

Executive Summary

The 2001 Thunder Bay Business Opinion Survey was developed to gauge the attitudes of the small business community towards the current and future business climate in Thunder Bay. The survey identifies factors most critical to the development of the City's economy beyond the year 2001, and examines the attitudes of the business community towards specific issues and developments in the local community.

This report represents the findings of the survey, and offers interpretation to the findings when needed. Statistical methodology and practice are used in the study in an effort to eliminate any bias that would provide misleading results.

Although the presentation format or display of this report is different than those offered in the previous two years, questionnaire development maintained consistency for the purpose of identifying trends and patterns in the small business community. Questionnaire reliability and validity were examined and found to be consistent with generally accepted statistical techniques.

The survey offered notable findings in several key areas:

- (1) 91.7 percent of the respondents expect to maintain or increase their employment levels over the next 12 months; while 58.3 percent of the survey respondents expect an increase for FY 2001 sales; this is down slightly from 64 percent last year.
- (2) Respondents significantly find Tourism/Hospitality, Education, Healthcare and Technology as the industry sectors with the fastest growth potential in Thunder Bay. This is the fourth year in a row that Tourism/Hospitality has been ranked the highest.
- (3) More than 73 percent of respondents believe that the Thunder Bay City Council is doing a poor job representing their small business, and approximately 68 percent believe that City Council does a poor job in prudently and efficiently examining economic development opportunities in the Thunder Bay Census Metropolitan Area.
- (4) Small business firms show significant concerns with the general economic climate and the future of economic development in the Thunder Bay Census Metropolitan Area. 95.2 percent of the respondents believe there has been either no change or a decrease in revenues since the Charity Casino opened. 64.3 percent of respondents believe that Portside will be completed some time after six years, or never.

Although responses generally indicate an increased pessimism toward the economic health of Thunder Bay, small business behavior shows somewhat contrary optimism. Expectations of revenues and employment levels are strong. Small business appears to be uncertain about the future and is waiting for clear indicators of future economic activity and the competitive environment. Most small businesses are not overly concerned with large box retailers moving into the city even though the sentiment expressed is that these big box retailers are not good for the economy due to an increased flight of dollars from Thunder Bay.

Finally, the current confidence level of small business owners in City Council is extremely low. Responses indicate that City Council is actually hurting small business by their inability to develop and maintain an economic growth strategy. This coupled with increasing tax rates and decreased services only further aggravates the local small business community.

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Research Objective

The purpose of this study is to examine the attitudes and behaviors of small business organizations in the Thunder Bay Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). Specifically, the three objectives are: (1) to gauge the attitudes of the small business community towards the current and future business climate in Thunder Bay; (2) to identify factors most critical to the development of the City's economy beyond the year 2001, and (3) to examine the attitudes of the business community towards specific issues and developments in the local community. The study is conducted under the auspices of Thunder Bay Ventures, an organization funded by Industry Canada through FedNor, as part of the federal government's Community Futures Development Program and has a mandate to conduct research on issues relevant to community economic development, in addition to providing financing and support to small business. A similar survey has been done for the past three years and results from these earlier studies will be included in this report, as warranted. The 2001 annual survey was conducted in May and June of this year.

Methodology and Response

The specific population examined in this study is organizations with less than 20 full-time employees, regardless of revenues. Further, the population is located in the Thunder Bay region and has no affiliation with a particular industry sector. The survey uses a systematic random sample approach and is delivered through the Canadian Postal Service, addressed to the identified owner of the business. The questionnaire has 116 independent variables and primarily uses a Likert scale response format (see Appendix 1). Respondents are also offered the opportunity to openly express comments regarding any of the issues in the survey. Forty-one percent of respondents did provide additional feedback on one or more of the issues at hand. A random selection of the comments is offered throughout the report. These responses are simply opinionated comments and do not indicate any statistical significance or trend.

