

**LYON COUNTY BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION
STRATEGIES PROGRAM
Interview Guide**

Business ID: _____ Supplied by Coordinator: _____ Also record on first page of survey

BUSINESS NAME:

Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____ Website _____

PERSON INTERVIEWED: _____

Job title: _____

Date of visit: _____

Email _____

OTHER KEY OFFICIALS IN THIS ESTABLISHMENT:

Owner _____

Chief Exec. Officer _____

Plant Manager _____

Personnel Officer _____

VOLUNTEER VISITORS:

Note to Coordinator: After placing the ID number on this cover sheet and on first page of the survey, remove the cover sheet and file separately to ensure confidentiality of results.

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION STRATEGIES PROGRAM

Background

We believe our existing businesses are our best prospects for future growth. The purpose of this program is to see how we can help them grow.

- I. This program is sponsored locally by the following organizations:
 - Lyon County
 - City of Marshall EDA
 - City of Cottonwood EDA
 - City of Tracy EDA
 - Marshall Area Chamber of Commerce
 - Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
 - University of Minnesota Extension

- II. Technical and research assistance for this program is provided by the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

- III. Business, government, and educational leaders have agreed to help us work with our local businesses on this program.

- IV. The survey is a cooperative effort involving volunteers drawn from other businesses, local government, and educational institutions.

- V. The objectives of the program are:
 1. To demonstrate support for local businesses
 2. To help solve immediate business concerns.
 3. To increase local businesses' ability to compete in the global economy
 4. To establish and implement a strategic plan for economic development.
 5. To build community capacity to sustain growth and development.

- VI. Confidentiality - Your individual answers to this survey are confidential and will not be released. Your response will be summarized with those of others to produce an overall result in percentages or averages. **If we find an issue in your survey response in which a certain individual or individuals may be able to respond to your concern in a beneficial way, you will be asked at the end of the survey whether you authorize us to release your survey information to them.**

- VII. The "Skip It Rule" - If there is a question that you feel might be best to skip, we will do that; just let us know. There is no need to explain your reasons.

- VIII. Copy of Final Report - Copies of the summary will be provided to all businesses that participate in this survey.

Business ID: _____ Supplied by Coordinator

**LYON COUNTY BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION STRATEGIES PROGRAM
Interview Guide**

Community or township: _____ Date: _____

1a. Is all the information on the cover sheet complete and correct? (Circle ONE answer)

(1) Yes (2) No → **1b. If No, make the necessary corrections.**

2a. Did your business begin its operation in this community? (Circle ONE answer)

(1) Yes (2) No → **2b. If No, where did you move from and when?**

	<u>Community</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Year</u>
	_____	_____	_____

→ **2c. If Yes, what year?** _____

3a. Is your business locally owned? (Circle ONE answer)

(1) Yes (2) No → **3b. If No, where is your corporate headquarters located? (Please identify city, state, & country)** _____

4a. Do you have multiple locations? (Circle ONE answer)

(1) Yes (2) No
 → **4b. If Yes, where are they located?** _____

5. Which of the following industry categories best describes your business? (Circle ONE answer)

- | | |
|---|--|
| (1) Agriculture production | (9) Lodging |
| (2) Mining | (10) Tourism/recreational services (i.e., golf, boating, bike rental, theater, etc.) |
| (3) Construction | (11) Other services |
| (4) Manufacturing | (12) Food & beverage |
| (5) Transportation and public utilities | (13) Education |
| (6) Wholesale trade | (14) Mail order/internet sales |
| (7) Finance, insurance, and real estate | (15) Government (not including education) |
| (8) Retail trade | (16) Other (specify) _____ |

Your product / service

6. We are interested in learning about your primary products and services.

a. Name the major products or services offered by this establishment	b. What percentage of your total sales comes from each? (Total should equal 100%)	c. Are sales of this product or service? (Circle ONE answer)
(1)	%	(1)Increasing (2)Stable (3)Decreasing
(2)	%	(1)Increasing (2)Stable (3)Decreasing
(3)	%	(1)Increasing (2)Stable (3)Decreasing
(4) Other products or services (specify)	%	(1)Increasing (2)Stable (3)Decreasing
Check total (should equal 100%)	100 %	

7. What is special or unique about your major products or services? (*BR&E visitor: Please take detailed notes here.*)

8 a. Who are your key competitors and where are they located? (*List UP TO THREE*)

- Name of business _____ Location _____
- Name of business _____ Location _____
- Name of business _____ Location _____

b. What are the one or two most important reasons that customers might choose your competitors over you?

