2014 Thunder Bay Small Business Opinion Survey

Presented By: Thunder Bay Ventures

June 2014

17th Annual Report

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

Executive Summary

Completion of the "2014 Thunder Bay Business Opinion Survey" marks the seventeenth 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 current 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 have decreased in comparison to last year's results, with 48% of firms planning to hire additional employees, down from down 51% in 2013. 46% of firms are not planning to hire additional employees and 6% of firms are planning to lay off employees. This is the first time in four year that firms are planning to lay off employees. It is important to note that firms currently have an average of 16 full time and 4 part time workers.

2. 52% of respondents feel that the economic growth in Thunder Bay is positive, down from 74% in 2013. This marks the first decline in the confidence of small business owners in five years. In 2009 only 28% of respondents had optimistic thoughts in regards to economic growth and over the next four years it has continually increased to its peak of 74% in 2013.

3. The belief that the mining industry is having a positive impact on Thunder Bay's economy has remained consistently strong over the past four years. Thunder Bay's small business owners gave mining a score of 3.57 out of 5, ranking it as the most important industry sector. However, when asked how much of their revenue was attributed to the mining industry, 52% responded 0% and 35% responded between 1-25%. Mining is also ranked very high in regards to its importance to the future of the economy, while respondents feel that Forestry is not important to the future of the economy. The OLG Casino score decreased from 2.79 to 2.74; another low score for the seventh year in a row, indicating business owners still have negative thoughts towards the impact of the casino.

4. Small business owners showed almost identical results regarding how secure they feel about the sustainability of their small business for the next three years. In 2013, 86% of small businesses possessed a feeling of security, while in 2014 that number decreased by 1% to 85%. This should be monitored closely in the future to determine what effect the current conditions are having on small businesses.

5. Respondents' perceptions in regards to the City of Thunder Bay meeting their needs are not positive. Every factor that was questioned has dropped compared to last year and all the results are below the mean score of 3.00. This indicates that the City should pay better attention to the needs of Thunder Bay's small businesses.

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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 2014; 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 2014 annual survey was conducted in May and June of this year.

Methodology and Response

The specific population studied for this research is primarily 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 and a response incentive. During a 3-week data collection period, the surveys were mailed to 700 small business, with 48 surveys returned (6.86%), which is down 3.71% from last year's response rate of 10.57%.

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 145 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 2014 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

Gender	Percentage
Male	50%
Female	50%

Table 2 - Average Age

Average Age of Respondent	50

Table 3 - Average Years in Business

Average Years in Business	19

Table 4 - Type of Business

Type of Business	Number
Retail	22
Wholesale	7
Manufacturing	6
Professional Services	13
Personal Services	5
Other	12

Table 5 - Legal Status

Legal Status of Business	Percentage
Sole Proprietorship	16%
Partnership	12%
Corporation	71%

Table 6 - Education Level

Education Level of Owner	Percentage
High School	24%
College	28%
University	48%

Table 7 - Categories for Economic Development

Categories for Economic Development	Percentage
Women	77%
Aboriginal	3%
Francophone	6%
Youth (under 30)	13%

Table 8 – Average Number of Employees

Type of Employee	Average Number	Maximum	Minimum
Full Time	16	300	0
Part Time	4	50	0

Table 9 - Change in Employment

Change in Employment (2013 Fiscal Year)	Percentage
Increased	40%
Remained the Same	48%
Decreased	13%

Table 10 - Actual Sales

Actual Sales or Billings (2013 Fiscal Year)	Percentage
Less than $25,000	11%
$25,000 - $49,999	0%
$50,000 - $99,999	0%
$100,000 - $249,999	14%
$250,000 - $499,999	14%
$500,000 - $999,999	9%
$1,000,000 - $5,000,000	39%
Greater than $5,000,000	14%

Table 11 - Change in Sales Volume

Change in Sales Volume from 2012 to 2013	Percentage
Increase greater than 10%	39%
Increase greater than 0% and less than 10%	36%
Decrease greater than 0% and less than 10%	14%
Decrease greater than 10%	11%

Current Small Business Issues

The "Current Small Business Issues" section is focused on understanding of 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.

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

Large Deviation From the Mean	
Significant Change From 2013	

1. Respondent Expectations

Table 12 - Anticipated Sales Increase

Anticipated Sales Increase For 2014 Fiscal Year	Percentage
Yes	72%
No	28%

Small business owners appear to be rather positive in terms of sales increases, as 72% of respondents feel that their sales will increase in the next fiscal year. This is up 1% from the previous year where 71% of respondents anticipated a sales increase.

Table 13 - Hiring Expectations

Hiring Expectations (next 12 months)	Percentage
Hiring Additional Employees	48%
Not Hiring Any New Employees	46%
Laying Off Employees	6%

Hiring expectations for the next twelve months have changed slightly from the previous 12 months as 48% of businesses are expecting to hire additional employees, down 3% from 51% in 2013. It is also important to note that although 51% of firms expected to hire additional employees in 2013, 40% actually did, which identifies a strong correlation between hiring expectations and actual changes in employment levels (Table 9).

Lay off expectations for the next twelve months are expected to be 6%. This is the first time in four years that firms are expecting to lay off employees (Figure 1). Furthermore, 46% of respondents do not expect to hire any new employees. Small businesses currently employ on average 16 full time 4 part time employees (Table 8). The anticipated hiring expectations for the next 12 months will likely change employment levels of small businesses in the Thunder Bay region.

Figure 1 below shows the hiring expectations of small businesses over the past six years. As displayed in figure 1, the percentage of firms expecting to hire and not hire new employees has remained stable over the past four years.

Figure 1 - Historical Trend of Hiring Expectations

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 2013 fiscal year.

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

Table 14 - Challenges for Businesses

Issue in Question	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Increasing Wage Rates	2.91	2.36	2.64	-	-	-
Declining Sales	2.62	2.18	2.45	2.48	2.86	2.89
Availability Of Skilled Labour	3.07	3.11	3.08	2.79	2.86	2.59
Raising Capital/Securing Business Loans	2.09	2.13	2.13	2.10	1.96	2.16
Increased Competition	2.87	2.89	2.52	2.66	2.82	2.53
Access To Market Research, Business Advice	1.98	2.31	2.01	1.97	1.86	2.17
Government Paperwork Requirements	3.21	3.00	2.82	2.94	3.00	2.88
Municipal Zoning/Building Requirements	1.89	2.08	2.07	2.14	2.07	1.97
CDN/US Exchange Rate	2.19	1.63	2.01	2.04	2.15	2.54

Union Restrictions	1.47	1.24	1.33	1.39	1.32	1.27
Electricity Rates	2.88	2.55	2.66	3.11	2.70	2.64
Gasoline and Fuel Rates	3.26	2.99	3.41	3.70	3.33	3.19
Taxes	3.10	3.03	3.28	3.56	3.64	3.36
Your Business Location in the City	1.66	1.89	1.92	-	-	-

The concern of small businesses over declining sales, increasing wage rates, and the CDN/US exchange rate has gone up significantly in comparison to last year's results (Table 14). Concern about access to business advice, municipal building/zoning requirements, and business location in Thunder Bay each demonstrated substantial decreases in their mean score to small businesses in comparison to 2013 (Table 14).

The two major problems of small business owners appear to be fuel rates and government paperwork requirements; however with ratings of 3.26 and 3.21 respectively, they are not a significant issue as they hover around the mean score of 3.00. It is evident that union restrictions and business location in Thunder Bay are not a concern to small businesses; scoring 1.47 and 1.66 respectively.

Figure 2 depicts the trends of four significant challenges that businesses face. All four challenges remained relatively constant from 2013 to 2014, clustered around 3.00.