A population estimate of 1100 small business firms is determined to exist in the Thunder Bay region. From this, in an effort to gather an appropriate response percentage, a sample size of 368 was determined and consequently contacted with a questionnaire. During a three-week response period, 85 surveys were returned (23.6%), a similar response rate to that of previous years. Of the 85 responses, only one questionnaire was deemed incomplete and unusable, providing a net response of 84 questionnaires. Included with the questionnaire was a letter of introduction explaining the purpose of the survey and details of a response incentive. The response rate provides a 7.6 percent sampling of the population being examined. This percentage is very high and results can be interpreted as indicative of the normal population.

In keeping with accepted statistical practice, an examination of the questionnaire's reliability and numerous validity measures were performed. A reliability alpha (Cronbach) was calculated at 71.7 percent indicating that consistency and stability of the measurement scoring scale exists. Typically, a percentage above 70 is considered acceptable for exploratory research. The research instrument also demonstrates strong face and content validity, but lower construct validity may exist. Validity measures are qualitative, not quantitative and therefore more difficult to ascertain. The construct validity is somewhat questionable due to the absence of a pre-test. However, the questions in this instrument are very similar or the same to those used in the previous years, thus providing additional confidence.

Respondent Profile

The following provides some general demographic results to the 2001 survey. The variable totals may not equal 100 percent due to omission of some answers by the respondents. The average age of the respondent was 45, (youngest 23, oldest 72). Firms have been in business an average of 21.3 years, ranging from 1 year to 133 years. Also, the average size of the small business respondents is 6.8 full-time employees and 2.7 part-time employees. These general demographic results are in keeping with the target population under examination.

OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC RESULTS

<i>Variable</i>	<i>(n)</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Gender		
Male	54	64.3
Female	29	34.5
Business Format		
Retail outlet	23	27.4
Home-based	9	10.7
Factory	1	1.2
Commercial office	16	19.0
Other	33	39.3
Business Location		
Thunder Bay North	13	15.5
Heart of the Harbour	5	6.0
Westfort Merchants Assoc.	6	7.1
Thunder Bay South	13	15.5
Victoria Avenue BIA	9	10.7
Bay-Algoma Merchants Assoc.	2	2.4
Intercity-Balmoral	27	32.1
Simpson Street BIA	2	2.4
Other	7	8.3
Industry Sector		
Construction	3	3.6
Primary Industry	0	0
Service-type Business	36	42.9
Hospitality-Tourism	6	7.1
Real Estate-Insurance	6	7.1
Wholesale Distribution	2	2.4
Manufacturing	2	2.4
Retailing	17	20.2
Other	10	11.9

<i>Variable</i>	<i>(n)</i>	<i>percentage</i>
2000 Fiscal Year Income		
less than \$25,000	6	7.1
\$25,000 - \$49,999	4	4.8
\$50,000 - \$99,999	9	10.7
\$100,000 - \$249,999	13	15.5
\$250,000 - \$499,000	17	20.2
\$500,000 - \$999,999	12	14.3
\$1,000,000 - \$5,000,000	18	21.4
greater than \$5,000,000	2	2.4
Change in 1999 Sales Volume to 2000		
Increase greater than or equal to 10%	16	19.0
Increase greater than 0 and less than 10%	30	35.7
Decrease greater than 0 and less than 10%	15	17.9
Decrease greater than or equal to 10%	14	16.7

Business skills most lacking in the organization

	<i>(n)</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Sales and Marketing	27	32.1
Finance and Accounting	12	14.3
Inventory and Process Management	7	8.3
High Technology Implementation	14	16.7
Recruitment and Training	11	13.1

Based on the demographic results, it is clear that geographic disbursement exists. A cross-section of firms from around the Thunder Bay region is included. The largest group of respondents comes from the Intercity-Balmoral region. With that, of the two largest industry sectors represented, retail and service firms dominate, as expected. When examining income breakdown, 2000 Fiscal Year results are normal. It is interesting to note that about 34 percent of the respondents made less money in FY 2000 than they did last in FY1999. This figure is a bit higher than expected and is an indicator of attitudes forthcoming in this report. One final note of interest from this section, when asked about perceptions of skills most lacking within the organization, sales and marketing are found to be substantially higher than any of the other listed skills. This finding was very surprising due to the apparent attention garnered by high technology implementation. Small businesses indicated that fundamental business skills continue to be essential for success.

