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

Township of
Leeds and the
Thousand Islands

November 30, 2022

Survey Timeframe: October 4 – October 30, 2022

Prepared by:

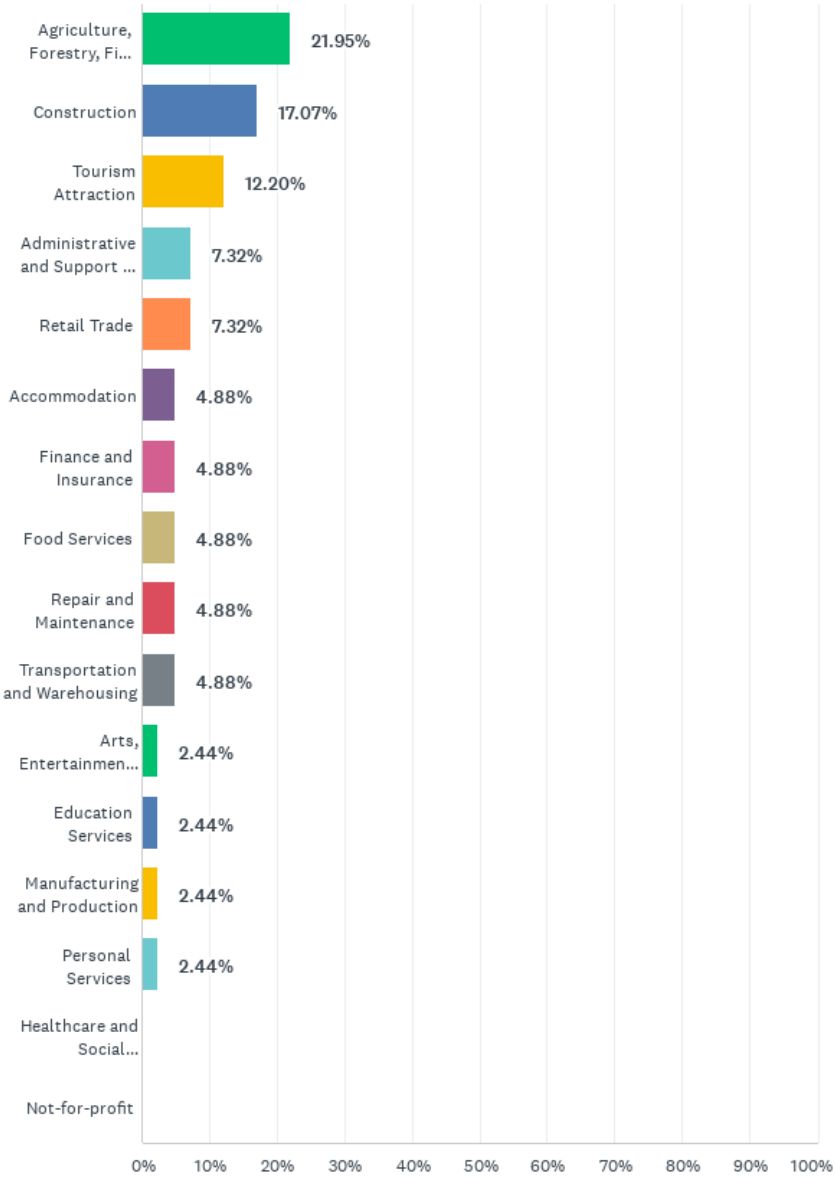
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville
Economic Development Office
32 Wall Street, Suite 300, Brockville, ON

Leeds Grenville
where lifestyle grows good business

invest.leedsgrenville.com/reportsandplans

#2 What sector is your business primarily operating in?