Labor Force

9. How many workers (including yourself) are employed by you at this location? We'd like you to break this out between full-time and part-time for the two time periods shown.

	a. Full time	b. Part time (as defined by the business)	c. Seasonal (hired by the business)	d. Temp agency employees
Currently				
Three years ago				

10. If the number of employees changed from three years ago, please identify up to 3 reasons for the employment change. (Circle UP TO THREE reasons)

- (a) Technological changes
- (b) Change in management
- (c) Growth in demand, or lack of demand
- (d) Change in profits
- (e) Business did not exist 3 years ago
- (f) Improved or decreased efficiency
- (g) Government regulation
- (h) Increased competition
- (i) Renovation/expansion
- (j) New products/services
- (k) Entered new markets
- (l) Change in subcontracting
- (m) Corporate decisions/policies
- (n) Other _____

11. If you reported any employees as seasonal in question 9c, when is your busy season? (Circle UP TO TWO seasons)

- (1) Spring (2) Summer (3) Fall (4) Winter (5) Varies (6) Not applicable

12. What is the average hourly starting wage paid to employees in each category? (If you do not have employees in that category, write *Not Applicable or NA*)

- (a) Unskilled labor (ex: waiters, janitorial, hotel maids, unskilled manufacturing labor, etc) \$ _____
- (b) Precision production/specialty skills \$ _____
- (c) Clerical / secretarial \$ _____
- (d) Sales \$ _____
- (e) Engineers \$ _____
- (f) Professional/management \$ _____
- (g) Information technology \$ _____
- (h) Temporary/contract employees \$ _____
- (i) Youth employees \$ _____
- (j) Other _____ \$ _____

Business ID: _____ Supplied by Coordinator

13. Does your company have problems recruiting employees in the following categories? (Circle ONE answer per line)

<u>Category</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Unsure</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
(a) Unskilled labor	1	2	3	NA
(b) Precision production/specialty skills	1	2	3	NA
(c) Clerical / secretarial	1	2	3	NA
(d) Sales	1	2	3	NA
(e) Engineers	1	2	3	NA
(f) Professional/management	1	2	3	NA
(g) Information technology	1	2	3	NA
(h) Temporary/contract employees	1	2	3	NA
(i) Youth employees	1	2	3	NA
(j) Other _____	1	2	3	NA

14. If you answered "yes" for any category in question 13 above, identify up to 3 of the most important reasons for your recruiting problem. (Circle UP TO THREE.)

- (a) Poor work attitudes
- (b) Inadequate labor skills
- (c) High cost of training employees
- (d) High wage rates for labor
- (e) Competition for employees
- (f) Workers will not migrate into the area
- (g) Workers cannot pass screening (drug, criminal record check, etc.)
- (h) Lack of child care
- (i) Other _____

15. Which of the following benefits are available to your full-time employees? (Circle Yes or No for each item)

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| (a) Health insurance | Yes | No |
| (b) Life insurance | Yes | No |
| (c) Disability insurance | Yes | No |
| (d) Paid vacation time | Yes | No |
| (e) Paid holidays | Yes | No |
| (f) Paid sick leave | Yes | No |
| | | |
| (g) Bonus | Yes | No |
| (h) Profit sharing | Yes | No |
| (i) Stock options of company | Yes | No |
| (j) Tuition reimbursement (for-credit courses) | Yes | No |
| (k) Non-credit training / professional development | Yes | No |
| | | |
| (l) Retirement/401 K contribution | Yes | No |

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|----|
| (m) Uniforms/uniform allowance | Yes | No |
| (n) Child care/dependent benefits | Yes | No |
| (o) Employee discounts on merchandise | Yes | No |
| (p) Company car | Yes | No |
| (q) Other (specify)_____ | Yes | No |

16. Please estimate the commute time for your employees.

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| (a) Within a 15 minute drive one way | _____% |
| (b) 16-30 minute drive one way | _____% |
| (c) 31-60 minute drive one way | _____% |
| (d) 61+ minute drive one way | _____% |
| Check total (should equal 100%) | 100% |

17. What resources are you currently using to locate new employees? (Circle ALL that apply)

- (a) Ad in metro / state-wide papers
- (b) Ad in local community papers
- (c) Placement office of four-year, community and / or technical colleges
- (d) Private search businesses