Current Small Business Attitudes

The attitudes of the small business community towards current and future business in the Thunder Bay region are a vital economic indicator. This “Current Small Business Attitudes” section focuses on specific problems identified, outside factors of current performance and future success, investment expectations, economic developments in the region associated to performance, and several organizational variables of the small business firm.

The results indicate that small business has not identified any significant reason for their performance over the last 12 months. No mean score under 3 is identified which indicates that small business firms; at least now, do not feel any of the examined variables have directly affected their performance. Further, no single factor associated with FY 2000 results stands out as being a significant reason for sales performance. However, weather and new market developments are considered factors not important to last year’s sales performance.

When examining factor association with future success, small business identifies two general variables that are associated to future success: general economic climate and change in competitive environment. These findings are consistent with earlier studies. Small businesses appear uncertain over their future investment decisions. None of the variables examined display statistical significance, either positive or negative. This finding indicates that small business is somewhat hesitant about future business activity. They appear to be monitoring the economy and business climate carefully.

Impact from the development of new economic institutions and programs have had little positive impact on small business. In fact the Charity Casino displays a negative bias toward certain economic developments and institutions. Finally, a key indicator of current and future business intentions can be measured through employment levels. About 84 percent of small business employment levels remained the same or increased last year. Although earlier indications indicate some pessimism regarding economic expansion, behaviours indicate that small business may be more optimistic than other variables indicate. In further support, 91.7 percent of small businesses intend to keep employment levels the same or increase employment levels over the next 12 months.

Problems often encountered by small business during the last 12 months Significant Problem (1) - Not a Problem (5)

	<i>mean</i>
Wage rates	3.97
Inventory control	4.22
Availability of skilled employees	3.50
Weather conditions	4.14
Raising Capital/Securing business loans	3.72
Increased competition	3.10
Access to market research	4.16
Government paperwork requirements	3.56
Municipal zoning/building requirements	4.00
Access to business advice	4.16

**Factor importance as associated with 2000 Sales Performance
Very Important (1) - Not Important (5)**

	<i>mean</i>
Inventory price increases	3.59
Advertising/promotion	2.93
General economic climate	2.16
Change in product/service offering	3.56
Staff-related issues (e.g., training)	3.30
Change in competitive environment	2.78
Weather	3.93
New markets (e.g., exports)	3.96
Cdn - U.S. exchange rate	3.58
Fuel costs	2.94
Internet/Web development	3.37

**Factor Importance as Associated with Future Success
Very Important (1) - Not Important (5)**

	<i>mean</i>
Inventory price increases	2.86
Advertising/promotion	2.53
General economic climate	1.81
Change in product/service offering	2.96
Staff-related issues (e.g., training)	3.11
Change in competitive environment	2.33
Weather	3.99
New markets (e.g., exports)	3.53
Cdn - U.S. exchange rate	3.38
Fuel costs	2.59
Internet/Web development	3.20

**Investment Expectations in the next 12 months
Significantly Less (1) - Significantly More (5)**

	<i>mean</i>
advertising/promotion	3.15
employee compensation	2.84
employee recruitment	2.70
staff training programs	3.03
partnering with other firms	2.73
inventory supply	2.72
capital projects (e.g, equipment)	2.75
market research	2.67
technology	3.06
consulting/advisory service(s)	2.63

Impact of Developments/Institutions on your business
Very Negative (1) - Very Positive (5)

	<i>mean</i>
Cruise ship visits	3.07
Box store development (e.g., Walmart, Costco)	2.98
Medical School at LU	3.81
Regional hospital	3.61
Lac des Iles Mine expansion	3.72
Canadian Tire expansion	3.17
<i>Portside</i> waterfront development	3.64
Charity Casino	2.70
Advanced Technology & Communication Centre at LU (ATAC)	3.37

