

**December 16, 2014**  
**Regular Meeting**

**Item #9h**  
**Economic**  
**Development**

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**Strategic Plan**  
**Update**

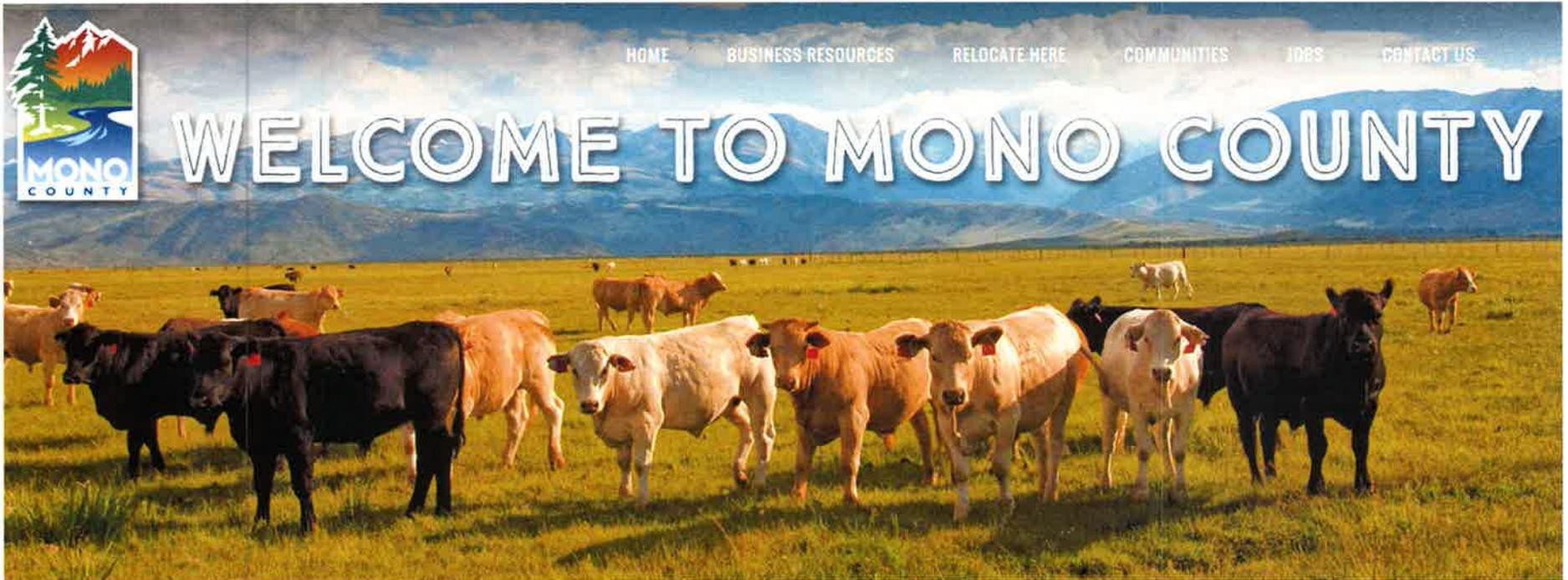
# Mono County Economic Development Strategies & Prioritization



