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**COMMUNITY WEB POLL**

**Business Guide**

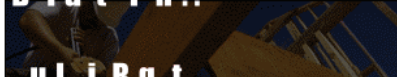
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- [SHOPPING](#) (219)
- [SERVICES](#) (122)
- [RESTAURANTS](#) (72)
- [REAL ESTATE](#) (30)
- [ORGANIZATIONS](#) (217)
- [INDUSTRIAL](#) (113)
- [HOUSE & HOME](#) (340)
- [HEALTH & BEAUTY](#) (173)
- [FINANCIAL](#) (96)
- [ENTERTAINMENT](#) (64)
- [EDUCATION](#) (69)
- [AUTOMOTIVE](#) (156)
- [AGRICULTURE](#) (220)

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**Another Round Of Surveys Complete**

The Winkler and District Chamber of Commerce has finished round two of its B.R.E.I. surveys.

Over 80 businesses were surveyed during the past five months, with a focus on the retail and service industry.

President Ken Thomas says there were some encouraging findings.

He notes the business community is stable, which reflects the first survey.

During this round, they found 53 per cent of businesses have been in the community ten or more years..., 64 per cent started in Winkler.

21 per cent said they plan to expand in the next two years, and 48 per cent plan to add additional employees in the the next two years.

Of the challenges reported...86 per cent of those surveyed believe customer service is weak in the community.

72 per cent believe workplace skill development needs to happen and improve.

Other challenges mentioned include, inadequate labour supply, the availability of space to rent, and properly zoned and designated land for businesses.

There is also concern there is a lack of water and sewage capacity.

Other things people would like to see.... is better promoting and marketing of Winkler, that Winkler needs an economic development officer, and that there is a strong need for a public transit system.

Thomas also notes quite a bit of discussion surrounding the Southland Mall.

He says the business community generally feels the Southland Mall has tremendous potential.

People commented the mall should be locally owned by individuals who take pride and responsibly in the well being of Winkler.

It was mentioned 36 times that the mall needs more retail, such as children's, men's, and women's clothing.

It was also said the mall should be fully leased, hold more events to bring people in, and there should be more activity to promote the Harvest Festival.

- Friday, January 30th, 2009 -

[< Prev](#)      [Next >](#)

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