Employment Levels

	<i>(n)</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Change in employment level fiscal year 2000		
Increased	25	29.8
Remained the same	46	54.8
Decreased	13	15.5
Expected change in employment level, next 12 months		
Planning to hire additional employees	33	39.3
Planning not to hire any additional employees	44	52.4
Planning to layoff employees	5	6.0

Comments about the Future Direction of Thunder Bay:

“Feel too much negativism from people – they are discouraged because nothing seems to go ahead. We are treading water. We are going to get something and then it falls through. So many union people, they feel strikes fix everything and it is holding us back from things coming into town who do not believe in unions. Talk about the blessings we have here, the beauty of the area, so many healthy things to do here, so much going for us! Be positive, a great place to raise a family or retire.”

“We need strong cohesive leadership with a solid vision to propel this city forward. Many people have given up – all talk and no action is the perception. Start with a clean fresh image, build up the community self-esteem, and find small wins.”

“My biggest concern is with our city council, and how they represent our city. They are in fighting about issues that are irrelevant to the future of our city. We need to concentrate on turning this city’s dying economy around. We are lacking in so many areas. Portside, north and south cores, as well as a multiplex are things we need to develop in this city. There is nothing here for the youth of our community to stay, the sooner the problem and others are addressed maybe we have a chance.”

“Thunder Bay needs to open their eyes to the changes happening quickly throughout Canada. As people become more educated and technology aware, the demand for change will occur more frequently. This cannot be avoided or prevented. Our city council should be a lot more assertive towards change and should have a plan. Look at cities like Barrie for how they are growing because 1. change 2. marketing 3. tourism 4. technology. T.Bay is the perfect location for car manufacturing, airplane manufacturing, and technology based business. We need to know why they are not coming. Barrie has an aggressive city council with plans and ideas which are supported and implemented. Their city council fights for change and improvement.”

Thunder Bay Business Climate

The intent of this section is to focus on the current and expected future business climate and economic growth potential for the Thunder Bay region. Small businesses are asked specifically about new development and institutions and their impact on the Thunder Bay economy, industry sector growth potential, and the City’s ability to meet the needs of small business.

As examined in the previous section, new developments and institutions and their impact on the local economy are addressed. Small business believes that the proposed medical school at LU would be the most beneficial to the economy, with the regional hospital, proposed Portside project and the expansion of the Lac des Iles Mine expansion closely following. Again, the Charity Casino displays a significant negative impact on the Thunder Bay economy.

Small business believes that most of the industry sector growth will occur in hospitality/tourism, education, healthcare, and technology. These results are expected and similar to those in previous studies. Another concern examined is Thunder Bay’s ability to meet the needs of small business. With the exception of one variable, no significance exists with the examined variables. City Council representation/decisions displays a very strong correlation with not meeting the needs of small business. The measured inability of City Council in representing and meeting the needs of local small business quickly emerges as the most dominant finding of this study. Lastly, 58 percent of respondents believe that FY 2001 will bring increased sales to those of FY 2000.

Impact of Developments/Institutions on Thunder Bay Economy Very Negative (1) - Very Positive (5)

	<i>mean</i>
Cruise ship visits	3.39
Box store development (e.g., Walmart, Costco)	3.26
Medical School at LU	4.32
Regional hospital	4.11
Lac des Iles Mine expansion	4.14
Canadian Tire expansion	3.53
Portside waterfront development	4.14
Charity Casino	2.80
Advance Technology & Communication Centre at LU (ATAC)	3.80

**Future Industry Sector Growth
None (1) – Great (5)**

	<i>mean</i>
Primary (e.g., logging, mining)	2.98
Secondary (e.g., large manufacturing)	2.86
Small manufacturing	3.22
Construction	2.71
Hospitality/tourism	3.83
Education	3.61
Health Care	3.58
Retailing	3.04
Technology	3.51
Financial Services	3.10

**Thunder Bay meeting the needs of your business
Very Well (1) - Very Poor (5)**

	<i>mean</i>
Labour pool (education, availability, skill)	2.89
Access to raw materials/natural resources	2.92
Weather response	2.78
City's promotional efforts	3.52
Transportation costs (passenger)	3.69
Other transportation costs (shipping)	3.52
City infrastructure (e.g., roads, hydro, gas)	3.38
Municipal tax rates	3.93
City Council representation/decisions	4.10

Anticipated Annual Sales Increase for the 2001 Fiscal Year

	<i>(n)</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Yes	49	58.3
No	33	39.3

Comments about Thunder Bay Business Climate:

“If I could sell my over-regulated, over-taxed business, I would be out of T. Bay in 7, and I was born here.”