*Economic Development Strategic Plan Update*  
*December 16, 2014*



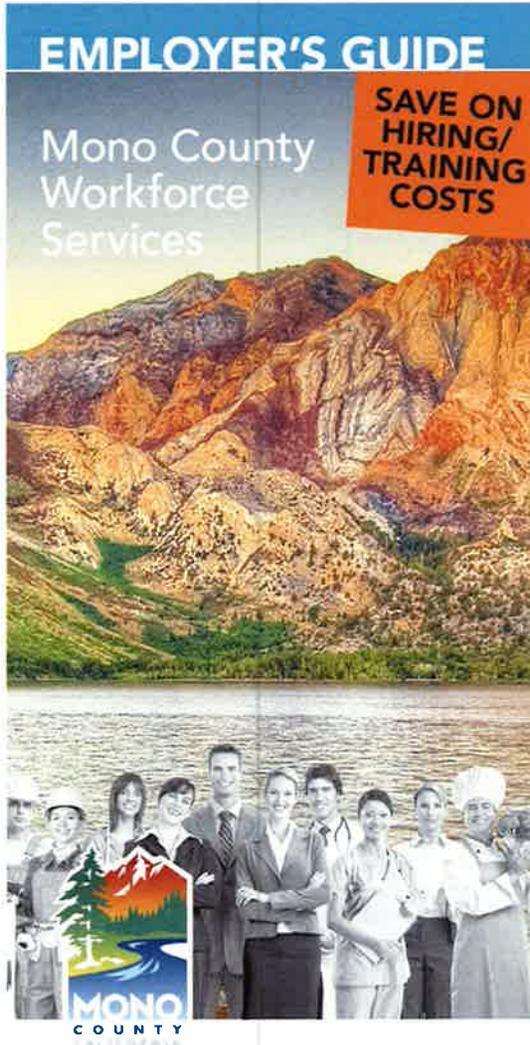
# Current Projects



- Business Resources
- Relocation Tools
- Communities
- Current Jobs
- All businesses and developable land
- Steps to open a business



# Current Projects



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- Welfare to Work
- Subsidize Employment
- On-the-Job Training
- Job Skills Placement
- Resume Building
- Career Counseling
- Workforce Education
- Job Search Assistance

# Current Projects

- Small Business Development Center in Bakersfield
  - SBDC – Access to Capital Conference
  - Business Assistance Webinars
- Governors office of Economic Development
  - California Competes Tax Credit
- SBA
  - Low Interest Disaster Loans
- Mono County Property Assessed Clean Energy Program (PACE)
- California Academy for Economic Development – California Economic Development Certificate
- State of the County – January 15, 2015
- USDA & CDBG Loan Programs



# Economic Development Strategic Plan

- Define the **key economic strengths of Mono County** as they currently exist and how they can be developed over the next decade **to create sustainable growth opportunities.**
- Identify a comprehensive, practical plan that will provide **an overall strategic framework** for the Board of Supervisors for planning and decision-making purposes.
- Strategic Marketing Group



# Mono County ED Key Strategic Platforms



# 1. Strengthen Existing Economic Sectors

- The two largest elements of the Mono County economy are Hospitality/Tourism and Professional Services. As such it is important to strengthen those economic sectors and solidify Mono County's economic base.





# 3. Attract New Business

- **Business attraction**

- Inventory/Targeting – Identify the resources the county can offer, and use those to target specific business segments in order to attract businesses that fit. The key is to match what county has available with the needs of potential businesses.



# Economic Development Key Strategies



# Strategy 1 – Economic Development becomes a priority for Mono County



- Leadership from the Mono County Supervisors is essential, along with cross department buy-in
- Work with key agencies to educate them on the importance of ED – Impact of policies
- Use recommendations from community based plans to priorities projects



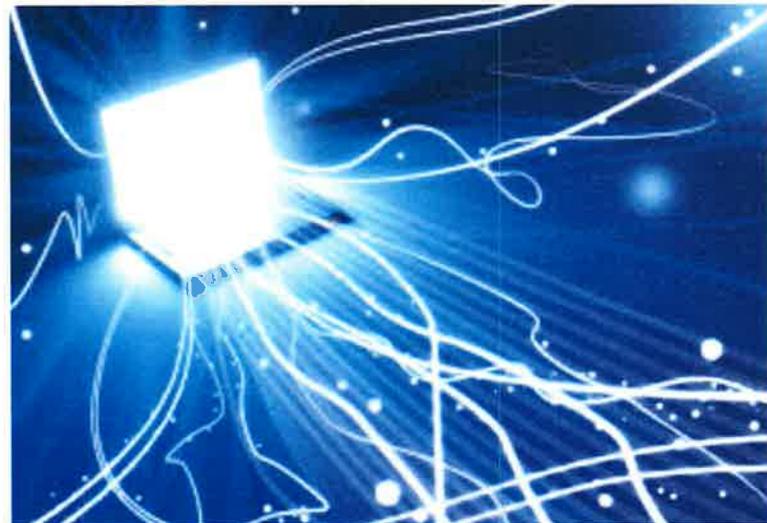
# Strategy 2 – Strengthen Tourism Sector