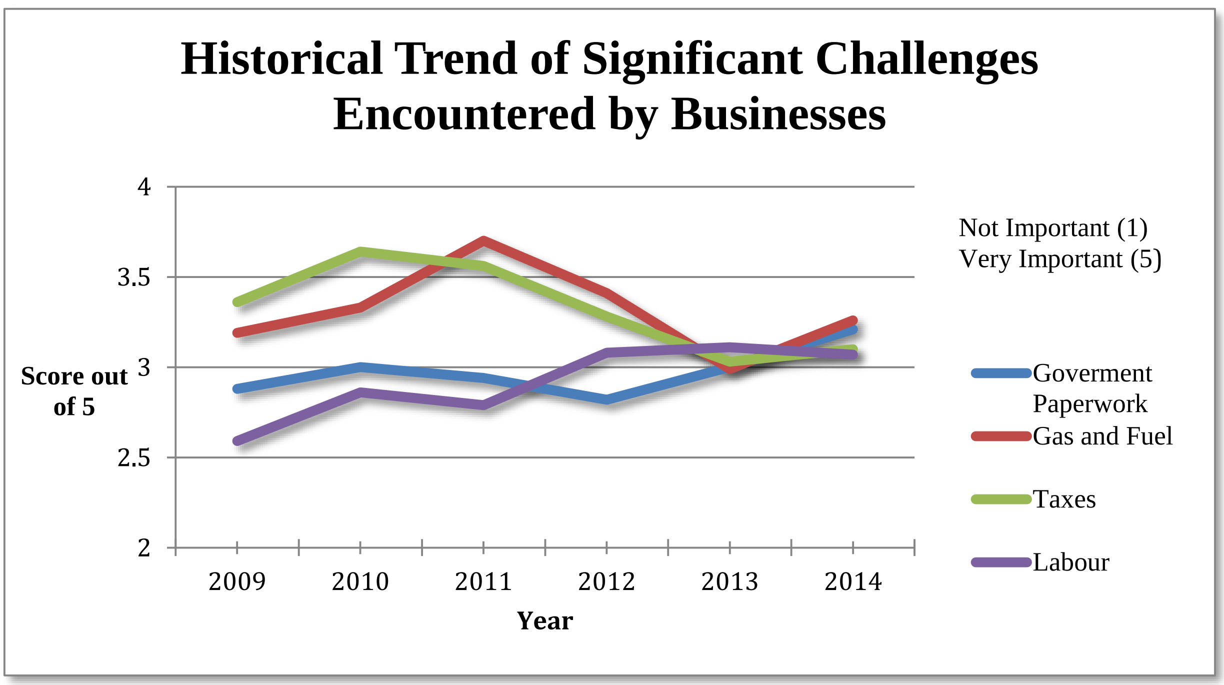

Figure 2 - Historical Trend of Significant Challenges Encountered by Businesses

3. Importance of Factors to Sales and Revenue

How important were the following factors to your sales/revenue performance to the 2013 fiscal year?

Not Important (1) – Very Important (5)

Table 15 - Factors Important to Sales/Revenue

Factor in Question	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Inventory Price Increases	2.74	2.66	2.68	2.89	2.79
Advertising/Promotion	2.77	3.18	3.02	3.04	2.86
General Economic Climate	3.51	3.57	3.37	3.68	3.86
Change In Product/Service Offering	2.02	2.68	2.56	2.65	2.32
Staff-Related Issues (e.g., Training)	2.67	2.70	2.66	2.36	2.46
Change In Competitive Environment	2.70	2.90	2.75	2.79	2.97
New Markets (e.g., Exports)	1.92	2.01	1.81	1.89	1.71
CDN/U.S. Exchange Rate	2.13	1.76	2.26	2.34	2.16
Insurance Rates	2.73	2.72	2.93	2.91	2.77
Cross Border Requirements	1.77	2.17	2.20	2.20	1.96
Gasoline and Fuel Rates	3.29	2.80	3.31	3.64	3.28
Electricity Rates	3.02	2.76	2.82	3.35	2.94
Natural Gas Rates	2.73	2.50	2.19	2.76	2.60
Your Business Location in the City	1.79	2.42	2.38	-	-

During the 2013 fiscal year the general economic climate and gasoline/fuel rates were the two most important factors to the success of small businesses. The general economic climate has remained important for the last five years; while gasoline and fuel rates has become significantly more important to firms over the last year.

Advertising/promotion, change in product/service offering, and business location in Thunder Bay appear not to be important to sales and revenue when compared to the 2012 fiscal year. Natural gas rates experienced a positive mean score increase for the third year in row, increasing from 2.50 in 2013 to 3.10 in 2014 (Table 15); indicating an increasing importance to small businesses sales and revenue.

Overall, the four significant challenges that business face includes advertising/promotion, gasoline and fuel rates, electricity rates, and the general economic climate.

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 16 - Factors for Future Success

Factor in Question	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Inventory Price Increases	2.26	2.56	2.27	2.43	2.38	3.06

General Economic Climate	2.87	3.22	2.76	3.13	2.98	4.20
Product/Service Diversification	3.18	3.57	3.24	3.37	3.25	2.74
New Markets (Beyond Thunder Bay)	3.36	3.41	3.41	3.21	3.14	1.97
Change in CDN Dollar	2.59	2.74	2.71	3.72	2.87	2.75
Increased Fuel/Energy Costs	2.04	2.54	2.20	2.49	2.34	3.34
Increased Insurance Rates	2.17	2.49	2.34	2.56	2.46	3.16
Cross Border Requirements	2.54	2.68	2.46	2.41	2.60	2.32

All eight factors related to future success of businesses in Thunder Bay regressed in their score value from 2013 to 2014 (Table 14); indicating all factors surveyed are becoming more negative to small businesses in Thunder Bay. Fuel/energy costs, product/service diversification, and general economic climate showed the most substantial decrease in their mean score. Other factors remained relatively similar to the results in 2013 or experienced a mild decrease. The three most important factors for the future success of a business are depicted in Figure 3.

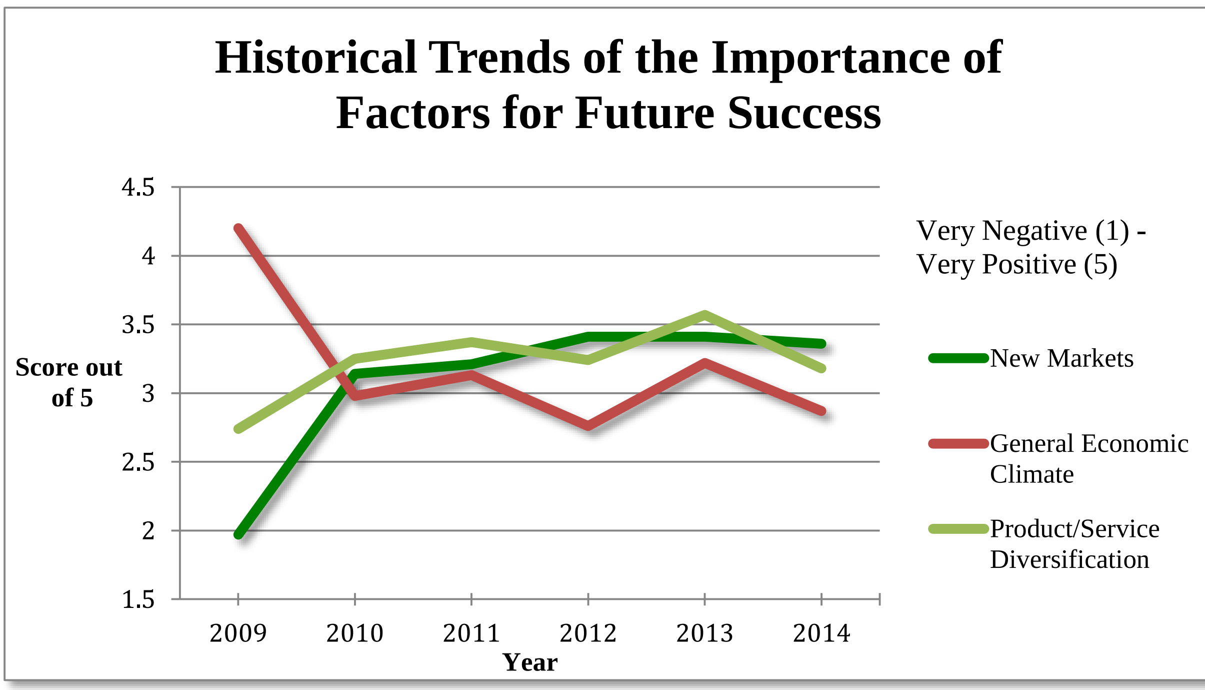

Figure 3 - Historical Trends of Factors Important to Future Success

5. Investing Activities

Is your company planning to invest more or less in the following activities in the 2014 fiscal year than in the previous year?

