

Township of Rideau Lakes
Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes
2022 Business Survey: Report



Rideau Lakes

November 30, 2022

Survey Timeframe: October 4 – October 30, 2022

Prepared by:

United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Economic Development Office
32 Wall Street, Suite 300, Brockville, ON

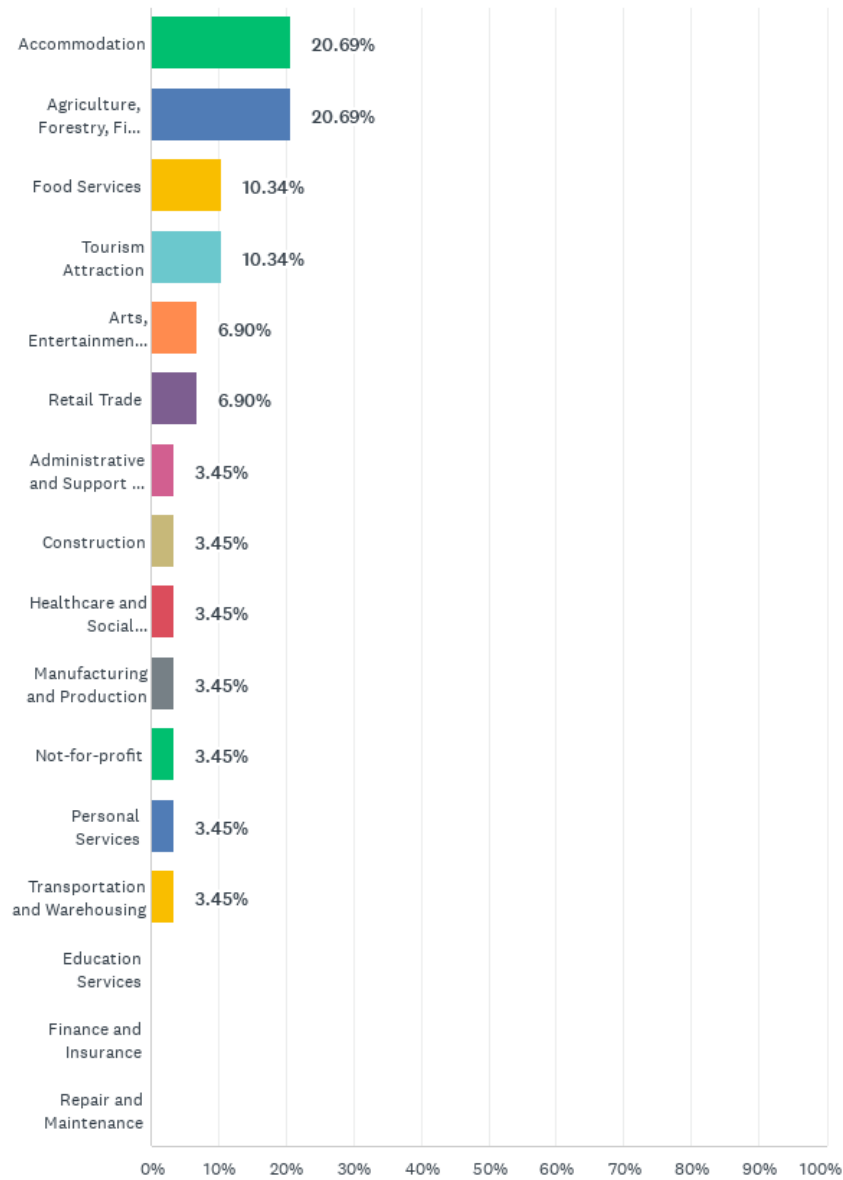


invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans

#2 What sector is your business primarily operating in?