- Explore funding sources (TBID)
- Promote Air Service
- Increase reach and effectiveness of communication to current/expanded target markets



# Strategy 3 – Digital 395 integration

- Work with IT to attract last mile providers
- Integrate the benefits of D395 into all communications including attraction of new business
- Business training on how to take advantage of new high speed internet



# Strategy 4 – National Scenic Byway Designation

- Pursue a National Scenic Byway Designation and development of a Corridor Management Plan for the US Highway 395 region
- Work with Community Development on application, marketing plan, branding for National Scenic Byway application



# Strategy 5 - Business Retention and Expansion

- Develop a small business resource center – technical assistance, small business loans, skills building
- Consider a California Enterprise Zone
- Work with Chambers and College on developing business training seminars/programs including accounting, marketing, finance and taxes.



# Strategy 6 – Networking Environment

- Opportunity to increase revenue opportunities by establishing relationships between dispersed communities
- Share ideas, identify common challenges, learn new skills
- Develop annual Business Expo and invite businesses to showcase their products/services to each other and community



# Strategy 7 – Reduce the County Regulatory Burden

- Customize regulation where possible by local community to enable local economic activity
- Review County ordinances re: impact on ED efforts
- Streamline the approval process within the County
- Place-based planning



# Strategy 8 – Buy Local / Regional Food Systems

- Work with Agriculture community to understand their needs and explore ways to increase the value of business-to-consumer models
- Develop a co-brand for agriculture and ranching products that would include ranch and county brand
- Buy local program could work in Mono County through restaurants, farmers markets and farm visits



# Strategy 9 – Business Attraction

- Resources of the region match with prospective business
- Define business niche and attract businesses that are complementary to the region – clusters/lifestyle
- Business retention is more cost-effective than business attraction
- Inventory - acreage, space, facilities, infrastructure and quality of life
- Incentives



# RPAC Feedback

- Walker/Coleville/Topaz
  - Look to promote more outdoor recreation, specifically Snowmobiling at Sonora Pass and ATV/UTV
  - Look for ways to support the agriculture sectors
- Bridgeport
  - Increase and continue to support the tourism industry
  - Look at new avenues through traditional Economic Development
  - Explore health care and wellness opportunities
  - Continue to work towards a multi-use interagency visitor center
- Lee Vining
  - Look at how we can keep money and spending in Mono County
  - Buy local campaign
  - International tourism training for local businesses
  - Local production and sustainability of products and resources
  - In favor of a regional EDC
  - Outreach and communication with second homeowners in the area

# RPAC Feedback

- June Lake
  - Access to Capital
  - Trail and recreational development
  - Community beautification including gateway signage
- Crowley
  - Support Mammoth Lakes Tourism and Air Service
  - Leverage D395 for longer stays and help existing businesses
  - Scenic Byway is a top priority
  - Reduce the regulatory burden
- Chalfant
  - D395 integration
  - Support alternative Economic Development including Agriculture
- Benton
  - Mono County communication and alternative distribution of information is important