- (e) Referrals from existing employees
- (f) Professional associations
- (g) Minnesota Workforce Center
- (h) Temporary agency / staffing service business

- (i) Hire our own apprentices
- (j) Promote from within
- (k) Hire people who were initially temporary employees
- (l) Job Fair

- (m) Internet / world wide web
- (n) Union
- (o) Sign in the window
- (p) Walk-in
- (q) Word of mouth
- (r) Other _____

18a. Do you expect the number of employees you have in each of the following categories to increase, decrease or stay the same over the next three years? (Circle 1, 2 or 3 for each category)

b. If you expect a change, how many employees will be added or subtracted? (Indicate by how many)

	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Stay The Same</u>	<u>Decrease</u>	<u>By How Many?</u>	<u>Not Applicable/ Don't Know</u>
(a) Unskilled labor	1	2	3	_____	_____
(b) Precision production/specialty skills	1	2	3	_____	_____
(c) Clerical / secretarial	1	2	3	_____	_____
(d) Sales	1	2	3	_____	_____
(e) Engineers	1	2	3	_____	_____
(f) Professional/management	1	2	3	_____	_____
(g) Information technology	1	2	3	_____	_____
(h) Temporary/contract employees	1	2	3	_____	_____

- (i) Youth employees 1 2 3 _____
- (j) Other _____ 1 2 3 _____

19. Overall, how do you rate your employees with respect to their attitude toward work and their productivity? (Circle ONE answer per line)

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Above Average</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Below Average</u>	<u>Poor</u>
(a) Attitude toward work	5	4	3	2	1
(b) Productivity	5	4	3	2	1

20. Employees and owners often need additional training for their current job. From the list below, select the training topics which are needed but are not already being provided. (Circle ALL that apply. For each item you circle, write the number of people needing this training)

General Skills Number of people needing this training

- (a) Basic math _____
- (b) Basic shop math _____
- (c) Reading and writing _____
- (d) Interpersonal communication _____
- (e) English as a Second Language _____
- (f) Diversity training _____
- (g) Customer service _____
- (h) Other (Specify) _____

Managerial Skills

- (i) Basic accounting _____
- (j) Financial management _____
- (k) Record keeping _____
- (l) Inventory control _____
- (m) Business planning _____
- (n) Employee management _____
- (o) Time / Project management _____

Sales and Marketing

- (p) Sales _____
- (q) Marketing _____
- (r) Selling on the internet _____
- (s) Other (Specify) _____

Computer Skills

- (t) Keyboarding _____
- (u) Microsoft Word _____
- (v) Spreadsheets _____
- (w) Computer-aided design (CAD) /
Computer-aided manufacturing (CAM) _____
- (x) Graphic design and layout _____
- (y) Database management _____
- (z) Website design and maintenance _____
- (aa) Computer system
installation and maintenance _____
- (bb) Computer programming _____

(cc) Other (specify) _____

Specialized Skills

(dd) Blueprint Reading _____

(ee) Specialized equipment (Specify) _____

(ff) Other (Specify) _____

21. How do you currently train your employees? (Circle ALL that apply.)

- (a) Self-taught (manuals, videos, training materials)
- (b) In-house training (one-on-one by supervisor or co-worker, training department classes, etc.)
- (c) Send employees to workshops
- (d) Contract with private vendors for on-site training
- (e) Contract with public vendors (technical colleges, etc.) for on-site training
- (f) On-the-job training (a government supported program)
- (g) Apprenticeships
- (h) Distance learning (correspondence, the Internet, TV)
- (i) Other (Please list) _____
- (j) Do not provide any employee training

Customers

22. We are interested in the location of your customers. Please estimate the percent of your gross sales come from the following locations:

a. Local (within 25 miles)?	percent
b. Regional (26-100 miles)?	percent
c. Outside the region but in the United States?	percent
d. Outside of the U.S.?	percent
	100% TOTAL

23a. Is your business currently exporting internationally? (Circle ONE answer)

- (1) Yes, we export directly from our business
- (2) Yes, but we sell our product internationally through another company which exports it (ex: US parent company, etc.)

(3) No: 23b. What prevents you from exporting your product? (Circle ALL that apply.)

