



# Hastings County

## Business Retention & Expansion Project

### FINAL REPORT

**February 02, 2009**

**Terra Consulting**  
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## Message from Warden Ron Emond, Warden of Hastings County

Through countless hours of hard work, I am pleased with the outcome of our County's Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) project. It is another milestone in our new economic development function at Hastings County to support the growth of a vibrant and robust business climate.

We are listening to the needs, issues and wants of our business community. Studies demonstrate that our existing businesses will account for as much as 80 to 90% of new economic growth. They demand priority attention. We must recognize that businesses and entrepreneurs in our own backyard generate the bulk of our County's growth and investment.



On behalf of the County of Hastings, I would like to personally thank the County staff, organizers, participants and volunteer interviewers who took part in this worthwhile and necessary project. I would also like to thank our funding partners including the Province of Ontario, Foreign Affairs & International Trade Canada, our Community Futures Development Corporation, the North Hastings Economic Development Committee, the Madoc & District Chamber of Commerce, the Tweed Chamber of Commerce and the Township of Stirling-Rawdon's Economic Development Committee.

Once again, thanks to all who participated in helping us make Hastings County the place to invest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Emond".

Ron Emond

Warden

## Message from Bob Sager Chair of the Hastings County Economic Development Advisory Committee

As Chair of the Hastings County Economic Development Advisory Committee, I am pleased to present our Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) final report and strategy. We are impressed with the positive engagement of our business community with 111 businesses surveyed providing us with plenty of useful information.

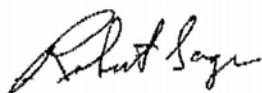
The results of this project which are contained within this report help us to design action plans that respond to the concerns, desires and identified barriers to local business growth as well as expansion opportunities. We are now able to design strategies and budgets with the needs of our business community in mind.

Our Committee and County economic development staff look forward to working with partners across Hastings to act on the information gathered and continue to improve the investment readiness of our County, create and retain jobs and help our existing businesses prosper.

I also take this opportunity to thank our former Committee Chair Tom Deline (2008) and former Committee member Dan McCaw for their work on this project. I also congratulate the tireless efforts of more than the 20 volunteer surveyors. We could not have completed this project without their hours of volunteer service.

Tailoring our actions to the needs and wants of our business community means successful economic development.

Sincerely,



Chair, Hastings County Economic Development Advisory Committee

Reeve, Township of Madoc



## Executive Summary

Hastings County initiated a Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) project to foster the stability and growth of local business through a community based initiative. The project ran from July to November of 2008 and involved 111 businesses in all sectors of the economy. The report that follows provides an in-depth analysis on the dynamics of the local business climate through the collection and interpretation of the survey results. Also in this report is an action plan which encourages the engagement of the community, government and business organizations to work in partnership for future development of the local economy of Hastings County.

An overarching theme is that the County and its partners must invest time and resources to effectively coordinate efforts in the area of economic development, and the County must assume the lead role showing commitment to the process and to growing the area.

Seven action areas were identified by the Task Force –

- Develop a clear economic development structure and policies
- Coordinate joint marketing and business networking initiatives
- Improved access and communications to businesses
- Enable a stable and skilled workforce
- Enhance the area information technology system
- Improve availability and condition of County properties and businesses areas
- Develop an investment strategy to attract new commercial investment

The first action sets the stage for all of the other actions. It stresses the need for dedicated resources to build a strong team who will lead the County towards a coordinated approach to local economic health and growth.

Participating in joint marketing and networking opportunities will increase the visibility and market potential of Hastings County businesses. Local businesses identified that individual efforts do not realize the strength of collaborative efforts. Businesses also felt that there were deficiencies in consumer services within the County. It is therefore very important to identify these service gaps and develop a plan to attract new services to meet the future vision of the County.

Businesses felt strongly that it is critical for municipal officials to work with businesses towards planned growth by regular contact and ongoing BR+E type processes to identify issues and streamline the development process. Communications was identified as a key area of concern with business owners feeling that more information should be readily available to inform them of new and essential programs that can assist their businesses.

Many business owners felt a shortage of skilled labour was a very important issue to address. Through training and information this concern can be greatly alleviated – again this is an area for a collaborative approach with all partners. There was also a demonstrated need for topic specific training for businesses in niche areas of business development in order to enable them to have all the tools necessary to run a successful business. The area of enhanced information technology must also be addressed to meet the changing technology and the changing markets and communication needs of the businesses.

To put the County's 'best foot forward', businesses felt that community improvement in business, commercial and downtown areas was very important to morale and business attraction potential. And finally, it is recommended that the County participate in an investment strategy to increase the businesses and commercial investment potential in the area.

In general, Hastings County businesses have expansion plans, are experiencing an increase in dollar sales and are positive for further growth in the future. They appreciate the quality of life and support of local residents as the area's greatest strengths while expressing concern over some municipal services, labour shortages, technology and the overall cost of doing business.

Overall the business community of Hastings County is growing and has a positive attitude despite some obvious areas for improvement. Business owners have a 'can-do' attitude and are very willing and enthused to work with the municipality to develop the area to its full potential.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Overview of Hastings County

Situated at the centre of the 'Golden Triangle' between the metropolitan cities of Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto, Hastings County commands a unique and enviable position in the Ontario region. With Pearson International Airport just 2 hours away, Hastings County has an area of 1,473,861 acres served by Highway 401 and Route 2 in the South, Highways 127 and 28 to the North and Highways 62 and 37 providing North/South access. As well as these key transportation routes, there is a well maintained network of local municipal roads and Canadian National and Canadian Pacific Railways provide good passenger and freight service to the area.

The population of Hastings County is 38,960. The County's local economic composition includes a range of primary and commercial businesses that are located in the 14 municipalities within the County. The County has a range of all-season outdoor resorts, cultural and community events, as well as spectacular scenery and recreational activities.

The City of Belleville and Quinte West are separated municipalities, and although they share in some County delivered services, economic development initiatives are locally managed. Therefore, businesses in these cities have not been included in this project.

## 1.2 Introduction to Business Retention & Expansion

A Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) program is more than a site visit program where business owners discuss matters that may be inhibiting growth or causing decline of their business. BR+E is a community-based, volunteer-driven economic development tool to encourage the growth and stability of local businesses. In Ontario, the BR+E program was first formalized as an economic development resource tool by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) to promote investment in local business. OMAFRA encourages communities to partner with multiple business interest groups and offers a comprehensive interview and data gathering/analyzing process which helps to determine the viability of the local economy.

Thorough analysis of the data allows for the extraction of important issues that can result in strategic actions. When implemented, these actions will improve the local business climate. This will help retain existing businesses or help others to expand.

Hastings County's BR+E project began in the spring of 2008 with the assistance of the County Council's Economic Development Advisory Committee and several stakeholder groups. A total of 111 businesses participated. The project is consistent with the OMAFRA program and involved direct communication with the business community. The end result is the identification of some challenges and opportunities which are categorized in an action plan to encourage future growth and progress of businesses within Hastings local boundaries.

The County's objectives in completing a BR+E project were to:

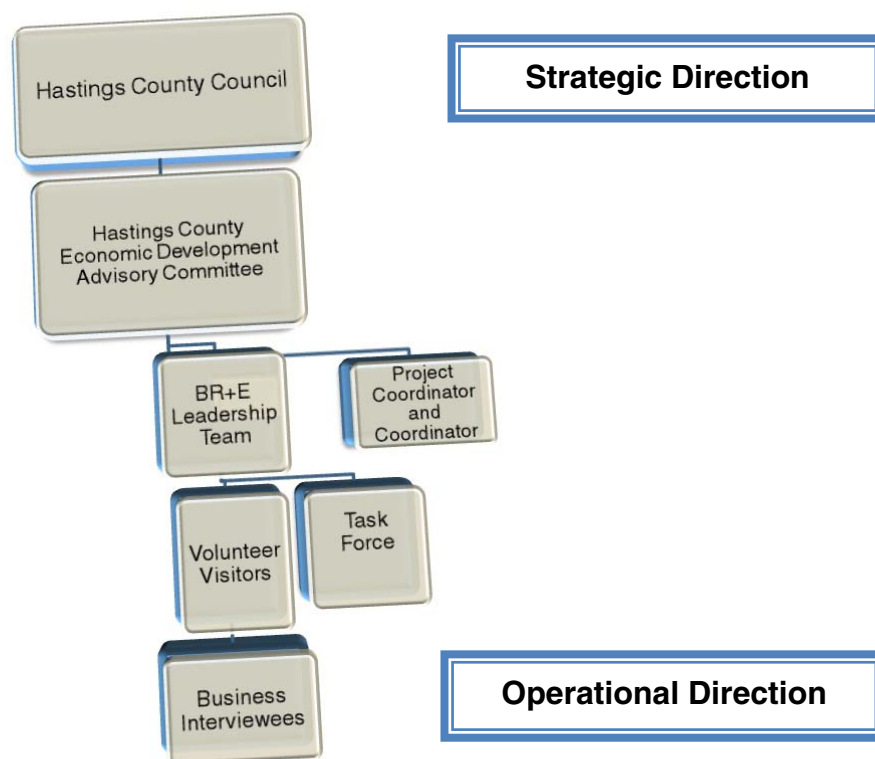
- Provide community support for local business
- Identify and address, where possible, immediate individual business concerns
- Develop a strong working relationship between economic development partners
- Increase the competitiveness of local establishments
- Establish and implement a component of a strategic action plan for economic development
- Increase business development and job creation
- Increase community capacity for economic development

## 2 Methodology

After strategic direction and approval from Hastings County Council, the project was awarded to project coordinator, Libby Smith of Terra Consulting. Operational direction was provided by the Manager of Economic Development and the Economic Development Advisory Committee who were supported by a team of Volunteer Visitors. Several Volunteer Visitor Training Sessions were led by Bonnie O'Neill, former Economic Development Consultant with OMAFRA and Libby Smith.

The Volunteers visited businesses and facilitated interviews, which were returned to the County office and entered into the BR+E database. Individual letters of introduction were sent to all participating business. Interviews lasted between 1 to 3 hours. The data was then analyzed by the consulting firm of Millier Dickinson Blais Inc. and presented to the project Task Force which was the Economic Development Advisory Committee of Hastings County. The Task Force identified areas where the County and other local groups could take on initiatives to improve the business environment.

**Figure 1 – Project Organizational Chart**



## Project Supporting Partners

Hastings County's BR+E project was financially supported by the Province of Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), Community Investment Support Program (CISP), Community Futures Development Corporation of North and Central Hastings and South Algonquin, North Hastings Economic Development Committee (NHEDC), Madoc and District Chamber of Commerce, Tweed Chamber of Commerce and the Township of Stirling-Rawdon.



Foreign Affairs and  
International Trade Canada  
Trade Commissioner Service

Affaires étrangères et  
Commerce international Canada  
Service des délégués commerciaux



Community Futures Development Corporation  
of North & Central Hastings and South Algonquin

*The North Hastings Economic Development Committee*



Tweed Chamber of Commerce



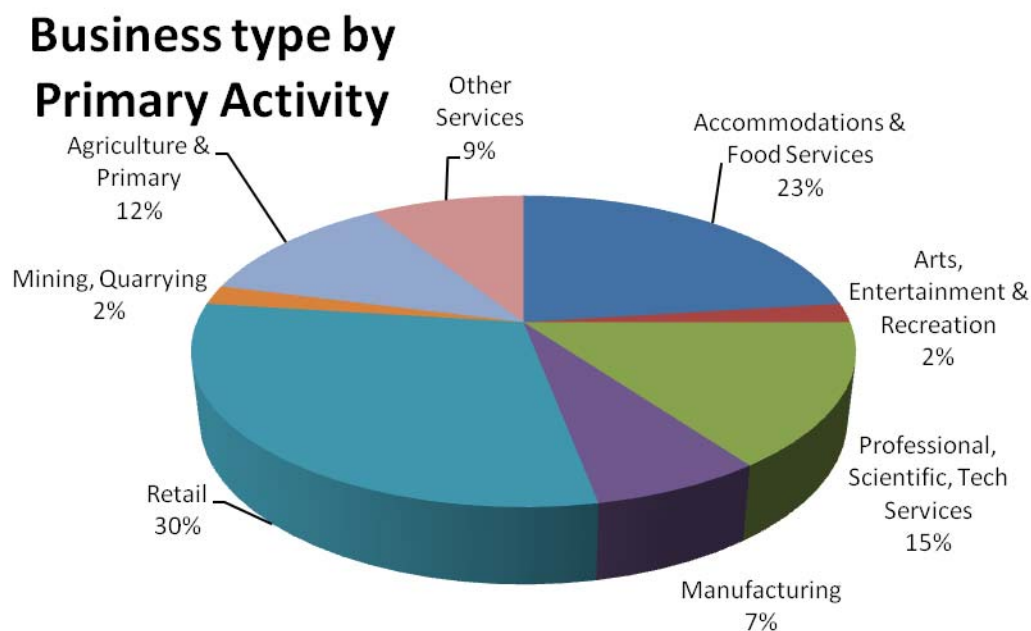
## 2.1 Survey Sample

Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) projects offer an opportunity to either survey a cross-section of community businesses or to focus on a specific sector(s). The Hastings County BR+E employed a modified approach that would provide a cross-section profile of the key sectors contributing to the Hastings County economy, namely manufacturing, tourism, natural resources and retail/service.

The total business listing was based on a list of all businesses in Hastings County (2,000) provided by YLM, Your Local Marketplace. The list of 2,000 was reviewed for accuracy and updates were made to the selection of those to be surveyed. From the total number of businesses representing the target sectors, 267 businesses were randomly selected for the survey with the goal of visiting 100 businesses. Contact was successfully made with 204 businesses.

The survey took place during the months of July – November allowing time to give all businesses the opportunity to participate regardless of seasonality. The final survey includes 111 businesses for a success rate of 54%. Figure 2 illustrates the number of responses by primary activity.

**Figure 2**

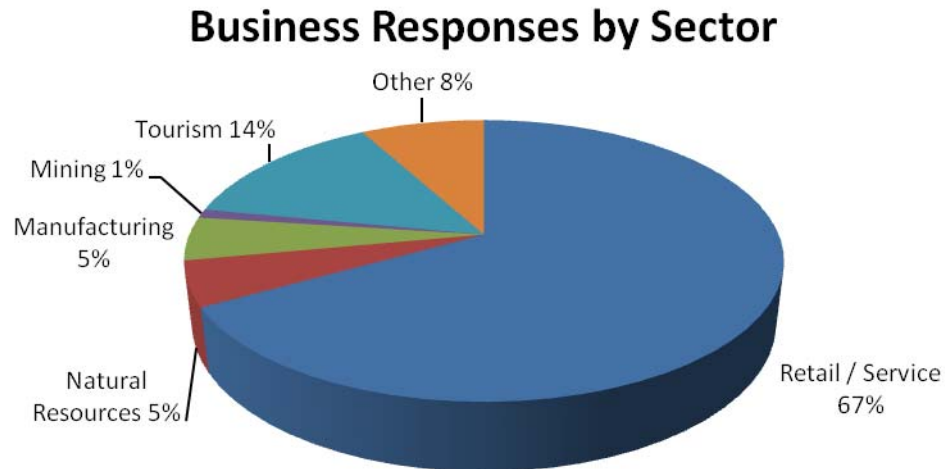


Among the 111 reporting businesses, 43% were corporations, 33% were sole proprietors, 16% were partnerships, 3% were non-profit organizations and 2% were cooperative. A significant number of businesses (86%) reported their company headquarters was in Hastings County, while 11% were elsewhere in Ontario, 3% were outside of Ontario and 1% was outside of Canada.

The BR + E process included 111 participants from a number of different business types. As shown in Figure 3, the majority (67%) identified themselves as part of the retail/business service sector. The second largest business sector identified was from the tourism sector (14%), followed by the

manufacturing sector (5%), natural resources (5%) and mining 1%. The balance of 8% was unidentified and considered 'other'.

**Figure 3**

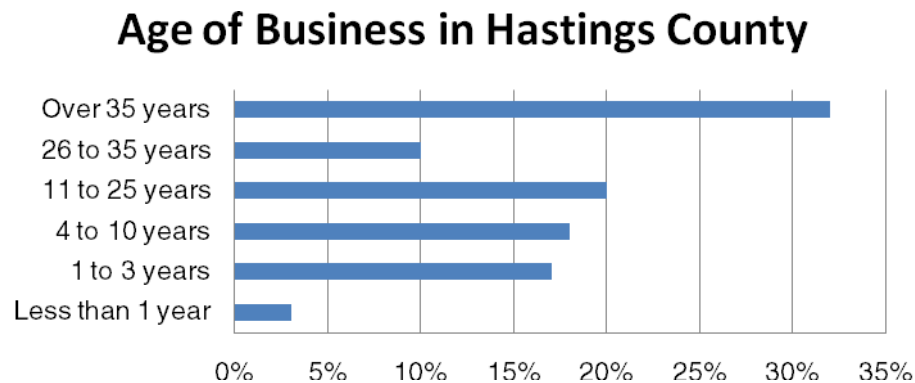


Approximately, 77% of respondents indicated the owner is a resident in the County and 72% of employees live within the municipality or the immediate area. Only 7% of the respondents indicated that their business is part of a franchise. 86% of businesses identified the County location as the headquarters. The business respondents for the survey are divided between the northern and southern areas of the County and Figure 4 provides the percentages of respondents from each area.