Answered: 41 Skipped: 0

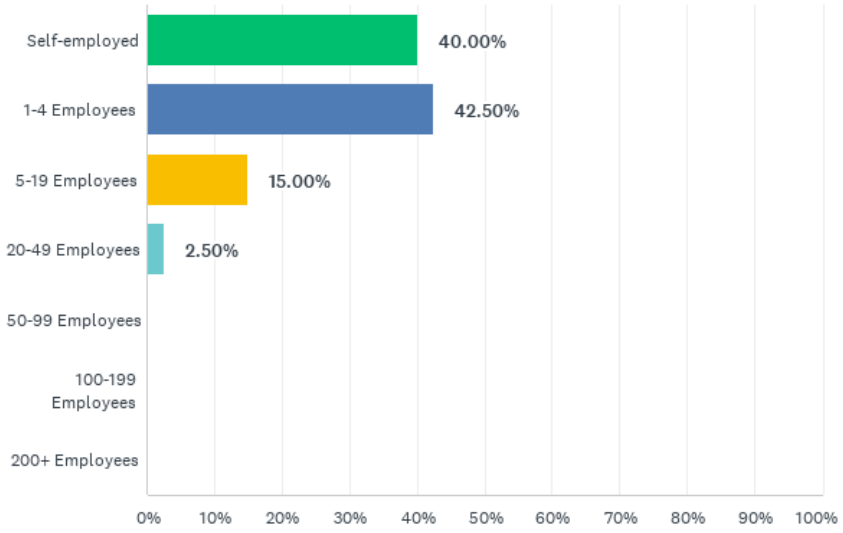


#2 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish and Hunting	21.95%	9
Construction	17.07%	7
Tourism Attraction	12.20%	5
Administrative and Support - Business Services	7.32%	3
Retail Trade	7.32%	3
Accommodation	4.88%	2
Finance and Insurance	4.88%	2
Food Services	4.88%	2
Repair and Maintenance	4.88%	2
Transportation and Warehousing	4.88%	2
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	2.44%	1
Education Services	2.44%	1
Manufacturing and Production	2.44%	1
Personal Services	2.44%	1
Healthcare and Social Assistance	0.00%	0
Not-for-profit	0.00%	0
TOTAL		41

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

Answered: 40 Skipped: 1

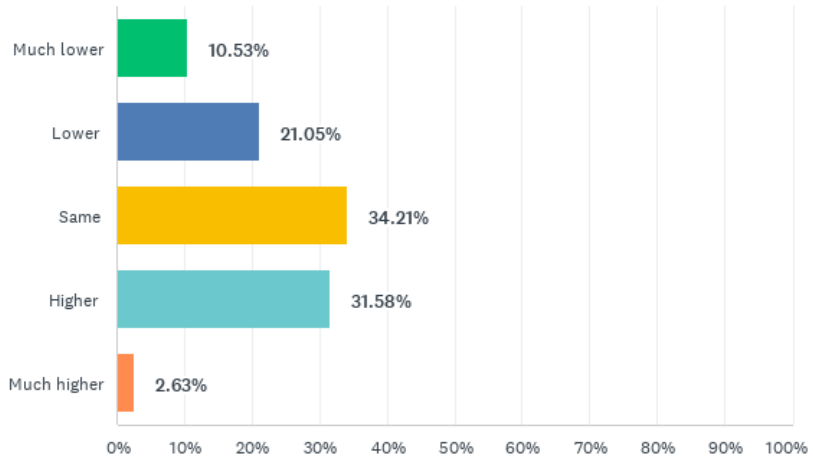


#3 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Self-employed	40.00%	16
1-4 Employees	42.50%	17
5-19 Employees	15.00%	6
20-49 Employees	2.50%	1
50-99 Employees	0.00%	0
100-199 Employees	0.00%	0
200+ Employees	0.00%	0
TOTAL		40

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

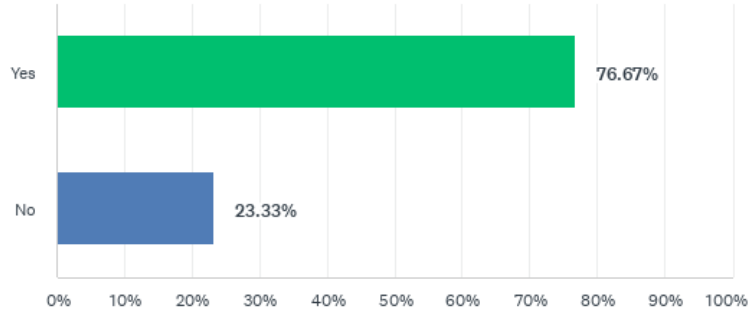
Answered: 38 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Much lower	10.53%	4
Lower	21.05%	8
Same	34.21%	13
Higher	31.58%	12
Much higher	2.63%	1
TOTAL		38