“Jobs in the service-sector are not high paying. We need tech and manufacturing type jobs (higher paying). They are more stable jobs that support families. These jobs will help service industries, we have this backwards, employment first (tech/manufacturing) then service industries second.”

“Commercial property taxes are outrageous – killing business. Little or no incentive for anyone with money to invest here. City taxes have to kept at ridiculously levels to keep people employed and this will eventually fail. City discourages entrepreneurs by wanting their cut in everything,

many businesses could have flourished in the marina area if allowed. City manager should look abroad along with staff and council and realize how things are done everywhere else in the world, the results are success!”

“This city has not grown appreciably in 15 years – with the influx of outside labor being hired and the lack of attractive industry which can pay decent money, the city is destined to remain the same. As the largest U-Haul dealer in this city, for every 5 long distance moves, 4 are out of the city, not just students, but families who realize their children will not live here. Big box retailers will not supply income for people to spend on anything. These stores only hurt the local employees and taxpayers. The casino has taken money out without giving back to whom it was taken from.”

Development Projects, Small Business and the Community

The final section of the report addresses the attitudes of small business toward the local and business communities. A focus is made on Thunder Bay’s attractiveness as a community, current and proposed development projects, and the performance of City Council.

Quality of life in Thunder Bay, as measured against other cities in Canada, fairs well in this study. Almost two-thirds of the respondents believe that Thunder Bay has as good or better quality of life than most other cities. These results indicated that although small business is skeptical about other economic indicators, the general quality of life variables remains strong. When broken down as to who enjoys the best quality of life in town, retirees get the vote. However the range is not significantly different between the groups.

As mentioned, the most statistically significant findings of the survey are centered on the City Council. In this section, as in the previous section, City Council is viewed as doing a very poor job in representing small business. Also they are viewed as doing a very poor job in examining potential economic development opportunities. One item included in the survey, under review by City Council, is regarding the proposed amalgamation of Development Thunder Bay, Realty Services, Tourism Thunder Bay and Building and Planning. Although 57 percent of the respondents come in contact with one of these organizations, views are split over combining the services.

Several development projects still dominate the media and are therefore included in this survey, Portside, the Charity Casino, and the Regional Hospital. Although two of the three projects are reality, diverse views on their current or expected contribution to the city remain. Asked when Portside would be completed, about 64 percent of small business thought it would be more than six years or never. Asked about revenue patterns since the opening of the Charity Casino, 95 percent of the respondents said their revenues remained the same or went down. Lastly, has small business seen any increased revenues from the early phases of the new Regional Hospital construction? Almost 60 percent of the respondents said no.

<i>Variable</i>	<i>(n)</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Comparison of the quality of life to other cities		
Better than most	32	38.1
Same as most	23	27.4
Not as good as most	27	32.1
Is Thunder Bay City Council doing a good job?		
Yes	16	19.0
No	62	73.8
Does City Council prudently and efficiently examine economic development opportunities?		
Yes	22	26.2
No	57	67.9
Does your organization use Development Thunder Bay, Realty Services, Tourism Thunder Bay or Building and Planning?		
Yes	48	57.1
No	35	41.7
Do you think they should be amalgamated?		
Yes	37	44.0
No	35	41.7
When will Portside be completed?		
Within next 3 years	3	3.6
Between 3 and 6 years	24	28.6
Sometime beyond 6 years	29	34.5
Never	25	29.8
Change in revenue patterns since the charity casino opened		
Gone down	18	21.4
Remained about the same	62	73.8
Gone up	1	1.2
Has Regional Hospital had positive impact on your business		
Yes	26	31.0
No	50	59.5