Answered: 29

Skipped: 0



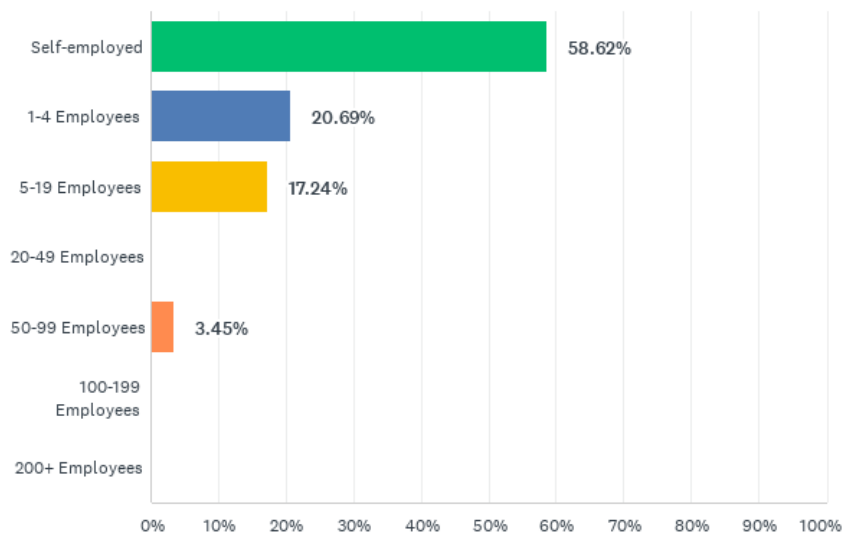
#2 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Accommodation	20.69%	6
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	20.69%	6
Food Services	10.34%	3
Tourism Attraction	10.34%	3
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	6.90%	2
Retail Trade	6.90%	2
Administrative and Support - Business Services	3.45%	1
Construction	3.45%	1
Healthcare and Social Assistance	3.45%	1
Manufacturing and Production	3.45%	1
Not-for-profit	3.45%	1
Personal Services	3.45%	1
Transportation and Warehousing	3.45%	1
Education Services	0.00%	0
Finance and Insurance	0.00%	0
Repair and Maintenance	0.00%	0
TOTAL		29

#3 Typically, how many full-time equivalent employees does your company have?

Answered: 29

Skipped: 0



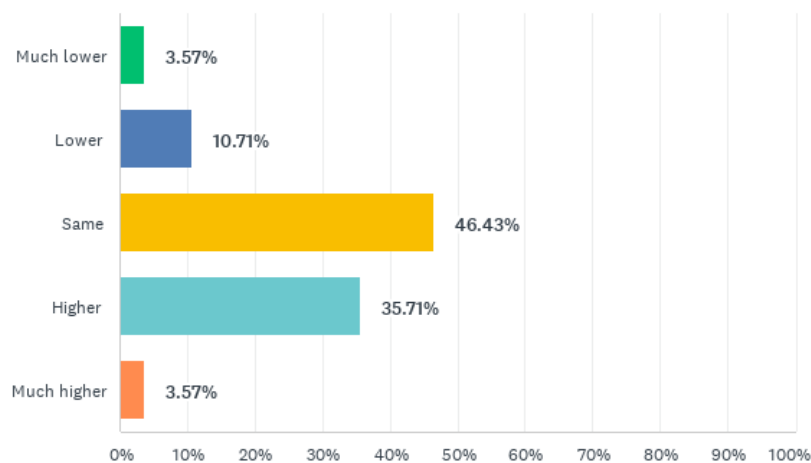
#3 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Self-employed	58.62% 17
1-4 Employees	20.69% 6
5-19 Employees	17.24% 5
20-49 Employees	0.00% 0
50-99 Employees	3.45% 1
100-199 Employees	0.00% 0
200+ Employees	0.00% 0
TOTAL	29

#4 Where is your business activity level today, compared with pre-COVID levels?

Answered: 28

Skipped: 1

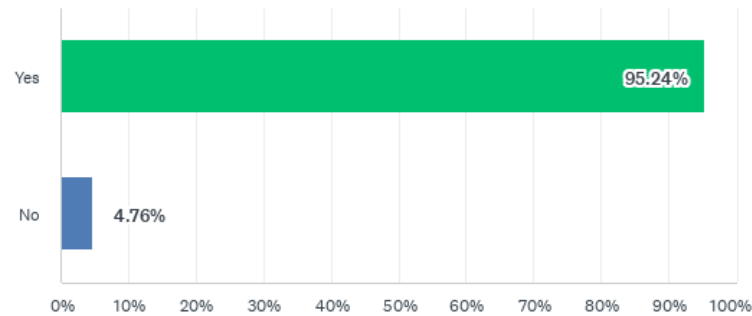


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Much lower	3.57% 1
Lower	10.71% 3
Same	46.43% 13
Higher	35.71% 10
Much higher	3.57% 1
TOTAL	28

#5 If your business is growing, are you confident your demand levels will continue?

