



CEDIK

Community and Economic
Development Initiative
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Final Report for Mason County

Business Retention and Expansion Program
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University of Kentucky
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 College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The BR&E Program is a facilitated business assessment service provided by CEDIK, the Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky. The BR&E program worked closely with leaders in Mason County, including the Chamber of Commerce. During the fall of 2015, local volunteers met with business owners in the area to listen to and document their perspectives on the local business environment. This report is a summary of those BR&E survey interview results.

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

The leaders of Mason County interviewed 28 businesses in Maysville and Mason County. These firms employ anywhere from 0 to 28 employees and are primarily retail businesses.

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

In the past five years, 74% of the businesses have introduced new products and services, and 75% anticipate new products and services in the next two years. Emerging technology is also anticipated to impact future products and services.

MARKET & INDUSTRY

Company sales are healthy for the businesses in the survey. Over seventy percent indicated that total company sales are increasing, while 18% are stable. Primary competitors include local, regional, and internet businesses. Over three-fourths of the businesses sold products or services or advertised over the internet.

GROWTH POTENTIAL

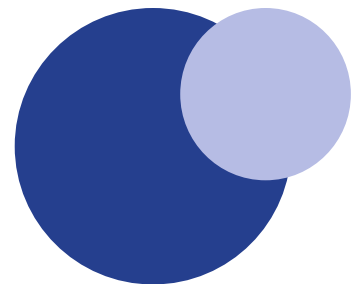
Nearly two-thirds (64%) of the companies surveyed indicated they plan to expand in the next three years. Most firms reported that the company's current facilities are adequate for their future needs. Barriers to growth included income levels of local residents, slow local job growth, competing business locations, on-line selling, and perceptions of downtown and parking.

WORKFORCE

The availability, quality, stability, turnover, longevity, and reliability of workers were generally rated as good to fair. Fifty-four percent require a high school diploma for employees, and 11% have employees in positions that require a college degree.

COMMUNITY

Over ninety percent of respondents in this survey rated Kentucky as a good to very good place to do business. Ninety percent rated Mason County as a good to very good place to do business. From a business point of view, police and fire services, cell phone and digital communications, water, sewer, and quality of life received highly favorable ratings as strengths for doing business in Mason County. Parking and transportation access received the lowest ratings.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the findings of the survey, leaders identified four areas for recommendations for the County to consider regarding the local business climate:

PRODUCTS & SERVICES

74% of respondents reported they have introduced new products and services in the past five years and 78% indicated they use social media, such as Facebook to advertise. There should be expanded training and awareness of how to effectively use social media and websites for advertising. Consideration of marketing alliances should be explored.

GROWTH POTENTIAL

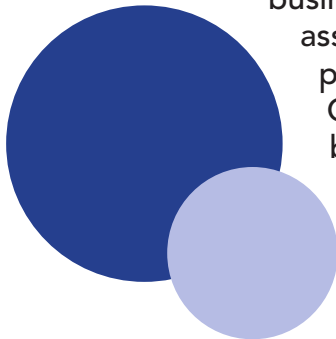
64% of respondents indicated they plan to expand their business in the next three years. Barriers mentioned are the need for more customers and slow local job growth in the area. We should continue participating in the economic activities such as the Vision 2025 initiative and continue our marketing efforts of the area (including maintenance of the Maysville Open for Business property listing, and positive attributes brochure). We should explore the need for “feeder” companies for nearby industries in Morehead, Lexington, Georgetown, etc.

WORKFORCE

68% of the respondents reported they invest in employee training and 30% participate in a mentorship or Co-op program with the schools. 70% of respondents indicated interest in such programs. The Chamber should investigate methods to educate businesses about mentorship and Co-op programs.

COMMUNITY

Respondents consider the community and state as a very good place to do business. Parking and transportation access were considered the weak areas. The Chamber should have discussions with the city and county officials about parking and transportation issues. The Chamber should continue to promote the positive attributes of doing business in this area and consider initiatives on how to educate/assist businesses with new state and or local regulations. The perception of downtown compared to the top of the hill and Old Washington is an issue that the Chamber should work on by exploring ideas to unify the entire community as one.



