

CRESTON VALLEY- KOOTENAY LAKE  
**Economic Action Partnership**  
Working Together For Shared Prosperity



**BUSINESS SUPPORT SURVEY  
DATA ANALYSIS REPORT**

Winter 2018



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# Business Support Survey

Winter 2018

CRESTON VALLEY – KOOTENAY LAKE  
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## ABOUT THE CV-KL EAP

The communities of the Creston Valley – Kootenay Lake area (Lower Kootenay Band, Regional District of Central Kootenay Areas A, B and C, and the Town of Creston) are working together to find joint economic opportunities and actions through the creation of the Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake Economic Action Partnership (CV-KL EAP) project. To accomplish this, there has been extensive outreach and discussion with community members, businesses, partners and other stakeholders. Engagement to date has focused on understanding the strengths, challenges and priority opportunities for economic development in the area.

After initial community outreach in Fall 2017, the team identified a need to connect further with local businesses. Many business owners, operators and entrepreneurs have indicated collaboration and additional support is needed for them to grow and prosper in our region. [The Business Support Survey looks further into these opportunities and asks for specifics.](#)

## ABOUT THE BUSINESS SUPPORT SURVEY

From December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017 to January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018, the *Business Support Survey* was open for businesses to complete. The survey was available online and paper version at designated locations around the region.

By completing a survey, participants had the option to be entered to win customized business/marketing support. There were 5 businesses drawn (at random) and received the following support:

- A 1 hour consultation, and
- Customized training or support session(s). Training and support will be dependent on individual business needs.

Overall, [102 business participated in the survey](#) – 68 from the Creston Valley (RDCK Areas B, C, and Town of Creston), 33 from Kootenay Lake (RDCK Area A), and 1 business from both Creston Valley and Kootenay Lake area.

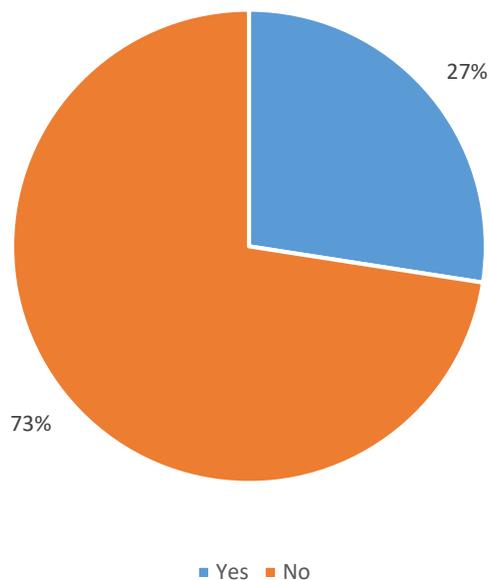
## ABOUT THE SURVEY ANALYSIS

The following survey analysis illustrates all responses received by participating businesses. Below are a few things to note while you go through the analysis:

- Closed-ended questions will have chart (i.e. pie chart or line graph) and will be accompanied with a summary of the results.
- Some questions will show separate results from Creston Valley and Kootenay Lake businesses. It's important to note that both areas are unique and businesses may provide different feedback. However, this survey is designed to support the regional economic strategy, which means most question analyses' will be based on all responses.
- To protect the identity of groups and individuals, no contact information is included in the analysis, or, in the raw survey data spreadsheet. This includes owner and business names.
- Raw survey data is kept by Kootenay Employment Services and will be accessible upon request.

## SECTION 1: PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT INFORMATION

Have you given input to the Economic Action Strategy before?  
*(i.e. in person, by survey, community conversations)*



If you answered 'Yes', please specify how you were involved.

13 responses – EAP Strategy Survey (Fall 2017)

7 responses – EAP community engagement activities (Fall 2017 and Winter 2018)

6 responses – Supporting groups and individuals (i.e. team members, partners, groups)

2 responses – Other meetings

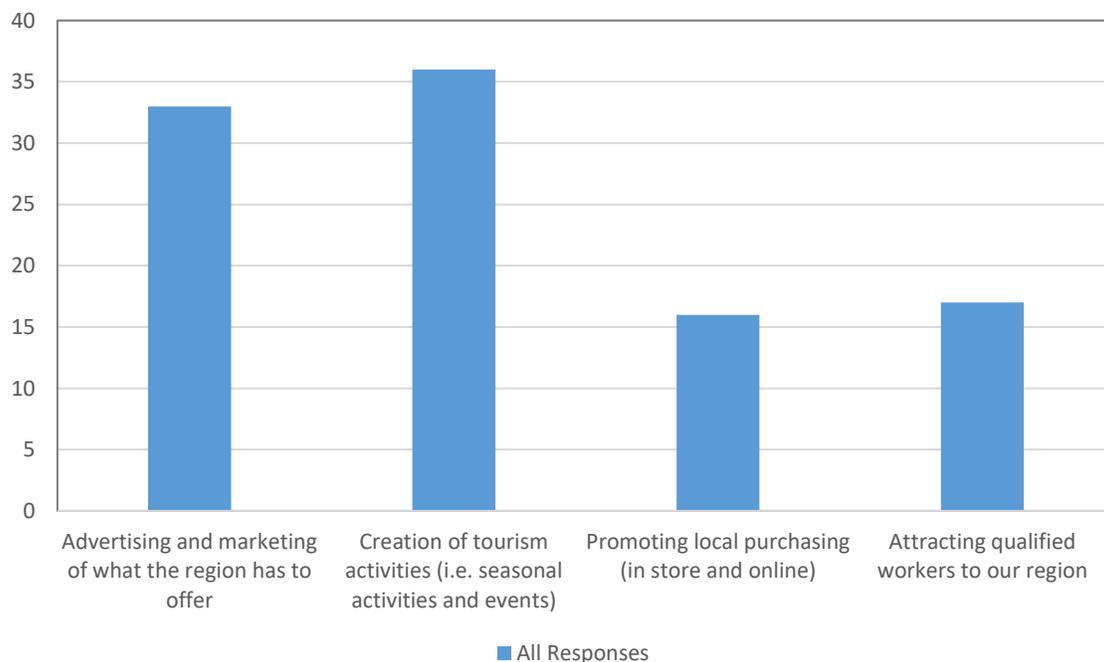
This question was asked to inquire about previous participation in the CV-KL EAP project. Overall, **73% of respondents stated they had not participated prior to this survey.** This was an ideal answer for this survey, as the CV-KL EAP was seeking new and additional input from the business community.

## SECTION 2: DO YOU AGREE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY?

Below are some 'hot topics' and top answers from the business community. Feedback was collected from previous engagements, such as the EAP Economic Strategy Survey (2017) and Business Retention and Expansion Survey (2016). **Please indicate your top answer.**

In your opinion,

What area should the Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake region approve upon?