Significantly Less (1) – Significantly More (5)

Table 17 - Investing Activities

Investment Opportunity	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Advertising/Promotion	2.89	3.19	3.13	2.97	2.83	2.87	3.10	3.06
Employee Compensation	2.98	2.99	2.84	2.80	2.85	2.80	2.85	2.64
Employee Recruitment	2.85	2.89	2.94	2.70	2.63	2.54	2.69	2.49
Staff Training Programs	2.94	3.13	3.07	2.79	2.94	3.01	2.82	2.76
Partnering with Other Firms	2.49	2.88	2.55	2.55	2.52	2.26	2.50	2.45
Inventory Supply	2.63	2.79	2.95	2.49	2.62	2.40	2.39	2.56
Capital Projects (e.g. Equipment)	2.67	3.03	2.95	2.84	2.58	2.60	2.78	2.67
Market Research	2.36	2.64	2.45	2.55	2.35	2.39	2.40	2.39
Technology	2.85	3.11	2.93	2.96	2.73	2.84	2.84	2.80
Consulting/Advisory Service(s)	2.40	2.93	2.41	2.54	2.31	2.35	2.56	2.36

The results of the survey show that all 10 categories related to the investing activities of small businesses declined; indicating small businesses are planning to invest less in all aspects surveyed. Small businesses are least likely to invest in consulting services (2.40) and market research (2.36). Consulting services was also the category that regressed the most in value, decreasing from 2.93 in 2013 to 2.40 in 2014.

Small businesses are planning to invest the most in employee compensation (2.98), staff training programs (2.94), and advertising/promotion (2.89). The results of the survey also indicated that small businesses are investing less in employee recruitment and inventory supply for the second year in a row. Figure 4 on the next page shows the historical trend of uppermost investing activities.

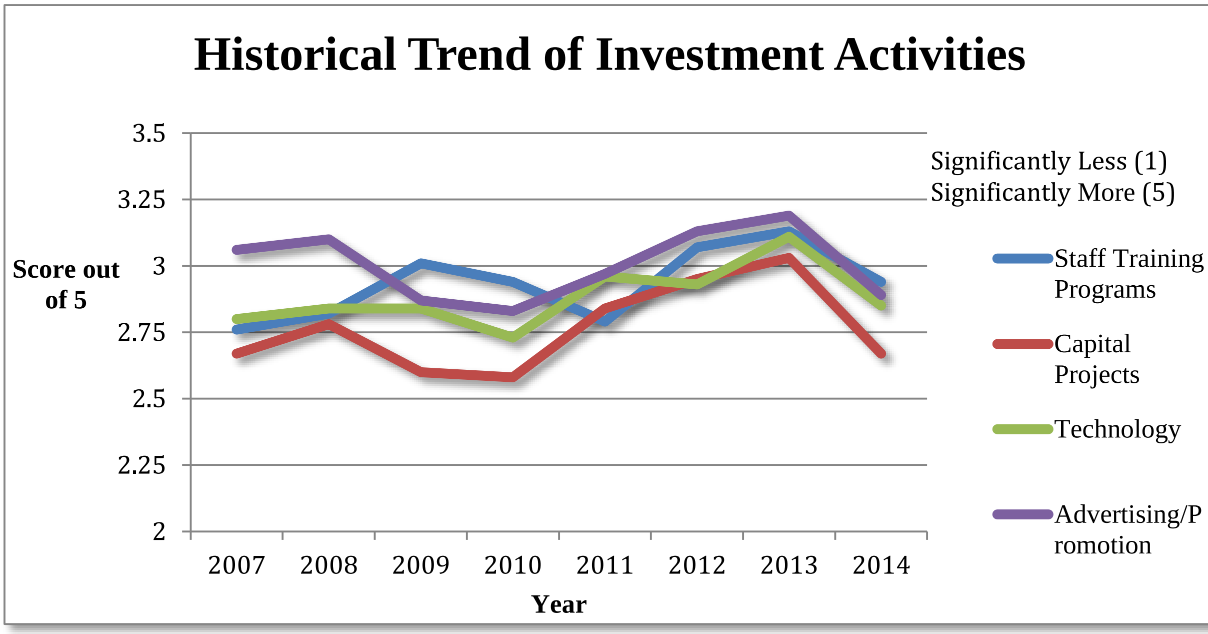

Figure 4 - Historical Trend of Investing Activities

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 18 - Impact of Development and Institutions

Development/Institution	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Box Store Expansion	2.57	2.78	2.51	2.31	2.57	2.64	2.56	2.61
Gasoline/Fuel Prices	2.21	2.40	2.03	2.19	2.15	2.49	2.32	2.42
Waterfront Development	3.15	3.44	3.55	2.99	3.35	3.23	3.25	3.40
OLG Casino	2.74	2.79	2.45	2.41	2.40	2.31	2.42	2.28
Lakehead University	3.30	3.64	3.76	3.49	3.61	3.50	3.71	3.55
Confederation College	3.36	3.59	3.65	3.34	3.58	3.52	3.60	3.58
Municipal Tax Rates	2.29	2.35	2.21	2.34	2.24	2.44	2.99	2.92
Pulp and Paper Industry	3.07	3.16	2.81	2.84	2.76	2.31	3.07	2.44
Energy Rates (Heating, Electricity)	2.25	2.30	2.17	2.26	2.18	2.28	2.65	2.49
Mining Industry	3.57	3.74	3.85	3.48	3.68	3.15	3.64	3.20

There are mixed results regarding the impact of developments and institutions on small businesses. Lower ratings in education at both Lakehead University and Confederation College are apparent. In 2013 Lakehead University had a rating of 3.64, which has now deceased to 3.30. Confederation College decreased from 3.59 in 2013 to 3.36 this year.

The mining industry's positive impact has slightly decreased in comparison to last year. However, with the highest mean score of 3.57 it is considered the institution that will have the most positive impact to small business owners in Thunder Bay.

The OLG Casino is believed to have a negative impact on small businesses with a mean score of 2.74. The score is consistent with the last six years and it appears that small businesses attitudes are still relatively negative towards the Casino.

The mean scores for energy rates, municipal tax rates, and gasoline/fuel prices are the areas in which small businesses hold the most negative views, which is consistent with the last two year's results (Table 18). Figure 5 shows the trends of significant developments and institutions.

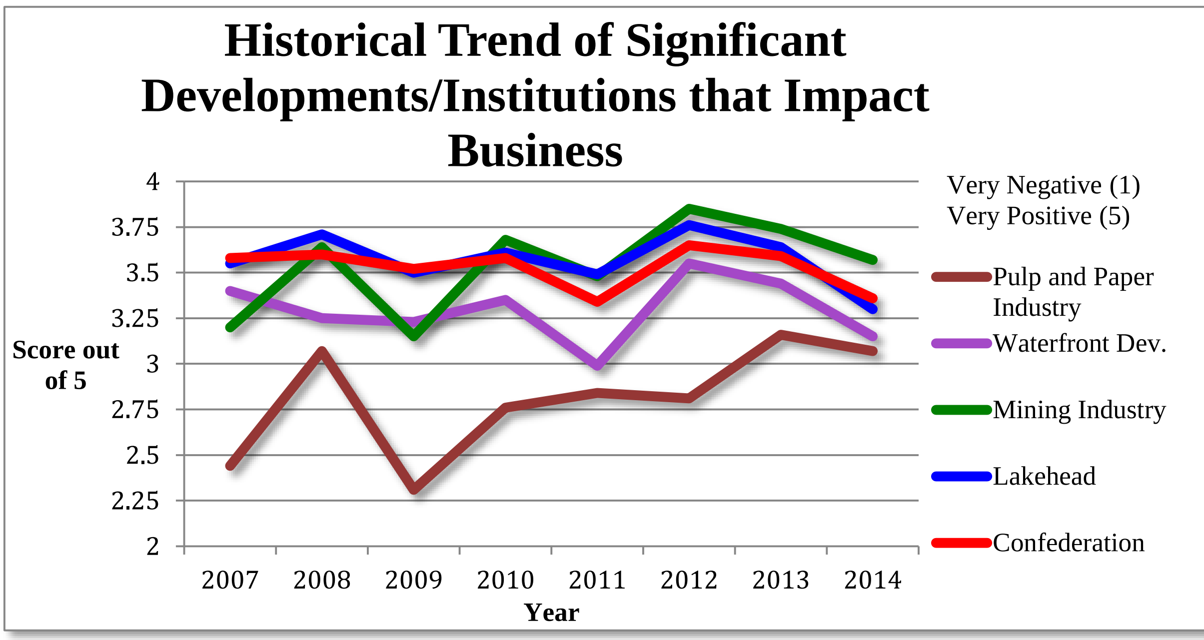

Figure 5 - Historical Trend of Developments/Institutions Impacting Small Businesses

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.

1. Anticipated Growth for Thunder Bay

What level of economic growth do you anticipate for Thunder Bay in 2014?