**Figure 4**

| Area of County  | Population | % of County by Population | % of Businesses Participating in Survey |
|---|------------|---------------------------|---|
| <b>North</b> – Hastings Highlands, Bancroft, Faraday, Carlow-Mayo, Limerick, Wollaston, Tudor & Cashel        | 13,148     | 33%                       | 36%                                     |
| <b>South</b> – Stirling-Rawdon, Centre Hastings, Marmora & Lake, Tweed, Tyendinaga, Deseronto, Madoc Township | 26,808     | 67%                       | 64%                                     |

Figure 5



As shown in Figure 5 above, 32% of the respondents have been in operation over 35 years in Hastings County. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of businesses were established at least 10 years ago, possibly indicating a low level of new business start up initiatives, while 20% have established in the past three years.

## 2.2 Interpreting the Data

It is a significant accomplishment to complete a first time BR+E project. Many volunteers and economic development staff from various areas of the County participated towards the goal of a successful and meaningful project. While the data is important and can be used to help draw out ideas about the nature of doing business in Hastings County, the reader must be cognizant of the fact that the findings cannot be considered statistically significant based on this limited sample. However, this was a ‘non-probabilistic purposive random sample of businesses’.<sup>1</sup> As Palys noted, this type of sampling “doesn’t aim for formal representativeness. People or locations are intentionally sought because they meet some criterion for inclusion in the study.” The observations are then generalized to the population (business community) studied.<sup>2</sup>

Having said this, there is no question that the survey adds a base of information that creates tremendous value while developing action plans. One of the recommendations is that Hastings County continues with future BR+E work. Done systematically over time, the knowledge base gets deeper which ultimately makes for better decisions and economic climate.

<sup>1</sup> Ted Palys, *Research Decisions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives*. 1997 p. 137

<sup>2</sup> Delbert Miller, *Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurement*. 1991 p.61

### 3 Survey Questions and Responses

The results of the BR+E survey are given in Section 3. While not all questions are presented, questions with a significant result are given for consideration. It should be noted that not all 111 businesses responded to all questions and many responses are given in percentage form. Following the general survey results, are comments and statistics from the sectors.

#### 3.1 Business Climate

##### 3.1.1 What is your general impression of this community as a place in which to do business?

A review of Hastings County's business climate was undertaken by asking respondents of the survey to comment on the local business conditions and their overall experiences operating in the community. The overall perceptions of the community for conducting business, by owners and managers of local businesses were positive.

Figure 6



***Specific comments to improve the local business climate as well as issues which impact businesses the most are contained in Appendix C.***

### 3.1.2 What is your level of satisfaction with these various services?

Businesses were asked to give their level of satisfaction with various services provided by local government and community organizations. Areas showing the least amount of satisfaction were public transit and training. The following figure shows these results:

**Figure 7**

| Service  | Very/Somewhat Satisfied % | Somewhat/Very Dis-satisfied % | No Contact % |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Planning, engineering, zoning and building permits | 51%                       | 23%                           | 26%          |
| Health department/health unit approvals            | 52%                       | 14%                           | 34%          |
| Policing   | 77%                       | 11%                           | 13%          |
| Fire prevention and services                       | 82%                       | 7%                            | 13%          |
| Public utilities                                   | 74%                       | 9%                            | 17%          |
| Street repairs                                     | 67%                       | 25%                           | 7%           |
| Snow removal                                       | 75%                       | 19%                           | 6%           |
| Garbage removal                                    | 69%                       | 11%                           | 20%          |
| Public transit                                     | 13%                       | 14%                           | 74%          |
| Medical and health services                        | 75%                       | 18%                           | 8%           |
| Schools  | 70%                       | 9%                            | 21%          |
| Local training board                               | 17%                       | 8%                            | 75%          |
| Community college                                  | 45%                       | 7%                            | 48%          |
| University   | 6%                        | 2%                            | 93%          |
| Library  | 65%                       | 9%                            | 25%          |
| Child care services                                | 37%                       | 12%                           | 51%          |
| Cultural facilities                                | 49%                       | 18%                           | 33%          |
| Recreational facilities                            | 64%                       | 23%                           | 12%          |

Percentages are based on the number of companies and may not total 100%

## 3.2 Current & Future Plans

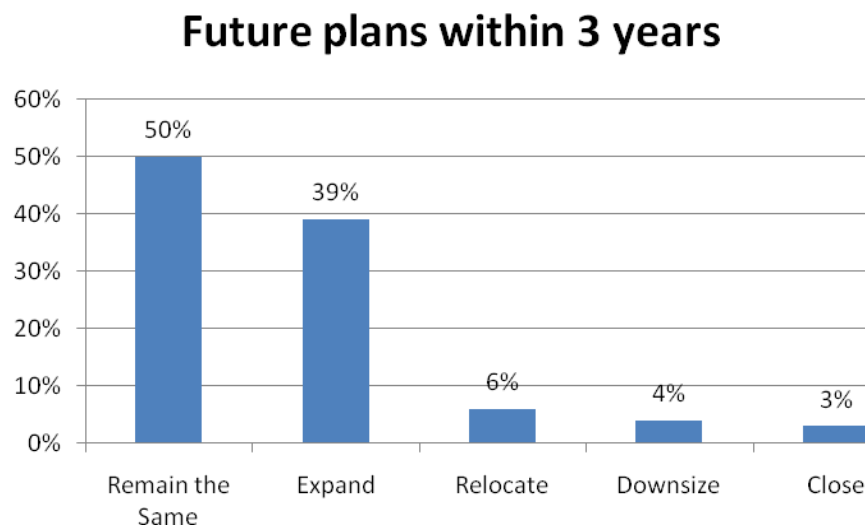
The section of the survey entitled, “Future Plans” focused on questions regarding major business decisions within each organization over the next three years. A positive response was provided by respondents in terms of anticipating expansion plans in the future. Approximately 89% of surveyed businesses note that they will stay the same size or are planning to expand their operations within the next three years. About 4% of businesses indicated they will be downsizing. Of the 4 businesses planning to relocate, all of them are planning to relocate their business within their community. In addition, all businesses stated their current facilities are inadequate for expansion and they could use help in finding a new location and with financing.

Approximately 81% of the respondents in this question (or 34) of the respondents indicated that they will purchase new equipment for their operations in the next three years.

### 3.2.1 Within the next 3 years, which of the following do you plan to undertake at this site?

It is anticipated that the expansion of firms in Hastings County will lead to several changes. These changes are exemplified in Figure 8 (below). Most firms surveyed anticipate that business expansion will lead to an increase in workforce, additional investment in equipment and process improvements and additional services for customers.

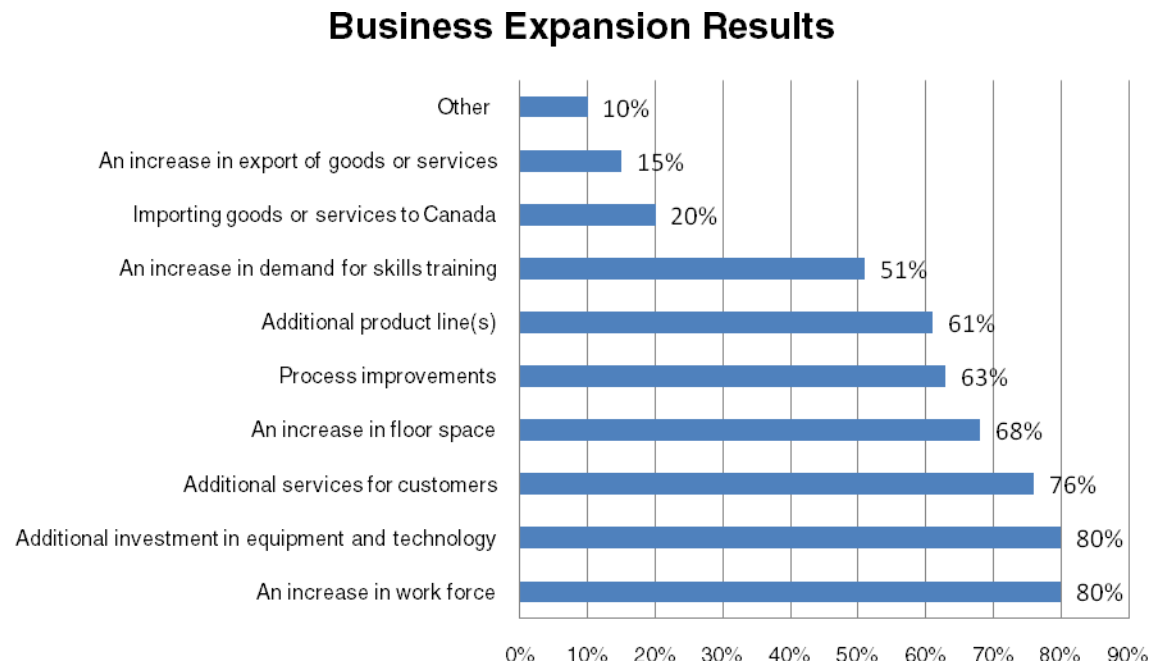
**Figure 8**



### 3.2.2 Will your expansion lead to.....?

Of those businesses that indicated an expansion was in their future plans within the next three years, the following is what they anticipated their expansion will lead to shown in Figure 9:

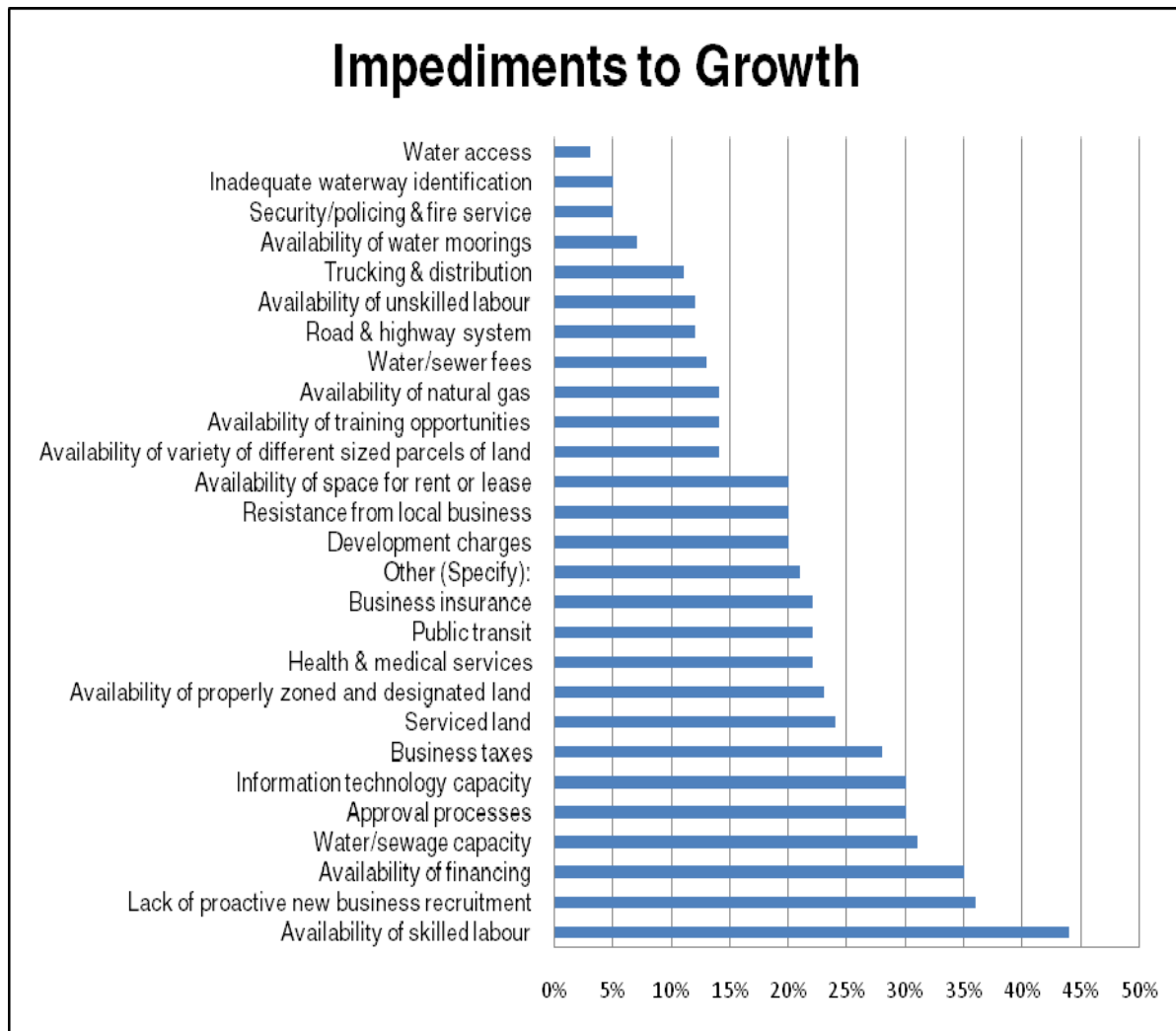
Figure 9



### 3.2.3 Which of the following factors are barriers to the expansion of existing businesses and the development of new businesses in the community?

The greatest impediments to expansion of existing businesses and the development of new businesses were availability of skilled labour, lack of proactive new business recruitment by the municipality and availability of financing. The complete results are in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10



### 3.2.4 Does your business have a succession plan, business plan and a marketing plan?

Many of the responding businesses indicated that they do not have a succession, business or marketing plan. Training or additional information may be required to encourage businesses to plan for the future. Results are below in Figure 11. Requests for assistance were received from 15 businesses for succession plan development, 13 for business plan preparation and 12 needed assistance with a marketing plan.

**Figure 11**

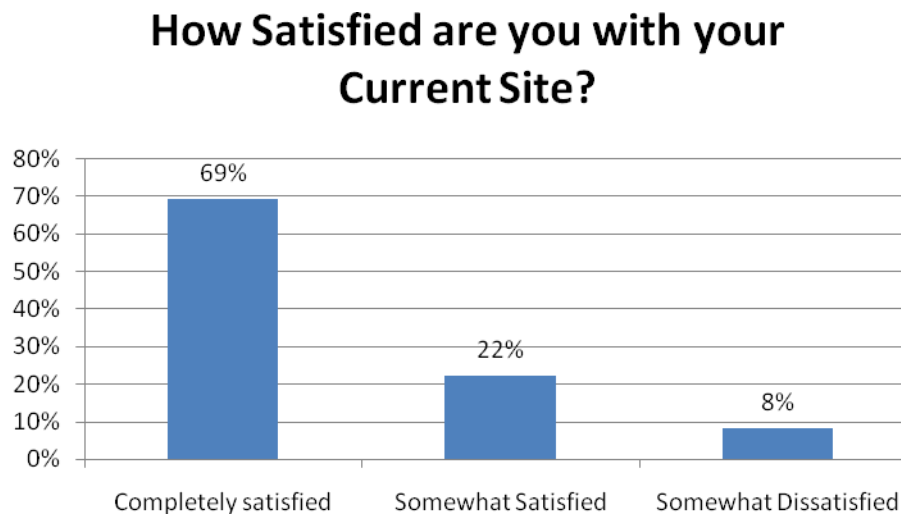
| Plan            | Yes | No  |
|-----------------|-----|-----|
| Succession Plan | 37% | 63% |
| Business Plan   | 61% | 39% |
| Marketing       | 54% | 46% |

## 3.3 Business Development

Included in the survey were 19 questions that relate to site location, utilities, information technology and competitive business factors for Hastings County.

