



Markdale Chamber of Commerce
The Olde Firehall, 19 Toronto St. N., Box 177, Markdale, Ontario N0C 1H0
Phone/Fax: 519-986-4612 markdalechamber@cablerocket.com Toll Free: 888-986-4612
www.village.markdale.on.ca

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MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MARKDALE CHAMBER RELEASES BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

Almost 100 per cent of people surveyed in a recent study think Grey Highlands has excellent quality of life, while 58 per cent of those surveyed think it is a good place to do business.

After a busy summer season in Markdale, the local Chambers of Commerce are reporting on a Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Survey conducted in the municipality of Grey Highlands in the spring.

Volunteers visited 52 businesses in the municipality as part of the survey, which was developed over a decade ago by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. As part of the cross-sectoral survey, all businesses were identified and split into sectors. Most sectors were included in the survey, with the notable exclusion of the health, education, public administration, mining & forestry and agricultural sectors. The agricultural sector will be the subject of a specific survey later this year.

“We wanted to take the pulse of our local business climate,” said Markdale Chamber Vice President and BR&E Leadership Team Chair Charmaine Peever. “We were pleased with the participation of our volunteers and businesses and are moving forward toward an action plan on the results.”

Peever, along with Colleen Boer of the Flesherton Chamber and other Chamber members presented the survey's findings to Grey Highlands municipal council on August 23rd. In that report, there were several areas singled out as going well while other areas that need some work were also identified.

Good or high ratings were recorded for policing, fire prevention, public utilities, street repairs and snow and garbage removal. Areas identified as issues needing work were proactive business recruitment and suitable land availability for development; water and sewage availability and capacity; approval processes and development charges; information technology accessibility and the need for more medical facilities.

The Chamber will be working with several partners to develop resources and further information on a variety of areas including financing; skills training and labour availability. There were several areas identified as barriers to business, including transportation; land zoning, permit processes; taxes and telecommunications infrastructure. The Chamber will look at these and other areas to determine actions to address these issues.

“We will be meeting with our Task Force in September to determine our next steps in the process,” said Peever, who added partnerships are being formed with the Flesherton Chamber, the municipality; the Four County Training Board; the Saugeen Economic Development Corporation; the Y Community and Employment Services and other interested parties. “We want to develop a good action plan we can all work with to improve our local business climate. We look forward to continuing to develop our community as an excellent place to do business.”

The report has been mailed to volunteer visitors and businesses involved in the study. It will also be posted to the Markdale Chamber's website at www.village.markdale.on.ca. The study was supported through federal funding made available through the Community Futures Rural Development Fund, administered by the Saugeen Economic Development Corporation. OMAFRA provided the training to the project leaders and volunteers and the web-based statistical analysis program used in the survey.

If you have questions or would like a copy of the report, call 519-986-4612 or email markdalechamber@cablerocket.com.

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MEDIA CONTACT: Charmaine Peever – 519-986-2261 (Wed - Fri)