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

Answered: 30 Skipped: 11

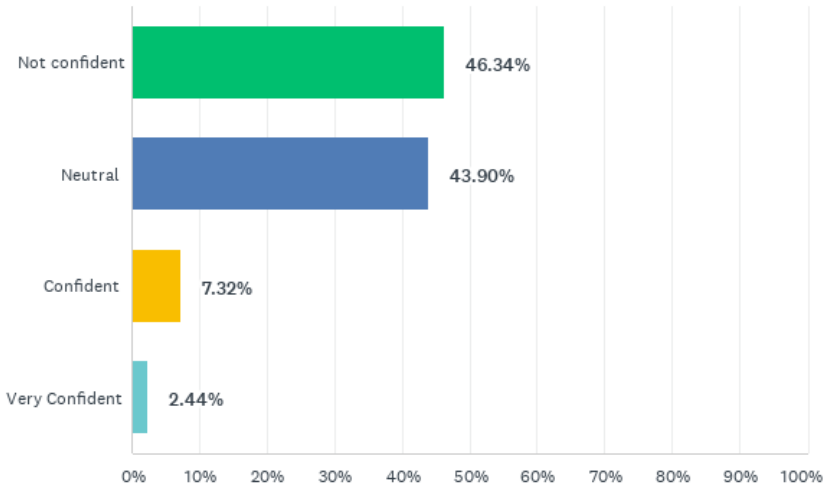


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	76.67%	23
No	23.33%	7
Total Respondents: 30		

- Our business is a marina and retail store. Boating grew through COVID but gas prices and low water on the St. Lawrence hurt us this summer. There is not enough docking on the river and I don't have space to expand. There is a need for more dock slips in the 1000 Islands.
- Hopefully opening will be 2023. We hope to create many jobs as well. We, three owners, are looking forward to being busy.
- We are an essential business and just keep getting busier. We need more resources to function.
- Government screwed up our economy....and now they want more taxes.... I am just about done. Pre-COVID I was thinking of expansion and hiring...not anymore.
- Flat is a good estimate. Between residential and Commercial the dollar volume should be flat.
- I make and service/repair textiles. People have become more mindful of waste management and economic management and thereby the repair and service business has increased.

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

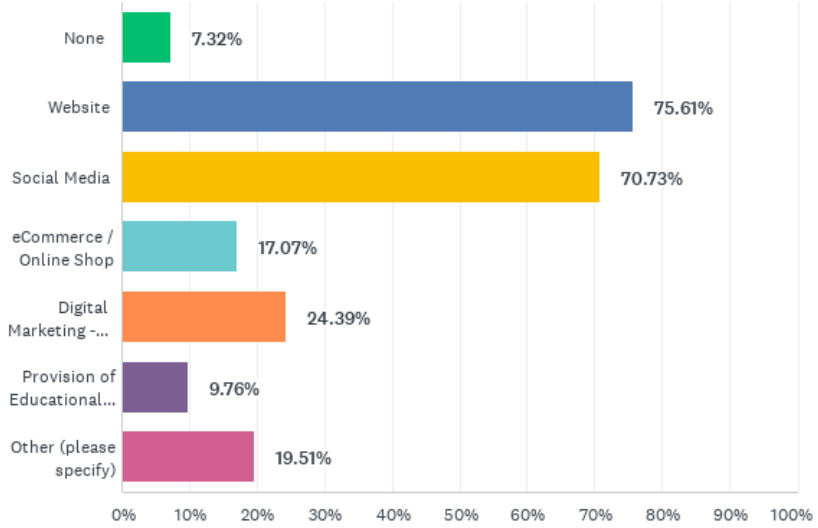
Answered: 41 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Not confident	46.34%	19
Neutral	43.90%	18
Confident	7.32%	3
Very Confident	2.44%	1
TOTAL		41