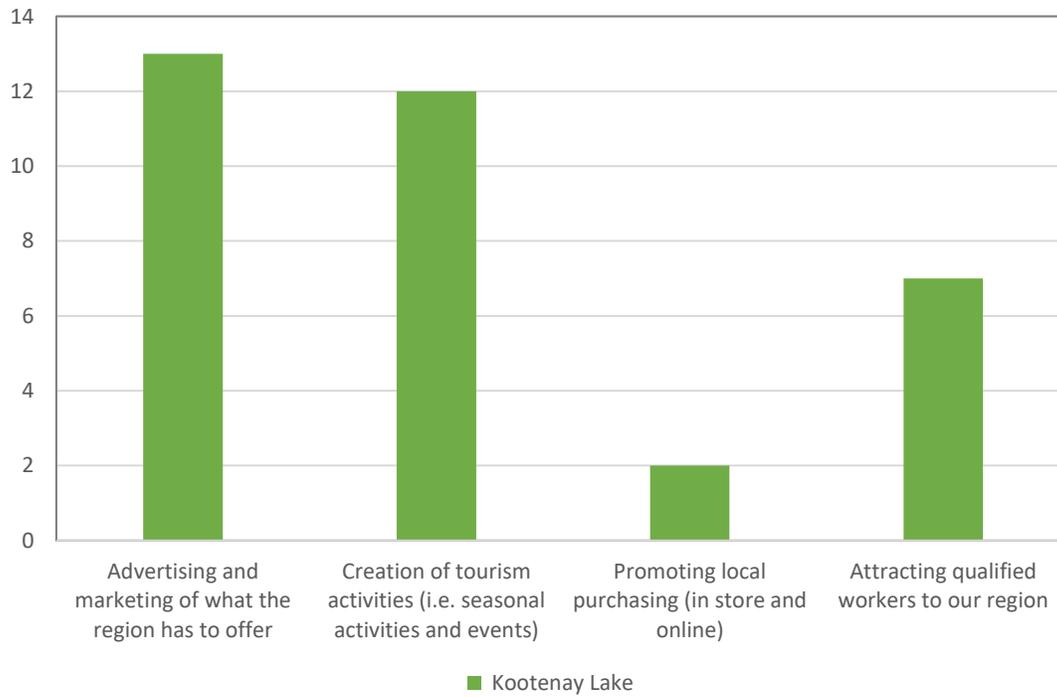
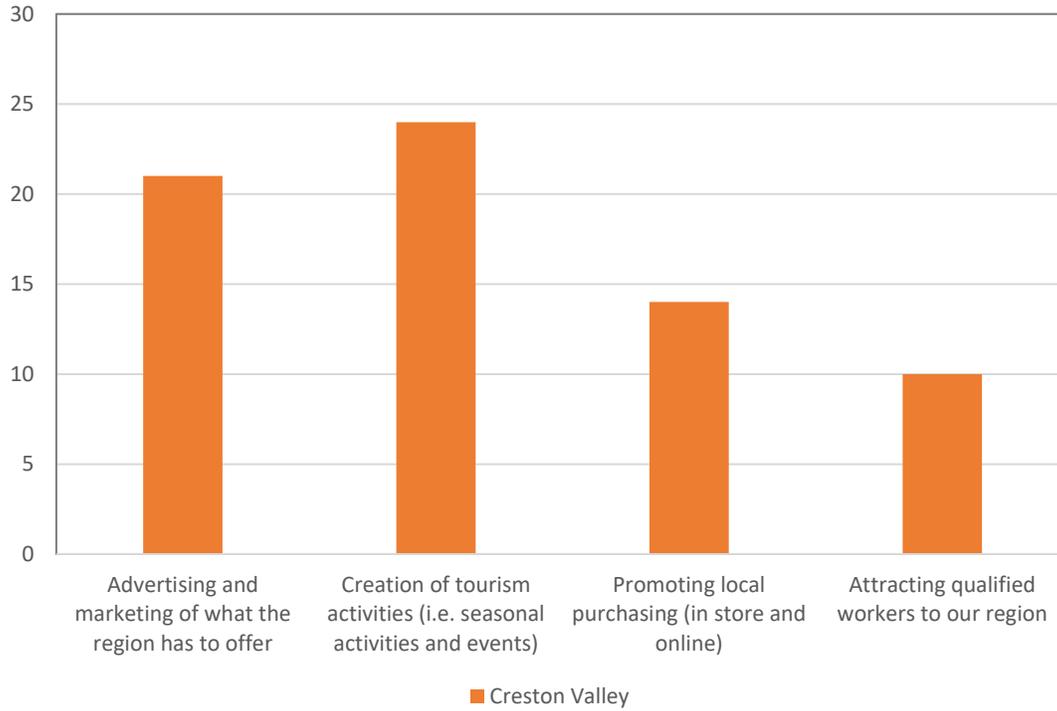


*Advertising and marketing* and *creation of tourism activities* are the top two areas respondents thought Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake could improve upon to support the regional economy.

The following two graphs show separate responses from the Creston Valley and Kootenay Lake business communities. Even though the top two areas are the same in both areas, 14 businesses from the Creston Valley indicated *promotion of local purchasing* was important as well (versus 2 businesses from Kootenay Lake).

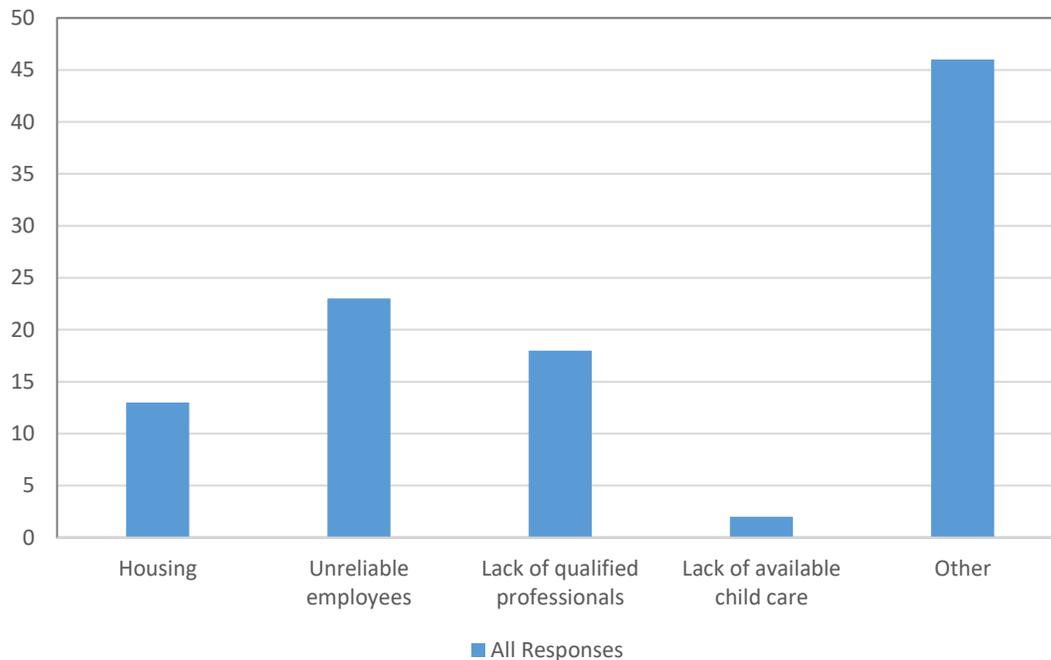
# Business Support Survey

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## What are the labour challenges that prevent your business from growing?



Based on the options provided, *unreliable employees* and *lack of qualified employees* are the top labour challenges that prevent local businesses from growing. However, almost half of respondents provided other reasons, which include affordability to hire, not enough client/customer base to constitute hiring additional staff, lack of specific industry knowledge and having no need to hire additional staff at this time.

Below is a summary of 'other' responses - which includes popular answers and unique responses:

- Very small business and do not require or afford other employees
- We must grow our business to afford paying staff
- Slow seasons (i.e. winter)
- Only have part time work available
- Not in the market for additional hiring quite yet
- Lack of local clients
- Lack of consumers who can consistently afford my service
- Buying local and supporting local can be a big struggle depending upon the dollar. Cross border shopping and online shopping are some of the biggest detriments to business ownership in the Valley – which affects labour.
- We haven't experienced this yet, but could very soon
- Do not have a labour challenge
- Both of my businesses are 'right sized' for now
- Our age! Running out of steam. Could use a qualified plant/business manager and keep up with website updates.

