2010 Thunder Bay Small Business Opinion Survey

June 2010

13th Annual Report

Presented by Thunder Bay Ventures

To examine the attitudes of the business community towards specific issues and developments in the local community.

Executive Summary

Completion of the “2010 Thunder Bay Business Opinion Survey” marks the thirteenth year since the inception of the survey, which gives a voice to the small business community of the region. The Thunder Bay Business Opinion Survey provides third parties with an in-depth analysis of the thoughts of small businesses. The findings of the survey include both quantitative and qualitative aspects and also examine the recent and future environmental conditions that small businesses operate under. Every effort was made to ensure that the statistics and data represented the population and that all bias was eliminated.

The survey presented findings in several key areas that should be noted:

1. Hiring expectations for the next 12 months were almost identical to last year’s results with 39% of firms planning to hire additional employees, 58% not planning to hire additional employees, and 3% planning to lay off employees. The employment trends in the last five years indicate that 1) the number of firms not hiring additional employees has increased, and 2) the number of firms hiring and laying off employees have decreased. It is important to notice; however, that those firms planning to lay off employees employ on average only 4 full-time, and 1 part time employees, while those planning to hire additional employees employed on average 14 full-time and 7 part-time employees.

2. Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents believe that the Thunder Bay economy will have negative or no growth over the next year. This finding is much more optimistic than the previous year’s result of 71%. For the past six years there has been a strong negative trend in small businesses’ views towards economic growth in Thunder Bay. This is the first time in six years that the majority of respondents (53%) have thought that the economy is moving towards positive growth.

3. The belief that the mining industry is having a positive impact on Thunder Bay’s economy has stayed strong the past two years. Mining was scored the highest by Thunder Bay’s Small business owners as the most important industry sector in Thunder Bay. Mining was given a score of 4.54 out of 5. The second industry sector that Thunder Bay’s small business owners believed was crucial to the success of the Thunder Bay economy was tourism, reaching a score of 4.35 out of 5. The lowest industry sector was forestry which was ranked as 3.49 out of 5.

4. Small business owners showed a slight increase in their feelings towards future security. In 2009, only 73% of small businesses felt secure while the 2010 survey now shows that 77% of respondents possess a feeling of security. This increase shows a strong positive trend since 2005 concerning small business owners’ feelings of security. This should be monitored closely in the future to determine what affect the current conditions are having on small businesses.

5. Respondents’ perceptions in regards to the Thunder Bay City Council have increased one percent to 25% from the 2009 results of 24%. This is a positive increase as it appears Thunder Bay small business owners feel that City Council is doing a better job representing their business. This is a significant improvement from just four years ago when only 15% of small businesses felt City Council succeeded in representing their business.

6. Small business owners continue to believe that the current economic situation has a strong effect on their business. Seventy-five percent (75%), (an increase from seventy-three percent in 2009) have noticed a change in consumer spending due to the recent economic conditions, although the direction of the change was not specified. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of respondents believe that the conditions are significantly affecting Thunder Bay specifically, which is affecting their expected dates of retirement as forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents state that due to the recent economic conditions they are reconsidering their date of retirement.

Table of Contents

Research Objectives

It is time once again to offer the results of this year's Thunder Bay Business Opinion Survey. The objective of this study is to examine the attitudes and behaviours of small businesses in the Thunder Bay Census Metropolitan Area (CMA). The three specific areas of concentration are in: (1) gauging both the attitudes and trends of the small business community with regard to the current and future business climate in Thunder Bay; (2) identifying factors most critical to the development of the City's economy beyond the year 2010, and (3) examining the attitudes of the business community toward specific issues and developments in the local community. The survey also provides respondents with the opportunity to openly comment on any issue they choose.

This approach has led to the development of new questions within subsequent surveys and continues to provide valuable and candid feedback of small business owners' thinking. 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. Thunder Bay Ventures has a mandate to conduct research on issues relevant to community economic development, in addition to providing financing and support to small businesses. The 2010 annual survey was conducted in May and June of this year.

Methodology and Response

The specific population studied for this research is firms with less than 35 full-time employees, regardless of revenues or types of business activity. The population is located in the Thunder Bay CMA and has no affiliation with a particular industry sector. Included with the questionnaire was a letter of introduction explaining the purpose of the survey as well as details of a response incentive. During a 3-week data collection period, 700 surveys were delivered with 115 surveys returned (16.43%), which is up 1.65% from last year's response rate of 14.78%.

The survey uses a systematic random sample approach and is delivered through Canada Post. Each survey is addressed to the identified owner of the business. The questionnaire uses a Likert scale (1 to 5) response format as well as categorical response options for assessing frequency and descriptive data (see Appendix A). The survey is 8 pages and has approximately 150 questions. Respondents are also offered the opportunity to openly express opinions regarding Thunder Bay's economy. Many respondents did provide additional feedback on one or more of the open-ended questions in section B as well as section C. A random selection of the comments is provided in the report. These responses are opinionated comments and do not present any significance or trend.

In keeping with statistical practice, an examination of the questionnaire's reliability and numerous validity measures were performed.

Respondent Profile

Provided in the Respondent Profile section is general demographic results for the 2010 survey respondents. The percentage results that are provided are from those individuals who responded to the specific questions, therefore excluding those who did not respond to the question properly or failed to respond at all. Respondent characteristics appear to reflect the small business population and are consistent with characteristics exhibited in previous years.

Table 1

Gender	**Percentage**
Male	59%
Female	41%

Table 2

Average Age of Respondent	49.60

Table 3

Average Years in Business	21.92

Table 4

Type of Business	**Number**
Retail	49
Wholesale	11
Manufacturing	8
Professional Services	33
Personal Services	4
Other	28

Table 5

Legal Status of Business	**Percentage**
Sole Proprietorship	33%
Partnership	11%
Corporation	56%

Table 6

Education Level of Owner	**Percentage**
High School	22%
College	29%
University	49%

Table 7

Categories for Economic Development	Percentage
Women	42%
Aboriginal	4%
Francophone	4%
Youth (under 30)	7%

Table 8

Type of Employee	Average Number	Maximum	Minimum
Full Time	10	160	0
Part Time	5	120	0

Table 9

Change in Employment (2009 Fiscal Year)	Percentage
Increased	30%
Remained the Same	51%
Decreased	19%

Table 10

Actual Sales/Billings (2009 Fiscal Year)	Percentage
Less than $25,000	9%
$25,000 - $49,999	4%
$50,000 - $99,999	11%
$100,000 - $249,999	22%
$250,000 - $499,999	11%
$500,000 - $999,999	10%
$1 Million - $5 Million	24%
$5 Million +	9%

Table 11

Change in Sales Volume (2008-2009)	Percentage
Increase greater than 10%	24%
Increase greater than 0% and less than 10%	40%
Decrease greater than 0% and less than 10%	18%
Decrease greater than 10%	18%

Table 12

Change in Actual Sales	**2008-2009**	**2007-2008**	**2006-2007**	**2005-2006**
Increase	64%	54%	71%	66%
Decrease	36%	46%	27%	34%

Current Small Business Issues

The “Current Small Business Attitudes” section is focused on understanding the current posture of small business owners given their previous experiences and future expectations. The mean scores are provided in the following tables. Major deviations away from the center (3.00) indicate that this factor is an area to watch as well as a possible emerging trend in either direction. These results are shaded.

Sales expectations for the 2010 fiscal year are up from those in the 2009 survey. Respondent’s sales expectations are moderately positive at 64%; however, this is slightly less by 7% from 2006-2007 (Table 12). It is important to note that according to the 2009 survey 54% of businesses expected sales increases in the 2009 fiscal year, but 64% of businesses realized them (Table 12). This is an increase of 10% from the 54% that realized sales increases from 2007-2008.