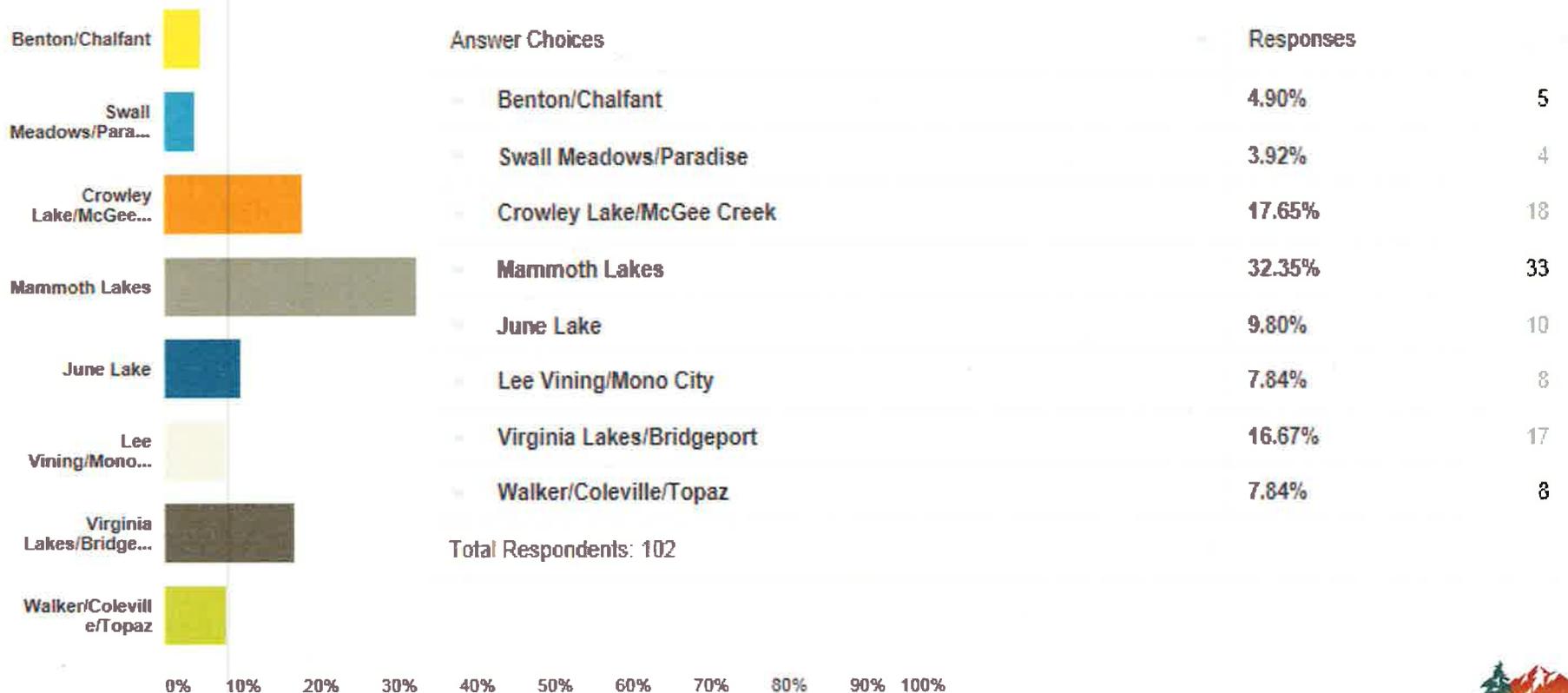


# Strategic Plan Survey

102 participants

In which community do you reside?

Answered: 102 Skipped: 0



# Strategic Plan Survey

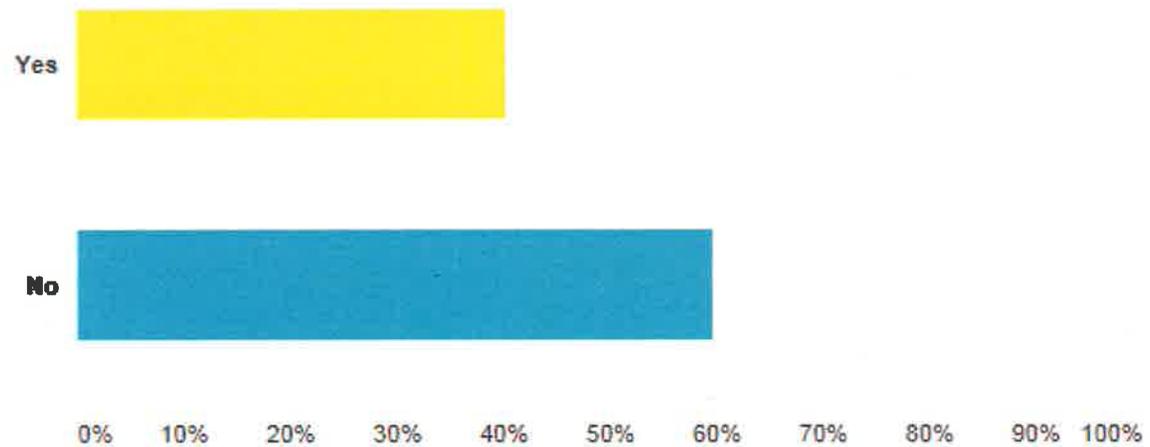
Q2

Customize

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## Do you own a business in Mono County?