- (a) Business is too small
- (b) Business designed to serve specific area
- (c) Lack of knowledge of foreign countries/markets
- (d) Lack of specific export knowledge
- (e) Restrictive state and or federal regulations
- (f) Language barrier
- (g) Concerns about receiving payment
- (h) Never considered it before
- (i) Tough competition
- (j) Costs / risks are too high
- (k) Starting plans to export
- (l) Other _____

24. For businesses who export internationally or are planning to do so in the near future – all others, skip to question 25.

24a. In which countries or regions of the world do you currently sell products, or plan to sell in the future? (Circle Now or Future for ALL that apply)

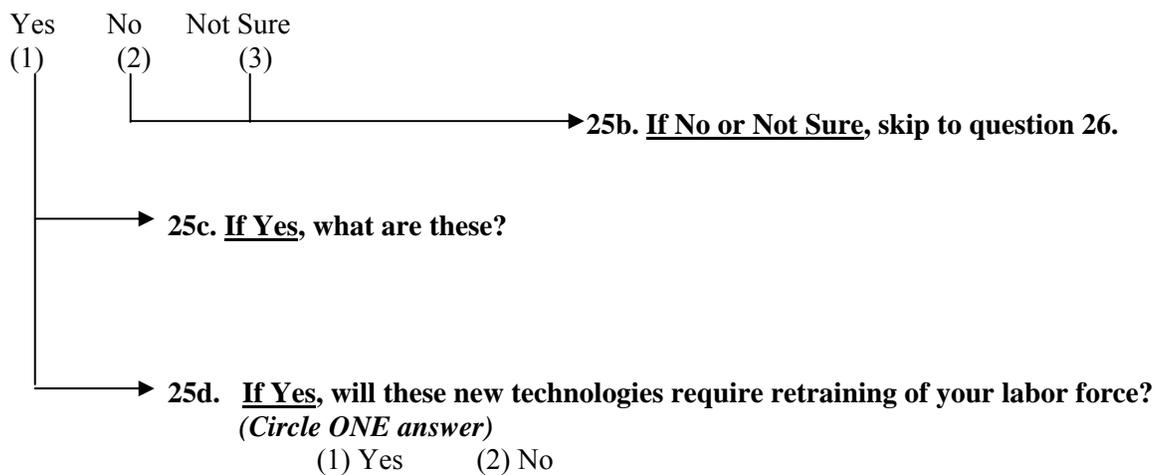
	(1) I sell there <u>now</u>	(2) I plan to start selling there <u>in the future</u>
(a) Canada	Now	Future
(b) Mexico	Now	Future
(c) Central America (not including Mexico)	Now	Future
(d) South America	Now	Future
(e) Western Europe	Now	Future
(f) Eastern Europe	Now	Future
(g) Russia	Now	Future
(h) Africa	Now	Future
(i) China	Now	Future
(j) Japan	Now	Future
(k) Asia, other than China or Japan	Now	Future
(l) Australia	Now	Future
(m) Other _____	Now	Future

24b. Identify problems, if any, that you have exporting your product(s)? (Circle ALL that apply)

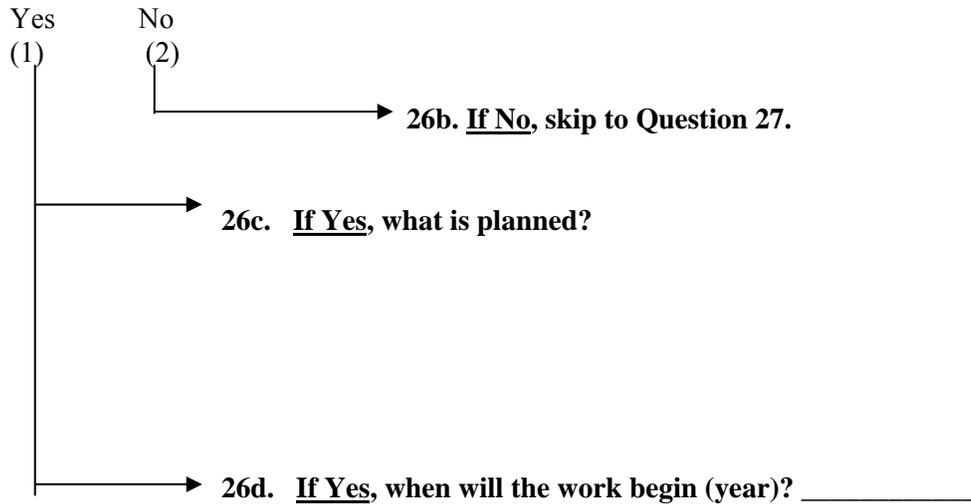
- (a) Transportation of product
- (b) Lack of export financing
- (c) Restrictive state and or federal regulations
- (d) Inadequate knowledge of foreign countries/markets
- (e) Other _____
- (f) I do not have problems exporting my product(s)

