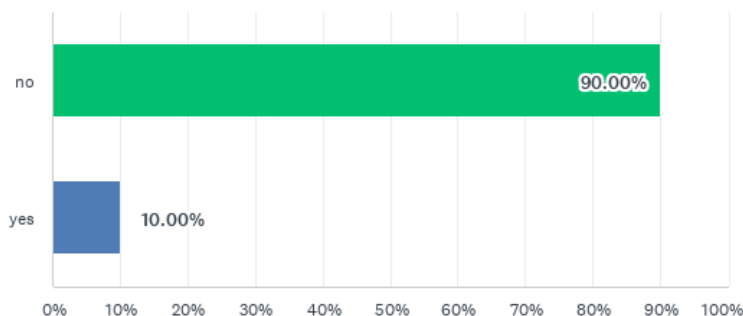
- None. I am on track to retirement.
- Not really looking for support
- Support dealing with regulations
- Free up the Red Tape - Let people build, limit wait times for permits and remove permit fees!
- Subsidies for small businesses still recovering/affected by Covid lockdowns and now affected by customers having less available money to spend due to increase costs of gas and groceries
- Improving tourism to the area, including improving the overall appearance, cleanliness, and perception of the towns.
- More focus on making existing businesses competitive.
- Equipment improvements

C – Medium / Large Business – 50 and above full-time equivalent employees

#C1. Are your employees unionized?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

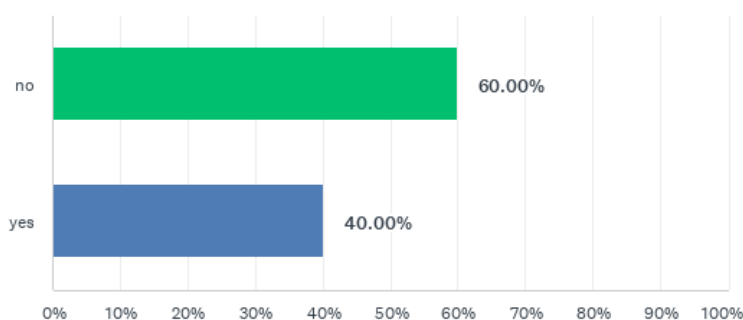


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	90.00%	18
Yes	10.00%	2
TOTAL		20

#C2. Do you have broadband / internet connectivity challenges?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

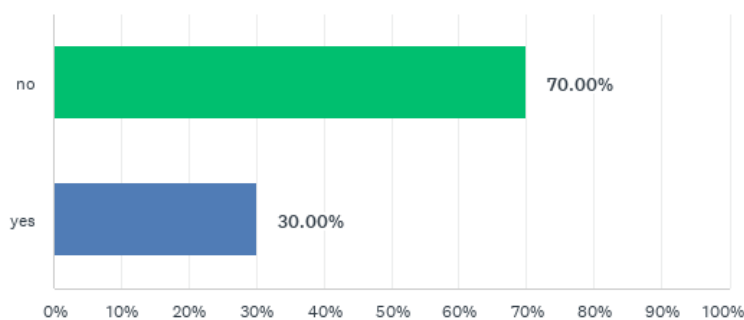


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	60.00%	12
Yes	40.00%	8
TOTAL		20

#C3. Do you have cellular phone connectivity challenges?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

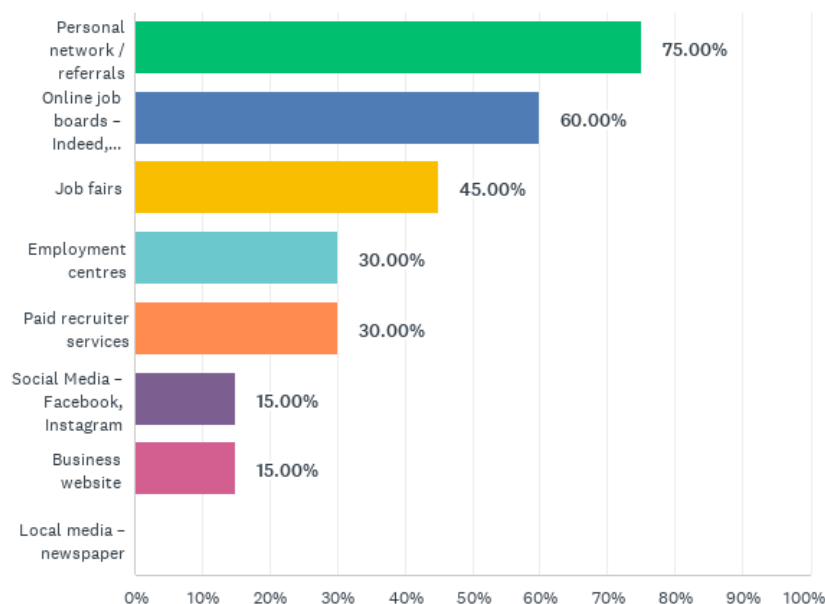


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	70.00%	14
Yes	30.00%	6
TOTAL		20

#C4. What methods do you utilize for employee recruitment that gives you the best results? (Choose your top 3)

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

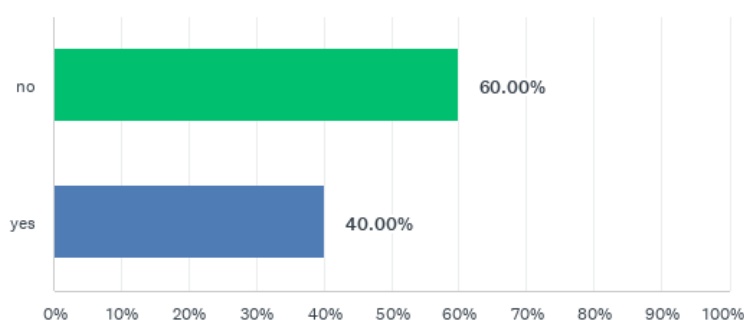


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Personal / network / referrals	75.00%	15
Online job boards – Indeed, LinkedIn	60.00%	12
Job fairs	45.00%	9
Employment Centres	30.00%	6
Paid recruiter services	30.00%	6
Social Media – Facebook, Instagram	15.00%	3
Business Website	15.00%	3
Local media - newspaper	0.00%	0

#C5. In the last 2 years have your hired foreign workers on permit, OR refugee / refugee claimants, OR international students?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

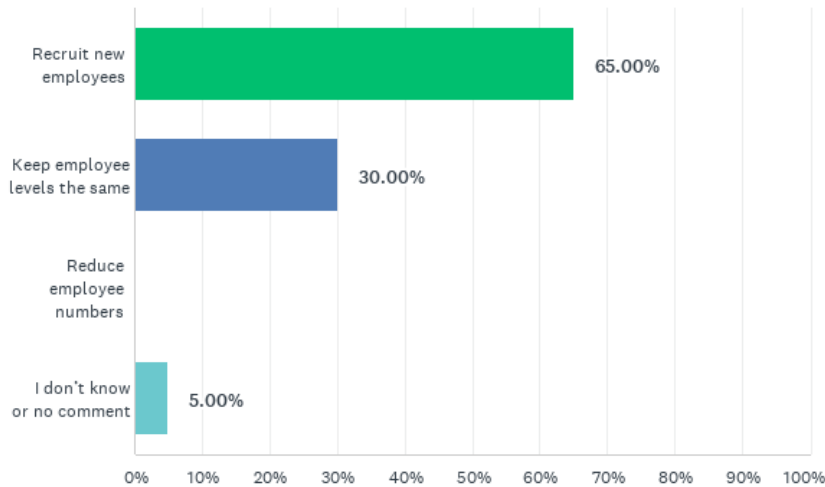


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	60.00%	12
Yes	40.00%	8
TOTAL		20

#C6. In the next year do you plan to:

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

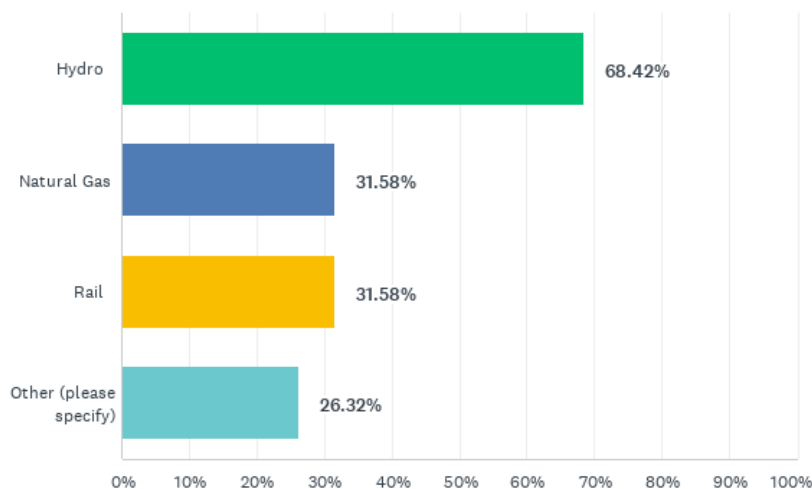


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Recruit new employees	65.00%	13
Keep employee levels the same	30.00%	6
Reduce employee numbers	0.00%	0
I don't know or no comment	5.00%	1
TOTAL		20

#C7. What are your top infrastructure issues? check all that apply

Answered: 19

Skipped: 1



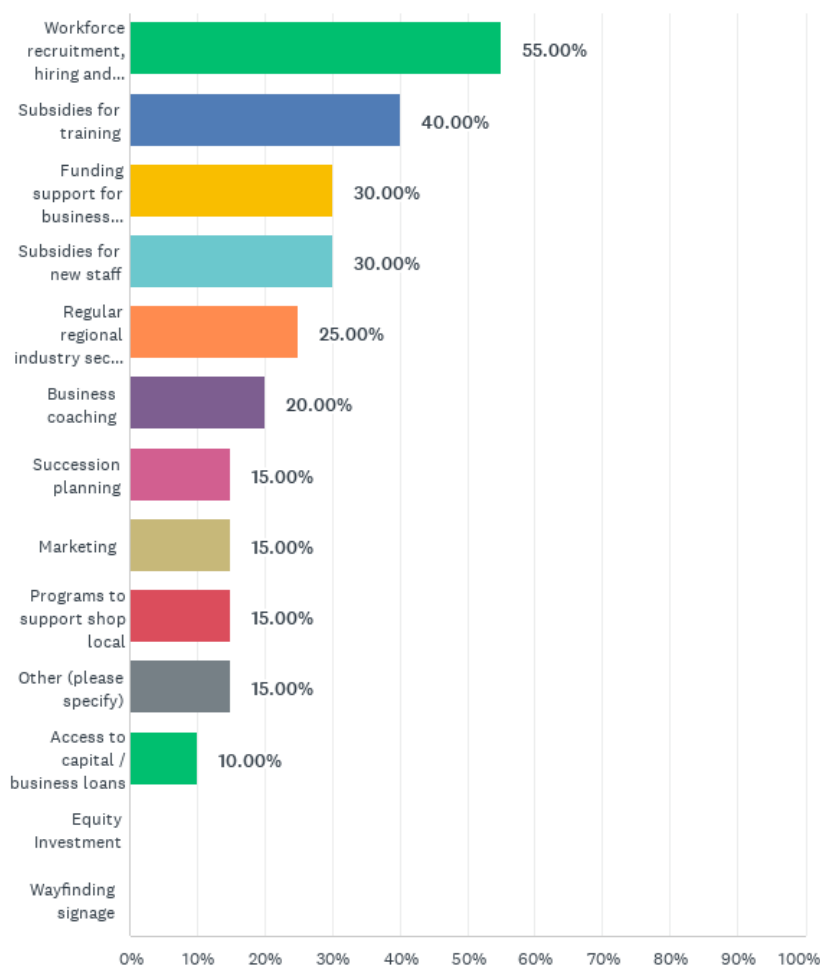
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Hydro	68.42%	13
Natural Gas	31.58%	6
Rail	31.58%	6
Other (please specify)	26.32%	5

- Permits and restrictions within the municipality.
- Connectivity.

#C8. What are the top 3 areas of support that would be most helpful to your business right now?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

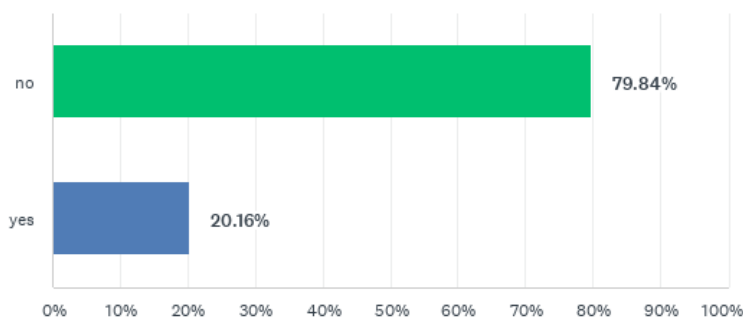


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Workforce recruitment, hiring and resourcing staff	55.00%	11
Subsidies for training	40.00%	8
Funding support for business expansion	30.00%	6
Subsidies for new staff	30.00%	6
Regular regional industry sector focus groups	25.00%	5
Business coaching	20.00%	4
Succession planning	15.00%	3
Marketing	15.00%	3
Programs to support shop local	15.00%	3
Other (please specify)	15.00%	3
Access to capital / business loans	10.00%	2
Equity Investment	0.00%	0
Wayfinding signage	0.00%	0

#S1. Would you like to connect with a member of the Economic Development / Small Business teams?

Answered: 243

Skipped: 42

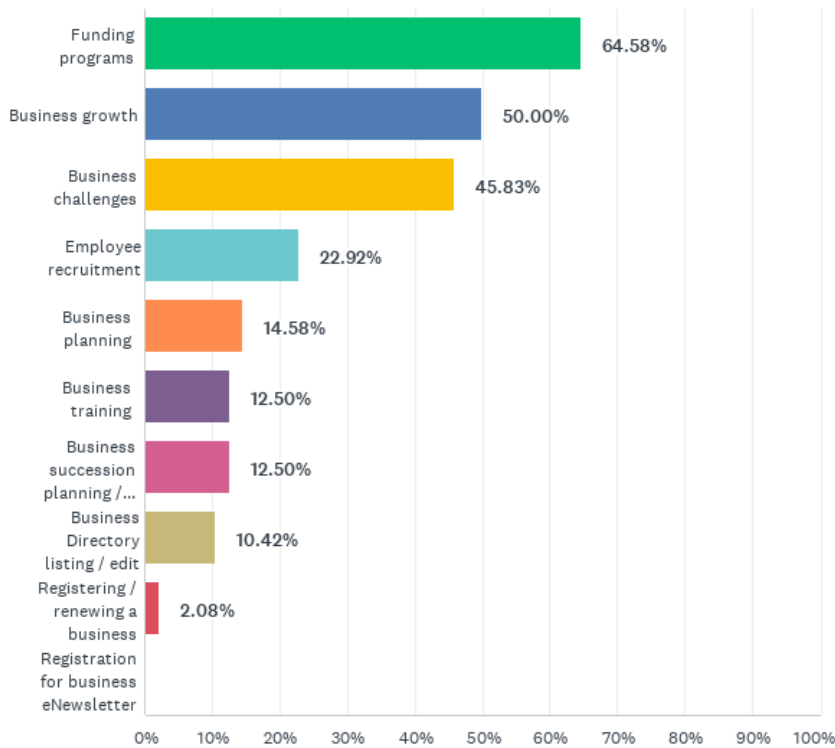


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	79.84%	194
Yes	20.16%	49
TOTAL		243

#S1-b. I would like to discuss the following: (choose all that apply)

Answered: 48

Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Funding programs	64.58%	31
Business growth	50.00%	24
Business challenges	45.83%	22
Employee recruitment	22.92%	11
Business planning	14.58%	7
Business training	12.50%	6
Business succession planning / closing a business	12.50%	6
Business Directory listing / edit	10.42%	5
Registering / renewing a business	2.08%	1
Registration for business eNewsletter	0.00%	0

Additional Notes:

- Survey Timeframe: April 29 to June 4, 2025
- Survey Distribution: Businesses that were part the Counties Economic Development business directory, with active email addresses, received the survey directly. In addition, some members of Business Support Working Group distributed the survey through their membership lists and social media channels.
- Economic implications impacting survey results: U.S. tariffs ranging from 10-25% on Canada products were introduced on March 4th, followed by Canadian 25% retaliatory tariffs on some U.S. products. Some CUSMA-compliant products were exempt. On June 3rd, U.S. announced a 50% tariff on steel and aluminum effective June 4th. Constant changes in tariff messaging occurred through the survey period.

Business Support Working Group:

Municipalities

Athens | Augusta | Brockville | Edwardsburgh Cardinal | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Front of Yonge | Gananoque | Leeds and the Thousand Islands | Merrickville-Wolford | North Grenville | Prescott | Rideau Lakes | Westport

MP / MPP

MP Office of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands-Rideau Lakes
MPP Office of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

Community Futures Development Corporations

1000 Islands CDC | Community Futures Grenville | Valley Heartland CFDC

Small Business Centres

Leeds Grenville Small Business
Small Business Advisory Centre – Smiths Falls | Lanark

Chambers of Commerce

1000 Islands Gananoque | Brockville and District | Lyndhurst, Seeley's Bay & District | Merrickville and District | North Grenville | South Grenville

BIAs

Downtown Brockville | Downtown Gananoque | Downtown Prescott | Old Town Kemptville

Employment Services

CSE Consulting | Employment and Education Centre | KEYS Job Centre

Other Business & Education Agencies

Regional Tourism Organization 9 | Eastern Ontario Workforce Innovation Board | St. Lawrence College | Kemptville Campus Education and Community Hub | Ontario Tourism Education Corporation | St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership | Ministry of Economic Development Job Creation and Trade – East Region

THANK-YOU!

On behalf of the Business Support Working Group, I would like to thank each business who completed the survey. This report provides the region with key data to help in plan future initiatives to support business.

Ann Weir, Economic Development Manager
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

W: invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans | E: ann.weir@uclg.on.ca

Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

2025 Business Survey Report

July 3, 2025



Self-Employed / Solopreneur / No employees

Survey Timeframe: April 29 – June 4, 2025

Communities

Athens | Augusta | Brockville | Edwardsburgh Cardinal | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Front of Yonge
Gananoque | Leeds and the Thousand Islands | Merrickville-Wolford | North Grenville | Prescott
Rideau Lakes | Westport

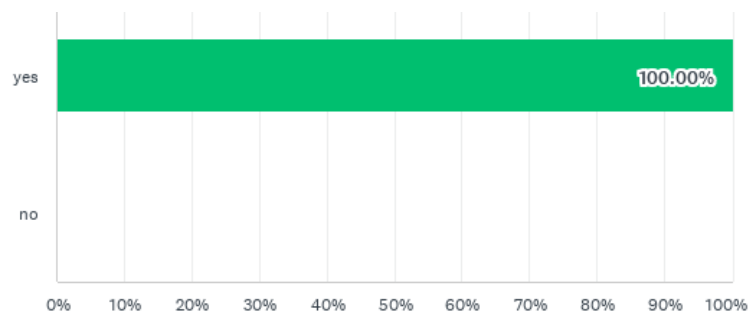
Prepared by:

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Economic Development Office
32 Wall Street, Suite 300, Brockville, ON
econdev@uclg.on.ca

invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans

Is your organization a for-profit business registered to carry out business in Ontario? (required)

Answered: 76 Skipped: 0

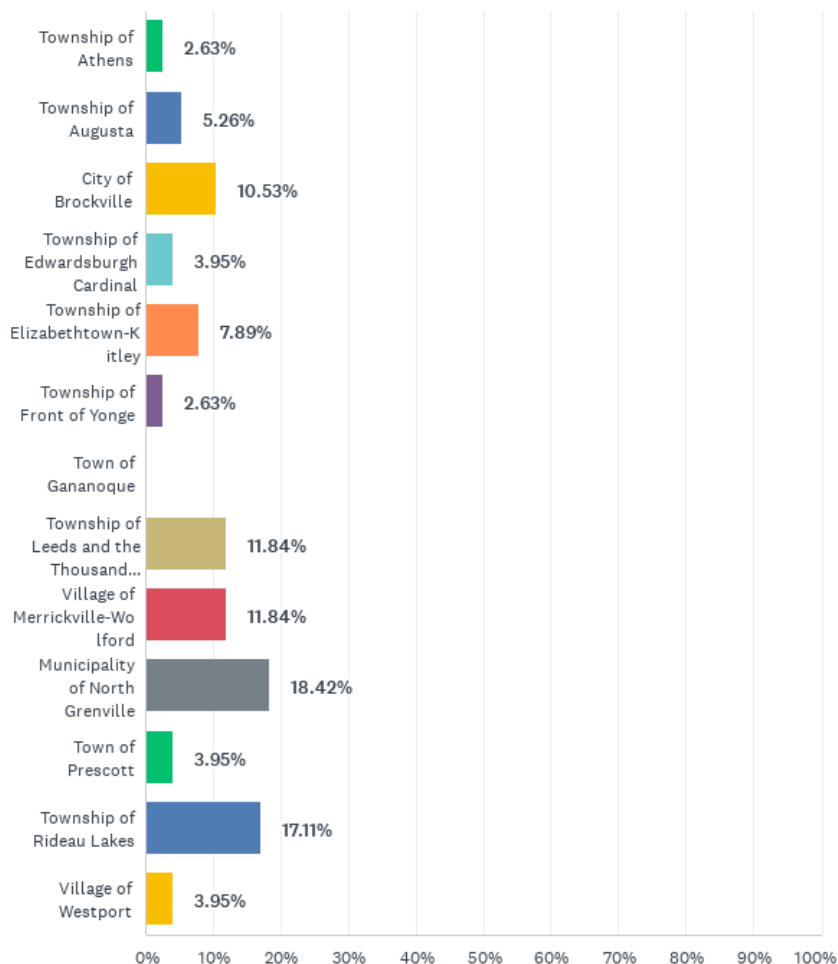


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
yes	100.0%	76
no	0.00%	0
TOTAL		76

#G1. Where is your business located? (if servicing multiple communities, please identify location of your main office)

Answered: 76

Skipped: 0

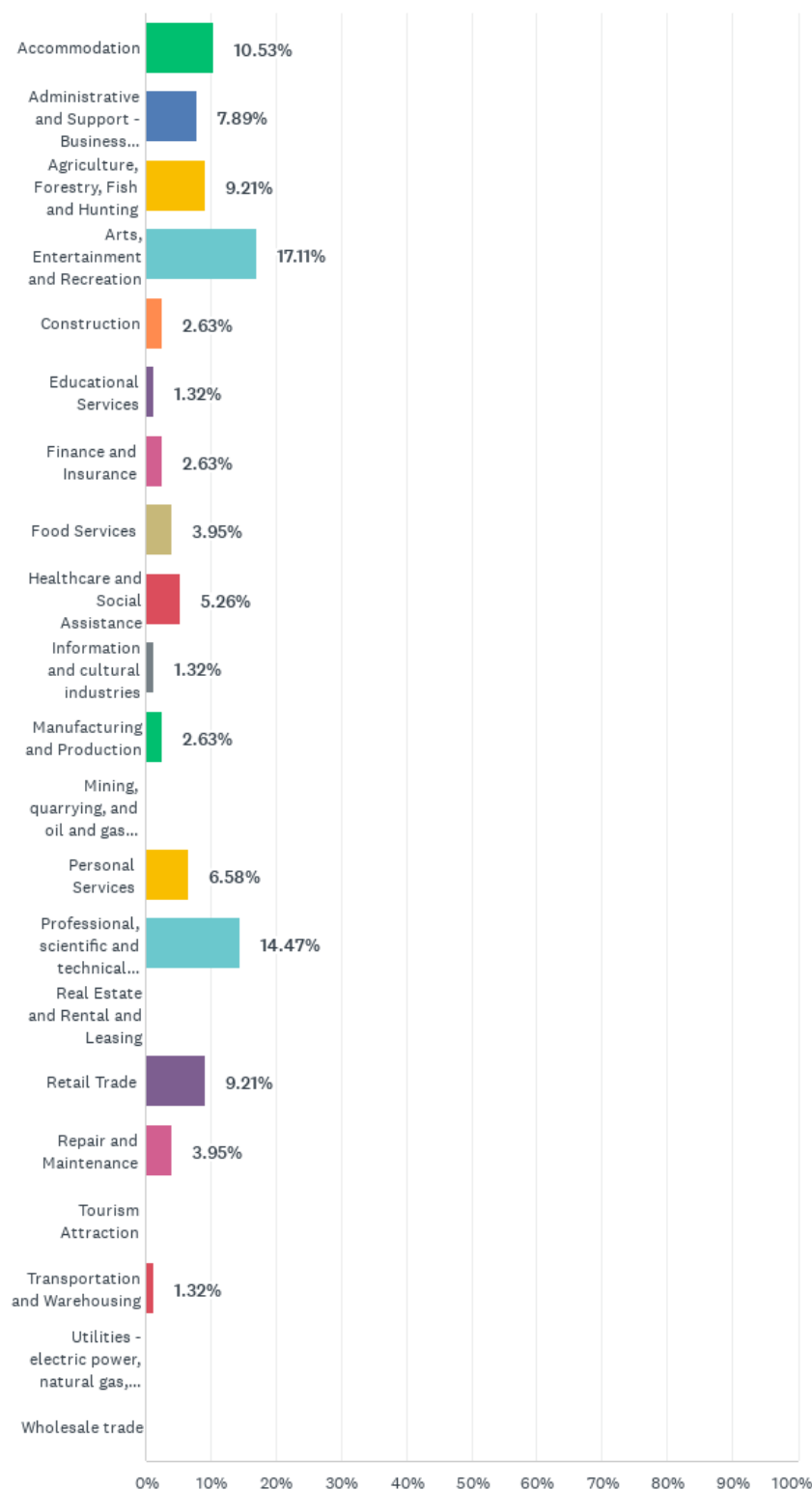


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Township of Athens	2.63%	2
Township of Augusta	5.26%	4
City of Brockville	10.53%	8
Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal	3.95%	3
Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley	7.89%	6
Township of Front of Yonge	2.63%	2
Town of Gananoque	0.00%	0
Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands	11.84%	9
Village of Merrickville-Wolford	11.84%	9
Municipality of North Grenville	18.42%	14
Town of Prescott	3.95%	3
Township of Rideau Lakes	17.11%	13
Village of Westport	3.95%	3
TOTAL		76

#G2. What sector is your business primarily operating in? (find your business category here)

Answered: 76

Skipped: 0

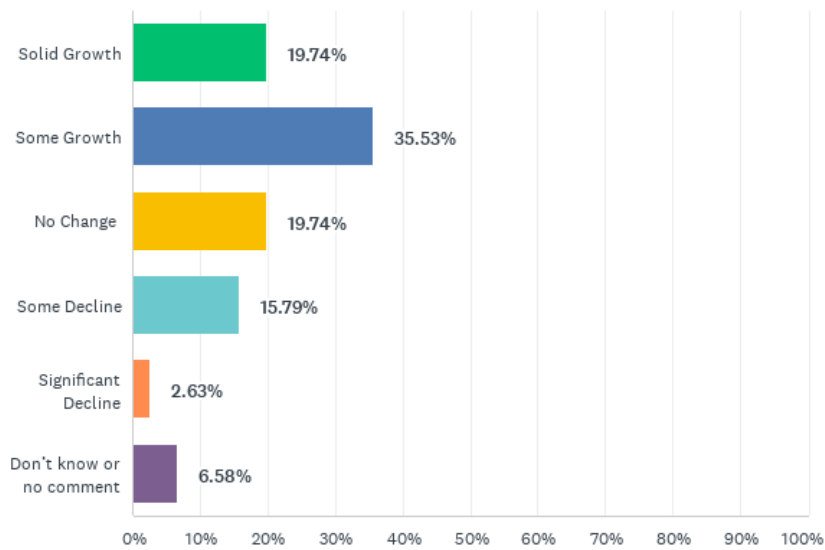


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accommodation	10.53%	8
Administration and Support – Business Services	7.89%	6
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	9.21%	7
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	17.11%	13
Construction	2.63%	2
Educational Services	1.32%	1
Finance and Insurance	2.63%	2
Food Services	3.95%	3
Healthcare and Social Assistance	5.26%	4
Information and cultural industries	1.32%	1
Manufacturing and Production	2.63%	2
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.00%	0
Personal Services	6.58%	5
Professional, scientific and technical services	14.47%	11
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0.00%	0
Retail Trade	9.21%	7
Repair and Maintenance	3.95%	3
Tourism Attraction	0.00%	0
Transportation and Warehousing	1.32%	1
Utilities – electric power, natural gas, water-sewage	0.00%	0
Wholesale trade	0.00%	0
TOTAL		76

#G3. In your last fiscal year, how did your sales / revenues perform?