**Thunder Bay's Quality of Life
Very Good (1) - Very Poor (5)**

	<i>mean</i>
Students (all ages)	2.76
Professionals	2.65
Skilled Employees	2.63
Retirees	2.37

**Characteristics Impeding or Enticing People to relocate to Thunder Bay
Significant Impediment (1) - Significant Enticement (5)**

	<i>mean</i>
Awareness of the region and its resources	3.31
Distance from major metropolitan areas	1.85
Weather (i.e., perceived or actual)	2.46
Quality of life	3.30
Transportation facilities (e.g., airport)	3.15
Health care facilities	2.50
Economic opportunity	2.40
Recreational opportunity	3.76
Technology Infrastructure (e.g., broadband)	2.96
City Government/policies	2.10

Comments about New Business Development:

“Big box retailers will be the way of the future, other cities that have welcomed them are doing well, we should learn from them. Big box retailers are no different in the 21st century than Sears or Eatons were 20 years ago, the smaller retailers will survive on a different scale, just like they did in the 20’s, 30’s, 40’s, etc.. Portside development is a wonderful idea, but this council is not capable of doing any work to get it going.”

“I was for the casino, but not in its present location. Portside is very important also and we must create a positive atmosphere to help develop this. Big box stores create low income wages and take all the money out, lower prices in the marketplace and generally offer inferior products.”

“The economic impact of the casino, lauded as a boon to our city is a joke. It is big business, concerned with profits only. Small business loses along with independent fund raisers and charities. Get in line and wait for the “big-brother” hand outs.”

“I think its interesting that one of the best locations for anything – e.g. mall, dinning, etc., because of the view as well, is now a government office with parking. So if you are renewing your birth certificate you are provided with a first-class look at the Giant!”

“Since the casino opened, our evening sales have dropped off 20%. Customers go to the casino instead, on a regular basis. Portside would help attract more tourism and jobs.”

2001 Thunder Bay Business Opinion Survey

The following survey will take a few minutes to complete and your willingness to take the time to share your opinions is greatly appreciated. Specifically, the survey captures the attitudes of Thunder Bay business owners about issues that affect their business and the local economy. To learn more about this survey please contact Thunder Bay Ventures representative: Lois Nuttall at 344-9208.

Thank you for your participation and prompt reply.

Section A: You and your business.

1. Gender: Male Female
2. Your age: _____
3. How many years has this firm been in business? _____
4. Business Format: Retail outlet Factory Commercial office
 Home-based Other (specify) _____
5. Postal code: _____
6. Business location: Thunder Bay North Thunder Bay South Inter-City/Balmoral
 Heart of the Harbour BIA Victoria Avenue BIA Simpson Street BIA
 Westfort Merchants Assoc. Bay/Algoma Merchants Assoc.
 Other _____
7. Please select the category below that best describes your business.
 Construction Hospitality/Tourism Manufacturing
 Primary Industry Real Estate/Insurance Retailing
 Service-type business Wholesale Distribution Other _____
8. How many people are currently employed at your firm? full-time _____ part-time _____
9. What change in the total employment level of your firm occurred during the **2000** fiscal year?
 Increased
 Remained the same
 Decreased
10. What are your current hiring expectations for the next 12 months?
 Planning to hire additional employees
 Planning not to hire any additional employees
 Planning to layoff employees

11. Below is a list of problems often encountered by businesses, please indicate the extent to which the following issues have been a problem for your business in the past 12 months.