Hiring expectations for the next twelve months have changed slightly as 29% of businesses are expecting to hire additional employees, down from 38% in 2009. It is also important to note that although 38% of firms expected to hire additional employees in 2009 only 30% actually did (Table 9). Layoff expectations for the next twelve months are down 1% from 2009 to 3% (Table 13). Firms planning to lay-off employees employed approximately 4 full-time employees and 1 part-time employee. Those firms that are planning to hire additional employees in 2010 employ on average 14 full time employees and 7 part time employees.

The concern of small business over fuel prices, taxes, and wage rates have increased somewhat in comparison to last year’s results (Table 15). Firms feel that the general economic climate is not as important to the success of one’s business compared to last year’s survey, yet still important. As well, product/service diversification and expansion to new markets have both increased moderately, indicating that more businesses are thinking of changing their business strategy (Table 17).

It appears that businesses are investing less in advertising, employee recruitment, and consulting services. These figures are down from last year as well as the years before. This appears to be a trend as the mean scores for investing in these areas have been indicating a decline since 2005 (Table 18). There has, however, been a moderate increase in business’ plans to invest in partnering with other businesses as well as slight increases in investment in employee compensation and recruitment.

There are mixed results regarding development and institutions impact on small businesses. In comparison with last year's results, higher education at both Lakehead University and Confederation College consistently appear to have the belief of being most positive developments/impacts on small businesses in Thunder Bay. The belief in the mining industry's positive impact has increased significantly compared to last year (Table 19). The Waterfront Development has shown a slight increase from last year, with a mean score of 3.35 still indicating that firms feel the Waterfront Development will have a positive impact on their business (Table 19). The pulp and paper industry's score has increased moderately from last year's results, indicating that feel less negatively about the industry's impact upon their business. The OLG Casino is still believed to have a negative impact on small businesses with a mean score of 2.40. This is consistent with the last four years and it appears that small businesses attitudes towards the Casino have not changed and are still generally negative. The mean scores for energy rates, tax harmonization, municipal tax rates and gasoline/fuel prices are the areas that small businesses hold the most negative views (Table 19).

The following table depicts the shading legend used throughout the report.

Large Deviation From the Mean	
Significant Change From 2009	

1. Respondent Expectations

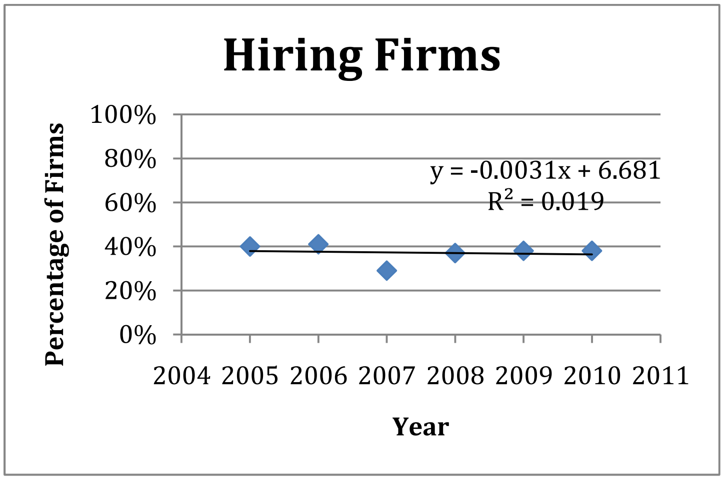
Table 13

Anticipated Sales Increase For 2010	**Percentage**
Yes	51%
No	49%

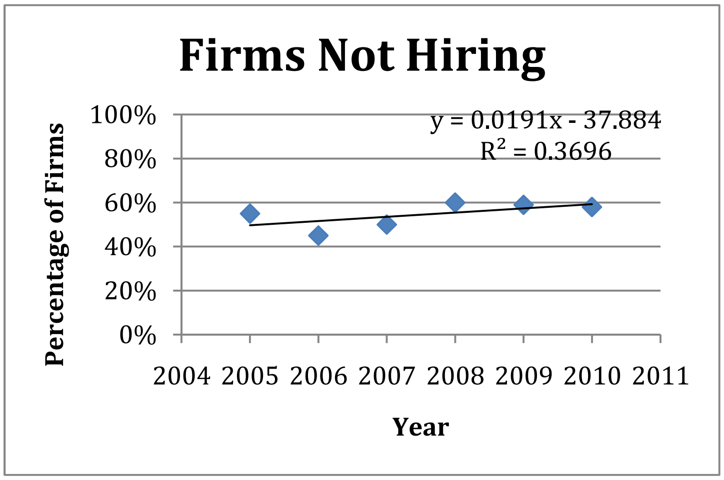
Table 14

Hiring Expectations (next 12 months)	**Percentage**
Hiring Additional Employees	39%
Not Hiring Any New Employees	58%
Laying Off Employees	3%

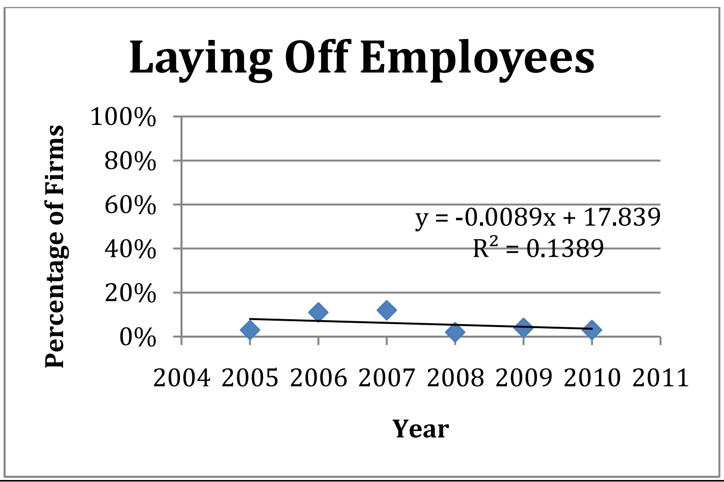
Graph 1



Graph 2



Graph 3



2. Challenges Often Encountered by Businesses

Below is a list of challenges that are 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.

Not a Problem (1) – Significant Challenge (5)

Table 15

Issue in Question	2010	2009	2008
Increasing Wage Rates	2.97	2.35	2.65
Declining Sales	2.86	2.89	2.66
Availability Of Skilled Labour	2.86	2.59	3.01
Weather Conditions	2.18	2.21	2.38
Raising Capital/Securing Business Loans	1.96	2.16	2.00
Increased Competition	2.82	2.53	2.52
Access To Market Research, Business Advice	1.86	2.17	2.12
Government Paperwork Requirements	3.00	2.88	2.91
Municipal Zoning/Building Requirements	2.07	1.97	1.94
CDN/US Exchange Rate	2.15	2.54	2.31
Union Restrictions	1.32	1.27	1.53
Electricity Rates	2.70	2.64	2.78
Gasoline and Fuel Rates	3.33	3.19	3.90
Taxes	3.64	3.36	3.49

3. Importance of Factors to Sales and Revenue

How important were the following factors to your sales/revenue performance to the 2009 fiscal year?