Answered: 76

Skipped: 0

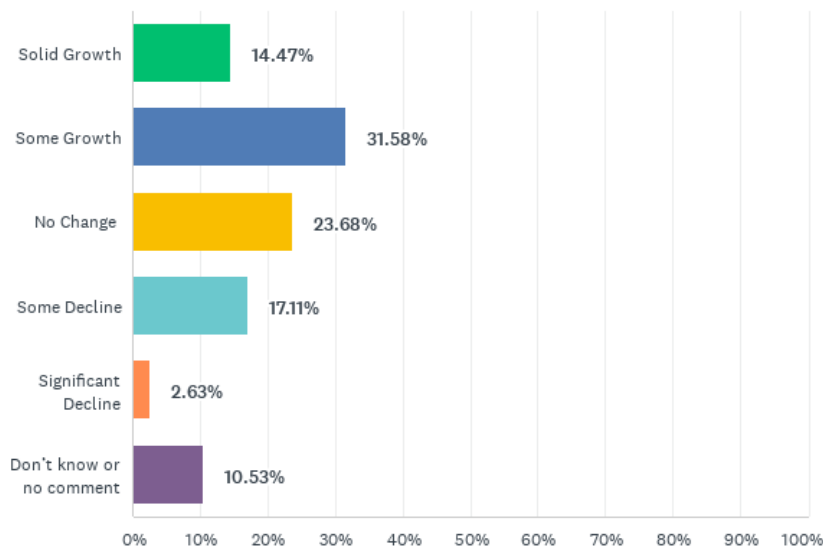


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Solid Growth	19.74%	15
Some Growth	35.53%	27
No Change	19.74%	15
Some Decline	15.79%	12
Significant Decline	2.63%	2
Don't know or no comment	6.58%	5
TOTAL		76

#G4. How did your net income in the last fiscal year compare to the previous year?

Answered: 76

Skipped: 0

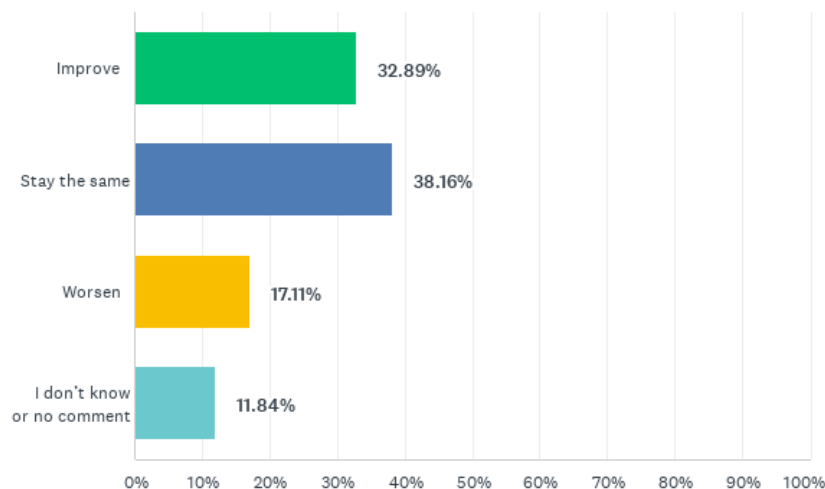


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Solid Growth	14.47%	11
Some Growth	31.58%	24
No Change	23.68%	18
Some Decline	17.11%	13
Significant Decline	2.63%	2
Don't know or no comment	10.53%	8
TOTAL		76

#G5. Over the next year, do you expect the market for your business sector to:

Answered: 76

Skipped: 0

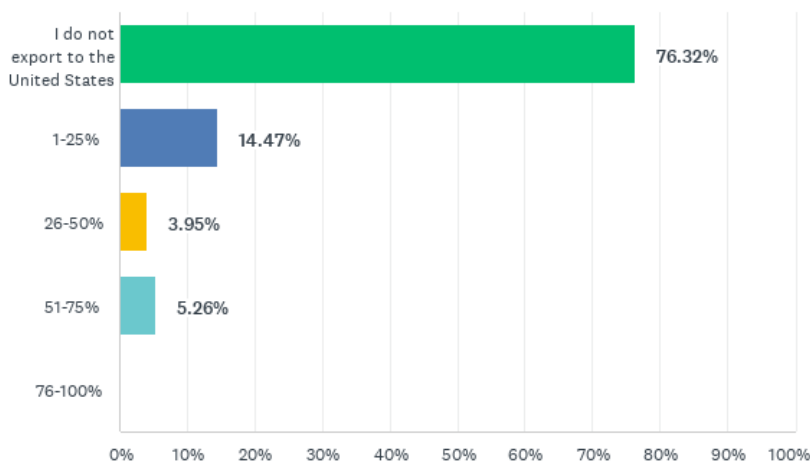


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Improve	32.89%	25
Stay the same	38.16%	29
Worsen	17.11%	13
I don't know or no comment	11.84%	9
TOTAL		76

#G6. What percentage of your business's exports are directed to the United States?

Answered: 76

Skipped: 0

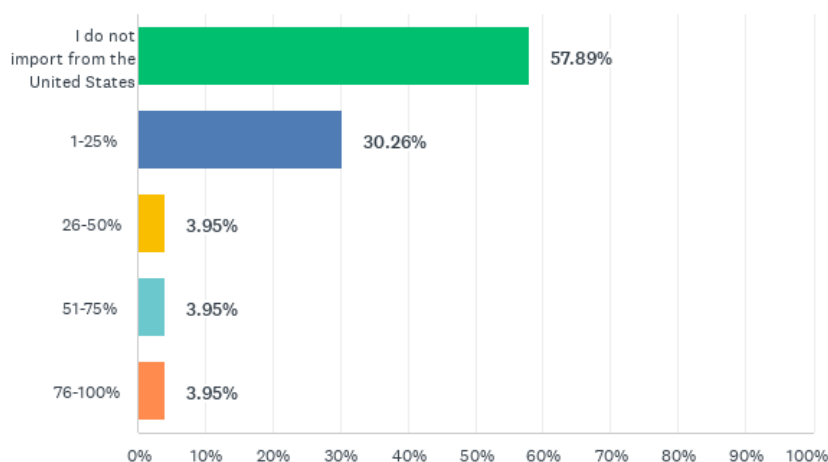


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I do not export to the United States	76.32%	58
1-25%	14.47%	11
26-50%	3.95%	3
51-75%	5.26%	4
76-100%	0.00%	0
TOTAL		76

#G7. What percentage of your business relies on imports from the United States?

Answered: 76

Skipped: 0

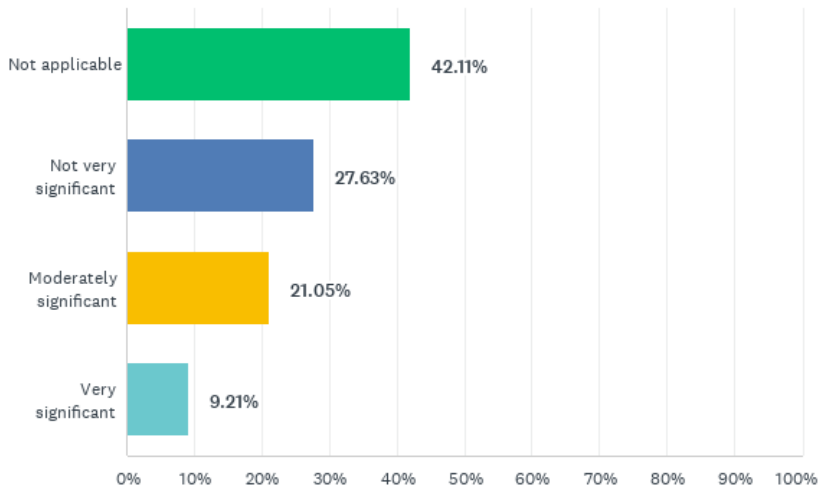


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I do not import from the United States	57.89%	44
1-25%	30.26%	23
26-50%	3.95%	3
51-75%	3.95%	3
76-100%	3.95%	3
TOTAL		76

#G8. How significant is the U.S. market to your business's overall revenue?

Answered: 76

Skipped: 0

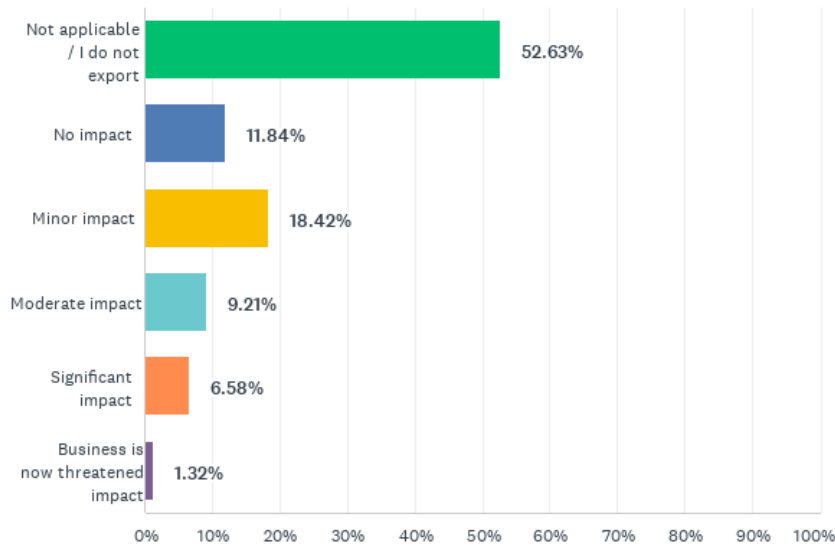


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not applicable	42.11%	32
Not very significant	27.63%	21
Moderately significant	21.05%	16
Very significant	9.21%	7
TOTAL		76

#G9. Has the 25% tariff on Canadian goods impacted your business operations?

Answered: 76

Skipped: 0

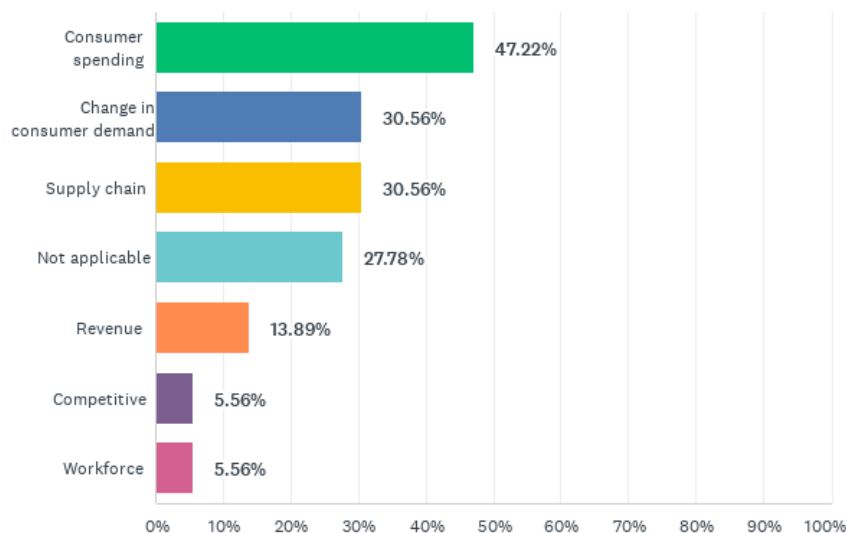


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not applicable / I do not export	52.63%	40
No impact	11.84%	9
Minor impact	18.42%	14
Moderate impact	9.21%	7
Significant impact	6.58%	5
Business is now threatened impact	1.32%	1
TOTAL		76

#G10. What specific areas of your business are or will be most affected by the economic trade war? Choose all that apply.

Answered: 72

Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Consumer spending	47.22%	34
Change in consumer demand	30.56%	22
Supply chain	30.56%	22
Not applicable	27.78%	20
Revenue	13.89%	10
Competitive	5.56%	4
Workforce	5.56%	4

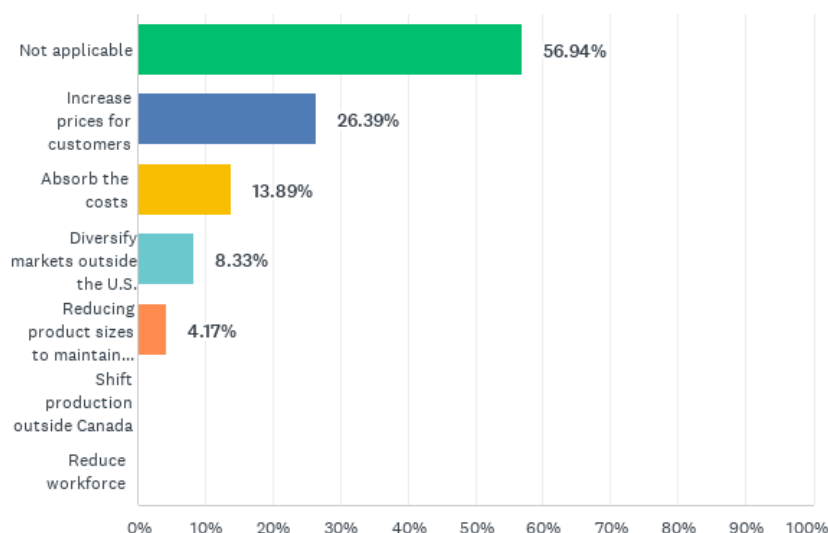
- Considering this will likely lead to our already inbound recession, consumers will be less likely to spend on non-essentials.
- Business might want to cut costs and try to do things themselves to reduce costs.
- Food costs.
- Probably not going to be getting American visitors.
- I assist businesses to ship commercial goods into the United States as the majority of my business, the tariffs will affect my clients and they will possibly ship less into the U.S.
- I am a newspaper so my clients are impacted by the trade war.
- Cost of supplies increasing.
- Tourism decline.
- I've just registered my business within the last month.
- Change in consumer spending due to uncertainty.
- Tourism.

#G11. How is or will your business be responding to the tariffs?

Choose all that apply.

Answered: 72

Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not applicable	56.94%	41
Increase prices for customers	26.39%	19
Absorb the costs	13.89%	10
Diversify markets outside the U.S.	8.33%	6
Reducing product sizes to maintain price for customers	4.17%	3
Shift production outside Canada	0.00%	0
Reduce workforce	0.00%	0

Raising Prices or Adjusting Pricing Strategy

- 25–50% price increase for American clients.
- Large increase in cost of materials will have to raise prices.

Exploring New Markets or Revenue Streams

- Look for other markets.
- Working with clients to help better promote their business with affordable pricing.
- My business will involve marketing for local and regional authors. Revenue stream to be Kobo Affiliate and YouTube within 5 years.

Limited Flexibility or Severe Consequences

- Potentially shut down.

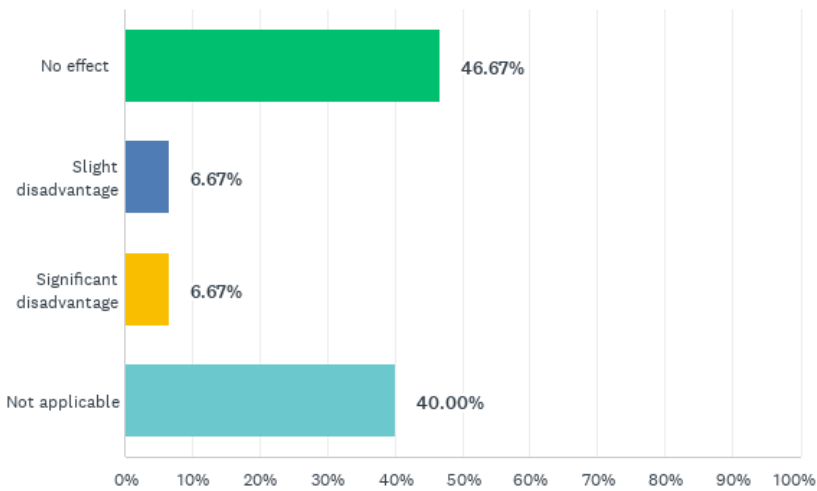
Other

- Wedding venue, not sure it applies.

G12. How will these tariffs affect your ability to compete with U.S. based companies in the U.S. market?

Answered: 75

Skipped: 1

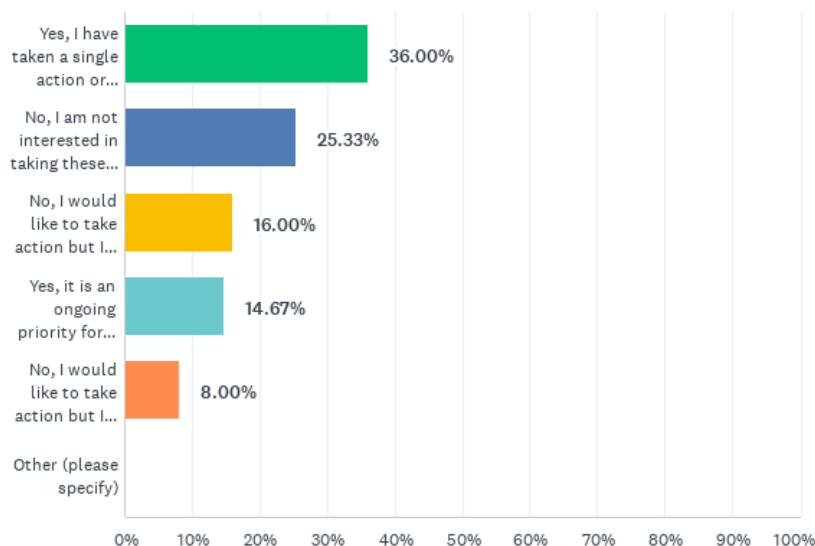


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No effect	46.67%	35
Slight disadvantage	6.67%	5
Significant disadvantage	6.67%	5
Not applicable	40.00%	30
TOTAL		75

#G13. Have you taken action in the last 5 years to increase your business's energy efficiency and/or reduce your business's carbon emissions?

Answered: 75

Skipped: 1

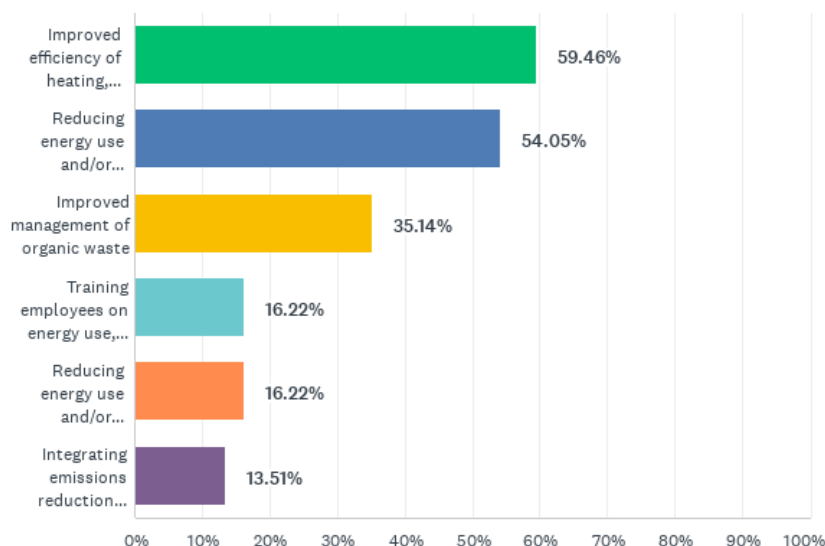


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, I have taken a single action or multiple single actions when possible	36.00%	27
No, I am not interested in taking these actions	25.33%	19
No, I would like to take action but I am not sure what action to take	16.00%	12
Yes, it is an ongoing priority for the business with multiple and/or impactful actions taken	14.67%	11
No, I would like to take action but I am unable to at this time	8.00%	6
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		75

#G13 a. If you have taken action, what were these actions? Check all that apply

Answered: 37

Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Improved efficiency of heating, cooling and/or ventilation systems	59.46%	22
Reducing energy use and/or emissions from business operations	54.05%	20
Improved management of organic waste	35.14%	13
Training employees on energy use, waste reduction, etc.	16.22%	6
Reducing energy use and/or emissions from supply chain	16.22%	6
Integrating emissions reduction considerations into business strategy	13.51%	5

Energy Efficiency Upgrades

- I'm a work from home business but we have improved our home's efficiency.

Operational Efficiency

- Prioritizing digital records and signatures over paper/hard copies.

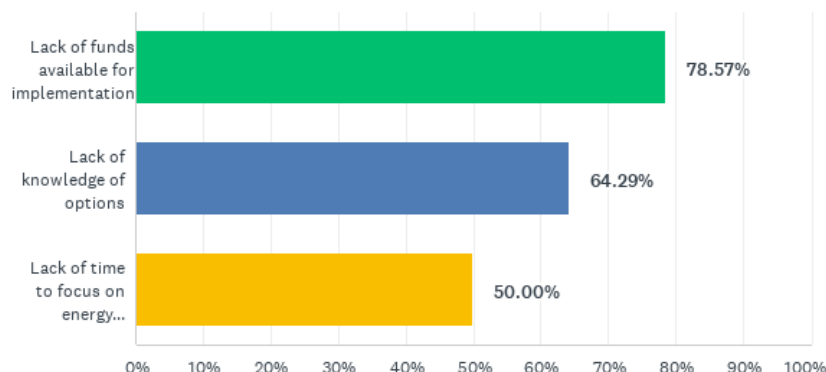
Other

- Purchasing local.
- I am a renewable energy business developer.
- I stopped using products that are harmful to the environment (epoxy resin), I lease an electric car, re-use canvas, and purchase art supplies from other artists who can no longer use them along with purchasing new from Canadian suppliers.

#G13 b. If you have not taken action and would like to, what is preventing you? Check all that apply.

Answered: 14

Skipped: 23



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Lack of funds available for implementation	78.57%	11
Lack of knowledge of options	64.29%	9
Lack of time to focus on energy efficiency and/or carbon emissions	50.00%	7
TOTAL		14

Home-Based Business Challenges

- I run a home-based writing business and I'm not sure how I can improve my energy efficiency.
- My business is home-based, and I would like to improve energy efficiency within my home. I have purchased a more energy efficient auto for visits to clients.

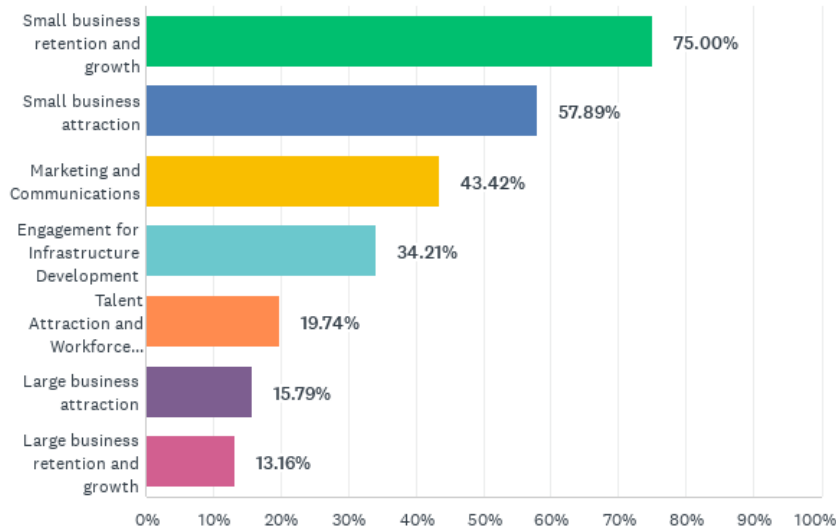
Other

- Feedback on energy efficient grants put out by the govt fall very short of the promises made while looking into how each work.

#G16. What should the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Economic Development focus on for the next 5 years? Please pick top 3.

Answered: 76

Skipped: 0

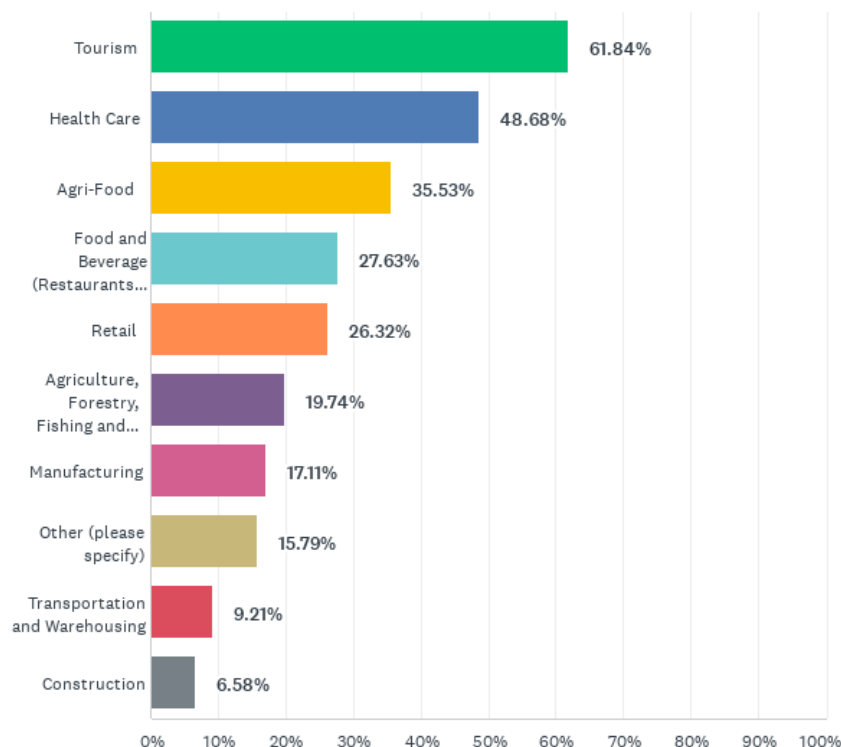


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Small business retention and growth	75.00%	57
Small business attraction	57.89%	44
Marketing and Communications	43.42%	33
Engagement for Infrastructure Development	34.21%	26
Talent Attraction and Workforce Development	19.74%	15
Large business attraction	15.79%	12
Large business retention and growth	13.16%	10

#G17. In support of the Leeds Grenville diversified economy, what business sectors require Counties Economic Development support? Please pick top 3

Answered: 76

Skipped: 0



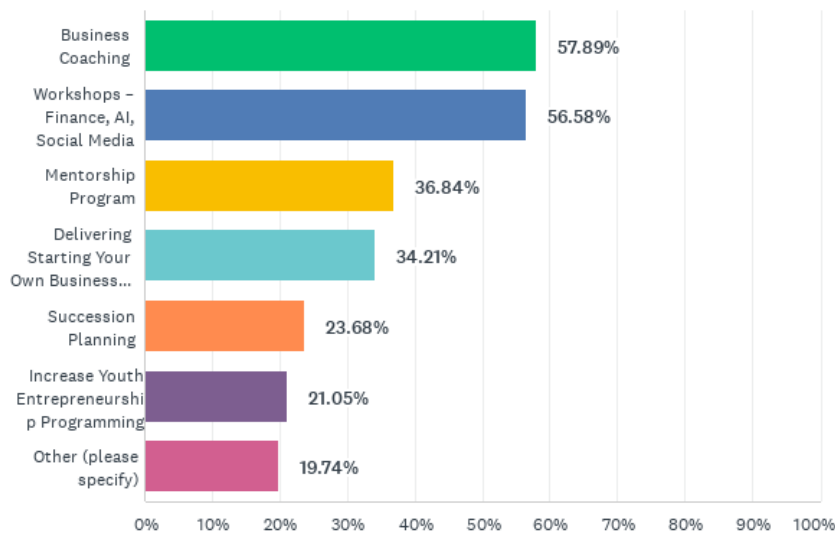
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Tourism	61.84%	47
Health Care	48.68%	37
Agri-Food	35.53%	27
Food and Beverage (Restaurants, Bars, Catering, Food Service)	27.63%	21
Retail	26.32%	20
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	19.74%	15
Manufacturing	17.11%	13
Other (please specify)	15.79%	12
Transportation and Warehousing	9.21%	7
Construction	6.58%	5

- All who need it, I don't believe it can be simplified.
- Tech trades training and licensing.
- Money management.
- Local fitness and recreation programs.
- Arts and entertainment.
- Helping media in area, newsprint especially.
- Arts.
- Sustainability.
- Recreation.
- Event management.
- Road improvements.