Answered: 21

Skipped: 8



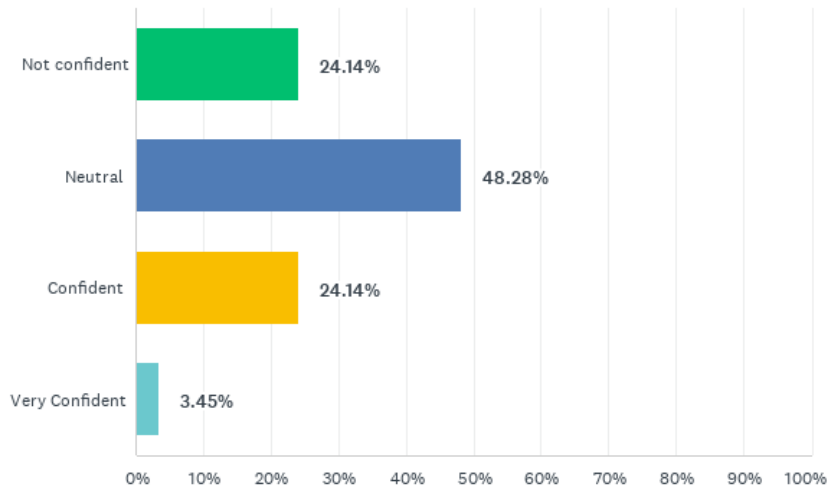
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	95.24%	20
No	4.76%	1
Total Respondents: 21		

- Cutting back. Age and COVID are a factor.
- Been in business 5 years now and it is growing steadily with many repeat guests returning.
- Accommodations are needed and Townships must provide support for hotels, campgrounds and more.
- Our 'business' is a volunteer operated charity thrift shop and outreach, so growing is not necessarily a good thing - many needs have increased.
- I am a STEM editor. I lost my major client (~80% of revenue) to COVID death at end of 2020. Have had a dreadful time regaining a good clientele. Had one client fail to pay for outstanding invoices for 6 months. Looks to be a write-off. At this point, I've decided to semi-retire. I can earn enough to supplement OAS and CPP, but I likely will never regain the earning power lost in 2020.
- I had a bumper year last year helping Canadian businesses ship Commercial goods into the United States. This year the volume has dropped off. I have lost some clients because they have moved their manufacturing facilities to either U.S. or Mexican facilities.
- We are retail in that we sell boats and have a grocery/LCBO store, but we also have repairs and maintenance.

#6 How confident are you in the strength of the economy?

Answered: 29

Skipped: 0

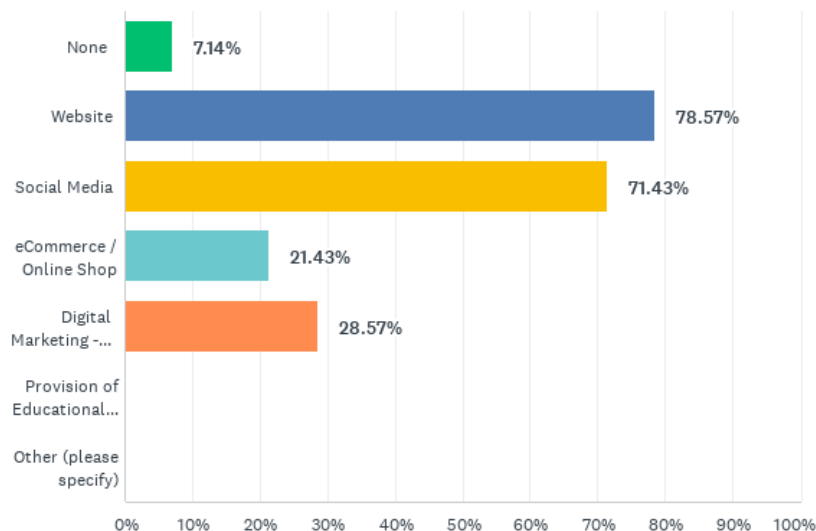


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Not confident	24.14% 7
Neutral	48.28% 14
Confident	24.14% 7
Very Confident	3.45% 1
TOTAL	29