Not Important (1) – Very Important (5)

Table 16

Factor in Question	2010	2009	2008
Inventory Price Increases	2.79	2.67	2.71
Advertising/Promotion	2.86	3.11	3.06
General Economic Climate	3.86	3.90	3.83
Change In Product/Service Offering	2.32	2.34	2.59
Staff-Related Issues (e.g., Training)	2.46	2.12	2.66
Change In Competitive Environment	2.97	2.46	2.80
Weather	2.18	2.24	2.48
New Markets (e.g., Exports)	1.71	1.78	2.00
CDN/U.S. Exchange Rate	2.16	2.64	2.53
Insurance Rates	2.77	3.22	3.13
Cross Border Requirements	1.96	2.09	2.02

Gasoline and Fuel Rates	3.28	3.37	3.63
Electricity Rates	2.94	2.98	2.88
Natural Gas Rates	2.60	-	-

4. Importance of Factors for Future Success

What kind of affect will each of the following factors have on the future of your business?

Very Negative (1) – Very Positive (5)

Table 17

Factor in Question	**2010**	**2009**	**2008**
Inventory Price Increases	2.38	3.06	3.05
General Economic Climate	2.98	4.20	3.99
Product/Service Diversification	3.25	2.74	3.06
Weather	2.81	2.29	2.49
New Markets (Beyond TBay)	3.14	1.97	2.15
Change in CDN Dollar	2.87	2.75	2.67
Increased Fuel/Energy Costs	2.34	3.34	3.80
Increased Insurance Rates	2.46	3.16	3.42
Cross Border Requirements	2.60	2.32	2.40

5. Investing Activities

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

Significantly Less (1) – Significantly More (5)

Table 18

Investment Opportunity	**2010**	**2009**	**2008**	**2007**	**2006**	**2005**
Advertising/Promotion	2.83	2.87	3.10	3.06	3.16	3.32
Employee Compensation	2.85	2.80	2.85	2.64	2.76	2.83
Employee Recruitment	2.63	2.54	2.69	2.49	2.71	2.82
Staff Training Programs	2.94	3.01	2.82	2.76	2.82	2.92
Partnering with Other Firms	2.52	2.26	2.50	2.45	2.63	2.85
Inventory Supply	2.62	2.40	2.39	2.56	2.71	2.74
Capital Projects (eg. Equipment)	2.58	2.60	2.78	2.67	2.57	2.90
Market Research	2.35	2.39	2.40	2.39	2.58	2.76
Technology	2.73	2.84	2.84	2.80	2.83	3.23
Consulting/Advisory Service(s)	2.31	2.35	2.56	2.36	2.46	2.74

6. Impact of Development and Institutions

What kind of impact do you believe the following developments/institutions will have upon your business?

Very Negative (1) – Very Positive (5)

Table 19

Development/Institution	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Increased Minimum Wage	2.35	-	-	-	-	-
Box Store Expansion	2.57	2.64	2.56	2.61	2.51	2.62
Gasoline/Fuel Prices	2.15	2.49	2.32	2.42	2.21	2.20
Cross Border Requirements	2.66	2.80	2.66	2.57	2.55	2.91
Waterfront Development	3.35	3.23	3.25	3.40	-	-
OLG Casino	2.40	2.31	2.42	2.28	2.18	2.21
Lakehead University	3.61	3.50	3.71	3.55	3.71	3.63
Confederation College	3.58	3.52	3.60	3.58	3.64	3.63
Municipal Tax Rates	2.24	2.44	2.99	2.92	3.12	2.62
Pulp and Paper Industry	2.76	2.31	3.07	2.44	2.35	2.98
GST/PST Harmonization	2.23	2.27	-	-	-	-
Energy Rates (Heating, Electricity)	2.18	2.28	2.65	2.49	2.17	-
Mining Industry	3.68	3.15	3.64	3.20	-	-

Thunder Bay Business Climate

The "Thunder Bay Business Climate" section of this survey is presented in an effort to gauge the attitudes of small businesses toward the current and future business climate and economic growth potential for the Thunder Bay CMA. Specific questions in regards to developments and institutions, sector growth potential and Thunder Bay's ability to meet the needs of its small businesses are also asked.

Fifty-three percent (53%) of small business respondents believe that the Thunder Bay economy will have positive growth over the next year. This view is significantly higher than last year's figure of 28%. This is the highest percentage over the last five years, with the second most positive belief of economic growth being 40% in 2008 (Table 20). This suggests that small business owners are more confident that the economy is on its track to recovery.

Small business owners showed a slight increase in the belief about their future security and future business interests. Previous years' results indicated that 73% of small businesses felt secure in their future, while this year indicates that 77% possess a feeling of security (Table 21). This is not a significant change from last year, and the result is identical to that of 2008. The trend line shows that the number of small businesses that feel secure in their future is increasing (Graph 5).

Small businesses have much more confidence in the growth potential of the industry sectors, except for a very slight decrease in financial services. The rest of the business sector expected to increase. Mining had the highest growth potential as its mean score increased to 4.00 from a score of 3.10 in 2009. Forestry's perceived growth potential increased moderately from a mean score of 1.75 to 2.17. The forestry and renewable energy sector have the lowest scores (Table 22).

In regards to the City of Thunder Bay meeting the needs of small business owners, there are no significant changes from last year. Most respondents still feel that the City of Thunder Bay is not successful in meeting the needs of small business (Table 23). The idea that the City of Thunder Bay should pursue the focused development of a particular industry sector is up to 83%, from the 2009 responses yielding 68%. This strong belief is back to a similar position in 2008 and 2007 which had 80% of responses in favour of focused development of a particular industry sector (Table 24).

In regards to what might impede or entice a small business to relocate to Thunder Bay, most small businesses felt that the quality of life and healthcare facilities are prime factors that entice businesses, whereas the awareness of the region and its resources as well as city government/policies are two of the main impediments to small businesses relocating to the region (Table 25).

Quality of life is always a topic of interest when Northwestern Ontario is discussed. Responses from small businesses show that the majority of respondents believe that retirees have the highest quality of life, which returns to the same belief in 2008 (2009's response indicated a belief that professionals held a slightly higher quality of life). Mean scores for all groups are above 3.00, which indicate that small businesses reflect positively on the quality of life in Thunder Bay (Table 26). Additionally, all groups' mean scores increased except for students, with a very slight decrease. When comparing Northwestern Ontario with other regions, 63% of respondents feel that the quality of life in Thunder Bay is better than most comparable regions, which is almost the same as last year's response of 60%. Those that believed the quality of life was the same had increased to 29% from 25% last year (Table 27). The respondents that believe Thunder Bay has a lower quality of life than most comparable regions had decreased to 8% from 15% in 2009. However, without a concrete definition of what defines a good quality of life, this is very difficult to measure.

When asked about how the population of Thunder Bay affects the success of small businesses, 89% of respondents believe that the population does affect their success; while 11% believed that population size has no bearing on their business success (Table 28). This is up from last year's response of 78% and 22%, respectively.

Recent economic conditions are affecting small businesses in Thunder Bay. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the respondents have noticed changes in consumer spending due to the new conditions; however it was not specified whether the change was positive or negative (Table 29). Forty – seven percent (47%) of all respondents are reconsidering the date of their retirement (Table 30). Seventy-seven percent (77%) of small business respondents feel that the recent economic changes are significantly affecting Thunder Bay, down 6% from 2009. Of the respondents, 14% have not noticed any changes and 9% believe the impact is insignificant (Table 31).