### 3.3.1 How satisfied are you with the current site of your business?

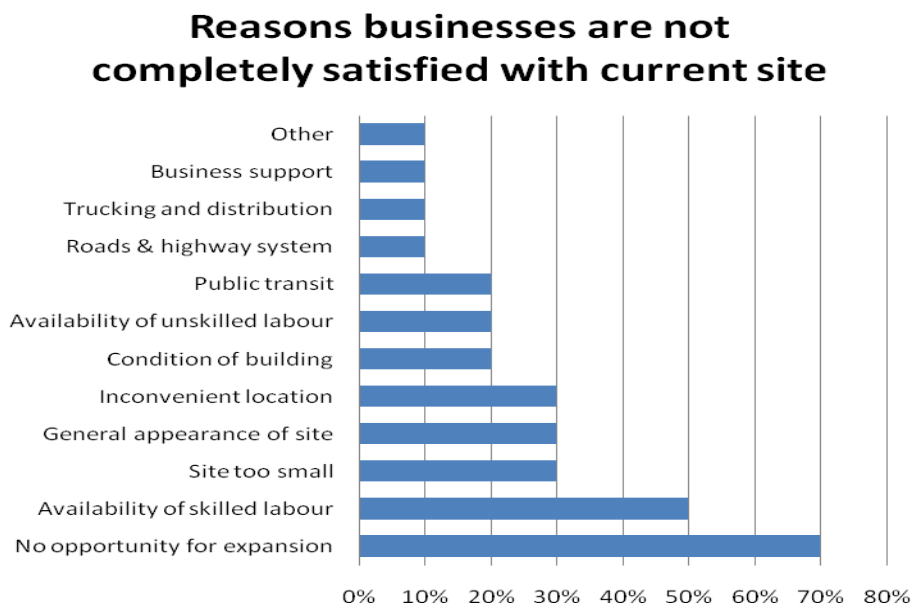
**Figure 12**



### 3.3.2 Why are you not completely satisfied with your current site?

Businesses who were not completely satisfied with their site were largely concerned for the opportunity to expand and availability of skilled labour as shown in Figure 13.

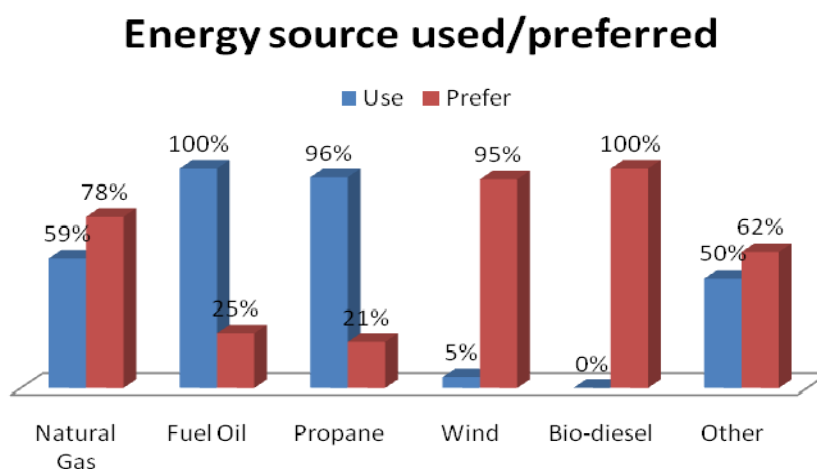
Figure 13



### 3.3.3 Which energy sources does your business use and which do you prefer?

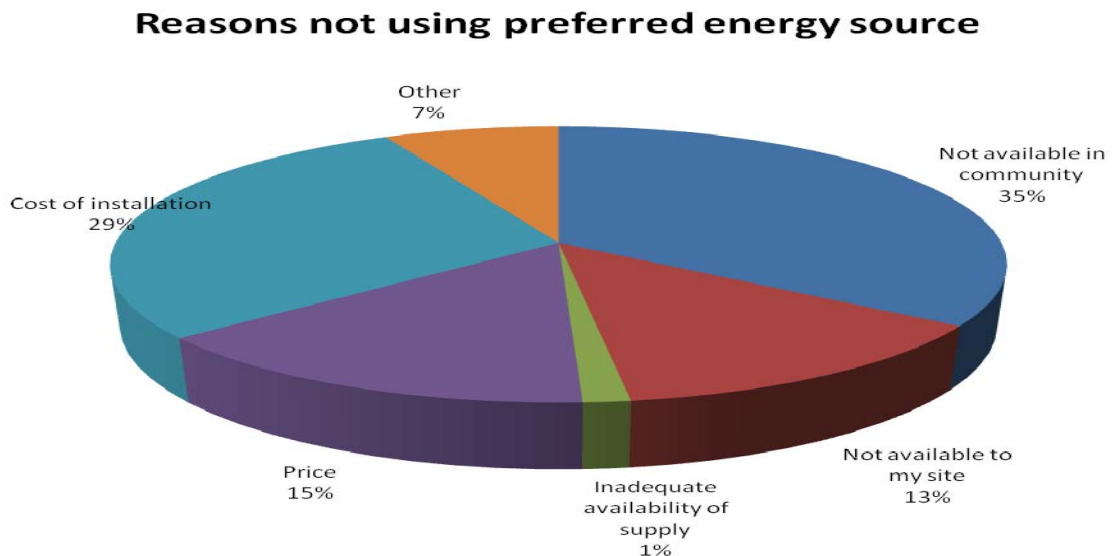
Businesses preferred to use wind and bio-diesel energy sources followed by natural gas as shown in Figure 14. Figure 15 shows the reasons businesses are not using the energy source they preferred.

Figure 14



3.3.4 Why don't you use the type of energy you prefer?

Figure 15

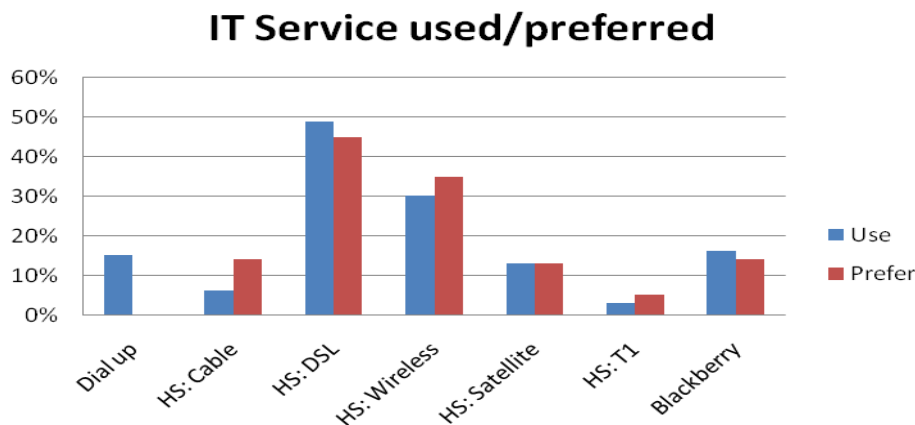


Nearly half of businesses reported that they had concerns with energy supply, management or efficiency. Most were concerned for the high cost of energy, and inconsistent supply/periodic brownouts. Half of the businesses also indicated that they would benefit from engineering or technical support with respect to energy conservation and efficiency.

3.3.5 Which IT services do you use in your business and which do you prefer?

Business preferred high speed DSL and wireless. 15% of businesses responding were using dial-up which was a service that no one preferred. In all cases, the majority of respondents rated all high speed technologies as **'very important'** as shown in Figure 16.

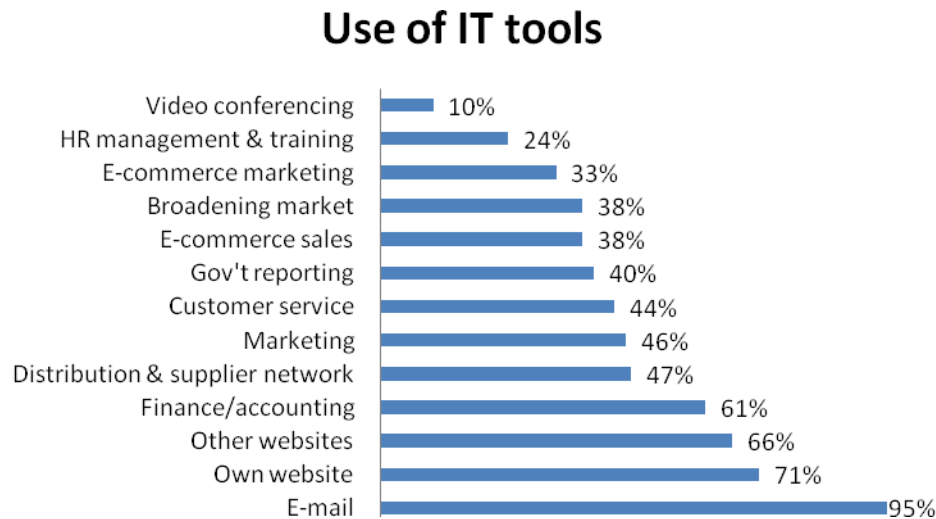
Figure 16



### 3.3.6 Which IT tools to you use in your business?

Responding businesses rated e-mail, their own website and the ability to conduct accounting and other financial transactions online as the most important IT tools they use in their business. Again, most respondents rated all IT tools as **'very important'**.

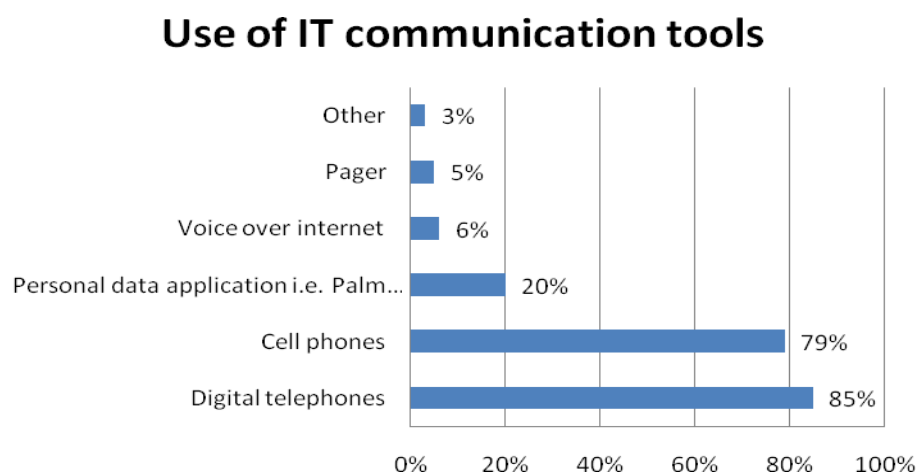
Figure 17



### 3.3.7 Which IT communication tools do you use in your business?

Businesses responding rated digital (touch tone) telephones and cell phones as extremely high usage in their daily business dealings. Respondents rated the IT communications tools as **'very important'** to their business needs.

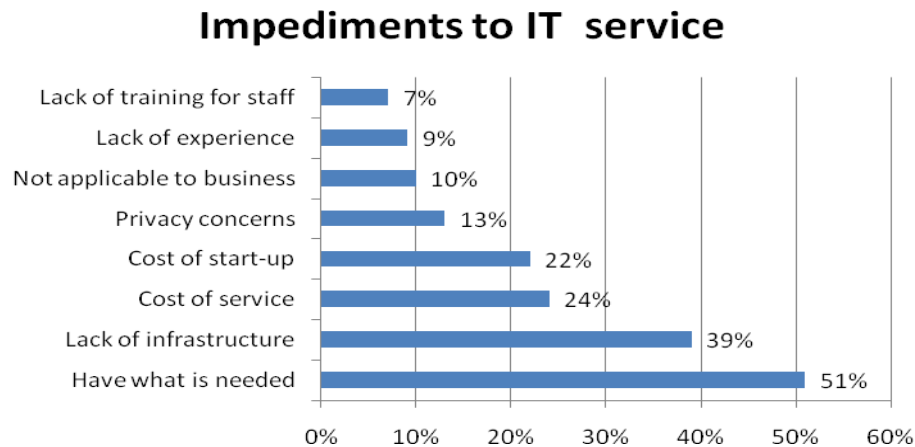
Figure 18



### 3.3.8 What is keeping you from implementing any of these telecommunications technologies?

While half of the businesses felt they have what they need, the remaining half of the businesses felt that a lack of telecommunications infrastructure in the community is keeping them from using many of the technologies they preferred.

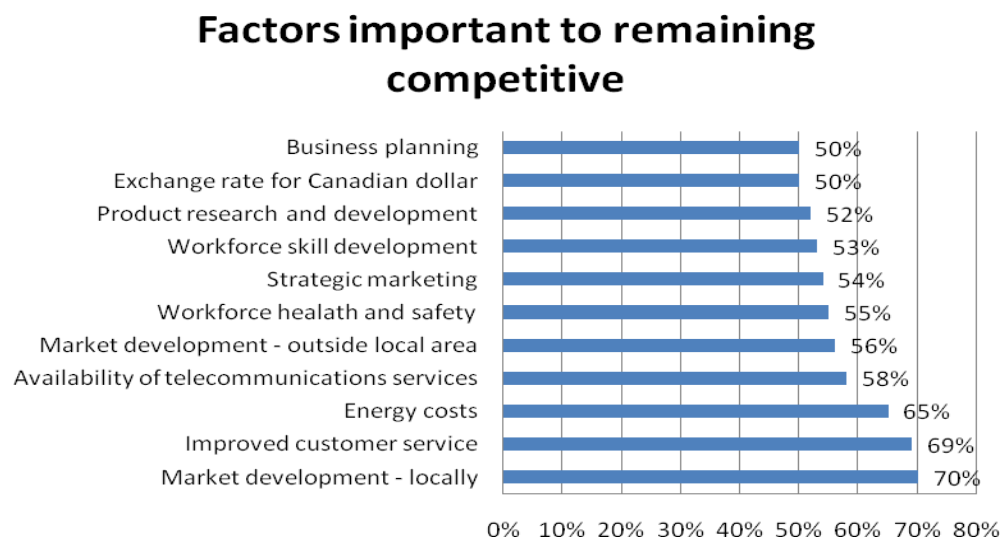
Figure 19



### 3.3.9 Looking forward to the next three years, how important are each of these factors in ensuring that your business remains competitive?

Businesses were given a list of 23 factors that are important to most businesses in remaining competitive. Eleven factors received over 50% ratings by the responding businesses. They are contained in Figure 20 below.

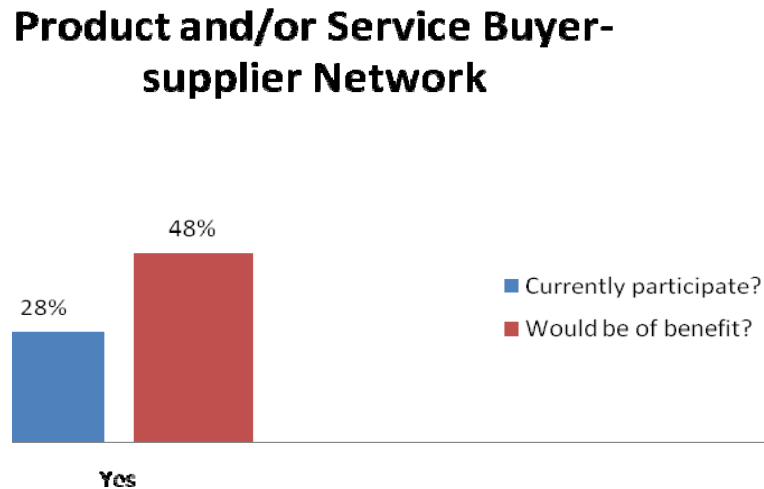
Figure 20



### 3.3.10 Do you participate in a product and/or service buyer-supplier network? Would this type of service be of benefit to your business?

While nearly three fourths of businesses do not currently participate in a buyer-supplier network, nearly half of the businesses felt that such a network would be of benefit to their business.

**Figure 21**



## 3.4 Market Development

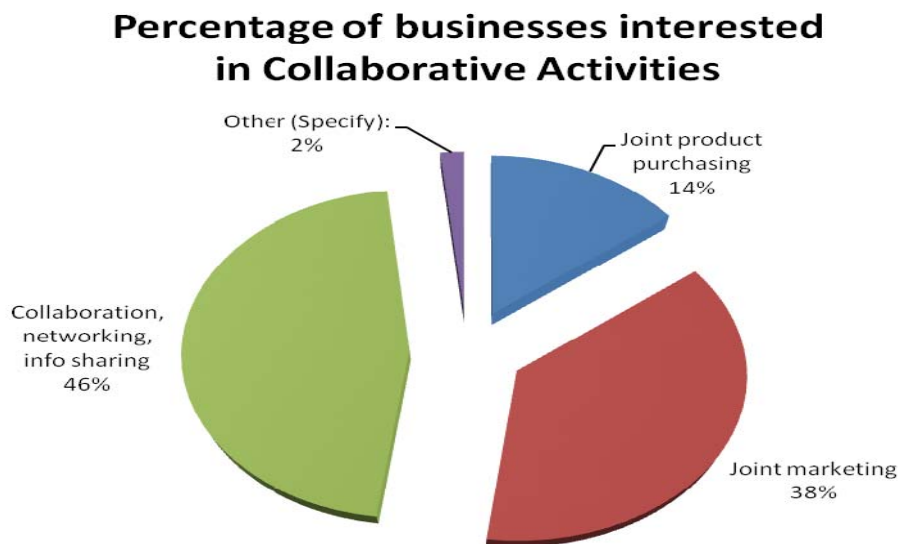
This section of the survey deals with how well the businesses know their customers and how they reach them with their marketing message.