Table 19 - Anticipated Economic Growth

Anticipation of Growth	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Decrease	19%	7%	8%	8%	17%	43%	29%	53%
No Change	29%	19%	18%	24%	30%	28%	31%	25%
Increase	52%	74%	74%	68%	53%	28%	40%	22%

52% of the small business respondents believe that the Thunder Bay economy will have positive growth over the next year. A breakdown of the 52% shows that 46% of respondents anticipate a moderate increase and 6% anticipated a significant increase in the economy (Figure 6). This view is lower than previous years, as 74% of respondent’s anticipated economic growth in 2013 (Table 19). This trend suggests that small business owners are less confident that the growth of the economy in Thunder Bay.

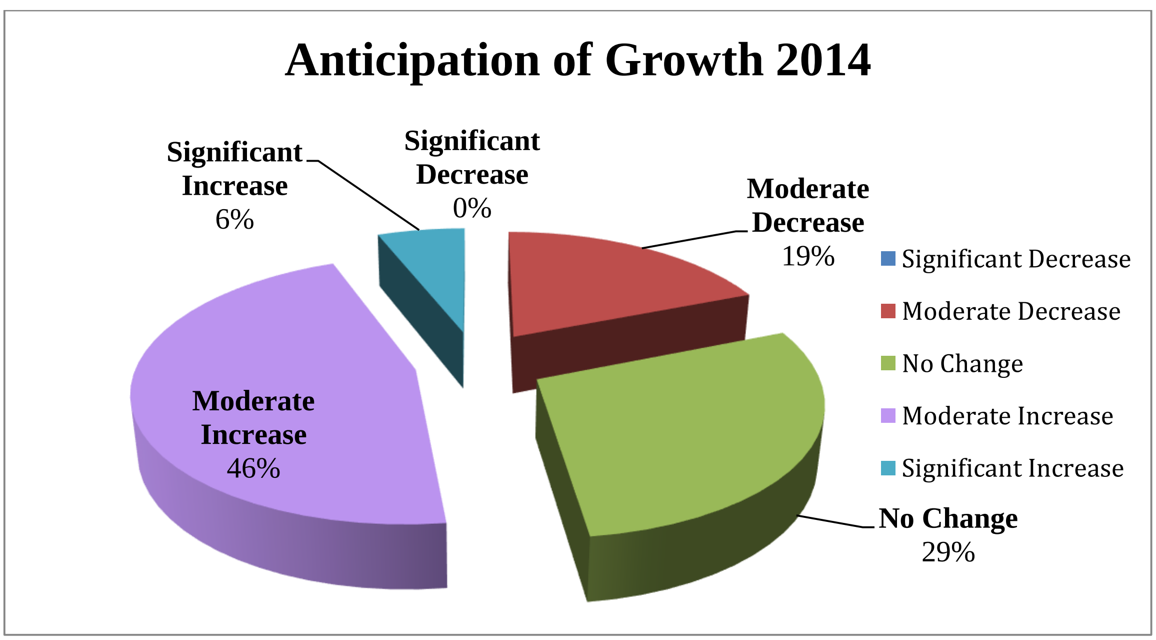

Figure 6 - Anticipation of Thunder Bay Growth

2. Future Sustainability

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

Table 20 - Future Sustainability

Response	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Yes	85%	86%	85%	83%	77%	73%
No	15%	14%	15%	17%	23%	27%

Small business owners showed relatively stable results over the last four years surveyed about the sustainability of their business during the next three years. Previous years' results indicated that 86% of small businesses felt secure about their sustainability, while this year indicates that 85% possess a feeling of sustainability (Table 20). Although the results are very similar, it is important to note that over the past six years business owners have become considerably more confident about the sustainability of their business. In 2009, 73% felt secure and now 85% are feeling secure. The trend regarding future security can be seen in Figure 7.

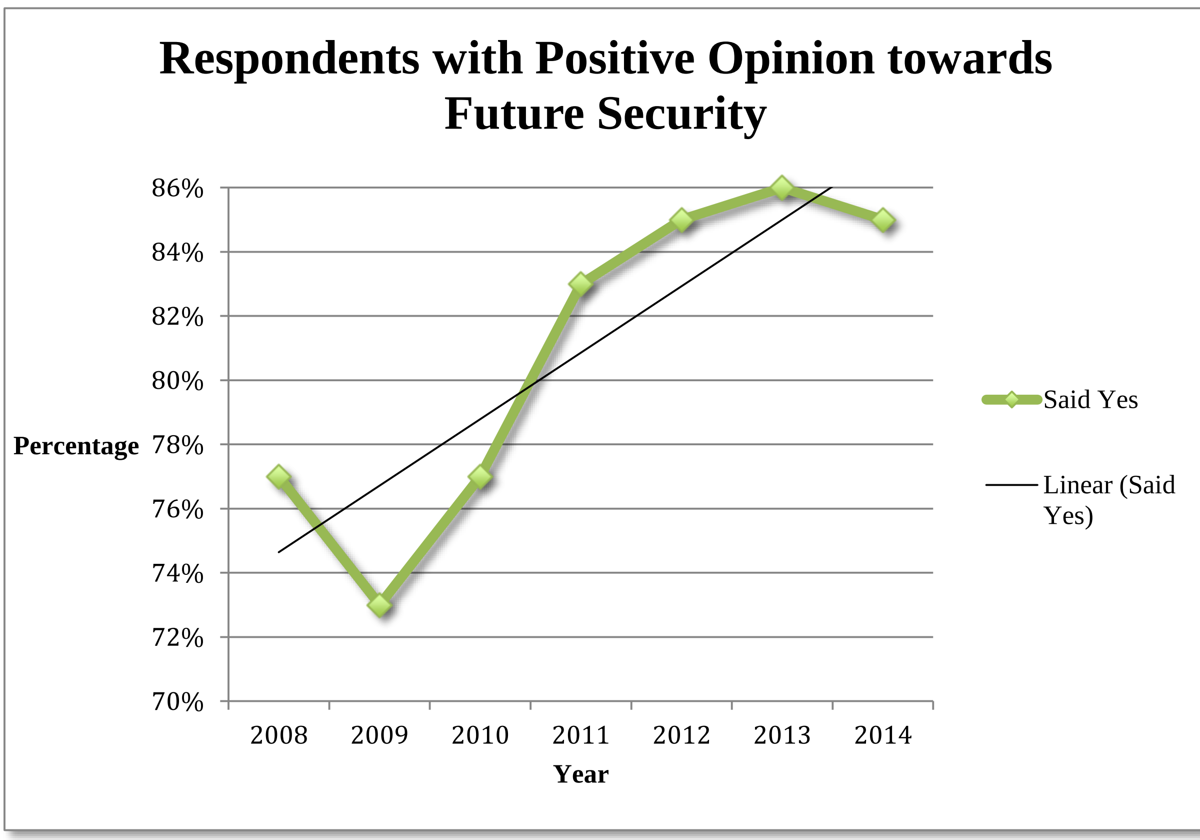

Figure 7 - Historical Trend of Future Security

3. Sector Growth Potential

Evaluate the following sectors in terms of their current actual impact on Thunder Bay's Business Climate (e.g., new markets, new products/services).

None (1) – Great (5)

Table 21 - Impact of Sectors

Sector	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Primary – Forestry	3.00	2.84	3.04	2.19	2.17	1.75	2.21	1.63
Primary – Mining	3.83	3.80	4.06	4.15	4.00	3.10	4.17	3.26
Secondary (e.g., Large Manufacturing)	3.09	3.16	3.30	2.62	2.73	2.35	2.48	2.62
Small Manufacturing	3.11	3.24	3.32	3.14	3.06	2.83	3.08	2.95
Renewable Energy Production	2.78	2.99	3.14	3.14	3.38	3.08	3.62	-
Non-Renewable Energy Production	2.41	2.53	2.30	3.01	2.15	2.09	2.30	-
Health Care Services	3.85	3.89	3.92	2.39	3.83	3.83	3.98	3.91
Retailing	3.45	3.49	3.25	3.86	3.01	3.00	2. 73	3.11
Senior Services	3.60	3.67	3.49	2.95	3.68	3.63	3.86	3.52
Financial Services	3.17	3.25	2.84	2.97	2.98	3.01	2.97	2.94
Higher Education (LU/Con College/Med School/Law School)	3.83	3.97	4.06	3.94	3.83	3.61	3.97	3.95
Construction Services	3.76	3.74	3.70	3.50	3.25	3.05	2.94	2.90
Government Services	3.11	3.39	3.14	3.02	3.10	2.99	2.82	2.98
Hospitality/Tourism	3.62	3.65	3.42	3.27	3.26	3.09	3.13	3.58
Biotech	3.59	3.59	3.75	3.95	3.54	3.51	3.79	-
Other	3.20	5.00	3.58	3.11	3.54	3.38	-	-

Only three of the sectors surveyed had an increase in their mean score value this year; indicating small businesses have more confidence in only three sectors. Businesses have their doubts regarding non-renewable energy production, renewable energy production, and primary forestry; consequently these three sectors recorded the lowest scores this year. The non-renewable energy sector was felt to have the least impact with a rating of 2.41, down from 2.53 in 2013. Other had the highest drop in value decreasing from 5.00 in 2013 to 3.20 in 2014 (Table 21). Given the qualitative feedback, other was deemed to be agriculture.