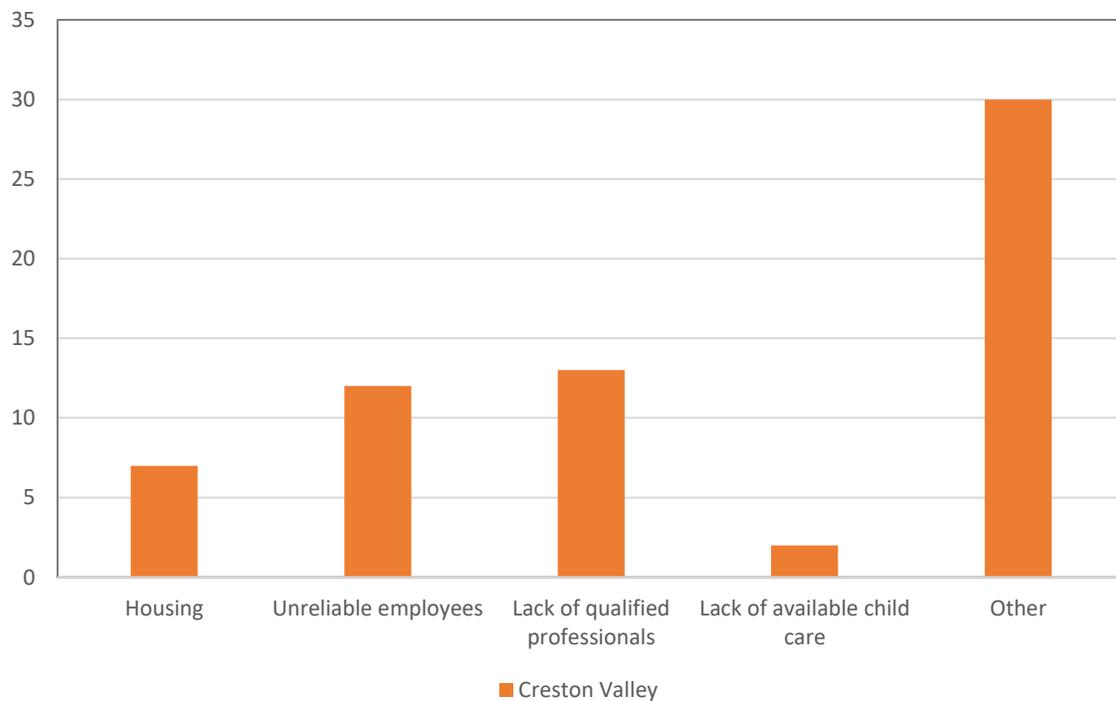
# Business Support Survey

## Winter 2018



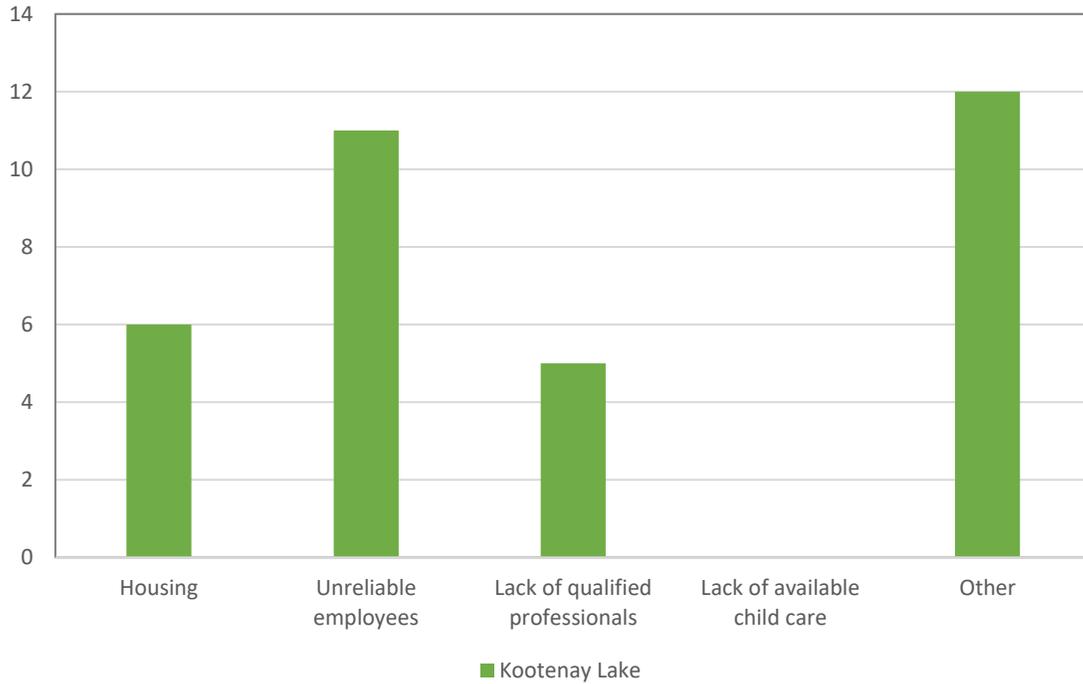
- My own time commitment
- Computer and literacy support
- Qualified short term employees
- No pool to draw from. Changed millennial expectations
- Marketing and transport
- Lack of commitment from town bureaucratic system
- Lack of knowledge in the farming industry. Cannot afford full time workers so it is difficult to find part time/on call help with knowledge and/or ability
- Laziness
- Lack of enthusiasm to work.
- Lack of doctors
- Funding
- Access to more education and training
- All of the above

Like the previous question, the next two graphs show separate responses from the Creston Valley and Kootenay Lake businesses. In Kootenay Lake, there is a noticeable difference between *unreliable employees* being more of an issue compared to *lack of qualified employees*.

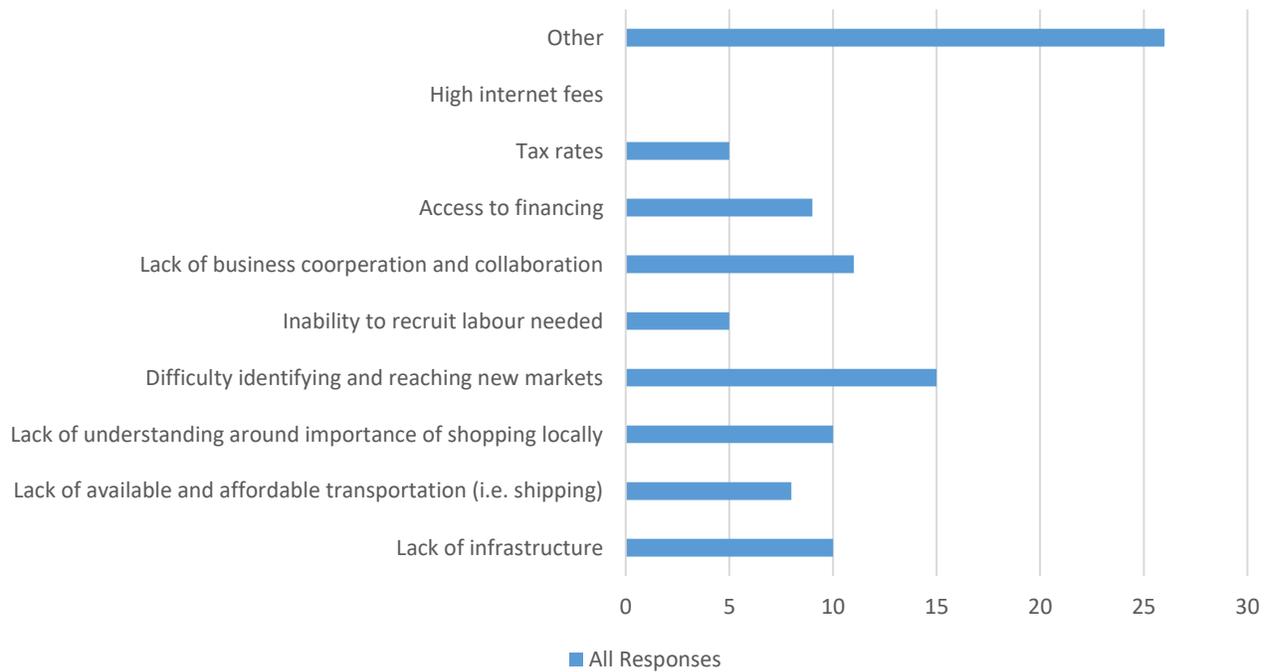


# Business Support Survey

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What is the largest **obstacle** preventing you from growing your business?



# Business Support Survey

Winter 2018



Overall, there is little variance between the options provided. However, *difficulty identifying and reaching new markets, lack of business cooperation and collaboration, lack of understanding around impacts of shopping local* and *lack of infrastructure* were top choices.

Nearly 25% of respondents provided other answers, which vary in type of obstacles businesses face when trying to expand their business. Some businesses stated more than one option is a significant obstacle.