#G18. To grow small businesses, what areas should Counties support? Pick top 3

Answered: 76

Skipped: 0



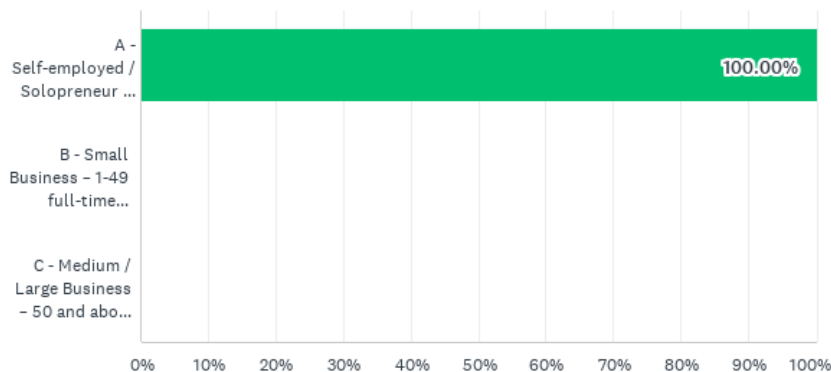
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Business Coaching	57.89%	44
Workshops – Finance, AI, Social Media	56.58%	43
Mentorship Program	36.84%	28
Delivering Starting Your Own Business Workshops	34.21%	26
Succession Planning	23.68%	18
Increase Youth Entrepreneurship Programming	21.05%	16
Other (please specify)	19.74%	15

- Multi use office space (Head Office in Ottawa) a shared location where businesses can rent office space in communities
- Help market and encourage people to come out to local programs
- Professional behaviour
- Focus on business operating from home non brick and mortar
- Funding opportunities
- All of the above has been done. New larger Grants to all SMALL RURAL businesses NEED funding and grants!!! Not ONLY large corporations/manufacturers that have already so often received way to many millions in too many large grants and programs/loans
- Ontario Small Business Centres and BDC courses are terrific for my needs
- Micro-loans, grants, arts funding
- Business coaching from someone demonstrating strong results
- LESS RED TAPE
- Grants
- Small business grants
- Improve roads, less regulation and permits
- Grants/funding attached to programming

G19. Identify your business size

Answered: 76

Skipped: 0



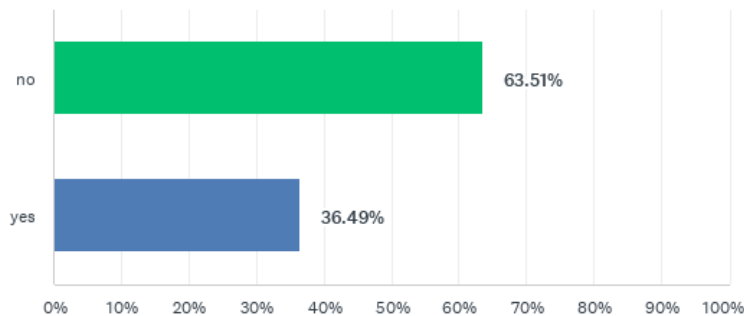
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A – Self-employed / Solopreneur / No employees	100.00%	76
B – Small Business – 1-49 full-time equivalent employees	0.00%	0
C – Medium / Large Business – 50 and above full-time equivalent employees	0.00%	0
TOTAL		76

A - Self-employed / Solopreneur / No employees

A1. Do you have broadband / internet connectivity challenges?

Answered: 74

Skipped: 2

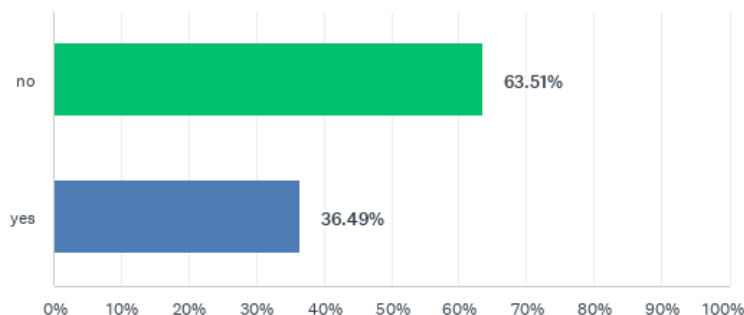


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	63.51%	47
Yes	36.49%	27
TOTAL		74

A2. Do you have cellular phone connectivity challenges?

Answered: 74

Skipped: 2

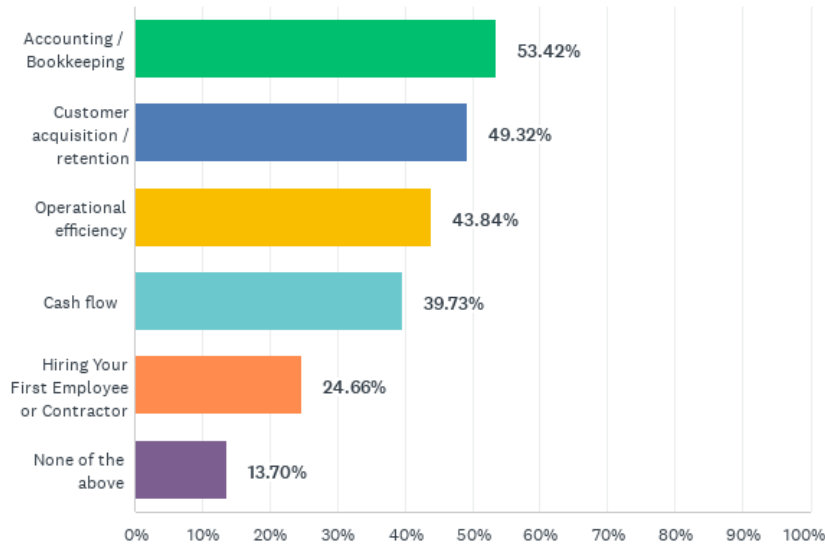


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	63.51%	47
Yes	36.49%	27
TOTAL		74

A3-a What type of workshops / training would you like to see offered for Small Business Growth? (check all that apply)

Answered: 73

Skipped: 3

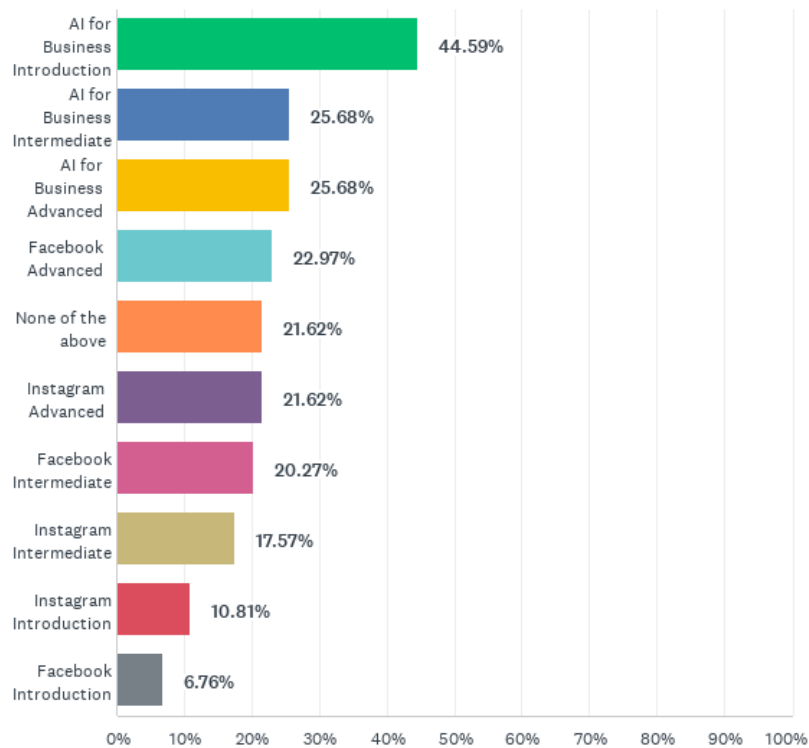


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accounting / Bookkeeping	53.42%	39
Customer acquisition / retention	49.32%	36
Operational efficiency	43.84%	32
Cash flow	39.73%	29
Hiring Your First Employee or Contractor	24.66%	18
None of the above	13.70%	10

A3-b. What type of workshops / training would you like to see offered for Social Media or AI for Business? choose up to 3

Answered: 74

Skipped: 2

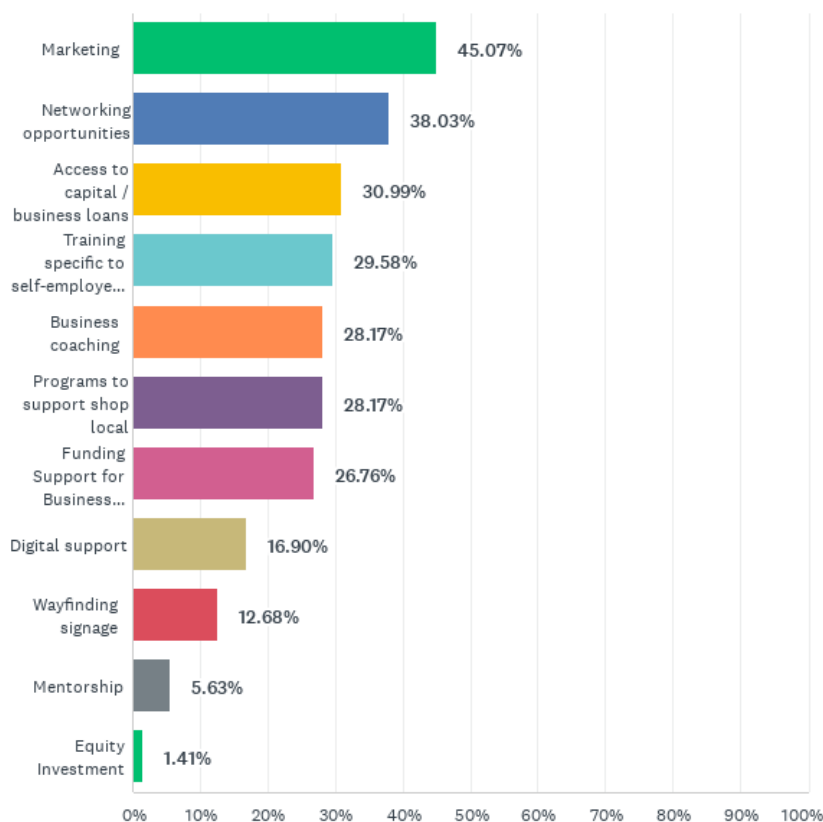


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
AI for Business Introduction	44.59%	33
AI for Business Intermediate	25.68%	19
AI for Business Advanced	25.68%	19
Facebook Advanced	22.97%	17
None of the Above	21.62%	16
Instagram Advanced	21.62%	16
Facebook Intermediate	20.27%	15
Instagram Intermediate	17.57%	13
Instagram Introduction	10.81%	8
Facebook Introduction	6.76%	5

A4. What are the top 3 areas of support that would be most helpful to your business right now?

Answered: 71

Skipped: 5



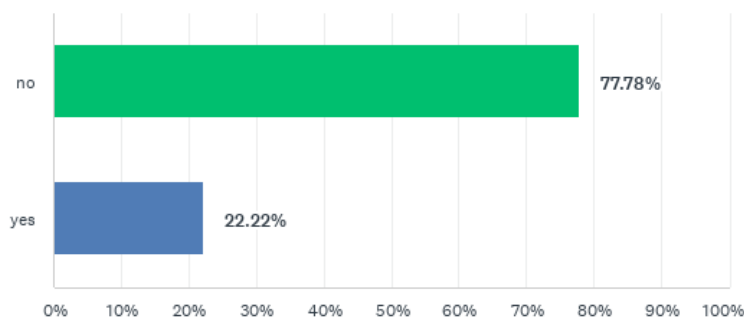
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Marketing	45.07%	32
Networking opportunities	38.03%	27
Access to capital / business loans	30.99%	22
Training specific to self-employed / solopreneurs	29.58%	21
Business coaching	28.17%	20
Programs to support shop local	28.17%	20
Funding support for business expansion	26.76%	19
Digital support	16.90%	12
Wayfinding signage	12.68%	9
Mentorship	5.63%	4
Equity Investment	1.41%	1

- Not sure more support is needed. Free time to grind and hustle in business is the current need. Not more training.
- Access to a trained workforce.
- None. I am on track to retirement.

S1. Would you like to connect with a member of the Economic Development / Small Business teams?

Answered: 72

Skipped: 4

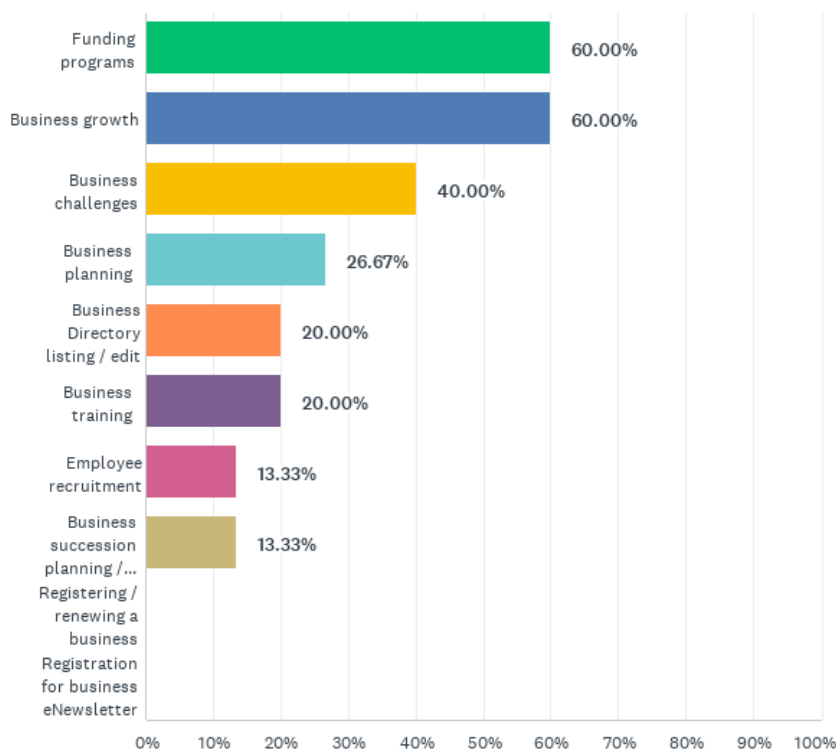


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	77.78%	56
Yes	22.22%	16
TOTAL		72

S1-b. I would like to discuss the following: (choose all that apply)

Answered: 15

Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Funding programs	60.00%	9
Business growth	60.00%	9
Business challenges	40.00%	6
Business planning	26.67%	4
Business Directory listing / edit	20.00%	3
Business training	20.00%	3
Employee recruitment	13.33%	2
Business succession planning / closing a business	13.33%	2
Registering / renewing a business	0.00%	0
Registration for business eNewsletter	0.00%	0

Additional Notes:

- Survey Timeframe: April 29 to June 4, 2025
- Survey Distribution: Businesses that were part the Counties Economic Development business directory, with active email addresses, received the survey directly. In addition, some members of Business Support Working Group distributed the survey through their membership lists and social media channels.
- Economic implications impacting survey results: U.S. tariffs ranging from 10-25% on Canada products were introduced on March 4th, followed by Canadian 25% retaliatory tariffs on some U.S. products. Some CUSMA-compliant products were exempt. On June 3rd, U.S. announced a 50% tariff on steel and aluminum effective June 4th. Constant changes in tariff messaging occurred through the survey period.

Business Support Working Group:

Municipalities

Athens | Augusta | Brockville | Edwardsburgh Cardinal | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Front of Yonge | Gananoque | Leeds and the Thousand Islands | Merrickville-Wolford | North Grenville | Prescott | Rideau Lakes | Westport

MP / MPP

MP Office of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands-Rideau Lakes

MPP Office of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

Community Futures Development Corporations

1000 Islands CDC | Community Futures Grenville | Valley Heartland CFDC

Small Business Centres

Leeds Grenville Small Business

Small Business Advisory Centre – Smiths Falls | Lanark

Chambers of Commerce

1000 Islands Gananoque | Brockville and District | Lyndhurst, Seeley's Bay & District | Merrickville and District | North Grenville | South Grenville

BIAs

Downtown Brockville | Downtown Gananoque | Downtown Prescott | Old Town Kemptville

Employment Services

CSE Consulting | Employment and Education Centre | KEYS Job Centre

Other Business & Education Agencies

Regional Tourism Organization 9 | Eastern Ontario Workforce Innovation Board | St. Lawrence College | Kemptville Campus Education and Community Hub | Ontario Tourism Education Corporation | St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership | Ministry of Economic Development Job Creation and Trade – East Region

THANK-YOU!

On behalf of the Business Support Working Group, I would like to thank each business who completed the survey. This report provides the region with key data to help in plan future initiatives to support business.

Ann Weir, Economic Development Manager

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

W: invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans | E: ann.weir@uclg.on.ca

Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

2025 Business Survey Report

July 3, 2025



Small Business
1 - 49 full-time equivalent employees

Survey Timeframe: April 29 – June 4, 2025

Communities

Athens | Augusta | Brockville | Edwardsburgh Cardinal | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Front of Yonge
Gananoque | Leeds and the Thousand Islands | Merrickville-Wolford | North Grenville | Prescott
Rideau Lakes | Westport

Prepared by:

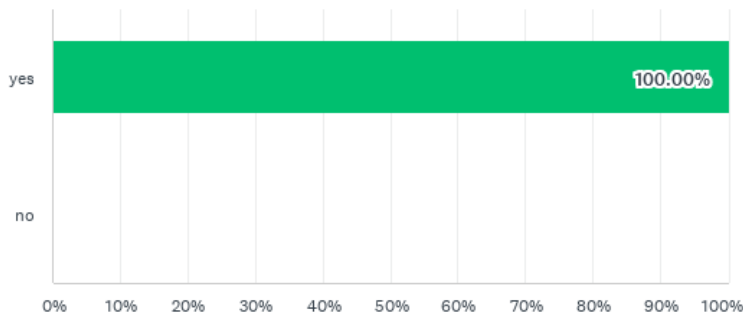
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Economic Development Office
32 Wall Street, Suite 300, Brockville, ON
econdev@uclg.on.ca

invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans

Is your organization a for-profit business registered to carry out business in Ontario? (required)

Answered: 158

Skipped: 0

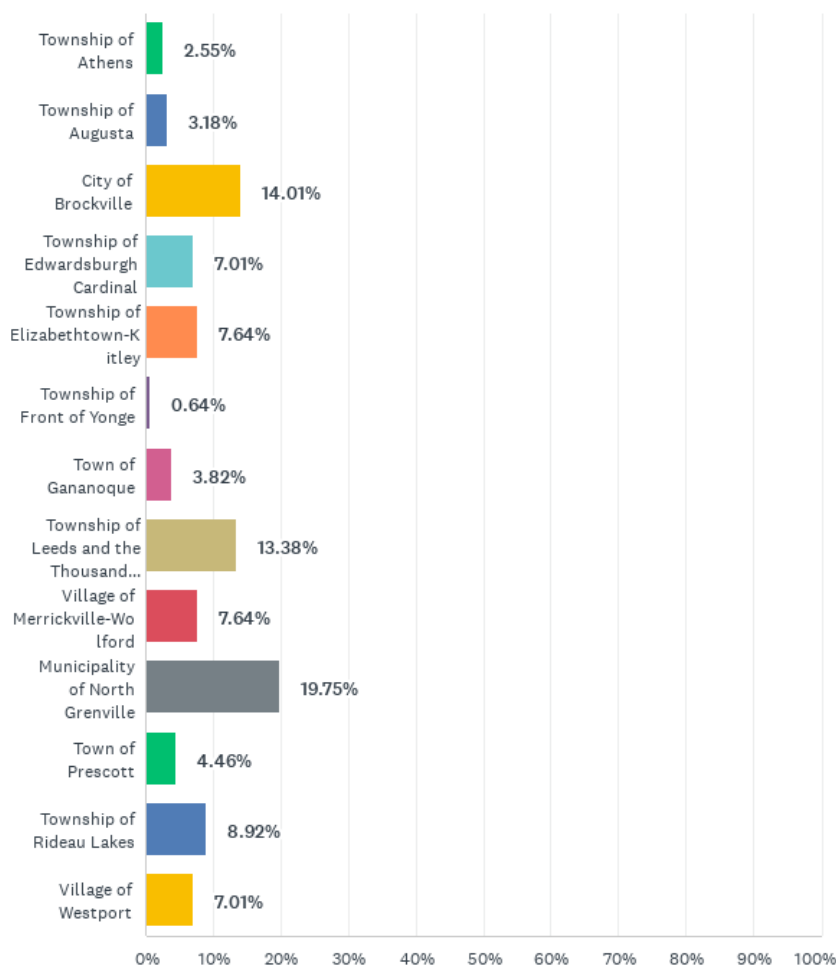


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		100.00%	158
no		0.00%	0
TOTAL			158

#G1. Where is your business located? (if servicing multiple communities, please identify location of your main office)

Answered: 157

Skipped: 1

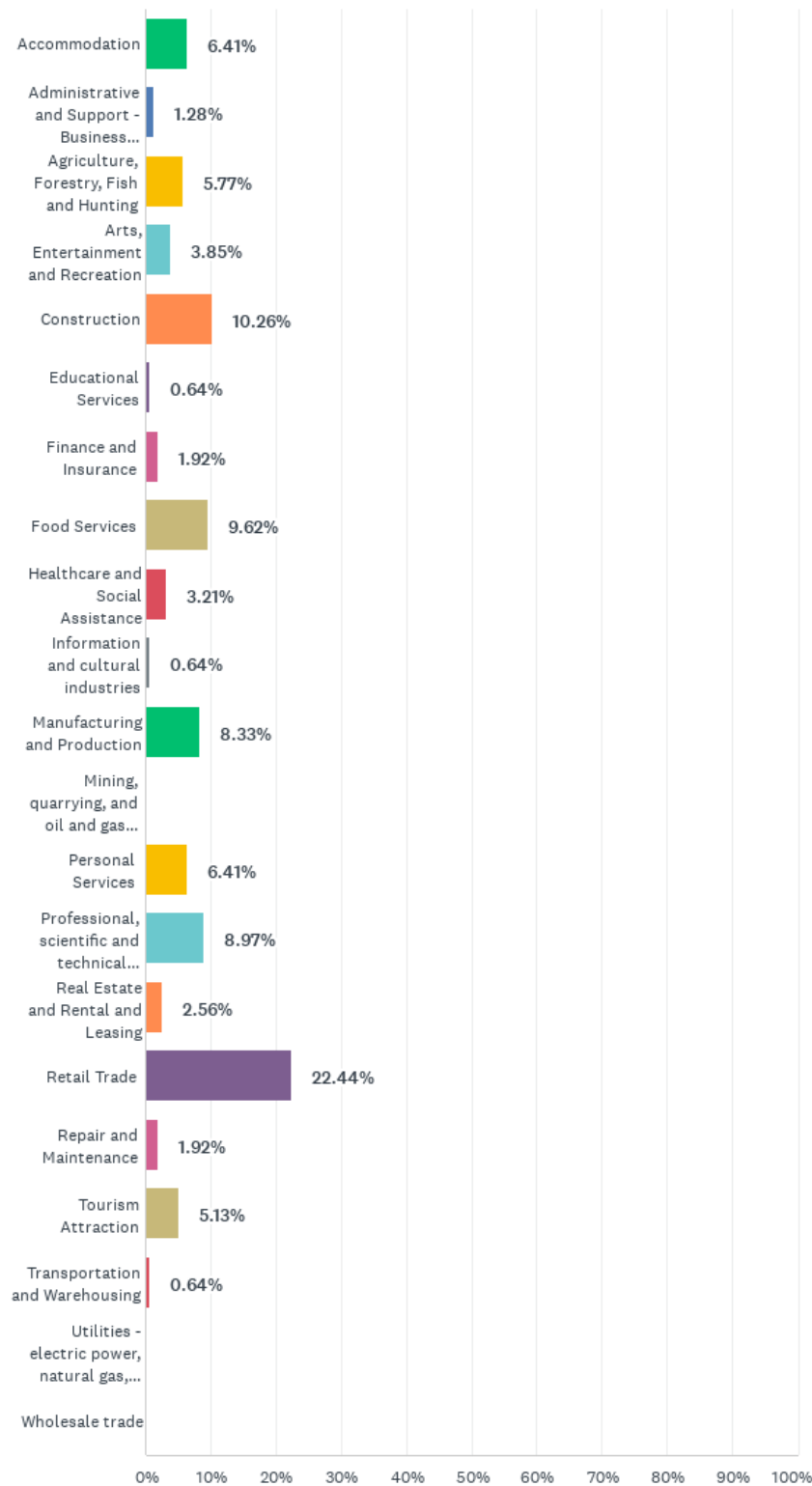


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Township of Athens	2.55%	4
Township of Augusta	3.18%	5
City of Brockville	14.01%	22
Township of Edwardsburgh Cardinal	7.01%	11
Township of Elizabethtown-Kitley	7.64%	12
Township of Front of Yonge	0.64%	1
Town of Gananoque	3.82%	6
Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands	13.38%	21
Village of Merrickville-Wolford	7.64%	12
Municipality of North Grenville	19.75%	31
Town of Prescott	4.46%	7
Township of Rideau Lakes	8.92%	14
Village of Westport	7.01%	11
TOTAL		157

#G2. What sector is your business primarily operating in?(find your business category here)

Answered: 156

Skipped: 2

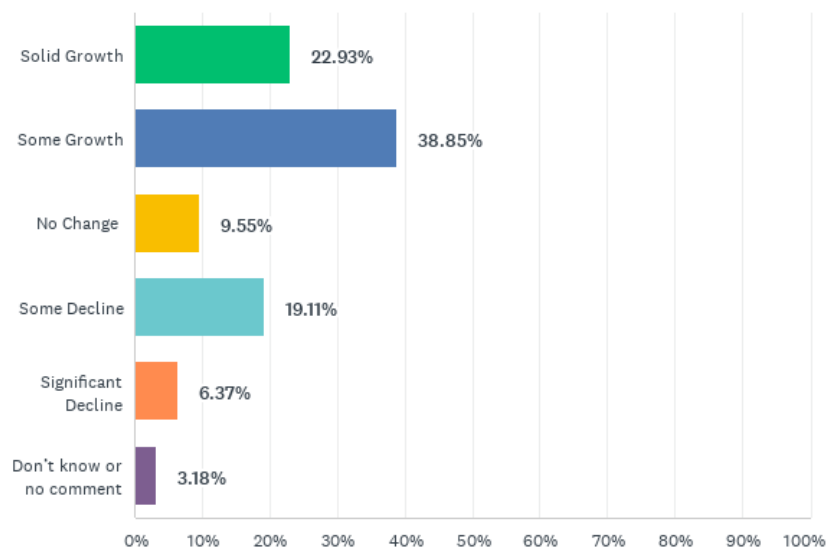


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accommodation	6.41%	10
Administration and Support – Business Services	1.28%	2
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	5.77%	9
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	3.85%	6
Construction	10.26%	16
Educational Services	0.64%	1
Finance and Insurance	1.92%	3
Food Services	9.62%	15
Healthcare and Social Assistance	3.21%	5
Information and cultural industries	0.64%	1
Manufacturing and Production	8.33%	13
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.00%	0
Personal Services	6.41%	10
Professional, scientific and technical services	8.97%	14
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	2.56%	4
Retail Trade	22.44%	35
Repair and Maintenance	1.92%	3
Tourism Attraction	5.13%	8
Transportation and Warehousing	0.64%	1
Utilities – electric power, natural gas, water-sewage	0.00%	0
Wholesale trade	0.00%	0
TOTAL		156

#G3. In your last fiscal year, how did your sales / revenues perform?

Answered: 157

Skipped: 1

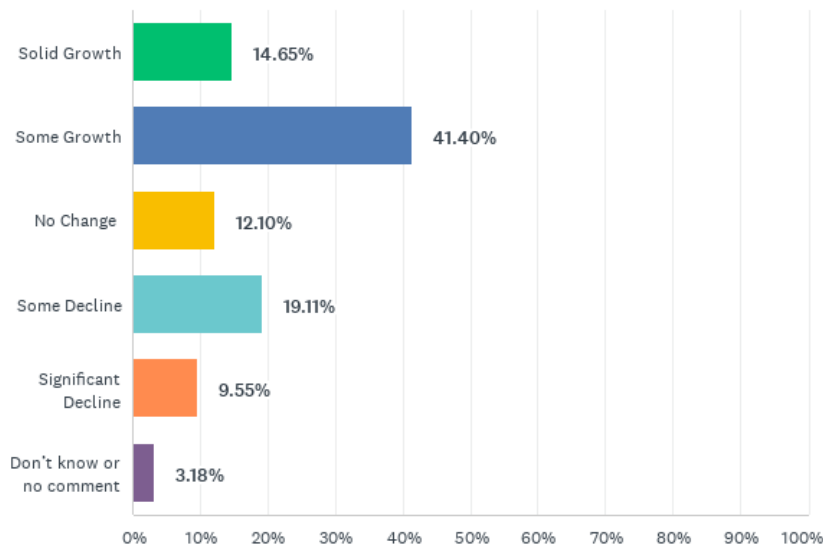


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Solid Growth	22.93%	36
Some Growth	38.85%	61
No Change	9.55%	15
Some Decline	19.11%	30
Significant Decline	6.37%	10
Don't know or no comment	3.18%	5
TOTAL		157

#G4. How did your net income in the last fiscal year compare to the previous year?

