

**Piscataquis County
Micro-Enterprise
Survey**

Prepared for

The Eastern Maine Development Corporation

Submitted by

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Introduction

This study was conducted by the Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy (MCSC) of the University of Maine for the Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC) in cooperation with the Piscataquis County Economic Development Committee. The study was funded through a grant received by EMDC from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The study comprised the development and implementation of a survey of micro-enterprise owners in Piscataquis County. The survey was designed to collect information about home-based businesses and micro-enterprises in Piscataquis County to determine their characteristics, their economic impact, and to identify their business needs.

Survey Methodology

Survey Population

Data were collected through telephone interviews conducted with the owners or operators of micro-enterprises in Piscataquis County. The survey sample was developed through several mailing/data files provided by EMDC. These files contained a total of 1,074 records. The files were combined and reviewed to remove duplicate and incomplete records. This review resulted in a total of 809 complete records.

Questionnaire development

A list of potential questions was developed by the Piscataquis County Economic Development Committee. In addition, MCSC staff met with EMDC staff to identify the most important topics to be addressed in the survey. In close consultation with EMDC, the Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy developed the final survey questionnaire which addressed the information needs of the committee and EMDC as well as interview time limits.

Survey implementation

Notification letters were mailed to survey sample members shortly before the interviewing was begun. These letters listed the sponsors, described the reason the study was being conducted and the use that would be made of the data. In addition, the letter described the role of the Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy, and informed potential respondents that their participation would be voluntary and that their individual responses would remain confidential (see Appendix). This information was repeated at the beginning of each interview as part of the informed consent process.

The interviews were conducted by professional interviewers employed by the Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy at the University of Maine. All interviewers participated in a four-hour training session designed specifically for this study, using a series of study-specific materials (see Appendix). Interviewers were provided background information on the project, the purpose of the study, and how and when to contact respondents. Interviewers were provided a set of question-by-question instructions on the meaning and intent of each question, potential respondent concerns, and appropriate methods of handling those concerns. In addition, interviewers conducted two hours of practice interviews before implementation of the survey.

A protocol was developed specifying the number of contact attempts to be made on a schedule of varying times of day and days of the week to ensure that all potential respondents had optimal and equal opportunity to participate in the survey. Interviewers documented all attempts to contact respondents. The interviews were conducted from September 14 through November 6, 2000.

Data entry and verification

All survey data were double entered to check for input accuracy. All inconsistencies identified were verified with the completed questionnaire. The verification process also identified seven interviews completed with non-profit organizations or with businesses outside Piscataquis County. These interviews were not included in the final data file.

Survey Sample Disposition

From the original list of 1,074 micro-enterprises, a total of 809 complete records was identified and comprised the survey sample. Attempts to contact these micro-enterprise owners were made between 8:00 a.m. and 8:45 p.m. weekdays, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturdays, and from 1:00 to 8:45 p.m. Sundays.

Survey Sample Disposition

Outcome	Number	Percent of Sample
Completed an interview	376	46.5%
Unable to contact	125	15.4%
Refused	51	6.3%
Wrong #, disconnected, not in service	113	14.0%
Ineligible	144	17.8%
Total in sample	809	100%

During the course of attempting to contact sample members, 108 were determined to be ineligible for participation in the survey primarily because they no longer owned/operated the selected micro-enterprise, and 36 individuals indicated they (or someone else in the business) already had completed an interview. Attempts to contact 113 sample members resulted in identification of a wrong phone number, a disconnected phone or a phone not in service.

A total of 51 of those contacted refused to participate in the study and 125 could not be contacted after multiple attempts. Interviews were completed with 376 (88%) of those individuals contacted who owned/operated a micro-enterprise at the time of the interview.

Survey Results

The following pages present the results of the completed interviews. At the request of EMDC, the results are presented using the questionnaire that was employed by the telephone interviewers (with some coding and interviewer instructions removed). In addition, responses volunteered by respondents to interviewer prompts such as “anything else?” are listed. The Appendix is the Interviewer’s Manual used in this project and includes the notification letter as well as the questionnaire used in this study.

Piscataquis County Micro-Enterprise Survey

Survey Responses

This document presents the results of a telephone survey of micro-enterprise owners in Piscataquis County conducted in September and October 2000 by the Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy at the University of Maine. The results presented here are of 340 micro-enterprise owners employing five or fewer year-round employees who worked at least 35 hours per week..