Changes

25. a. Are there any major technological innovations on the horizon in your industry that might affect your company? (Circle ONE answer)



26a. Do you have any plans to modernize or expand your present buildings(s) or equipment? (Circle ONE answer)



Future Location Decisions

27. **Are you currently considering?** (*Circle ALL that apply*)

- (a) Downsizing → **If yes**, go to Question 28
- (b) Selling → **If yes**, go to Question 28
- (c) Merging with or acquiring another business → **If yes**, go to Question 30
- (d) Moving → **If yes**, go to Question 28
- (e) Closing → **If yes**, go to Question 28
- (f) Expanding -- at this location → **If yes**, go to Question 30
- (g) Expanding – adding another location → **If yes**, go to Question 29
- (h) Other changes to business plan → **If yes**, go to Question 30
- (i) None of the above → **If yes**, go to Question 30

28. **If yes to Question 27 (a), (b), (d) or (e), why are you considering downsizing, selling, moving or closing?** (*Circle ALL that apply*)

- (1) Changing market conditions
- (2) Overcrowded building
- (3) No land for expansion
- (4) Transportation problems
- (5) Crime/vandalism
- (6) Low work productivity
- (7) Environmental concerns
- (8) Rigid code enforcement (including ordinances and building codes)
- (9) High local taxes
- (10) High state taxes
- (11) Lease expiration
- (12) Poor telecommunications/internet
- (13) Insufficient labor supply
- (14) Retiring
- (15) Another business opportunity
- (16) Business incentives from other jurisdiction(s)
- (17) Trying to sell business but unable to sell it
- (18) Other (specify) _____

29a. **If moving (Yes to Question 27d) or expanding at another location (Yes to Question 27g), where are you considering?** (*Circle ALL that apply*)

- (1) In same city as currently located
- (2) Another city in this county (specify city) _____
- (3) Another county in the state (specify city) _____
- (4) Another state (specify city and state) _____
- (5) Outside of the United States (specify city and country) _____
- (6) Undecided

29b. If other states (South Dakota, Iowa, Wisconsin, etc.) are enticing to you, please explain why and how.

30a. Do you rent / lease or does this business own this facility? (Circle ONE answer)

- (1) Rent /Lease
- (2) Own

└───┬───> **30b. If Rent / Lease, when does the current rental agreement expire?**

31a. Does your company currently own or rent / lease sufficient property to allow for expansion if necessary? (Circle ONE answer)

- Yes (1)
- Maybe (2)
- No (3)

└───┬───> **31b. If Maybe or No, what type of land, buildings, and space needs do you foresee?**

32. Are there any other changes in business plans for the next three years? (Circle ALL that apply)

- (1) No change in operations _____> **If no change, skip to Question 33.**
- (2) Change in mix of goods/services
- (3) Add or subtract product lines
- (4) Change production technology
- (5) Other _____

33. What impact will your answer(s) from Questions 27-32 have on the number of employees? (Circle ONE answer on the left, and if you choose 2 or 3, also answer the jobs question)

- (1) No change
- (2) Add employees _____> About how many jobs will be added? _____ Jobs
- (3) Reduce employees _____> About how many jobs will be lost? _____ Jobs
- (4) Reduce schedule for hourly employees:
 - (a) About how many hours / week per employee? _____
 - (b) How many employees will be on a reduced schedule? _____

Community Factors

(a) In the community in which your business is located, are the following business factors more favorable, less favorable or about the same as your direct competitors from other communities? (Circle ONE answer for each factor)