BACKGROUND

The Business Retention and Expansion program in Mason County, Kentucky focused on the opinions and concerns of the business sector. The study primarily focused on small, locally owned retail businesses in Mason County. During the fall of 2015, representatives of 28 businesses were interviewed. The following is a summary of each section of the survey. It is important to remember that the responses reflect the opinions of the survey participants.

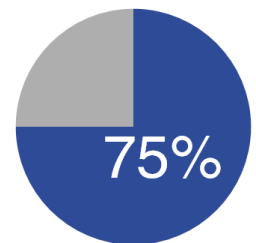
Respondents were asked to honestly reflect their viewpoint of Mason County. In some cases, participants may not be knowledgeable of services or programs. Furthermore, the results are not weighed by the size of the firm. Thus each firm's response is counted as equal, even though the sizes of the firms are not equal. Finally, these results are based on 28 responses to the survey.

THE PARTICIPANTS

The surveys were completed by the owner, chief executive, or other person in charge to best reflect the needs of the establishment. The participants reported employing between 0 and 16 full time employees, and between 0 and 28 part time employees. As mentioned above, the businesses were mostly retail.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Nearly three-quarters of respondents (74%) reported that they have introduced new products and services in the past five years. A similar number of respondents (75%) stated that they could introduce new products or services in the next two years. Over half (57%) of respondents believed that there are new technologies and changes emerging that could change their business. When the participants were asked what type of business would they like to see introduced or expanded in Mason County, the responses included types of business such as: restaurants, various types of retail stores, manufacturing and industry, and more variety and family-focused businesses. Similarly, industry, services, retail, restaurants, recreation, and hobby-related businesses were mentioned as businesses that would draw more trade into Mason County.



of respondents anticipate offering new products or services in the next two years.

MARKET

Respondents reported sales of products and services were stable or increasing. Over seventy percent indicated that total sales of products and services were increasing, 18% reported that they were stable and 11% reported they were decreasing. When asked about the primary market they serve, 54% reported that their primary market is local, 36% regional, and 11% national, 4% international, and 11%

Respondent's major products or services:

furniture, mattresses, appliances, electronics, consignment, gifts, power equipment, quilting, fabric, pawn, guns, jewelry, cosmetics, auto parts, auto service, livestock feed, crops products, hunting, archery, gemstones, swimming pools, computer service, home furnishings, florist, farm supplies, clothing, building supplies, building materials, lamps, lampshades, prom & bridal clothing, sports apparel, sports equipment, food, merchandise, embroidery, alterations

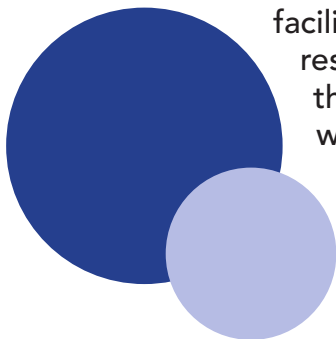
internet. (Some respondents answered more than one primary market location.) Comparably, 64% of respondents indicated that their main competitors are local, 21% regional, 11% national, 4% international, and 14% internet. Three-fourths (75%) of respondents stated that their business sold products or services or advertised over the internet. The participants using the internet to sell products or services mentioned positive results such as using the internet to get information out to the public, advertising and reaching new customers, and increased sales. Over three-fourths (78%) use social media, such as Facebook, to advertise or sell products. Benefits of social media include staying engaged with customers, reaching existing and new customers, providing technical advice, and new markets and increased sales.



Maysville Church Steeples looking over the Ohio River.

GROWTH POTENTIAL

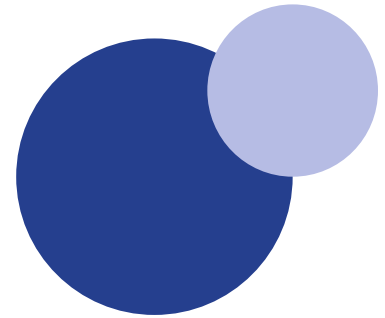
Mason County has some opportunities for business growth. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of the respondents indicated that they have plans to expand their business in the next three years, 32% stated that they did not plan on expanding. Fifty-four percent of the businesses responded that they own their current facility, and 86% indicate that their current facility is adequate for future operations. Fifty-two percent of respondents stated that there are barriers to business growth in the area. Barriers mentioned were the need to have more people with spending ability and slow local job growth, competing local business locations (downtown versus the hill), on-line selling, and perception of downtown and parking. In the face of these barriers to growth, only 14% of businesses have considered relocating.