Answered: 102 Skipped: 0



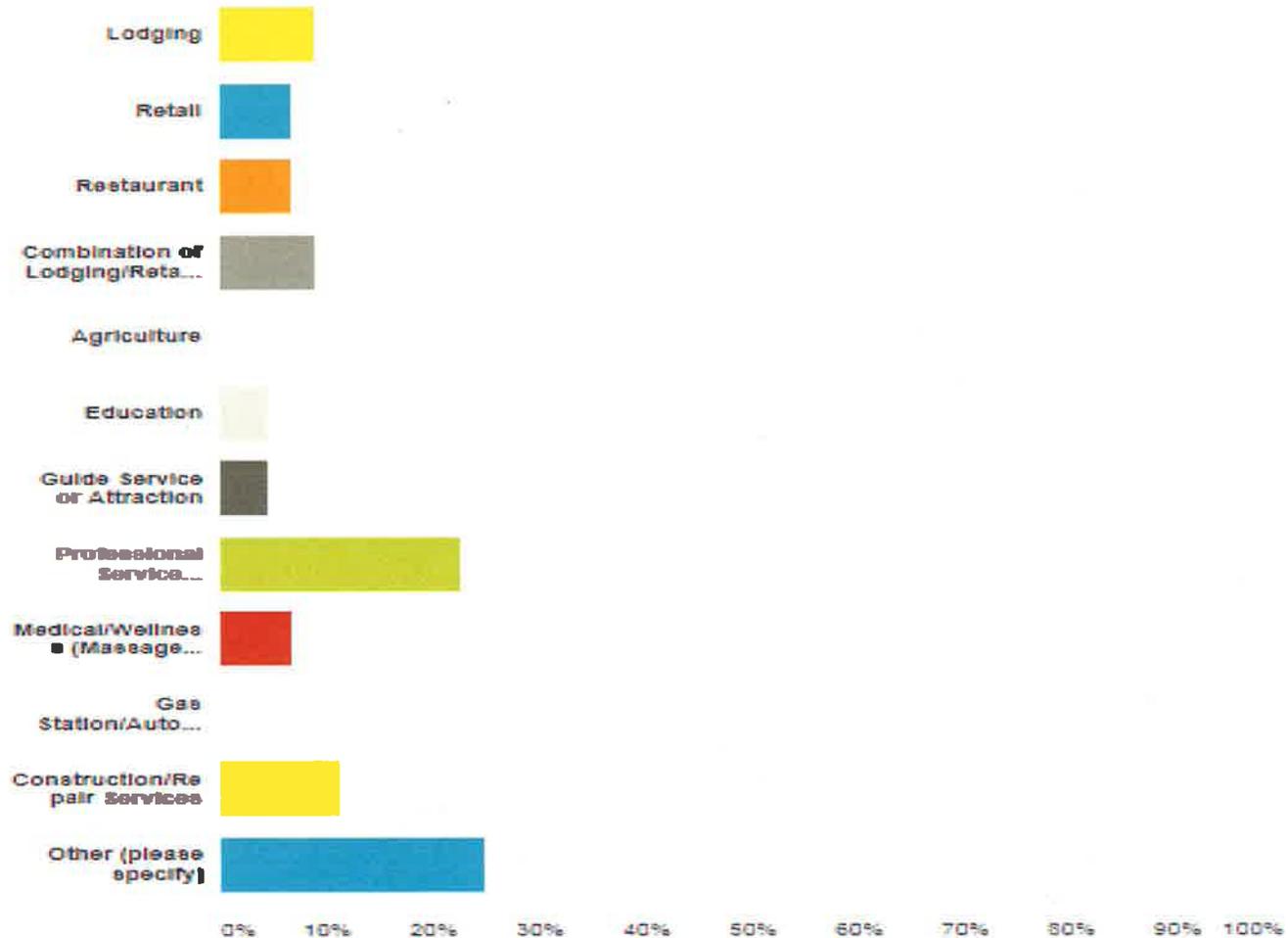
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	40.20%	41
No	59.80%	61
Total		102



# Strategic Plan Survey

If Yes, what category best describes your business?