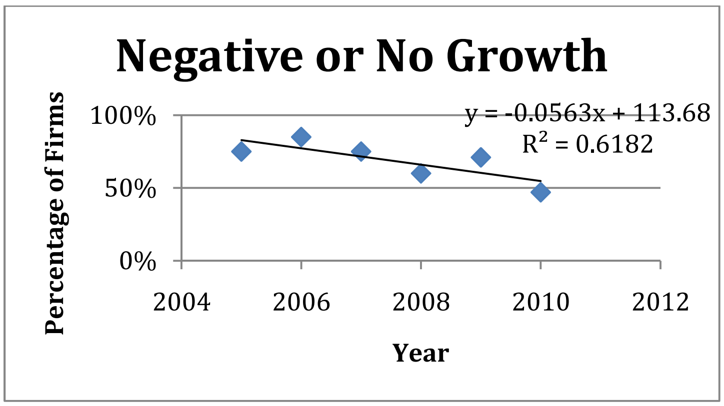
1. Anticipated Growth for Thunder Bay

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

Table 20

Anticipation of Growth	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Decrease in Economic Growth	17%	43%	29%	53%	67%
No Change in Economic Growth	30%	28%	31%	25%	18%
Increase in Economic Growth	53%	28%	40%	22%	15%

Graph 4



The mean anticipation of growth for 2010 was 3.35, which indicates that respondents expect to see a moderate increase in economic growth over the next twelve months. This is up from 2.77 in the 2009 survey, which indicated that respondents felt there would be no change in economic growth. The prevailing trend over the past five years in regards to anticipated growth indicates that the number of small businesses feeling there would be a negative or no growth in the Thunder Bay economy is decreasing (Graph 4).

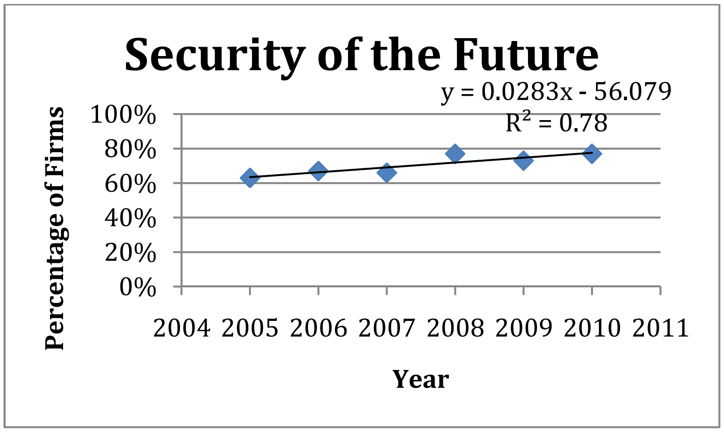
2. Future Security

Do you feel secure about the sustainability of your small business over the next three years?

Table 21

Response	2010	2009	2008	2007
Yes	77%	73%	77%	66%
No	23%	27%	23%	34%

Graph 5



3. Sector Growth Potential

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

None (1) – Great (5)

Table 22

Sector	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Primary – Forestry	2.17	1.75	2.21	1.63	2.24	2.55	2.55
Primary – Mining	4.00	3.10	4.17	3.26	-	-	-
Secondary (e.g., Large Manufacturing)	2.73	2.35	2.48	2.62	2.29	2.37	2.43
Small Manufacturing	3.06	2.83	3.08	2.95	2.77	2.80	2.80
Renewable Energy Production	3.38	3.08	3.62	-	-	-	-
Non-Renewable Energy Production	2.15	2.09	2.30	-	-	-	-
Health Care Services	3.83	3.83	3.98	3.91	3.66	3.33	3.44
Retailing	3.01	3.00	2. 73	3.11	2.83	2.92	2.90
Senior Services	3.68	3.63	3.86	3.52	3.50	3.52	-
Financial Services	2.98	3.01	2.97	2.94	3.03	2.93	3.41
Higher Education (LU/ConCollege/MedSchool)	3.83	3.61	3.97	3.95	4.08	3.82	3.44
Construction Services	3.25	3.05	2.94	2.90	-	-	-
Government Services	3.10	2.99	2.82	2.98	-	-	-
Hospitality/Tourism	3.26	3.09	3.13	3.58	3.47	3.42	3.36
Biotech	3.54	3.51	3.79	-	-	-	-
Other:	3.54	3.38					

It appears that small businesses feel that the forestry and non-renewable energy industries continue have little growth potential, while the health care services, senior services, mining, biotech and higher education industries have the most potential to grow.

4. Meeting Your Needs

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

Not Very Well (1) – Very Well (5)

Table 23

Factor	2010	2009	2008
Labour Pool	2.90	2.94	2.89
Access to Raw Materials/Natural Resources	2.91	2.94	2.84
City's Promotional Efforts	2.59	2.46	2.40
Transportation Costs (Passenger)	2.73	2.54	2.48
Other Transportation Costs (Shipping)	2.35	2.31	2.22
City Infrastructure (e.g., Roads, Hydro, Gas)	2.76	2.50	2.60
Municipal Tax Rates	2.15	2.11	2.26
City Council Representation/Decisions	2.12	2.15	2.44
Access to Financing/Capital	2.81	2.64	2.79
Provincial Representation	2.59	2.34	2.54
Federal Representation	2.34	2.23	2.56

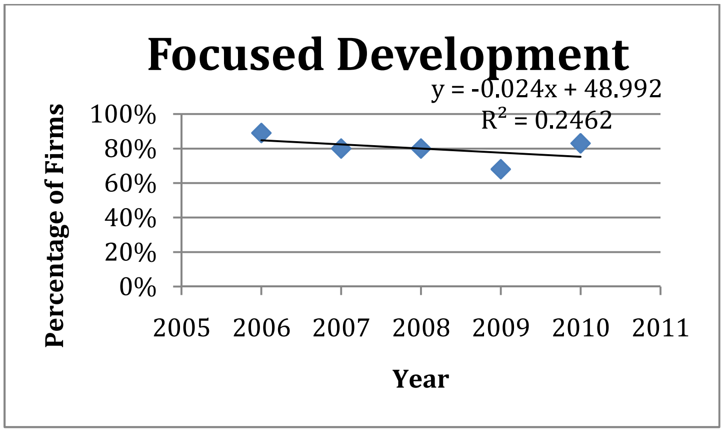
5. Focused Development

Do you believe the City of Thunder Bay should pursue the focused development of a particular industry sector? If yes, which one?

Table 24

Focus Development?	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
Yes	83%	68%	80%	80%	89%
No	17%	32%	20%	20%	11%

Graph 6



There has been a significant increase in the amount of small businesses that feel the City of Thunder Bay should pursue the focused development of a particular industry, up to 83% from 68% in 2009. The trend from the previous three year's results indicates that most firms consistently believe that Thunder Bay should pursue a focused development of one industry (Graph 6). The primary-mining sector stood out as being the most responded of the suggested industry sectors received from the respondents; however, most sectors were suggested along and several small businesses indicated that they would like to see focused development within the sectors of large and small manufacturing, health care services, forestry, biotech and tourism.

6. Characteristics That Impeded or Entice Businesses

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

Significant Impediment (1) – Significant Enticement (5)

Table 25

Characteristic	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Awareness of Region and Resources	2.26	3.09	3.20	3.02	3.07	3.21
Geographic Location	2.87	2.65	2.63	2.71	2.48	2.44
Weather (Perceived or Actual)	2.77	2.38	2.39	2.66	2.41	2.39
Quality of Life	3.99	3.90	3.98	3.98	3.76	3.74
Transportation Facilities (Airport, etc.)	3.52	3.50	3.21	3.33	3.29	3.18
Health Care Facilities	3.84	3.76	3.76	3.82	3.56	3.36
Economic Opportunity (Market Size)	2.70	2.46	2.45	2.56	2.21	2.23
Input Costs (Land, Labour, Capital)	2.76	2.69	3.00	2.69	2.45	2.53

Technology Infrastructure (Broadband)	3.07	2.90	3.20	3.24	2.94	2.92
City Government/Policies	2.24	2.29	2.53	2.35	2.07	2.14

Small business respondents in Thunder Bay feel that the quality of life, health care facilities and transportation facilities are the most significant enticements for businesses to relocate to the region. In contrast they feel that awareness of region and resources, along with city government/policies are significant impediments for businesses to relocate to the Thunder Bay region.