WORKFORCE

The 28 businesses responding reported that they employ 108 full time employees, and 81 part time employees, for a total of 189 employees. Eighteen percent of reporting businesses have workers in more than one shift. Thirty-six percent utilize temporary or part time workers to meet workforce demand. Fifty-four percent of businesses surveyed require a high school diploma or equivalent; in addition, 11% of businesses have positions that require a college degree. Over two-thirds (68%) of businesses invest in employee training. Types of training included job orientation, on-the-job training, customer relations, and a wide variety of skill specific training. Overall, the majority of participants rate the availability, quality, stability, turnover, longevity, and reliability of workers in Mason County as good to fair. The survey also showed that workers come from many surrounding counties in both Kentucky and Ohio.

Twelve percent of businesses in Mason County currently have unfilled positions. Only 12% of businesses report experiencing recruiting problems with employee positions or skills. Thirty percent of businesses participate in a mentorship or Co-op program with high school or college students, and 70% of the businesses stated they were interested in such programs. Most of the respondents seem to use more informal methods to recruit employees, such as word of mouth. The internet (37%) was the most used of the more formal methods of recruiting. Other recruitment methods were newspaper ads (26%), Kentucky Career Center (25%) and recruiting at areas schools and colleges (22%).

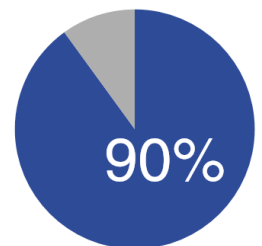


COMMUNITY

The survey respondents in Mason County generally considered the state of Kentucky as a very good (54%) or good (39%) place to do business. More than half (54%) rated Mason County as a very good place to do business, and 36% rated Mason County as a good place to do business, meaning that 90% of respondents rated Mason County as a good or very good place to do business.