#7 What type of online presence does your company have? (choose all that apply)

Answered: 28

Skipped: 1



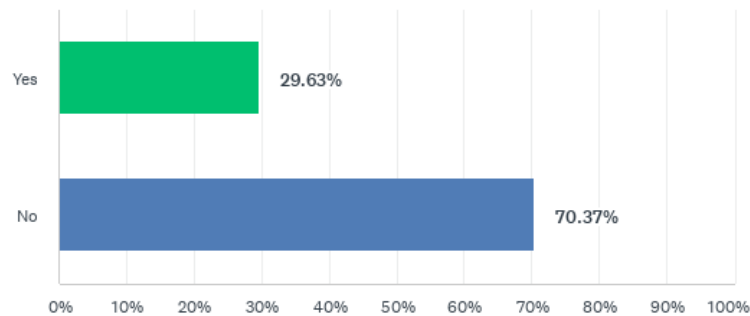
#7 continued...

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
None	7.14% 2
Website	78.57% 22
Social Media	71.43% 20
eCommerce / Online Shop	21.43% 6
Digital Marketing - Advertising / Email	28.57% 8
Provision of Educational Webinars	0.00% 0
Other (please specify)	Responses 0.00% 0
Total Respondents: 28	

#8 Would you like to receive assistance with your online presence (website, social media, e-Commerce / online shop, digital marketing)? Please provide your contact information in #16.

Answered: 27

Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	29.63% 8
No	70.37% 19
TOTAL	27

#9 Identify your biggest challenges using the rating scale for each item, with 1 being smallest and 10 being your biggest challenge.

Answered: 28

Skipped: 1

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
Increasing product prices	8.00% 2	4.00% 1	0.00% 0	12.00% 3	24.00% 6	4.00% 1	16.00% 4	16.00% 4	4.00% 1	12.00% 3	25
Supply chain	11.54% 3	3.85% 1	3.85% 1	0.00% 0	23.08% 6	3.85% 1	15.38% 4	26.92% 7	11.54% 3	0.00% 0	26
Labour force	36.00% 9	0.00% 0	4.00% 1	0.00% 0	4.00% 1	8.00% 2	8.00% 2	12.00% 3	8.00% 2	20.00% 5	25
Changes in your product demand	21.74% 5	4.35% 1	8.70% 2	8.70% 2	26.09% 6	8.70% 2	4.35% 1	4.35% 1	8.70% 2	4.35% 1	23
Increased overhead costs	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	3.85% 1	3.85% 1	7.69% 2	15.38% 4	11.54% 3	26.92% 7	19.23% 5	11.54% 3	26
Debt servicing capacity	33.33% 8	8.33% 2	0.00% 0	12.50% 3	8.33% 2	8.33% 2	12.50% 3	0.00% 0	12.50% 3	4.17% 1	24

- Overly stringent and onerous municipal bylaws - rank 7.
- All work is online. Little effect of prices other than Internet services.
- Lack of environmental protections that would preserve our natural heritage that attracts people to the area and lack of Internet and cell service in rural areas.

#10 Identify your biggest workforce challenges using the rating scale for each item, with 1 being smallest and 10 being your biggest challenge.

Answered: 25

Skipped: 4

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
Employees returning to the workplace	56.00% 14	0.00% 0	4.00% 1	8.00% 2	8.00% 2	0.00% 0	16.00% 4	0.00% 0	4.00% 1	4.00% 1	25
Ability to offer competitive wages and benefits	54.17% 13	8.33% 2	4.17% 1	4.17% 1	4.17% 1	4.17% 1	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	16.67% 4	0.00% 0	24
Desire for hybrid workplace models	82.61% 19	0.00% 0	4.35% 1	8.70% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.35% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	23
Attraction of new employees	54.17% 13	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	12.50% 3	0.00% 0	4.17% 1	4.17% 1	16.67% 4	4.17% 1	24

#10 continued...

- No Employees.
- Only doing what our family members can.
- Solo operator, no employees; all work online. Little effect of labour concerns.
- My company is so small I just have a couple of girls who share one 4-hour shift on Saturdays. Can't afford to open more days and hire more people. Just open 3 days a week.
- The first 3 choices aren't really applicable to my situation. I'm simply having a difficult time finding help.
- Can't find enough staff even with highest wage offering in the region for our industry. Had to cutback on days and hours open to compensate.
- Internet and cell service issues in rural areas negatively impact my capacity to do business and be safe while I do business.

