

**Cobscook Bay**  
**Summary of Findings and Action Plan**  
**Spring of 2000**

**SPONSORED BY:**

Eastport Chamber of Commerce Planning Committee  
Lubec Chamber of Commerce  
Maine State Chamber of Commerce  
Maine Department of Labor

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## INTRODUCTION

The Eastport Chamber of Commerce Planning Committee for the Cobscook Bay Area, in partnership with the Lubec Chamber of Commerce, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, and the Maine Department of Labor initiated the Business Visitation Program (BVP) in an effort to strengthen and support existing local businesses. The mission was to:

1. identify and resolve common business problems found in the area;
2. assist businesses that were considering expansion or relocation;
3. provide training and educational programs to meet the needs identified by the program;
4. increase communication between businesses, local, community, and state governments;
5. assist the Cobscook Bay Area in identifying issues that it could address on behalf of the local business community; and
6. to explore the idea of forming a larger, regional chamber of commerce for the Cobscook Bay Area.

The Maine Department of Labor and the Maine State Chamber of Commerce prepared the survey, trained the volunteers, compiled the data, produced the statistical analysis, and printed the Summary of Findings and Action Plan. The local committee planned the project, prepared local questions, targeted businesses to be surveyed, conducted the interviews, analyzed the results, and prepared the action plan. The interviews were conducted by nine volunteer interviewers.

To ensure confidentiality, all survey findings are reported in aggregate. Thirty-three (33) of the 55 targeted businesses were surveyed between November 1999 and January 2000.

The BVP for the Cobscook Bay Area reflects an excellent relationship between local and state government officials working together as a team with the local business community.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The Cobscook Bay Area BVP targeted businesses in the service, retail, tourism, transportation, and manufacturing sectors. It was found that most sales take place within the state of Maine, and competition is located 58% locally, 20% in the state of Maine, 11% in the rest of the United States, and 11% outside the U.S. A very definite increase in sales was found over the past four years and expectations were high that the increase would continue into the near future.

The Business Visitation Program investigated such factors as:

- the three most critical business interests;
- the competition;
- the factors impacting profits;
- the market areas;
- the purchases of products, supplies, and services;
- the expansions, retentions, and relocations;
- the employment and employment changes;
- the occupations;
- the recruiting and retaining needs;
- the local services;
- the community characteristics; and,
- the creation of a Cobscook Bay Area Chamber of Commerce.

An overall profile of the respondents shows that:

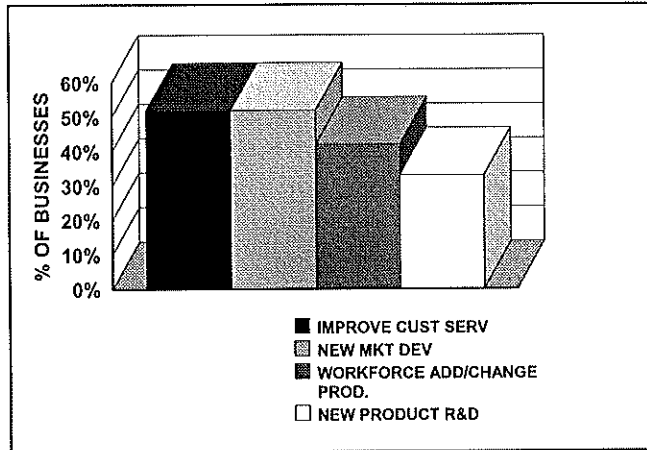
- 36% of the businesses have been in business for 10 years or more
- 48% reported that the main reason their businesses were located in the area had to do with family;
- 70% indicated the Cobscook Bay Area was the headquarters for their business; and,
- 58% are in service, 24% in manufacturing, 21% in retail, 12% in wholesale and 6% in transportation.