	Much More Favorable	Somewhat More Favorable	About the Same	Somewhat Less Favorable	Much Less Favorable	Not Applicable/ Don't Know
a) Availability of Skilled Labor	5	4	3	2	1	DK
b) Availability of Unskilled Labor	5	4	3	2	1	DK
c) Worker Stability	5	4	3	2	1	DK
d) Worker Productivity	5	4	3	2	1	DK
e) Wage Rates	5	4	3	2	1	DK
f) Employee Health Care Costs	5	4	3	2	1	DK
g) Union Profile	5	4	3	2	1	DK
h) Technical Training Programs	5	4	3	2	1	DK
i) Availability of Land	5	4	3	2	1	DK
j) Cost of Land	5	4	3	2	1	DK
k) Availability of Buildings	5	4	3	2	1	DK
l) Cost of Buildings	5	4	3	2	1	DK
m) Proximity to Major Markets	5	4	3	2	1	DK
n) Proximity to Raw Materials	5	4	3	2	1	DK
o) Proximity to Service Suppliers	5	4	3	2	1	DK
p) Highway Accessibility	5	4	3	2	1	DK
q) Railroad Service	5	4	3	2	1	DK
r) Accessibility to Major Airport	5	4	3	2	1	DK
s) Local Airport	5	4	3	2	1	DK
t) Electricity Cost	5	4	3	2	1	DK
u) Electricity Reliability	5	4	3	2	1	DK
v) Natural Gas Cost	5	4	3	2	1	DK
w) Natural Gas Reliability	5	4	3	2	1	DK
x) Unemployment Insurance Costs	5	4	3	2	1	DK
y) Workers Compensations Rates	5	4	3	2	1	DK
z) Local Taxes	5	4	3	2	1	DK
aa) State Taxes	5	4	3	2	1	DK
bb) Availability of Credit	5	4	3	2	1	DK
cc) Cost of Credit	5	4	3	2	1	DK
dd) Environmental Regulations	5	4	3	2	1	DK

(b) Please rank in order the three factors from Question #34 you would consider the greatest *strengths* of this community as a location for your business and the three factors you would consider the greatest *weaknesses* for your business. (Specify by corresponding letters in Question 34 above if the response comes from the list)

Strengths (Rank from 1 – 3.)

Weaknesses (Rank from 1 – 3.)

1.

1.

2.

2.

3.

3.

36. Based on the following community services, please rate the desirability of this location as a place for your company to do business. (Circle ONE answer for each item)

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Above Average</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Below Average</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
1) Street Maintenance	5	4	3	2	1	DK
2) Snow Removal	5	4	3	2	1	DK
3) Drainage	5	4	3	2	1	DK
4) Water	5	4	3	2	1	DK
5) Sewer	5	4	3	2	1	DK
6) Solid Waste Disposal	5	4	3	2	1	DK
7) Law Enforcement	5	4	3	2	1	DK
8) Fire Protection	5	4	3	2	1	DK
9) Emergency Medical Services	5	4	3	2	1	DK
10) Health Care Facilities	5	4	3	2	1	DK
11) Zoning and Permitting	5	4	3	2	1	DK
12) Code Enforcement	5	4	3	2	1	DK
13) Financial Institutions	5	4	3	2	1	DK
14) Chamber of Commerce	5	4	3	2	1	DK
15) Economic Development Authority	5	4	3	2	1	DK
16) Public Elementary and Secondary Schools (K-12)	5	4	3	2	1	DK
17) Community Education	5	4	3	2	1	DK
18) Higher Education within a reasonable drive	5	4	3	2	1	DK
19) Public Library	5	4	3	2	1	DK
20) Child Care	5	4	3	2	1	DK
21) Religious choices	5	4	3	2	1	DK
22) Cultural opportunities	5	4	3	2	1	DK
23) Recreational Opportunities	5	4	3	2	1	DK
24) Housing Costs	5	4	3	2	1	DK
25) Housing Availability	5	4	3	2	1	DK

Telecommunications

37. Which type of Internet service does your business use? (Circle ALL that apply)

- (a) None
- (b) Dial-up
- (c) Cable
- (d) DSL telephone
- (e) T-1 lines
- (f) Fiber
- (g) Powerline
- (h) WiMAX
- (i) WiFi
- (j) Satellite
- (k) Don't Know

38a. Are you satisfied with your current internet service? (Circle ONE answer)

- (1) Yes
- (2) No → **38b. If no, which type of Internet Service would be your first choice?**

(Circle ONE answer)

- (a) Cable
- (b) DSL telephone
- (c) T-1 lines
- (d) Fiber
- (e) Powerline
- (f) WiMAX
- (g) WiFi
- (h) Satellite
- (i) Don't Know

39. a. Is cell phone reception or “dead” areas an issue for you? (Circle ONE answer)

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

b. Is two-way radio reception (poor or dead) an issue? (Circle ONE answer)