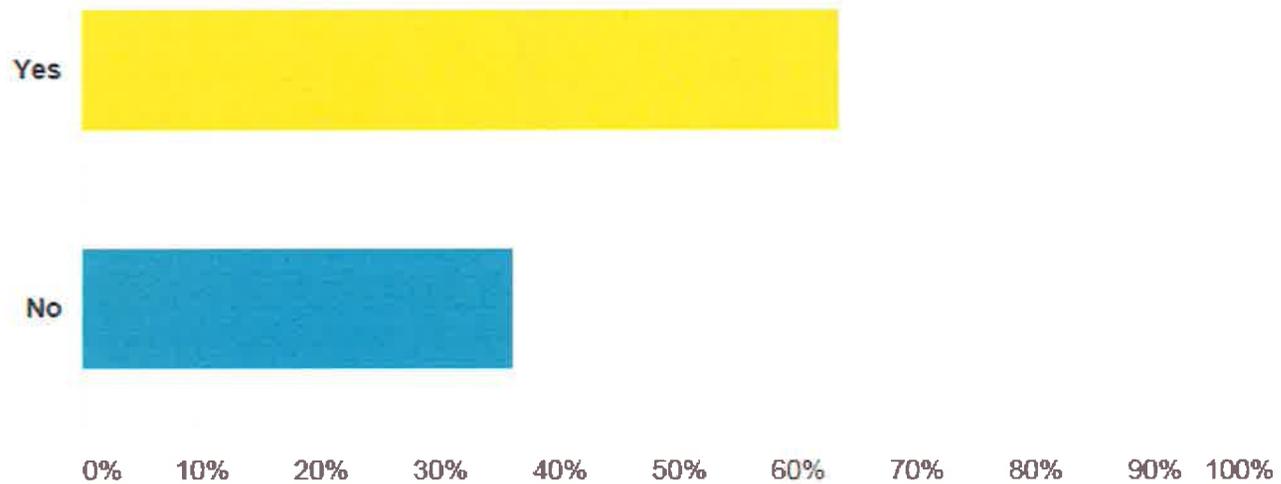
Answered: 44 Skipped: 58



# Strategic Plan Survey

Do you manage or work at a non-profit Organization or Federal/State/County agency?

Answered: 102 Skipped: 0



## Answer Choices

- Yes
- No

## Responses

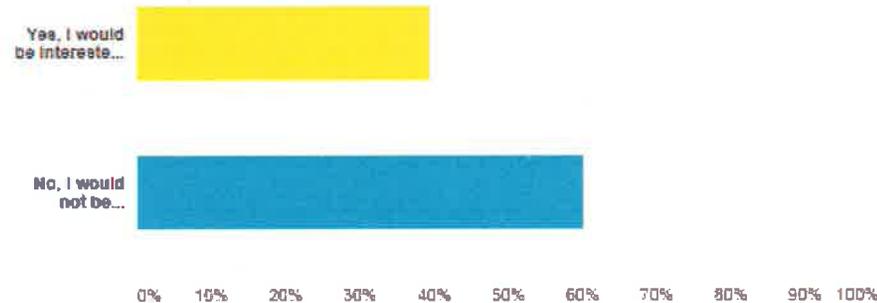
Yes	63.73%	65
No	36.27%	37



# Strategic Plan Survey

Please answer the following question only if you are a business owner in Mono County: Would you be interested in learning about how a Tourism Business Improvement District (TBID) funding source works? (A TBID has become common in tourism-based economies to raise additional funds for increased tourism advertising/marketing -- there are over 80 cities/counties in California who fund or partially fund their marketing efforts this way. A TBID is a self-assessed pass-through fee charged by specific industry sectors, usually the lodging sector, and is most often \$1-\$2 per purchase or 1-2% of the room rate.)