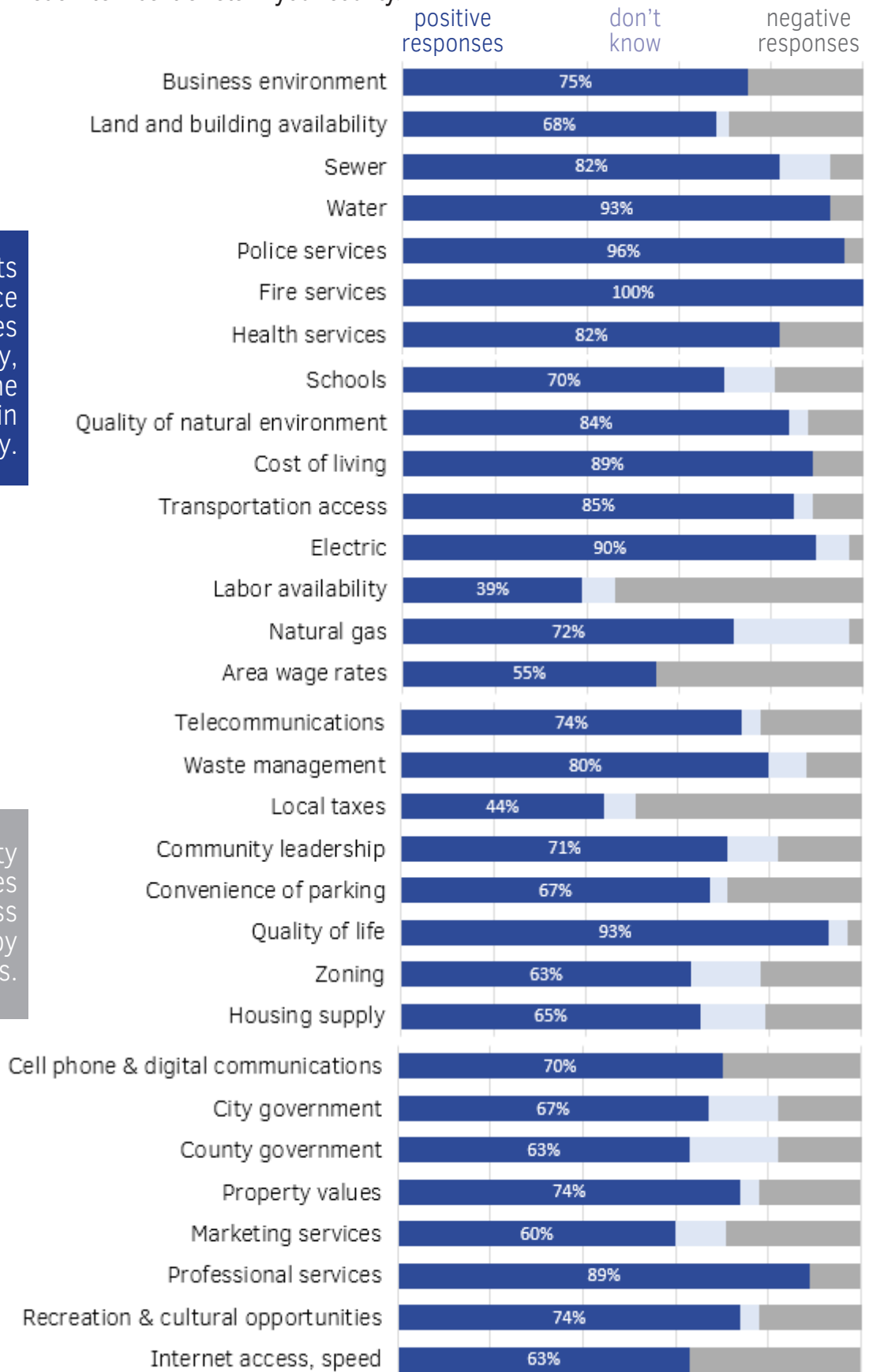
Those surveyed responded to a list of 31 community characteristics and services, and rated each of them as excellent, good, fair, poor, or no opinion from a business point of view (see graph next page). Police and fire services, cell phone and digital communications, water, sewer, and quality of life were all cited the most frequently in the strong category. The characteristics most frequently considered weak were parking and transportation access.

A series of open-ended questions about business in Mason County was asked of those surveyed. Refer to the appendix of survey results for a full report of the responses. Positives of doing business in Mason County highlighted the values of a small town atmosphere, quality of life characteristics, and familiarity with the county, town, its residents,



of respondents rate Mason County as a very good or good place to do business,

Table 1. Survey results for question, “From a business point of view, please rate each item as it exists in your county.”



Respondents rated the police and fire services very favorably, along with the quality of life in Mason County.

Labor availability and local taxes were rated less favorably by respondents.

and the customer base. Negative aspects of doing business in Mason County emphasized the effects of the economy on places with smaller populations, location issues, local understanding of local businesses, and competition from out-of-town businesses.

Businesses were asked about what attracted them to open their businesses in Mason County. Responses included the local need for certain types of businesses, desire to open a business in one's hometown, and opportunities that were available in Mason County. Other general comments about business in Mason County identified issues that should be dealt with to continue to improve the local business climate.

Comments about local government promotion of local business included both positive comments and suggestions for additional action. Physical infrastructure needs were mentioned as areas in need of help, such as streets and transportation, building improvements, and building sites. Suggestions also included efforts for community promotion and events to highlight local business. Respondents also provided many other suggestions to promote business in Mason County. These also included physical improvements and promotion events and campaigns. See the full list of comments in the appendix of survey results.

Finally, the businesses were asked about both positive and negative characteristics of the customers that they work with. Positive characteristics for the community included loyalty, friendly clientele, supportive of local business, and referrals to other customers. Negative characteristics that were mentioned included lack of respect and understanding of the local business situation, willingness to drive out of town to shop, and an increase in shoplifting. The full list of comments is in the appendix of survey results.



Shops in downtown Maysville.