Answered: 157

Skipped: 1

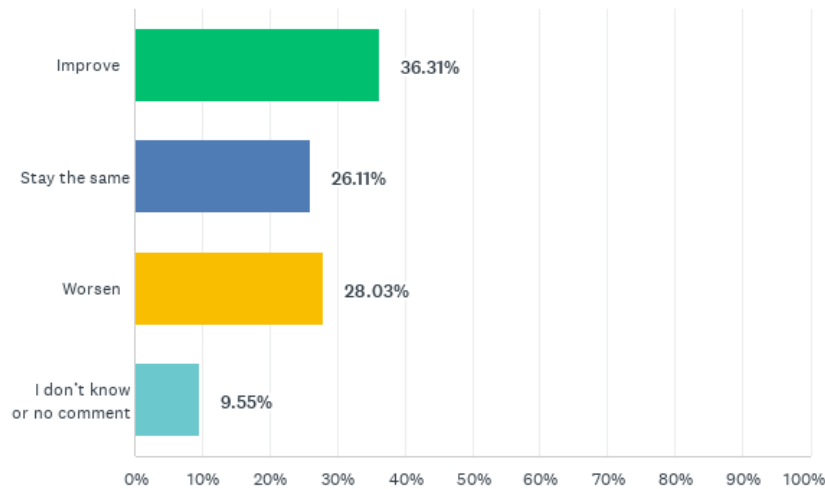


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Solid Growth	14.65%	23
Some Growth	41.40%	65
No Change	12.10%	19
Some Decline	19.11%	30
Significant Decline	9.55%	15
Don't know or no comment	3.18%	5
TOTAL		157

#G5. Over the next year, do you expect the market for your business sector to:

Answered: 157

Skipped: 1

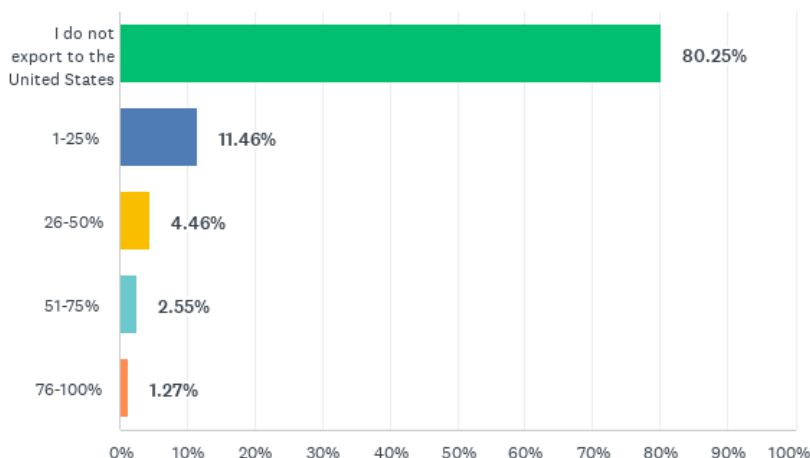


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Improve	36.31%	57
Stay the same	26.11%	41
Worsen	28.03%	44
I don't know or no comment	9.55%	15
TOTAL		157

#G6. What percentage of your business's exports are directed to the United States?

Answered: 157

Skipped: 1

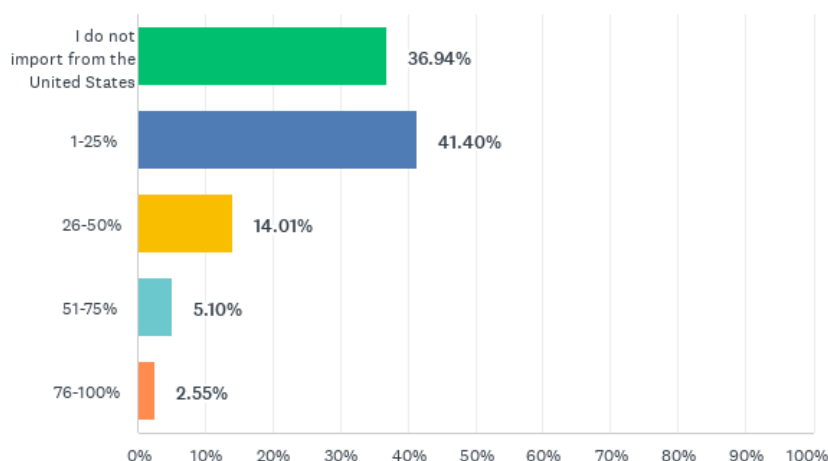


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I do not export to the United States	80.25%	126
1-25%	11.46%	18
26-50%	4.46%	7
51-75%	2.55%	4
76-100%	1.27%	2
TOTAL		157

#G7. What percentage of your business relies on imports from the United States?

Answered: 157

Skipped: 1

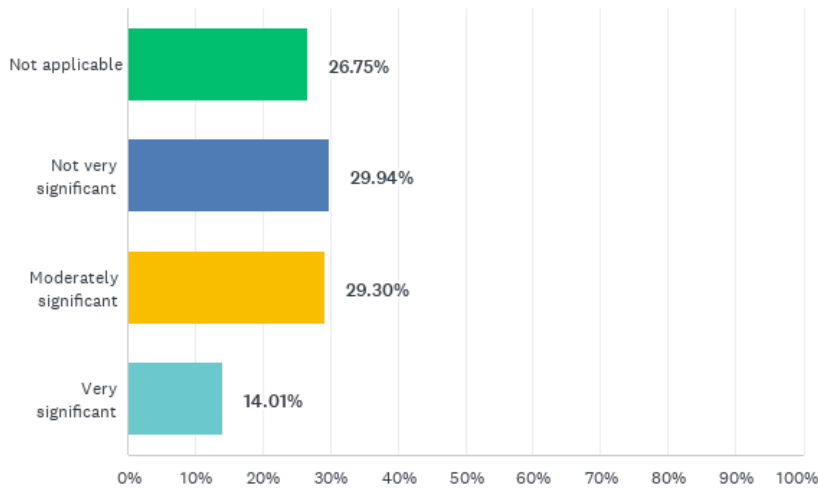


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I do not import from the United States	36.94%	58
1-25%	41.40%	65
26-50%	14.01%	22
51-75%	5.10%	8
76-100%	2.55%	4
TOTAL		157

#G8. How significant is the U.S. market to your business's overall revenue?

Answered: 157

Skipped: 1

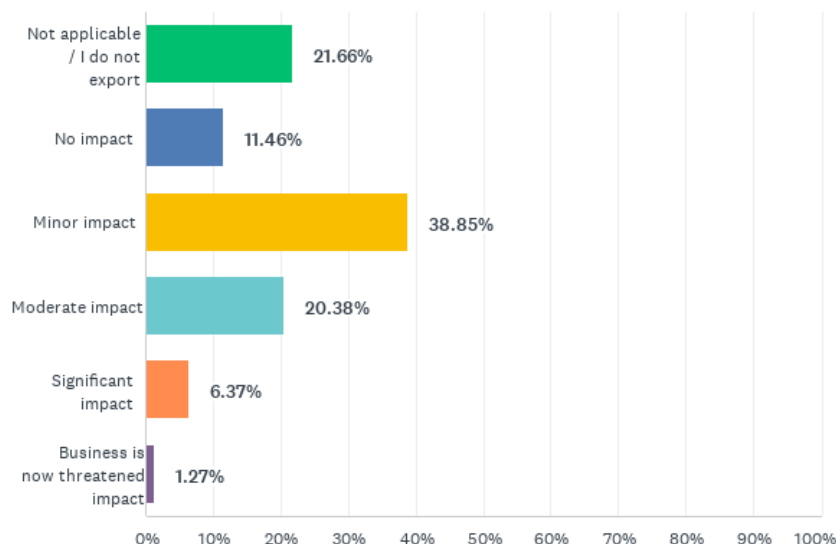


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not applicable	26.75%	42
Not very significant	29.94%	47
Moderately significant	29.30%	46
Very significant	14.01%	22
TOTAL		157

#G9. Has the 25% tariff on Canadian goods impacted your business operations?

Answered: 157

Skipped: 1

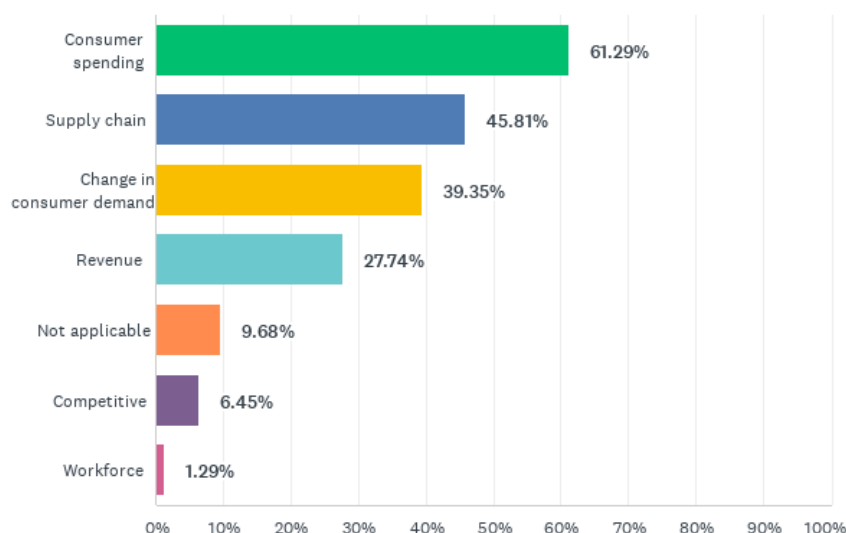


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not applicable / I do not export	21.66%	34
No impact	11.46%	18
Minor impact	38.85%	61
Moderate impact	20.38%	32
Significant impact	6.37%	10
Business is now threatened impact	1.27%	2
TOTAL		157

#G10. What specific areas of your business are or will be most affected by the economic trade war? Choose all that apply.

Answered: 155

Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Consumer spending	61.29%	95
Supply chain	45.81%	71
Change in consumer demand	39.35%	61
Revenue	27.74%	43
Not applicable	9.68%	15
Competitive	6.45%	10
Workforce	1.29%	2

Increased cost of doing business

- Cost of goods.
- Retail price.
- Equipment/parts pharmaceuticals, etc.
- Price of goods went up and less availability of US goods from suppliers.
- We may experience an increase in cost of supplies we order in order to run our business.
- We travel to the US from Feb–May approximately 4x for business and with the declining value of our dollar the expenses are overwhelming and swallowed all revenue this year.

Reduced consumer spending

- Clients are watching their disposable cash more closely.
- Fear in the marketplace for buying a new home. Panic. Confusion.

Tourism and cross-border travel impacts

- US tourism traffic.
- Visitors to Gananoque from the U.S. may change.
- Cross Border Tourism Decline Expected.
- Unsure what the real impact will be with tourism.
- Canadians have drastically reduced travel to the USA, which has resulted in sales declines of 30–40%

Other

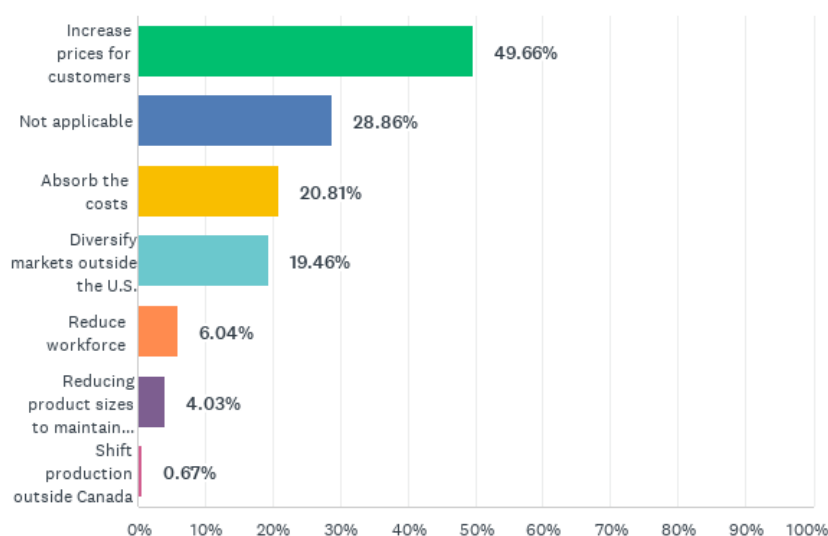
- Fees, Permits, Taxes.
- Stress impacting individual and community levels; heightened need for mental health support.

#G11. How is or will your business be responding to the tariffs?

Choose all that apply.

Answered: 149

Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Increase prices for customers	49.66%	74
Not applicable	28.86%	43
Absorb the costs	20.81%	31
Diversify markets outside the U.S.	19.46%	29
Reduce workforce	6.04%	9
Reducing product sizes to maintain price for customers	4.03%	6
Shift production outside Canada	0.67%	1

Raising Prices or Adjusting Pricing Strategy

- Some items, pricing have risen. Others we've eaten some of the tariffs. Other items our wholesalers have eaten some. No real consistent answer to this.

Avoiding or Replacing U.S. Products

- Avoiding U.S. imports for the time being.
- Eliminating all U.S. products, replacing with Canadian products.
- Stopped purchasing U.S. products when possible, increasing prices on them when a Canadian alternative is not available.

Exploring New Markets or Revenue Streams

- Diversification foremost.
- Focus on Canadian tourism, not increasing prices.

Improving Efficiency or Operational Changes

- Become more efficient to minimize the impact.
- Seeking alternative supply channel.

Limited Flexibility or Severe Consequences

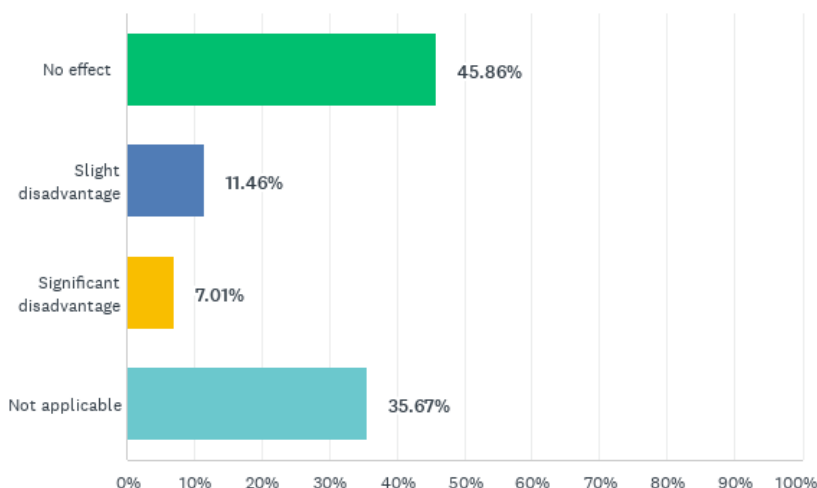
- If sales don't materialize, I may have to reduce workforce.
- We are 100% dependent on cross border traffic by federal regulation. We have no ability to pivot to new markets.

Other

- Not sure yet. Still waiting to see how it will affect us directly in terms of supplies.
- Fitness industry is mainly affected by other people's lack of disposable income.

G12. How will these tariffs affect your ability to compete with U.S. based companies in the U.S. market?

Answered: 157 Skipped: 1

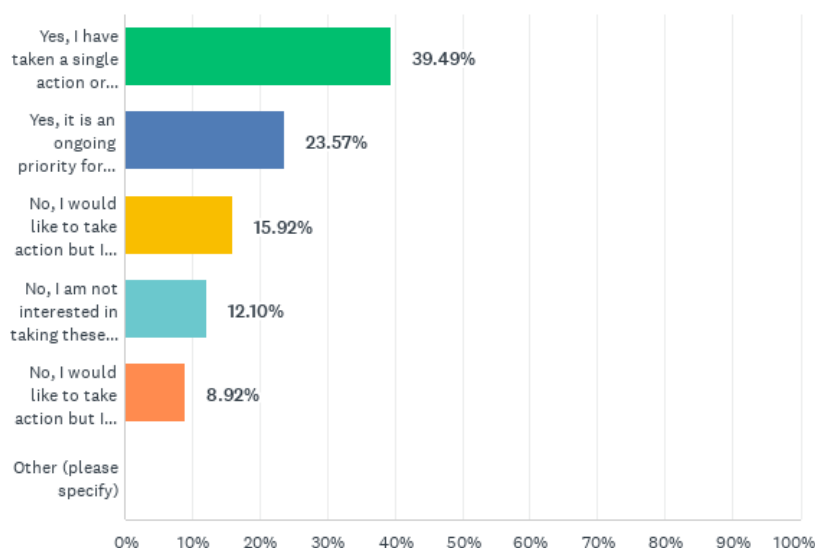


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No effect	45.86%	72
Slight disadvantage	11.46%	18
Significant disadvantage	7.01%	11
Not applicable	35.67%	56
TOTAL		157

#G13. Have you taken action in the last 5 years to increase your business's energy efficiency and/or reduce your business's carbon emissions?

Answered: 157

Skipped: 1

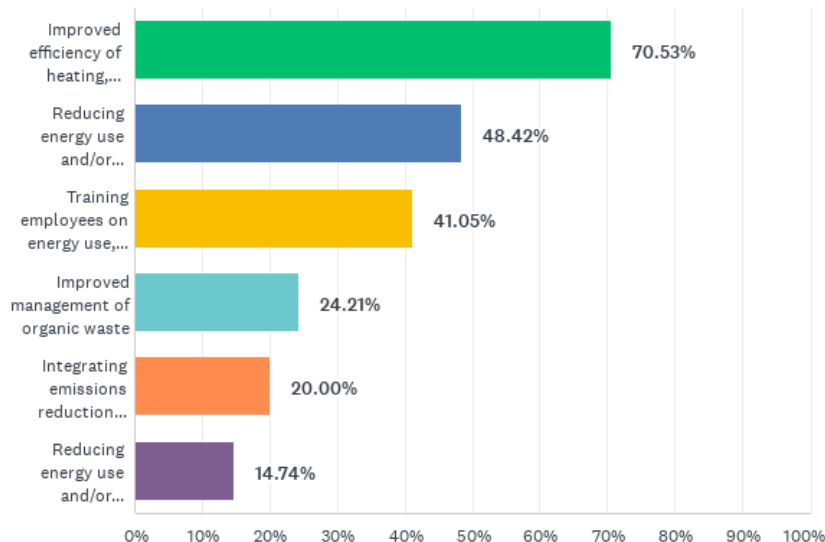


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, I have taken a single action or multiple single actions when possible	39.49%	62
Yes, it is an ongoing priority for the business with multiple and/or impactful actions taken	23.57%	37
No, I would like to take action but I am not sure what action to take	15.92%	25
No, I am not interested in taking these actions	12.10%	19
No, I would like to take action but I am unable to at this time	8.92%	14
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0

#G13 a. If you have taken action, what were these actions? Check all that apply

Answered: 95

Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Improved efficiency of heating, cooling and/or ventilation systems	70.53%	67
Reducing energy use and/or emissions from business operations	48.42%	46
Training employees on energy use, waste reduction, etc.	41.05%	39
Improved management of organic waste	24.21%	23
Integrating emissions reduction considerations into business strategy	20.00%	19
Reducing energy use and/or emissions from supply chain	14.74%	14

Energy Efficiency Upgrades

- Changing equipment.
- Installed new lighting in store.
- Conversion to all LED lighting, smart thermostats.
- Purchased newer equipment.
- Trying to install solar to offset energy use by Hydro One has been extremely unhelpful.
- The business building was designed from the start to be very energy-efficient.

Sustainable Transportation

- Using freight delivery options instead of several courier deliveries.
- Multi-tasking more - deliveries linked with locations travelling to, pickups, etc.
- Looking for better ways to reduce vehicle emissions, however I can't afford battery powered cars.

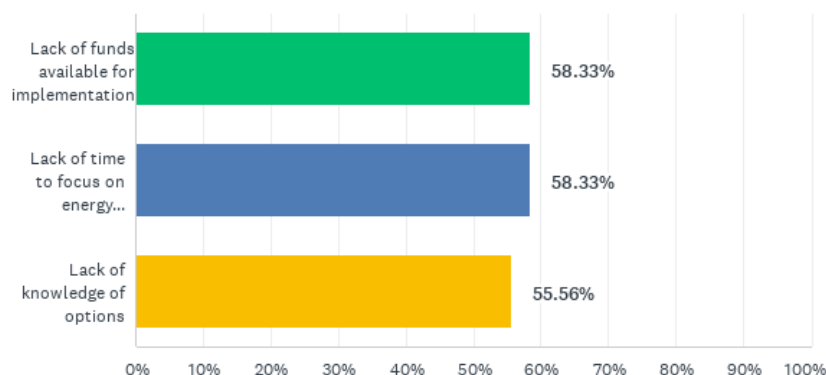
Other

- We are a Regenerative farm, with NetZero emissions.
- Added a battery powered product line to our mix of offerings. Encouraging supplies to reduce landfill end products in shipping.

#G13 b. If you have not taken action and would like to, what is preventing you? Check all that apply.

Answered: 36

Skipped: 22



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Lack of funds available for implementation	58.33%	21
Lack of time to focus on energy efficiency and/or carbon emissions	58.33%	21
Lack of knowledge of options	55.56%	20

Home-Based Business Challenges

- My business is home-based, and I would like to improve energy efficiency within my home. I have purchased a more energy efficient auto for visits to clients.

Industry-Specific or Operational Limitations

- We need certain supplies required to run our healthcare business.
- Our equipment is very industry specific.

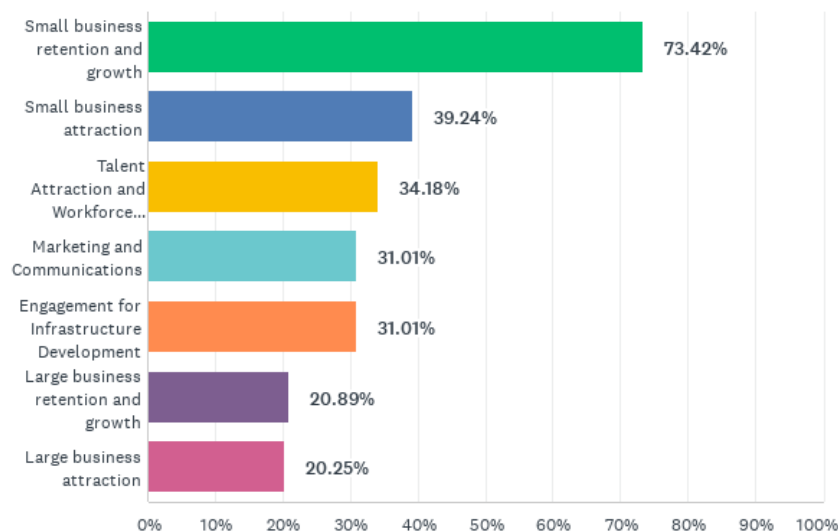
Other

- I rent the space I'm working from and don't have a lot of control over our biggest energy efficiency issues (very large windows bleeding heat in winter and AC in summer).

#G16. What should the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Economic Development focus on for the next 5 years? Please pick top 3.

Answered: 158

Skipped: 0

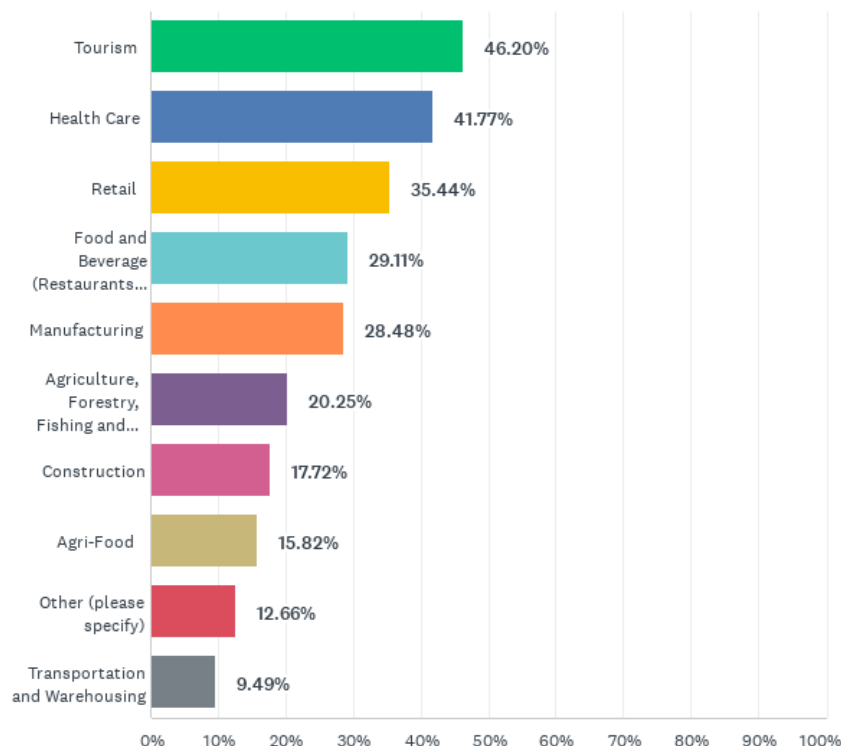


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Small business retention and growth	73.42%	116
Small business attraction	39.24%	62
Talent Attraction and Workforce Development	34.18%	54
Marketing and Communications	31.01%	49
Engagement for Infrastructure Development	31.01%	49
Large business retention and growth	20.89%	33
Large business attraction	20.25%	32

#G17. In support of the Leeds Grenville diversified economy, what business sectors require Counties Economic Development support? Please pick top 3

Answered: 158

Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Tourism	46.20%	73
Health Care	41.77%	66
Retail	35.44%	56
Food and Beverage (Restaurants, Bars, Catering, Food Service)	29.11%	46
Manufacturing	28.48%	45
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	20.25%	32
Construction	17.72%	28
Agri-Food	15.82%	25
Other (please specify)	12.66%	20
Transportation and Warehousing	9.49%	15

Health and Personal Services

- Personal Services.
- Complementary healthcare services that aren't OHIP funded.
- More help for seniors that financially need it.

Trades

- Trades training and business support.
- Labour support.
- Automotive service and repair trade support.

Financial and Professional Services

- Data. Huge opportunity for energy development and data storage.

Arts and Culture

- Culture and Arts.
- Arts and entertainment.
- Arts and Entertainment & programming for youth.

Tourism

- Multi-use trails to retain/attract young families, health reasons and to improve tourism.
- Destination retail coaching is needed to educate/inform how our 25 new homes per year can help sustain and improve business.

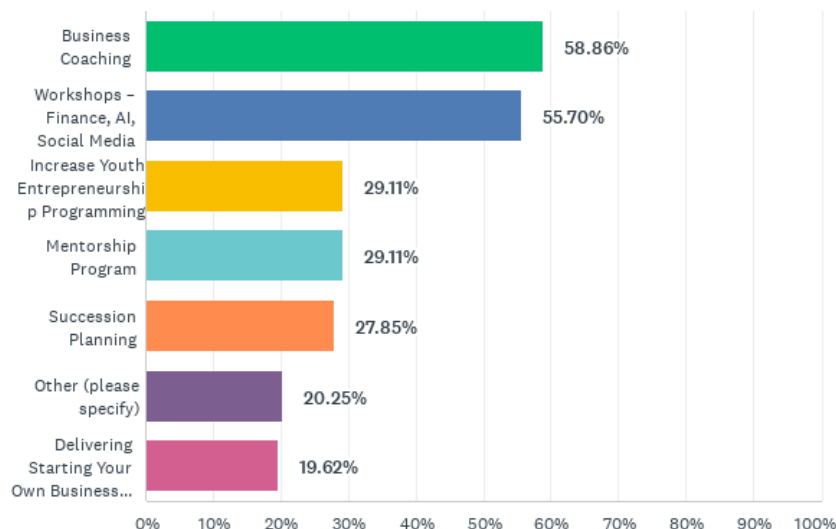
Other

- All.
- Housing.
- Support not severing lots up and down the back Concession Roads!!
- Technology. Requires Restaurants and Bars to attract technical talent.
- We are a fitness and youth development company. If gyms and sport/fitness programs aren't better supported there will simply be none.
- Work towards bringing branch campus of a university to the region.
- Day Care.

#G18. To grow small businesses, what areas should Counties support? Pick top 3

Answered: 158

Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Business Coaching	58.86%	93
Workshops – Finance, AI, Social Media	55.70%	88
Increase Youth Entrepreneurship Programming	29.11%	46
Mentorship Program	29.11%	46
Succession Planning	27.85%	44
Other (please specify)	20.25%	32
Delivering Starting Your Own Business Workshops	19.62%	31

Grants, Funding, and Financial Support

- Grants. (3)
- Tax incentives.
- Financial support programs for S/M businesses.
- Financial support to counter tariffs, promote shop local.
- Small capital seed funding to kickstart small business and attract STEM based startups.
- Grants for physical signage, marketing and promotion.
- Grants and incentives.
- Funding, incubator program.
- How to access financial support to ALL small businesses regardless of how long they've been in business and not just those in tourism.

- Lower Business Taxes, Grant Programs for Small Business, Funding for Staff Training, Marketing the Area, Infrastructure Development and Maintenance.

Government Regulations

- Reduce regulation.
- Dealing with all levels of govt requirements assistance/training.
- Cut red tape, reduce building codes burdens w/ individualized deviations.
- Reduce the statutory and regulatory burden for small business by aligning with provincial and federal jurisdictions to reduce redundancy.
- Our issues have to do with regulatory hurdles (ESA code).
- Reduce 'Red Tape': Building permits, decks, outbuildings etc... \$1500 for a deck permit (for a deck that cost less than \$2000) - months of approval time, and public consult, presentation to council etc. It means people don't want to bother to upgrade and build small projects! This is revenue not spent and earned.
- Speak with Townships to set up and support business within the Township. Many Townships don't know how to strengthen existing and support new business to make each Township stronger in this area.