Survey responses are presented using the questionnaire that was completed by the telephone interviewers. Page breaks on this form are different from the actual questionnaire to accommodate presentation of the results. Some coding and interviewer instructions have been removed and do not appear on this form.

For all survey questions, the number of valid responses is presented as N=XXX. The number of valid responses may vary by question because some questions did not apply to all respondents and some respondents chose to not respond to particular questions. For most survey questions, the percent of the valid number of respondents who chose each response is presented as XX%. For some survey questions (e.g., number of years operating this business) measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) are presented. For a few survey questions, the actual number of respondents indicating a particular response is presented.

IF NO BUSINESS NAME, GO TO Q1a.

Q1 Our records indicate that the name of this business is _____ is that correct?

IF CORRECT GO TO Q2

N=340

68%	YES	(GO TO Q2)	1
17%	NO	(GO TO Q1b)	2
14%	DK		8
	NA		9
1%	INAP (NO BIZ NAME)		0

Q1a We don't have the name of your business here, just your name. Is that the name you do business as?

YES	(GO TO Q2)	1
NO	(GO TO Q1b)	2
DK		8
NA		9
INAP		0

Q1b What is the current name of this business?

Q2 That's a (EXAMPLE: RESTAURANT?) IF NOT APPARENT BUSINESS TYPE,

Then what is the primary product?

N=340	
4.4%	DR. / LAWYER / DENTIST 1
4.1%	CHILD CARE 2
2.1%	RESTAURANT 3
5.9%	BED & BREAKFAST/MOTEL / LODGING 4
6.8%	GAS STATION, AUTO SALES, REPAIRS 5
7.9%	CRAFTS 6
5.3%	FINANCE, INSURANCE, REAL ESTATE
6.5%	ART, ARTWORK, PAINTER
1.5%	ANTIQUES
2.9%	HAIR CUTTER, STYLIST
8.2%	BUILDER, CONTRACTOR
4.7%	CONVENIENCE STORE
2.1%	FLORIST
8.2%	GIFT SHOP, OTHER RETAIL
6.2%	GUIDE, OUTDOOR RECREATION
1.2%	HARDWARE STORE
7.1%	AGRICULTURE. TREE FARMING
3.5%	WOOD PRODUCTS
11.5%	OTHER

Q3 What is the legal structure of your business? Is it:

N=339	
72%	A sole proprietorship? (GO TO Q4) 1
18%	A corporation? (GO TO Q4) 2
6%	A partnership? 3
1%	A limited liability company? (GO TO Q4) 4
0%	A cooperative? (GO TO Q4) 5
3%	Something else? (DESCRIBE) _____ (GO TO Q4) 6

Q3a (IF A PARTNERSHIP) How many partners are there?

18 respondents with 2 partners; 4 respondents with 3 partners; 1 respondent with 4partners

Q4 How many years have you operated/managed this business?

(IF LESS THAN 01, CODE 00)

N=339
 mean=12.6 years
 median=10 years
 mode=3 years
 min=0 years
 max=54 years

Q5 Did you start this business or was it in operation before you took over?
 N=339
 73% R STARTED IT 1
 27% IN OPERATION BEFORE R TOOK OVER ... (GO TO Q5b) 2

Q5a (IF STARTED BUSINESS) Why did you start this business?
 (CHECK REASONS AS R GIVES THEM. DO NOT READ LIST)
 N=249

	Yes	No	NA	INAP
WANTED INDEPENDENCE OF WORKING FOR MYSELF. .	37%			
WANTED TO WORK OUT OF MY HOME.	19%			
FINANCIAL / NEEDED INCOME.	31%			
PERSONAL INTEREST/SUBJECT MATTER/HOBBY	51%			
RESPONSE TO MARKET NICHE	27%			
OTHER (EXPLAIN) _____	30%			

ALL: GO TO Q6

Q5b (IF BUSINESS PREVIOUSLY IN OPERATION {CODE 2} IN Q5)
 For how many years had it been in business before you took over?
 N=85
 mean=30 years
 median=20 years
 mode=10 years
 min=1 years
 max=178 years

Q6 How much experience did you have in this type of work before you started this business? Would you say...
 N=338
 51% A lot? 1
 22% Some? 2
 27% A little or none? 3