Higher Education, health care services, mining, and construction services were felt to hold a great impact on Thunder Bay's business climate by the respondents of this year's survey. This is the second year in a row these four categories were the top sectors surveyed; indicating their upmost importance to the business climate in Thunder Bay. In addition, government services experienced a significant change from 2013.

Small manufacturing (3.11) and renewable energy (2.78) received lower scores for the third year in a row; illustrating a growing negative trend for these sectors. Figure 8 depicts the trends of the major sectors.

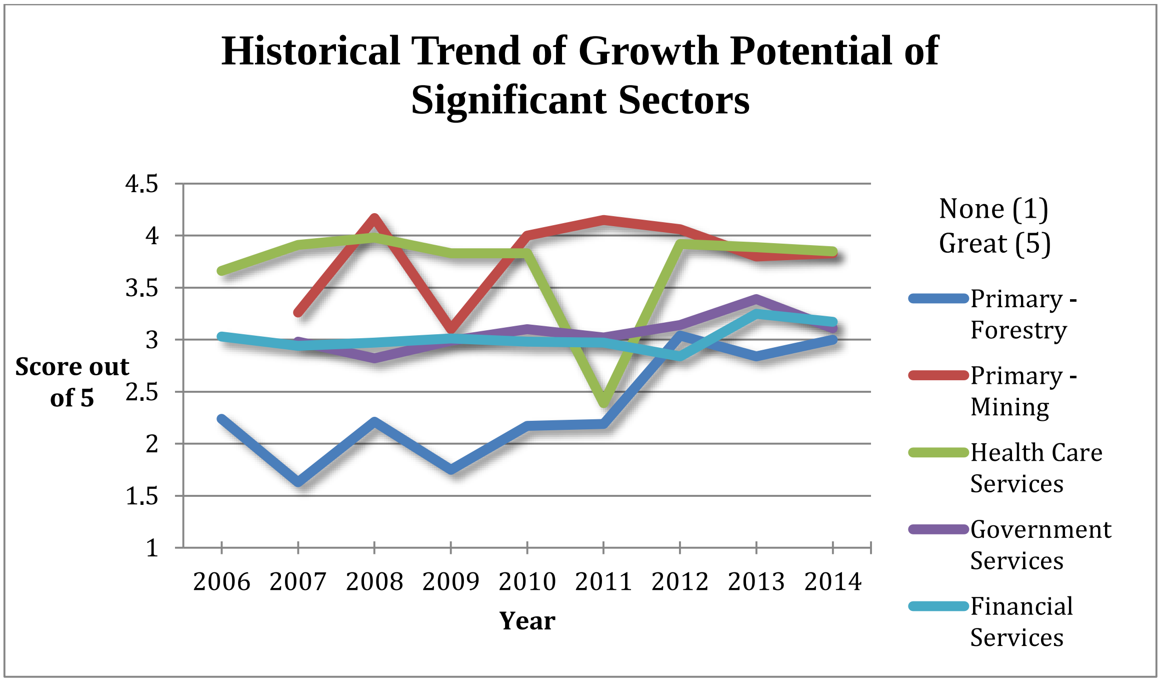

Figure 8 - Historical Trend of Growth Potential of Sectors

4. Meeting Your Needs

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

Not Very Well (1) – Very Well (5)

Table 22 - Meeting Your Business Needs

Factor	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Labour Pool	2.74	2.68	2.86	2.83	2.90
Access to Raw Materials/Natural Resources	2.84	2.87	2.82	2.88	2.91
City's Promotional Efforts	2.57	2.54	2.75	2.45	2.59
Transportation Costs (Passenger)	2.53	2.68	2.65	2.47	2.73
Other Transportation Costs (Shipping)	2.15	2.39	2.38	2.24	2.35
City Infrastructure (e.g., Roads, Hydro, Gas)	2.5	2.55	2.71	2.42	2.76
Municipal Tax Rates	2.21	2.30	2.28	2.15	2.15
City Council Representation/Decisions	2.35	2.55	2.25	2.25	2.12
Access to Financing/Capital	2.74	3.03	2.74	2.76	2.81
Provincial Representation	2.50	2.79	2.53	2.49	2.59
Federal Representation	2.34	2.41	2.40	2.32	2.34

In regards to the City of Thunder Bay meeting the needs of small business owners, respondent's felt the labour pool and the city's promotional effort have improved slightly in comparison to 2013 (Table 22). The results of this survey indicate these were the only two categories to improve. Consequently each improved by 0.06 and 0.03; indicating only a marginal improvement from 2013.

With all of the scores falling below 2.74, most respondents feel that the City of Thunder Bay is not successful in meeting their needs as small business owners.

5. Revenue Attributed to Mining Exploration Activities

What percentage of your business revenue can be attributed to mining exploration activities?

Table 23 - Revenue Attributed to Mining Exploration Activities

Revenue Attributed to Mining Exploration Activities	2014	2013
0%	52%	42%
1 - 25%	35%	47%
26 – 50%	4%	6%
51 – 75%	6%	1%
76 – 100%	2%	4%

It is evident a minimal portion of small businesses attribute revenue to mining exploration activates (Table 23). Furthermore, a large number of businesses remain unaffected by the mining or mining exploration sector with 52% of respondents stating 0% of their revenue is attributed to such activities. An additional 35% of respondents stated that 1-25% of their revenue was attributed to mining or mining exploration activities (Figure 9).

12% of small businesses attribute 26-100% of their revenue to the mining exploration activities. It is evident from this number few businesses in Thunder Bay generate revenue from the mining exploration industry; however the combined 26-100% category is up 1% from 11% in 2013.

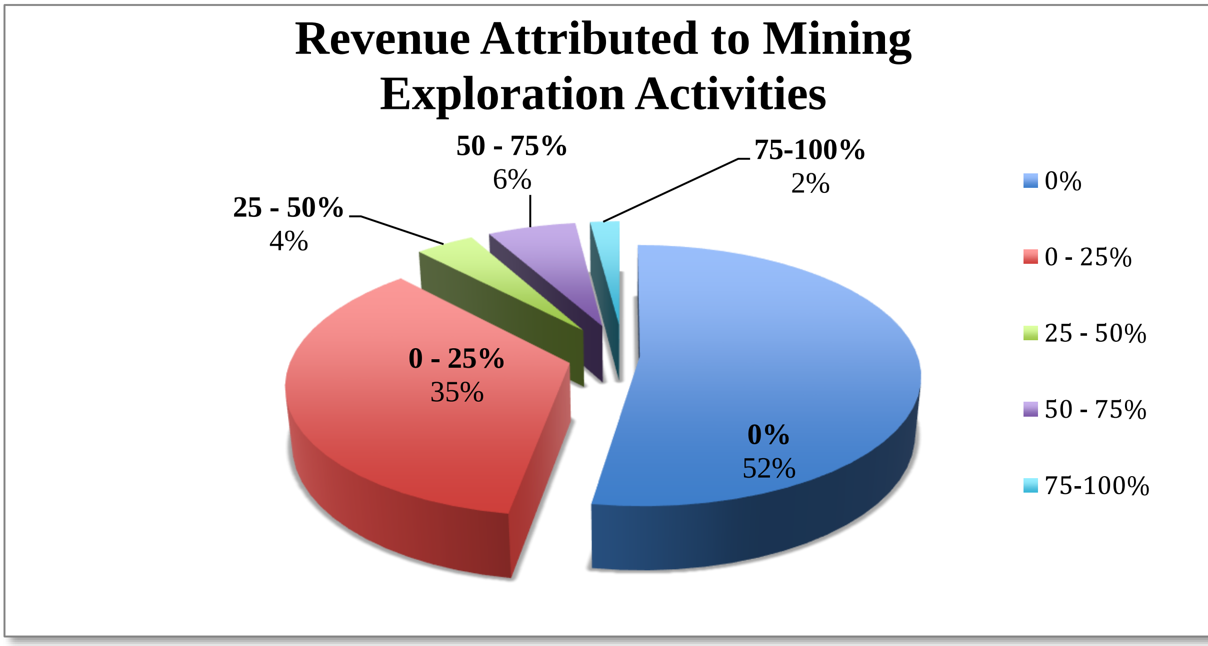

Figure 9 - Revenue Attributed to Mining Exploration Activities

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?