7. Quality of Life for Groups

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

Very Poor (1) – Very Good (5)

Table 26

Group	2010	2009	2008
Students (All Ages)	3.46	3.48	3.35
Professionals	3.85	3.78	3.72
Skilled Employees	3.61	3.46	3.52
Retirees	4.08	3.71	3.84
Business Owners	3.27	3.15	3.10

8. Quality of Life Compared to Other Cities

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

Table 27

Description	2010	2009	2008
Better Than Most	63%	60%	59%
The Same as Most	29%	25%	25%
Not as Good as Most	8%	15%	16%

9. Population Level

Is the population level of Thunder Bay important to the success of your business?

Table 28

Response	2010	2009
Yes	89%	78%
No	11%	22%

10. Changes in Consumer Spending

Have you noticed a change in consumer spending under the recent economic conditions?

Table 29

Response	2010	2009
Yes	75%	73%
No	25%	27%

11. Reconsidering Retirement

Have the recent economic conditions made you as a small business owner, reconsider when you will be retiring?

Table 30

Response	2010	2009
Yes	47%	41%
No	53%	59%

12. Economic Conditions and Thunder Bay

To what extent do you believe the current economic conditions are affecting Thunder Bay?

Table 31

Level of Significance	2010	2009
Insignificantly	9%	7%
No Change	14%	10%
Significantly	77%	83%

Development Projects, Your Business and the Community

The last section of the report deals with how the small businesses feel in regards to the local business communities in Thunder Bay. Specifically it discusses local business stimulus, current local developments and the performance of the Thunder Bay City Council.

The views of small businesses towards the Thunder Bay City Council is always a particularly important question and keeping with the previous year's results the majority of small businesses feel that the City Council does not do a good job representing small businesses. Up 1% from last year, only 25% of small businesses feel that the City Council does a good job representing their business interests (Table 32). In the same vein only 30% of small businesses feel that Thunder Bay is aggressive at bringing new business to the region, which is the same percentage from 2009, indicating that the attitudes of small businesses in regards to City Council and its performance are continually stable (Table 33).

When comparing the activities of the municipal government, 36% of respondents have been deterred from beginning new business ventures by administrative requirements. This is an increase of 13% from 2009, which indicates that the administrative process has worsened and businesses are finding it more difficult to deal with the zoning, permits, licenses and inspections that the municipal government requires (Table 34).

Banks still have a negative image in regards to providing lending services to small businesses. The opinion of small business owners remains the same as 2009 as 45% of respondents feel that they are meeting the needs of local businesses (Table 35). In contrast, 62% of small businesses surveyed felt that credit unions were focused on meeting the needs of small businesses (Table 36). These results are consistent with previous year's results as small businesses' attitudes towards credit unions are generally more positive, however a 10% decrease in approval from the previous year. The inability of firms to access capital in order to finance new business initiatives is down from 22% to 16%, which indicates that it is becoming easier for small businesses to access capital for new business ventures (Table 38).

The activities of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming (OLG) Casino have always been greatly debated among small businesses and this year's results closely parallel results from previous years with 85% of small business respondents believing that the OLG Casino is having a negative impact on our city's economy (Table 39). Generally the attitudes of small businesses towards the OLG have not changed and remain, for the most part, negative.

The respondents were asked to decide which Thunder Bay industry sector they believe was the most important and influential to Thunder Bay citizens and the front runners were mining with an average total score of 4.54 out of 5 and tourism with a score of 4.35 out of 5. This indicates that to small business owners, these are the most important industries. The lowest scores industry sector was forestry with a score of 3.49 out of 5 (Table 40).

Every year various new questions are added to the survey, which address current issues that may affect small businesses in Thunder Bay. Only sixteen percent (16%) of the respondents supported the tax increase to help the government control the deficit, which indicates that, despite the controversy surrounding this issue, the majority of businesses do not support the tax increase (Table 41).

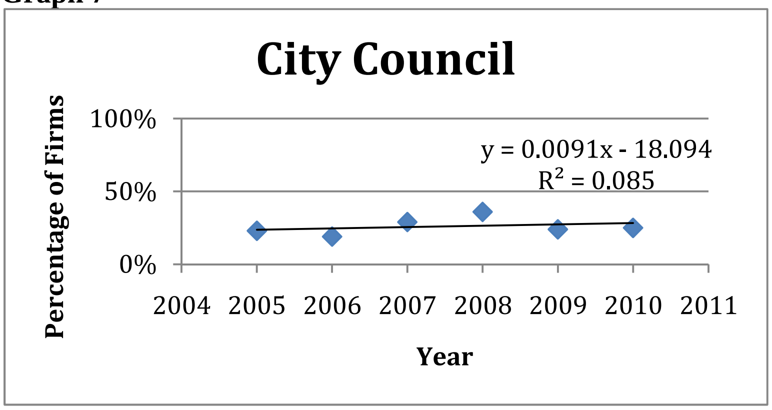
1. Thunder Bay City Council

Do you believe the Thunder Bay City Council is doing a good job representing your business?

Table 32

Response	2010	2009	2008	2007
Yes	25%	24%	36%	29%
No	75%	76%	64%	71%

Graph 7



Although the numbers remain low, there is a positive trend that can be seen in the attitudes of small businesses towards the Thunder Bay City Council when comparing data from the previous four years (Graph 7). Those respondents that left comments concerning the Thunder Bay City Council were consistent with the 2009 survey and were mainly pessimistic. The majority of comments were similar to the following: “they do very little for small business”, “they are only interested in themselves” and “major disconnect between city council and individuals in Thunder Bay”. There were also many comments on the focus of City Council; “not focused on anything”, “too focused on the past” and “Not much focus.” As well, similar to last year there were several comments in regards to downtown; “more attention and resources to the deserted and downtown areas”, “They really have no incentives for businesses located in the downtown cores! (Yet our taxes are outrageous!)”.

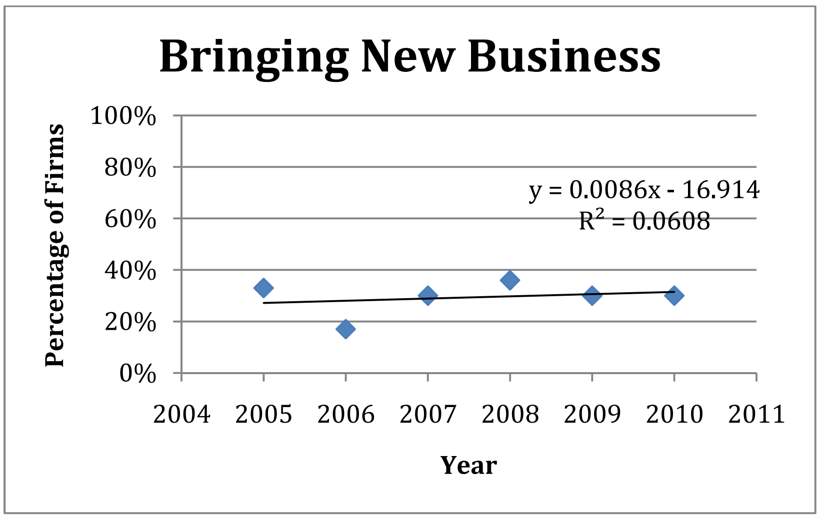
2. Bringing New Business to Thunder Bay

Do you believe that Thunder Bay is both proactive and aggressive at bringing new business to the region?