Q7 What did you do just before you went into this business?
 (CHECK RESPONSE IF GIVEN; DO NOT READ)
 N=337
 7% WORKED HERE (GO TO Q8) 1
 66% WORKED SOMEWHERE ELSE 2
 11% HAD ANOTHER SMALL BUSINESS 3
 9% NOT WORKING (GO TO Q8) 4
 7% OTHER (DESCRIBE) _____ .. (GO TO Q8) 5

Q7a	Was it the same type of business - the same products or services - or not?		
		N=295	
		35%	YES, SAME TYPE OF BUSINESS 1
		65%	NOT 2
Q8	Do you own or operate <u>more than one</u> business?		
		N=339	
		20%	Yes 1
		80%	No (GO TO Q9) 2
Q8a	(IF OPERATE MORE THAN ONE BUSINESS) How many?		
		N=65	
		26	respondents operate 1 other business
		35	respondents operate 2 other businesses
		4	respondents operate 3 other businesses
Q9	Do you currently have any other jobs?		
		N=339	
		20%	YES 1
		80%	NO (GO TO Q10) 2
Q9a	(IF EMPLOYED) Do you work full-time or part-time at that job (SUM OF THOSE JOBS)?		
		N=68	
		56%	FULL-TIME 1
		44%	PART-TIME 2
Q9a1	Is that year-round or not?		
		N=70	
		78%	YEAR-ROUND 1
		17%	NOT 2
		5%	SOME ARE, SOME AREN'T 3
Q10	Now, back to (NAME OF BUSINESS) Thinking about your household's total income, how much would you say you rely on this business? Would you say a great deal, some, very little, or not at all?		
		N=333	
		52%	A GREAT DEAL 1
		19%	SOME 2
		15%	VERY LITTLE 3
		14%	NOT AT ALL 4
Q11	Is this business located in your home, in a separate building on the property where you live, or in a building that is not on the property where you live?		
		N=338	
		48%	IN HOME 1
		19%	A BUILDING ON PROPERTY 2
		33%	A BUILDING NOT ON PROPERTY 3

Q12 Do you sell your products or services from there?
 N=338
 95% Yes 1
 5% No 2

Q13 Do you sell them from anywhere else? For example:
 N=149

	Yes	No	DK	NA
In a separate storefront that's yours alone? . .	7%			
In other stores with goods from other people?	34%			
By mail or phone order?	36%			
In trade shows / craft fairs?	50%			
Over the Internet?	34%			
Anywhere else? (EXPLAIN _____)	21%			

Q14 Who are your customers? Are they:
 N=340

	Yes	No	DK	NA
other businesses?	43%			
govt or non-profit agencies?	18%			
individuals - the general public?	94%			

IWER: IF MORE THAN ONE YES, ASK Q14a. IF ONLY ONE, GO TO Q15.

Q14a (IF MORE THAN ONE IN Q14) Which one of those categories I just read to you is most important to your business?
 N=128

25%	OTHER BUSINESSES	1
3%	GOVT/ NON-PROFIT AGENCIES?	2
72%	INDIVIDUALS / GENERAL PUBLIC	3

We want to know where your sales go to. Specifically, I'm going to ask you about what percent of your sales are to customers who come from Piscataquis County, the surrounding region (Madison, Dexter, Howland, Millinocket...), what percent are from customers who come from other parts of Maine, what percent are from customers who come from outside of Maine, and what percent are from customers who come from outside the US. That should add up to 100%

Q15 First, about what percent of your sales come from:

	N=329		
mean=56%		Piscataquis County itself?	___ ___ ___
median=70%			
mean=10%		The surrounding region?	___ ___ ___
median=5%			
mean=13%		From other parts of Maine?	___ ___ ___
median=1%			
mean=20%		From outside of Maine but in the U.S.?.?	___ ___ ___
median=0%			
mean=1%		From outside the US?	___ ___ ___
median=0%			
(SHOULD SUM TO 100)		100%

Now we want to know where your supplies and materials come from. These are consumable things like office supplies, raw materials -things you buy fairly routinely, not durable equipment. Specifically, I'm going to ask you about what percent of your expenses for supplies and materials come from those same areas I just mentioned. Again, this should add up to 100%.

Q16 About what percent of your supplies come from:

	N=329		
mean=29%		Piscataquis County?	___ ___ ___
median=10%			
mean=13%		the surrounding region?	___ ___ ___
median=0%			
mean=33%		from other parts of Maine?	___ ___ ___
median=10%			
mean=25%		from outside of Maine?	___ ___ ___
median=0%			
mean=1%		from outside the US?	___ ___ ___
media=0%			
(SHOULD SUM TO 100)		100%

Q17 Do you purchase any business services like accounting, legal, cleaning services?