Training and Education

- Increase in trades training and education.
- Teach effective transformational methodologies to lower their costs and become more competitive. Remove the 'waste' in their processes - every company has more waste than non-waste in their internal processes and they need to learn how to 'see' and remove it effectively.
- It starts in the schools. Highschool should mandate 4 years of business classes.

Marketing, Promotion, and Visibility

- Assist with marketing.
- Advertising, promotion, consumer awareness.
- Social media strategies to entice business retention, tourism and economic development.

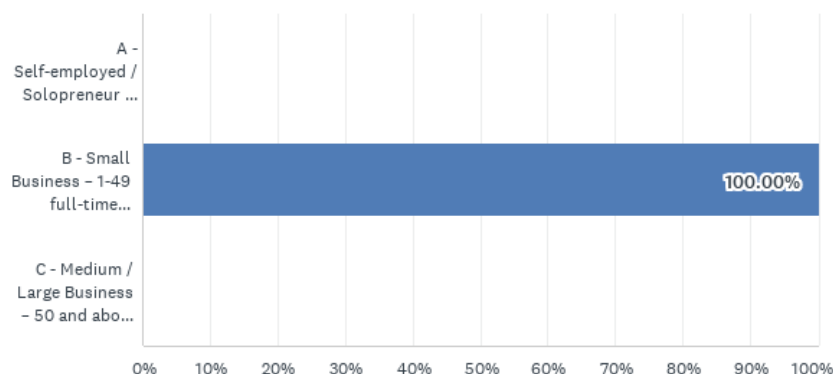
Other

- Skilled workers.
- Business networking.
- Increase focus on small independent businesses in the hospitality and tourism sector.
- Invite successful business owners to present once a month a half hour long Lessons Learned as most will pack up as they do not have a business succession strategy. It is estimated 60% of these small shops and businesses will go unbought because no one gave them a transition strategy workshop. Yet successful business owners inspire others. But we need to give them a forum to network and share Lessons Learned.

G19. Identify your business size

Answered: 158

Skipped: 0



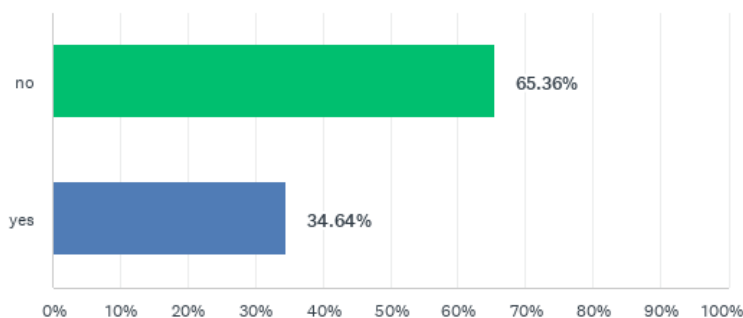
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A – Self-employed / Solopreneur / No employees	0.00%	0
B – Small Business – 1-49 full-time equivalent employees	100.0%	158
C – Medium / Large Business – 50 and above full-time equivalent employees	0.00%	0
TOTAL		158

B - Small Business – 1-49 full-time equivalent employees

#B1. Do you have broadband / internet connectivity challenges?

Answered: 153

Skipped: 5

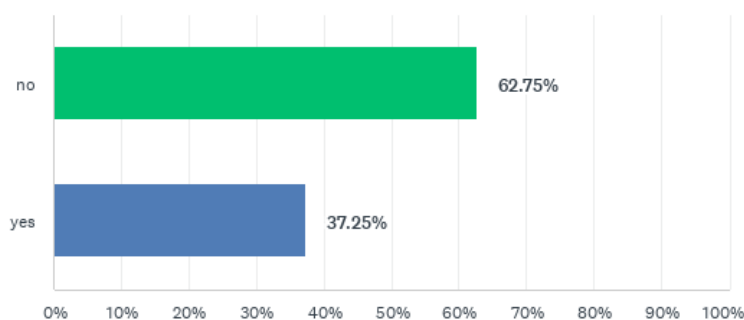


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	65.36%	100
Yes	34.64%	53
TOTAL		153

#B2. Do you have cellular phone connectivity challenges?

Answered: 153

Skipped: 5

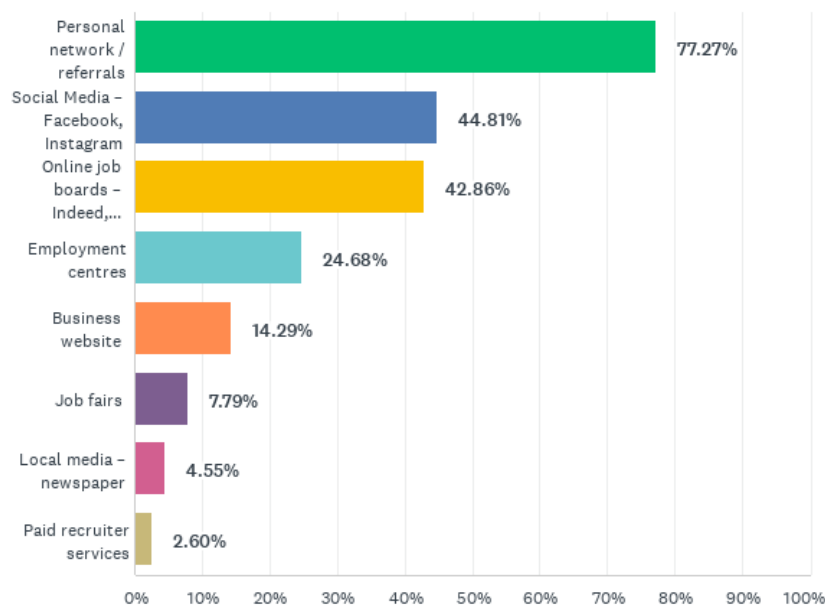


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	62.75%	96
Yes	37.25%	57
TOTAL		153

#B3. What methods do you utilize for employee recruitment that gives you the best results? (Choose your top 3)

Answered: 154

Skipped: 4

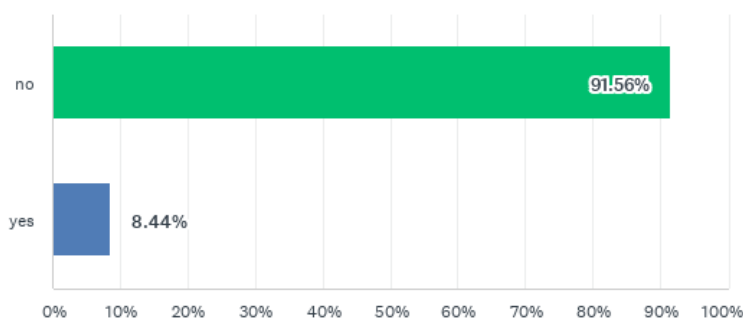


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Personal network / referrals	77.27%	119
Social media – Facebook, Instagram	44.81%	69
Online job boards – Indeed, LinkedIn	42.86%	66
Employment centres	24.68%	38
Business website	14.29%	22
Job Fairs	7.79%	12
Local media – newspaper	4.55%	7
Paid recruiter services	2.60%	4

#B4. In the last 2 years have your hired foreign workers on permit, OR refugee / refugee claimants, OR international students?

Answered: 154

Skipped: 4

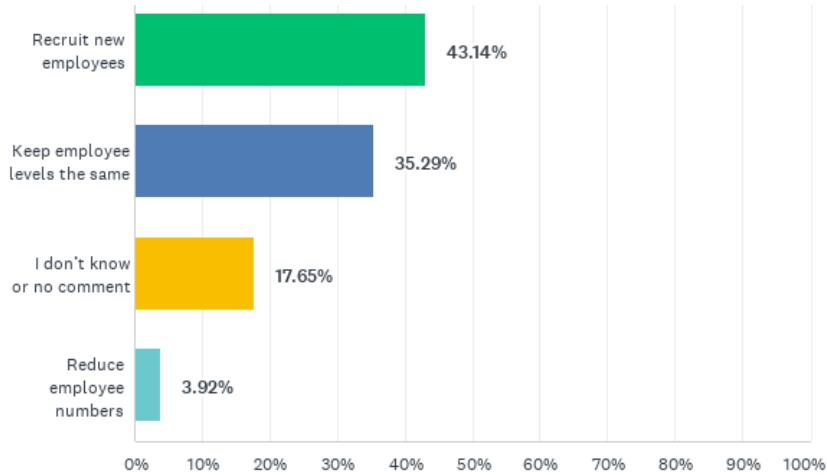


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
no	91.56%	141
yes	8.44%	13
TOTAL		154

#B5. In the next year do you plan to:

Answered: 153

Skipped: 5

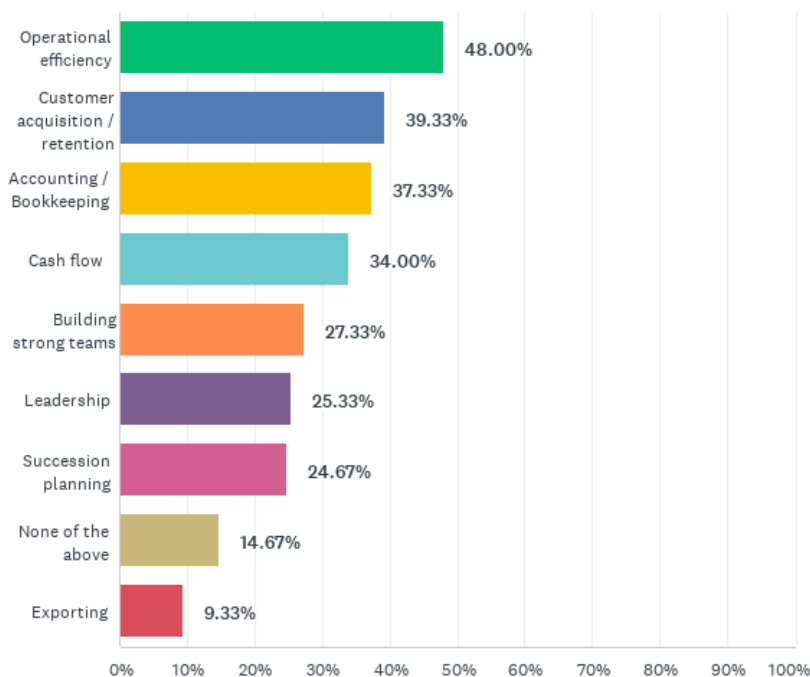


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Recruit new employees	43.14%	66
Keep employee levels the same	35.29%	54
I don't know or no comment	17.65%	27
Reduce employee numbers	3.92%	6
TOTAL		153

#B6-a. What type of workshops / training would you like to see offered to support Small Business Growth? Choose all that apply.

Answered: 150

Skipped: 8

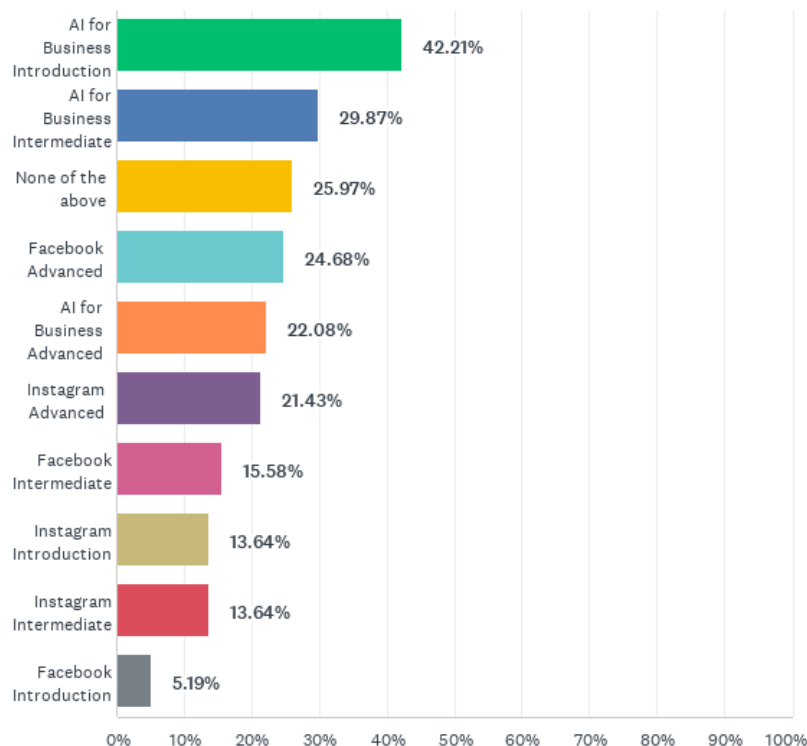


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Operational efficiency	48.00%	75
Customer acquisition / retention	39.33%	59
Accounting / Bookkeeping	37.33%	56
Cash flow	34.00%	51
Building strong teams	27.33%	41
Leadership	25.33%	38
Succession planning	24.67%	37
None of the above	14.67%	22
Exporting	9.33%	14

#B6-b. What type of workshops / training would you like to see offered for Social Media or AI for Business? Choose up to 3

Answered: 154

Skipped: 4

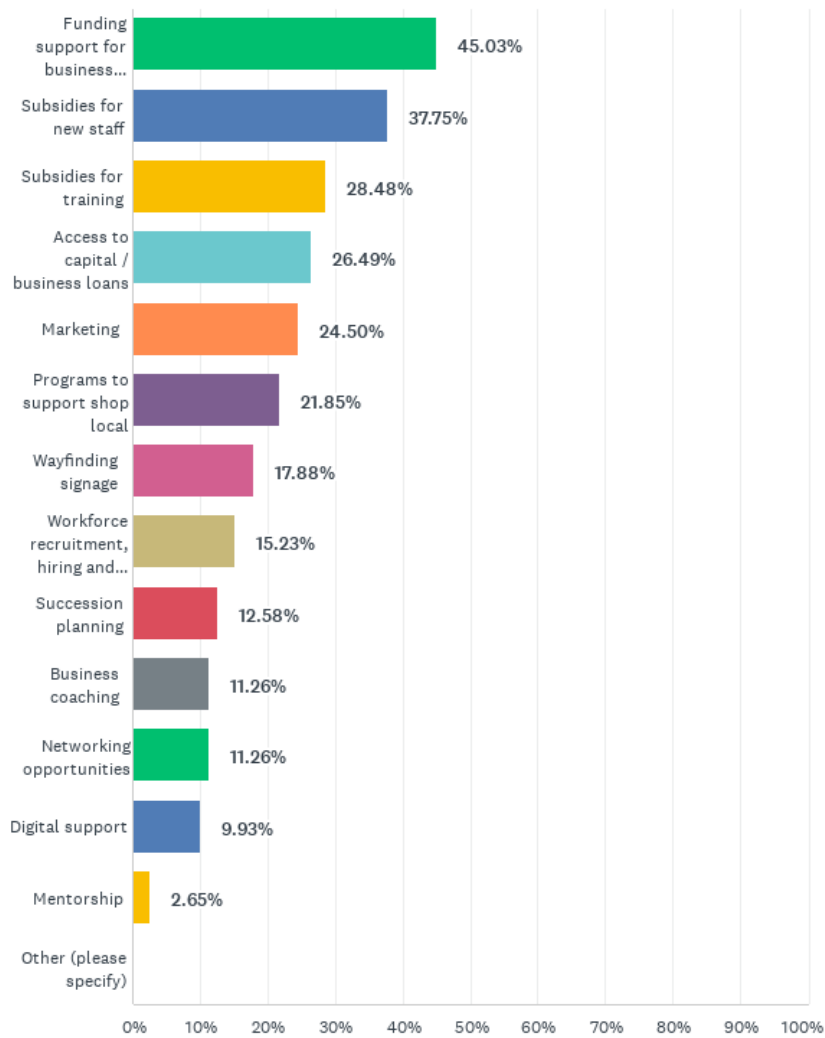


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
AI for Business Introduction	42.21%	65
AI for Business Intermediate	29.87%	46
None of the above	25.97%	40
Facebook Advanced	24.68%	38
AI for Business Advanced	22.08%	34
Instagram Advanced	21.43%	33
Facebook Intermediate	15.58%	24
Instagram Introduction	13.64%	21
Instagram Intermediate	13.64%	21
Facebook Introduction	5.19%	8

#B7. What are the top 3 areas of support that would be most helpful to your business right now?

Answered: 151

Skipped: 7



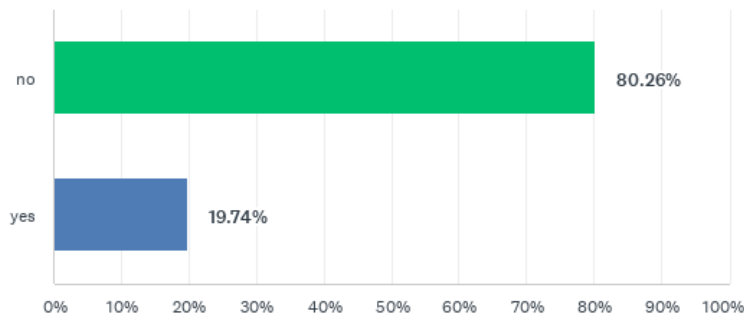
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Funding support for business expansion	45.03%	68
Subsidies for new staff	37.75%	57
Subsidies for training	28.48%	43
Access to capital / business loans	26.49%	40
Marketing	24.50%	37
Programs to support shop local	21.85%	33
Wayfinding signage	17.88%	27
Workforce recruitment, hiring and resourcing staff	15.23%	23
Succession planning	12.58%	19
Business coaching	11.26%	17
Networking opportunities	11.26%	17
Digital support	9.93%	15
Mentorship	2.65%	4
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0

- None. I am on track to retirement.
- Not really looking for support.
- Support dealing with regulations.
- Free up the Red Tape - Let people build, limit wait times for permits and remove permit fees!
- Subsidies for small businesses still recovering/affected by Covid lockdowns and now affected by customers having less available money to spend due to increase costs of gas and groceries.
- Improving tourism to the area, including improving the overall appearance, cleanliness, and perception of the towns.
- More focus on making existing businesses competitive.
- Equipment improvements.

#S1. Would you like to connect with a member of the Economic Development / Small Business teams?

Answered: 152

Skipped: 6

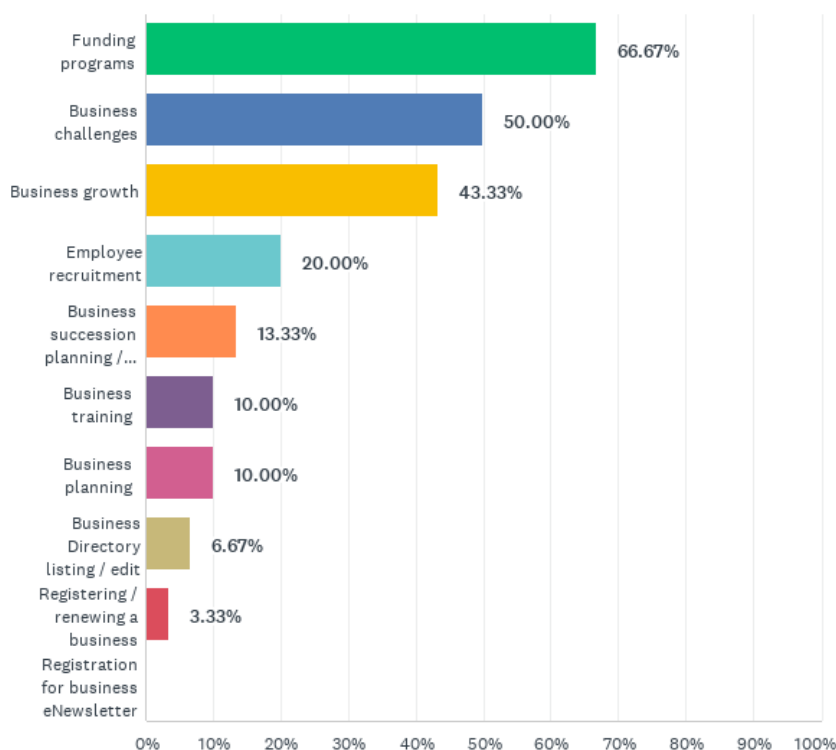


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	80.26%	122
Yes	19.74%	30
TOTAL		152

#S1-b. I would like to discuss the following: (choose all that apply)

Answered: 30

Skipped: 128



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Funding programs	66.67%	20
Business challenges	50.00%	15
Business growth	43.33%	13
Employee recruitment	20.00%	6
Business succession planning / closing a business	13.33%	4
Business training	10.00%	3
Business planning	10.00%	3
Business Directory listing / edit	6.67%	2
Registering / renewing a business	3.33%	1
Registration for business eNewsletter	0.00%	0

Additional Notes:

- Survey Timeframe: April 29 to June 4, 2025
- Survey Distribution: Businesses that were part the Counties Economic Development business directory, with active email addresses, received the survey directly. In addition, some members of Business Support Working Group distributed the survey through their membership lists and social media channels.
- Economic implications impacting survey results: U.S. tariffs ranging from 10-25% on Canada products were introduced on March 4th, followed by Canadian 25% retaliatory tariffs on some U.S. products. Some CUSMA-compliant products were exempt. On June 3rd, U.S. announced a 50% tariff on steel and aluminum effective June 4th. Constant changes in tariff messaging occurred through the survey period.

Business Support Working Group:

Municipalities

Athens | Augusta | Brockville | Edwardsburgh Cardinal | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Front of Yonge | Gananoque | Leeds and the Thousand Islands | Merrickville-Wolford | North Grenville | Prescott | Rideau Lakes | Westport

MP / MPP

MP Office of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands-Rideau Lakes

MPP Office of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

Community Futures Development Corporations

1000 Islands CDC | Community Futures Grenville | Valley Heartland CFDC

Small Business Centres

Leeds Grenville Small Business

Small Business Advisory Centre – Smiths Falls | Lanark

Chambers of Commerce

1000 Islands Gananoque | Brockville and District | Lyndhurst, Seeley's Bay & District | Merrickville and District | North Grenville | South Grenville

BIAs

Downtown Brockville | Downtown Gananoque | Downtown Prescott | Old Town Kemptville

Employment Services

CSE Consulting | Employment and Education Centre | KEYS Job Centre

Other Business & Education Agencies

Regional Tourism Organization 9 | Eastern Ontario Workforce Innovation Board | St. Lawrence College | Kemptville Campus Education and Community Hub | Ontario Tourism Education Corporation | St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership | Ministry of Economic Development Job Creation and Trade – East Region

THANK-YOU!

On behalf of the Business Support Working Group, I would like to thank each business who completed the survey. This report provides the region with key data to help in plan future initiatives to support business.

Ann Weir, Economic Development Manager

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

W: invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans | E: ann.weir@uclg.on.ca

Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

2025 Business Survey Report

July 3, 2025



Medium / Large Business -
50 and above full-time equivalent employees

Survey Timeframe: April 29 – June 4, 2025

Communities

Athens | Augusta | Brockville | Edwardsburgh Cardinal | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Front of Yonge
Gananoque | Leeds and the Thousand Islands | Merrickville-Wolford | North Grenville | Prescott
Rideau Lakes | Westport

Prepared by:

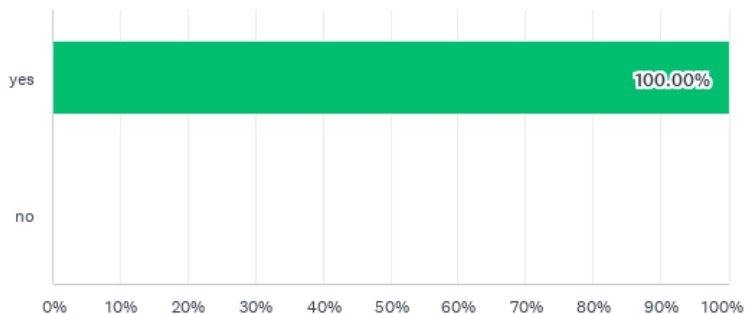
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Economic Development Office
32 Wall Street, Suite 300, Brockville, ON
econdev@uclg.on.ca

invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans

Is your organization a for-profit business registered to carry out business in Ontario? (required)

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

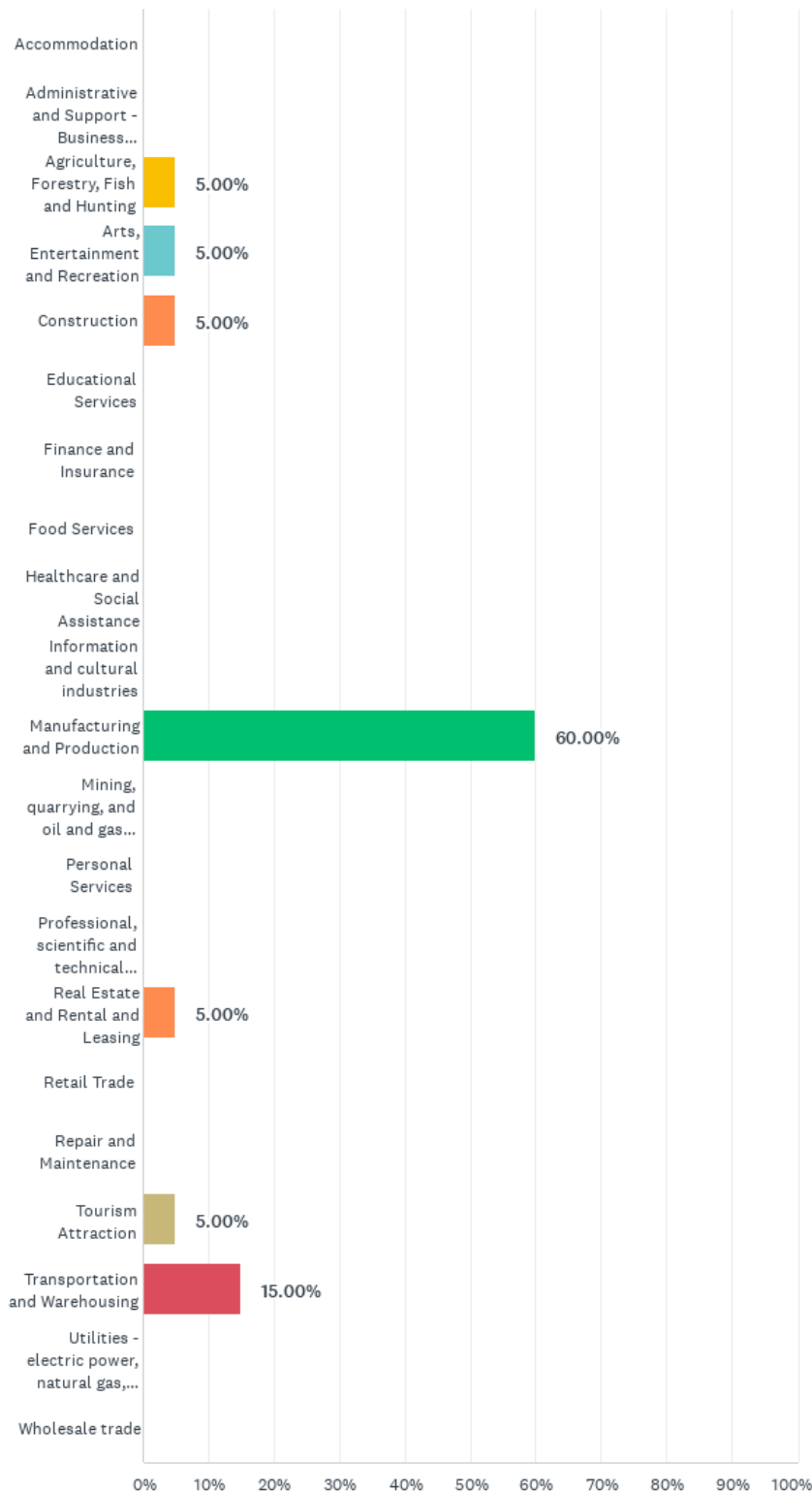


ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		100.00%	20
no		0.00%	0
TOTAL			20

#G2. What sector is your business primarily operating in?(find your business category here)