Below is a summary of 'other' responses:

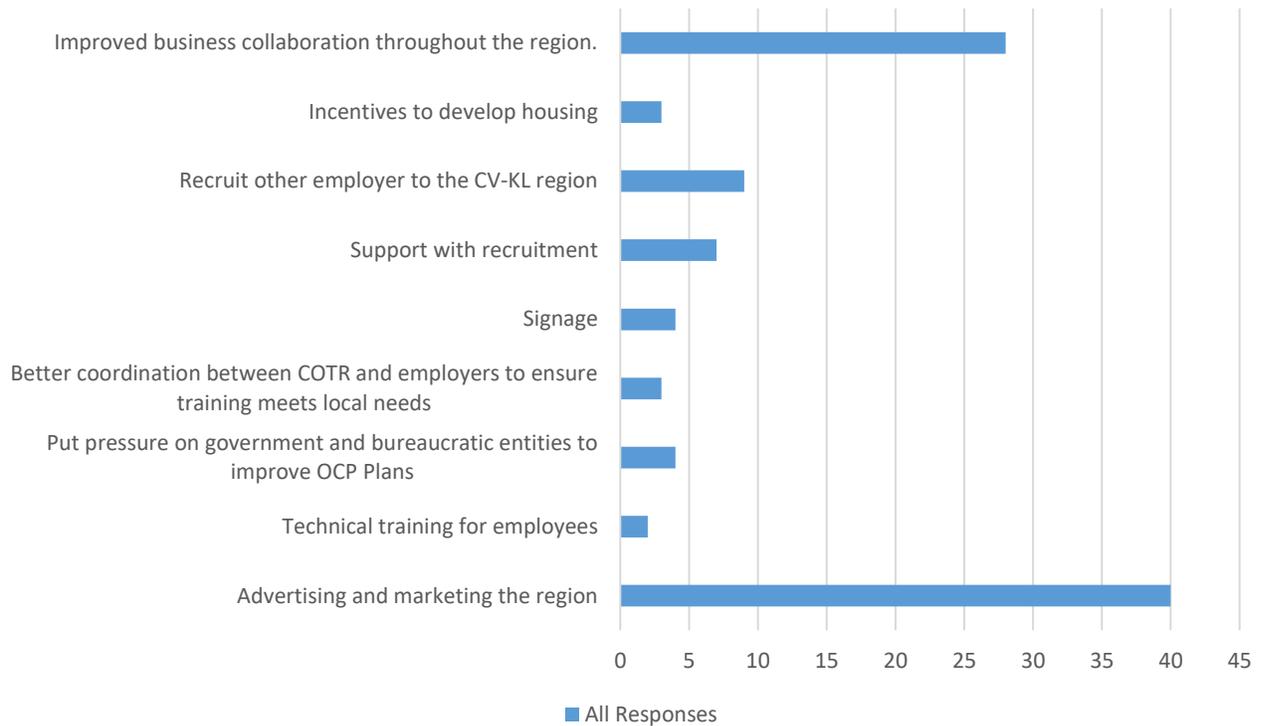
- Marketing and attracting people from afar + local knowledge that we are open to guests
- Taking businesses out of town
- Population base
- Availability of reliable local suppliers, as we get a lot of requests for local products
- Labour is top but fragmentation of marketing activities is huge!
- Government funded start-ups that directly compete with my business
- Cheaper, online options available
- Restrictions to small communities lead to slow growth. Urbanization is best for provincial and federal growth. Smaller communities need to fend for themselves and create their own unique identity.
- Government funding for new start-ups and now support for existing
- Growth in the building and construction economy
- Lack of accessibility – i.e. ferry schedule
- Jobs
- Lack of time and knowledge. Most small businesses run all elements of their business.
- Lack of tourism facilities
- Laziness
- My age and lack of keen younger folks to take over
- My own lack of experience growing a business
- Not trying to grow my business
- There are none. We don't need to grow our business at the moment
- There is no top reason. Equal items are: financing, shop local, and markets.

# Business Support Survey

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If the Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake EAP could assist and support businesses to grow and prosper, which do you feel is most important?

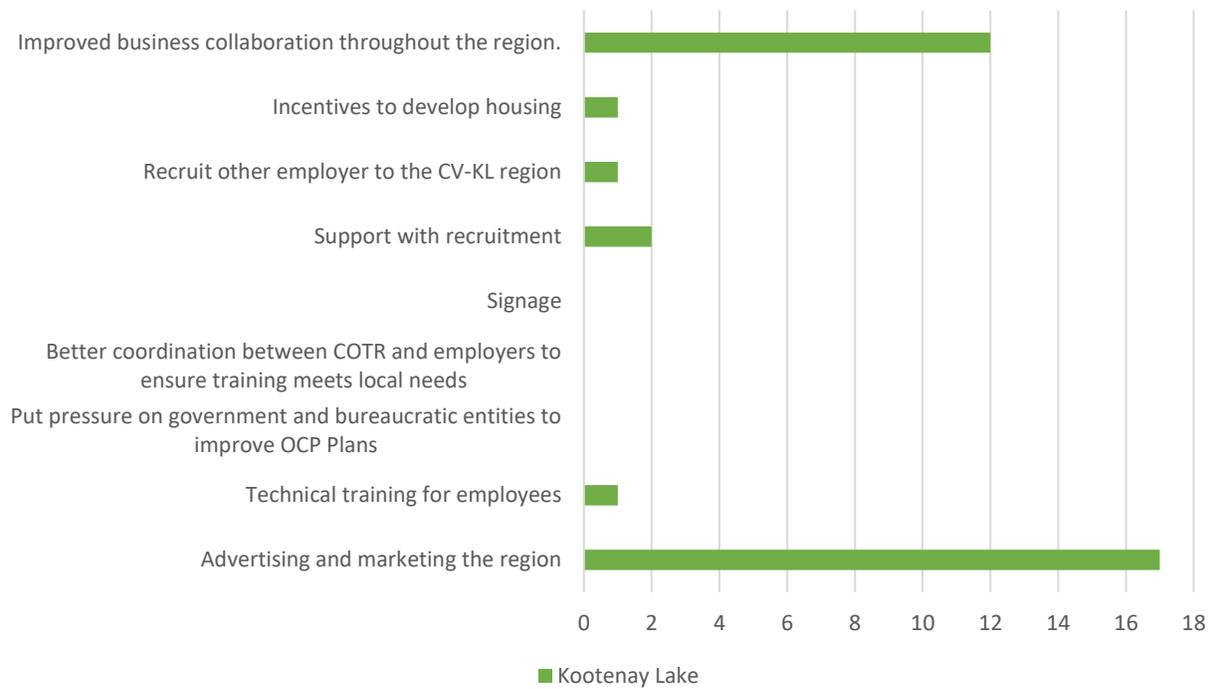
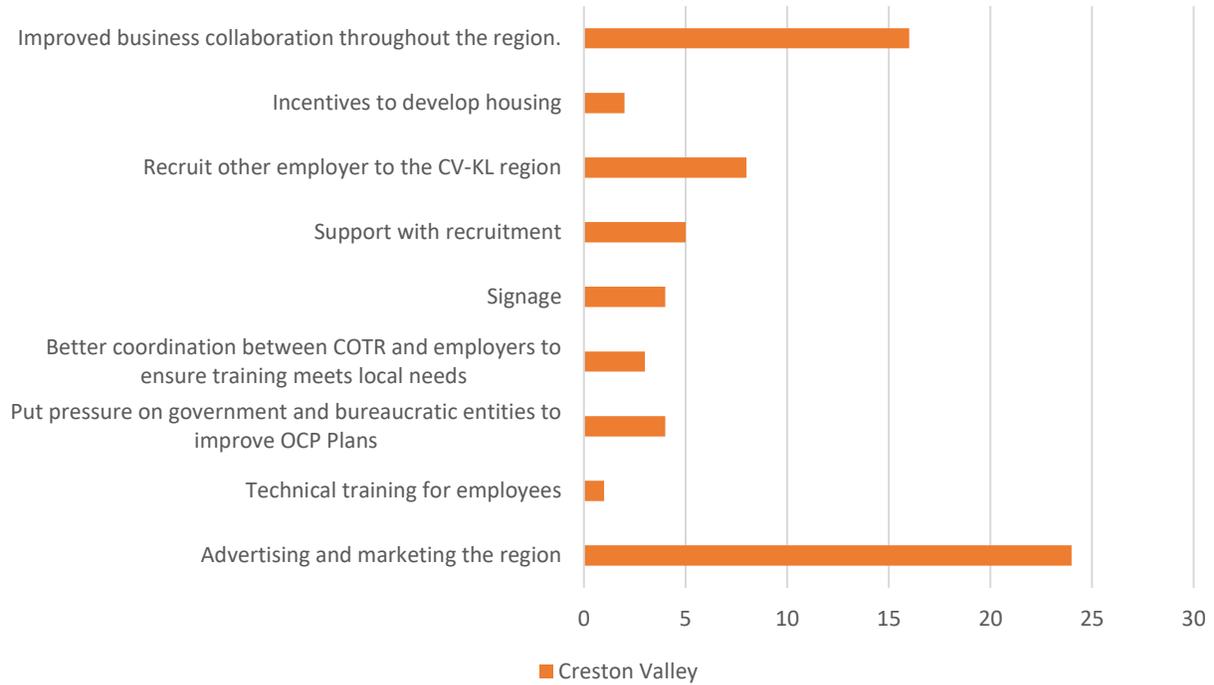