#11 What should the region's focus be to address workforce shortages?

Answered: 14

Skipped: 15

- Help with wage subsidies, for training.
- Job wage subsidies to attract talent to the area.
- Affordable housing (including heating) and transportation.
- Solo operator. I am really not knowledgeable in this area.
- Not sure. People seem to want to work or they don't.
- Unsure, perhaps offer more accommodation to students so that they can relocate for summer.
- Tough Q to answer because this problem seems to be a nationwide problem currently.
- Cost of living, if an employee cannot afford to live in the area, then he /she will move to where they can afford to live and work.
- Working with everyone. Immigration (both from cities and from wherever), increase available housing stock, improve education options to entice families to move.
- Our workforce issues are Canada-wide in the trades and currently the Ontario government as well as our trade association (Boating Ontario) are pushing hard right now to attract more workers to our trade. I don't see how there's anything that can be done at the county level. There is a Career Fair for Trades for eastern Ontario at the EY Centre in Ottawa where schools are being bused in to attend the event. Happy to send a PDF of the event if interested to stay in the loop.
- More sustainable housing built, high speed Internet for ALL areas, improved cell service for ALL areas, sustainable housing grants for carbon neutral upgrades, environmental protections, affordable housing, limits on home sizes based on need and allowing tiny homes to be built and lived in year-round right across the region.

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

Answered: 18

Skipped: 11

Government Matters

- There is no point in listing things outside of municipal control, so the best thing the municipality can do is to have Overly stringent, ideologically-driven, and onerous municipal bylaws.
- Better road, so city customers don't mind driving on non rough and dusty roads. Help with better highway signage.
- Tougher environmental protections of land, water and forests - preserving and enhancing what attracts people here. High speed Internet access and improved cell service for all businesses in ALL rural areas. Improved small business supports and grants in the areas of marketing and widespread information about buying 'local' matters.
- Township supporting all levels of business and dealing with privileged individuals that refuse healthy growth. Promotion and positive messaging of business growth.
- I'm having great difficulty expanding my business because of the overly restrictive rules regarding % of land use. I need a new shop, have the land, but with a 30% land use limit, I can't build what I need. Truly, it's this one single thing that has me handcuffed to grow.

Networking

- Business networking.
- Networking with other accommodation providers.
- Just one for me: Potentially some B2B introductions to people who might like to have their written materials edited. Although I currently work mostly with STEM materials, I have in the past edited a lot of business communications for people who have lauded my work.

Digital Support

- Social media assistance.
- Real Help with web presence and social media.
- Web presence.

Financial Support

- Supplying grants to business to expand and grow.
- Financing support to modernize.
- Funding programs.
- Access to lower interest finances.
- Access to grants and business incentives to operate in the area.
- Servicing debt wage support.

Other

- Advertising.
- Building costs (wood) lower.
- Operating costs lower hydro, etc.
- More opportunities to bring people to area in winter.
- Housing and income to support our clients.

#12 continued...

- Grants & funding for growth & expansion. Grants for carbon reduction.
- Increase available labour pool, increase housing stock, improve services to increase population.

#13 What are your expectations for 2023?

Answered: 21

Skipped: 8

Positive

- Modest growth. x2
- Good.
- Increase in patrons.
- More customers purchasing local.
- Increased productivity, larger market.
- Expect modest growth in my business.
- Double my sales, cross my fingers.
- Continued growth in needs of clients.
- Outlook is good for cottages.
- A solid year, but an inability to access capital to grow.
- Unsteady market conditions, but a general upwards trend in larger community infrastructure builds.
- Increased business levels with more people wanting to go out however with the increased costs of going out not sure how many will have the spare money for a night out.

Neutral

- I expect 2023 to be very much like 2022.
- I'm hoping that despite looming recession warnings, that we continue to maintain of current sales and service numbers.

Negative

- I suspect a downturn this winter, but a lessening of downward economic pressure in a year to 18 months.