	N=340		
59%		YES	1
41%		NO	(GO TO Q17b) 2

Q17a (IF PURCHASE SERVICES) Do any of those services come from:
N=196

	Yes	No	DK	NA
Piscataquis County?	69%			
the surrounding region?	22%			
from other parts of Maine? . .	24%			
from outside the US?	1%			

Q17b What are the three most important things that you need in this business that you have to pay for, not counting personnel or fringe benefits? (NOTE: COULD BE SUPPLIES, RENT, INSURANCE, ETC.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

sum of all responses for the 3 most important things mentioned:

N=337

16%	Fuel
38%	Utilities
33%	Supplies (only response)
47%	Supplies (specified)
14%	Raw materials
31%	Insurance
9%	Transportation
12%	Equipment
13%	Rent or Mortgage
6%	Taxes
9%	Advertising
3%	Other professional services
7%	Basic business services
3%	Registrations, licenses, table rent
12%	Inventory for resale
3%	other

Q18 What kinds of advertising do you use? I have a list here. Please answer yes or no to each. Do you advertise by: (IF "NONE," ASK ANYWAY:) Let me just run through this list make sure.

N=336

	Yes	No	DK	NA	INAP
word of mouth	98%				
yellow pages	34%				
radio	21%				
magazines	15%				
television	7%				
the Internet	35%				
flyers / brochures	47%				
trade shows / craft fairs	31%				
daily newspapers	26%				
weekly newspapers	46%				
signs	60%				
anything else? (DESCRIBE	18%				

Q19 In the last year, about how much money have you spent on marketing - on advertising and promoting your products/services?

N=235

mean=\$2,190

median=\$300

Q19a (PROMPT IF NEEDED) Would you say it's:

N=193

21%	none?	1
18%	under \$100?	2
23%	between \$101 - \$500?	3
11%	between \$501 - \$1,000?	4
27%	above \$1,000?	5

Q20 When you (started/took over) this business, what was your primary source of funds to support the (start-up/take over)?

N=328

59%	PERSONAL SAVINGS / EARNINGS	01
1%	CREDIT CARD	02
1%	2 ND MORTGAGE ON YOUR HOME	03
10%	LOAN FROM BANK OR CREDIT UNION	04
1%	LOAN FROM OTHER ORGANIZATION (SBDC, EMDC)	05
3%	LOAN FROM FAMILY MEMBERS	06
2%	LOAN FROM ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL	07
1%	Other	
14%	Identified More than one of above sources	
8%	DIDN'T NEED FUNDS	77

Q21 Do you currently have loans to support this business? (DO NOT INCLUDE HOME MORTGAGE UNLESS IT IS A 2ND TAKEN OUT EXPRESSLY TO SUPPORT THE BUSINESS)

N=328

33%	YES	1
77%	NO (GO TO Q22)	2

Q21a From whom? Do you have a loan for your business from...

N=107

	Yes	No	DK	NA
a credit card?	18%			
a 2 nd mortgage on your home?	11%			
a loan from a bank or credit union?	68%			
a loan from another organization?	18%			
a loan from family members?	4%			
a loan from another individual?	9%			

Now I'd like to ask some questions about the staff at this business.

Q22 First, about you, about how many weeks per year do you work at this business?

N=335
mean=45 weeks

Q23 When you are working at this business, about how many hours per week do you work at this business?
(PROBE: IF IT CHANGES, Can you give me an average?)

N=333
mean=46 hours

Q24 Not counting yourself, how many non-paid workers work at this business?

N=340

221 respondents indicated they had non-paid workers;

90 had 1 non-paid worker

16 had 2 non-paid workers

6 had 3 non-paid workers

7 had >3 non-paid workers

Q24a How many of your non-paid workers are seasonal? 15 respondents had 1
7 respondents had 2
2 respondents had >2

Q24b How many of your non-paid workers work 35 hours per week or more? 31 respondents had 1
3 respondents had 2
2 respondents had 3
1 respondents had 4

Q24c How many of your non-paid workers work less than 35 hours per week? 63 respondents had 1
..... 12 respondents had 2
2 respondents had 3
6 respondents had >3

Q25 Now about others, not counting yourself, how many year-round paid workers work at this business?