Requests for information or assistance were responded to in such areas as:

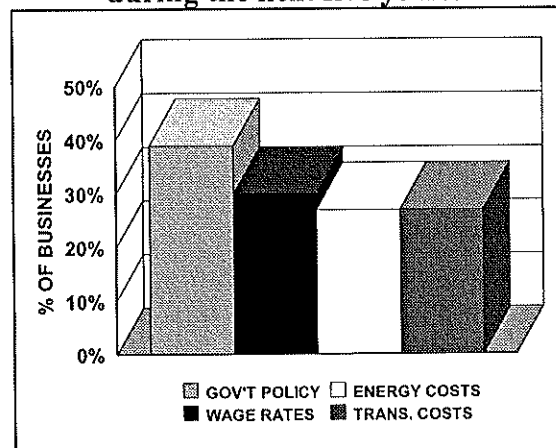
- marketing;
- OSHA; and,
- capital.

# MARKETS

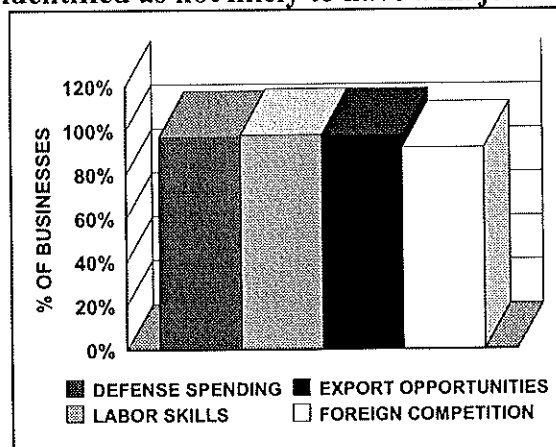
Choose the most critical areas which your business has planned to focus on within the next five years in order to remain competitive



The most significant factors likely to have a major impact on profits during the next five years:



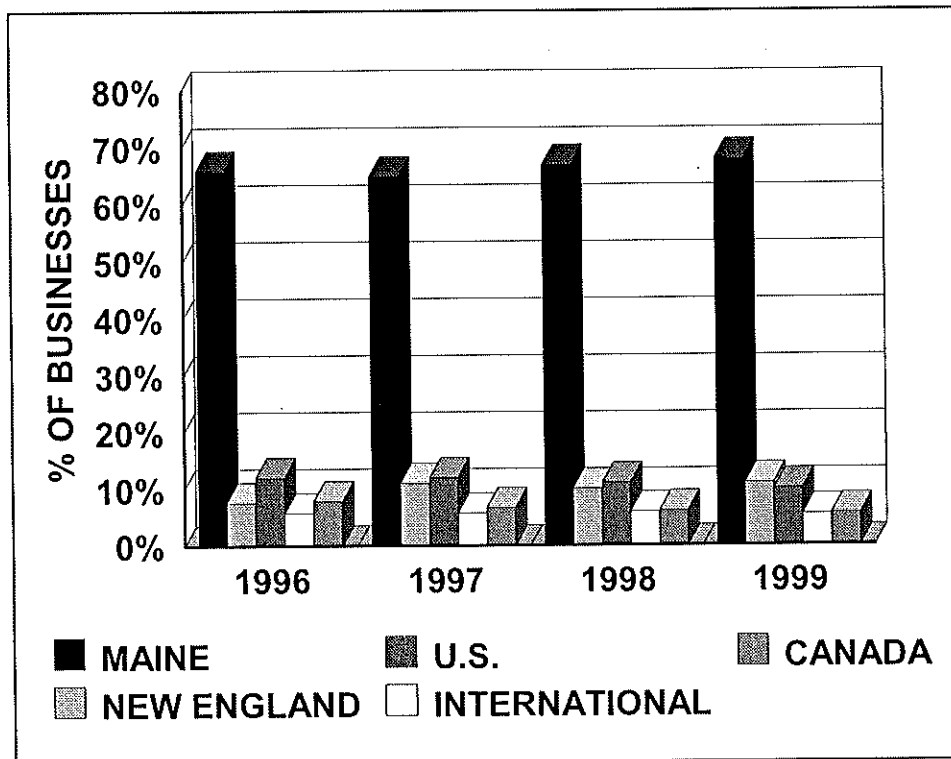
Factors identified as not likely to have a major impact are:



## PURCHASES

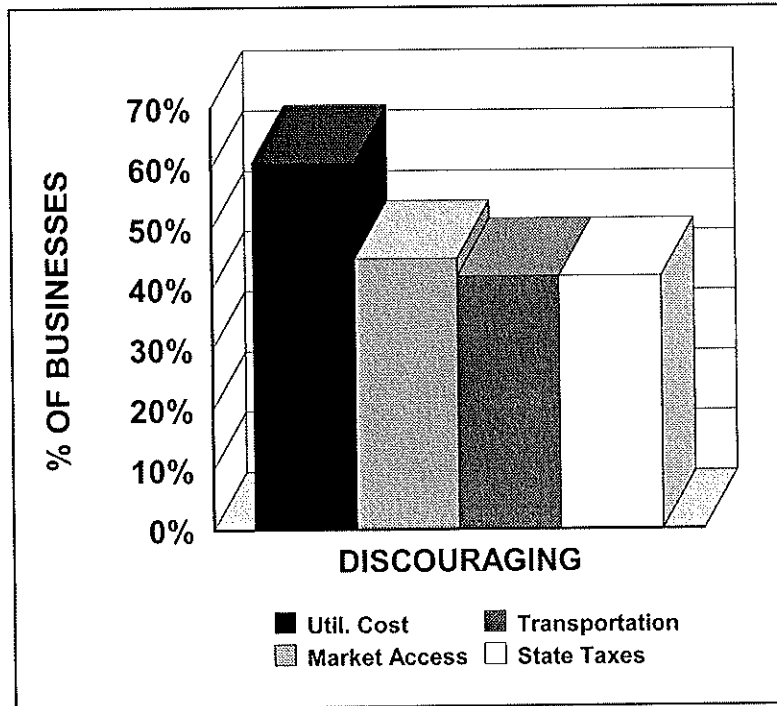
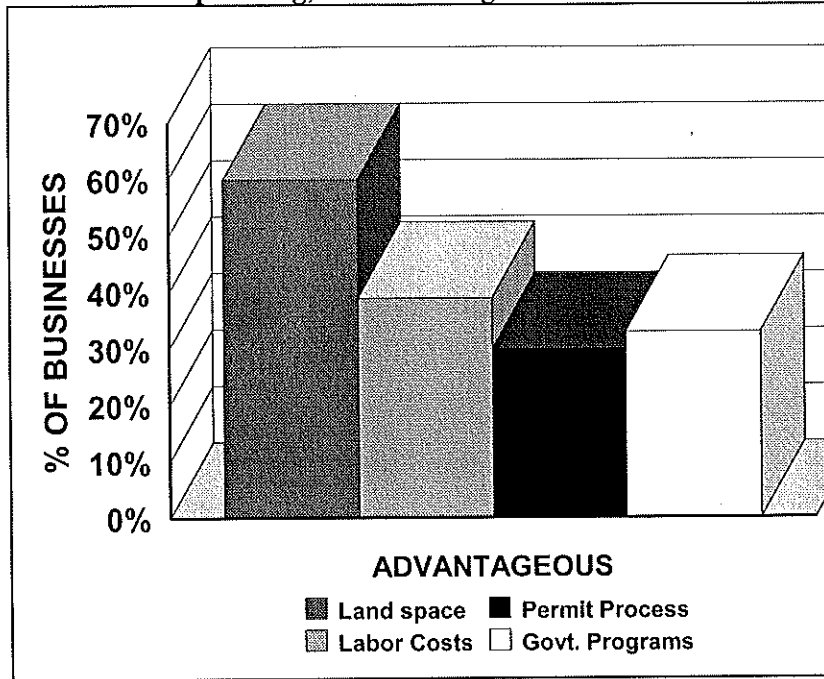
- In 1999, 68% of the businesses interviewed indicated their primary purchases were in Maine; 11% of the purchases were in New England; 10% in the U.S.; 5% in Canada; and, 5% international.
- 36% purchased products outside of Maine because the product was not available and 24% indicated that it cost them less money.
- 45% indicated that they were interested in finding other Maine vendors.