- (1) Yes
- (2) No

40 a. Do the following community features have a positive impact, no impact, or negative impact on your business? (Circle ONE answer for each item)

	Very Positive <u>Impact</u>		No <u>Impact</u>		Very Negative <u>Impact</u>
(a) Natural environment	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(b) Historic buildings (barns, downtowns, etc.)	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(c) Farm landscapes	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(d) Distance from large metro areas	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(e) Small town atmosphere	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(f) Community diversity	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(g) Freeway access	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(h) Fishing	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(i) Hunting	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(j) Seasonal tourism	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(k) Museums/historic sites	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(l) Activities for children and teens	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

(m) Festivals or events	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(n) Arts and cultural events	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(o) Lodging facilities	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(p) Meeting facilities	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(q) Eating establishments	+2	+1	0	-1	-2
(r) Other _____	+2	+1	0	-1	-2

b. Which of the features listed in Question 40a do you feel should be the focus of a marketing image for this community? (Please list the LETTERS for UP TO THREE choices)

_____ First choice
 _____ Second choice
 _____ Third choice

41a. Do you think promoting the area to visitors is in the best interests of your business? (Circle ONE answer)

(1) Yes (2) No

41b. How do you think promoting the area to visitors affects your business?

42. a. Please rate the following factors about retail in this community. (Circle ONE for each item)

	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
(a) Exterior atmosphere of the area (e.g. front entrances, rear entrances, landscaping, street trees, store fronts, sidewalks, cleanliness, signage)	5	4	3	2	1
(b) Parking situation (e.g. number of spaces, location)	5	4	3	2	1
(c) Feeling of safety (e.g. lighting, security)	5	4	3	2	1
(d) Variety of businesses	5	4	3	2	1
(e) Special events or promotions in the shopping area	5	4	3	2	1
(f) Merchandising by retailers	5	4	3	2	1
(g) Prices	5	4	3	2	1
(h) Advertising	5	4	3	2	1
(i) Group advertising	5	4	3	2	1
(j) Evening hours	5	4	3	2	1
(k) Weekend hours	5	4	3	2	1
(l) Coordinated store hours	5	4	3	2	1
(m) Quality of merchandise handled by merchants	5	4	3	2	1
(n) Customer service	5	4	3	2	1

(o) Variety of places to eat	5	4	3	2	1
(p) Knowledge and friendliness of local personnel	5	4	3	2	1
(q) Technology infrastructure	5	4	3	2	1
(r) Public restrooms	5	4	3	2	1
(s) Traffic flow / signage	5	4	3	2	1
(t) Other (specify)	5	4	3	2	1

42b. What three items from the above list are the most important to be improved (*Identify UP TO THREE LETTERS from the above list*)

_____ First choice
 _____ Second choice
 _____ Third choice

43. Considering all the factors in Question 42, how would you rate the overall atmosphere in your local shopping area? (*Circle ONE answer*)

- (5) Excellent
- (4) Above Average
- (3) Average
- (2) Below Average
- (1) Poor

Technical Assistance

44a. During the past three years, have you used any local, regional, state or federal programs to help your business? For example, Chamber of Commerce, local Economic Development Authority (EDA), Small Business Administration (SBA), USDA Rural Development, Workforce Center, Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), local Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), Small Business Development Center (SBDC), initiative foundation, etc. (*Circle ONE answer*)

(1) Yes (2) No → **44b. If No, skip to question 45.**

→ **44c. If Yes, which ones did you use?**

→ **44d. Would you recommend these programs to other businesses? (*Please identify program and explain why*)**

→ **44e. While our local Business Retention and Expansion Task Force cannot promise to solve problems you have with local, regional, state or federal programs, we are willing to look into them. Would you like our Task Force or a local economic developer to assist you in any way with these programs? (*Circle ONE answer*)**

(1) Yes (2) No
 |

→ **44f. If Yes, what do you suggest?**

45a. Would you like additional information concerning any of the following subjects? (Circle ALL that apply. Then in the next column, rank UP TO THREE most important with a *)