	Significant Problem			Not a Problem	
a) Wage rates	1	2	3	4	5
b) Inventory control	1	2	3	4	5
c) Availability of skilled employees	1	2	3	4	5
d) Weather conditions	1	2	3	4	5
e) Raising Capital/Securing business loans	1	2	3	4	5
f) Increased competition	1	2	3	4	5
g) Access to market research	1	2	3	4	5
h) Government paperwork requirements	1	2	3	4	5
i) Municipal zoning/building requirements	1	2	3	4	5
j) Access to business advice	1	2	3	4	5
k) Other (specify) _____					

12. Which of the following best represents your actual sales or billings for the **2000** fiscal year?

- less than \$25,000 \$25,000 - \$49,999 \$50,000 - \$99,999
 \$100,000 - \$249,999 \$250,000 - \$499,999 \$500,000 - \$999,999
 \$1,000,000 - \$5,000,000 greater than \$5,000,000

13. Does this **2000** sales volume represent an increase or decrease over your 1999 sales?

- increase greater than 10%
 increase greater than 0 and less than 10%
 decrease greater than 0 and less than 10%
 decrease greater than 10%

14. Do you anticipate an annual sales increase for the **2001** fiscal year?

- yes
 no

15. How important were the following factors to your sales performance in the **2000** fiscal year?

	Very Important			Not Important	
a) Inventory price increases	1	2	3	4	5
b) Advertising/promotion	1	2	3	4	5
c) General economic climate	1	2	3	4	5
d) Change in product/service offering	1	2	3	4	5
e) Staff-related issues (e.g., training)	1	2	3	4	5
f) Change in competitive environment	1	2	3	4	5
g) Weather	1	2	3	4	5
h) New markets (e.g., exports)	1	2	3	4	5
i) Cdn - U.S. exchange rate	1	2	3	4	5
j) Fuel costs	1	2	3	4	5
k) Internet/Web development	1	2	3	4	5
l) Other (specify) _____					

16. How important do you expect each of the following factors to be for the future success of your business?

	Very Important			Not Important		
a) Inventory price increases	1	2	3	4	5	
b) Advertising/promotion	1	2	3	4	5	
c) General economic climate	1	2	3	4	5	
d) Change in product/service offering	1	2	3	4	5	
e) Staff-related issues (e.g., training)	1	2	3	4	5	
f) Change in competitive environment	1	2	3	4	5	
g) Weather	1	2	3	4	5	
h) New markets (e.g., exports)	1	2	3	4	5	
i) Cdn - U.S. exchange rate	1	2	3	4	5	
j) Fuel costs	1	2	3	4	5	
k) Internet/Web development	1	2	3	4	5	
l) Other (specify) _____						

17. Is your company planning to invest more or less on the following activities in the next 12 months than in the previous year?

	Significantly Less			Significantly More		
a) advertising/promotion	1	2	3	4	5	
b) employee compensation	1	2	3	4	5	
c) employee recruitment	1	2	3	4	5	
d) staff training programs	1	2	3	4	5	
e) partnering with other firms	1	2	3	4	5	
f) inventory supply	1	2	3	4	5	
g) capital projects (e.g, equipment)	1	2	3	4	5	
h) market research	1	2	3	4	5	
i) technology	1	2	3	4	5	
j) consulting/advisory service(s)	1	2	3	4	5	

18. What kind of impact will the following developments/institutions have upon your business?

	Very Negative			Very Positive		
a) Cruise ship visits	1	2	3	4	5	
b) Box store development (e.g., Walmart, Costco)	1	2	3	4	5	
c) Medical School at LU	1	2	3	4	5	
d) Regional hospital	1	2	3	4	5	
e) Lac des Iles Mine expansion	1	2	3	4	5	
f) Canadian Tire expansion	1	2	3	4	5	
g) <i>Portside</i> waterfront development	1	2	3	4	5	
h) Charity Casino	1	2	3	4	5	
i) Advanced Technology & Communication Centre at LU (ATAC)	1	2	3	4	5	
j) Other (specify) _____						

19. Which of the following business skills is most lacking in your organization? (pick 1)

- sales and marketing
- finance and accounting
- inventory and process management
- high technology implementation
- recruitment and training

Section B: Thunder Bay Business Climate

1. What level of economic growth do you anticipate for Thunder Bay over the next 12 months?

Significant Increase		No Change		Significant Decrease
1	2	3	4	5

2. What kind of impact do you believe each of the following developments/institutions will have on Thunder Bay's economy?