By far, *advertising and marketing the region* is the top support local businesses feel the Creston Valley-Kootenay EAP (or ongoing economic development entity) could lead to help local businesses grow and prosper. *Improved business collaboration throughout the region* is another support businesses identified as being important to the business community.

When comparing Creston Valley and Kootenay Lake data separately, the top requested supports are the same for both area communities.

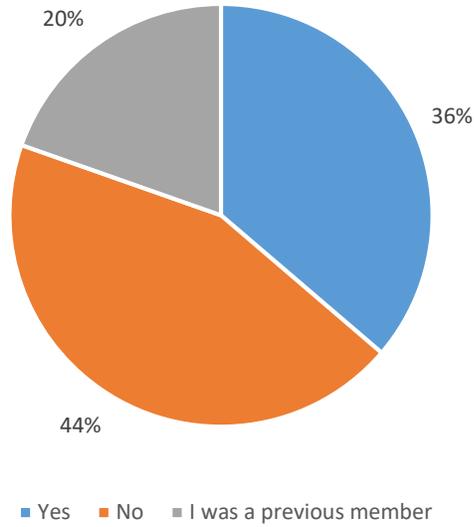
# Business Support Survey

## Winter 2018

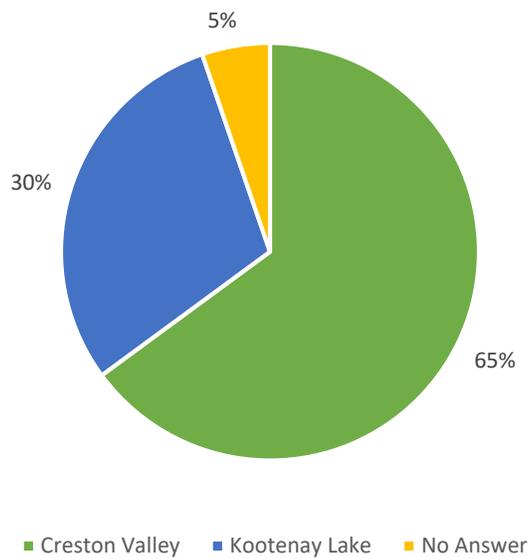


### SECTION 3: SUPPORT FROM YOUR LOCAL CHAMBER

Are you currently a Chamber member?



*If you answered 'Yes' or 'I was a previous member', which Chamber do/did you belong to?*



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Please explain why you are or why you are not a Chamber member.

Below are the top five answers from current members, non-members and previous members:

*Current Chamber members:*

1. Collaboration, communication and cooperation with local businesses
2. Support in identifying needs and establish solutions
3. Networking
4. Marketing and advertising local business
5. Supporting the local business community

*Non-members and previous member recommendations:*

1. Unclear of the benefits structure and help I would receive.
2. The cost. Many small businesses can't afford it.
3. Don't have the time to go to meetings and provide input.
4. Not enough to offer my business at this time.
5. As a home-based business, not sure it applies and what is offered.

What types of supports and services would you like to see the Chamber provide?

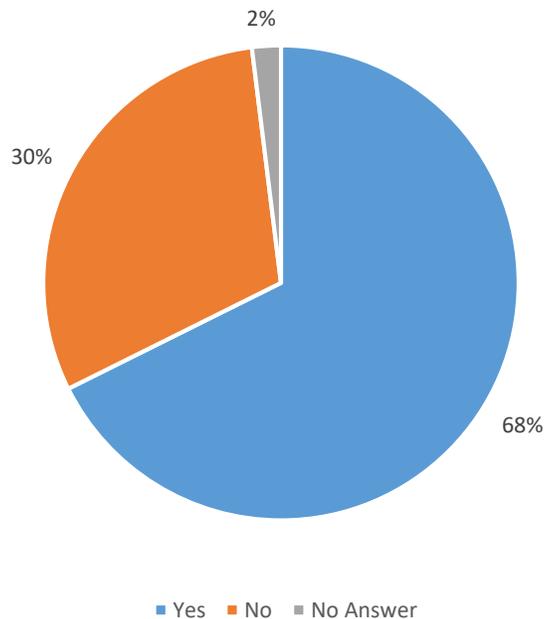
Below are the top recommended supports and services:

- Business-to-business support and collaboration
- More advertising in town and outside of the region
- Profiling our business and all it offers.
- Signage showcasing that we are a member supporting the chamber
- Focus on shopping local, directing traffic to our businesses.
- Provide incentives and discounts to local businesses
- Programs, education and marketing support, or, let businesses know where and when it's available in the community.
- Collaborate with other Chambers for events or support.
- Provide a "Welcome" package that outlines everything the Chamber does.
- More specific information for small, home-based businesses.



## SECTION 4: YOUR BUSINESS AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

As a business owner, operator, or entrepreneur, do you feel Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake is a supportive environment for doing business?



From all responses, 68% of businesses feel Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake is a supportive place for doing business. 30% of respondents feel there is more support needed for them to be successful.

Below are top answers for both opinions.

Supportive environment:

- The RDCK has minimal barriers to setting up a business. The Valley is a great cheerleader for our business.
- The new Chamber board seems much more interested in (very) small businesses - we are home-based.
- The values of people in the area are supportive and purchasing local products is a result of the support. Growing on this idea is something that I feel would benefit the area.
- Have received referrals from others and I send tourists to other venues.
- Cost of living is minimal, which provides a place for learning/growth. All needed amenities are available.
- The network of people and organizations I am in contact with are very supportive of my business.

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- We have an exceptional amount of wealth in our community per capita. While high paying jobs are not readily available, we have a blank canvas as far as business opportunity. With more emphasis on buying local, new businesses will feel more of a safety net rather than a crap shoot when they start a business. We need to support local businesses and create more wealth in our valley. Looking at neighboring city centers, such as Cranbrook and Nelson, we more to offer small business as far as an eager market than they do, because we do not fall prey to the big box stores. We need to encourage small business growth, and keep those dollars in Creston.
- There are multiple resources, programs and people to support business including KES, Community Futures and Columbia Basin Trust
- I belong to the Artisans of Crawford Bay group as well as the Chamber and we are able to advertise and collaborate on marketing projects we could never do individually.
- I find businesses work well together in the area. If I don't carry what a customer is looking for I send them out the door with a couple suggestions of places to try. I find there is a strong network out there, that this is being reciprocated every day!