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

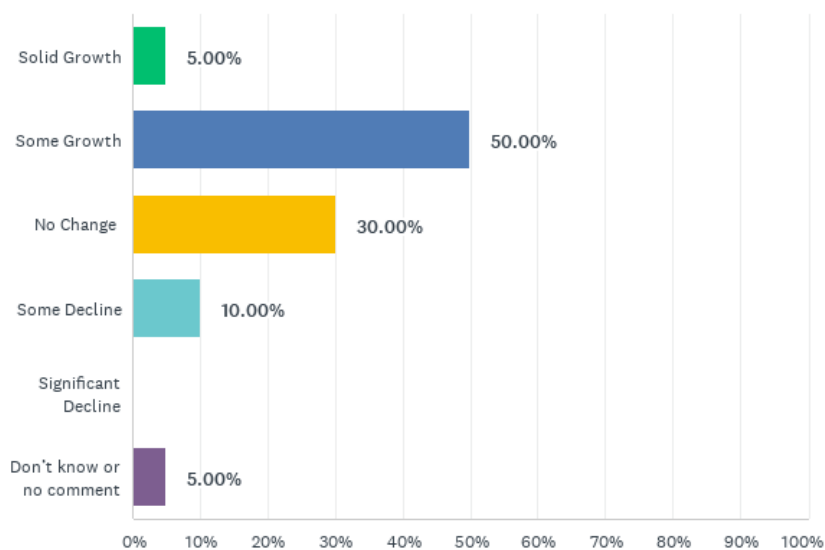


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accommodation	0.00%	0
Administration and Support – Business Services	0.00%	0
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	5.00%	1
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	5.00%	1
Construction	5.00%	1
Educational Services	0.00%	0
Finance and Insurance	0.00%	0
Food Services	0.00%	0
Healthcare and Social Assistance	0.00%	0
Information and cultural industries	0.00%	0
Manufacturing and Production	60.00%	12
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	0.00%	0
Personal Services	0.00%	0
Professional, scientific and technical services	0.00%	0
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	5.00%	1
Retail Trade	0.00%	0
Repair and Maintenance	0.00%	0
Tourism Attraction	5.00%	1
Transportation and Warehousing	15.00%	3
Utilities – electric power, natural gas, water-sewage	0.00%	0
Wholesale trade	0.00%	0
TOTAL		20

#G3. In your last fiscal year, how did your sales / revenues perform?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

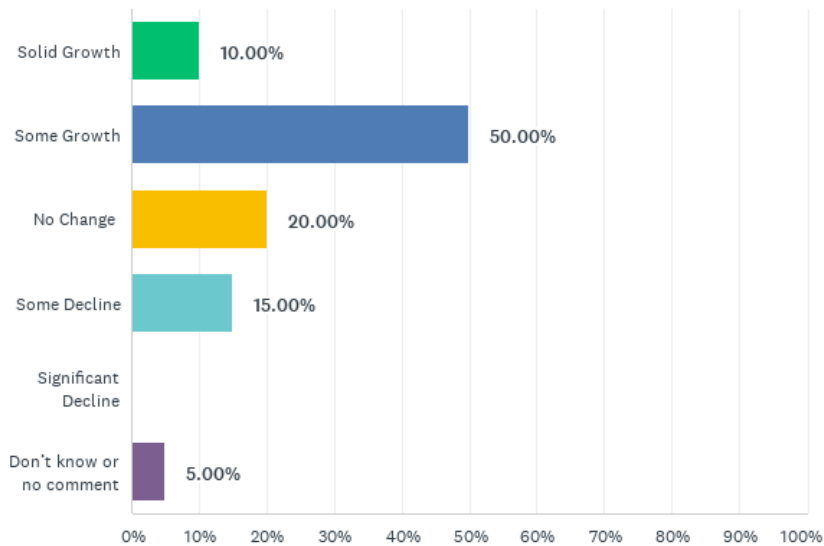


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Solid Growth	5.00%	1
Some Growth	50.00%	10
No Change	30.00%	6
Some Decline	10.00%	2
Significant Decline	0.00%	0
Don't know or no comment	5.00%	1
TOTAL		20

#G4. How did your net income in the last fiscal year compare to the previous year?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

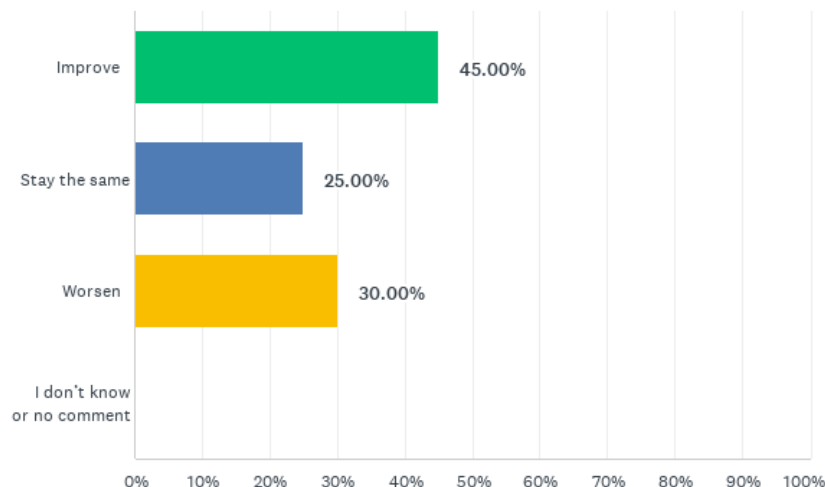


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Solid Growth	10.00%	2
Some Growth	50.00%	10
No Change	20.00%	4
Some Decline	15.00%	3
Significant Decline	0.00%	0
Don't know or no comment	5.00%	1
TOTAL		20

#G5. Over the next year, do you expect the market for your business sector to:

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

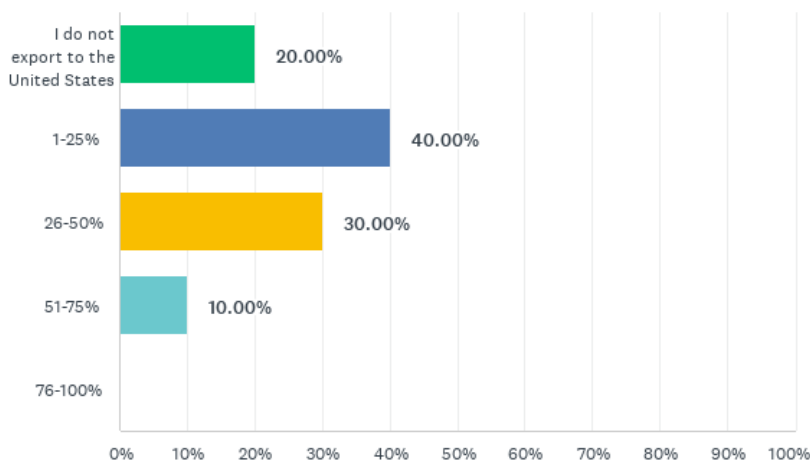


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Improve	45.00%	9
Stay the same	25.00%	5
Worsen	30.00%	6
I don't know or no comment	0.00%	0
TOTAL		20

#G6. What percentage of your business's exports are directed to the United States?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

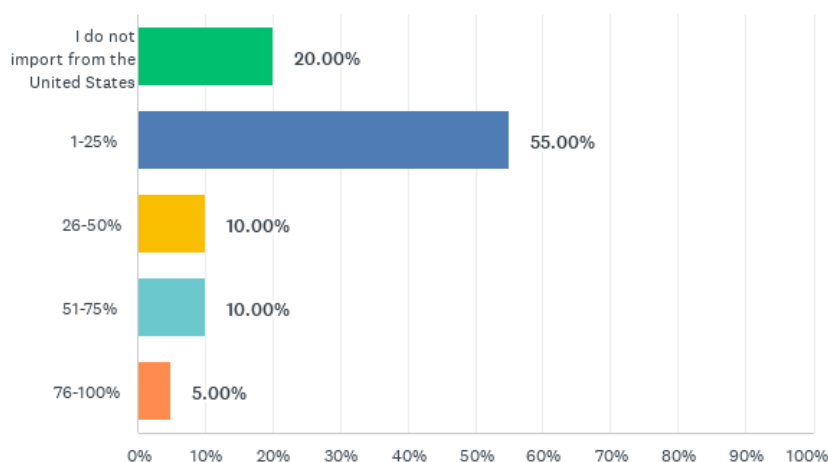


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I do not export to the United States	20.00%	4
1-25%	40.00%	8
26-50%	30.00%	6
51-75%	10.00%	2
76-100%	0.00%	0
TOTAL		20

#G7. What percentage of your business relies on imports from the United States?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

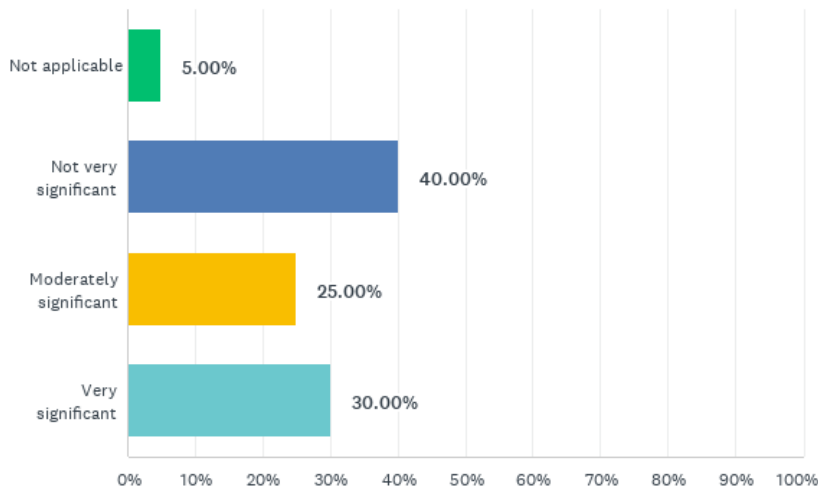


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I do not import from the United States	20.00%	4
1-25%	55.00%	11
26-50%	10.00%	2
51-75%	10.00%	2
76-100%	5.00%	1
TOTAL		20

#G8. How significant is the U.S. market to your business's overall revenue?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

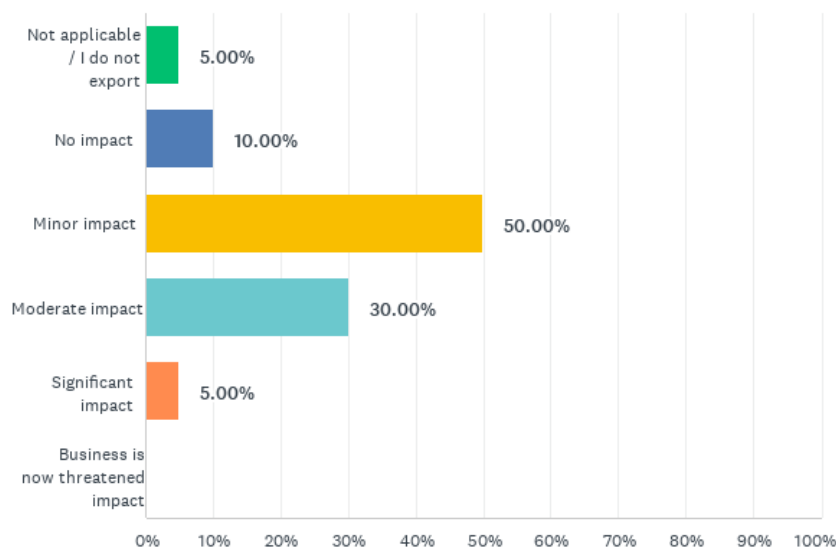


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not applicable	5.00%	1
Not very significant	40.00%	8
Moderately significant	25.00%	5
Very significant	30.00%	6
TOTAL		20

#G9. Has the 25% tariff on Canadian goods impacted your business operations?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

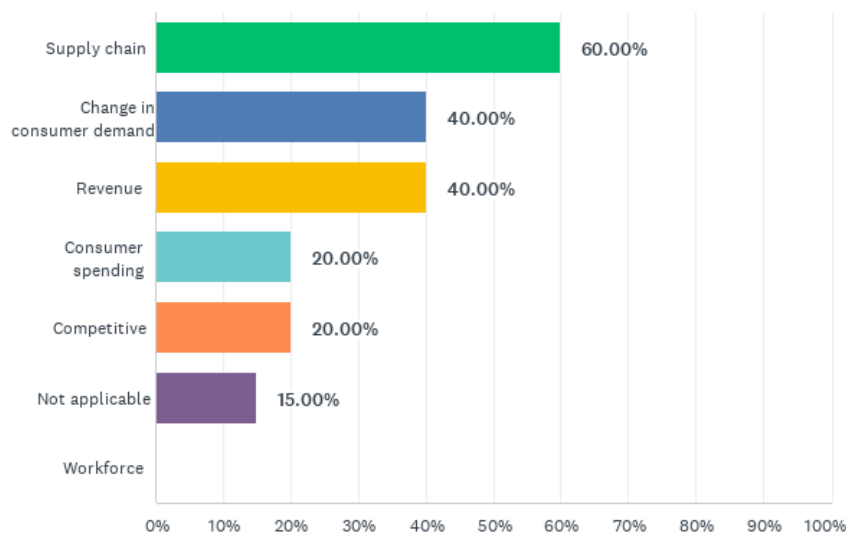


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not applicable / I do not export	5.00%	1
No impact	10.00%	2
Minor impact	50.00%	10
Moderate impact	30.00%	6
Significant impact	5.00%	1
Business is now threatened impact	0.00%	0
TOTAL		20

#G10. What specific areas of your business are or will be most affected by the economic trade war? Choose all that apply.

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Supply chain	60.00%	12
Change in consumer demand	40.00%	8
Revenue	40.00%	8
Consumer spending	20.00%	4
Competitive	20.00%	4
Not applicable	15.00%	3
Workforce	0.00%	0

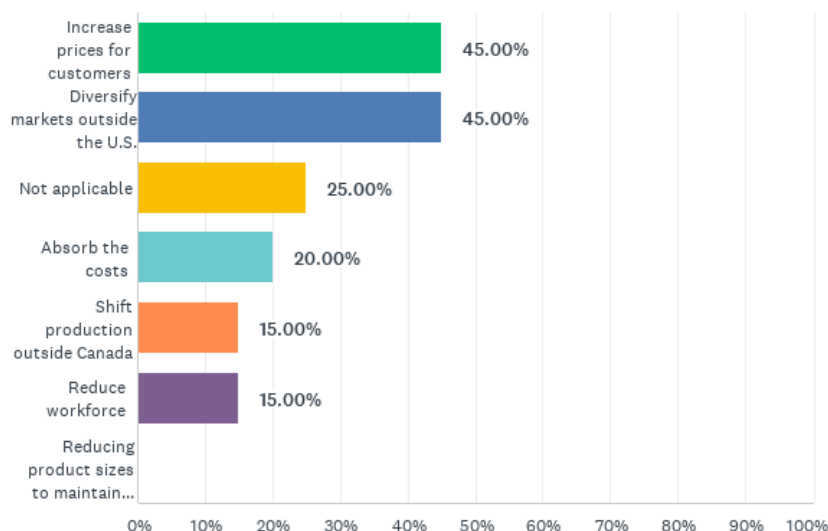
- Effects will be mildly only.

#G11. How is or will your business be responding to the tariffs?

Choose all that apply.

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

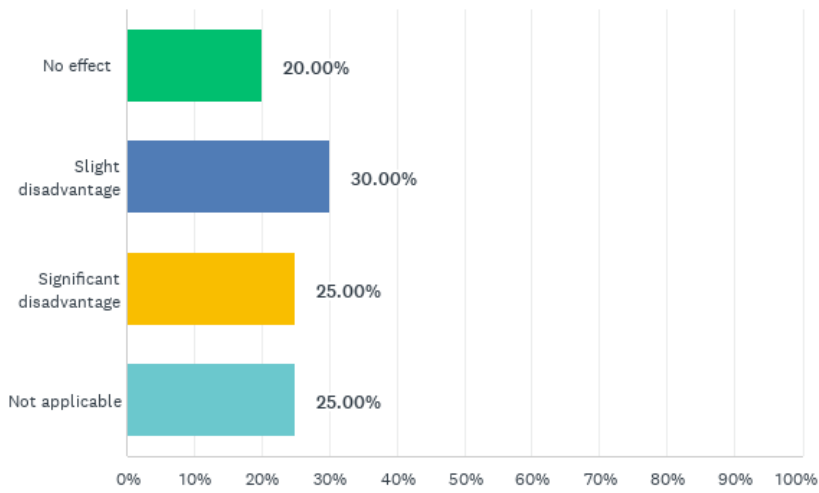


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Increase prices for customers	45.00%	9
Diversify markets outside the U.S.	45.00%	9
Not applicable	25.00%	5
Absorb the costs	20.00%	4
Shift production outside Canada	15.00%	3
Reduce workforce	15.00%	3
Reducing product sizes to maintain price for customers	0.00%	0

#G12. How will these tariffs affect your ability to compete with U.S. based companies in the U.S. market?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

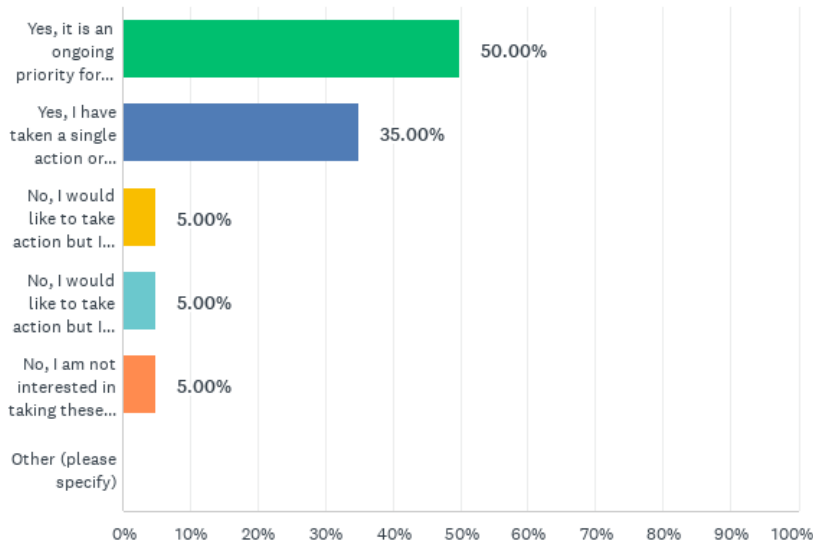


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No effect	20.00%	4
Slight disadvantage	30.00%	6
Significant disadvantage	25.00%	5
Not applicable	25.00%	5
TOTAL		20

#G13. Have you taken action in the last 5 years to increase your business's energy efficiency and/or reduce your business's carbon emissions?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

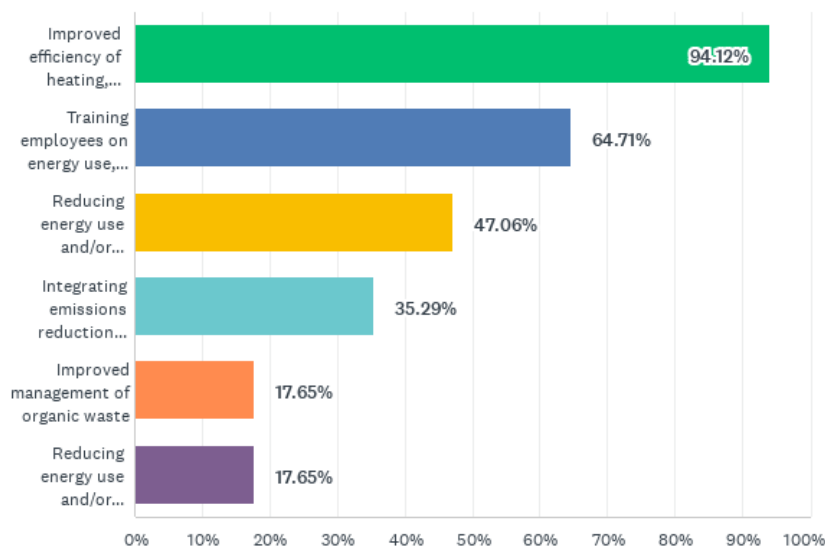


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, it is an ongoing priority for the business with multiple and/or impactful actions taken	50.00%	10
Yes, I have taken a single action or multiple single actions when possible	35.00%	7
No, I would like to take action but I am not sure what action to take	5.00%	1
No, I would like to take action but I am unable to at this time	5.00%	1
No, I am not interested in taking these actions	5.00%	1
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		20

#G13 a. If you have taken action, what were these actions? Check all that apply

Answered: 17

Skipped: 0

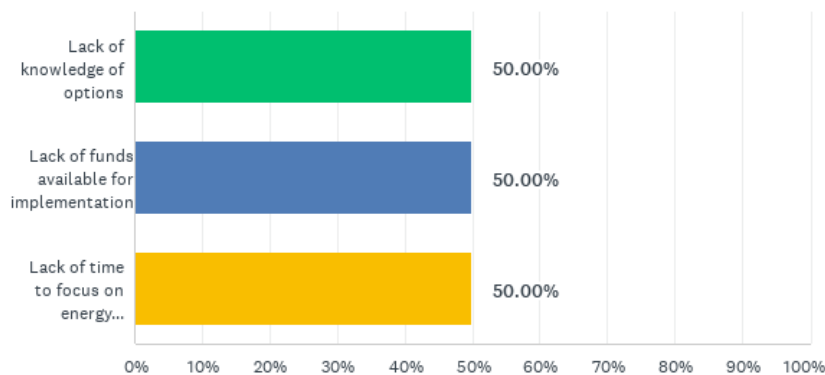


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Improved efficiency of heating, cooling and/or ventilation systems	94.12%	16
Training employees on energy use, waste reduction, etc.	64.71%	11
Reducing energy use and/or emissions from business operations	47.06%	8
Integrating emissions reduction considerations into business strategy	35.29%	6
Improved management of organic waste	17.65%	3
Reducing energy use and/or emissions from supply chain	17.65%	3

#G13 b. If you have not taken action and would like to, what is preventing you? Check all that apply.

Answered: 2

Skipped: 1

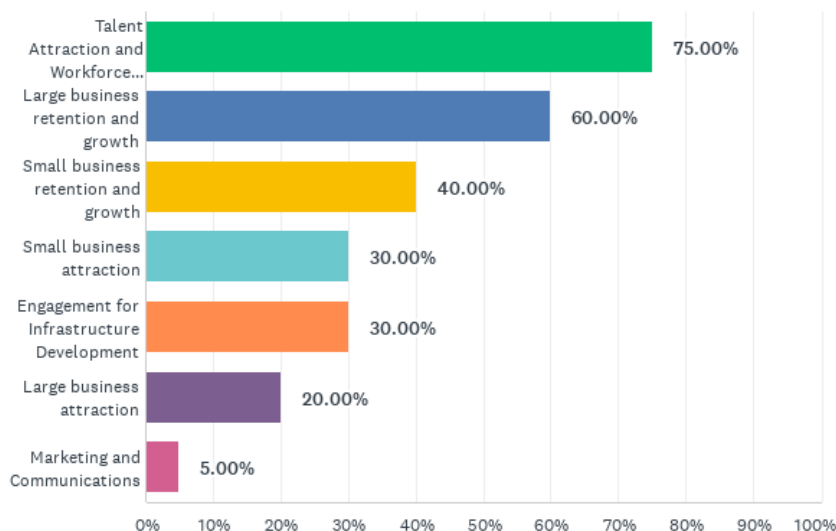


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Lack of knowledge of options	50.00%	1
Lack of funds available for implementation	50.00%	1
Lack of time to focus on energy efficiency and/or carbon emissions	50.00%	1

#G16. What should the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville Economic Development focus on for the next 5 years? Please pick top 3.

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0



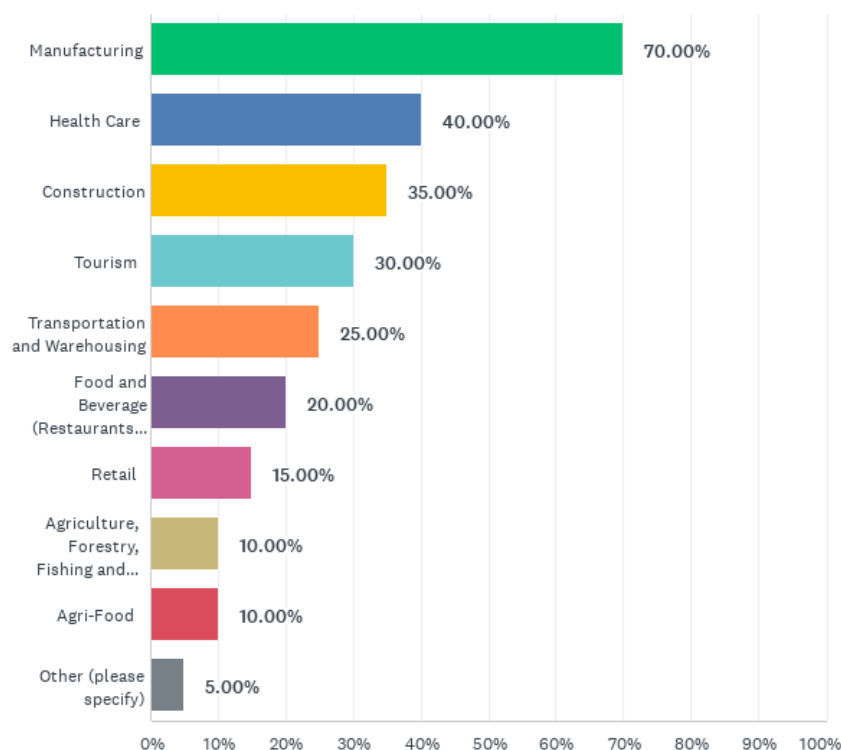
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Talent Attraction and Workforce Development	75.00%	15
Large business retention and growth	60.00%	12
Small business retention and growth	40.00%	8
Small business attraction	30.00%	6
Engagement for Infrastructure Development	30.00%	6
Large business attraction	20.00%	4
Marketing and Communications	5.00%	1

#G17. In support of the Leeds Grenville diversified economy, what business sectors require Counties Economic Development support?

Please pick top 3

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Manufacturing	70.00%	14
Health Care	40.00%	8
Construction	35.00%	7
Tourism	30.00%	6
Transportation and Warehousing	25.00%	5
Food and Beverage (Restaurants, Bars, Catering, Food Service)	20.00%	4
Retail	15.00%	3
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	10.00%	2
Agri-Food	10.00%	2
Other (please specify)	5.00%	1

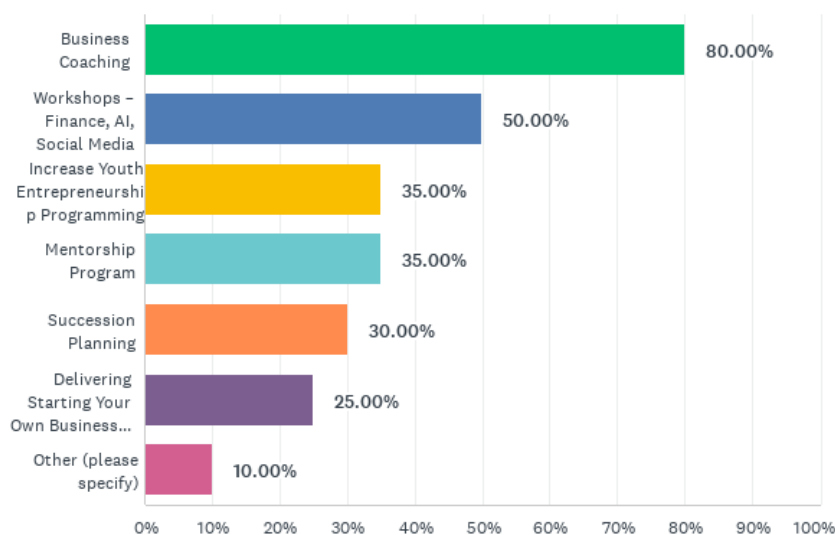
Other (please specify)

- Hiking and biking trails to support tourism and the community.

#G18. To grow small businesses, what areas should Counties support? Pick top 3

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Business Coaching	80.00%	16
Workshops – Finance, AI, Social Media	50.00%	10
Increase Youth Entrepreneurship Programming	35.00%	7
Mentorship Program	35.00%	7
Succession Planning	30.00%	6
Delivering Starting Your Own Business Workshops	25.00%	5
Other (please specify)	10.00%	2

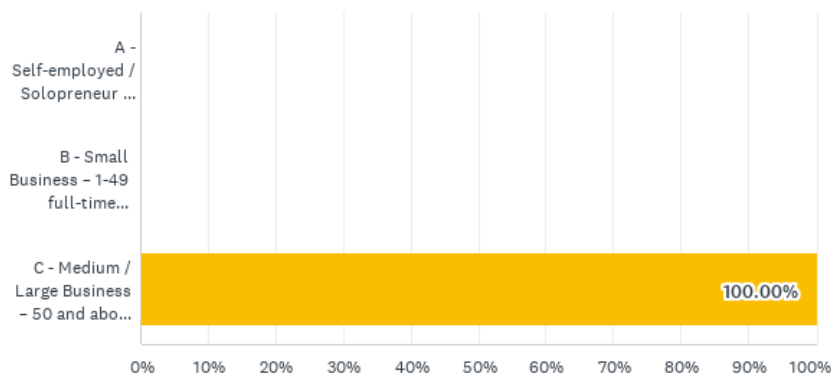
Other (please specify)

- Develop CIP Programs like other Counties do.
- Get area to be open for business.