Table 33

Response	2010	2009	2008	2007
Yes	30%	30%	36%	30%
No	70%	70%	64%	70%

Graph 8



There is a slightly positive trend in regards to bringing new businesses to the region (Graph 8). Despite this, many negative comments were received again on this issue such as "they seem to drive away people who want to set up business here", "they only bring large box business" and "afraid to let new business, it ticks off "old boys" club." There were also a few positive or neutral comments received from respondents. "I believe they try to be", "only in the past three years" and "they are trying various methods and ideas."

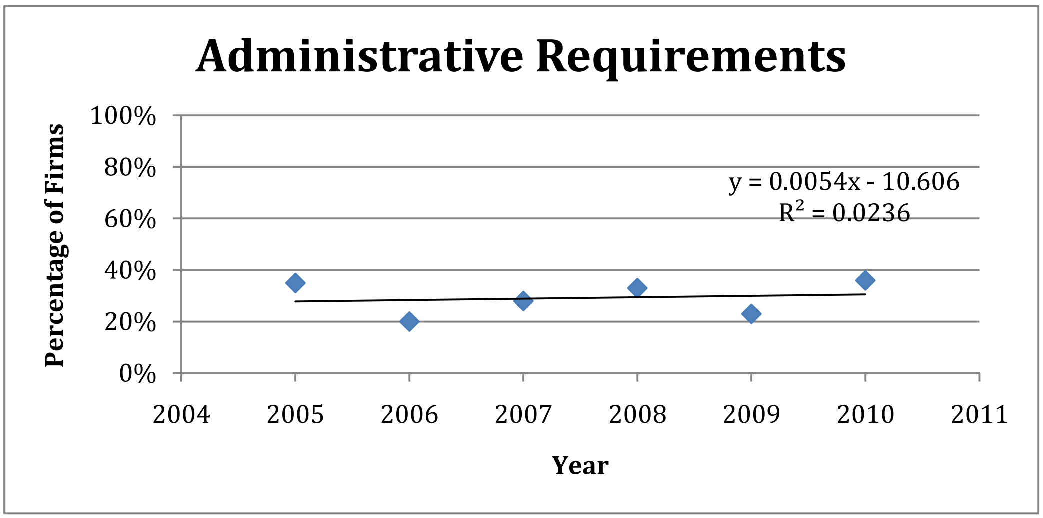
3. Administrative Requirements

Have the administrative requirements of municipal government (zoning, permits, licenses, inspections) adversely affected your decision to develop new business initiatives?

Table 34

Response	2010	2009	2008	2007
Yes	36%	23%	33%	28%
No	64%	77%	67%	72%

Graph 9



Over the past five years those businesses that feel administrative requirements have been hindering their initiatives are fluctuating between 23% and 36% (Graph 9). This wave indicates that the administrative process has stayed fairly stable for small businesses to use. Very few respondents left comments in regards to administrative requirements but those that did had mostly said that administrative requirements have been affecting initiatives. Comments that were left were very mixed opinions ranging from "decisions need to be made quickly and they are not" and "they seem to not want new small business" to "not affected by this" and "not doing any development at this time."

4. Thunder Bay Economic Development Commission

Are you aware of the aware of the activities of the Thunder Bay Economic Development Commission?

Table 35

Response	2010	2009	2008	2007
Yes	52%	41%	36%	69%
No	48%	59%	64%	31%

Although the results are more encouraging than last year, with 52% of respondents being aware of the activities of the EDC there are still a fair amount of negative comments. "They do not make themselves or their activities or programs very public or known to small business owners.", "not really" and "What have they been doing?"

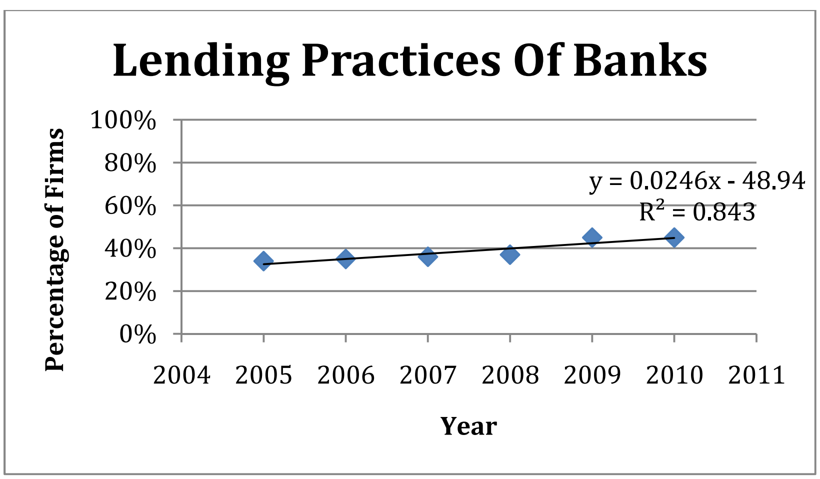
5. Lending Practices of Banks

Do you believe the lending practices of banks in Thunder Bay are focused on meeting the needs of local businesses?

Table 36

Response	2010	2009	2008	2007
Yes	45%	45%	37%	36%
No	55%	55%	63%	64%

Graph 10



Over the last four years the trend in regards to small businesses' feelings about banks meeting their lending needs is a positive one (Graph 10). Nearly half of all respondents feel banks meet their lending needs (the same percentage as last year) in contrast with just over one third who felt that way two years ago. Despite this positive trend there was still a majority of negative comments left by respondents. “They are prepared to level only to people that have money. Anyone that needs money is SOL. Commercial lending? INCONCEIVABLE!”, “They treat T.Bay business like the one in Toronto. Credit unions are more Community Active.” and “I hate banks.”

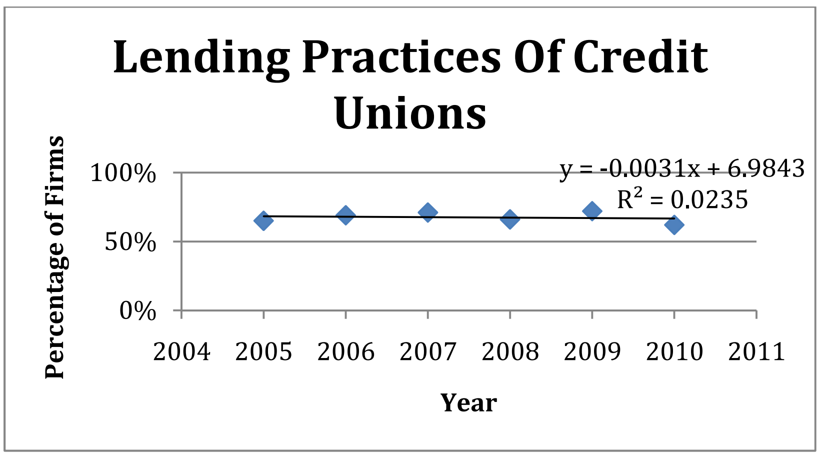
6. Lending Practices of Credit Unions

Do you believe the lending practices of credit unions in Thunder Bay are focused on meeting the needs of local businesses?

Table 37

Response	2010	2009	2008	2007
Yes	62%	72%	66%	71%
No	38%	28%	34%	29%

Graph 11



The responses in regards to credit unions are far more positive than the attitudes small businesses have towards banks but the trend has decreased this year by 10% indicating that over the past year, views of small businesses have changed towards credit unions. In spite of this, many small business owners still feel that are not very knowledgeable about credit unions as they simply commented with a “Don’t know” or “don’t deal with them” response.

7. Access to Capital

Has an inability to access capital affected your decision to develop new business initiatives?

