



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the General Committee

From: Sandra Dueck, Board Chair
Rhonda Keenan, President & CEO
Peterborough & the Kawarthas Economic Development

Report Date: February 8, 2021

Subject: Report PKED21-003
PKED 2020 Business Count Survey Project

Purpose

A report to inform City Council of the Peterborough & the Kawarthas Economic Development's 2020 Business Count Survey results.

Recommendation

That Council approve the recommendation outlined in Report PKED 21-003 dated February 8, 2021 of the Board Chair and President & CEO of Peterborough & the Kawarthas Economic Development, as follows:

That Report PKED21-003 and supporting presentation, providing the Peterborough & Kawarthas Economic Development 2020 Business Count Survey results be received for information.

Budget and Financial Implications

An annual Business Count Survey is a significant undertaking and uses considerable staff time and financial resources. The cost to deliver the 2020 annual business count survey was \$51,590.00. Expenses included marketing, wages and software.

The cost of the survey was covered by core funding received by the City and the County of Peterborough in 2020, as well as through Canada Summer Jobs to help offset the costs of the summer students hired to complete the surveys.

Background

From June 15, 2020 to August 31, 2020, PKED staff identified and contacted businesses to conduct a brief survey.

PKED's business count survey asked questions such as:

- How many people do you employ?
- What is the square footage of your business?
- Do you import or export?
- What is the legal status and ownership of your company?
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Employment data was collected with three objectives:

- To establish a solid and dependable employment database.
- To create a comprehensive internal business directory.
- To facilitate the regular collection of employment data in the future.

The COVID pandemic meant that PKED had to do the project virtually. PKED hired three students that were assigned businesses to call and e-mail to complete surveys. Given the nature of the pandemic, businesses were given the option to elevate any concerns regarding their business operations to an economic development specialist, immediately.

The information gathered will explore what industries are most important in the City of Peterborough, and each Township in the County of Peterborough. This will complement stronger and more informed decision-making related to support growth across the region.

Analysis

The virtual delivery of the project hampered our ability to identify vacancies for rent which was one of the objectives for the project. The virtual delivery also attributed to a lower completion rate of contacted businesses completing the surveys. The Business Count Survey was also competing with numerous other surveys from many different organizations that also sought to speak to business owners. This led to the owners of businesses being fatigued, and smaller businesses were already taking on additional tasks making their time that much more valuable and subsequently more likely to hesitate to take the voluntary survey.

Attachment No. 1 is the 2020 Business Count Survey publication.

Looking ahead to 2021

In May, PKED will commence the second iteration of this project. PKED is hopeful that pandemic restrictions are lifted that allow the team to physically visit businesses rather than rely on electronic communication. This will allow for stronger data collection and a higher survey completion rate.

Submitted by,

Sandra Dueck
Board Chair
Peterborough & the Kawarthas
Economic Development

Rhonda Keenan
President & CEO
Peterborough & the Kawarthas
Economic Development

Contact:
Rhonda Keenan
President & CEO
Peterborough & the Kawarthas Economic Development
Phone: 705-743-0777 ext. 2120
Fax: 705-743-3093
E-Mail: rkeenan@peterboroughed.ca

Attachments:
Attachment No. 1 2020 Business Count Survey publication