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

Answered: 41 Skipped: 0



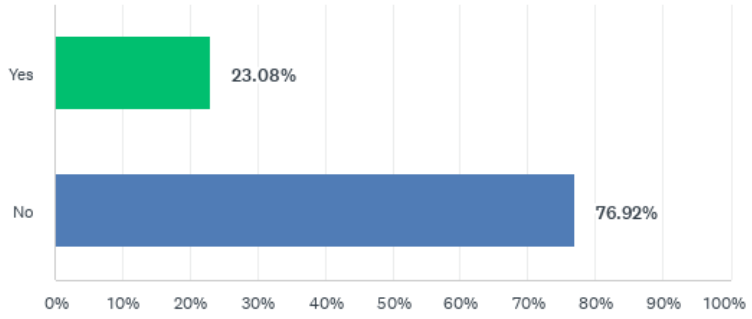
#7 continued…

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
None		7.32%	3
Website		75.61%	31
Social Media		70.73%	29
eCommerce / Online Shop		17.07%	7
Digital Marketing - Advertising / Email		24.39%	10
Provision of Educational Webinars		9.76%	4
Other (please specify)	Responses	19.51%	8
Total Respondents: 41			

- Google.
- Every job is our resume.
- When opening we will have these services.
- Speaking, podcast.
- Brick and mortar in-person shopping at a Cornerstone Business in a small community that is essential.
- I simply use the Lyndhurst Seeley's Bay & District Chamber website to advertise on-line.
- Very limited by terrible internet availability in our area. Online appointments for career decision-making for anyone who is struggling with what they want to do next in their lives - from Grade 10 through to retirement. Clients are given the choice of face-w-face or online.

#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: 39 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	23.08%	9
No	76.92%	30
TOTAL		39

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

Answered: 41 Skipped: 0

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
Increasing product prices	4.88% 2	9.76% 4	2.44% 1	0.00% 0	14.63% 6	2.44% 1	17.07% 7	24.39% 10	7.32% 3	17.07% 7	41
Supply chain	24.39% 10	12.20% 5	7.32% 3	4.88% 2	12.20% 5	0.00% 0	7.32% 3	9.76% 4	12.20% 5	9.76% 4	41
Labour force	34.15% 14	7.32% 3	2.44% 1	4.88% 2	9.76% 4	4.88% 2	4.88% 2	12.20% 5	4.88% 2	14.63% 6	41
Changes in your product demand	28.21% 11	7.69% 3	17.95% 7	2.56% 1	12.82% 5	12.82% 5	7.69% 3	5.13% 2	0.00% 0	5.13% 2	39
Increased overhead costs	12.20% 5	4.88% 2	0.00% 0	4.88% 2	12.20% 5	2.44% 1	17.07% 7	17.07% 7	17.07% 7	12.20% 5	41
Debt servicing capacity	46.15% 18	15.38% 6	5.13% 2	2.56% 1	10.26% 4	2.56% 1	7.69% 3	5.13% 2	0.00% 0	5.13% 2	39

- Can't get employees.
- Shipping costs.
- New to the area.
- Insurance costs jumped in 2021 and 2022. Gas prices caused boaters to rethink boating. All my deliveries from providers started charging a delivery fee. milk, ice, suppliers.
- No debt...that would be suicide during these times.....interest rates will go up...
- Border issues for American to come over, and unacceptable low water levels in the St. Lawrence River/1000 Islands area.
- Continued border issues for most of this season, and the big one.... extremely low water levels from mid-August on... caused us to close a big part of our business.
- Our biggest challenge is outside the realm of outside assistance. We have a long row to hoe to break through the barriers of an old way of doing people development. Whether students or people already at work, there exists a huge resistance to making the conceptual shift from the top-down method of helping people (I am in charge so I need to have all the answers to I am leading but I can't do that effectively until my employees - or youth - can state clearly what that help would look like. We have to find our own methods for getting this conceptual shift to happen, both for leaders and for individuals trying to make career decisions.