N=340

210 respondents indicated they had no year-round paid workers

130 respondents indicated they had year-round paid workers;

..... 35 had 1 year-round paid workers

..... 36 had 2 year-round paid workers

..... 22 had 3 year-round paid workers

..... 11 had 4 year-round paid workers

..... 26 had 5 or more year-round paid workers

Q25a How many of your year-round, paid workers work 35 hours per week or more? 30 respondents had 1
28 respondents had 2
15 respondents had 3
9 respondents had 4
9 respondents had 5

Q25b How many of your year-round, paid workers work less than 35 hours per week? 25 respondents had 1
27 respondents had 2
9 respondents had 3
4 respondents had 4
3 respondents had 5
5 respondents had >5

Q26 Not counting yourself, how many seasonal paid workers work at this business?

N=339

252 respondents indicated they had no seasonal paid workers
87 respondents indicated they had seasonal paid workers;
35 had 1 seasonal paid workers
24 had 2 seasonal paid workers
12 had 3 seasonal paid workers
3 had 4 seasonal paid workers
13 had 5 or more seasonal paid workers

Q26a How many of your seasonal paid workers work 35 hours per week or more? . . . 17 respondents had 1
11 respondents had 2
5 respondents had 3
1 respondents had 4
5 respondents had >4

Q26b How many of your seasonal paid workers work less than 35 hours per week? . . . 29 respondents had 1
12 respondents had 2
7 respondents had 3
3 respondents had 4
6 respondents had >4

Thank you. Now I have some questions about finding and keeping workers for your business.

Q27 How difficult is it for you to find good workers for your business? Would you say it is:

N=331

40%	very difficult,	1
13%	somewhat difficult,	2
5%	not very difficult, or (GO TO Q28)	3
7%	not at all difficult? (GO TO Q28)	4
35%	DON'T HAVE/NEED WORKERS (VOL) (GO TO Q28)	7

Q27a (IF DIFFICULT OR SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT) Why?

(CIRCLE 1 FOR ITEMS IF R MENTIONS. PROBE: "Anything else?")

N=175

	Yes	No	DK	NA	INAP
CAN'T PAY ENOUGH OR PROVIDE ENOUGH BENEFITS	32%				
NO QUALIFIED PEOPLE IN THE AREA ..	48%				
CHILDCARE ISSUES	2%				
TRAVEL / TRANSPORTATION ISSUES ..	1%				
OTHER (DESCRIBE)	69%				

Q28 How difficult is it to keep employees for your business? Would you say it is:

N=193

14%	Very difficult	1
21%	Somewhat difficult	2
37%	Not very difficult	(GO TO Q29) 3
28%	Not at all difficult	(GO TO Q29) 4

Q28a. (IF DIFFICULT OR SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT) Why?

(CIRCLE 1 FOR ITEMS IF R MENTIONS. PROBE: "Anything else?")

N=72

	Yes	No	DK	NA	INAP
CAN'T PAY ENOUGH OR PROVIDE ENOUGH BENEFITS	62%				
CAN'T PROVIDE STEADY WORK	26%				
NO QUALIFIED PEOPLE IN THE AREA ..	29%				
CHILDCARE ISSUES	1%				
TRAVEL / TRANSPORTATION ISSUES ..	3%				
THEY CAN'T DO THE WORK, WON'T STICK WITH IT	33%				
THEY FIND OTHER JOBS	33%				
OTHER (DESCRIBE)	29%				

Q29 About how much is your estimated annual payroll including benefits?

N=271

167 respondents indicated they had no payroll
104 respondents indicated specified a payroll; of the 104:
mean=\$52,841
median=\$31,000
min=\$300
max=\$550,000

Q30 Do you provide benefits for your employees?

N=165

42% YES 1
58% NO (GO TO Q31) 2

Q30a (IF PROVIDES BENEFITS) Does that include:

N=70

	Yes	No	DK	NA	INAP
health insurance?	54%				
a retirement plan?	34%				
paid vacation?	93%				
paid sick leave?	71%				
anything else? (DESCRIBE) _____	44%				

Thank you. Now I have some questions about your sales of goods or services.

Q31 About what was the total dollar amount of sales for your business in the last year?

ALTERNATE WORDING: About what was the total dollar amount of the services your business provided in the last year?