Insignificant Enticement (1) – Significant Enticement (5)

Table 24 - Characteristics that Entice Businesses

Characteristic	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Awareness of Region and Resources	3.53	3.91	3.45	3.14	2.26	3.09	3.20	3.02
Geographic Location	3.11	3.14	2.89	2.76	2.87	2.65	2.63	2.71
Weather (Perceived or Actual)	2.53	2.64	2.73	2.66	2.77	2.38	2.39	2.66
Quality of Life	3.87	3.94	4.01	3.96	3.99	3.90	3.98	3.98
Transportation Facilities (e.g., Airport)	3.45	3.53	3.42	3.48	3.52	3.50	3.21	3.33
Health Care Facilities	3.79	3.84	3.68	2.65	3.84	3.76	3.76	3.82
Market Size	3.11	3.01	-	-	-	-	-	-
Input Costs (Land, Labour, Capital)	2.94	3.18	2.82	2.65	2.76	2.69	3.00	2.69
Technology Infrastructure (Broadband)	2.91	3.20	2.87	3.08	3.07	2.90	3.20	3.24
City Government/Policies	2.79	2.76	2.36	2.32	2.24	2.29	2.53	2.35
Growing Aboriginal Population	2.35	2.42	2.54	-	-	-	-	-

In regards to what might impede a small business to relocate to Thunder Bay, there was a substantial decrease in ‘the awareness of the region and its resources’ category (Table 24). However, at a score of 3.53 respondents feel this is an important factor that entices businesses to relocate to Thunder Bay. Significant decreases were also evident for input costs and technology infrastructure (Table 24).

Small business owners felt that the quality of life and health care facilities are prime factors that entice businesses to the region of Thunder Bay. Both these factors received scores that were well above the mean score of 3.00. The weather is one of the main factors that impedes small businesses to Thunder Bay.

7. 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 25 - Quality of Life

Description	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Better Than Most	60%	57%	67%	70%	63%
The Same as Most	13%	31%	24%	29%	29%
Not as Good as Most	27%	13%	9%	1%	8%

When comparing North-Western Ontario with other regions, 60% of respondents feel that the quality of life in Thunder Bay is better than comparable regions. 13% respondents believed the quality of life was the same as comparable regions.; which is an 18% decrease from 31% in 2013 (Table 25).

The respondents who believe Thunder Bay has a lower quality of life than comparable regions has increased to 27%. The highest response for this category since the question was introduced into the survey in 2010. Responses from this year's survey indicate that small businesses feel as though the quality of life in Thunder Bay is not improving, but consequently getting worse. However, without a concrete definition of what defines a good quality of life, this is very difficult to measure.

8. Changes in Consumer Spending

Do you believe there was an increase in consumer spending in Thunder Bay during the 2013 fiscal year?

Table 26 - Changes in Consumer Spending

Response	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Yes	57%	70%	38%	72%	75%
No	43%	30%	62%	28%	25%

Recent economic conditions are affecting small businesses in Thunder Bay. 57% of the respondents have noticed changes in consumer spending due to the new conditions (Table 26). These results are significantly different than last year where 70% believed there was an increase in consumer spending in Thunder Bay.

The survey results over the past four years indicate a fluctuating trend in the changes of consumer spending (Table 26). Consumer spending appears to increase one year only to regress the next year.

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.

1. Thunder Bay City Council

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

Table 27 - Thunder Bay City Council

Response	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Yes	39%	42%	30%	26%	25%	24%	36%
No	61%	58%	70%	74%	75%	76%	64%

The views of small businesses towards the Thunder Bay City Council is an important question. The results of this year's survey are consistent with last year's results. The majority of small businesses (61%) feel that the City Council does a poor job at representing their business. Down 3% from last year, 39% of small businesses feel that the City Council does a good job representing their business interests (Table 27).

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 28 - New Businesses

Response	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Yes	32%	33%	33%	30%	30%	30%	36%
No	68%	67%	67%	70%	70%	70%	64%

Only 32% of small businesses feel that Thunder Bay is aggressive at bringing new business to the region, which is similar to the response rate dating back to 2008 (Table 28). Indicating that the attitudes of small businesses in regards to City Council and its performance are continually stable and have not changed (Table 28). Comments of this year's survey stated that there is too much red tape involved, results were hard to notice, and too many bylaws restrictions.

3. Administrative Requirements

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

Table 29 - Administrative Requirements

Response	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Yes	30%	31%	37%	32%	36%	23%	33%

No	70%	69%	63%	68%	64%	77%	67%

When comparing the administrative requirements of the municipal government, 30% of respondents have been deterred from beginning new business ventures. This is a decrease of 1% from 2013 (Table 29), which indicates that the administrative process was marginally better this year. Some small businesses are still finding it difficult to deal with the zoning, permits, licenses and inspections. The response to this question has remained stable over the last five years, indicating that small businesses will continue to develop new business initiatives with the current administrative process.

4. Thunder Bay Economic Development Agencies

Are you aware of the following Economic Development Agencies in Thunder Bay?

Table 30 - Awareness of Economic Development Agencies

	2014	
Economic Development Agencies	**Yes**	**No**
Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission	83%	17%
Thunder Bay Ventures	88%	13%
Nishnawbe Aksi Development Fund	63%	38%
Northern Ontario Heritage Fund	90%	10%
Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce	100%	0%

A significant majority of the respondents are aware of Thunder Bay Ventures, Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, and Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission, Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce (Table 30). The Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce is an agency that was added to the survey for the first time this year. All respondents were aware of this economic development agency.

When examining Nishnawbe Aksi Development Fund (NADF) 63% of respondents are aware of this economic development agency. This is down 8% from last year's results where 71% were aware of the agency, which indicates that small business owners are becoming less familiar with NADF.

These results indicate that the Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce and the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund have made greater efforts to promote their activities. These two Economic Development Agencies are familiar to small business owners around Thunder Bay.

5. Impact of the OLG Casino

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

Table 31 - Impact of the OLG Casino

Response	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Positive	23%	29%	23%	16%	15%	13%	22%
Negative	77%	71%	77%	84%	85%	87%	78%

The activities of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming (OLG) Casino have always been greatly debated among small businesses. This year's results mirror results from previous years with 77% (Table 31) of small business respondents believing that the OLG Casino has a negative impact on the city's economy (Figure 10). Generally the attitudes of small businesses towards the OLG have not changed and remain, for the most part, negative. Many heated comments were left regarding the impacts of the casino.

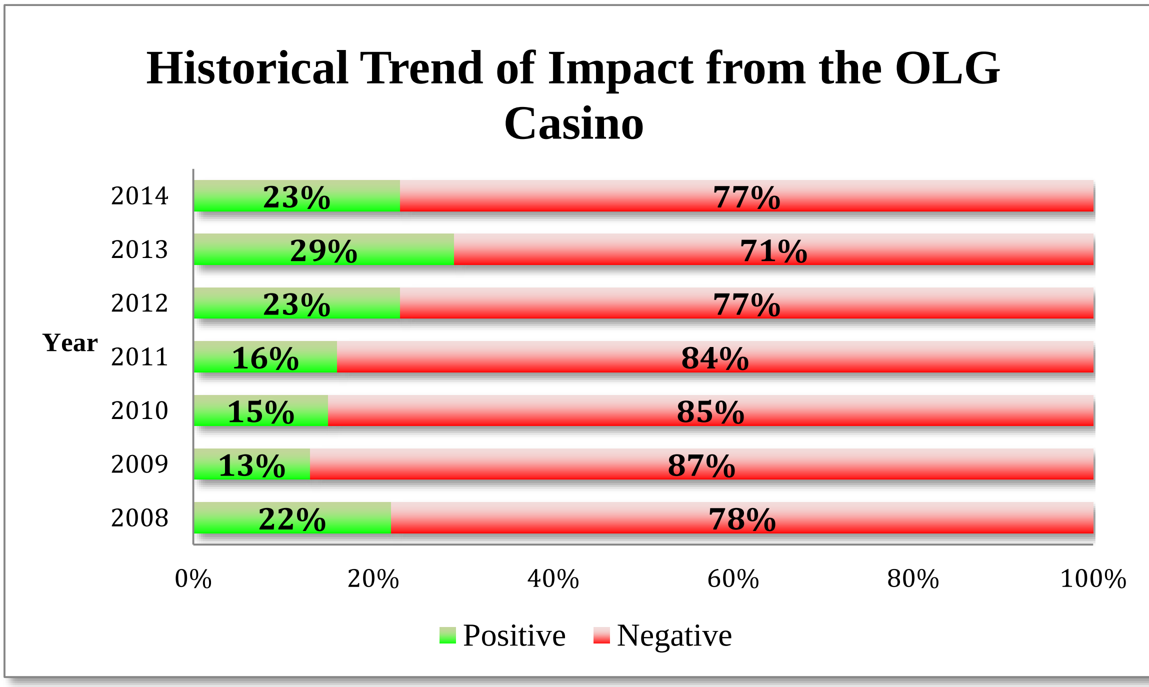

Figure 10 - Historical Trend of OLG Casino

6. Industry Importance to Future of Economy

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

Not Important (1) – Very Important (5)