**During the last four years, what percent of your primary purchases were in the following areas?**



## RETENTION AND EXPANSION

What is advantageous and what is discouraging when considering remaining, expanding, or relocating in this area?



## ASSISTANCE AND INFORMATION

➤ Businesses indicated the need for outside assistance or information in:

- marketing (24%)
- OSHA (21%)
- capital (21%)
- energy efficiency (18%)

➤ 9 businesses indicated a desire for direct or immediate assistance in at least one of the following:

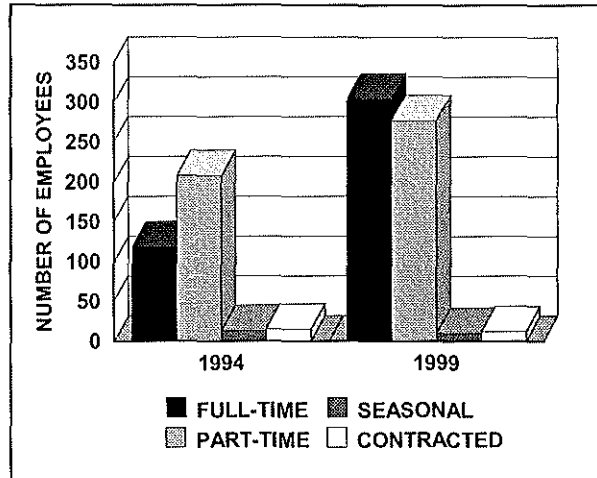
- tax
- PUC
- business licensing
- capital
- local zoning
- marketing

*86 business referrals were generated from the businesses interviewed in the Cobscook Bay Area. The referrals were passed through the BVP referral network to local and state agencies for business assistance.*

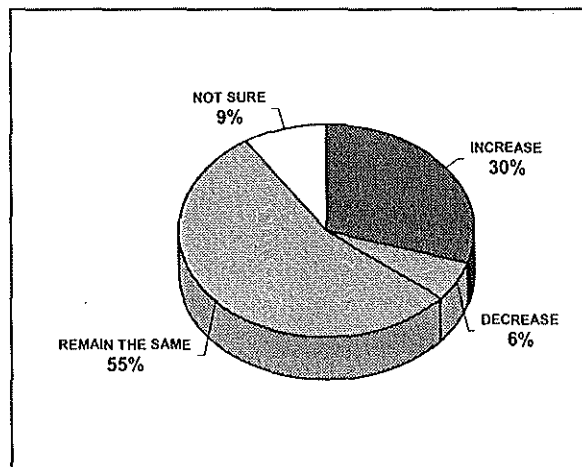


# EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

How many worked at this establishment:

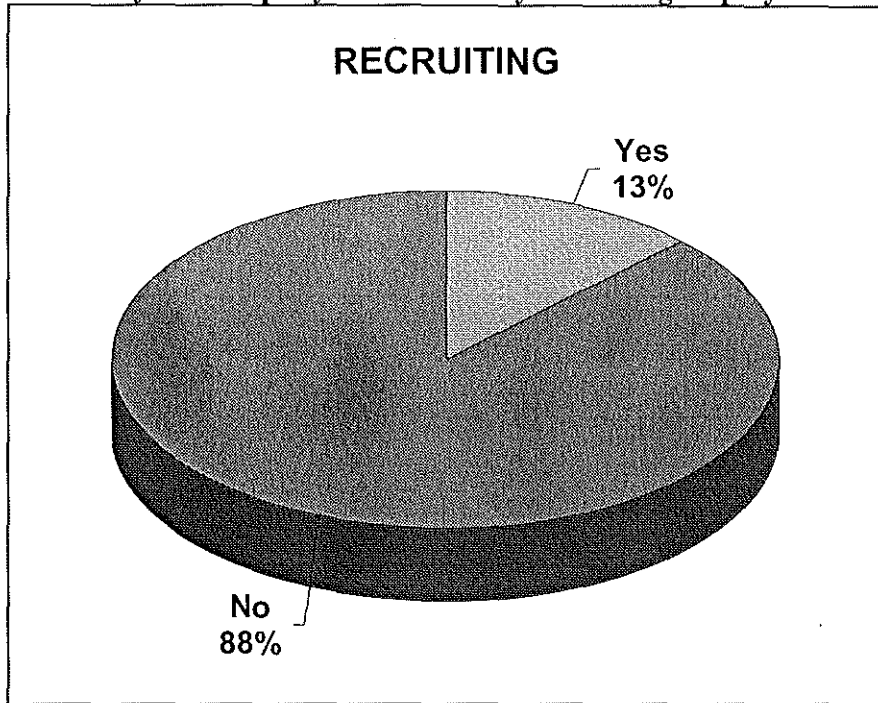


Over the course of the next couple of years, do you expect your firm's employment level to increase, decrease, or remain the same?

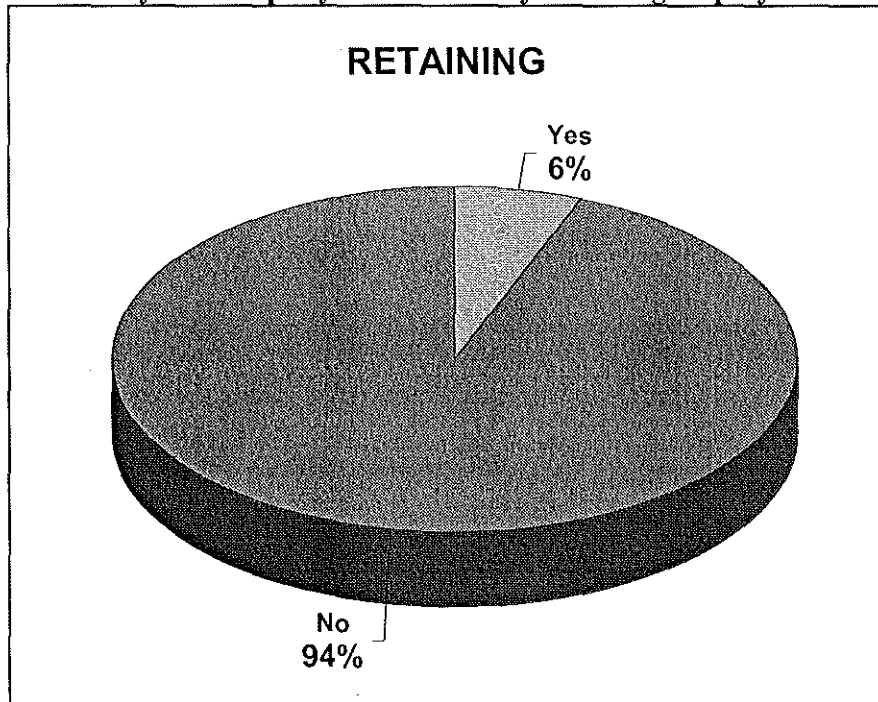


# EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

Does your company have difficulty recruiting employees?