Answered: 48 Skipped: 54



#### Answer Choices

- Yes, I would be interested in learning more about a TBID and how this might work for the unincorporated parts of Mono County (the Town of Mammoth Lakes currently has a TBID in place).
- No, I would not be interested.

#### Responses

39.58% 19  
60.42% 29



# Strategic Plan Survey

Would your business be interested in the following:

	Yes	No	Unsure
1) Low-interest, fixed rate loan programs	41.67% 25	36.67% 22	21.67% 13
2) Training in Accounting/Marketing/Social Media	56.90% 33	36.21% 21	6.90% 4
3) Technical Assistance in business planning, development feasibility studies, etc.	49.15% 29	37.29% 22	13.56% 8
4) Customer Service training for you, your managers, and staff	37.29% 22	49.15% 29	13.56% 8
5) Business Assistance Webinars	47.46% 28	40.68% 24	11.86% 7
6) How to navigate county permit process for expansion or renovation projects.	52.54% 31	37.29% 22	10.17% 6



# Strategic Plan Survey

## Ranking of Top Priorities 1 through 8

- 1) **5.90**: Digital 395 Integration
- 2) **5.54**: Business retention and expansion
- 3) **5.51**: Strengthen the Tourism Sector
- 4) **4.14**: Pursue National Scenic Byway Designation
- 5) **4.05**: Attract New Businesses
- 6) **3.86**: Look at ways to reduce the regulatory burden
- 7) **3.67**: Create a regional networking environment
- 8) **3.30**: Buy local/Regional food system



# Strategic Plan Survey

Ranking of importance 1-5

- #1 Score of **4.19**: Digital 395 integration
- #2 Score of **4.18**: Improve infrastructure for outdoor recreation
- #3 Score of **3.96**: Economic Development becomes a priority
- #4 Score of **3.87**: US 395 Corridor Management Plan
- #5 Score of **3.84**: Look at ways to reduce the regulatory burden



# Strategic Plan Survey

Ranking of importance 1-5

- #6 Score of 3.83: New business attraction
- #7 Score of 3.78: Use existing community based plans
- #8 Score of 3.72: Expand tourism efforts
- #9 Score of 3.69: Look for new funding options for tourism
- #10 Score of 3.69: Create a regional networking environment



# Strategic Plan Survey

Ranking of importance 1-5

#11 Score of 3.67: Sustainable regional food systems

#12 Score of 3.45: Small Business Training

#13 Score of 3.41: Small Business Loans, Education and Resources

#14 Score of 3.30: Continue to promote Mammoth-Yosemite air service



# Strategic Plan Survey - Recommendation

## 1) Business Retention and Expansion

- Digital 395 Integration
- Look at the county regulatory process
- Small business loans, training, skills building, networking

## 2) Strengthen Tourism Sector

- Pursue National Scenic Byway Designation/Corridor Management Plan
- Expand tourism efforts; source new funding
- Improve infrastructure for outdoor recreation

## 3) Attract New Businesses

- Use existing community-based plans



# Mono County Business Needs Survey Results

Prepared by Community Development Services (CDS) on behalf of the  
Mono County Economic Development Department  
December 4, 2014

20 Businesses Surveyed from 11/3/14-11/25/14  
Business Sectors Called: Accommodations and Lodging, Restaurant,  
Sporting Goods and Guide Service, Specialty Retail



# Mono County Business Needs Survey Results- Background

- Community Development Services (CDS) an economic development consulting firm, conducted a phone survey of Mono County Businesses from 11/3/14-11/25/14.
- The goal of the survey was to assess business needs in Mono County and determine what Technical and Financial assistance would be beneficial to Mono businesses.
- CDS attempted to contact over sixty businesses in Mono County but several were closed due to seasonal business.
- Twenty businesses were surveyed from the Accommodations and Lodging, Restaurant, Sporting Goods and Guide Service, and Specialty Retail sectors of the Mono County economy.