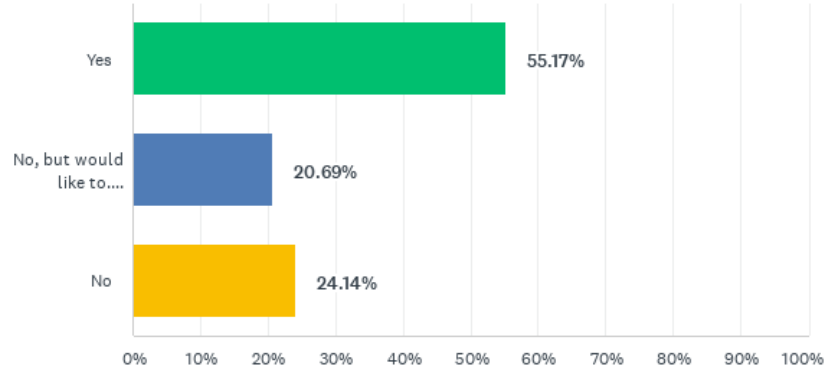
Other

- To work on getting the word out about how amazing this area is all year round!
- Myself, and most of my neighbours and family members, expect things to worsen moving forward, not only in this area, but also across Canada and globally.
- Just to keep my hand in during my semi-retirement, and earn enough to be comfortable.
- I am thinking of winding down my business and moving towards retirement or Semi-Retirement.
- Change of what appears to be negativity towards businesses for everything they provide.

#14 Do you currently receive the Leeds Grenville business eNewsletter?

Answered: 29

Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	55.17%	16
No, but would like to. (please provide your contact information in #16)	20.69%	6
No	24.14%	7
TOTAL		29

#15 Please provide any additional comments related to your business viability and your challenges as a business owner.

Answered: 9

Skipped: 20

- Small Farm Start-up with high input costs.
- As a new business it is extremely hard to access capital to enable growth.
- Support services such as contractors are overpriced and not meeting deadlines.
- More support for business through township and Chambers of Commerce to promote buy local.
- Getting to the point of selling online. i.e. interesting to have digital media support training but getting on to selling online would be a next helpful step.
- It's incredibly difficult to connect with local business owners in rural areas – improved networking opportunities would be helpful, as well as improved marketing of local businesses by the region.
- I have demand for more Maple Syrup, but have trouble in funding the cost of expansion. With the increased fuel costs related to my cow/calf operation I'm probably just breaking even. There has to be some control put on fuel and fertilizer prices. I could be selling more beef and pork locally but there is only 1 abattoir locally and to book an animal in for slaughter you have to book a spot before the animal is born. The abattoir's need help to meet all of the regulations.
- Increase in food costs and labor wages have decreased margins making it next to impossible to service debts incurred from COVID even though business levels are higher.

#15 continued...

- Red tape. As an owner I do it by the book, as my township expects. Business owners need the townships to stand up for them, show strength and leadership and not suck up to every so-called concerned environmentalists who's real prime objective is to keep this area to themselves. This area belongs to everyone.

#16 If you would like to speak to someone regarding support available to business, or if you answered yes to question #8 or #14, please provide your contact information.

Answered: 13

Skipped: 16

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Contact Name	Responses	100.00%	13
Business Name	Responses	100.00%	13
Contact Number	Responses	84.62%	11
Email	Responses	100.00%	13

Additional Notes:

- Survey Timeframe: October 4, 2022 to October 30, 2022
- Survey Distribution: Businesses that were part the Counties Economic Development business directory, with active email addresses, received the survey directly. In addition, some members of Business Support Working Group distributed the survey through their membership lists and social media channels.

Business Support Working Group:

Municipalities

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

MP / MPP

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

Community Futures Development Corporations

1000 Islands CDC | Grenville CFDC | Valley Heartland CFDC

Small Business Enterprise Centres

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

Chambers of Commerce

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

BIAs

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

Employment Services

CSE Consulting | Employment and Education Centre | KEYS Job Centre

Other Business & Education Agencies

Regional Tourism Organization 9 | St. Lawrence Corridor Economic Development Commission | Eastern Ontario Workforce Innovation Board | St. Lawrence College | Kemptville Campus Education and Community Hub

THANK-YOU!

On behalf of the Business Support Working Group, I would like to thank each business who took the time to complete the survey. Members of the Working Group will be reaching out to assist businesses who indicated they would like assistance. The Working Group contact list is available on the webpage, along with any new programs and resources as they become available.

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

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