Table 32 - Industry Importance to Future Economy

Industry	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Forestry	3.30	3.61	3.54	3.48	3.49
Mining	4.21	4.46	4.49	4.46	4.54
Retail	3.53	3.83	3.72	3.54	3.71
Hospitality (hotels, restaurants, entertainment)	3.89	4.14	-	-	-
Tourism	3.70	4.08	3.99	3.94	4.35
Transportation	3.72	4.01	4.01	3.85	3.79
Government	3.28	3.61	3.61	3.53	-
Aboriginal Organizations	3.38	3.69	3.76	-	-

The highest ranked industries are mining at 4.21 and hospitality at 3.89, indicating their importance to the future of the economy of Thunder Bay. Hospitality was added to the survey in 2013 and has remained as an important industry in both years. Mining obtained a score well above the mean score of 3.00 in all five years surveyed.

No categories increased in importance from 2013 to 2014. In addition, the tourism industry decreased the most in importance from the 2013 responses. Government and forestry obtained the lowest scores, proving to be least important industries to the future of the Thunder Bay economy (Table 33).

7. Media Advertising Methods

Presently what kind of media are you using for your advertising?

Not Important (1) – Very Important (5)

Table 33 - Advertising Methods

Media Advertising	2014	2013	2012
Television	2.09	1.69	1.67
Radio	3.03	2.12	2.24
Website	4.05	4.02	4.23
Twitter	2.04	2.11	2.01
Facebook	3.30	2.87	3.02
Newspapers	2.70	2.53	-
Flyers, brochures, direct mail	3.30	2.97	-
Other	3.60	4.47	4.24

A large majority of small businesses are advertising through websites. Websites as an advertising method was the only category to obtain a score over 4.00, illustrating how important it is to small businesses. Many respondents indicated that radio, flyers, brochures, and direct mail were important media for advertising. Advertising methods such as television and Twitter received low scores indicating they are not important to small businesses (Table 35).

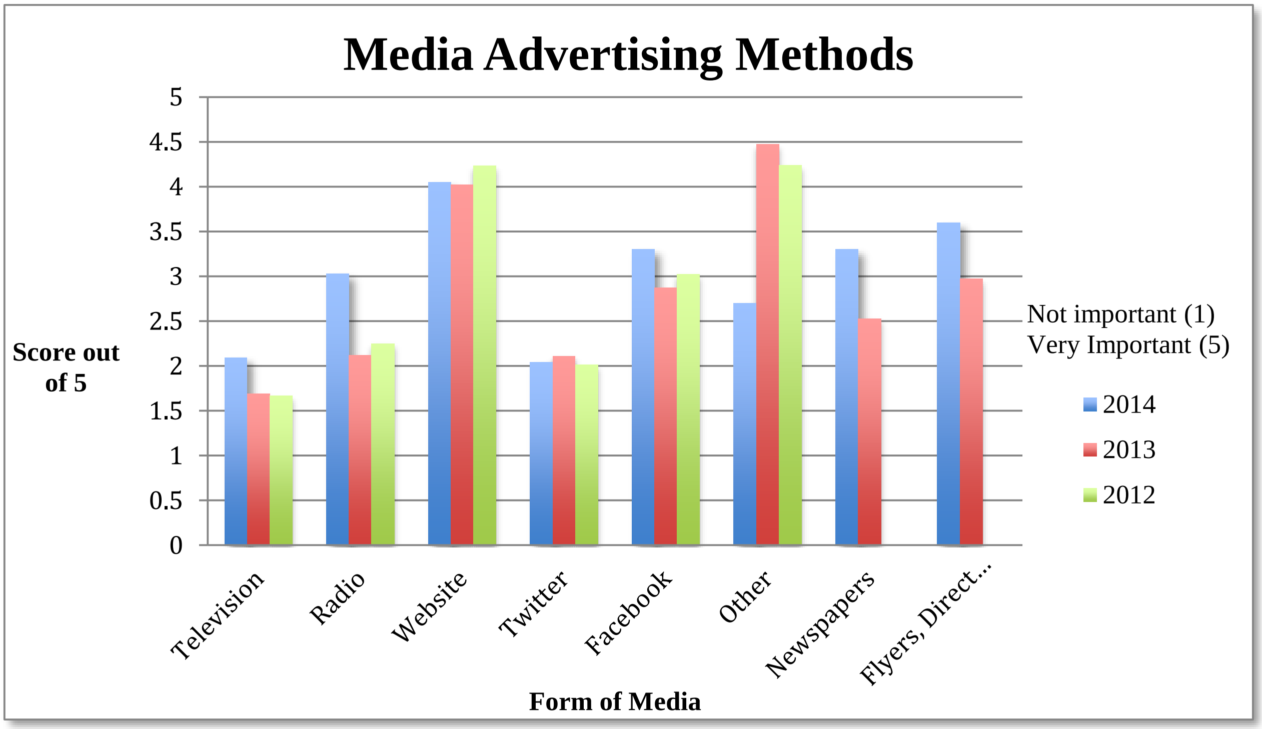

Figure 11 - Media Advertising Methods

8. Comparison of Property Tax Rates

In your opinion, when compared with other cities you are familiar with in Ontario, are property tax rates in Thunder Bay:

Table 34 – Property Tax Rates

Level of Accuracy	2014
High	57%
About Average	41%
Low	2%

This is the first year this question has been added to the survey. It is evident that a large number of the respondents, 57%, feel property tax rates in Thunder Bay are high compared to other cities in Ontario. Only 2% of the respondents felt the property tax rates in Thunder Bay were low. Figure 12 illustrates breakdown of the responses.

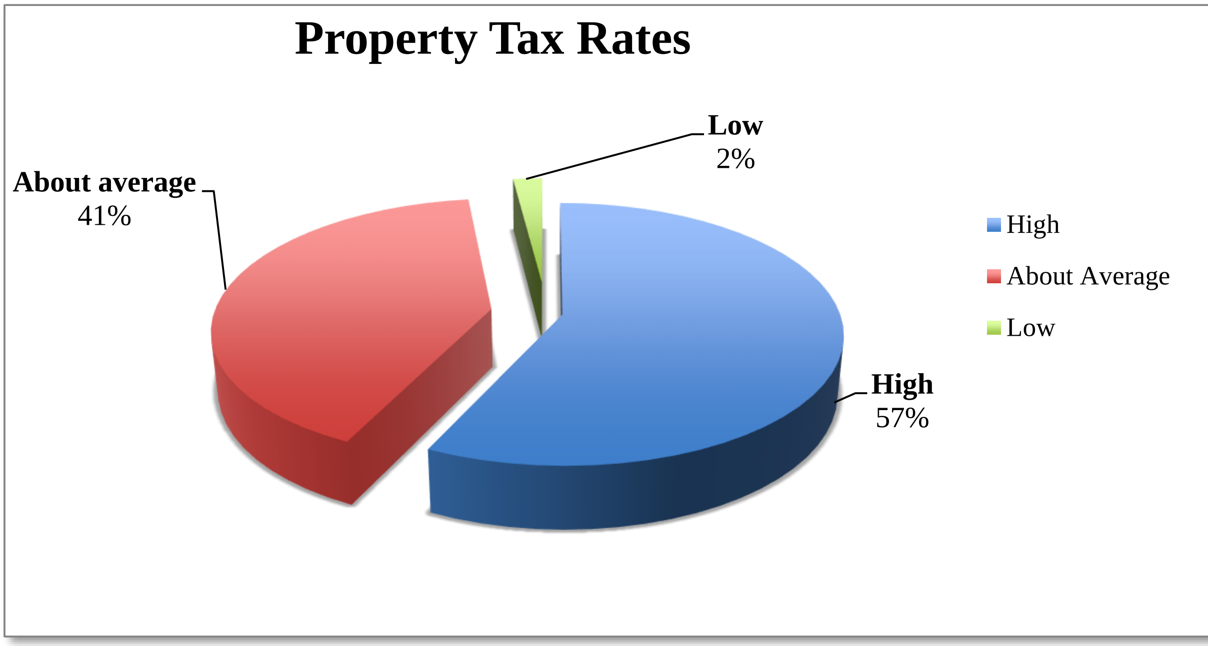

Figure 12 – Comparison of Property Tax Rates

9. City of Thunder Bay Strategy

The City of Thunder Bay is planning to make streets more accessible and attractive for pedestrians, public transport users, and cyclists (i.e. increasing sidewalks, benches, trees, bike lanes). Do you think this strategy will increase your business?