Table 38

Response	2010	2009	2008	2007
Yes	16%	22%	36%	26%
No	84%	78%	64%	74%

There were very few respondents who left comments in regards to how access capital has affected their decisions to develop new business initiatives. Some individuals left comments indicating that they obtained capital financing from friends and family. One respondent stated that he "Will not take private financing due to cost".

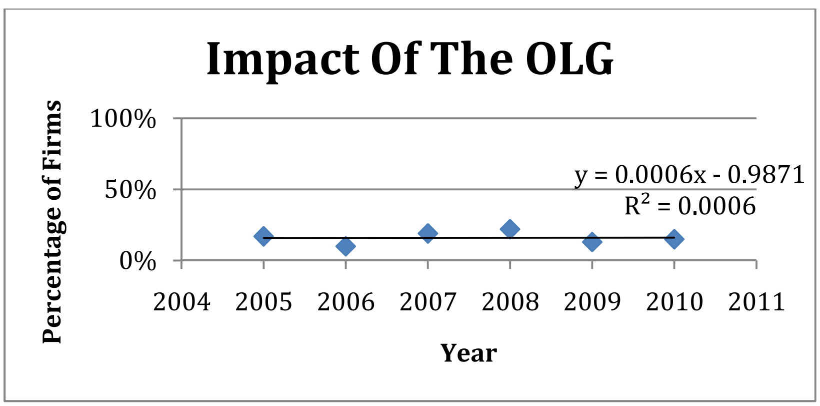
8. Impact of the OLG Casino

What impact do you believe Thunder Bay's OLG Casino is having on the Thunder Bay economy?

Table 39

Response	2010	2009	2008	2007
Positive	15%	13%	22%	19%
Negative	85%	87%	78%	81%

Graph 12



There have been a steady number of businesses over the past four years that feel the OLG Casino is having a negative impact (Graph 12). Since the inclusion of this question in the survey there have been no major changes in regards to small businesses' attitudes towards the OLG Casino. In keeping with last year's results mostly negative comments were received in regards to the impact of the OLG Casino such as "More addicts. More financial hardship. More demand on social programs. More visible depression in our city", "Draining limited funds from those least able to afford it." and

"Taken business from bingo's etc that help support our youth programs." There were; however, some positive comments received such as "It provides jobs and has cleaned up the area".

9. Industry Importance to Future of Economy

Please rank the following industries in importance as a sector to the future of the Thunder Bay economy:

Not Important (1) – Very Important (5)

Table 40

Industry	2010
Forestry	3.49
Mining	4.54
Retail	3.71
Tourism	4.35
Transportation	3.79

A new question to this year's survey, it appeared that the highest ranked industries in importance to the future of the Thunder Bay economy were mining at 4.54/5 and Tourism at 4.35/5. This means to the small business owners in Thunder Bay these are the most influential and important industries at this time. Forestry had the lowest score of 3.49/5.

10. Raising Taxes to Combat Budget Deficits

The governments of Canada and Ontario are facing years of large budget deficits, do you support raising taxes as a policy alternative in the short-term to eliminate the deficits at a faster pace?

Table 41

Response	2010
Yes	16%
No	84%

Another new question to this year's survey, it appears that only 16% of Thunder Bay small business owners support raising taxes as an initiative. This shows that most small business owners have negative perception of raising taxes and that it would not be well received if this occurred. The majority of the comments for this question were quite negative including, "There is so much government waste. It does not have to come from us! Accountability and transparency needs to be exposed", "We are too highly taxed as it is.", "We are struggling already being taxed to death," and "Tell them to take a paycut!"

11. Thunder Bay Ventures

Are you aware of the activities of Thunder Bay Ventures?

Table 42

Response	**2010**	**2009**
Yes	55%	55%
No	45%	45%

In 2008 only 43% of small business owners were aware of the activities of Thunder Bay Ventures. However, this year 2010, as the previous year 55% of small business owners were aware of the activities of Thunder Bay Ventures. One respondent stated that Thunder Bay Ventures is "very supportive!" Although they have increased awareness amongst small business owners there were still many respondents who were unaware of their presence in Thunder Bay. One particular respondent stated "You've lost touch".

Selected Respondent Comments:

"We need municipal government to focus on the many small + medium things that are falling apart. It seems that these items are being neglected in favour of expensive legacy projects that without a bigger, more comprehensive plan for the city we won't be getting the greatest benefit from. I've never felt so undervalued as a small business owner as I do today. As well how do we plan to integrate the large + growing Aboriginal Population? Avoiding the reality + "issues" isn't a plan I support. How do we care for our aging population? How do we deal with drugs, alcohol addictions + crime? How do we preserve our green spaces? These are quality of life issues for me, which impacts whether I want to invest in this city or not."

"My latest venture is off to a successful start. The Neebing Marketplace. Thursdays 5-8 Blake Hall. Thanks to a great conversation with Royden"

"I see our youth leaving and Thunder Bay turning into just a service community. Not enough focus on keeping our future (kids) in Thunder Bay. Send them a survey and see how they view Thunder Bay."

"I fill out many surveys like this but never see any outcomes. I would like to see results if possible."

"Thunder Bay is a great place to live and bring up a family. I believe things are looking up. The water front project and new multi-use facility are exciting additions."

“I believe a lot of people dependent on welfare or disability don’t belong there and are making a big dent on t economy. It’s a shame when businesses like fast food chains are crying for servers. People don’t want to work because they get equal far on government handouts.”

“I think the most significant challenge for “retail” shops in Thunder Bay is the amount of “outshopping” the buyer income professionals do. Online shopping in the US is a huge factor as well. The low exchange rate has definitely hurt all local business.”

“To open a business here is very difficult. It takes way too long to get to the fire dept, health dept, and the “city” to act. By the time you’re ready to open your doors, your cash is gone, but they don’t care, they still get paid. We should have a “Fast Track” for businesses.”

“City councillors need to put the best interests of the whole city first and not have to respond to complaints from their constituents (of their wards). The old “not in my backyard” problem. There needs to be planning for the future and not for the next 2-4 years. Two or three people can shut down a project in Thunder Bay. How does this happen? Nowhere else in Canada (larger cities) can suck small numbers of people to stop projects. I.e. “Flying J”. The most significant challenge for us is the lack of businesses (retail stores) in the PA downtown. TB people believe that there is nothing down here whereas there are about 15 stores operating. The other challenge is the metered parking which people do not want to pay – and they’re not interested in where the parking lots are either. Of course the meter maids are very efficient at what they do so tickets fly frequently. At least one loading zone is not marked clearly so tickets get given out often there, (small sign, large, long loading zone).”

“If Thunder Bay + region is to support farms and local food production, Thunder Bay should ensure local infrastructure processing plants (milk exists but Italian owned), meat processing not meeting existing requirements. There is a need for storage, refrigeration, incubation, kitchens to encourage local food production + processing. It is called food security.”

“It does not matter that I will be able to claim more of the HST back as a rebate, if the consumers have less money to spend, that is more detrimental to my business. My business is consumer based driven and if consumers have less money to spend because of the HST, or no job, that is worse.”

“City of Thunder Bay esp. city manager + purchasing manager are detrimental to small business + they are not at all about helping them. Their concerns are for helping their friends in larger businesses. They do not help local and have a term of “not geographically discriminate” in their policies so they can get away with not supporting local businesses. Their $5000 limit before a 3 quote system takes affect gives them too much power.”

Appendix A - 2010 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 small business owners about issues that affect their business and the local economy. To see past reports go to www.thunderbayventures.com . If you have questions, please call our representative at 344-9208.