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

Answered: 39 Skipped: 2

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
Employees returning to the workplace	59.46% 22	2.70% 1	10.81% 4	5.41% 2	5.41% 2	2.70% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2.70% 1	10.81% 4	37
Ability to offer competitive wages and benefits	48.65% 18	2.70% 1	8.11% 3	2.70% 1	8.11% 3	5.41% 2	10.81% 4	5.41% 2	2.70% 1	5.41% 2	37
Desire for hybrid workplace models	71.43% 25	0.00% 0	8.57% 3	2.86% 1	5.71% 2	2.86% 1	5.71% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2.86% 1	35
Attraction of new employees	46.15% 18	0.00% 0	2.56% 1	5.13% 2	5.13% 2	2.56% 1	7.69% 3	7.69% 3	5.13% 2	17.95% 7	39

- We do not hire staff.
- No one is or has the skills anymore...no one wants to get their hands dirty.
- Does not apply to me, only owner works at business, no employees.
- Summer students were hard to find this year. We had a CSJ grant for 2 students and could not find more than one student for the full term.
- I did not have any significant staffing challenges in 2022. Other neighbouring businesses did and could not keep good hours which hurt our village and tourism traffic.
- As a seasonal tourism business, it is hard to compete with full-time year-round jobs. Our normal workforce of 55 plus is not interested any more in working all summer. Students are not the solution, since you a) need a car to get to work, b) are not reliable enough c) are not able to work in the shoulder season.
- Hard to find employees, even harder to find experienced employees with special qualifications.

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

Answered: 26 Skipped: 15

Reduce Social Assistance

- Promotion of the amazing quality of life in this area - attract new comers.
- Increase criteria for EI eligibility; incentives to work rather than not.
- Cut back social assistance, working "under the table'.
- Encourage people to stop getting government money and not smoking government dope that they are buying with government money and back into the work force.
- I think it's more on the government level on not letting it be so easy to get EI and welfare.

#11 continued…

Housing/Resident Attraction

- Increase local housing to draw in new people looking for work.
- Affordable housing.
- Promote moving here.
- Immigrants.

Training/Labour

- Job training grants and programs.
- Train and educate workforce.
- Promote the trades in this area.
- Promote trades and skill workers so we can take control of our own production and demands.
- It is hard to get qualified people to apply for jobs in construction.
- Training on the job - Apprentice funding to the employers.
- Attract youth to stay and upgrade their skills and education.

Other

- Transportation.
- Youth.
- Motivation to want to work.
- Stop investing in Student hiring and get the 55 plus crowd to work.
- We don't have workforce shortages.
- More amenities.
- Valued labour force reflected in wages and general print.
- Increase wages - government subsidy for businesses to get minimum wage employees over the poverty line.
- An effective single platform to register job seekers and jobs offered.
- Not sure. I fear COVID made people rethink working in the service sector and working weekends and long hours. I fear this is a cultural change and a life choice.
- The most useful focus would be on helping leaders - including those in schools - to understand that it is possible and critically important to teach people how to decide what kind(s) of work/learning is a really good fit for them. Once they are equipped to do that, there will be a lot more people who will willingly step up to the plate (whatever plate they know will be a good one for them) and to be excited to join the workforce. Leaders and individuals need to learn that it is possible and essential that employees are able to state clearly what they need in order to pick and stick with a job, an occupation and a career.

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

Answered: 31 Skipped: 10

Financial Support

- Wage subsidies/grants for training new staff.
- Keep up and double down on support local businesses.
- Small business grants/support such as wage supplement.
- Access to more government grants.
- More support for moving businesses forward.
- Small business grants and funding opportunities.
- Money to help with costs which were incurred during the pandemic.

Cell/Internet

- Cell phone and internet connectivity in the Lyndhurst area.
- Better internet service.
- Internet and cell service improvements in our area.