## Recommendations for support:

- I think there is always room to improve in getting our message out to other parts of the province and other parts of Canada and USA.
- There could be more support for home-based, specifically direct sales, businesses in terms of venue opportunities.
- Many businesses permits, documentation, and taxes are high – making it hard to flourish.
- At times, the business community seems to me like they are in survival mode. There is way too many signs on the main highway (which confuses tourists) and a lack of parking for tourists who are traveling with larger vehicles/trailers.
- More support and communication (of funding and projects) could be directed towards Kootenay Lake businesses.
- Non-profit business is largely ignored and unsupported outside of government funding
- Many people see Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake as an area that doesn't want tourists (mainly Albertans and Americans) to come to the region.
- Difficulty finding qualified employees, materials needed for work as well as customers. Lots of potential customers prefer to buy cheap mass produced stuff and bring it here.
- Online shopping and being close to US border can hinder all businesses in the Valley.
- Competition does not feel welcome in the Kootenay Lake area. Most of the time I feel very alone in business here in this area with the exception of a few businesses. I think this is due to the lack of population and lack of tourism (except for summer months), which means lack of revenue/income.
- Lack of support for organic agricultural, value-added business, as the majority of the farmers are still using chemical fertilizers and poison pest sprays
- Local associations attempt to foster business support however a tremendous amount of dollars are spent outside of the local area.

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What do you need or want to help grow your business?

What do you think our region needs to help our local economy grow?

As these two questions are closing linked, below are common themes and answers provided by all respondents around what support they feel is needed to help their business and the local economy grow.

- Better marketing presence outside the Kootenay region about what Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake has to offer
- Communications and marketing support – including website support
- Combined marketing efforts between businesses
- Lower business property taxes and restrictions
- More tourism activities, events and infrastructure
- Continue to promote shopping local
- Financial support
- Information about available grants and funding
- More industry and (full-time) job opportunities
- Attract and retain younger people
- More support, networking and collaboration among existing businesses in the entire Creston Valley-Kootenay lake region. Too many individual groups working against one another, rather than working together.
- Better and more affordable shipping and distribution options
- Affordable housing

How do you want to get involved and/or help support our business community?

Below are common themes and examples of how local businesses (do and can) support the Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake business community:

- Involved in the local Chamber of Commerce
- Been a real estate agent for 25 years and promote CV-KL every single day
- Shop local and donate whenever possible
- Creston and Kootenay Lake Arts Connection
- Area A EDC member
- Volunteer and support non-profit businesses
- Participate in surveys, engagement and workshops
- Refer locals and tourists to other local businesses
- Attend networking events to engage with other businesses
- Hire and train locals versus hiring outside the community

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What other types of “new” businesses would increase your own business activity?  
(i.e. what services and/or products do you source from outside the region?)

Below are examples of “new” businesses that would increase existing business activity:

- Co-op storefront
- Marine repair
- Freight and delivery company – suppliers that come to our area (Kootenay Lake) instead of only going as far as Creston
- More tourism activities - lake events, adventure activities, boat rentals, special events
- Tour operators to lead tourism activities
- Specialty and value-added shops
- New businesses that will attract young families
- Anything to help expand the local arts community

## SECTION 5: WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What are your thoughts on economic development in Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake?

Below are top answers provided by all respondents.

Strengths and recognition:

- I think there are valuable resources at work and in play and look forward to seeing how they actually, boots-on-the-ground, effect business and vitality invaluable ways.
- I am satisfied with the current work taking place. I believe those that are involved in economic development are energetic and positive.
- Seems to be growth in the agriculture sector/ tourism.
- It has been studied efficiently. Now let’s implement the ideas.
- Going in the right direction. Need more work opportunities to keep people here and attract new people. Especially youth - something positive for them to come back to after their studies.
- So much potential, we need to take care of our natural infrastructure!
- I would like to see it keep the small town feeling
- I love the agriculture in Creston. It gets me down the lake in the summer and fall! I support as many different businesses – small and large!
- The economy is slowly growing and is becoming more important.
- I think with the support of local government economic development will be able to grow.
- We should be forefront in looking at new economic models. There are so many creative, alternative -minded people in this region. And to not work from a place of fear that our community (particularly Crawford Bay) is dying. We have to be realistic, but we also have to start working from a place that has a positive vision.

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- Economic development is great. If there is more to offer, then more people would shop locally
- I haven't been around long enough to form a complete opinion, but I like this survey that they put out. It has very pointed and valuable questions that get all of us thinking and involved.
- Fantastic - in order to survive we need new blood, new idea so have to attract people from outside of this area
- I feel there is huge potential in the Creston Valley -Kootenay Lake area.
- I think we are attracting more agricultural based business
- I think it would be great to see a vibrant economy here. I think Creston needs to preserve its charm and integrity and not allow developers to run rampant at the cost of community and culture but growth would be a good thing for here.

Areas of opportunity for...

## *Collaboration:*

- The Town council, the Chamber of Commerce, and other players need to work as a team and not separate agendas.
- I think there should be enhanced cooperation between the Town and the RDCK areas to promote the region. Then everyone wins.
- This Valley has so much potential - but there is significant resistance to change.
- 5 structural issues with our policy environment are causing stagnation in our local economy.
  - 1) New MDU housing inside the town limits should be granted a 5 year property tax holiday to encourage development
  - 2) Highway 3 re-alignment should include parallel one-way on Canyon (westbound) and Cook (eastbound) with angle parking along the common block between (no parallel parking and no diversion)
  - 3) Development zone for services for Commercial Trucking on Cook Street (parking, truck stop, fuel)
  - 4) BRZ for facade improvement on Canyon street with matching grants from municipal government (50% business, 50% town-RDCK) Enforcement on project completion (zero tolerance for partially completed construction projects)
  - 5) Business Development Officer appointed by the town with the remit to attract two new large employers to the Valley (250+ employees each)
- There is a need for collaboration from many community organizations to accomplish economic growth.
- The development plan should be coordinated with provincial and federal plans so the region can leverage resources and work with others. This area has so many untapped resources clearly we need a better plan and all the help we can get internally and externally.
- Any plan should be as inclusive as possible. It should also respect the beauty and diversity of this region.

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## *Access:*

- Access is a big issue, our remoteness is an asset but also makes it difficult to ship or increase our volume of sales. Westjet in Cranbrook might help.
- There should be more put into enhancing access to Kootenay Lake (particularly at Kuskanook) so visitors and locals have direct and better access to the lake. We are currently underserved at Kuskanook, with poor and dangerous parking with all the boat trailers, etc. and inadequate parking for using the beach (which itself could be enhanced for the public as well with better rest/bathroom facilities and picnic areas. A park with trails at the south end of Kootenay Lake would be great.

## *Residents:*

- Need more young families.
- If we don't provide secure medium-high wage secure jobs in our community then the people who do live here (but work elsewhere) will become comfortable playing, shopping and visiting elsewhere instead of closer to home
- I feel and see Creston growing, we just don't seem to have enough jobs that pay enough for people to support themselves here.
- More jobs lower housing cost to make moving here feasible to families
- Continue to promote our climate for living here. Continue to improve its appeal as a place to live (for young families and seniors). Promotion of our rec center, town trail development, senior's services which also provide jobs for younger workers. Build a new fire hall.

## *Business and employment climate:*

- Improve leasing conditions outside the downtown location. I feel angry that rent in the downtown area is very high and all because most of the owners do not live in Creston. They have no interest here and of course they can write off all their empty spaces instead of reducing rent.
- We need to first support the businesses that have been here for years. Then we need to encourage new investment and help businesses that want to sell attract a buyer.
- It would be nice to see more industry and jobs in our Valley, instead of just being a nice place to retire
- It's a difficult region to manage the economic development as it's mostly geared toward primary resource of wood. Some part of the region are also becoming snow bird housing, where the economic viability is reduce due to housing only used for a few week in the year.
- There are not enough jobs to support larger population needed. Green industry is needed.
- I believe the economic development is so-so. I think there could be more to bring in new business or expand existing businesses or expand our population that is not being done.
- Tourism in the off season can help with growth but for sustainable growth I believe there needs to be a focus on industry and new business.
- We really need to bring in more companies that will provide year round well paid work
- I think the future relies on businesses and organizations working together more and encouraging a new sharing economy.