<u>Topics for all businesses</u>	<u>Most important</u>
(1) Business plan development	_____
(2) Passing business on to heirs / succession planning	_____
(3) Continuous improvement	_____
(4) State or federal financing programs	_____
(5) Job Opportunity Zone (JobZ)	_____
(6) Tax increment financing (TIF)	_____
(7) Employee recruitment & hiring	_____
(8) Labor/management relations	_____
(9) Employee benefits	_____
(10) School-to-work / school-business partnerships	_____
(11) Selling to government	_____
(12) International trade	_____
(13) Internet options	_____
(14) Chamber of Commerce	_____
(15) Economic Development Authority	_____
(16) Regional Development Commission	_____
(17) Tourism development	_____
(18) Tourism loan program	_____
(19) Recycling business wastes / EPA regulations	_____
(20) OSHA and other safety regulations	_____
(21) Total quality management	_____
(22) Other (specify) _____	_____

Additional topics for manufacturers (non-manufacturers please skip to Question 46)

(23) Adopting new manufacturing technology	_____
(24) Just-in-time inventory	_____
(25) Upgrading manufacturing systems	_____
(26) Statistical process control	_____
(27) Computer-aided manufacturing	_____
(28) Statistical process control	_____
(29) Six sigma	_____
(30) Root cause analysis	_____
(31) ISO and/or quality standards	_____
(32) Automation and robotics	_____
(33) Documentation	_____
(34) Cell manufacturing	_____
(35) Lean manufacturing	_____
(36) World class manufacturing	_____

(37) Reconfigure business processes _____

45b. Do you have any specific questions or special needs on any of the topics listed in Question 45a. or are there any other topics not listed above? (Describe program and needs)

46. What is your overall opinion of your community (i.e. where your business is) as a place to conduct business? (Circle ONE answer)

(5) Excellent (4) Above Average (3) Average (2) Below Average (1) Poor

47. What is your overall opinion of your community (i.e. where your business is) as a place to live? (Circle ONE answer)

(5) Excellent (4) Above Average (3) Average (2) Below Average (1) Poor

48. Are you in need of financing assistance to retain or expand your business? (Circle ONE answer for each item)

a. Short-term loans (< one year) secured	Yes	No
b. Short-term loans (< one year) unsecured	Yes	No
c. Long-term loans (1-5 years)	Yes	No
d. Long-term loans (> 5 years)	Yes	No
e. Commercial mortgage	Yes	No
f. Home equity loan for business purposes	Yes	No
g. Line of credit	Yes	No
h. Equipment financing or lease	Yes	No

49. Please provide information on your firm's credit experience for the past three (3) years in each of the following categories. (Circle ONE answer for each item)

	Able to obtain desired credit	Able to obtain some credit	Unable to obtain	Don't know	Not applicable
a. Short-term loans (< one year) secured	3	2	1	DK	NA
b. Short-term loans (< one year) unsecured	3	2	1	DK	NA
c. Long-term loans (1-5 years)	3	2	1	DK	NA
d. Long-term loans (> 5 years)	3	2	1	DK	NA
e. Commercial mortgage	3	2	1	DK	NA
f. Home equity loan for business purposes	3	2	1	DK	NA
g. Line of credit	3	2	1	DK	NA
h. Equipment financing or lease	3	2	1	DK	NA

50. If applicable, please provide information on the following services for families with children. (Circle ONE answer for each item)

	Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
(a) Availability of Pre-kindergarten care	5	4	3	2	1
(b) Cost of Pre-kindergarten care	5	4	3	2	1
(c) Availability of Before/After school care	5	4	3	2	1
(d) Cost of Before/After school care	5	4	3	2	1
(e) Availability of general child care	5	4	3	2	1
(f) Cost of general child care	5	4	3	2	1

51. We have covered many issues. Please help us set some priorities on how we can help your business or what we should work on to help all of our existing businesses grow and expand. Please give your additional comments.

52. If we find an issue in your survey response in which a certain individual or individuals may be able to respond to your concern in a beneficial way, do you authorize us to release your survey information to them?

(1) Yes Your contact information will be shared with the resource person to aid them in understanding your company and the concern. Please sign here to authorize release of your survey information to the appropriate, selected resources:

(2) No We will provide you information about the resources available to assist you, and you will make the first contact with the resource. The resource will not have access to your survey.

Thank you for participating in our Business Retention and Expansion Strategies Visitation Program. We appreciate the time you've given us and the contribution your business is making to our local economy.

We cannot promise to solve the concerns you mentioned, but we will promise to try. If we can help you in the future, please call:

*Robert Gervais, Tracy EDA, 507-629-5540
Charlie Seipel, Cottonwood EDA, 507-423-6488
Marcia Loeslie, Marshall EDA, 507-337-0802*

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