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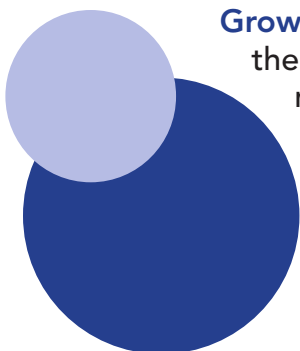
RED FLAG ISSUES

Red flag issues are concerns of the respondents that required immediate attention by the project team. Most often these issues are problems that were viewed as a hindrance to successful operation or a need for further information. By specifying a problem as a red flag, respondents were willing to have that issue identified with their names to the project leaders. In return, respondents were promised a response to that issue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Products and Services: 74% of respondents reported they have introduced new products and services in the past five years and 78% indicated they use social media, such as Facebook to advertise. There should be expanded training and awareness of how to effectively use social media and websites for advertising. Consideration of marketing alliances should be explored.

Growth Potential: 64% of respondents indicated they plan to expand their business in the next three years. Barriers mentioned are the need for more customers and slow local job growth in the area. We should continue participating in the economic activities such as the Vision 2025 initiative and continue our marketing efforts of the area (including maintenance of the Maysville Open for Business property listing, and positive attributes brochure). We should explore the need for "feeder" companies for nearby industries in Morehead, Lexington, Georgetown, etc.



Workforce: 68% of the respondents reported they invest in employee training and 30% participate in a mentorship or Co-op program with the schools. 70% of respondents indicated interest in such programs. The Chamber should investigate methods to educate businesses about mentorship and Co-op programs.

Community: Respondents consider the community and state as a very good place to do business. Parking and transportation access were considered the weak areas. The Chamber should have discussions with the city and county officials about parking and transportation issues. The Chamber should continue to promote the positive attributes of doing business in this area and consider initiatives on how to educate/assist businesses with new state and or local regulations. The perception of downtown compared to the top of the hill and Old Washington is an issue that the Chamber should work on by exploring ideas to unify the entire community as one.



APPENDIX

MASON COUNTY BUSINESS SURVEY

Product / Services

1. Major products or services: furniture, mattresses, appliances, electronics, consignment, gifts, power equipment, quilting, fabric, pawn, guns, jewelry, cosmetics, auto parts, auto service, livestock feed, crops products, hunting, archery, gemstones, swimming pools, computer service, home furnishings, florist, farm supplies, clothing, building supplies, building materials, lamps, lampshades, prom and bridal clothing, sports apparel, sports equipment, food, merchandise, embroidery, alterations

2. During the last five years, has the business introduced any new products or services

YES	74%
NO	26%

3. In the next two years do you anticipate any new products or services?

YES	75%
NO	25%

4. Is there new technology / changes emerging that will substantially change your business's primary products, services, or production methods?

YES	57%
NO	43%

Market and Industry

5. Are total business sales:

INCREASING	71%
STABLE	18%
DECREASING	11%

6. Is your business's **primary** market:

LOCAL	54%
REGIONAL	36%
NATIONAL	11%
INTERNATIONAL	4%
INTERNET	11%

7. Are your **primary** competitors:

LOCAL	64%
REGIONAL	21%
NATIONAL	11%
INTERNATIONAL	4%
INTERNET	14%

8. What regulation or legislation most affects your business?
Local: utility cost, gun control, parking, tobacco, zoning, taxes, health department codes

State: sales tax, gun control, antibiotics regulation, taxes, fire marshal, minimum wage

Federal: taxation, EPA, minimum wage, gun control, income tax, safety regulations, health care, labor laws, FDA,

9. Do you sell products and/or services or advertise over the internet?

YES 75% NO 25%

If yes, how has the internet benefited your business?

Information source for customers, advertising, company products, increased sales, circulates name, company information, cleans out extra inventory, communications, reach new customers, contact and appointments, brought people in, make orders, gets sizes and colors, can reach everywhere, Facebook comments helpful, increased sales

10. Do you sell products and/or services or advertise using social media?

YES 78% NO 22%

If yes, how has social media benefited your business?

Stay engaged with customers, no cost, new markets, sales, reaching customers, provide technical advice, increased sales, increased customer base

Growth Potential

11. In the next three years, does your business plan to expand?

YES 64% NO 32%

12. Do you own your local facilities?

YES 54% NO 46%

13. Are the business's current facilities adequate for anticipated future operations?

YES 86% NO 14%

If no to Q 13, why not?