# Mono County Business Needs Survey Results- Background

- Businesses contacted reflect seasonal recreational based economy of Mono County.
- Some overlap in classification i.e.; Some businesses self-identified as Sporting Goods Retailers as well as providing Activities Guiding Services.
- The majority of businesses surveyed classified Summer as their busy season.
- Businesses classified the majority of their customers as either *Visitors/Tourists* or as *Local Residents*.



# Mono County Business Needs Survey Results- Background

- The vast majority of businesses surveyed had been operating in Mono County for over 10 years (Eighteen of twenty businesses).
- Fourteen of twenty business owners are very satisfied with their current business location but many owners would like to make building improvements.
- Energy efficiency and Solar conversion projects would like to be made by ten of twenty businesses owners.
- Signage, Store Front Restoration and Lighting were the next most popular improvements wanted among business owners.
- Sixteen of twenty business owners would require financing for these improvements.



# Mono County Business Needs Survey Results- Critical Factors

- Business owners cite *Tourism Visitation (keeping the pass open as long as possible)* and *Access to Recreational Product (snow and water for fishing)* as the two most critical factors for the success of their business with *Strong Economy* and *Qualified Workers* being the next two most critical factors.
- The most common problems affecting Mono County businesses today are;
  - *Lack of customer traffic*
  - *Economic conditions*
  - *Financing/cash flow*
  - *Government regulations*
  - *Quality of workers*



# Mono County Business Needs Survey Results

- Business owners are interested in receiving assistance in the following areas:
  1. ***Financing***
  2. ***Grants (Federal and State)***
  3. ***Workforce Training***
  4. ***Marketing and Promotion***
  5. ***Property Improvements***
  6. ***Government Regulations***
  7. ***Human Resource Services***
  8. ***Business Planning***
  9. ***Customer Service***



# Mono County Business Needs Survey Results- Localized Economy

- All but one business surveyed does the majority of their business by selling products or services in Mono County.
- The most important materials and supplies used by businesses include (depending on the business) food, beverage, and related products. Also, hunting, fishing and outdoor recreational related products.
- One business sells fishing products online and has seen a huge increase in online business in the past few years. This online increase in business has surpassed the business done in Mono County, however, business done in the County is still a vital part of the businesses cash flow.
- All businesses surveyed utilize trucking or UPS the majority of the time to receive and ship goods.



# Mono County Business Needs Survey Results- Economy

- Nine of twenty business owners describe their business activity over the past twelve months of operation as declining (less clients/income, fewer sales).
- Six of twenty business owners describe their business activity over the past twelve months as holding their own (same level of business, fairly steady).
- Three of twenty business owners describe their business activity over the past twelve months as growing moderately.
- Two of twenty business owners describe their business activity over the past twelve months as greatly expanding, major growth. One business has greatly expanded due to increased online business.



# Mono County Business Needs Survey Results- Economy

- The economic downturn of the last five years has affected the vast majority of businesses resulting in reduced sales and layoffs.
- Small business owners were generally optimistic about the economy recovering but fifteen of twenty thought it would take 3-5 years.
- When asked which business services would help them, business owners answered; *marketing techniques, customer service training, and understanding and managing cash flow* as the top three.



# Mono County Business Needs Survey Results- Banking/Financing

- Sixteen of twenty business owners listed banking accessibility as a barrier for their business.
- The majority of business owners bank with either Eastern Sierra or Union Bank.
- Seventeen of twenty business owners would be interested in a lending program that could take out a portion of their existing business debt and replace it with low interest, long term debt.



# Mono County Business Needs Survey Results-

## Other Services

- When asked what other services would help you, business owners' responses were:
- ***Improved cell phone services and increase in carriers***
- ***Improved Internet services***
- ***Increase in number and quality of public restrooms, potable water and trash receptacles to assist with tourism***
- ***Permitting assistance***
- ***Increased fish planting***
- ***Low income housing***
- ***Access to affordable financing for mom and pop businesses***