Government Regulation Federal/Provincial/Municipal

- Cancel the carbon tax.
- Turn CEBA loan into a grant.
- Interest relief on Government loans. Extension on Government loans.
- Equal support amongst all similar businesses in the township.
- Decrease import products so that domestic product and production can gain some ground.
- Eliminate carbon tax. Governmental funding towards infrastructure. Incentives for return to work.
- Township response on issues requested information on. Billed and rules specific to this township.
- Building inspectors who have a background in building things and understand what they are looking at.
- Municipal policies to shop 100% Canadian-owned and operated businesses (Canadian subsidiaries of foreign corporations are not Canadian companies!)
- More communication of support available from government sources.
- Never have the IJC let the water levels get low, have tourism and the boating/fishing/marina industry become a factor in water level decisions, have the IJC use common sense about deviating from the outflow levels when it can save an entire half of a season for this industry!
- Water levels never being so disruptive, stop with the over-high and especially stop with this over-low, this over-low issue should have been dealt with instead of hiding behind the rules for plan 2014, seems like they can deviate when other issues arise, this extremely low was a crushing blow after 2 seasons of lock-downs!

#12 continued…

Promotion/Advertising

- Increase traffic to area.
- Marketing.
- Promoting the area locally and provincially and into the bordering US states.
- Pay directly for advertisement e.g. in Brockville Guide & Map, 1000 Islands Visitor Guide, free Advertisement on their homepages, exactly the amount that all advertisers paid in 2019. This way everybody will benefit with the same amount.
- Promotion of the area and area businesses, I work hard at promo and social media but there's only so much time in the day.

Business Supports

- Business management workshops: communicating, budgeting, and networking 'how-to's'.
- Help connecting to leaders of teams who are struggling to keep/find/satisfy their employees.
- Training webinars etc., are great and I want to continue to learn, but it's hard to do it all. I would love if there was availability of resources either funded or maybe even 'discounted/reasonable pricing' based on either subsidized or a 'group rate' for things like product photography, in-house videos. Product photography for ecommerce is a real challenge for me right now.

Tourism

- Tourism marketing/advertising strategy.
- Attracting U.S. customers post COVID.

Debt/Borrowing

- Break on interest rates.
- Debt repayment.

Other

- Supply.
- Lower insurance costs.
- Educated workforce.
- Investment.
- Technology.
- Employees.
- Supporting Canadian businesses.
- Climate mitigation. Wetland restoration.
- Support for women entrepreneurs in service industries.
- Subsidy for local food in grocery stores, markets etc.
- Public facilities are critical, like public washroom, signage, parks, cycling paths,
- Recreation should be affordable and could be more affordable if HST exempt.
- Word of mouth in the community Social media advertising Support with locals.
- Combining various sectors for example Agriculture and tourism.

#12 continued...

- The ability for scientists to clone me so that I can have a week off.
- Get the insurance companies to allow the employers more say in their hiring.

#13 What are your expectations for 2023?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 10

Positive

- Growth.
- To have more vehicles.
- To hopefully continue to grow.
- I expect that I will be just as busy this year as I was this one.
- To attract more customers now that people are able to enjoy their properties from all over the world.
- Incremental growth, much based on my own personal efforts.
- I'm not sure. We hope that the inroads that we've made with some leaders and their team members will generate others who are willing to make the conceptual shift needed for this new kind of work world that exists. We hope, but we aren't sure how quickly the shift will happen.

Neutral

- Stable but not higher revenues; vulnerable to economic recession (prediction) so future revenue uncertain.
- To hopefully be open for business.

Negative

- Bankruptcy.
- Dim due to recession.
- Choppy markets and high interest rates.
- At this time, I feel more vulnerable to things I didn't expect.
- Reputation being tainted due to the lowest water levels in late summer and fall EVER!
- More COVID; more economic upheaval; foreign interference in Canadian affairs.
- Economy to be poor, basic people cannot afford expensive holidays, so basic level holidays will be a better option, continued over prices for fuels and commodities, water levels to be a crapshoot in this area.
- Another difficult year. Skilled staff shortages will continue and make us unable to open full time hours.
- Not sure because of the recession we are in and the hindrance of the carbon tax which is driving prices up.
- Little hope that cell and internet services will be available to all with fast speed and reasonable cost. Too much talk and too little to show.
- That if the financial impacts continue there will be less discretionary money and tourism will take a hit.
- Economy will continue to fluctuate so there may be some caution.
- Not sure... economy is failing, and clients have lost confidence in water levels for August, September and October.