Need more area, need upgrades, bigger store, road frontage, need bigger space

14. Are projected workforce needs for this business:

INCREASING 39%
STABLE 54%
DECREASING 7%

15. Are there any barriers to business growth in this community? YES 52% NO 48%

If yes to Q 15, what are these barriers?

Having enough people with money to purchase goods, perception of downtown compared to hill, lack of downtown business activity, on-line selling, regulations, people's attitudes, lack of community job growth, parking, customers, advertising, location, vacant buildings, local government, need more businesses to replace job losses

16. Have you considered relocating?

YES 14% NO 86%

If yes to Q 16, where? Top of hill, within a mile

Why? Increased traffic flow, more visibility, more parking

17. Are you familiar with the Work Ready Community? YES 57% NO 43%

18. What other businesses would you like to see in Mason County?

Steak n Shake, restaurants, industry, manufacturing, lamp producing, shoe store, book store, shooting range, Chick-Fil-A, Qdoba, Kohl's, Target, kids clothing, women's clothing, antiques, crafts, processing, independent retail, factories, hobby shops, White Castle, affordable clothing, craft, sewing, agriculture equipment dealers, dry cleaning, basketball arena, movie theater

19. What other businesses would draw more trade into Mason County?

Industry, port, logistics, equipment repair, construction, restaurants, specialized retail, auto parts plant, antique stores, retail, party store, Marshall's, craft, sewing, pets, tourism based, festivals and events, gun shop, shooting range, factories, basketball and sports arena, clothing, Hobby Lobby, Cracker Barrel
(many said same as in 18)

Workforce

20. How many employees does your business have at this time? (please write in number) FULL TIME: range 0-16, total of 108 employees
PART TIME: range 0-28, total of 81 employees

21. Does your business have more than one shift? YES 18% NO 82%

22. Does your business use temporary employees?
YES 36% NO 68%

23. Does your business use seasonal employees? YES 32% NO 68%

24. How do you rate the **availability** of workers in this area?

VERY GOOD 7% GOOD 19% FAIR 63% POOR 11%

25. How do you rate the **quality** of workers in this area?

VERY GOOD 11% GOOD 32% FAIR 50% POOR 7%

26. How do you rate the **stability** of workers in this area?

VERY GOOD 21% GOOD 32% FAIR 39% POOR 7%

27. How do you rate the **turnover** of workers in this area?

VERY GOOD 15% GOOD 33% FAIR 48% POOR 4%

28. How do you rate the **longevity** of workers in this area?

VERY GOOD 23% GOOD 35% FAIR 38% POOR 4%

29. How do you rate the **reliability** of workers in this area?

VERY GOOD 15% GOOD 48% FAIR 33% POOR 4%

Any comment on the workforce: retail has sub-par workforce, technology difficulties, fast pace life is not always better, very small pool to choose from, finding employees that can pass drug test is a concern, education level not where it should be, concerned that young people don't work or use phone instead of working

30. Does your business require employees to have at least a high school diploma or equivalent? YES 54% NO 39% N/A 7%

31. Does your business have any employee positions that require a college degree? YES 11% NO 82% N/A 7%

32. Does your business invest in employee training? YES 68% NO 21% N/A 11%

If yes to Q 32, what type: new hire orientation, customer relations, mechanical, sales, leadership, hands on, video, computer, on-line programs, safety training, computer learning modules, trade specific training, on-the-job training, technical, business, fork lift safety, on-going merchandising, training videos, tests, company university out of town, food prep

33. Does your business use the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) test to evaluate current or future employees? YES 4% NO 82% N/A 14%

34. Do you presently have unfilled positions? YES 12% NO 88%

35. Is the business experiencing recruitment problems with any employee positions or skills? YES 18% NO 75% N/A 7%

If yes to Q 35, what positions / skills? Mechanic, part-time sales, service writer, experienced technicians, design, sales, CDL drivers, warehouse

36. Does your business participate in a mentorship or co-op program with high school or community college students?

YES 30% NO 70%

If no to Q 36, would you be interested in participating in a mentorship program with high school or community college students? YES 70% NO 30%