Section A: You and Your Business

1. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Your Age: ____________

3. How many years has this firm been in business? ____________

4. Your business is… ☐ Retail ☐ Manufacturing ☐ Personal Services ☐ Wholesale ☐ Professional Services ☐ Other _________

5. Postal Code: ____________

6. Legal status of business ☐ Sole Proprietor ☐ Partnership ☐ Corporation

7. Education level of the owner ☐ High School ☐ College ☐ University

8. Industry Canada targets the following categories for economic development. Please indicate any of the following that apply to the ownership of your business.

   Woman ☐
   Aboriginal ☐
   Francophone ☐
   Youth (under 30) ☐

9. How many people are currently employed at your firm? Full-Time ______ Part-Time ______

10. What change in the total employment level of your firm occurred during the **2009** 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. Which of the following best represents your actual sales or billings for the **2009** 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

12. Does this **2009** sales volume represent an increase or decrease over your 2007 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%

13. Do you anticipate an annual sales increase for the **2010** fiscal year?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

14. Below is a list of challenges 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.

	Not a Problem				**Significant Challenge**
a) Increasing Wage Rates	1	2	3	4	5
b) Declining Sales	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, Business Advice	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) CDN/US Exchange Rate	1	2	3	4	5
k) Union Restrictions	1	2	3	4	5
l) Electricity Rates	1	2	3	4	5
m) Gasoline and Fuel Rates	1	2	3	4	5
n) Taxes	1	2	3	4	5

15. How important were the following factors to your sales/revenue performance in the **2009** fiscal year?

	Not Important				**Very 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) Insurance Rates	1	2	3	4	5
k) Cross Border Requirements	1	2	3	4	5
l) Gasoline and Fuel Rates	1	2	3	4	5
m) Electricity Rate	1	2	3	4	5
n) Natural Gas Rates	1	2	3	4	5

16. What kind of affect will each of the following factors have on the future of your business?

	Very Negative				Very Positive
a) Inventory Price Increases	1	2	3	4	5
b) General Economic Climate	1	2	3	4	5
c) Product/Service Diversification	1	2	3	4	5
d) Weather	1	2	3	4	5
e) New markets (beyond TBay)	1	2	3	4	5
f) Change in CDN dollar	1	2	3	4	5
g) Increased Fuel/energy costs	1	2	3	4	5
h) Increased Insurance Rates	1	2	3	4	5
i) Cross Border Requirements	1	2	3	4	5

17. Is your company planning to invest more or less in the following activities over <u>the next 12 months</u> 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 do you believe the following developments/institutions <u>will have</u> upon your business?

	Very Negative				Very Positive
a) Increased Minimum Wage	1	2	3	4	5
b) Box Store Expansion	1	2	3	4	5
c) Gasoline/Fuel prices	1	2	3	4	5
d) Cross Border Requirements	1	2	3	4	5
e) Waterfront Development	1	2	3	4	5
f) OLG Casino	1	2	3	4	5
g) Lakehead University	1	2	3	4	5
h) Confederation College	1	2	3	4	5
i) Municipal Tax Rates	1	2	3	4	5
j) Pulp/Paper Industry	1	2	3	4	5
k) GST/PST Harmonization	1	2	3	4	5
l) Energy Rates (heating, electricity)	1	2	3	4	5
m) Mining Industry	1	2	3	4	5

Section B: Thunder Bay Business Climate

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

Significant Decrease	Moderate Decrease	No Change	Moderate Increase	Significant Increase
1	2	3	4	5

2. Do you feel secure about the sustainability of your small business over the next three years?

☐ Yes ☐ No

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

	None				Great
a) Primary-Forestry	1	2	3	4	5
b) Primary-Mining	1	2	3	4	5
c) Secondary (e.g., Large Manufacturing)	1	2	3	4	5
d) Small Manufacturing	1	2	3	4	5
e) Renewable Energy Production (Wind, Solar etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
f) Non-Renewable Energy Production (Fossil Fuel, Nuclear)	1	2	3	4	5
g) Health Care Services	1	2	3	4	5
h) Retailing	1	2	3	4	5
i) Senior Services	1	2	3	4	5
j) Financial Services	1	2	3	4	5
k) Higher Education, LU/ConCollege/Med School	1	2	3	4	5
l) Construction Services	1	2	3	4	5
m) Government Services	1	2	3	4	5
n) Hospitality / Tourism	1	2	3	4	5
o) Biotech	1	2	3	4	5
p) Other: ____________________________________	1	2	3	4	5

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

	Not Very Well				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) City's Promotional Efforts	1	2	3	4	5
d) Transportation Costs (Passenger)	1	2	3	4	5
e) Other Transportation Costs (Shipping)	1	2	3	4	5
f) City Infrastructure (e.g., Roads, Hydro, Gas)	1	2	3	4	5
g) Municipal Tax Rates	1	2	3	4	5
h) City Council Representation/Decisions	1	2	3	4	5
i) Access to Financing/Capital	1	2	3	4	5
j) Provincial Representation	1	2	3	4	5
k) Federal Representation	1	2	3	4	5

5. Do you believe the City of Thunder Bay should pursue the focused development of one or more of the sectors mentioned in Question #3?

☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, which one? ____ ____

6. In general, to what extent do you believe the following characteristics impede or entice businesses 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) Geographic Location	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) Market Size	1	2	3	4	5
h) Input Costs (Land, Labour, Capital)	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

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

	Very Poor				**Very Good**
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
e) Business Owners	1	2	3	4	5

8. 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

9. Is the population level of Thunder Bay important to the success of your business?

☐ Yes
☐ No

10. Have you noticed a change in consumer spending under the recent economic conditions?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Comment: ____

11. Have the recent economic conditions made you, as a small business owner, reconsider when you will be retiring?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Comment: ____

12. To what extent do you believe the current economic conditions are affecting Thunder Bay?

Insignificant	**Somewhat Insignificant**	**Neutral**	**Somewhat Significant**	**Significant**
1	2	3	4	5

Section C: Development Projects, Your Business & the Community (Why/Why Not Responses Are Optional)

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 Thunder Bay is both proactive and aggressive at bringing new businesses to the region?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Why/Why Not? ____

3. Have the administrative requirements of municipal government (zoning, permits, licenses, inspections) adversely affected your decision to develop new business initiatives?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Why/Why Not? ____

4. Are you aware of the activities of the Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Comment: ____

5. Do you believe the lending practices of banks in Thunder Bay are focused on meeting the needs of local business?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Why/Why Not? ____

6. *Do you believe the lending practices of credit unions in Thunder Bay are focused on meeting the needs of local business?*

☐ Yes
☐ No

Why/Why Not? ____

7. Has an inability to access capital affected your decision to develop new business initiatives?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Other Sources Utilized: ____

8. What impact do you believe Thunder Bay's OLG Casino is having on the Thunder Bay economy?

☐ Positive
☐ Negative

Comment: ____

9. Please rank the following industries in importance as a sector to the future of the Thunder Bay economy:

		Not Important				**Very Important**	
a) Forestry		1	2	3	4	5	
b) Mining		1	2	3	4	5	
c) Retail		1	2	3	4	5	
d) Tourism	1	2	3	4	5		
e) Ttransportation			1	2	3	4	5

10. The governments of Canada and Ontario are facing years of large budget deficits, do you support raising taxes as a policy alternative in the short-term to eliminate the deficits at a faster pace?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Comment: ____

11. Are you aware of the activities of Thunder Bay Ventures?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Comment: ____

Please provide any other comments you wish in the space below and overleaf:

(i.e. most significant challenge for your business, a success story to be shared, other).

____
____
____
____

PS. In the future, would you prefer to fill this survey out online?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Thank you for your time – it is greatly appreciated!