### 3.4.1 Are you interested in pursuing any of the following methods of marketing with other businesses in your community?

Businesses were asked if they were interested in pursuing various marketing methods with other businesses. Approximately half of all responding businesses were interested in joint marketing and networking. An excellent example of joint marketing which is used frequently by Millier Dickinson Blais as a best practice example, is the ComfortCountry initiative which took place in February, 2005 among the Municipalities of Marmora & Lake, Centre Hastings (Madoc), Tweed and Stirling-Rawdon who all partnered to form the Main Street Revitalization Initiative. Hastings County can use this intimate knowledge of this project to widen this type of joint marketing initiatives throughout the County and establish new and broader projects. The County's Economic Development Action Plan 2009 – 2012 also calls for 'implementation of a Hastings County focused branding strategy that promotes Hastings County as a package including themed tourism opportunities'. A complete description of this initiative is in Appendix C.

Figure 22 below shows the breakdown of collaborative activities that businesses were interested in pursuing.

**Figure 22**



### 3.4.2 Where do your customers live – both in Canada and outside of Canada? (determined by total dollar sales)

Respondents were asked the approximate percentage of the business' total dollar sales in each of the markets in Figure 23. They were further asked where their Canadian customers normally live in Figure 24.

**Figure 23**

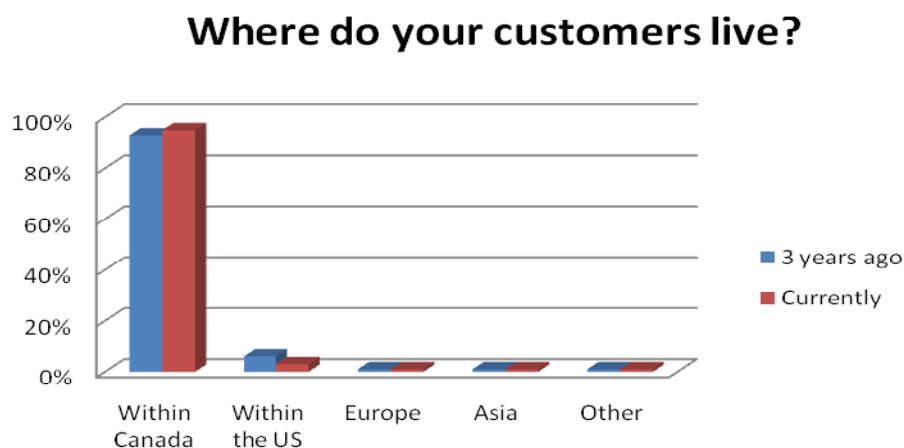
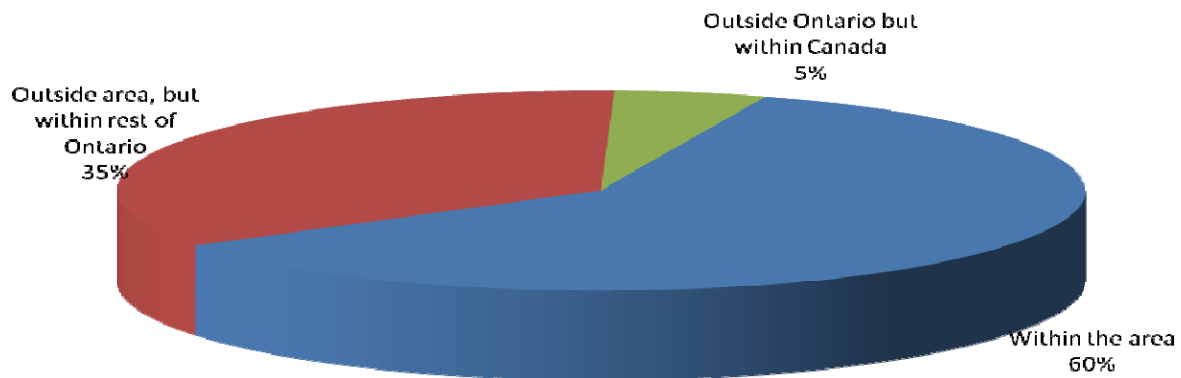


Figure 24

### Where do your Canadian customers live?



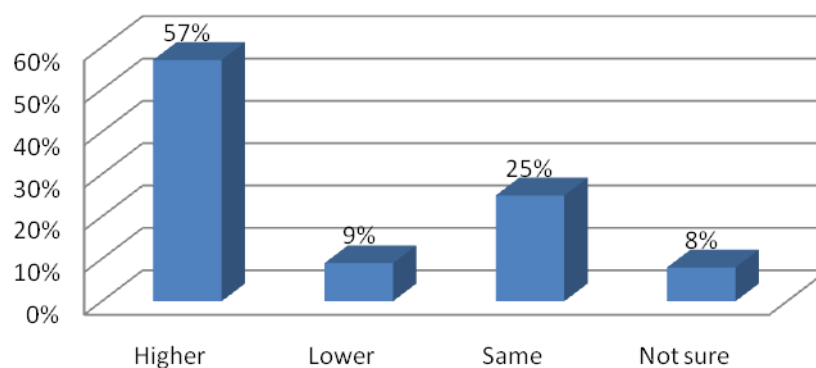
Sales were slightly higher in the US market in the past (3 years ago), noted at 6% rather than 3% as it is currently. In the Canadian market, the breakdown of locations is exactly the same currently as it was three years ago.

#### 3.4.3 What are your expectations for next year's total dollar sales compared to last year?

82% of businesses showed optimism that their total dollar sales will remain the same or increase, showing a high level of confidence in the economy and the marketplace.

Figure 25

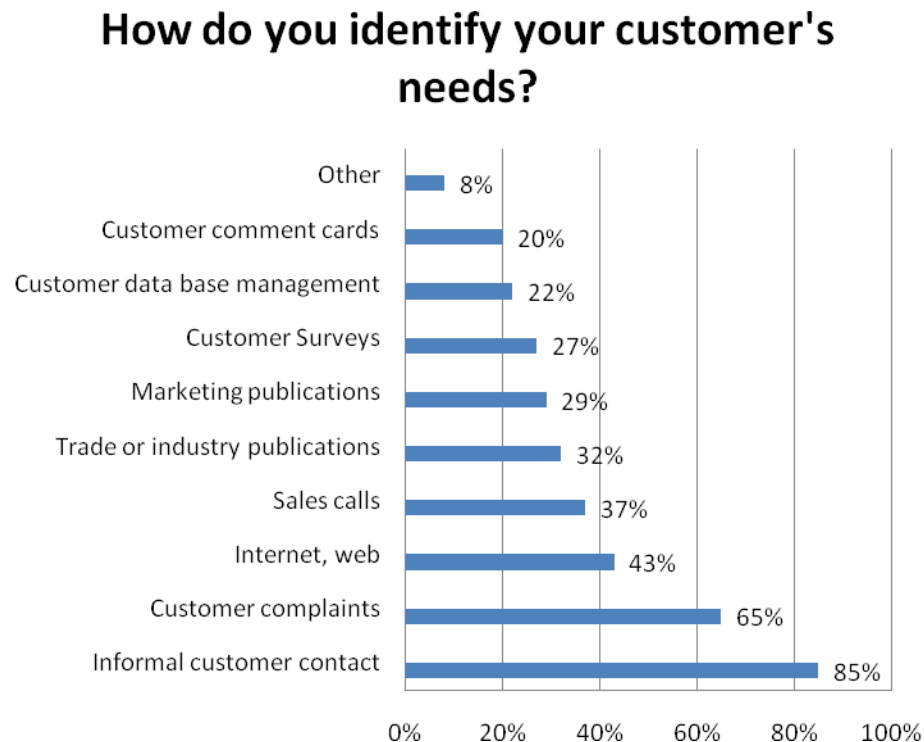
### Total dollar sales expectations for 2009



### 3.4.4 How do you identify your customer's needs?

Businesses were asked what methods they use to find out what their customers are looking for. Several methods were listed with most businesses relying on informal customer contact and customer complaints as shown below in Figure 26.

Figure 26



### 3.4.5 How do you market your products/services in Canada and outside of Canada?

Most businesses responding to this question selected the **Internet** as the preferred method to market their business both in and outside of Canada. Other methods used in Canada included:

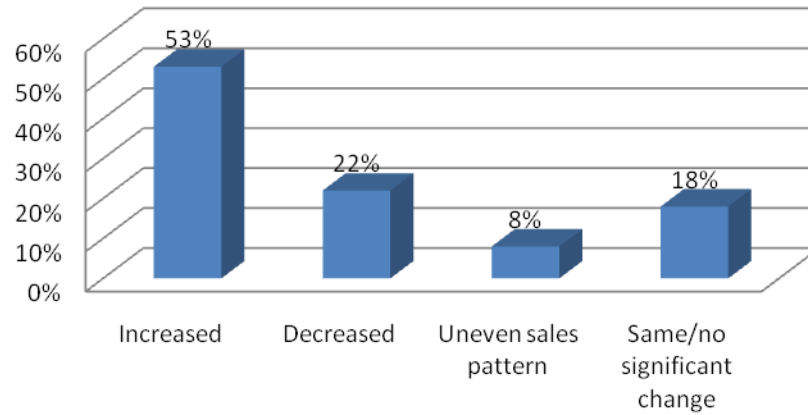
- Sponsorship of events
- Flyers/brochures
- General publications
- Business cards

### 3.4.6 During the past 3 years, what has been your total dollar sales trend at this location?

More than half of the businesses surveyed felt that their total dollar sales trend had increased with only 22% showing a decline.

Figure 27

### Total dollar sales trend in past 3 years

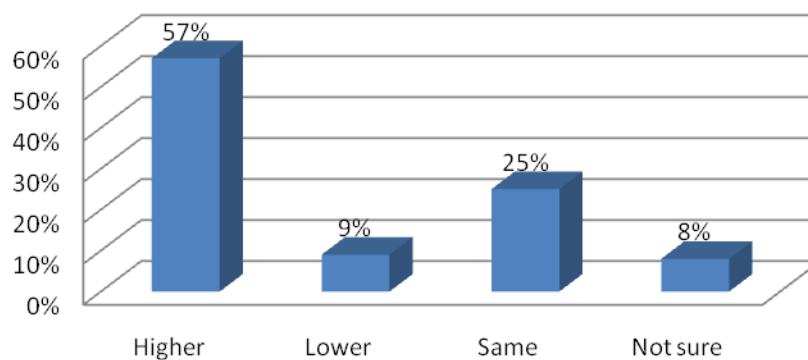


#### 3.4.7 What are your expectations for next year's total dollar sales compared to last year?

Showing confidence in next year's sales, only 9% of businesses felt their dollar sales would be less than 2008.

Figure 28

### Expectations for 2009 dollar sales compared to 2008



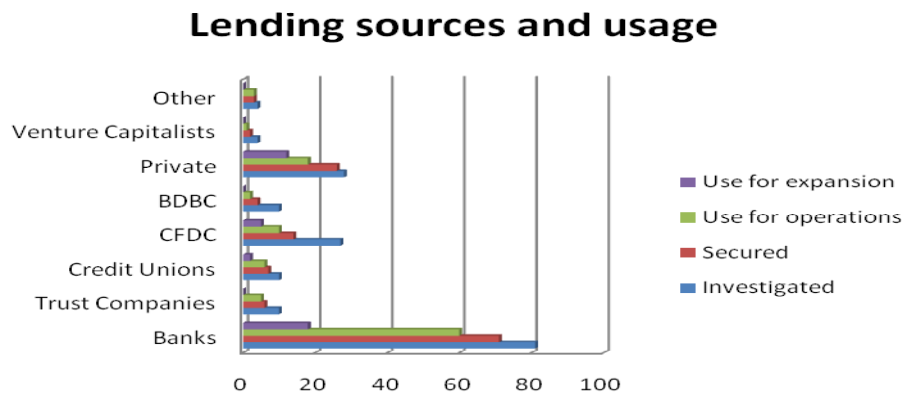
### 3.5 Financial Issues

This section of the survey questioned businesses on financial matters including financing/lending sources and financial planning.

#### 3.5.1 Within the past 3 years, what financial/lending sources have you investigated and secured funds from? Are you using those funds for operational costs or for expansion?

Responding businesses were asked questions regarding their choice of lender and 81 businesses investigated banks for funds with 71 securing funds. By far, banks were the most used source of funding and loans as shown in Figure 29.

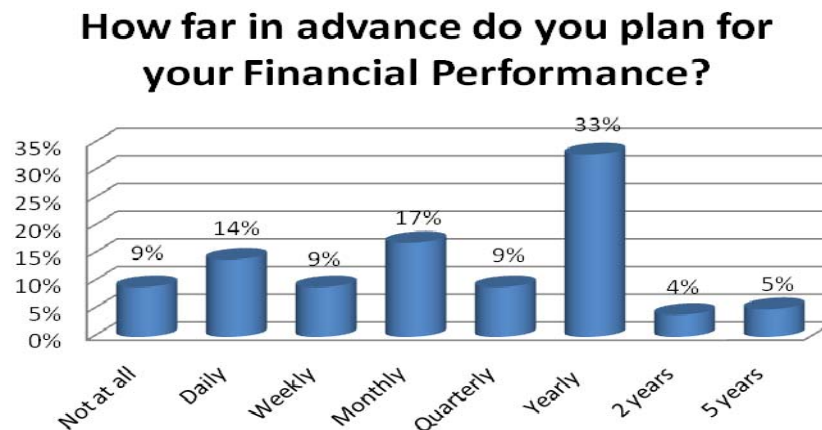
Figure 29



#### 3.5.2 How far in advance do you plan your financial performance? How far in advance do you review your financial plan against your actual performance?

More than one third of businesses plan their financial performance yearly. More than one third again, review their financial plan against their actual performance. Of concern was that 9% of businesses surveyed do not practice financial planning or review at all.

Figure 30



### 3.6 Workforce Development

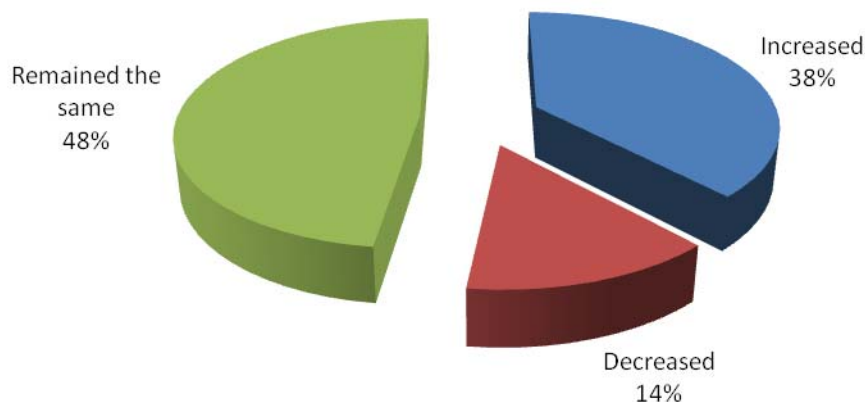
Sixteen questions were asked of surveyed businesses regarding their issues with workforce development. This included numbers of employees, characteristics of the workforce and skills development. This was an area of concern for most businesses who were unable to recruit skilled and unskilled labour for their workplace.

#### 3.6.1 During the past three years, has the number of employees in this business increased, decreased or stayed the same?

Figure 31 shows that only 14% of businesses decreased the number of the employees in their business over the past 3 years, with 38% experiencing an increase. This is a positive indicator that businesses feel secure in their future.