37. The following is a list of methods to recruit employees. Please indicate if you have used each of the following, and if so, please indicate if it was effective or not: (please circle answer for both USE and EFFECTIVENESS)

	<u>USE?</u>	<u>EFFECTIVE?</u>
Kentucky Career Center	YES 25% NO 75%	YES(1) NO(5)
Private Employment Services	YES 7% NO 93%	YES(2) NO
Newspaper Ads	YES 26% NO 74%	YES(2) NO(3)
Recruit at area schools and college	YES 22% NO 78%	YES(3) NO(2)
Internet	YES 37% NO 63%	YES(6) NO(1)
Word of mouth	YES 86% NO 14%	YES(17) NO(1)
Other: social media, former customers, hand pick them, customer service in other stores	YES(2) NO	YES(2) NO

38. What are the counties in which your workforce resides? Mason, Lewis, Bracken, Brown OH, Adams OH, Robertson, Fleming, Clermont OH, Greenup, Jessamine, Harrison, Bourbon, Nicholas, Hamilton OH

39. Is child care a significant issue for your workforce? YES 18% NO 82%

40. Does your business provide child care for your employees? YES 0% NO 100%

Community

41. As a place to do business, what is your overall opinion of:

Kentucky VERY GOOD 54% GOOD 39% FAIR 7% POOR 0%

Mason County VERY GOOD 54% GOOD 36% FAIR 11% POOR 0%

42. From a **business point of view**, please rate each item as it exists in your county: (please circle answer for each item)

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW
Health services	E 11%	G 71%	F 14%	P 4%	?
Fire services	E 46%	G 54%	F	P	?
Police services	E 43%	G 54%	F 4%	P	?

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW
Water	E 29%	G 64%	F 7%	P	?
Sewer	E 21%	G 61%	F 7%	P	? 11%
Land & building availability	E 29%	G 39%	F 29%	P	? 4%
Business environment	E 18%	G 57%	F 21%	P 4%	?
Area wage rates	E 11%	G 44%	F 41%	P 4%	?
Natural gas	E 18%	G 54%	F 4%	P	? 25%
Labor availability	E 7%	G 32%	F 43%	P 11%	? 7%
Electric	E 29%	G 61%	F 4%	P	? 7%
Transportation access	E 21%	G 64%	F 7%	P 4%	? 4%
Cost of living	E 18%	G 71%	F 11%	P	?
Quality of natural environment	E 15%	G 69%	F 12%	P	? 4%
Schools	E 22%	G 67%	F 19%	P	? 11%
Housing supply	E 14%	G 50%	F 21%	P	? 14%
Zoning	E 11%	G 52%	F 22%	P	? 15%
Quality of life	E 30%	G 63%	F 4%	P	? 4%
Convenience of parking	E 22%	G 44%	F 22%	P 7%	?
Community leadership	E 15%	G 56%	F 19%	P	? 11%
Local taxes	E 14%	G 30%	F 44%	P 4%	? 7%
Waste management	E 15%	G 65%	F 12%	P	? 8%
Telecommunications	E 11%	G 63%	F 22%	P	? 4%
Internet access, speed	E 7%	G 56%	F 26%	P 11%	?

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	DON'T KNOW
Recreation and cultural opportunities	E 11%	G 63%	F 19%	P 4%	? 4%
Professional services	E 19%	G 70%	F 11%	P	?
Marketing services	E 7%	G 52%	F 22%	P 7%	? 11%
Property values	E 11%	G 63%	F 22%	P	? 4%
County government	E 11%	G 52%	F 19%	P	? 19%
City government	E 11%	G 56%	F 19%	P	? 15%
Cell phone and digital communications	E 7%	G 63%	F 19%	P 11%	?
Other _____	E	G	F	P	?

