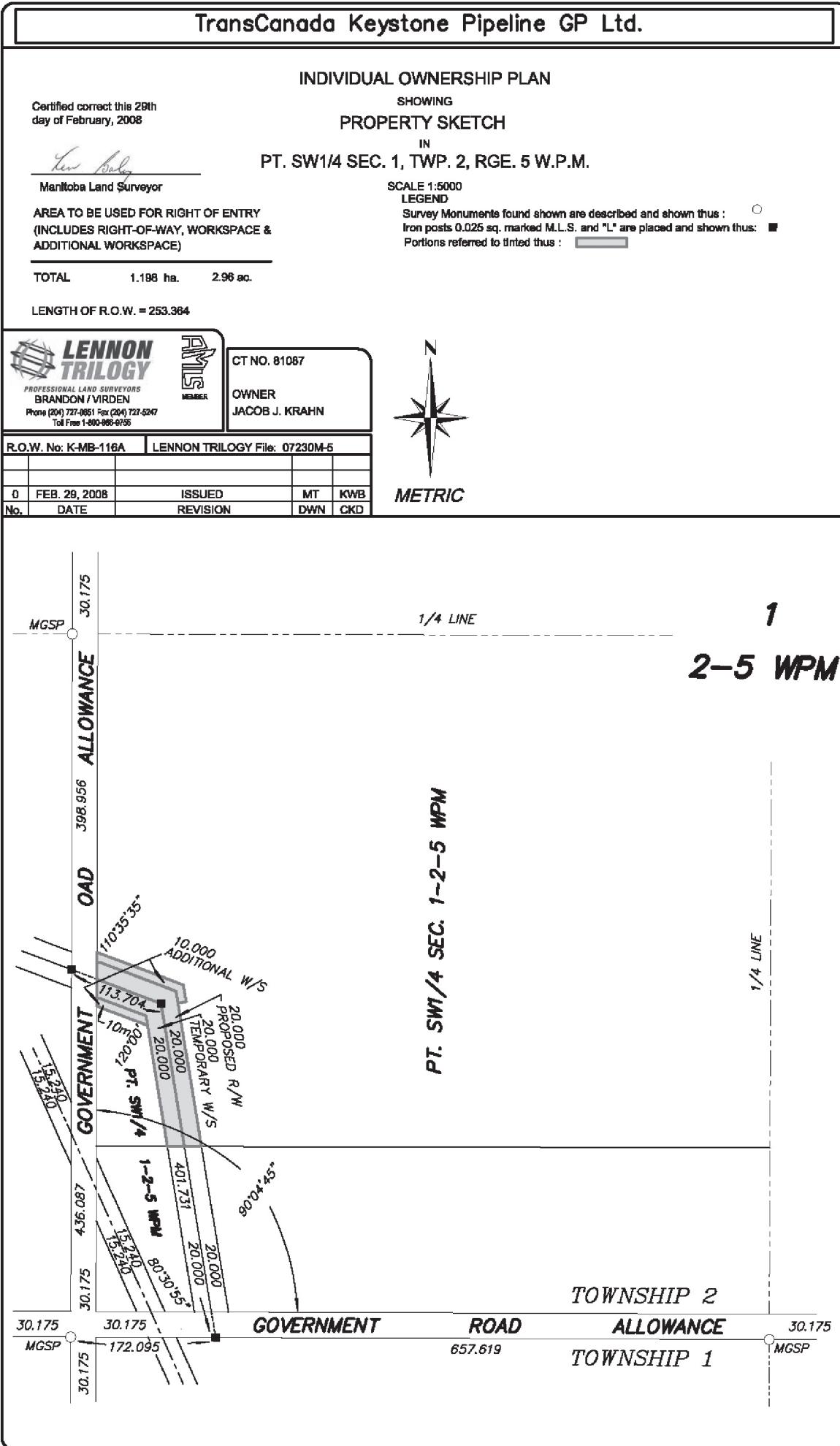




Annexe A



Businesses proud of city's 'strong work ethic'

From P. 7

Another interesting thing to come out of the survey included widespread support for a regional events or convention centre, Thomas said. Of the businesses surveyed, 83 per cent agreed there was a need for such a facility in the area.

"We've actually done quite a bit of work on that already," Thomas said, noting the Winkler Chamber has met with representatives from Morden and the R.M. of Stanley to discuss this very idea, and everyone seems to be on the same page. "What was really exciting about that meeting was everybody was talking about having world-class facilities."

The plan is to continue regional talks, and eventually put together a task force to flesh out the idea further, Thomas said.

The survey also showed local businesses want to have somewhere to go to get detailed information on local, regional, provincial, and federal programs or laws that relate to doing business here, Thomas said.

This would include things like health and safety regulations, bylaws, zoning laws, and so on, he said. A regional website with the information and/or links to other relevant sites might be a good way to satisfy this need, Thomas said.

Sunday shopping was also discussed briefly in the survey, though mostly in the context of sales leakage, Thomas said.

Millions of local dollars are lost every year as residents head to Winnipeg, Grand Forks, or even online to do their shopping, he said.

"Sunday shopping is just one part of the leakage," Thomas said, adding "most businesses do not support Sunday shopping."

Nonetheless, some local businesses do believe the community should be given the opportunity to re-evaluate the Sunday shopping issue. Sunday retail openings are regulated by the provincial government.

'Strong work ethic'

While the survey results cer-

tainly outlined some of the economic issues facing our community, they also revealed many of the positive aspects of doing business in Winkler, said Storey.

"First and foremost, strong work ethic was number one" on the list of community strengths, she said. "It doesn't matter if it's the Triple E's of the world, or some small cleaning service - it's the strong work ethic."

The businesses surveyed also noted the support of their fellow businesses as a positive - business alliances are not uncommon, with one local company relying on another for services or goods whenever possible, Storey said.

The surveys also showed that Winkler's business community is in pretty good shape, overall, Thomas said.

Of the 82 companies polled, 85 per cent have seen increased sales within the last two years, and 70 per cent expect to increase their number of employees within the next couple of years.

Meanwhile, 30 per cent have been in operation for over 10 years, 33 per cent fall between the 25-35 years range, and 21 per cent have been up and running in the area for over 35 years.

"Winkler has been very successful in starting-up long-term businesses," Storey said of those findings.

More surveys underway

The second round of surveys have already begun, with another 100 businesses set to receive visits from the survey administrators between now and November, Storey said.

With each successive round of surveys, the Chamber gains more and more ammunition to use when it makes its case to municipal or provincial leaders on a variety of issues, she said.

"We have the quality and the quantitative data now," she said.

The results will also help shape the Chamber's efforts for the next several years, Thomas said.

"As a community, we have a lot to be proud of, but we also see we have a lot of work to do," he said.

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- Ken Thomas,
Chamber president