Figure 31

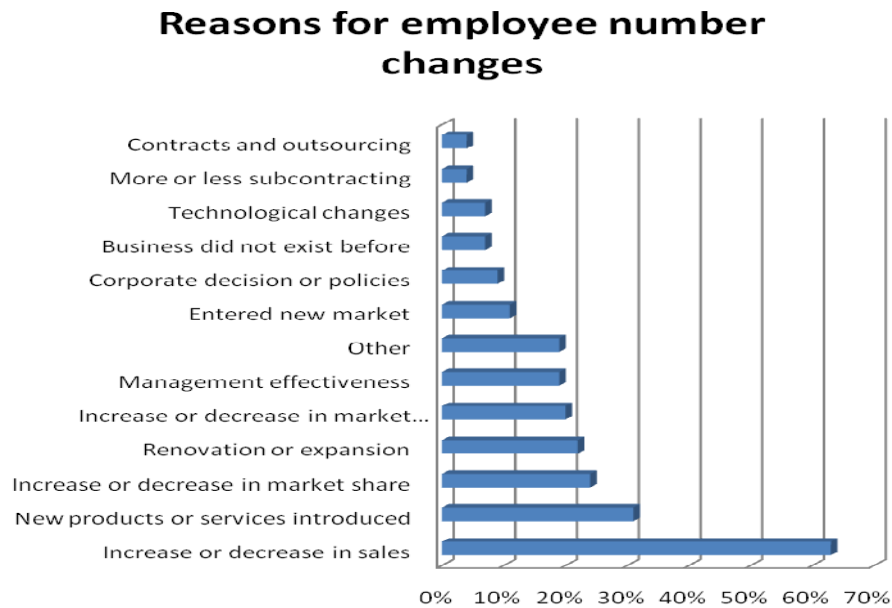
#### Number of employees in past 3 years



#### 3.6.2 What factors are responsible for this change?

Increases and decreases in sales are most responsible for employee number changes followed by new products or services introduced as shown in Figure 32.

Figure 32



### 3.6.3 During the next 3 years, do you think the number of employees in this business will increase, decrease or stay the same?

Again showing confidence, 89% of businesses felt that their employee numbers would remain the same or increase. Only 4% predicted a decrease.

Figure 33



3.6.4 What factors are responsible for this change?

### Reasons for future changes in employee numbers

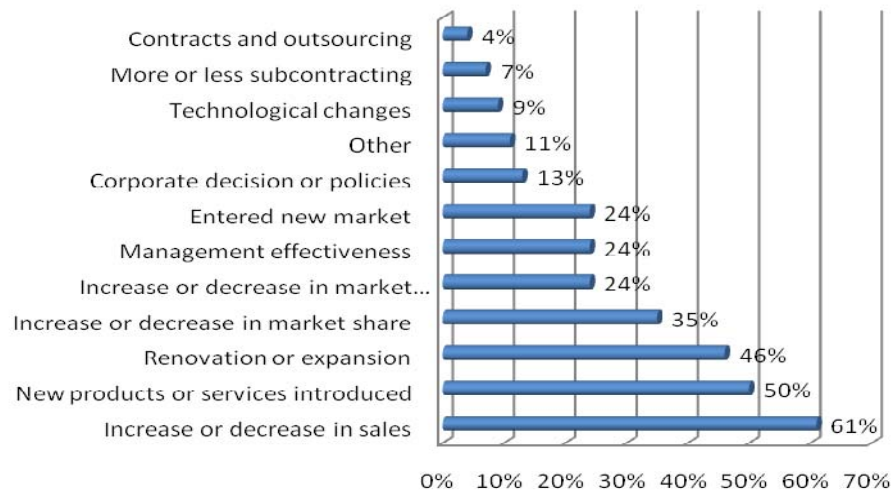
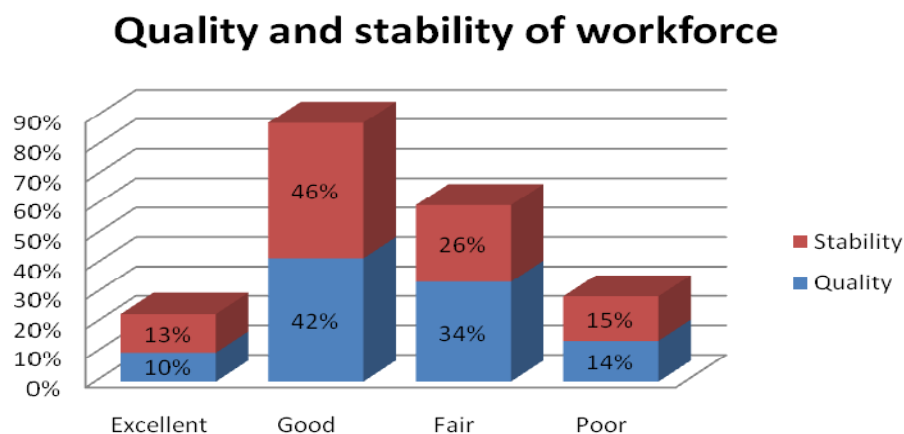


Figure 34

3.6.5 How do you rate the quality and stability of the workforce in this area for your business needs?

Businesses had some issues with getting skilled and quality employees. Only 10% of businesses rated the work force as excellent quality and 13% as a stable workforce. This may relate to responses from the training questions that follow.

Figure 35

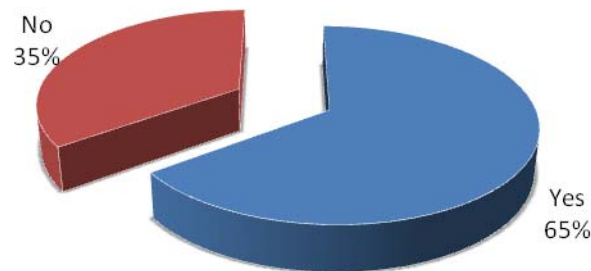


**Specific comments regarding the availability, quality and stability of the workforce are contained in Appendix C.**

### 3.6.6 Are you able to recruit sufficient qualified employees for this location?

**Figure 36**

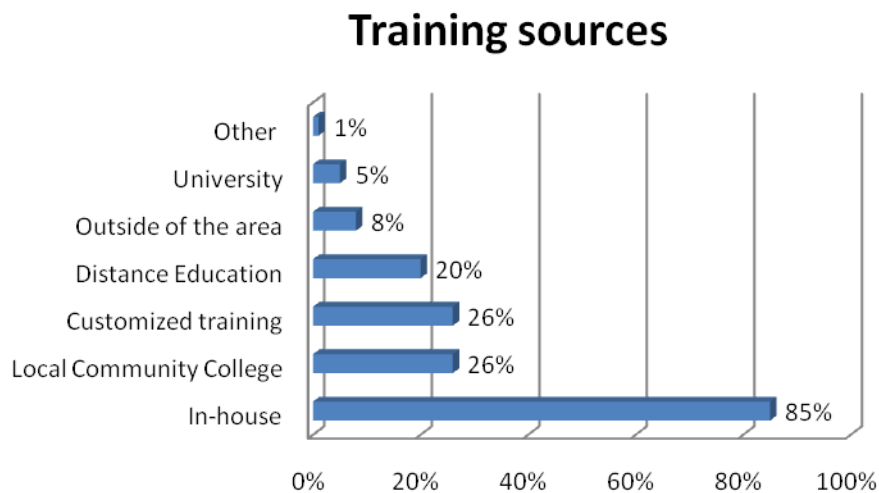
## Ability to recruit sufficient qualified employees



### 3.6.7 Where do your employees receive training?

With the exception of a satellite campus in Bancroft (and Belleville), Hastings County does not have any training institutions within the County, and therefore the majority of training is completed in-house.

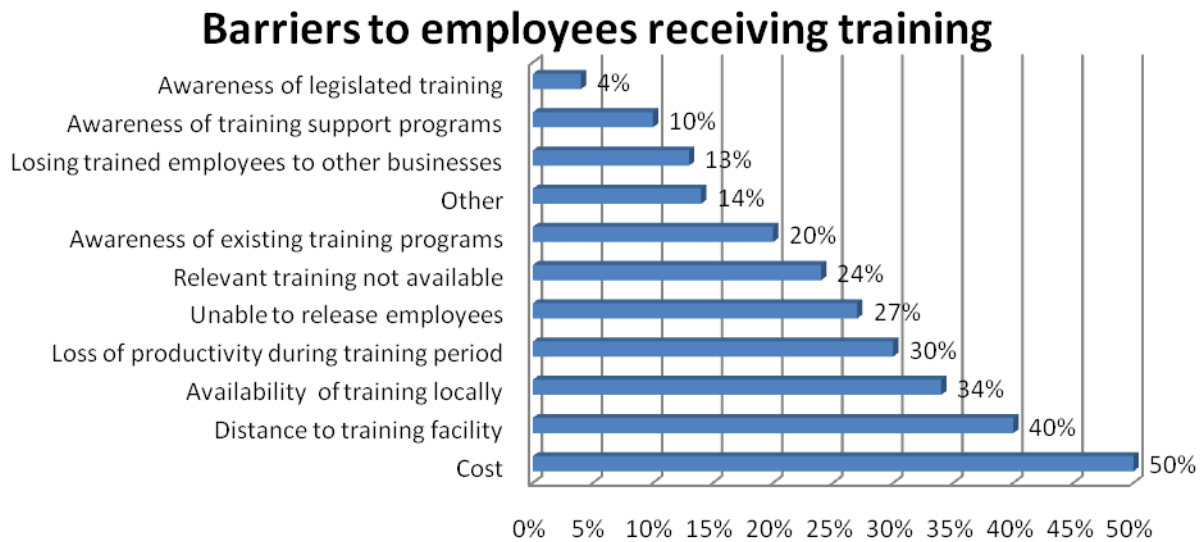
**Figure 37**



### 3.6.8 What are the most significant barriers to your employees receiving the necessary training?

The greatest barrier to employees receiving the necessary training is cost, followed by distance to a training facility and then availability of local training. This clearly shows a need for affordable and convenient training options for Hastings County businesses.

**Figure 38**



### 3.6.9 Would a mentoring program benefit the businesses in this community – meeting and working with other businesses as a way of sharing and learning new skills? In which area?

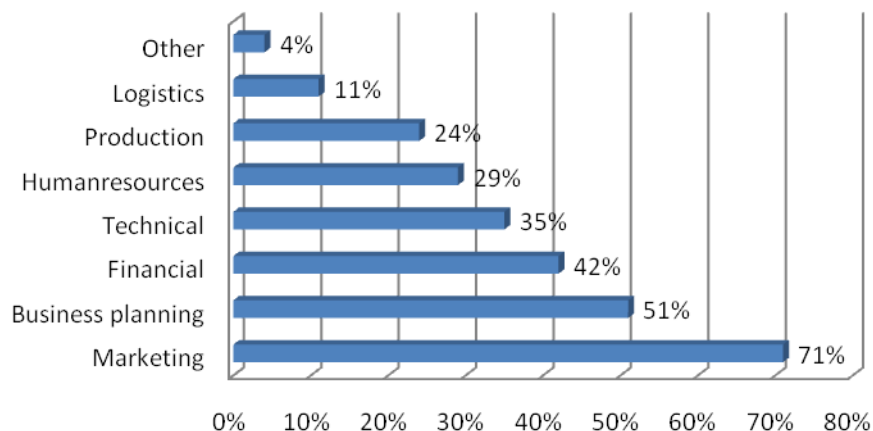
More than half of businesses surveyed thought that a mentoring program would benefit the businesses in the community. When asked what area they would benefit most from, the most popular responses were marketing, business planning and financial matters as shown in Figure 39 and 40 below.

**Figure 39**



Figure 40

### Desired areas of mentoring



### 3.7 Local Community

The final general section identifies issues that affect how the community can effectively participate as a thriving member of the business community of Hastings County. Businesses were encouraged to describe the 'best and the worst' of their community.

#### 3.7.1 Would you be interested in participating in a Business Ambassador program for the community?

Businesses were nearly evenly split regarding participation in an Ambassador Program. This is high interest and could possibly be expanded on to promote Hastings County.

Figure 40

### Participate in an Ambassador Program



### 3.7.2 Do you know if the local community has an economic development plan? Is it being effectively implemented?

As per Figure 41, more than one third of the respondents did not know if their community had an economic development plan. Of those that did, 50% felt that it was being effectively implemented. There is a general lack of knowledge as to the existence of community economic development planning procedures.

Figure 41

#### Knowledge of Community Economic Development Plan

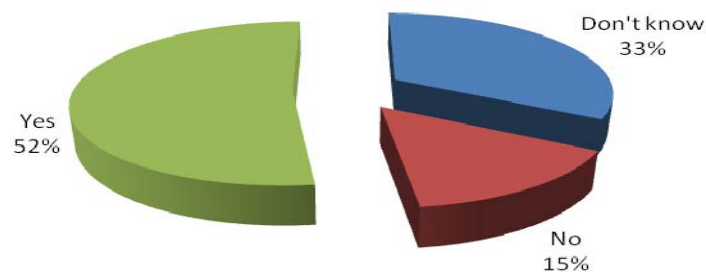
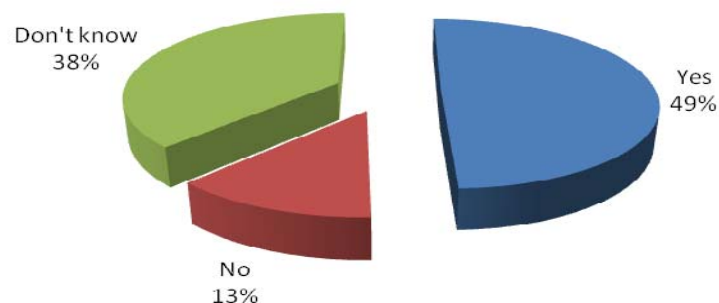


Figure 42

#### Is economic development plan being implemented effectively?

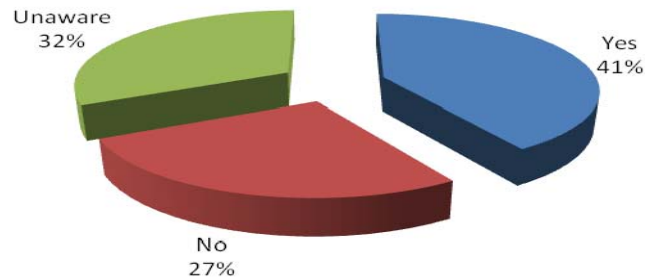


### 3.7.3 Do you feel that the local municipality takes an adequate role in business and economic development in the community?

59% of the businesses surveyed either felt that the municipality did not take an adequate role or was unaware of what is being done. This may be an issue with communications or with the level of involvement that the municipality adopts with economic development matters.

Figure 43

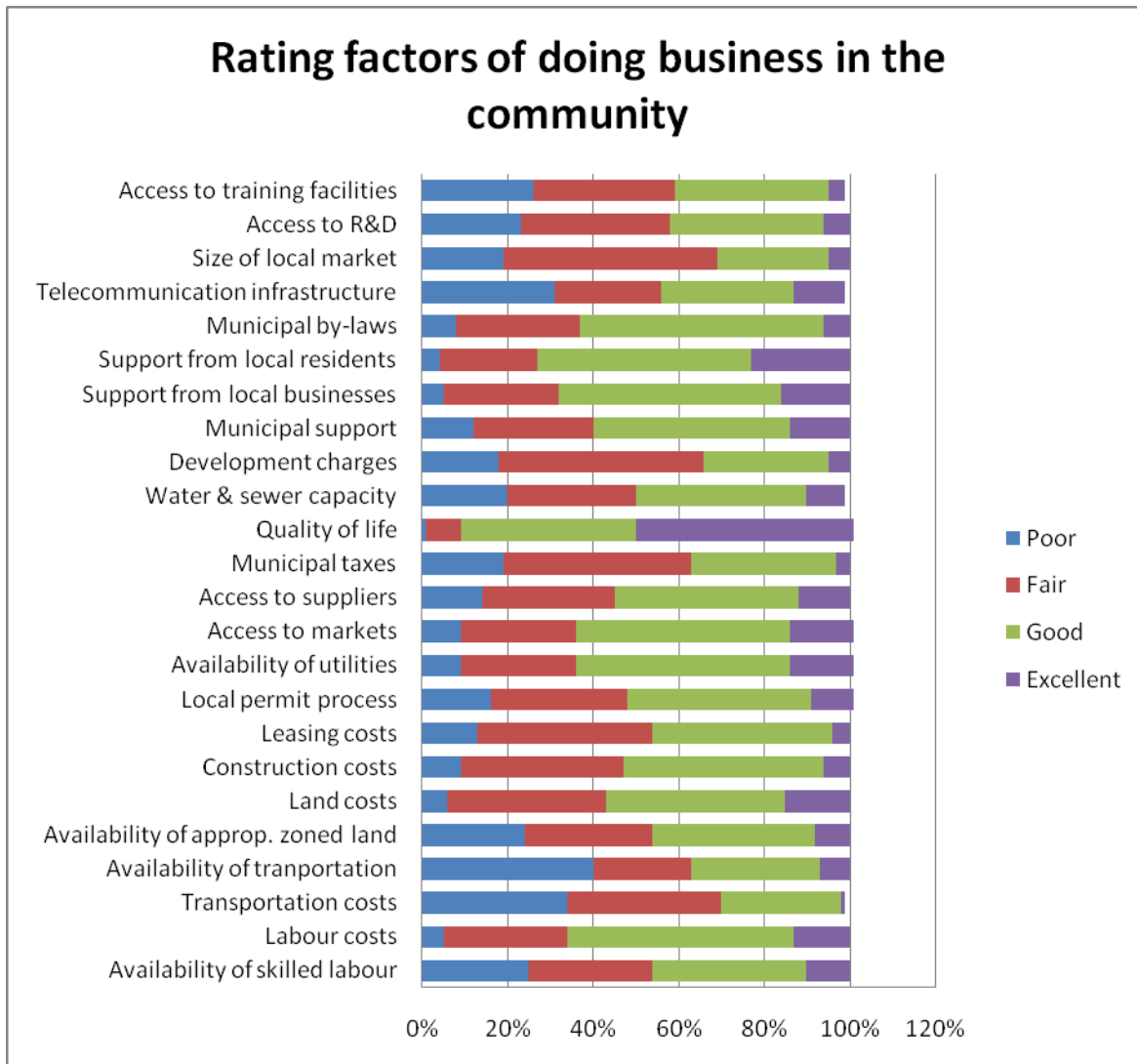
### Does local municipality take an adequate role?