#G19. Identify your business size

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0



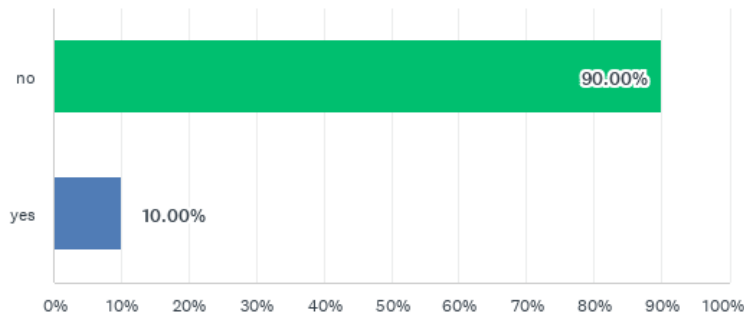
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
A – Self-employed / Solopreneur / No employees	0.00%	0
B – Small Business – 1-49 full-time equivalent employees	0.00%	0
C – Medium / Large Business – 50 and above full-time equivalent employees	100.0%	20
TOTAL		20

C – Medium / Large Business – 50 and above full-time equivalent employees

#C1. Are your employees unionized?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

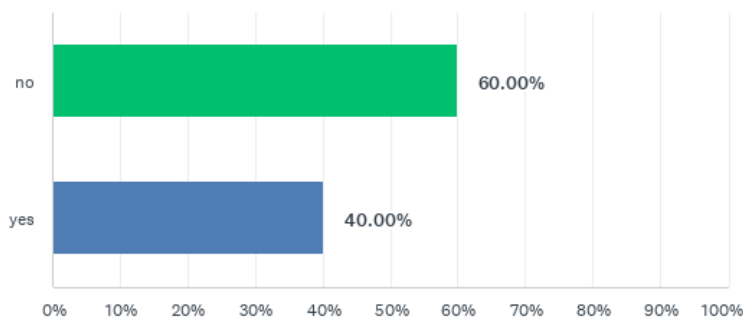


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	90.00%	18
Yes	10.00%	2
TOTAL		20

#C2. Do you have broadband / internet connectivity challenges?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

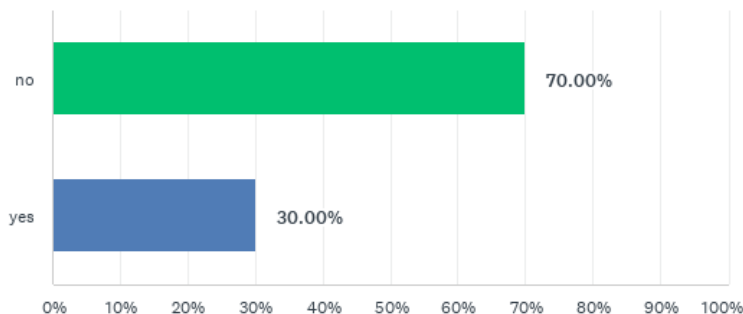


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	60.00%	12
Yes	40.00%	8
TOTAL		20

#C3. Do you have cellular phone connectivity challenges?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

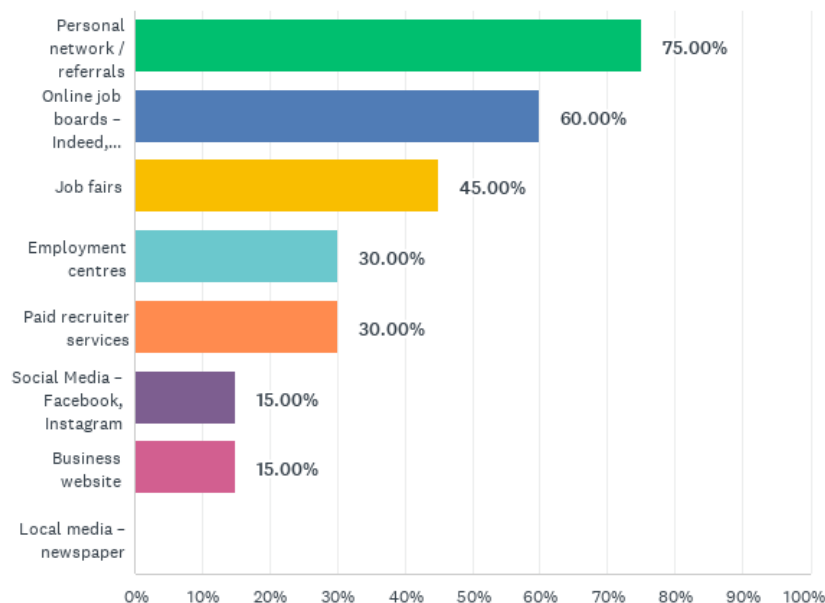


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	70.00%	14
Yes	30.00%	6
TOTAL		20

#C4. What methods do you utilize for employee recruitment that gives you the best results? (Choose your top 3)

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

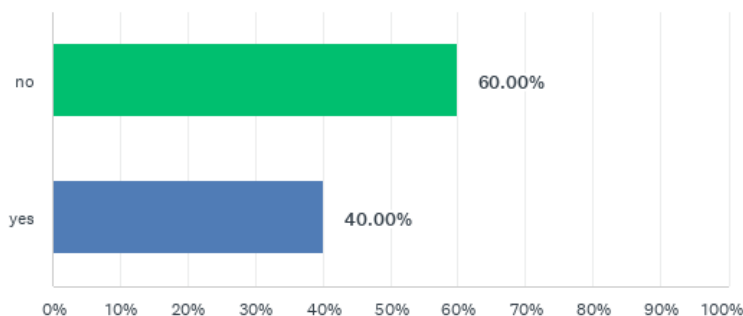


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Personal / network / referrals	75.00%	15
Online job boards – Indeed, LinkedIn	60.00%	12
Job fairs	45.00%	9
Employment Centres	30.00%	6
Paid recruiter services	30.00%	6
Social Media – Facebook, Instagram	15.00%	3
Business Website	15.00%	3
Local media - newspaper	0.00%	0

#C5. In the last 2 years have your hired foreign workers on permit, OR refugee / refugee claimants, OR international students?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

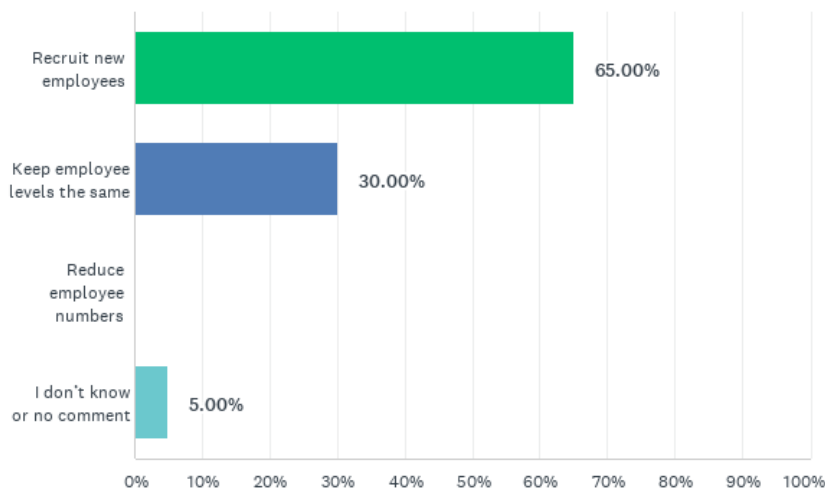


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No	60.00%	12
Yes	40.00%	8
TOTAL		20

#C6. In the next year do you plan to:

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

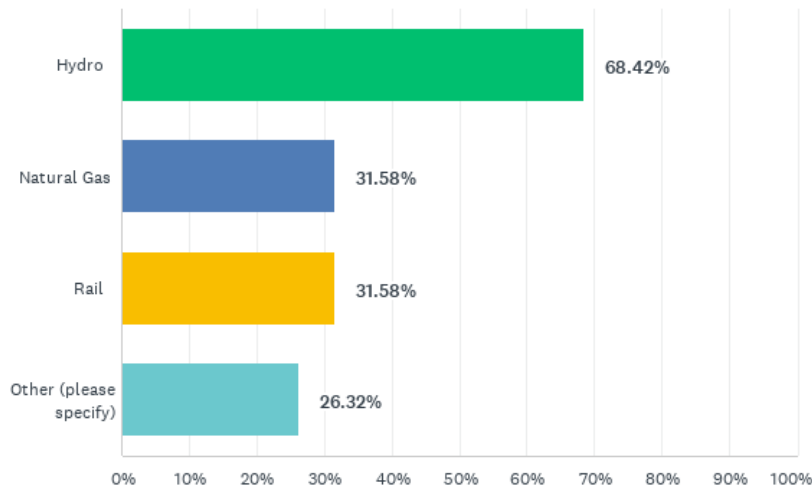


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Recruit new employees	65.00%	13
Keep employee levels the same	30.00%	6
Reduce employee numbers	0.00%	0
I don't know or no comment	5.00%	1
TOTAL		20

#C7. What are your top infrastructure issues? check all that apply

Answered: 19

Skipped: 1



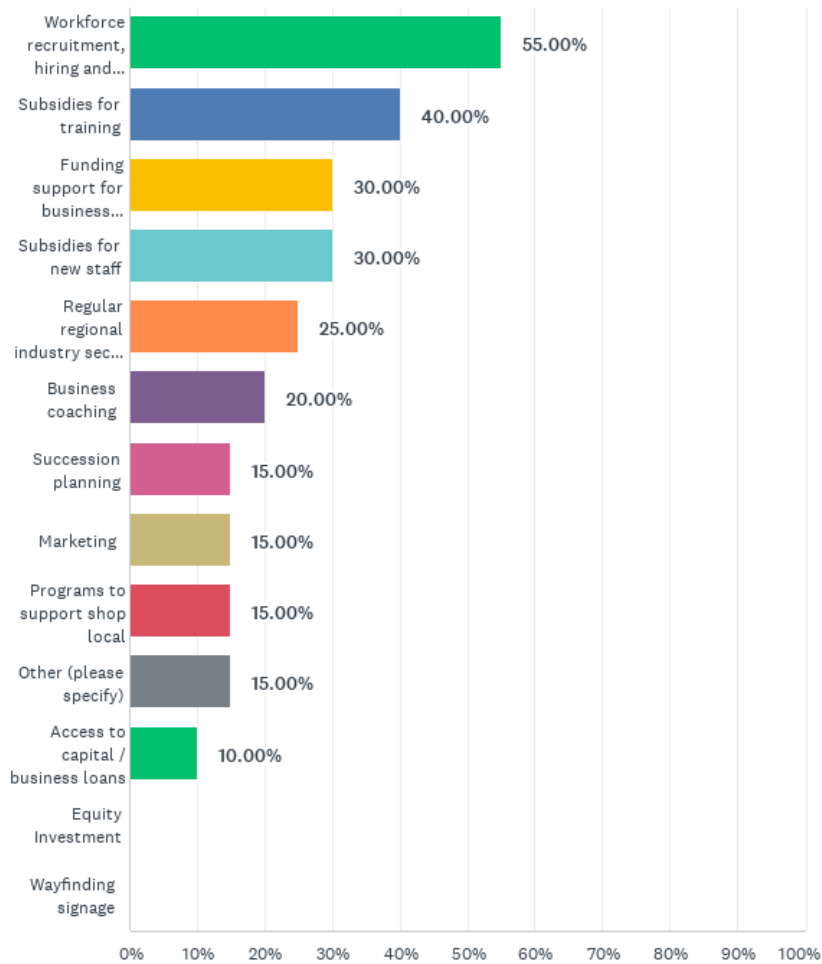
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Hydro	68.42%	13
Natural Gas	31.58%	6
Rail	31.58%	6
Other (please specify)	26.32%	5

- Permits and restrictions within the municipality.
- Connectivity.

#C8. What are the top 3 areas of support that would be most helpful to your business right now?

Answered: 20

Skipped: 0

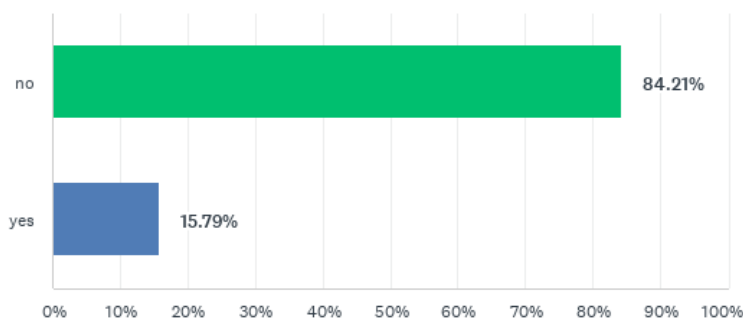


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Workforce recruitment, hiring and resourcing staff	55.00%	11
Subsidies for training	40.00%	8
Funding support for business expansion	30.00%	6
Subsidies for new staff	30.00%	6
Regular regional industry sector focus groups	25.00%	5
Business coaching	20.00%	4
Succession planning	15.00%	3
Marketing	15.00%	3
Programs to support shop local	15.00%	3
Other (please specify)	15.00%	3
Access to capital / business loans	10.00%	2
Equity Investment	0.00%	0
Wayfinding signage	0.00%	0

#S1. Would you like to connect with a member of the Economic Development / Small Business teams?

Answered: 19

Skipped: 1

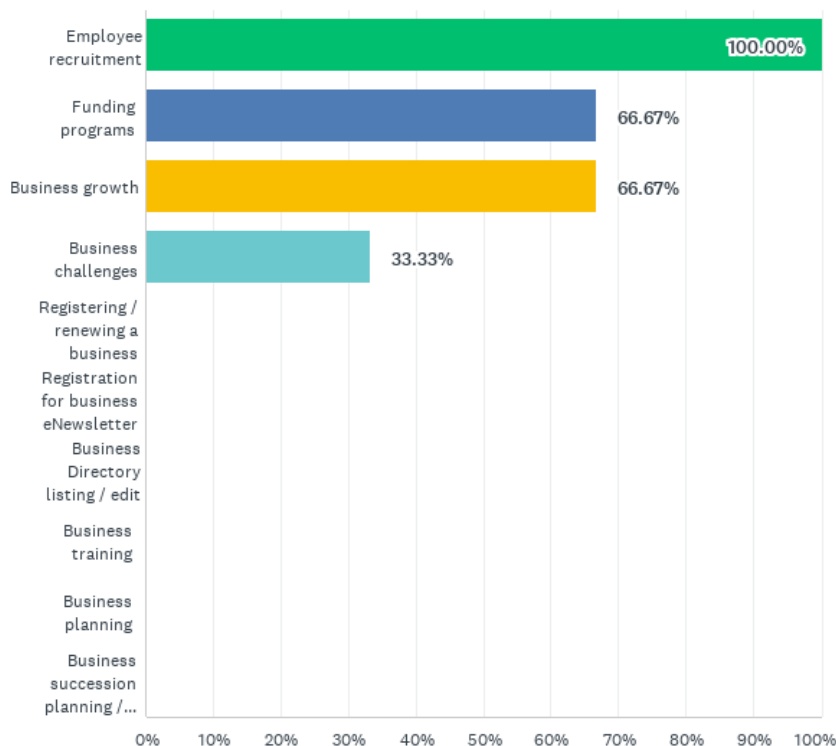


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
no	84.27%	16
yes	15.79%	3
TOTAL		19

#S1-b. I would like to discuss the following: (choose all that apply)

Answered: 3

Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Employee recruitment	100.00%	3
Funding programs	66.67%	2
Business growth	66.67%	2
Business challenges	33.33%	1
Registering / renewing a business	0.00%	0
Registration for business eNewsletter	0.00%	0
Business Directory listing / edit	0.00%	0
Business training	0.00%	0
Business planning	0.00%	0
Business succession planning / closing a business	0.00%	0
TOTAL		3

Additional Notes:

- Survey Timeframe: April 29 to June 4, 2025
- Survey Distribution: Businesses that were part the Counties Economic Development business directory, with active email addresses, received the survey directly. In addition, some members of Business Support Working Group distributed the survey through their membership lists and social media channels.
- Economic implications impacting survey results: U.S. tariffs ranging from 10-25% on Canada products were introduced on March 4th, followed by Canadian 25% retaliatory tariffs on some U.S. products. Some CUSMA-compliant products were exempt. On June 3rd, U.S. announced a 50% tariff on steel and aluminum effective June 4th. Constant changes in tariff messaging occurred through the survey period.

Business Support Working Group:

Municipalities

Athens | Augusta | Brockville | Edwardsburgh Cardinal | Elizabethtown-Kitley | Front of Yonge | Gananoque | Leeds and the Thousand Islands | Merrickville-Wolford | North Grenville | Prescott | Rideau Lakes | Westport

MP / MPP

MP Office of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands-Rideau Lakes

MPP Office of Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes

Community Futures Development Corporations

1000 Islands CDC | Community Futures Grenville | Valley Heartland CFDC

Small Business Centres

Leeds Grenville Small Business

Small Business Advisory Centre – Smiths Falls | Lanark

Chambers of Commerce

1000 Islands Gananoque | Brockville and District | Lyndhurst, Seeley's Bay & District | Merrickville and District | North Grenville | South Grenville

BIAs

Downtown Brockville | Downtown Gananoque | Downtown Prescott | Old Town Kemptville

Employment Services

CSE Consulting | Employment and Education Centre | KEYS Job Centre

Other Business & Education Agencies

Regional Tourism Organization 9 | Eastern Ontario Workforce Innovation Board | St. Lawrence College | Kemptville Campus Education and Community Hub | Ontario Tourism Education Corporation | St. Lawrence-Rideau Immigration Partnership | Ministry of Economic Development Job Creation and Trade – East Region

THANK-YOU!

On behalf of the Business Support Working Group, I would like to thank each business who completed the survey. This report provides the region with key data to help in plan future initiatives to support business.

Ann Weir, Economic Development Manager

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

W: invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans | E: ann.weir@uclg.on.ca



Eastern Ontario Rail Trail Loop Community Engagement Plan Recommendations

Broadening support for the Loop and raising awareness as to how communities can better connect to it and provide needed trail user services

May 13, 2025

Introduction

“Engagement is fundamental to trail network planning...occurring at every stage of the project to build the internal cohesion, political will and public enthusiasm needed to develop trail networks, activate them and realize their potential as hubs of thriving communities.” – Rails to Trails Conservancy’s TrailNation Playbook

When complete, the Eastern Ontario Rail Trail Loop (the Loop) will be a 360-kilometer circular route along trails that connects portions of the Cataraqui Trail, the K & P Trail, and the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail (OVRT) and will travel through the counties of Frontenac, Lanark and Renfrew, as well as the towns of Smiths Falls, Carleton Place and the Township of Rideau Lakes. the Loop traverses through portions of the Canadian Shield, Frontenac Biosphere Reserve, rolling farmland, and forested areas of Eastern Ontario.

This recommended community engagement plan, prepared by Cycle Forward, is intended to support project partners as they work to complete a **market ready trail system by 2030**. With a well-planned and executed engagement strategy, the partners can engage and involve a broad cross-section of the region in supporting the Loop. The main objective is to broaden support for the trail system itself. If regional residents and decision makers can get behind the notion of a connected, market ready trail, they will also support finding ways to improve trail-to-town connections, addressing market gaps, and fostering a trail-friendly culture.

Approach

This engagement plan has been crafted based on the following beliefs and assumptions:

- The partners envision the Loop as an economic development opportunity for Eastern Ontario, a chance to reinvest in the region through outdoor recreation and trail-based tourism. The overarching goal is to gain Loop project supporters so that the partners can successfully complete a market ready trail system **with robust community support** by 2030.
- While a successful marketing plan in the case of the Loop will specifically target cyclists, winning trail supporters and becoming a more trail-friendly region requires engaging **all segments** of the regional community.
- Any trail tourism efforts will be approached from a civic tourism or community-centered tourism perspective. As the Ontario’s Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO) thinks of it: “tourism is community, and community is tourism.” Essentially, investing in community (and trail) improvements results in communities worth visiting.
- This plan aligns with the approaches recommended in Rails to Trails Conservancy’s [TrailNation Playbook](#). The Playbook’s “Engagement” section¹ can be reviewed for additional guidance on community engagement.
- Marketing, branding, and communications are not substitutes for community engagement. Rather, engagement ought to be part of a larger communications plan. More information on the distinctions between engagement, communication, and marketing is contained in Appendix A, along with information on OHTO’s approach to Stakeholder Engagement.

¹ Authored by Cycle Forward

- The primary audience is comprised of regional residents, regardless of their roles within the community. A secondary audience includes cyclists from throughout Ontario and potentially as far as neighbouring Quebec, New York, and Vermont.
- A formal “Trail Town” initiative is not being implemented at this time, though the work being done is consistent with the Trail Town/trail-friendly approach and is in alignment with Ontario By Bike™ Network’s Bicycle Friendly program.

Leadership and Collaboration

The beauty of a strong collaborative effort is in the sharing: of lessons learned, of resources, of ideas, and a vision. The success of this engagement plan – and of the Loop – relies upon leadership and collaboration within the partnership. OHTO currently serves as the partnership’s coordinating entity, leads associated marketing efforts, and is responsible for convening the partners to execute and evaluate the plan. As with any strong partnership, however, the project partners must contribute in a substantial manner, taking on leadership roles within their jurisdictions, hold themselves accountable, and coordinate with one another.

Why Engage?

Engaging the broader community makes the vision of few the vision of many. Engaging the identified audiences results in others **becoming aware, feeling inspired, and taking action** – ultimately, sharing in the success of the Loop.

Engagement Continuum

As mentioned, engagement should involve a broad cross-section of the region in supporting the Loop. People become engaged in different ways, sometimes with that engagement deepening.



Benefits of a Completed Loop

The Trail Tourism Assessment, completed in February 2025, speaks to the values and benefits of trails, identifying benefits such as tourism, economic development, health improvements, conservation, and more. The Assessment should be consulted as the partnership plans to convey how the Loop brings value to the region. The economic viability of a market ready trail system certainly is a noteworthy “hook” and one that will be important to emphasize, but a multitude of benefits can be showcased to help reach those who are not motivated by the trail’s tourism prospects. Underscoring benefits beyond tourism also lays the groundwork for a trail-appreciative culture that is not overly reliant on visitation.

Among the “Additional Benefits” noted in the assessment are “improved community aesthetics and atmosphere” and “a strong sense of community and pride.” These are important benefits to emphasize as part of a community engagement plan. Consider this outreach an opportunity to do your very best community engagement work, not only bringing your citizenry along for the “ride,” but putting them in the driver’s seat in envisioning thriving, aesthetically pleasing, deep rooted places. It so happens that these places are linked by a signature trail Loop in the making.

It is important that the partners recognize that it doesn’t matter why regional residents and decision makers find value in the Loop. **Whatever their “why,” a trail-supportive community will help to advance the vision of a market ready trail system.**

About “Trail Town” and Trail-Friendly Approaches

The partners are aware of the “Trail Town” approach to community development, which typically positions trail-adjacent communities to improve trail-to-town connections, address infrastructure and business needs, and generally cultivate a trail-supportive culture. There are more than two dozen multi-community Trail Town initiatives throughout the U.S. and Canada (Canada’s program being in Ontario: Trent-Severn Trail Towns). An organized Trail Town initiative certainly is a possibility for the Loop and will further bolster support, though **immediate engagement efforts are intended to build support for the trail system, not a program to occur along it.**

In the meantime, the partners in their engagement work can address ways for the communities to invest in trail-related infrastructure and begin addressing needed services. Trail-friendly, bicycle-friendly, and trail-oriented programs and investments can be enacted immediately. “Because the partners have identified cyclists as the Loop’s primary market, this plan includes the partners’ collaboration with the Ontario By Bike™ Network to leverage resources and support the engagement of primary audiences, specifically the business community and cyclists.

Audiences

Primary Audiences

Elected Officials: Includes elected officials in upper and lower tier municipal governments, who are primarily responsible for making local land use decisions. Their support for trail development, trail improvements, and related infrastructure connections into communities is essential to developing a market-ready trail system.

Municipal Staff: Includes staff who are responsible for managing and promoting their community's trails and interface directly with local elected officials and the general public.

Business Community: Includes business owners, managers, and employees who are positioned to make or advocate for bicycle-friendly products and services. Members of the business community can also advocate for the Loop and speak to their council members concerning the value of trails. This audience does not need to be limited to traditional tourism operators.

Regional Cyclists and Trail Users: Includes existing cyclists who live in the region and can provide firsthand testimonials regarding the possibilities associated with a connected regional trail system. In addition to cyclists, local walkers, runners, and other trail users can provide support and a sense of enthusiasm for the Loop. This audience can engage their friends, neighbours, and elected officials in supporting trail improvements simply because quality trails improve quality of life.

Secondary Audiences

Regional Residents: Includes everyone. Broad-based grassroots engagement “leaves no stone unturned.” An aspired signature trail should be an integral part of the area that's commonly understood to be an asset and contributes to regional sense of place. Finding ways to engage the citizenry will make it more likely that people will use, appreciate, and support the Loop and its users over time.

Schools, Hospitals, and Not-for-Profit Partners: Includes any number of community organizations that recognize trails as assets and important social/community spaces. The potential for engaging with these community partners speaks to the many benefits of trails beyond economics and visitation. These audiences can be engaged early in the process as well as later after the Loop is fully established and marketed (at which point there will be more possibilities for them to use the trails and become involved in trail-related projects).

Out-of-Region Cyclists: Includes those beyond the immediate region who are already visiting trail segments and can provide testimonials that lend credibility to the vision for a connected trail system. They can demonstrate demand, humanize the audience, and give a glimpse into the visiting cyclist market. In addition to potentially engaging this audience, over time they will become part of the target market.

Other audiences to keep in mind:

- Area and provincial trail organizations
- Funders
- Provincial government/agencies/elected officials

Incentives

With any audience, it is important to consider their needs and motivations and how to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome. Incentivizing their involvement is one possible way to increase support. In the nearby Kawarthas Northumberland region, for example, Regional Tourism Organization 8 closed a 2016 regional Trail Town workshop by announcing a related small grant program. The “community incentive award” incentivized community driven initiatives that would help further the regional tourism goals. Similar tactics have been used locally. In fact, when communities here are asked to collaborate, host meetings, and the like, there may even be some level of expectation that they will benefit from their involvement. Microgrants and other incentives might be considered as part of many of the engagement tactics outlined in this plan.

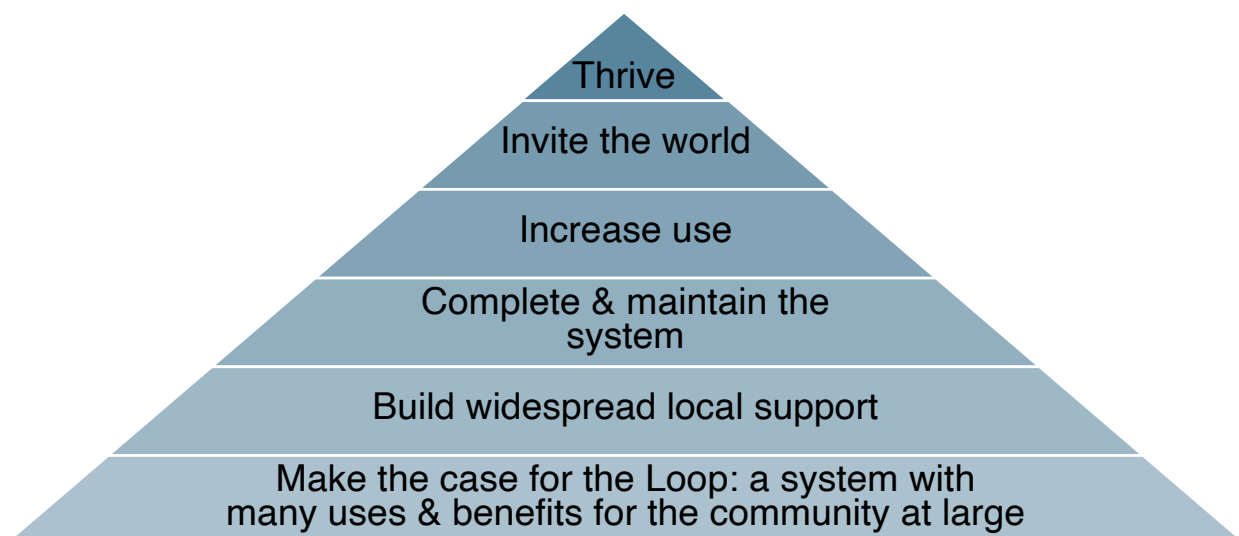
Timeline

This recommended course of action includes items that begin in May 2025 and extend through to the end of the year, though many of the engagement tactics may continue into future years. Quality community engagement does not have an end date. Engagement efforts should continue at least until the 2030 goal is achieved, and likely on an ongoing basis.

Engagement Strategies

The following community engagement recommendations are based upon the recognition that a broad base of regional supporters will position the partners to ultimately achieve their goals related to tourism and community development. The desired end state is attracting a visitor audience that contributes to the regional economy, while area residents use, support, and celebrate the Loop for their own reasons.

Like building blocks or the levels of a pyramid, the engagement plan and corresponding efforts are completed step by step with thriving communities as the end goal.



Engagement Tactics

The following recommendations and timeframes are recommendations that the project partners may adjust as needed.