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- I believe that the Creston/Kootenay area has remarkable potential, however it must be understood that the greatest opportunity exists is seasonal (tourism) and that there may be a need to create a secondary business that ties into the 'off season'
- We need to focus on the off season, this is where business really struggles. Where sales are down and layoffs happen.
- I believe we have an untapped resource regarding some of the personal wealth in our valley. I believe we often come from a place of lack and instill a sense of fear in the residents through social media, and print publications. If we could lose the whole "the sky is falling" economically mentality we'd be much further ahead. If people live in fear, they will have a knee jerk reaction for example... shop in the USA and save money, Canada is too expensive. Some of our products, for example our honey is more expensive than some import brands, but if you look at the contents, ours is superior... I think we need to brand the products coming from the Valley as superior in quality and integrity... why? Because we are Natural and take great pride in our pristine environment and habitat. While our business is not focused around organic food sources, we can support the adventure tourists and local businesses by profiling all these amazing products we sell. We have superior produce, wines, honey, artisans... and by supporting such businesses, they support us by simply being naturally awesome. We can have a wonderful interdependence network.

## What are your thoughts on tourism in Creston Valley-Kootenay Lake?

### Strengths and recognition:

- It seems to me to be at about the right level for it to be a good economic driver, and yet not so busy that it detracts from our quality of life here.
- We are so lucky to live in this area, many travelers are drawn here and as long as we continue to promote the area and what it has to offer we should have a healthy influx of visitors.
- It seems tourists enjoy coming to Creston and when asked what attractions there are in the Valley, tours are lacking. But, we live in a small town and that is why we live here. Small and beautiful.
- Creston is a beautiful place for tourists. Shoppers have commented about how beautiful it is here, and there are ample things to see & do
- Yes, and yes again. It's beautiful here that should be shared. Again Creston will need to keep developers in check
- We live in the best place in the world, highlighting our beauty and spiritual wellness retreats
- We have so much to be proud of and show. Tourism is good but could do more. SIGNAGE on trails and roadways always helps.
- Vital to the farmers and orchardists as well as the small businesses downtown.
- I see tourists come through the farmers' market in the summer. Very noticeable in the dollars they spend.
- I think our agri-tourism has come a long way and I wholeheartedly support using our natural resources to attract more consumers
- People come for the beauty; let's make more organic foods and processed foods/goods that represent the beauty people come for!

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Areas of opportunities for...

## *Destinations and activities:*

- Although I very much want to maintain the pristine quality of Kootenay Lake, and keep it as a valued and protected area, I think there is always room for growth with visitors. The Crawford Bay Regional Park initiative is very valuable to me and I see it being Central to maintaining that Vision. I also think that Eco and Rec tourism are the way to go.
- Development of a park at Kuskanook.
- Needs to be more activities to attract people to come.
- There needs to be more activities or attractions to bring in more tourism
- Develop more camping areas
- Encourage more eco-tourism. Our destination is so appealing we do attract many tourists, but perhaps we should preserve our area more and educate tourists with sustainable practices.
- Focus on folks who want wilderness, lake and/or food experiences. We grow food, have an amazing environment and make cool stuff.
- Need more for tourist to do between Creston and Crawford Bay. I.e. camping, restaurants
- So much potential. Need to have eateries, accommodation, and recreation packages - kayak guided tours - hiking guided tours - power boat rentals -fishing and boat charters all on east side of lake – etc.
- We have so much to offer in this community, it is keeping our tourists interested in the activities around
- I feel a lot has been happening, I would like agri-tourism and the arts not to be our only focus. I would like to see more done on the outdoors. Hiking, Biking, Swimming, Fishing you name it. Promoting the Creston Valleys for young families.

## *Collaboration, marketing and promotion:*

- We have so many hidden gems and such terrible signage!!! We need a work bee to take down all the irrelevant and worn out signs.
- Need marketing regarding our beautiful lake.
- Better promotion will bring more tourists, more tourists is better for all businesses.
- Definitely needs to promote. Creston and surrounding areas have huge potential for growth and development but this lack of team building is a blockage.
- We need to work together to advertise all of the wonderful activities that are here. Attract new tourists to the area. Also work more with the East Shore.
- Lots of room for growth, based on reliable, consistent quality of visitor experience, easier access to information and some degree of coordination to achieve longer, more satisfying tourist experiences
- More advertising and residents need to be open to change for it to grow and benefit all.
- Best keep secret in the world. Again, there has to be a vision and coordinated approach to marketing and improved services and infrastructure to make people want to come here and stay.
- The Creston Valley and Kootenay Lake area offers many activities for tourists to enjoy. We need to collaborate on marketing this area. As well, encourage new tourism activities.

# Business Support Survey

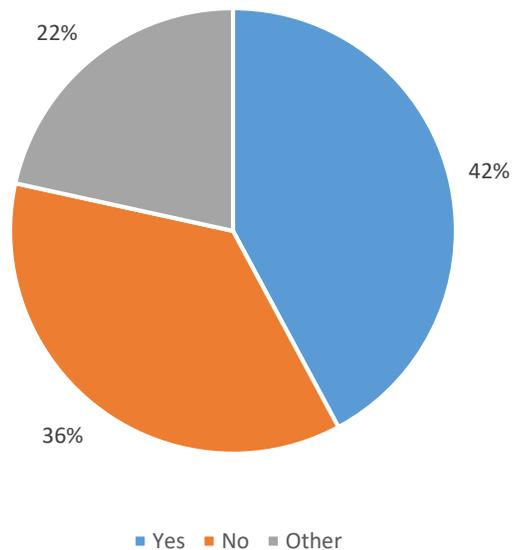
## Winter 2018



### *Recommendations:*

- Tourism is a great economic assets, but it's quite fluctuating. A tourism only base economy tends to kill the 'soul' of a region, where a region become inhabited for a long period of time. I wouldn't focus only on tourism but I'd rather see a push toward helping small businesses sustain themselves by connecting to other small business and tapping into a more global economy.
- Access is difficult for casual holiday makers which has resulted in a replacement of short-term accommodation with long term ownership on the lake. Everything is always for sale.
- Most guests that dine with us are staying in Creston for just 1 night to break their drive on the way to other destinations. We have amazing family kayaking opportunities here but the recreation is not highlighted enough
- While I am reading this question, I notice the picture above with the sandy beach and I think what a wonderful thing it would be for Creston to have public beaches at the lake and how that would likely bring a lot of people to Creston. We have such a beautiful valley and so many people who stop in our shop who are passing through comment on it being such a great town. We get asked a lot of questions and asked to recommend places and we try our best to do so. But it would be great if we knew more of events and things happening so that we could pass that on to tourists - keep them staying longer and enjoying our town.
- There is an extremely vibrant tourist scene in Crawford Bay and area (in the summer). Creston hasn't been as tied into that same flow of people (they drive through but don't stop etc.). Also, there hasn't been a lot of flow between the lake communities and Creston (most people who live there go to Nelson instead).
- In my view, Tourism is good but unfortunately creates a seasonal jobs opportunities. This town need full time job opportunities for professional and skilled labor, so the youth can come back after getting higher education and stay in this town.
- Off-season tourism should be a focus.
- I feel tourists would like to stop and check out the area and its offerings but there is not one easy space to park and get around
- We need more local winter options - really think a small family ski hill would be worthwhile.

Do you feel **lack of community signage** affects your business?  
(i.e. highway directions, tourism signs, destination markers)



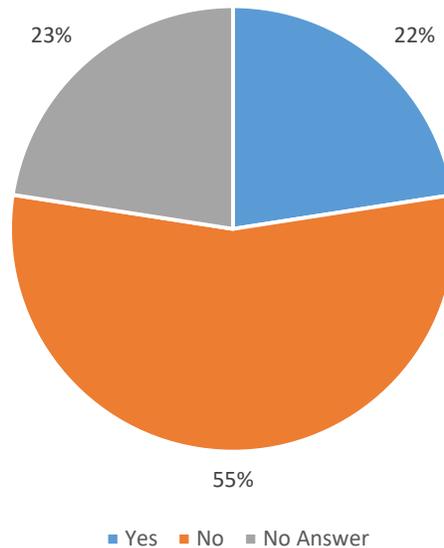
Overall, 42% of Creston Valley – Kootenay Lake businesses feel a lack of community signage affects their business. For respondents who declared ‘other’, below is a list of the common reasons why or why not lack of community signage affects their business:

- There are signs...but they are not big enough to create attraction
- Many look similar – not distinct
- I think it affects every business, particularly with tourism income
- Too many signs already. Businesses need to be more appealing to attract the customers.