#### 3.7.4 How would you rate these factors in doing business in the community?

Businesses were asked to rate 24 factors on their significance in doing business in the community. The following Figure 44 shows the responses of each with quality of life being the most highly rated factor and transportation and telecommunications being the biggest areas of concern.

Figure 44

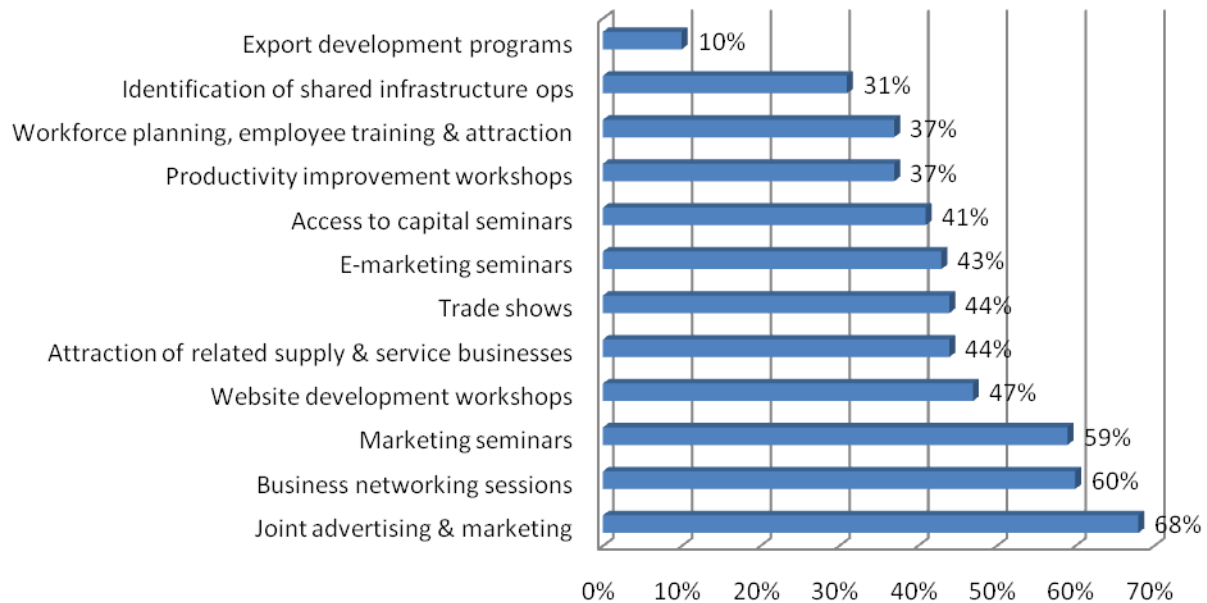


### 3.7.5 How can local business associations and/or economic development offices assist your business sector?

Businesses felt that local business associations and economic development agencies can assist businesses best by coordinating joint advertising and marketing initiatives, providing business networking sessions and making marketing seminars available. A great opportunity exists here for local and County organizations to assist businesses across Hastings.

Figure 45

## How economic development offices can assist



***Specific comments to and suggestions on new suppliers of products and services, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of doing business in the community are contained in Appendix C.***

### 3.8 Retail Sector

The Retail Sector comprised the largest portion of the survey population at 67%. Opinions varied somewhat, but overall the retail sector had many common issues and concerns.

#### 3.8.1 Is there a strategy or plan in place for promotion and managing your commercial district?

When asked if there is a strategy or plan in place for promoting and managing their commercial district, a concerning 29% of the respondents did not know. Of the 41 % who responded as 'yes', when asked to identify the strengths of the plan, more than 50% felt that the plan:

- Is a comprehensive and integrated plan
- Is focussed primarily on retail marketing and promotions

#### 3.8.2 Rate the condition of your commercial district for each factor given.

When asked to rate the condition of their commercial area, positive comments were received regarding:

- Street furniture (lights, benches, waste containers)
- Plantings, trees and flower boxes

- Sidewalks and pedestrian environment
- Vandalism
- Public safety services (lighting, security, police)
- Appropriate mix of businesses

Less favourable comments were noted regarding:

- Public amenities (parks, fountains, washrooms)
- Public transport
- Accessibility for people with disabilities
- Parking signage
- Highway and tourism directional signage
- Roadside advertising
- Visual identity of the area
- Exterior appearances of facades
- Number of vacancies (turnover)

### 3.8.3 Rate the condition of your commercial district for each factor given.

Similarly when asked to rate their commercial district on non-structural issues, a higher rating was given to:

- Organization of special events

Lower ratings were given to:

- Uniform hours of operation
- Customer service
- Advertising campaigns

### 3.8.4 Rate the condition of your commercial district for each factor given.

Businesses felt the following were the most significant operating costs that are of serious concern:

- Cost and availability of full and part time employees
- Business insurance
- Cost of utilities

## 3.9 Tourism Sector

The Tourism Sector represents 14% of the survey sample and have some unique issues given the seasonal nature of their business.

### 3.9.1 Currently, and looking to the future, who are and who would you like to see as your main target markets?

When asked who their current and future main target markets are, the most repeated answers for both parts of the question were:

- Leisure travelers

- Outdoor enthusiasts
- Local travelers within 100 kms
- Ontario visitors
- US visitors

The only market that was noted as a target in the future that does not already exist was the Corporate Market.

### 3.9.2 Currently, and looking 3-years into the future, what is and what do you feel could be the primary products that attract visitors to the area and your business?

Businesses responded to this question by citing several tourism products that attract visitors currently and are the same for the future. They are:

- Adventure and outdoor activities
- Agri-tourism
- Arts and culture/heritage
- Cycling
- Eco- tourism
- Fishing
- General attractions
- Fishing and hunting
- General attractions
- Family focus activities
- Music and performing arts
- Trails
- Snowmobiling/ATV adventurers

### 3.9.3 How beneficial are the following events and programs to your business?

When asked to rate a list of events and programs the following were listed as **Very/Somewhat** beneficial:

- Local 1 day events
- Festivals
- Sporting events
- Websites
- Tourist information centres
- Public washrooms
- Highway signage
- Public rest and picnic areas
- Tourism newspapers
- Tourism guides
- Multi packages

Listed as **Minor/No benefit** were:

- Ontario Tourism marketing partnership
- Canadian Tourism Commission marketing

- Travel agents
- Tour companies

Listed as **needing improvement** were:

- Chamber of Commerce tourism marketing
- Local, provincial and federal marketing initiatives
- Travel agents and tour company marketing
- Highway signage
- Rest areas
- Public trails

### 3.10 Manufacturing Sector

The Manufacturing Sector comprised 5% of the total respondents. Primary findings from the survey results included:

- All manufacturing businesses plan to expand the size of their plant and diversify products.
- All businesses outsource a percentage of their components from another manufacturer – most less than 50%. The outsourcing largely takes place within Canada.
- No emerging technologies were identified that will change the primary product or how it is used
- Most companies spend between 3 and 6% on Research and Development, with significant increased in R&D spending in the last three years.
- Businesses were asked what their area of focus is for process improvements. Most businesses noted:
  - Productivity improvements (lean mfg.)
  - Energy efficiency
  - Waste product recovery
  - Health and safety activities
  - Vendor/supply network
- Half of the plants are currently operating at capacity. The remaining half have their plant or equipment underutilized and felt their equipment was outdated, and would be interested in cooperating with another business to bring their plant/equipment to full capacity.
- All felt their firm was a potential exporter, but were largely not interested in any further information to develop this market.

### 3.11 Natural Resource Sector

The Natural Resource Sector was also 5% of the survey population. The following findings were noteworthy:

- All businesses were reliant on the forestry sector
- All businesses could foresee future problems getting raw material for their business and felt that local business associations and economic development offices could assist by:
  - Coordination of industry issues with government
  - Lobbying

- Investment and financial planning assistance
- They further felt that local government could help businesses in general by:
  - Streamlining of local regulatory and permitting processes
  - Review of taxes and fees
  - Infrastructure and financing assistance
  - Coordination of business initiatives between industry, education, government and associations
  - Infrastructure maintenance and improvements
- Businesses felt that the issues most critical to the success of their business in the next 1-3 years were establishing direct markets, improved transportation, improved infrastructure, improved telecommunications, commodity prices, wood supply, financing and overall cost of doing business.
- Also of importance was:
  - Aging workforce and shortage of skilled labour force
  - International competition
  - Technology changes
  - Land issue
  - Regulations

***Conclusions in the Mining Sector were not able to be drawn, given the low number of participants in this sector.***

### 3.12 Community Questions

All sectors were asked a series of community questions that gauged their knowledge of organizations and economic development agencies in the area. These organizations included:

- Hastings County Economic Development Office
- Small Business Centre – formerly known as Small Business Centre
- Chambers of Commerce in Tweed, Madoc and Bancroft
- North Hastings Economic Development Committee
- Community Futures Development Corp. of North and Central Hastings & South Algonquin
- Trenval Business Development Corporation
- ComfortCountry

While all business respondents had a reasonable knowledge of their local organizations including Chambers of Commerce, Trenval BDC (businesses in the south only) and ComfortCountry, there was less knowledge of organizations that represented most areas of the County and responses varied from North to South.

### 3.12.1 Are you familiar with Hastings County Economic Development Office?

Half of the businesses were familiar with this office, with two thirds of them being located in the South areas. It should be noted that at the time of the survey, the Hastings County Economic Development Office had been only formalized for approximately one year, which may account for a greater level of knowledge of the department.

Figure 46

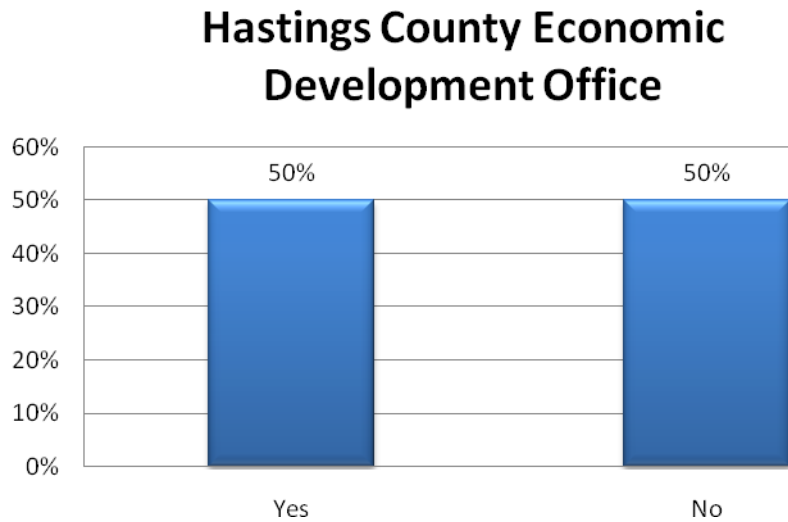
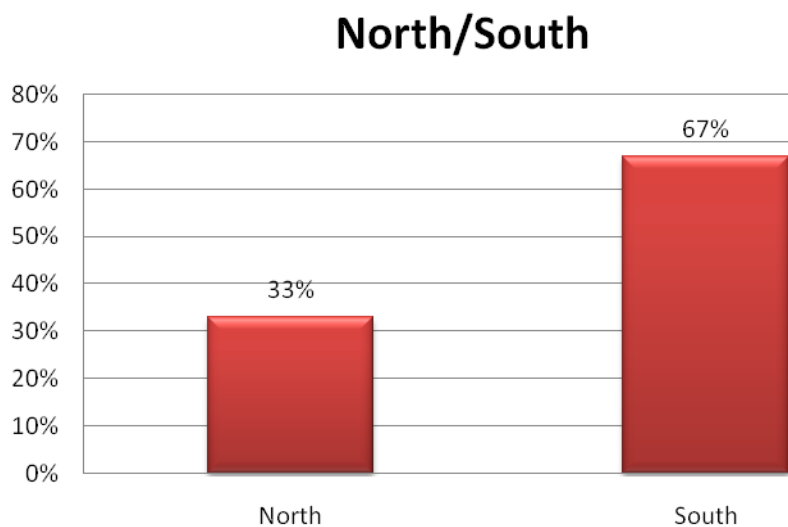


Figure 47



### 3.12.2 Are you familiar with the ?

Businesses reported a very low rate of knowledge of Small Business Centre. Of those that were familiar, most of them were in the South areas.

Figure 48

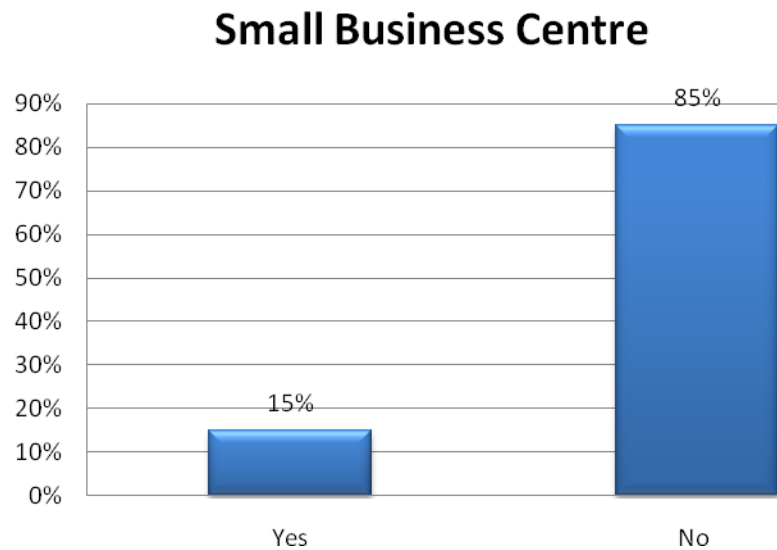
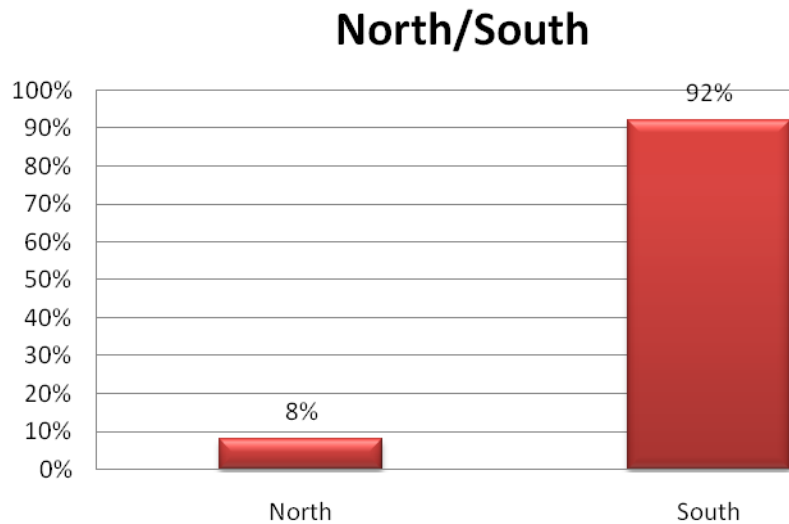


Figure 49



### 3.12.3 Are you familiar with Community Futures Development Corp. Of North and Central Hastings & South Algonquin?

Nearly three fourths of businesses were familiar with the CFDC with a nearly even split between North and South. (This organization does not represent Stirling-Rawdon, Tyendinaga and Deseronto businesses.)