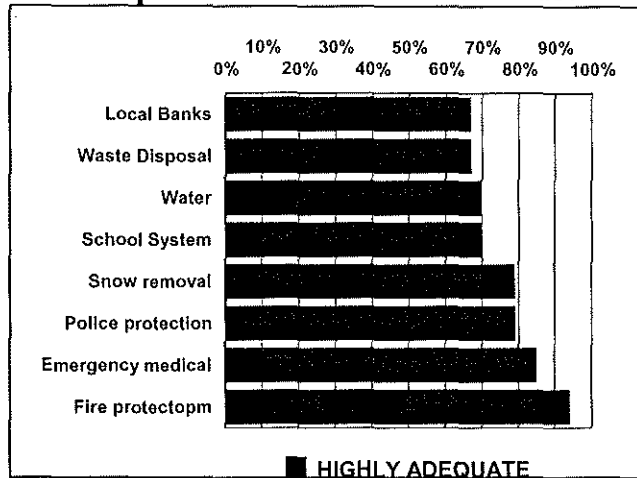


Does your company have difficulty retaining employees?

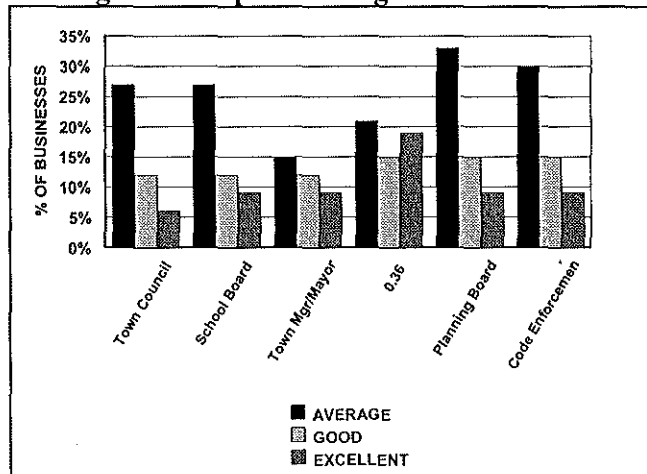


## BVP LOCAL QUESTIONS

**Are the services and facilities within your community adequate for current business needs?**



**Rate the following municipal government/educational agencies in performing their function.**

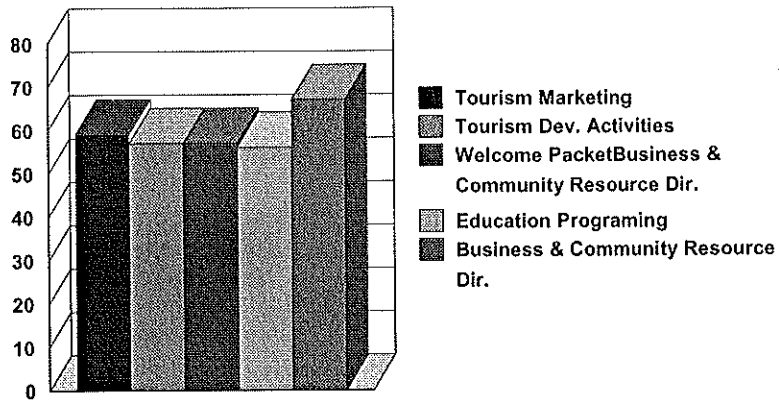


**Please rate the community from a business and personal point of view.**

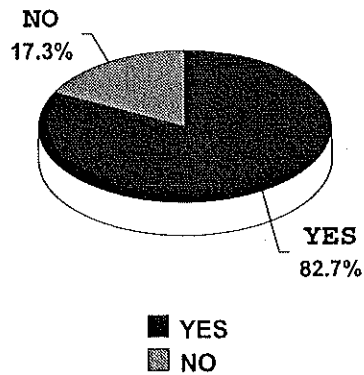
	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Economy	12%	6%	3%
Quality of Life	18%	42%	21%
Comm. Size	15%	30%	12%
People	24%	36%	
Housing	17%	38%	30%
Work Ethic	36%	30%	3%
Cost of Living	36%	15%	3%
Building Costs	39%	18%	6%

# COBSCOOK BAY AREA LOCAL QUESTIONS

If this new organization were in place, which of the following services would be beneficial to your business?



Do you think a combined chamber is a good idea?



Would you be interested in joining this chamber?