*Recommendations:*

- We should brand the Kootenay Lake stretch with various markers (i.e. beautiful flags)
- Prefer towns with little signage because it spoils the views. We live in a beautiful valley and should promote the views.
- Signage should be centralized and congruent
- More signage in Creston directing traffic up to Kootenay Lake rather than over the Salmo Pass to Nelson. It’s a scenic route along the lake. Creating a parking spot in Creston and adjusting the ferry schedule could help people get to us.
- Would prefer digital marketing apps, maps than an overuse of signs.

Do you feel **lack of community trails** affects your business?



Overall, **55% of respondents feel the lack of community trails does not affect their business.** For respondents who declared 'other', some of the common reasons are listed below:

- Very impressed with the development of trails for hikers, bikers and explorers. East Shore Trail and Bike Association is doing fantastic work
- More well-constructed and maintained trails needs to be part of our basic growth strategy
- The growing focus on trails has been hugely beneficial and I'll do everything possible to help that grow. A trail from the ferry to Creston would be amazing!
- The trails are improving all the time, I use them and feel this is an important element to attract more permanent and visitor traffic.

*Recommendations:*

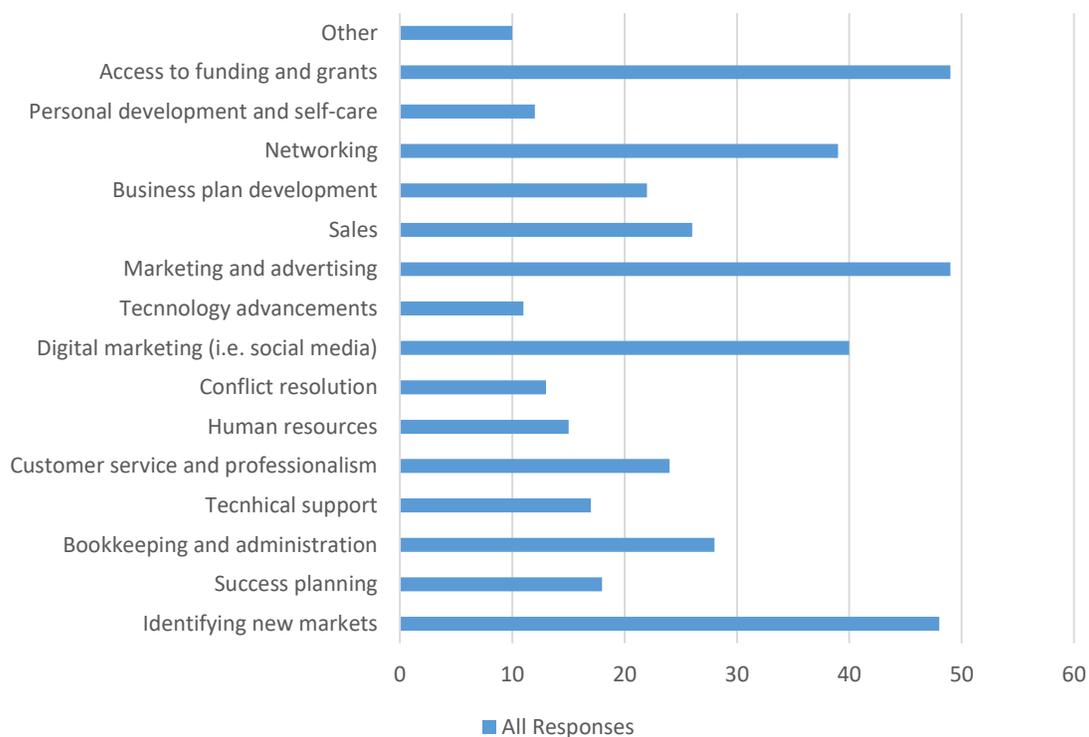
- The trails exist, more signage would help
- We need effective bike trails for safe transportation on bikes!
- Funding would really help.
- Yes, I do. Motorized and non-motorized. So much focus on developing non-motorized trail networks, where I see very little support and have to scrounge for every dollar to keep the trails safe for all to enjoy. Motorized and non-motorized. As part of a motorized group, we provide winter staging clearing for the new walking snow shoeing trail up Char Creek, without any assistance. Funding would make a world of difference.



## SECTION 6: WORKSHOPS

Through previous engagement, many businesses have indicated a need for coaching through workshops. The following questions pertain to this request.

In terms of workshop topics, please select all options you feel would be helpful to you and/or business. If you have other ideas, feel free to indicate them in the 'other' section.



The top five requested workshops businesses feel would be helpful are listed below:

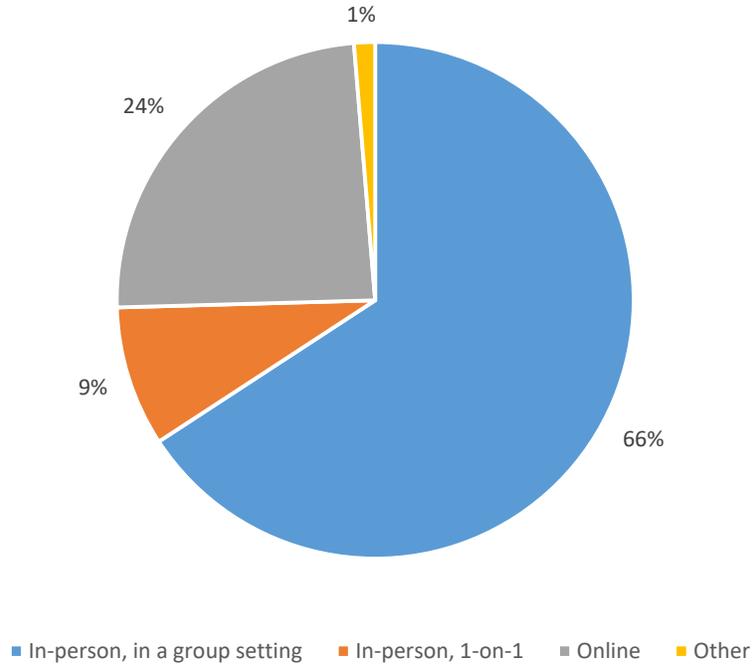
- Access to funding and grants
- Marketing and advertising
- Identifying new markets
- Digital marketing, including social media and digital technology (i.e. Google Drive, Dropbox)
- Networking

Here is a list of other workshop topics businesses felt would be useful:

- Business financing and investment
- Needs assessment of the market and current market trends
- How to bring in foreign workers.



What is your preferred delivery method of workshops?



Overall, 66% of businesses would prefer in-person workshops and in a group setting. However, 24% would prefer online workshop opportunities – which would allow flexibility for completion. Factors for flexibility include completion time and location. Some businesses felt they would prefer to complete training at home and on their own schedule.

# Business Support Survey

## Winter 2018



## FINAL COMMENTS

Below are some of the final comments about the Business Support Survey.

*"I have been a Creston since 2015 and love living in this community; however I have done these surveys many times and haven't seen any results. Hoping to see some soon."*

*"Not all of the questions asked or answered were relevant to my particular venture...trained professionals and marketing issues are not necessarily issues for the volunteer bank, but they are community issues."*

*"Time for action!"*

*"Having a site near water that is "public" and near town- like the Goat River on Hwy 21, or the old ferry crossing - is necessary to have people stay here in the summer when it is super-hot. Again - hidden gems. It also would be a mistake for the area to discount the impact that the Wildlife Centre and birding potential have on the local economy. This unique resource could be much more of an economic driver than it currently is."*

*"Thank you. It was my New Year's Resolution, to get working on these issues This Year!"*

*"We look forward to moving to the community and hope to add value."*

*"This year I intend to focus more on my business. This survey has been helpful. I think on-line advertising in the way of web site or other would be the way to get myself out there. Thank you."*

## CONNECT WITH US

If you would like to speak to us about this survey, please connect with us. We are willing to distribute raw data to approved community groups and individuals looking for specific information for their own projects and initiatives. Follow us on our website and Facebook page for up to date information regarding leadership, opportunities, and support for you and your business.

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