#13 continued…

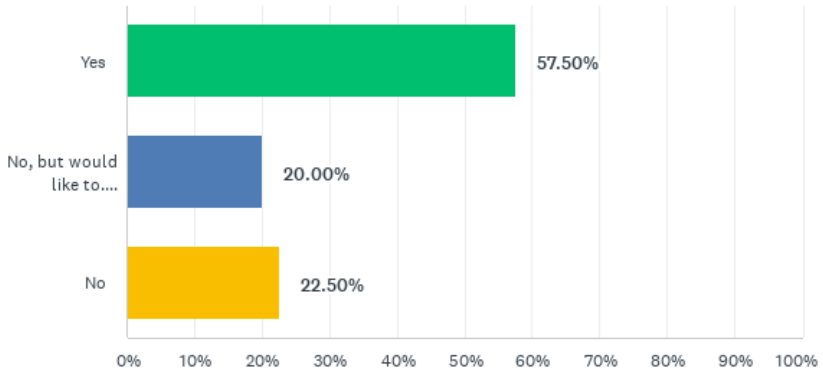
- More government red tape to traverse through.
- Low. Weather dependent. Planning for reduced growth and a catch-up year.

Other

- Still a slower than usual start/winter season. Jan-April 2022 was brutal. Maybe 2023 won't be as bad but I expect it to be very low in sales & foot traffic. Then I have cautiously optimistic outlook for summer 2023.

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

Answered: 40 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	57.50%	23
No, but would like to. (please provide your contact information in #16)	20.00%	8
No	22.50%	9
TOTAL		40

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

Answered: 15 Skipped: 26

- The biggest challenge now is the government restrictions.
- It's a challenge to know what's best to invest in to further service and sales.
- Wake control on the St. Lawrence is a real challenge. Big boats are not held accountable for their wake and do damage to boats at fixed docks. AS more big boats take over this issue is going to only get worse.
- Small businesses in our rural region are not receiving the same amounts of grants, funding or recognition.

#15 continued…

- Price of Gas is rising too fast. Cost of Goods are rising too fast. My shipping costs inured and cost of goods are making it un-affordable for consumers.
- Regulate short-term rentals to be held accountable for safety/water/and fire code issues, have short-term rentals pay a fee to operate, keep water levels up!
- It has been exhausting worrying about the health of every person who comes in the door. Dancing around to keep socially distanced. Not providing as many activities due to concerns. That has been a big change. Growing weary of it.
- As a storefront I can't overemphasize the importance of basic beautification services and facilities be provided and upkept. When our municipalities fall down on the job of basic services such as grass cutting, garbage emptying, flower watering, washroom cleaning etc. then it gives both locals and tourists the impression that we are a community that doesn't care.
- Due to the LOW water in the St. Lawrence River I will be closing my business about a month sooner!
- Keep the borders operating without restrictions, and WATER LEVELS should never be this low, especially when the ability to decrease the flow was available, but was just never implemented, recreational boating, fishing, tourism is a major player and need to be treated as such in the decision making, NO MORE EXCUSES!
- The increase in rural housing density resulting in reduces speed limits is adding significant travel time for picking up supplies and doing deliveries. Most of our farm produce goes to Ottawa, Toronto and Niagara.
- As the sole employee of my little business I have hit the maximum of what I can to ensure that my clients are happy. I rely on some free family help because I don't make enough to hire help and I feel that I can't increase the prices of some services during this time when so many are struggling to put food on the table. My services and products are mostly nonessential - fun, touristy, artsy. I love what I do but I do it because I do not have to support my family.
- Lazy society... Need to start teaching the next generation that life won’t be handed to them anymore.
- We are a wedding venue and are not recognized in any category. Government says not tourism? Although I stand to differ and if not then where!!
- We were part of the Digital Main Street program in 2020. We have attended several webinars through the township/tourism region - these have been excellent, please keep them coming! Our main challenges are terrible and expensive satellite internet and poor cellular coverage. We moved here 4 years ago and opted not to have a land-line - we can only use our phones in front of one window of our house or calls drop.

#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: 15 Skipped: 26

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Contact Name	Responses	93.33%	14
Business Name	Responses	93.33%	14
Contact Number	Responses	93.33%	14
Email	Responses	100.00%	15

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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