Figure 50

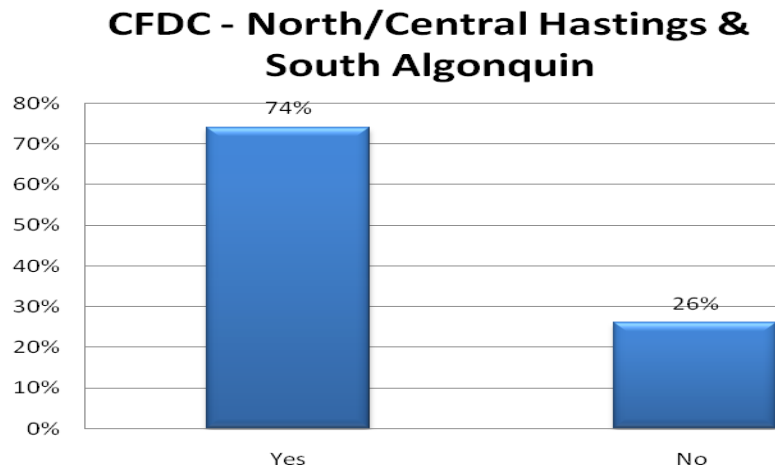
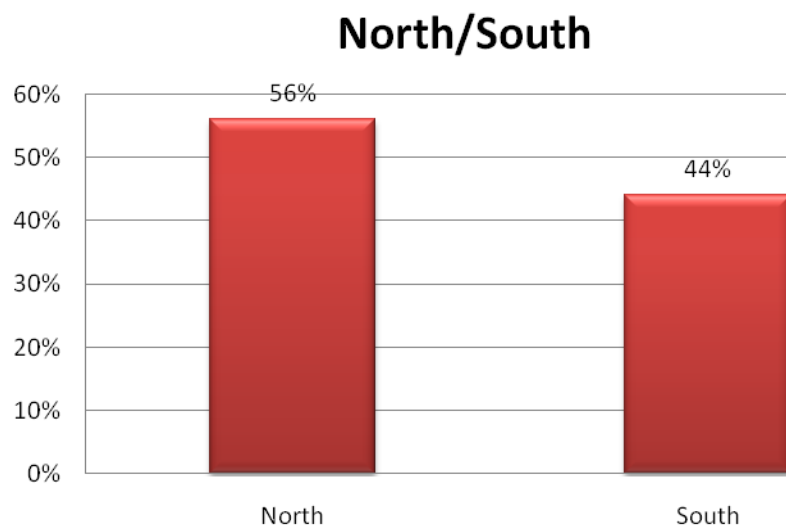


Figure 51



In summary, Hastings County businesses are familiar with Community Futures Corp., Small Business Centre is not well known in any area, and Hastings County Economic Development Office is recognized by half of the businesses surveyed, but better known by those in the South areas. Areas of concentration are the North and better awareness of Small Business Centre.

### 3.12.4 Final thoughts

The following tables show the final thoughts of survey respondents. Businesses appreciated being included in the study and being asked for their opinion and expressed enthusiasm for positive changes.

Businesses were asked for their suggestions on local events and attractions. The results follow:

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Village/farmers markets (7)         | Winter carnival/activities (6)           |
| Arts/crafts shows and festivals (5) | Promote history of area/museums (3)      |
| Ag/fall fairs (4)                   | Concerts in the park (2)                 |
| Beautify/events downtowns (2)       | ATV/snowmobiling/bicycling on trails (2) |
| New hotel (2)                       | Canada Day celebrations (2)              |
| Santa Clause parade (2)             | Performing Arts (2)                      |
| Recreational facilities (2)         | Boating/waterfront facilities (2)        |
| Truck show (2)                      | Uniform hours of operation               |
| Home show                           | Enhance local parks                      |
| Cultural tours                      | Loggers games                            |
| Celtic festival                     | Dog sledding                             |
| Attend trade shows                  | Swimming pool                            |

When asked for 'final thoughts', businesses commented as per the following:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Reduce red tape (2)   | Need industrial park (2)                                |
| Need high speed internet (2)  | Need more retirement facilities/promote to retirees (2) |
| Need better parking (2)   | Need business/industrial strategy (2)                   |
| Forget tourism – concentrate on business (2)                        | Settle native issues (2)                                |
| Need to market in larger centres & internationally (2)              | Good place to work (2)                                  |
| Need more park & recreation lands                                   | Focus on manufacturing                                  |
| Governments need to help -not hinder                                | Need a positive attitude towards eco development        |
| Need to promote Hastings County as a place to live as well as work  | Northern area is forgotten                              |
| Local people should support each other                              | Need staff person to coordinate events/tourism          |
| Keep up good work   | Excited about future                                    |
| Hastings County has improved its visibility re economic development | Need more funding options                               |
| Need welcome committee for new business                             | Off season promotions                                   |
| Minimum wage too high   |   |

## 4 Summary of Findings and Action Plans

### 4.1 Task Force Review

A review of the report was undertaken by the Economic Development Advisory Committee/Task Force Committee. All members reviewed the report in full and passed on comments to be considered in this final report. Following this review, the 'Action Plan' was created to move the County forward towards renewed growth and prosperity.

### 4.2 Moving Forward

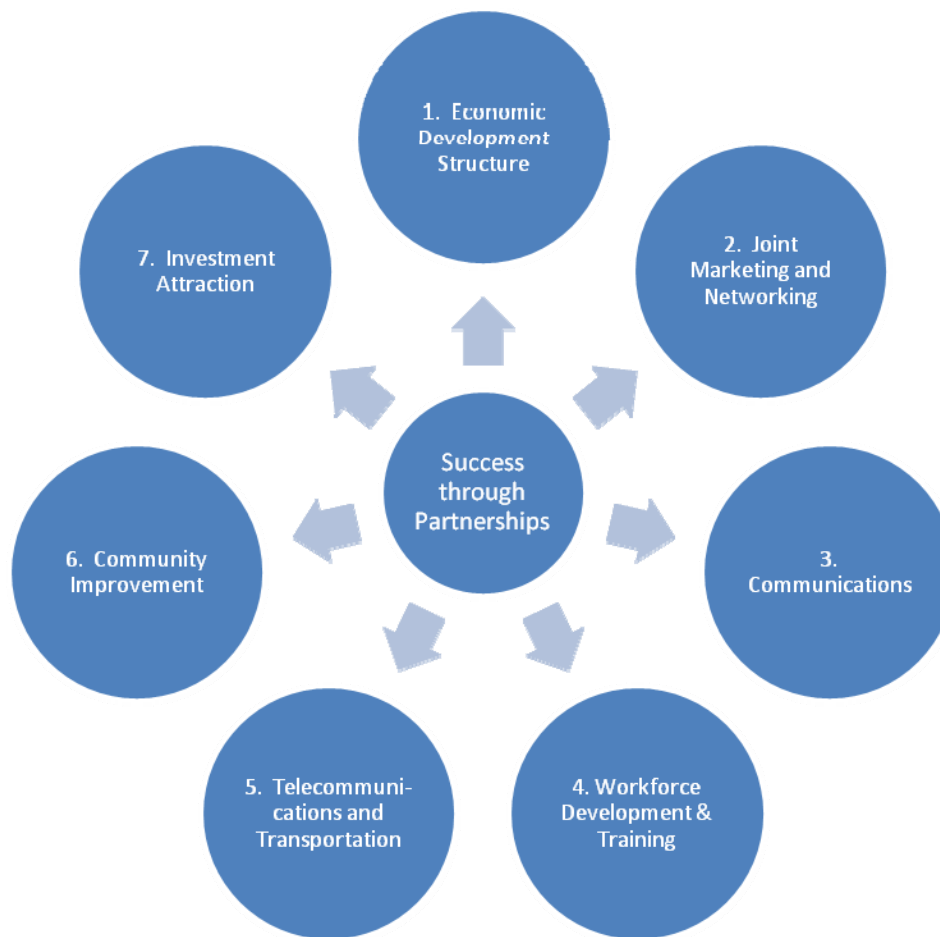
There are a number of activities identified in the following tables; however, the completion of these action items should undergo a review by an implementation committee who should undertake designating the appropriate lead on each action.

There are a number of organizations that should participate in the solution, for example: Hastings County, member municipalities within the County, Small Business Centre, Chambers of Commerce, Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC), Trenval Business Development Corporation, and Loyalist College.

The efforts of the County's Economic Development Advisory Committee and Economic Development staff are to be commended over the past year. Given the lack of coordinated economic development initiatives prior to 2007, great strides have been taken to create an awareness of the County's support in this area. At this moment in time, it appears that there is an opportunity for the County to take a leadership role in the creation of a more significant entity – one that is based on a partnership between government and business – with its only goal as moving the local economy ahead.

The County and its partners need to be willing to invest time and money to make this happen as local governments can build partnerships with a purpose of enhancing the business environment. The County must assume the lead role in the action process in order to show its commitment to facilitating community growth and prosperity. There is a long list of supporting goals that are required to make these outcomes possible and they will be discussed in the implementation tables that follow.

### **Hastings County Action Items – Success Through Partnerships**



**Action Item # 1 Economic Development Structure**

| Goal/Issue   | Actions   | Lead, timing resources  |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Dedicate financial and human resources to complement the existing economic development structure with the goal of a coordinated approach to local economic development.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per the Hastings County 2007 Economic Development Strategy, bring staffing levels to efficiency with the increase of one full time economic development officer. Due to the size and complexity of Hastings County, an additional person will be able to assist the Manager in the economic development process, strengthen a working relationship with the tourism/visitor marketing partners (Comfort Country and the Bancroft Chamber of Commerce), as well as significantly help to position the County's visibility with prospective investors and its municipalities.</li> <li>Review all issues of this BR+E and respond to concerns. While most businesses felt that quality of life was excellent, strong opinions were voiced on voids in service as well as community disadvantages such as remote location, lack of skilled labour, inadequate telecommunications and small population base. Plan future annual/bi-annual BR+E surveys including sector specific projects.</li> </ul> | <p>Q1- Q2 2009 – hiring process – revisit 2007 Economic Development Strategy recommendations of \$45,000 salary allocation for additional staff person, with additional funding for identified projects, travel expenses etc. Lead - Hastings County.</p> <p>Q2 – Q3 2009 – review of BR+E and identify plan of action to respond to concerns and items requiring attention. Lead – Hastings County</p> |

**Note that references to 'Q' refer to quarter of the calendar year i.e. Q1 – quarter one (January to March)**

### **Action Item # 2 Joint Marketing and Networking**

| Goal/Issue   | Actions   | Lead, timing resources   |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Develop a Hastings County wide commitment to joint marketing and promotions for retail and services businesses, as well as provide the opportunity for regular networking opportunities amongst County businesses.</p> <p>A need and desire was demonstrated for joint marketing opportunities as well as organized events to allow for networking and the establishing of business relationships.</p> <p>Establish a Mentorship program to complement existing business support programs already serving County businesses.</p> <p>Regarding visitor attractions, several voids were identified and suggestions made to enhance the tourism capability of the County. They are contained in section 3.9 Tourism Sector. Most people also indicated their willingness to participate on committees to</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A budget should be allocated to allow for the development of substantive joint marketing initiatives including joint promotion/advertising, joint purchasing and other projects which will benefit businesses through efficiencies.</li> <li>• Develop a regular series of networking sessions in all areas of the County, including County wide events. These events can take the form of business information sessions, 'business after hours' receptions, or informal luncheons or receptions. This planning process must include the Chambers of Commerce and other economic development offices and agencies throughout the County. Networking opportunities will strengthen relationships and lead to greater efficiencies in operating costs.</li> <li>• Establish a Mentorship program for businesses. Results of the BR+E clearly showed an interest in this type of program and with specific interest shown in receiving assistance in marketing, business planning and financial matters.</li> <li>• Continue to ensure that the area identity is maintained on online services such as Google Earth, Wikipedia, GPS systems. Maintain and update the County's website with the most current and relevant information for tourism and business investment, ensuring the appropriate links to the Bancroft Chamber of Commerce and ComfortCountry.ca.</li> <li>• Maintain an accurate data base of all County businesses and maintain a current business directory with annual revisions.</li> <li>• Enhance the tourism and special event capabilities of the County by acting as a catalyst towards a coordinated approach</li> </ul> | <p>Q3 – Q4 2009 – based on review of BR+E and in consultation with member municipalities and businesses, develop a plan of joint marketing initiatives and networking sessions. Best practices should be gathered from other municipalities and a budget prepared for 2010 for early implementation in Q1 2010. Lead – Hastings County, county municipalities, county businesses</p> <p>Q3 2009 – ongoing – develop a system to monitor and update County information on online services. Lead – Hastings County</p> <p>Q3 2009 – ongoing - develop a system to create and maintain data bank and business directory. Lead – Hastings County</p> <p>Q2 – Q4 2009 – work towards strengthening relationships with visitor marketing partners with a view to county wide projects and relationship building. Lead – Hastings County, ComfortCountry, Bancroft Chamber of Commerce and other tourism/events groups and associations in the County.</p> <p>Q2- Q4 – Work with municipalities to create a data bank of local experts to</p> |

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|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <p>enhance visitor attraction initiatives.</p> | <p>to visitor marketing. While efforts are on-going in ComfortCounty and Bancroft which represent all areas of the County, it will be important for those involved in this sector to meet and develop County wide plans and promotions as well to learn from already established best practices.</p> | <p>establish a Mentorship program. This will be of very little cost with the involvement of other municipalities and development organizations. Promote the program in all County media. Lead – Hastings County, local councils, CFDCs, Small Business Centre, Trenal, local professional associations, Loyalist College, Chambers of Commerce.</p> |
|--|--|---|

### Action Item # 3 Communications

| Goal/Issue  | Actions  | Lead, timing resources  |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Increase communication to business owners regarding training programs, exporting, availability of funding programs and other opportunities.</p> <p>Provide an information brokerage service.</p> <p>The survey results also showed a general lack of knowledge as to the existence of community economic development plans and procedures.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider establishing Hastings County as the primary communications vehicle for all small businesses. Communications can be enhanced through a variety of means including a quarterly newsletter, website access through a secured site and special announcement mailouts as appropriate.</li> <li>• Maintain a quality database of small business programs as well as sector and country export experts that are available from the provincial government.</li> <li>• Establish a regular business visitation system in efforts to become better acquainted with the regional challenges, identify sector issues and strengthen relationships and County awareness. This visitation system should be in addition to regular BR+E surveys.</li> <li>• Significant interest was shown in participation in an Ambassador Program. This program would engage local business people who become flag wavers for the County. A well defined Ambassador program is a strong way to build the local network and broaden communication of the message.</li> <li>• Throughout the BR+E study, many opportunities for training delivery for businesses were identified. Businesses requested training in the areas of marketing, advertising and financial matters. Also, opportunities to offer courses in succession and business planning were strongly evident.</li> </ul> | <p>Q3 2009 – ongoing - since information will have to come from many sources, this initiative could be a shared project rather than managed exclusively by the County. Partnerships could be established between organizations to co-manage the initiative including the CFDCs and Small Business Centre. Budget for this initiative would be approximately \$20,000 for a communications consultant to manage and produce the product, or it can be done through in-house means if partners collaborate on the project. Lead – Hastings County, CFDC's, Small Business Centre, Trenval, others</p> <p>Q3 2009 – ongoing – the establishment of business assistance data base can be done without any additional expense providing that adequate economic development staffing is in place to research and update. Lead – Hastings County, Government of Ontario.</p> <p>Q3 2009 – Q2 2010 – The Ambassador program can be established at relatively low cost with the exception of travel costs to enlist participants and to promote the program. Adequate resources should</p> |

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|  |  | <p>be included in the economic development budget to cover these costs. Lead – Hastings County, County municipalities, Chamber of Commerce, local leaders.</p> <p>Q3 2009 – ongoing – After analysis of the most requested training courses, the County can coordinate courses in various areas of the County. This program will require funds to develop the program, pay facilitators and rent space for delivery. However, efficiencies can be realized with participating partners and implementation costs can be minimized. Lead – Hastings County, CFDCs, Small Business Centre, Trenal, Government of Ontario, Loyalist College</p> |
|--|--|---|