**Indicates tactics that represent key milestones.*

Engagement	Audiences	Priority Level	Responsible Entities	Desired Outcome
First 1-3 Months				
Host Webinar.* Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization (OHTO) will host a "The Trail Town Advantage" webinar as part of its "Expand Your Knowledge" program. This regional level engagement affords a way for OHTO and the project partners to initiate conversation around Trail Towns and the value of trails to the region's rural communities. The webinar will allow time to share the group's vision of the Loop as a signature rail trail experience and its anticipated impact on the region.	Project partners Business community Elected officials Municipal staff	2	OHTO, County of Frontenac	Business and municipal leaders are more informed about the Loop and trail-friendly approaches.
Engage with Elected Officials at Council, Committee, and Board Meetings. Local elected officials make land use and other decisions that influence trail investments. Whether material or symbolic, their decisions are critical to the success of the Loop. Project partners will play a key role in gaining an early understanding of their councils' positions on the project as well as their wishes concerning priorities, timing, and public announcements.	Elected officials	1	Partners	Local elected officials express support for the Loop and (ultimately) illustrate their support with decisions and policies that help advance the project.

4-6 Months				
<p>Develop Program Materials.* Develop materials that position partners to be consistent in their messaging: talking points, a one-pager, a slide deck, and a website landing page. Branded materials can follow as the idea begins to take hold. These materials are frequently requested in other trail coalitions that rely upon partners to advocate for the network.</p>	<p>All, but primarily:</p> <p>Funders</p> <p>Business community</p> <p>Elected officials</p>	1	All partners, OHTO as lead	<p>Informative and compelling branded materials are available for communications to the named audiences and help impact their decisions to support the Loop.</p>
<p>Collaborate with Ontario By Bike™ Network to host educational workshops for area businesses.* The workshops should convey market data from their annual cycle tourism report and share information on how businesses can join the Ontario By Bike™ Network. The certification program includes 1,689 businesses, including about 30 that are in communities along the Loop (see the Trail Towns section of the Assessment report). Include in the workshop education on the types of cycling (rail-trail, mountain biking, gravel, bikepacking) being that at least the Cataraqui Trail is currently better suited for gravel and mountain bikes.</p> <p>This can also be presented as a single regional workshop if that is what resources can support.</p>	Business community	1	Partners in collaboration with Ontario By Bike™ Network and with marketing support from OHTO	<p>Through the workshop(s), the business community is more knowledgeable about the cycling market and takes steps to accommodate and attract the market.</p> <p>Businesses join the Ontario By Bike™ Network.</p>

<p>Kitchen Table Talks. Whether across a kitchen table, in a local coffee shop, or while walking along the trail, the partners should develop a grassroots strategy that involves broadening the support base one person and conversation at a time. Build community teams who can coordinate outreach and help build support. Invite people to upcoming community engagement events.</p> <p>If viewing the TrailNation Playbook, the Dick Bias story provides a helpful early example from a time that rail-trails were not well understood or appreciated. Tempting to bypass, this strategy can help build an impressive support base.</p>	<p>All, but primarily:</p> <p>Individual local leaders and thought leaders</p> <p>Schools, hospitals, and not-for-profit partners</p> <p>Regional residents</p> <p>Regional cyclists and trail users</p>	2	All partners	<p>Community teams are established to take part in a grassroots campaign which results in a broad base of support across multiple sectors and all walks of life.</p> <p>Communities are truly enthused by the Loop and drawing benefit from it.</p>
<p>Bring Trail Users on as Advocates. In 2020, Rails to Trails Conservancy launched its Trail Moments campaign to begin collecting stories from trail users. The aim was to share stories about how trails make a difference in people's lives. There are other campaigns, but this one provides many great examples. Tie into the ongoing #trailmoments campaign or create something similar. Rely upon OHTO's marketing abilities and established audience with this effort.</p> <p>Similarly, trail use contests like "Get Your Tail on the Trail" and the "Mammoth Trail Challenge" incentivize increased trail use and create a sense of comradery among trail users. The Mammoth challenge occurs in the Fall shoulder season to inject some enthusiasm and economic activity along the trail. This could be a good approach regionally, or the campaign could be held until Spring 2026. While visiting cyclists are a target demographic, campaigns like these should invite participation among all sorts of local users (walkers, hikers, cyclists, etc.).</p>	<p>Regional residents</p> <p>Regional cyclists and trail users</p> <p>Schools, hospitals, and not-for-profit partners</p>	2	All partners, OHTO as lead	<p>A regionally appropriate campaign engages trail users to increase trail use and share their stories, further enthusing local communities about the Loop and the trails it connects.</p>

7-9 Months				
<p>Host Community Engagement Sessions.* Per the partnership MOU, each partner will host a community engagement session to raise awareness, solicit input, and broaden the support base.</p> <p>When possible, the partners will include specific elements for which they are seeking input, a call to action, and information about the next steps. The sessions will be coordinated by the partners and facilitated by a local vendor that specializes in community engagement.</p> <p>Partners may coordinate to achieve efficiencies in vendor management, communications, outreach, and so forth. Partners may choose to host sessions virtually or in person (recommended) and can tailor their sessions based on local needs, resources, and current state of readiness.</p>	<p>All, but primarily:</p> <p>Trail organizations</p> <p>Regional cyclists and trail users</p> <p>Business community</p> <p>Elected officials and municipal staff</p>	1	<p>Renfrew County, Frontenac County, Lanark County, the Township of Rideau Lakes, and the Town of Smiths Falls</p>	<p>Five community engagement sessions that result in increased awareness as well as valuable input provided to the partners.</p>
<p>Secure Local Media Features. Secure local and regional media features (print, digital, TV, radio) so that you can tell the story of the Loop and all the progress that is being made. If pitching regional outlets, emphasize visitor-ready trail experiences within the system.</p> <p>Invite media to cover the community engagement sessions</p>	<p>Regional residents</p> <p>Regional cyclists and trail users</p> <p>Elected officials</p> <p>Business community</p>	2	<p>OHTO with support from local partners (for local media outreach)</p>	<p>Positive local and regional media features further assist in broadening the support base and help promote the engagement sessions.</p>

<p>Launch Marketing Campaign. In tandem with the media relations efforts, design an ad campaign aimed at local and regional audiences (and neighbouring regions). This campaign should create a sense of enthusiasm among local and regional residents while enticing cyclists within a 2–3-hour range to come experience portions of the Loop. For the locals, include a storytelling component (link back to the #trailmoments suggestion) that shows the potential of the Loop and how the trails already enhance the quality of life and the regional economy.</p>	<p>Regional residents</p> <p>Regional cyclists and trail users</p> <p>Elected officials</p> <p>Business community</p> <p>Out-of-region cyclists</p>	2	<p>OHTO with support from local partners (to identify stories)</p>	<p>Increased trail use and inquiries among cyclists within a 2–3-hour radius as well as awareness on the part of elected officials and business owners regarding increased use.</p>
<p>Lay the groundwork for a business network or affinity group specific to the Loop. With a trail system that will ultimately be 360km, it is important that businesses are aware of other business services throughout the system. Ask a chamber of commerce or Main Street partner to organize or a couple of business leaders that are bicycle-friendly certified.</p>	<p>Business community</p>	3	<p>Business community with the partners' prompting and encouragement</p>	<p>A multi-community business network is established or preliminary conversations that ultimately result in a network take place.</p>
10-18 Months				
<p>Lead Creative and Tactical Placemaking Projects.* Collaborate with community partners to take on creative and tactical placemaking projects (including some that are temporary in nature) to demonstrate success and progress related to trails. There are many ways to better connect to and celebrate regional trails.</p> <p>The idea here is to show that something is happening and that community and trail spaces are not static. Use the assessment document to find affordable opportunities. Visible success yields more community support.</p>	<p>All</p>	1	<p>Partners and their community partners</p>	<p>Improvement projects are completed in each community that tie back to needs identified in the assessment document. The projects <i>may</i> be funded, in part, through small grants that are announced during the community engagement sessions.</p>

<p>Host (and Encourage) Events & Programs.* A great way of winning trail supporters is to ACTIVATE trails with events and programs. The more people who are compelled to use the trails that make up the Loop, the more people who will eventually support the overall vision. Partner with local trail groups, parks and recreation departments, and others to host programs on the trails.</p> <p>In addition to the more easily executable programs (such as “walk with a doc,” weekly walking and biking groups, yoga on the trail, geocaching and scavenger hunt programs, etc.), consider special events that can be held on or along the trails. It helps to “meet people where they are,” and go beyond the typical 5K or fundraising bike ride. Inclusive engagement sometimes necessitates getting creative, like a “Howl at the Moon” 5K, a “haunted trails” event with ghost stories, a winter carnival (NB), or other themed and original events.² Use the community engagement events as opportunities to crowd source ideas.</p>	<p>Regional residents</p> <p>Regional cyclists and trail users</p> <p>Schools, hospitals, and not-for-profit partners</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Partners and their municipal colleagues and community partners</p>	<p>Each partner plans and hosts events and programs to activate their section of trail.</p>
<p>Ontario by Bike™ Network Trips. Continue to coordinate with Ontario By Bike™ Network. Their organized trips are already successfully bringing satisfied cyclists into the area to bike parts of the Loop. Consider finding ways to make a bigger splash with these rides, having local communities host the groups and offer a special welcome (like communities do with organized road and gravel cycling events, on a smaller scale).</p>	<p>Cyclists</p> <p>Trail organizations</p> <p>Municipalities</p> <p>Business community</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Partners and their municipal colleagues</p>	<p>Ontario By Bike hosts additional cycling trips in partnership with local communities and project partners.</p>

² A David Bowie-themed “Rebel Rebel Float Trip” Cycle Forward hosted in 2017 introduced a new audience to the Monongahela River. Most participants had not paddled the river before the event. It was the theme – not the float trip – that brought new people to the event.

Appeal to cyclists as advocates. Engaging visiting trail users can serve the dual purpose of having them feel a sense of connection to the area (and educating them on future ride opportunities) and collecting information that will help to make the case locally. Their testimonials, experiences, and interactions with locals can open hearts and minds to the awesome potential of the Loop. Collect stories from cyclists throughout the region. Collect their #trailmoments, have them share their experiences along the Loop, get to know them (their needs, their spending habits, their impressions of the area), and invite them to support the Loop effort.	Regional cyclists	1	Partners	More local and regional cyclists are advocates for the Loop, influencing their friends and neighbours' perspectives on the trail system.
Influencer Trips & Features. Work to find influencers who may ride and post about portions of the Loop.	Out of region cyclists / influencers	3	OHTO	Influencers visit and post about the Loop and increase visitation results.

Engagement Over Time

Community engagement is an ongoing process and is needed to continue support for even mature trail systems and networks. A market-ready or export-ready trail system needs this form of ongoing engagement to ensure that communities continue to invest in trails, provide trail-related services, and foster a trail-appreciative culture that will be felt by locals and visitors alike.

Resources

- Rails to Trails Conservancy's [TrailNation Playbook](#) is a toolkit for those who manage multi-trail, multi-partner trail systems. It provides strategies for building and maintaining trail networks. In addition to the engagement section, the playbook provides helpful information pertaining to developing a project vision, coalition building, gap-filling strategies, mapping and analytics, and investment strategies.
- Pennsylvania Environmental Council's [Inclusionary Trail Planning Toolkit](#) is a guide to planning and programming equitable trail networks. It includes background information on inclusionary planning, case studies, and a number of planning tools. While not tourism focused, this guide likely includes some information that will help the project partners to engage in an inclusive manner.

Appendix A:

Expanding Upon Communication, Marketing, and Engagement

Definitions (courtesy Dragonfly Communications):

Engagement

Engagement's purpose is to generate buy-in to the concept and project and to ensure their participation in it. The audiences are also different, although there is some overlap in terms of targeting trail users.

Marketing

The purpose of marketing is to get a desired output (the call to action) from audiences. This can apply to engagement as well if the desired output is to get them to use the trail, be an ambassador for the trail, give money to the trail etc.

Communication

The purpose of communication is to effectively distribute a desired message to audiences. There is typically some overlap between communication, engagement and marketing.

OHTO's Industry Engagement & Communication Strategy

Engaging with members, prospective members, and industry partners is essential to fostering a cohesive regional identity in Ontario's Highlands and ensuring that all tourism stakeholders are aligned and collaborating with OHTO toward a shared vision.

Stakeholder Engagement Process

The stakeholder engagement process utilized by OHTO recognizes the following principles:

- That ***the goals of stakeholders*** are important to consider for destination development
- That ***communicating the value of tourism*** is necessary to gain buy-in from stakeholders
- That a ***shared understanding of the destination's tourism brand*** and values is important to focus the collective efforts of stakeholders on a desired path
- That clearly outlining the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders is important to ***gain an understanding of expectations***, from the regional tourism organization down to the operator
- That successfully ***relaying communication and decision-making rationale*** is important for stakeholders' decision to commit to their role in destination development

Expected results from expanding and enhancing stakeholder engagement in the region are:

- An engaged stakeholder audience that actively participates in programming and opportunities
- A region infused with community pride that celebrates each other's successes
- A region filled with robust, diverse, and relevant tourism offerings
- A growing membership base with OHTO and an increased level of pride for membership
- A strong network of lasting relationships between OHTO and stakeholders

The success of the engagement process relies heavily on a solid communication system that will relay information on OHTO's brand, destination development strategy, and skills transferral to tourism stakeholders.

OHTO's Industry Engagement & Communication Strategy aims to:

1. **Celebrate + Inspire** – Leverage a transparent communication platform that identifies and quantifies OHTO's industry success stories through visual and written storytelling; distribute inspiring examples of the results that are possible from partnerships with OHTO and utilizing the tools and resources.
2. **Build Engagement** - Build an industry engagement digital environment that allows OHTO to regularly inform, educate and support its stakeholders with responsible tourism resources and opportunities; enhance the perceived value of what OHTO has to offer.
3. **Build Capacity** - Build and support a regional tourism community; increase knowledge and skills within the industry to increase and improve tourism offerings and adoption of responsible practices in tourism development.
4. **Enhance Feedback** - Continuously measure and analyze results of engagement to ensure OHTO is on track and meeting the needs and expectations of stakeholders; strengthen OHTO's ability to gather stakeholder feedback.

Funded by the Federal
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Agency for Southern Ontario

Financé par l'Agence fédérale
de développement économique
pour le Sud de l'Ontario

Canada



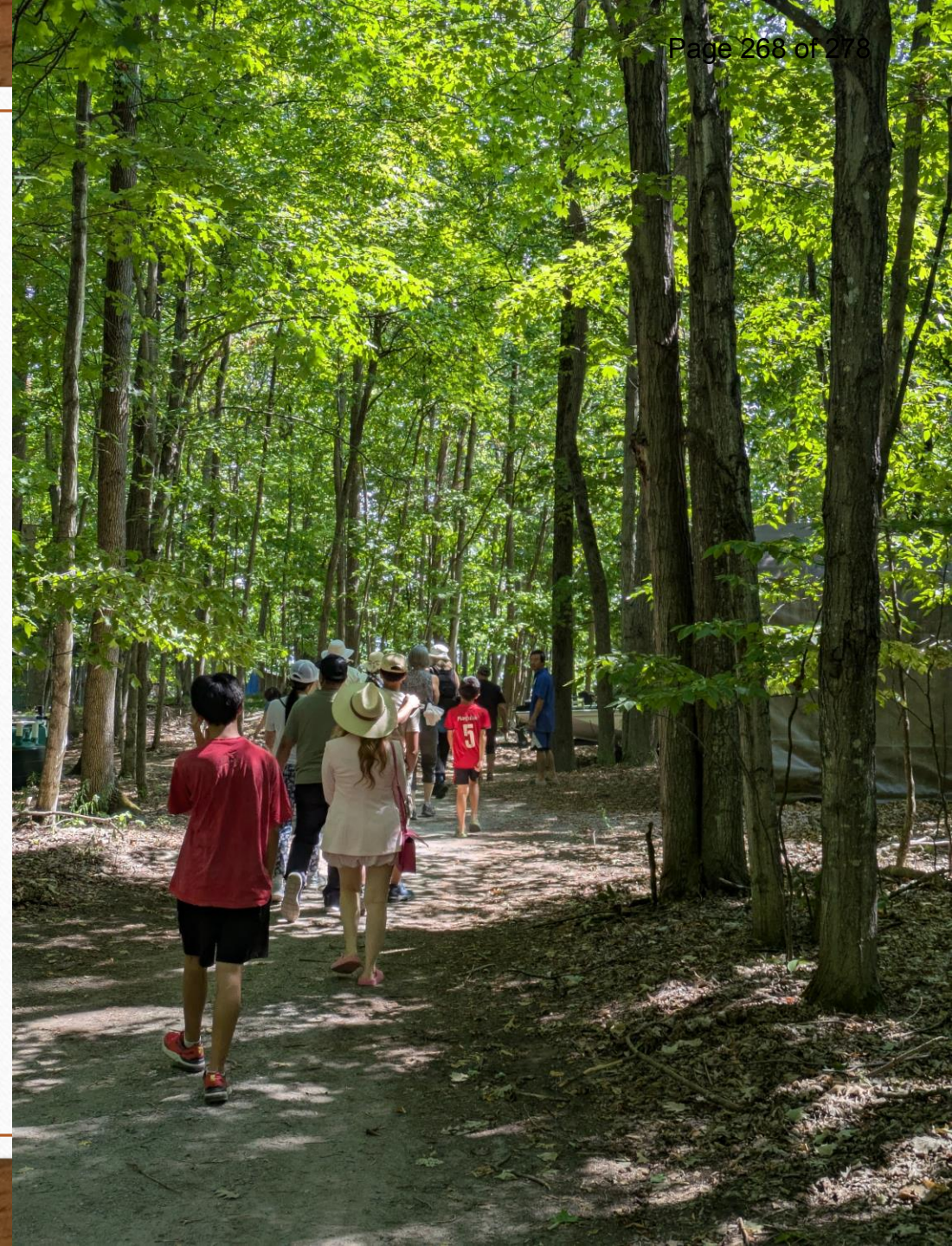
Doors Open Rideau Lakes

August 16 and 17 ~ Post event wrap up



Doors Open Rideau Lakes took place for the first time in 8 years across the township!

-
- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ❖ Chaffey's Lock Community Hall | ❖ Old Town Hall, Delta |
| ❖ Chaffey's Lockmaster's House | ❖ Original Lockmaster's House |
| ❖ Emmanuel Heritage Centre | ❖ Philippsville Baptist Church |
| ❖ Foley Mountain Conservation Area | ❖ QUBS |
| ❖ McKinney House | ❖ Red Brick School |
| ❖ Morton Hall | ❖ Samuel Poole House |
| ❖ Newboro Blockhouse | ❖ St. Mary's Anglican Church |
| ❖ Newboro Library Branch, RLPL | ❖ The Tipped Ship |
| ❖ Newboro Manor | ❖ Wood Mausoleum |
| ❖ Old Stone Mill, Delta | |



Visitor numbers Doors Open Rideau Lakes 2025

- The event drew more than 3,000 visits to the sites over two days.
- The top attended sites were the Newboro Manor and Newboro Blockhouse at 500!
- Both mornings and afternoons seemed to be busy across the board, but generally mornings won out for attendance (weather could be factor).

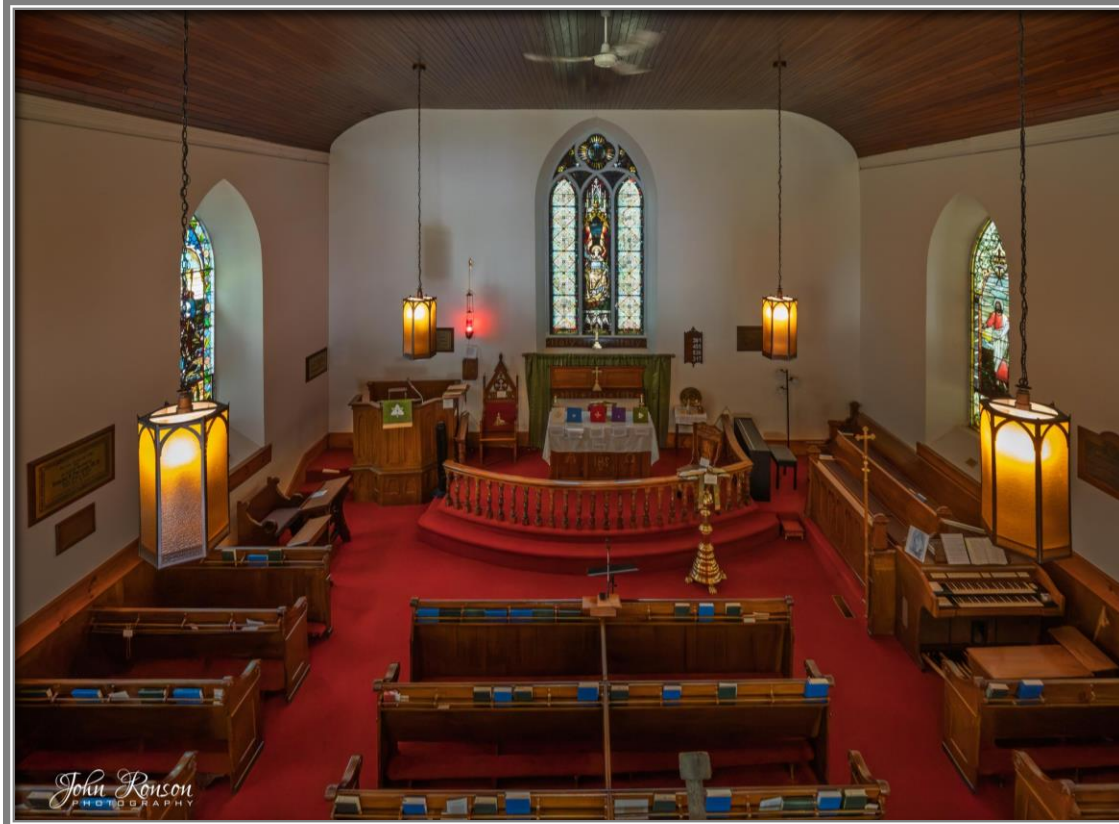




Where are visitors from?

We included guest books at each site so we could understand where people were travelling from. The results were interesting!

- Toronto
- Missouri
- Japan
- Merrickville
- Buffalo, NY
- Carleton Place
- Perth
- Ottawa
- Kingston
- Russell
- Peterborough
- Calabogie
- Burlington
- Amherstview
- Toronto
- Gatineau
- Brockville
- Trenton
- Dubai
- Lombardy
- Owen Sound
- Smiths Falls
- Florida
- South Frontenac
- Petawawa
- Harrowsmith
- Bracebridge
- California
- Stittsville
- Montreal
- Nepean
- Tweed
- ...and all parts of Rideau Lakes!



What visitors had to say:

- "Great stories! Beautiful restoration and magnificent accomplishment!" - Philipsville Baptist Church
- "Thanks to Rideau Lakes for opening your doors – wonderful to share." - Newboro Library Branch, RLPL
- "Didn't know this existed; fascinating!" - Wood Mausoleum & Cemetery
- "The trail was amazing as was our guide!" - Morton Community Hall

Publicity pieces

Press releases

Doors Open Ontario Website

Rideau Lakes local website

Free press: blogs, articles, mentions

Event calendars.

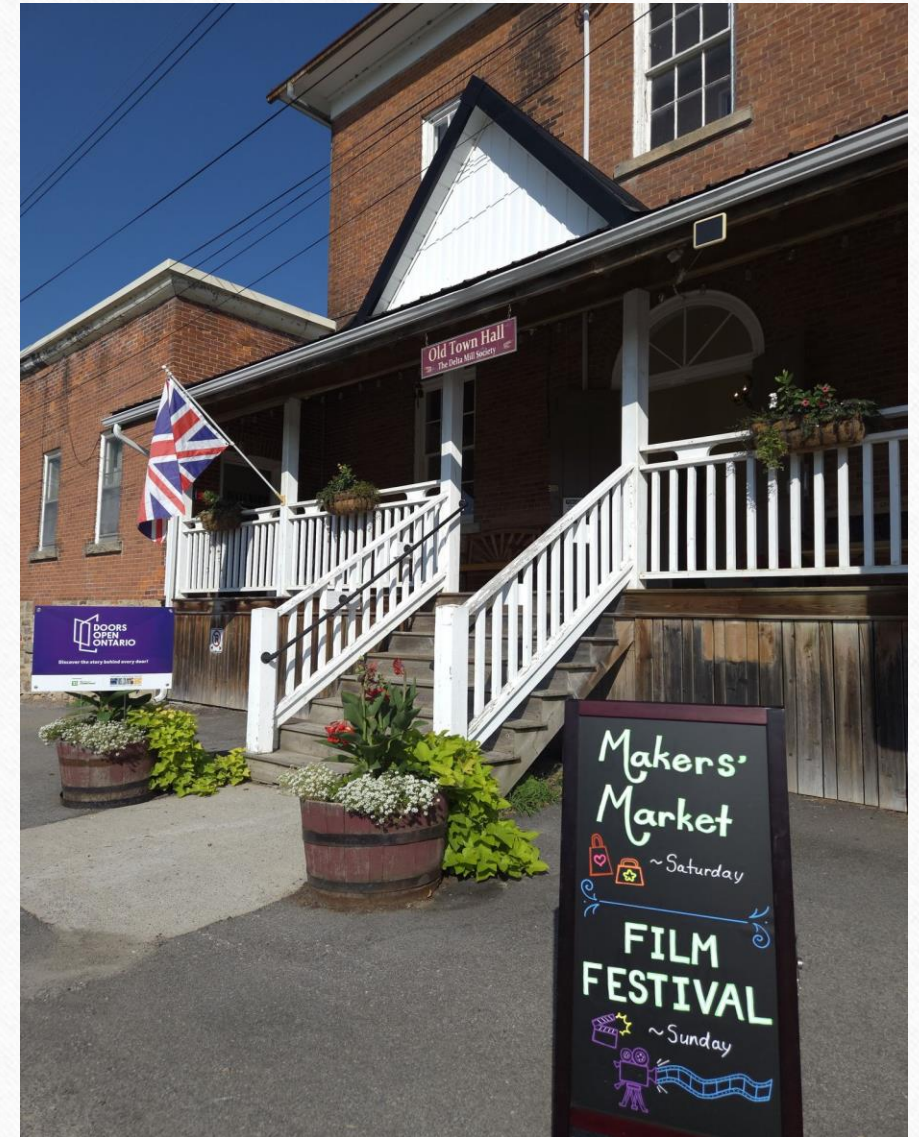
Social media – Doors Open Ontario

Social media – Experience Rideau Lakes

Brochures

Itinerary

Press coverage



Doors Open Ontario Webpage Statistics: Rideau Lakes

- This is looking at visitation and usage at doorsopenontario.on.ca/rideaulakes
- Total visits for the DOO website (April 1 to August 19): **312,976** (up 2% from the same time period last year)
- Total page views for the DOO website: **945,611** (up 19.7% from the same time period last year)
- Average page views per visit: 3 pages per visit (up from 2 last year at this time; keep in mind that a person can visit a website and that's counted as one visit but they may look at many pages during that visit, which accounts for the higher page views) *Total Rideau Lakes page views: **13,521***
- Most popular pages for the DOO site: the Home page, the Events page, the Toronto event page, the Hamilton event page and the Along the Grand event page (*The Rideau Lakes event page was #22 ... out of nearly 3,500 viewed pages; this is excellent placement!*)
- Most popular sites for Doors Open Rideau Lakes: Old Stone Mill, Newboro Manor, McKinney House, Wood Mausoleum and The Tipped Ship. (The Old Stone Mill comprised 4.5% of all your website visitation.)
- Rideau Lakes event was performing along the lines of more urban communities (e.g., Cornwall, Burlington, St. Mary's), so considered a great success on the DOO website!



Experience Rideau Lakes Doors Open Insights

Total views in the last 28 days surrounding Doors Open total 164,150 views. That's a 195% increase in views on Experience Rideau Lakes socials compared to the previous time period! People responded the most to links and photos.

During the last month, we posted 45 posts regarding Doors Open Rideau Lakes, designing individual graphics for each site and posting them on Facebook and Instagram, as well as to our story. We also shared any extra activities at sites that were posted, flyers and even event photos.

Extras to support sites

- Ted and Marion Outerbridge talks at Wood Mausoleum
- Wood Mausoleum and Cemetery handout
- St. Mary's Anglican Church Top 10 Facts to know about St. Mary's
- Coordinate using Allison's films on USB for accessibility during Delta showcase
- Colouring pages Red Brick School
- Elgin Heritage Walking Tour
- Photographer for event





Visitor Survey Highlights

The majority of visitors were attending 4 to 9 sites throughout the weekend, mostly in groups of 2.

Most respondents heard about Doors Open Rideau Lakes through the website, social media and the brochure.

They are very likely to recommend the experience.

On average they will spend \$50 to \$100 in the community (on food and beverages or shopping).



Suggestions for next time

- Bigger brochure to include a community map and "extras" as the Doors Open Ontario website does not accommodate.
- Make a host checklist of things to remember for both planning and the event itself.
- Get brochures out at least three months in advance.
- Create a dedicated Doors Open Rideau Lakes Facebook page to make it easier for people to refer to the posts.
- Ensure sites are in clusters (which we did this time, but to a greater extent).
- More directional event signage on the day of (reusing Doors Open signs from previous years!) - heftier wickets.

Thank you to MHAC and all of the site hosts!

