



Gillett Business Owner Survey Results

In order to better understand the conditions and concerns of business owners in downtown Gillett, a survey was conducted to collect comprehensive business information about needs and opportunities, business and workforce data, and market and marketing data. The following section provides a summary of the responses collected.



Welcome to Gillett

Needs and Opportunities Assessment

This portion of the report identifies the challenges and needs of downtown businesses as well as identifying the Main Street tools considered most beneficial to business owners. The survey also attempts to gain insight into the qualities of the downtown business climate and location.

- Respondents found business challenges to be:
 - Major Challenges:*
 - Out-of-town competition
 - Expensive or unavailable utilities
 - Minor Challenges:*
 - Expensive or unavailable products
 - Expensive shipping or transportation
 - In-town competition
 - Insufficient parking

- Respondents felt the need for information or assistance with:
 - Building improvements (31%)
 - Business planning (30%)
 - Financial management (24%)
 - Advertising or marketing (24%)
 - Business market analysis (24%)
 - Internet or E-Commerce (24%)
 - Window displays or interior store design (19%)

- Surveyed business owners found the following existing Main Street products and services useful
 - Highly Useful:*
 - Free design assistance
 - Free business assistance
 - Advertising or marketing of Main Street district as shopping destination
 - Useful:*
 - Low interest building improvement loan program
 - Sign grant up to \$200
 - Web site or Internet resources

- Surveyed business owners felt the following proposed Main Street products would be useful:
 - Very Useful*
 - Information Sharing
 - Downtown business directories, brochures, maps
 - Useful*
 - Networking events (i.e. breakfast/luncheon meetings, business after hours)
 - Individual business training (i.e. videotape training programs on loan)

- When asked if they have used, or will use, historic preservation tax credits, SBDC assistance, SCORE counseling or COMMERCE assistance, the overwhelming majority said they are not sure, or they would not.

- In relation to the business climate, a majority of the respondents agreed with the following statements:
 - Local law enforcement is outstanding
 - I feel safe downtown, even at night
 - Local fire protection is outstanding
 - Local waste management service is outstanding
 - I always try to buy products and services locally
 - Local municipal services are well worth the level of local taxation
 - I always direct customers to other downtown businesses
 - I seek ways to cooperate with complementary downtown businesses
 - My business is open when customers want to shop
 - Employees of my business show great customer service
 - Downtown Gillett is an excellent place to have a business

- Fewer, but still many, respondents agreed with:
 - My building façade draws customers into my business
 - My advertising helps my business

- A majority of respondents reported they are very satisfied or satisfied with the present location of their business.
- A majority of respondents reported they have no current plans to reduce or expand business operation. But, 37 percent did say they, or the building owner, are considering building improvement projects.

Business Characteristics

Information gathered in this section of the survey focuses on tenancy, duration of ownership, parking availability and general workforce information.

- 54 percent of respondents have operated their business for more than 20 years. But, 46 percent have owned their business for less than five years.
- More than half of respondents currently own the space their business is located.
- The vast majority of respondents claim their customers utilize parking within one block of the business entrance.
- The vast majority of respondents claim their employees utilize a designated employee parking lot.
- When asked about the scarce employee resources, business owners responded the following were critical to their ability to compete for available employees.
 - Flexible hours
 - More vacation time
 - Paid training








*see the Considerations sections for more discussion on this data

Market and Marketing Data

The purpose of this portion of the survey is to collect data regarding store hours, busiest shopping times, sources of advertising, complimentary and competitive businesses and target markets. By analyzing this information, we can determine which changes are possible in the planning of downtown activities and economic development to improve foot traffic, success among businesses, and to increase the overall economic vitality of the downtown area.

Customer/Client Traffic

- Surveyed business owners responded the busiest times of the week are:
 - Monday – Saturday before 11am
 - Friday 1 pm to 5 pm
 Business owners also do not feel they need to increase or modify current store hours.
- The three busiest months of the year for a majority of the businesses surveyed are:
 - July
 - August
 - December
- Respondents felt certain community events increased their business’s foot traffic or sales volume. The county fair garnered the most responses. Note the high level of *none* responses.