43. List **positives** of doing business in Mason County.

Pride in having a local business, great to do business in Mason Co., broad socio-economic customer base, this business has driven prices down, people, great community support, strong leadership, friendly people, willingness to help, sense of community, small community, I know everyone, affordable, knowing customer personally, local trade, good community, possible to do a business, reasonable tax base, police protection great, fair amount of money to spend due to industry, quality of life, low costs, ease of access to local officials, close to family, Maysville is fairly busy, close to Ohio market also, stable area, great community, big town items at affordable prices, close knit community, not a lot of competition, service area, home town, people can find business, word of mouth, we offer a lot to the people, convenient to get to places, support from government, great customer base

44. List **negatives** of doing business in Mason County.

Conference center events create parking problems, lack of vision and planning, division between downtown and the hill, not much income, I know everyone, lack of community support, downtown parking, need pull-in style parking, school boards, commissioners quick to vote tax increases, political environment won't be accountable, employee tax, city tax, zoning, small employment pool, overall demographics are less than desirable for even more successful business, abandoned and vacant properties, hard to get word out about where we are, work force, people shop out of town and on line instead of locally, driving distance to bigger cities, small town doesn't have as much money as larger places, Chamber needs to be more attentive to members, do not understand retail, Mason Co. has been stagnant for past 5 years, residential and commercial business is down

45. What attracted you to open your business in Mason County?

Unmet need, natural extension of other markets, size-Maysville larger retail hub than surrounding towns, family connections, long standing business, need for service, lived here, lack of similar store, opportunity, quality of life, low cost of living, costs of doing business cheaper than bigger cities, already had large customer base, home town, worked for family and was offered opportunity, ag industry, existing business, like to eat, established business, live here, originated out of home then found available space to expand at reasonable cost, company goes into smaller markets, corporate saw need in community, need for food and supplies in hope of bringing residents to downtown, purchased existing business

46. Any other comments you have about business or conducting business in Mason County?

New bridge has hurt some because people bypass downtown, need a dog park – dog walkers don't clean up, would appreciate more city support and city communications, I wish public would realize importance of shopping in Maysville and keeping dollars here, fortunate to have Carlson family making improvements downtown, need more good jobs, love the town, not enough economic development, business has been really good to me in Mason Co., government easy to work with, need better highway infrastructure to attract manufacturing jobs, easier access to interstate, downtown businesses need better hours, need more unity between shopkeepers, we are reactive community not proactive, most business in past 5 years has been out of Mason Co.

47. What is local government doing or not doing to promote a business friendly environment?

Does not appear to be transparency in local government or industrial authority, putting information on web site – very satisfied, grant money form property improvement, need new director for industrial development, AA highway and new bridge help drive by traffic, do more to help development of downtown buildings, compulsory purchase of building in poor shape, tourism doing a good job, they are trying, no events in outlying plazas, no events outside downtown, very supportive, not doing anything, all downtown people on tourist commission, need to promote available retail and industrial sites, local government doing okay, not communicating with local retailers, limited access to public meetings, not much help to smaller businesses

48. What else can be done to promote business in the Mason County?

Focus on river, floodwall murals, unique architecture, cohesive marketing approach to promote business, encouraging promoting one another, continued property improvement, better zoning laws to combine with agriculture, logistics-transportation, be careful not to bypass local business, more options for membership, more activities involving local businesses, incentives, draw something new to downtown, promote more, more community events to involve everyone, economic development, Chamber keep doing what you're doing, downtown gets everything, need to promote all areas, job fairs, Business Day, more marketing, lobby to get state and federal backing for port of Maysville, web page needs to be more accurate, get to know small business owners

49. What are positive characteristics of the customers you work with?

Realistic expectations, friendly, loyal, down-to-earth, genuine, good to our business, liked small town business day, locals want to help business, creative, willing to help one, another, charitable toward community, wonderful to work with, customers still want personal service, ag community with knowledge about ag, willing to spend money, honest, hard-working, positive atmosphere, customers provide word of mouth, trust our work, nice, want most for their dollar, regular customers, supportive, refer friends, never had a complaint in the store, love shopping small, customers are very interesting, destination business, repeat customers, customers satisfied with products and services

50. Are there any negative characteristics of the customers you work with?

Won't buy if not on sale but will drive out of town, families dealing with drug problems, lack of respect of my family time, need to have something done "5 minutes ago", misconception I can do whatever whenever, argumentative about store policies, customers talking on cell phones, customers worry about customer service, a few are unfriendly, one person wanted to use food stamps to buy store product, some are uneducated about their automobile and can be rude when they don't understand what we explain, some want something for nothing, Walmart mentality, increase of shoplifting, theft, some not paying accounts on time



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