Table 35 - City of Thunder Bay Strategy

Response	2014	2013
Yes	53%	33%
No	47%	67%

It is apparent that small business owners are undecided on whether making the streets more accessible and attractive in Thunder Bay will increase their business (Table 35). Results of the survey are almost split at 53% to 47%, in favour of improving the streets. There has been a shift in responses from 2013 to 2014, as 20% more respondents indicated a desire to improve the streets.

10. Receiving Port in Minnesota

Is your business using Ryden's Depot in Minnesota as a port for receiving (even a portion) of your inventory?

Table 36- Receiving Port in Minnesota

Response	2014
Yes	40%
No	60%

This is the first year this question has been added to the survey. Results of the survey indicate a large portion, 40%, of businesses use Ryden's Depot in Minnesota as a port for receiving a portion of their inventory.

Selected Respondent Comments:

“Our city governance is in need of change. Things to consider 1) decrease size of council 2) business presents to council 3) get hungry and aggressive.”

“I wish there would be better tax exemptions for small business owners. Especially since it takes about 5 years to get to a break-even point in a small city, where change is not well looked at. Rent is generally high if a location is chosen for better public access and marketing cost are huge.”

“Advertising and a marketing are my biggest challenge due to high costs for small businesses. Therefore, instead of giving local business "my business", which I would like to do but can't afford, I use Facebook to help promote my business. For the most part small retail businesses are struggling in Thunder Bay. Even in Bay/Algoma, only the larger stores and restaurants do well. Weather is a huge factor in regards to people walking/shopping.”

“The high schools need to encourage our young people to look into the wide variety of trade occupations available, there is a serious shortage for trade’s people in our entire country. Example: brick layers, mechanics, electricians, and hair dressers.”

“Municipalities need to work together to offer incentives to bring business to the region. Costs such as electricity are extremely high for any business.”

Appendix A - 2014 Thunder Bay Small Business Opinion Survey

Thank you for participating!

The following survey will take only a few minutes to complete. Your willingness to take the time to share your opinions is greatly appreciated. This 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 807-935-2685.

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 **2013** fiscal year?
☐ Increased
☐ Remained the same
☐ Decreased

11. What are your current hiring expectations for the **2014** fiscal year?
☐ Planning to hire additional employees
☐ Planning not to hire any additional employees
☐ Planning to lay off employees

12. Which of the following best represents your actual sales or billings for the **2013** fiscal year?
☐ Less than $25,000 ☐ $100,000 - $249,999 ☐ $1,000,000 - $5,000,000
☐ $25,000 - $49,999 ☐ $250,000 - $499,999 ☐ Greater than $5,000,000
☐ $50,000 - $99,999 ☐ $500,000 - $999,999

13. Does this **2013** sales volume represent an increase or decrease over your 2012 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 a sales increase for the **2014** fiscal year?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

15. 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 **2013** fiscal year?

	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) Raising Capital/Securing Business Loans	1	2	3	4	5
e) Increased Competition	1	2	3	4	5
f) Access to Market Research, Business Advice	1	2	3	4	5
g) Government Paperwork Requirements	1	2	3	4	5
h) Municipal Zoning/Building Requirements	1	2	3	4	5
i) CDN/US Exchange Rate	1	2	3	4	5
j) Union Restrictions	1	2	3	4	5
k) Electricity Rates	1	2	3	4	5
l) Gasoline and Fuel Rates	1	2	3	4	5
m) Taxes	1	2	3	4	5
n) Your business location in the City	1	2	3	4	5

16. How important **were** the following factors to your sales/revenue performance in the **2013** 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
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
o) Your business location in the City	1	2	3	4	5

17. 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) New markets (beyond Thunder Bay)	1	2	3	4	5
e) Change in CDN dollar	1	2	3	4	5
f) Increased Fuel/energy costs	1	2	3	4	5
g) Increased Insurance Rates	1	2	3	4	5
h) Cross Border Requirements	1	2	3	4	5

18. Is your company planning to invest more or less in the following activities in the **2014** fiscal year 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

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

	Very Negative				Very Positive
a) Big Box Store Expansion	1	2	3	4	5
b) Gasoline/Fuel prices	1	2	3	4	5
d) Waterfront Development	1	2	3	4	5
d) OLG Casino	1	2	3	4	5
g) Lakehead University	1	2	3	4	5
f) Confederation College	1	2	3	4	5
g) Municipal Tax Rates	1	2	3	4	5
h) Pulp/Paper Industry	1	2	3	4	5
i) Energy Rates (heating, electricity)	1	2	3	4	5
j) 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 in **2014**?

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 sectors in terms of their current <u>actual</u> impact on Thunder Bay's Business Climate (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/Law 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/ Medical technology	1	2	3	4	5
p) Other: ___________________________________	1	2	3	4	5

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

	Not Very Well				**Very Well**
a) Labour Pool (Level of 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. Approximately what percentage of your business revenue can be attributed to mining exploration activities?

☐ 0%   0- 25% ☐   25- 50% ☐   50-75% ☐   75-100% ☐

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

	Insignificant Enticement				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 (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
k) Growing Aboriginal Population	1	2	3	4	5

7. 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

8. Do you believe there was an increase in consumer spending in Thunder Bay during the **2014** fiscal year?
☐ Yes
☐ No
Comment: ____

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 following Economic Development Agencies in Thunder Bay?

a)	Thunder Bay Community Economic Development Commission - CEDC	☐ Yes	☐ No
b)	Thunder Bay Ventures - TBV	☐ Yes	☐ No
c)	NishnawbeAski Development Fund – NADF	☐ Yes	☐ No
d)	Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation – NOHFC	☐ Yes	☐ No
e)	Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce	☐ Yes	☐ No

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

☐ Positive

☐ Negative

Comment: ____

6. Please rate the following industry sectors in importance as a sector over the next 5 to the Thunder Bay economy:

	Not Important				**Very Important**
a) Aboriginal Organizations	1	2	3	4	5
b) Forestry	1	2	3	4	5
c) Government	1	2	3	4	5
d) Hospitality (hotels, restaurants, entertainment)	1	2	3	4	5
e) Mining	1	2	3	4	5
f) Retail	1	2	3	4	5
g) Tourism	1	2	3	4	5
h) Transportation	1	2	3	4	5

7. What kind of media are you using for your advertising& promotion? Please rate only those you use.

	Not Important				**Very Important**
a) Television	1	2	3	4	5
b) Radio	1	2	3	4	5
c) Website	1	2	3	4	5
d) Twitter	1	2	3	4	5
e) Facebook	1	2	3	4	5
f) Newspapers	1	2	3	4	5
h) Flyers, brochures, direct mail	1	2	3	4	5
g) Other (please specify) ____________________	1	2	3	4	5

8. In your opinion, when compared with other cities you are familiar with in Ontario, are property tax rates in Thunder Bay:

- ☐ High
- ☐About Average
- ☐ Low

9. The City of Thunder Bay is discussing increasing the number of bicycle lanes and full lanes dedicated to bicycles on Memorial Avenue with solid lane separators. Are you in support of more bike lanes and improvements to cycling in the City?

- ☐Yes
- ☐No

Why/Why Not? ____

10. Is your business using Ryden's Depot in Minnesota as a port for receiving (even a portion) of your inventory?

- ☐Yes
- ☐No

Why/Why Not? ____

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).

Thank you for your time – it is greatly appreciated!

A press-conference and Media release will publish the results
– at 10:00am on Tuesday, June 24, 2014-- location to be announced-look for it.