Response	Frequency	Percent	
4th of July	6	16.22	
Spring into Gillett	4	10.81	
County Fair	14	37.84	
Christmas in the Park	4	10.81	
Other	6	16.22	
None	18	48.65	
Missing	3	8.11	

- A majority of respondents described their target market as:
 - Female
 - Ages 25-44
 - Annual household income \$50,000 - \$74,999

Advertising

- 49 percent of respondents reported they do not utilize any radio advertising. But among those who have, the most popular outlets were:
 - WTCH 960 (27%)
 - WOWN 99.3 (16%)
 - WOCO 107.1 (16%)
- As expected, advertising dollars are generally spent on local publications. Below is the detailed break down of the respondent's use of each outlet. The numbers indicate most respondents utilize more than one publication



Response	Frequency	Percent	
Times Herald	24	64.86	
Bonus	21	56.76	
Evening Leader	0	0.00	
Sunday Penny Saver	0	0.00	
The Reminder	2	5.41	
Green Bay Press Gazette	2	5.41	
Other	4	10.81	
None	8	21.62	
Missing	-	-	

Competition











- A majority of business owners responded the following traits helped in a large degree to make their business more competitive:
 - Service
 - Quality
 - Location
 - Price
 To a lesser degree, respondents noted:
 - Selection
 - Hours
 - Brands

- Respondents would like to see the following businesses available downtown:

Most Wanted New Businesses

Response	Frequency	Percent	
Bakery	21	56.76	
Realtor	6	16.22	
Clothing	9	24.32	
Dairy Bar	2	5.41	
Car Wash	21	56.76	
Pharmacy	24	64.86	
Supper Club	7	18.92	
Antique Store	2	5.41	
Travel Agency	4	10.81	
Min Brew Pub	2	5.41	
Specialty Foods	5	13.51	
Shipping Service	12	32.43	
Coffee Shop & Deli	9	24.32	
Exercise & Fitness Center	15	40.54	
Computer Supples & Service	7	18.92	
Other	2	5.41	
Missing	7	18.92	

- Respondents would like to see the following community assets developed:

Response	Frequency	Percent	
Nicolet Rec Trail	9	24.32	
Public Parking Lot	6	16.22	
Golf Course	6	16.22	
Youth Center	15	40.54	
City Park	8	21.62	
Lakeside or Riverside Park	5	13.51	
Walking/Nature Path	8	21.62	
Senior Citizen Center	15	40.54	
None	1	2.70	
Other	2	5.41	

Considerations

Using the information we have gathered from the business owner surveys, this section will attempt to identify trends, attitudes and behaviors which present the downtown community with critical needs or potential opportunities. In no way does this section intend to replace local knowledge and expertise, instead, it is intended to direct your knowledge and utilize your expertise in the most efficient way possible.

- Many respondents feel assistance with advertising and marketing is a critical need. More specifically, the section on existing Main Street tools reveals respondents feel advertising and marketing the downtown community as a shopping destination would be highly useful. To further pursue the advertising and marketing of downtown as a destination it may be beneficial to explore the use of downtown business directories, brochures and maps. Successful advertising may also help address the major challenge of out of town competition.
- 31 percent of respondents reported they need assistance with building improvements. Likewise, 37 percent said they are considering undertaking improvements. This data may point to an opportunity to provide assistance with façade and building improvements in order to strengthen downtown's sense of place.
- Given the benefits to small business owners from counseling programs, such as SBDC, SCORE and COMMERCE, and the high rate of respondents who claim they are unsure if they would use such services, it may be beneficial to take steps to make business owners more aware of the advantages of participating in these programs.
- The business and workforce data show a trend toward relatively new business owners; revealing that 46 percent of respondents have owned their business for less than five years. This coupled with high response rates in almost every category dealing with the need for business assistance may warrant consideration when prioritizing and developing Main Street assistance.
- When respondents were asked what community events increased their business's foot traffic, 49 percents felt none of the current community events benefited their business. This may indicate a need and an opportunity to provide community events targeted at attracting costumers downtown.
- The responses to which business categories would be beneficial to the downtown environment, as well as the statements made about the downtown business climate and location, could be used in a future business recruitment plan. Recruitment should also bear in mind the target market identified by this survey.

The attached appendices contain the preliminary business owner survey results and a condensed item analysis report.