	Very Negative				Very Positive
a) Cruise ship visits	1	2	3	4	5
b) Box store development (e.g., Walmart, Costco)	1	2	3	4	5
c) Medical School at LU	1	2	3	4	5
d) Regional hospital	1	2	3	4	5
e) Lac des Iles Mine expansion	1	2	3	4	5
f) Canadian Tire expansion	1	2	3	4	5
g) <i>Portside</i> waterfront development	1	2	3	4	5
h) Charity Casino	1	2	3	4	5
i) Advance Technology & Communication Centre at LU (ATAC)	1	2	3	4	5
j) Other (specify)_____					

3. In your opinion, how attractive is Thunder Bay's "quality of life" for these groups?

	Very Good				Very Poor
a) students (all ages)	1	2	3	4	5
b) professionals	1	2	3	4	5
c) skilled employees	1	2	3	4	5
d) retirees	1	2	3	4	5

4. In your opinion, as compared to other cities you are familiar with in Canada, how would you describe Thunder Bay's quality of life?

- better than most
- the same as most
- not as good as most

5. Evaluate the following Thunder Bay industry sectors in terms of growth potential (e.g., new markets, new products/services).

	None			Great	
a) Primary (e.g., logging, mining)	1	2	3	4	5
b) Secondary (e.g., large manufacturing)	1	2	3	4	5
c) Small manufacturing	1	2	3	4	5
d) Construction	1	2	3	4	5
e) Hospitality/tourism	1	2	3	4	5
f) Education	1	2	3	4	5
g) Health Care	1	2	3	4	5
h) Retailing	1	2	3	4	5
i) Technology	1	2	3	4	5
j) Financial Services	1	2	3	4	5

6. How well does Thunder Bay meet the needs of your specific business with respect to the following factors?

	Very Well			Not Very Well	
a) Labour pool (education, availability, skill)	1	2	3	4	5
b) Access to raw materials/natural resources	1	2	3	4	5
c) Weather response	1	2	3	4	5
d) City's promotional efforts	1	2	3	4	5
e) Transportation costs (passenger)	1	2	3	4	5
f) Other transportation costs (shipping)	1	2	3	4	5
g) City infrastructure (e.g., roads, hydro, gas)	1	2	3	4	5
h) Municipal tax rates	1	2	3	4	5
i) City Council representation/decisions	1	2	3	4	5
j) Other (specify) _____					

7. In general, to what extent do you believe the following characteristics impede or entice people to relocate to Thunder Bay and the surrounding region?

	Significant Impediment			Significant Enticement	
a) Awareness of the region and its resources	1	2	3	4	5
b) Distance from major metropolitan areas	1	2	3	4	5
c) Weather (i.e., perceived or actual)	1	2	3	4	5
d) Quality of life	1	2	3	4	5
e) Transportation facilities (e.g., airport)	1	2	3	4	5
f) Health care facilities	1	2	3	4	5
g) Economic opportunity	1	2	3	4	5
h) Recreational opportunity	1	2	3	4	5
i) Technology Infrastructure (e.g., broadband)	1	2	3	4	5
j) City Government/policies	1	2	3	4	5
k) Other (specify) _____					

Any other thoughts you have on the city’s attractiveness as a tourist/shopping destination, residency for employees, retirees or location for establishing a business would be greatly appreciated.

Section C: Development Projects, Your Business and the Community

Why/Why Not responses are optional in the following questions.

1. Do you believe the Thunder Bay City Council is doing a good job representing your business?
- yes
 - no

Why/Why Not? _____

2. Do you believe that City Council prudently and efficiently examines economic development opportunities in the Thunder Bay region?
- yes
 - no

Why/Why Not? _____

3. Does your organization come in contact with any of the following development organizations: Development Thunder Bay, Realty Services, Tourism Thunder Bay, or Building and Planning?
- yes
 - no

4. Do you believe that City Council should combine “Development Thunder Bay, Realty Services, Tourism Thunder Bay, and Building and Planning” into one organization?
- yes
 - no

Why/Why Not? _____

5. When do you believe the Portside Development Project will be completed?
- within the next 3 years
 - between 3 and 6 years
 - sometime beyond 6 years
 - never