### **Action Item # 4 Workforce Development and Training**

| Goal/Issue  | Actions  | Lead, timing resources   |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Through contact with businesses and through regular BR+E surveys, identify the County's labour force challenges and work with appropriate agencies to identify solutions.</p> <p>Survey results showed distance to training facility and unavailability of local training as the #1 challenge in their employees receiving training.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the findings of this BR+E study to relevant organizations and work with them to identify ways to fill training voids. Encourage the training organizations to investigate various ways to deliver training throughout the County including the feasibility of offering courses throughout the County through satellite courses. Monitor the progress of education delivery and adjust the County's needs through further BR+E studies.</li> <li>• Conduct sector specific BR+E initiatives that will more specifically pinpoint labour force challenges and work with the appropriate agencies to identify training options. Survey results have shown that half of the businesses felt that the workforce issues were specific to the local area and half felt it was related to their industry in general.</li> <li>• Identify specific methods to deliver small business employee training courses (half – one day courses) in the areas of customer service, computer software, sales/marketing and interpersonal communications which will be conducted by various education stakeholders. These subjects were identified by the businesses as the primary areas of interest for information.</li> </ul> | <p>Q2 2009 – Q1 2010 – review training requirements and work with training organizations to assist in the preparation of a plan of training delivery for workforce development, skill voids, customer service delivery and other requested areas of training made evident by the BR+E study. The plan could include conventional and online methods of program delivery. Monitor results and revise program annually. Should require a minimum budget based on partnerships.</p> <p>Leads – Loyalist College, Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, East Central Ontario Training Board, Hastings County (advisory capacity).</p> |

**Action Item # 5 Telecommunications and Transportation**

| Goal/Issue  | Actions  | Lead, timing resources  |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Establish a process of ongoing information technology and telecommunication challenges and supporting agencies that are active in implementing solutions to provide quality broadband, telephone and wireless service.</p> <p>Businesses rated high speed technologies as very important to their business, while 15% of business respondents still use dial-up service.</p> <p>Identify various transportation issues within the County to ensure the cost efficient and seamless movement of goods and people.</p> <p>Survey results identified both areas as a concern which also affect the availability and shortage of labour to work in County businesses, as well as affecting the competitive</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to pursue funding for second phase funding of the Rural Connections Program available in February of 2009.</li> <li>• Assist in completing regular telecommunications and information technology needs surveys through regular contact with businesses and local development agencies.</li> <li>• Following installation of infrastructure, ensure adequate resources to train users and assume ownership of the technology.</li> <li>• Conduct further research into shipping and transportation challenges of County businesses.</li> <li>• Identify the current public /volunteer transportation systems throughout the County and work with appropriate agencies to identify solutions to voids in the system to facilitate the movement of passengers throughout the County.</li> <li>• Support the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus (EOWC) Gigabit Ethernet proposal, or similar future projects.</li> </ul> | <p>Q1 2009 – work with RCP to secure funding for second phase of broadband project. Lead – Hastings County, RCP</p> <p>Q1 2009 – research telecommunications needs in all areas and monitor progress of new programs. Lead – Hastings County</p> <p>Q3 2009 – ensure training of infrastructure users is adequate to support the capabilities of the new system. Lead – Hastings County, Loyalist College</p> <p>Q1 2009 – work with partners to identify the restrictions that transportation/transit places on business development and identify solutions through consultation. Lead – Hastings County, Chambers of Commerce, Small Business Centre, Trenal, CFDCs and other business associations</p> |

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|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| businesses advantages of the area. Twenty-six responses were received listing transportation related issues as affecting business development in the County |  |  |
|---|--|--|

### Action Item # 6 Community Improvement

| Goal/Issue   | Actions  | Lead, timing resources   |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Improve the availability and condition of commercial and industrial properties by ensuring the community goals of heritage restoration and economic growth are pursued.</p> <p>Examine ways of streamlining the development process for commercial and industrial properties.</p> <p>Results of the BR+E study indicate that expansion is inhibited through a lack of expansion capabilities and an inadequate supply of suitable properties.</p> <p>Survey results showed that 30% of businesses were not completely satisfied with their current site, due in large part to no opportunity for expansion and other building site conditions and restrictions.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to pursue the establishment of Community Improvement Planning Areas (CIP) in all areas of Hastings County. These CIPs will allow the communities to secure incentives for developers who want to improve the quality and aesthetics of their buildings. The municipality of Stirling-Rawdon, which implemented a CIP in 2006, is an example of a very successful program showing positive improvements in the business areas especially the downtown. Similar incentive programs should be encouraged and implemented throughout the County.</li> <li>• Hastings County should provide incentive funding for CIP areas to show leadership, support and participation.</li> <li>• Each municipal Council must be the champion for a revitalized downtown and must be willing to support the private sector and participate through improvement of its own properties. Accordingly, staff must be strongly supported by Council in all efforts to facilitate positive revitalization efforts.</li> <li>• Ensure the County has a streamlined written step-by-step manual for businesses to follow when they are planning new construction, zoning changes, etc. Included with this manual should be a check list that guides businesses through the planning process. Efforts should be made to monitor satisfaction with the development process and make changes accordingly.</li> <li>• Work with municipalities within the County to ensure similar processes are put in place to facilitate development and ensure ease of growth and expansion.</li> </ul> | <p>Q2 2009 – participate in the CIP and encourage member municipalities to get involved in the program. County financial involvement could involve a variety of formulas of involvement including loans, grant development charge assistance, tax rebates, matching funds etc. Recommended level of involvement would be between 1:3 to 1:2 matching funds. A budget for this project should run up to \$50,000. Lead – Hastings County and member municipalities, Community Improvement Program</p> |

**Action Item # 7 Investment Attraction**

| <b>Goal/Issue</b>  | <b>Actions</b>   | <b>Lead, timing resources</b>  |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Develop a recruitment strategy to attract new commercial investment to the community.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work towards making Hastings County investment ready through the development of an Investment Strategy. This strategy will identify the County's target sectors, its competitive positioning, site selection criteria and an associated marketing plan.</li> <li>• The investment strategy should focus on those strengths and weaknesses that were identified in the BR+E study including 'Quality of Life' as a strength and 'Lack of Population' as a weakness. For example, these findings would point to recruitment of small owner/operated businesses that are not dependent on a large local population base and are visitor-oriented.</li> </ul> | <p>Q2 – Q4 2009 Review the results of the upcoming Investment Strategy and work towards its goals and recommendations. Lead – Hastings County, other organizations as recommended by the study</p> |

## Appendix A – Business Retention & Expansion Project Participants

### Volunteer Visitors (Interviewers)

|               |                                 |                 |
|---------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Andrew Redden | Manager of Economic Development | Hastings County |
| Libby Smith   | Project Coordinator             | Hastings County |

### North -

|                   |  |                              |
|-------------------|--|------------------------------|
| Marianne Woods    | Business person                        | Coe Hill                     |
| Chris Drost       | Downtown Revitalization Coordinator    | Bancroft, Coe Hill, Maynooth |
| Maryann L.A. Post | Development Services Worker            | Coe Hill                     |
| Jim Clayton       | Municipal Councillor, Carlow-Mayo      | Bancroft                     |
| George Offshack   | Bancroft Chamber of Commerce President | Gilmour                      |
| James Cunningham  | Retired business owner                 | Bancroft                     |
| Patricia Whitlaw  | Owner – G.I.S. TechSpot                | Bancroft                     |
| Carolyn Graf      | NHEDC Coordinator                      | Bancroft                     |

### South -

|                  |  |                 |
|------------------|--|-----------------|
| Don DeGenova     | Consultant                                     | Tweed           |
| Tom Simpson      | Deputy Reeve                                   | Madoc           |
| Liette Forestell | Recreation Coordinator, Township of Tyendinaga | Shannonville    |
| Rosanna Clark    | Graphic Designer                               | Stirling        |
| Dana Valentyne   | Economic Development Officer                   | Deseronto       |
| Lorraine Watson  | Teacher  | Deseronto       |
| Ron Reid         | Business person                                | Stirling        |
| Don Simpson      | Retired resident                               | Deseronto       |
| Marc Forget      | Engineering Technologist                       | Marmora         |
| Elisha Maguire   | Economic Development Officer                   | Stirling        |
| Typhany Choinard | Economic Development Officer                   | Marmora         |
| Sharon Pedersen  | Community Development Coordinator              | Tweed           |
| Sparo Lindsay    | Financial Advisor                              | Madoc           |
| Jean Rixen       | Retired Planning Director                      | Deseronto       |
| Bill Bissett     | Business person                                | Tweed           |
| Jim Bakker       | Coordinator, Madoc Chamber of Commerce         | Madoc           |
| Tenzin Wangkhang | Economic Development Dept. Intern              | Hastings County |

**BR+E Leadership Team - Economic Development Committee Participants**

Warden Ron Emond

Tom Deline, Committee Chair (2008) and Reeve of Centre Hastings

Dan McCaw, Reeve of Wollaston Township

Simon Chapelle, Broadband consultant

Larry McTaggart, Forestry representative

Dale Ketcheson, Agriculture representative

George Offshack, Business owner and Bancroft Chamber President

June Osawabine, Bank Manager

Dianne Spencer, Loyalist College

Kelly Welch, Business owner

Bob Sager, Reeve of Madoc Township

Norm Clark, Mayor Town of Deseronto

## Appendix B – Participants Comments

Workforce Development – What are your specific recommendations to improve the local business climate?

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Need a long range industrial strategy/ active business recruitment plan (8) | Lower taxes (3)                             |
| Longer/consistent operating hours (3)                                       | Need more municipal support                 |
| Need tourism/recreation infrastructure needed (2)                           | Native land issues need to be resolved (3)  |
| Local training programs needed (2)  | Need more skilled workers (2)               |
| Businesses need to work together (2)  | Improve snow removal and street repairs (2) |
| Support local businesses /buy locally (2)                                   | Need better customer service (2)            |
| Need more medical services (2)  | Transportation needs improving (2)          |
| Improve downtown corridor/general appearance of town (2)                    | Eliminate red tape (2)                      |
| Community needs paid EDO (2)  | Create a BIA                                |
| More big stores and restaurants   | Need services for seniors                   |
| Need incentives for facade improvements                                     | Encourage off season tourism                |
| Create a business directory   | Need boating and docking facilities         |
| Reduce cost of waste removal  | Need effective tourism board                |
| Need high speed internet  | Encourage manufacturing                     |
| Need improved access to suppliers   |   |

What issue, if resolved, would have the greatest impact on your business?

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Native/Land claim issues (7)                | Population Increase (6)                         |
| Tourism strategy needed (5)                 | Reduce government red tape (4)                  |
| Need skilled labour (4)                     | Improved water/sewage services (4)              |
| Reduce operating costs for businesses (3)   | Need business strategy (3)                      |
| New businesses need to feel appreciated (2) | Chamber of Commerce needs to perform better (2) |
| Need high speed internet (2)                | Need more infrastructure (2)                    |
| Need funding options (2)                    | Value of Canadian dollar                        |
| Reduce logging policies                     | Need access to crown land                       |
| Imports need to be regulated                | Properties need to be affordable                |
| Need non-tourism businesses                 | Gas prices high                                 |
| Smoking regulations too strict              | CFDC grants creating unfair competition         |
| Improved snow removal                       | Better transportation                           |

How do you rate the availability, quality and stability of workers in this area for your business?

| <b>Availability</b>                                       | <b>Quality</b>  | <b>Stability</b>               |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| Hard to find qualified people (3)                         | Lack of skills (5)  | Low wages causing turnover (3) |
| Hard to find people who want to work (2)                  | Poor work ethic (2)   | Poor work ethic (2)            |
| People with no experience want more than minimum wage (2) | Good work ethic (2)   | Lack of training (2)           |
| People prefer to work for companies/gov with pensions     | Poor presentation – very casual   | Low turnover                   |
| Literacy issues   | Language skills bad   | People want to work seasonally |
| Don't want to travel                                      | Can't find staff for:<br>Cooks, arts/antiques, mechanics, fitness instructors, service professionals and people in medical fields | No loyalty                     |
| Wages are low   |   | Young people leave the area    |
| People returning from urban areas want high wages         |   | Ready supply of workers        |
| No skilled labourers available                            |   | Workforce is aging             |
| No reply to ads   |   |                                |
| Low turnover  |   |                                |

Local Community – Which new suppliers of products or services would you like to see added to this community?

|                                 |                           |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Restaurant (17)                 | Clothing/shoe store (13)  |
| Medical companies/services (10) | Grocery (10)              |
| Department/big box store (9)    | Bus/public transit (5)    |
| Hotel/accommodations (8)        | Movie theatre (4)         |
| Wood based products (4)         | Tool repair/hardware (4)  |
| Machinery/mechanics shops (4)   | Speciality stores (4)     |
| Conference centre (3)           | High speed internet (3)   |
| Bank (3)                        | Manufacturing company (3) |
| Packaging services (2)          | Wholesalers (2)           |
| Dry cleaning (2)                | Entertainment (2)         |
| General retail (2)              | Youth activities (2)      |
| Alternative energy (2)          | Farmers markets           |
| RV camping facilities           | Clean industries          |
| Marina services                 | Public washrooms          |
| Flooring/furniture              | Professional services     |
| Community college satellite     | Swimming pool             |
| Call centre                     | Seafood                   |
| Sports bar                      | Generation plant          |
| Plumbing and heating supplies   |                           |

List (3) of the community's advantages as a place to do business.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Central/good location/close to major centres (24) | Close knit community/sense of community/local support (18) |
| Quality of life (17)                              | Access to major highway (13)                               |
| Small town flavour (10)                           | Friendly (10)  |
| Low cost to set/operate business (8)              | Rural setting (8)  |
| Availability of local labour (7)                  | Lack of competition (7)                                    |
| Natural resources/environment (7)                 | Tourism/recreation good (6)                                |
| Personal service (5)                              | Cost of living (5)   |
| Lower taxes (5)                                   | Good services/roads/water (4)                              |
| Appreciated by town's people/loyal customers (3)  | Low crime rate (3)   |
| Good schools (3)                                  | Good cultural features (3)                                 |
| Lake/water access (2)                             | Municipal support (2)                                      |
| Less bureaucracy (2)                              | Volunteers (2)   |
| No traffic  | Clean  |
| Good for home based businesses                    | Good population base                                       |
| Good land   | Lower land costs   |
| Aging population                                  | Access to ag land  |
| Easy access to US border                          | Traffic  |
| Good local police force                           | Good health care   |

List (3) of the community dis-advantages as a place to do business.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Low population base/small customer base (22)             | Distance from large centres/remote (16)              |
| Limited services/suppliers (10)                          | Lack of skilled/unskilled labour (10)                |
| Poor telecommunications/high speed/telephone service (9) | Unsettled land claims/native issues (9)              |
| Seasonal fluctuations (8)                                | Lack of infrastructure (8)                           |
| Difficult people/don't work well together (8)            | Transportation and shipping costs (7)                |
| High taxes (6)   | Competition from larger centres (5)                  |
| Lack of support from other businesses (5)                | Small town mentality (4)                             |
| Low income area (4)                                      | Inept local government/lack of municipal support (4) |
| No accommodations (3)                                    | No bus/public transit (3)                            |
| Downtown/town appearance (3)                             | Lack of economic plan/municipal vision (3)           |
| Limited business/residential real estate (3)             | Anti business feelings (2)                           |
| Not customer friendly /poor customer service (2)         | Not suitable to those with disabilities (2)          |
| Harsh winters (2)  | Lack of industry (2)                                 |
| Lack of tourism strategy (2)                             | Lack of entertainment/attractions (2)                |
| Lack of raw materials                                    | Utilities  |
| Lack of medical facilities                               | Lack of County support                               |
| Poor highways  | Too quiet  |
| Gas prices   | Cost of doing business high                          |
| Police force costly                                      | Lack of training facilities                          |

## Appendix C– Case Study in Joint Marketing and Promotions

### Main Street Revitalization Initiative

In February, 2005 the Municipalities of Marmora & Lake, Centre Hastings (Madoc), Tweed and Stirling-Rawdon partnered to form the Main Street Revitalization Initiative. With assistance from the Rural Development Division of OMAFRA, a management committee in each town was formed consisting of elected members of Council, business owners, service club reps and anyone else interested in the redevelopment of their downtown/central business district.

To assist the municipalities and the work of the committees, in June, 2005 a sub-contractor was hired. The costs of this Coordinator's employment (a multi-year initiative) are, and have been, shared between the four municipalities. Since the hiring of the Coordinator, the initiative has, for each of the four downtowns, completed a market analysis and streetscape conceptual design plan. This year, OMAFRA provided funding through the Rural Economic Development Program to complete branding, commercial recruitment and landscape architecture designs. Local committees are very active and in every case the local municipality is also building the momentum by making investments in their downtown areas (e.g. Marmora event signage, Madoc murals, Stirling decorative wall, Tweed heritage street signs).

Last year, the group completed commercial recruitment and branding strategies. The branding strategy has recently won a marketing award from the Economic Developers Association of Canada for the country's most effective composition. You can see from the logo provided that the individual identity of each community is not lost within the concept of working together. In fact, the overall branding guidelines allow for each community to use an individual logo (as shown below the main logo). This is useful for such things as shopping bags which have the full logo on one side and then the individual downtown logo on the other side.