246 respondents specified the amount of sales in the last year; of the 246:
mean=\$150,565
median=\$35,000
min=\$0
max=\$2,000,000

Q32 Now I'd like to know when during the year - in which quarter - those sales (services) occurred. About what percent of your total sales (services provided) occurred in the:

N=325	
mean=17%	1st quarter (Jan., Feb., Mar)? %
median=20%	
mean=22%	2 nd quarter (Apr., May, June)? %
median=25%	
mean=33%	3 rd quarter (July, Aug, Sept.)? %
median=25%	
mean=28%	4 th quarter (Oct., Nov., Dec.)? %
median=25%	

Q33 About what was the total dollar amount of expenses for your business in the last year?
IWER CHECK BOX:

199 respondents specified the amount of expenses; of the 199:
 mean=\$106,940
 median=\$17,000
 min=\$0
 max=\$1,550,000

Now I'd like to ask a few questions about any major changes you plan in your business in the next two years.

Q34 Are you considering ending the business in the next two years?

N=334	
16%	YES 1
84%	NO (GO TO Q34b) 2

Q34a IF CONSIDERING ENDING THE BUSINESS) Why is that? _____

DK	88
NA	99
INAP	00

Q34b Are you considering moving the business in the next two years?

N=329	
6%	YES 1
94%	NO (GO TO Q34d) 2

Q34c (IF CONSIDERING MOVING) To where?

N=21	
76%	OTHER PISCATAQUIS COUNTY SITE 1
0%	SURROUNDING REGION 2
19%	OTHER PARTS OF MAINE 3
5%	OUTSIDE OF MAINE 4
0%	OUTSIDE THE US 5

Q34d Expanding this business during the next two years?

N=331

37%	Yes	1
63%	No	(GO TO Q35) 2

Q34e (IF CONSIDERING EXPANDING) What kind of expansion, will you...

N=124

	Yes	No	DK	NA	INAP
add more space?	56%				
add additional locations?	22%				
add new services?	48%				
add more product lines?	53%				
add more work force?	59%				
add Internet commerce?	53%				
anything else? (DESCRIBE)	16%				

Q35 Now I have some questions about things that small business owners often mention they would like information or advice about. I have a list here and ask if you are interested in getting information or advice about each of them I read. (IF YES TO AN ITEM, ASK: “Would you say you are very interested or just somewhat interested in getting information or advice about that?”)

Are you interested in getting information or advice about...
N=268

	Somewhat Interested Or VeryInterested
financial management	50%
production practices	21%
marketing products/services . . .	59%
distributing your products	33%
business planning	46%
getting financing	37%
customer service	36%
government regulations	48%
hiring & retaining employees .	37%
taxes	56%
computer use	54%
What else? (DESCRIBE)	6%

Q36 Small business owners rely on a variety of sources for information or advice in running their businesses. I have a list here and I'm going to ask you, for each one, how much do you rely on them for information or advice: a lot, a little, or not at all.

N=185

	A Lot	Some	A Little	Not At All	DK	NA
First, friends and family. How much do you rely on them for information or advice about running your business - a lot, some, a little or not at all?	42%					
other small business operators?	46%					
professional consultants such as lawyers & accountants?	31%					
state or regional economic development agencies?	18%					
magazines or trade journals?	42%					
anyone else? (DESCRIBE) _____ _____	20%					

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about owning and operating a business in Piscataquis County.

Q37 What are the greatest assets of Piscataquis County for owning a small business?

(DO NOT READ LIST. CIRCLE "1" IF R MENTIONS THE ITEM. PROBE: "Anything else?")

N=328

	Yes	No	DK	NA
LABOR AVAILABILITY	4%			
LABOR SKILLS	3%			
LABOR COSTS	5%			
MARKET ACCESS	8%			
TRANSPORTATION	1%			
LAND AVAILABILITY	13%			
ACCESS TO RAW MATERIALS	4%			
PROPERTY TAXES	7%			
QUALITY OF LIFE, LIFESTYLE	48%			
OTHER (DESCRIBE) _____ _____	58%			
NONE (VOL)	14%			

Q38 What are the disadvantages or barriers of Piscataquis County for owning a small business?

(DO NOT READ LIST. CIRCLE "1" IF R MENTIONS THE ITEM. PROBE: "Anything else?")

N=322

	Yes	No	DK	NA
LABOR AVAILABILITY (LACK)	11%			
LABOR SKILLS (LACK).	9%			
LABOR COSTS (HIGH).	3%			
MARKET ACCESS (NOT).	21%			
TRANSPORTATION (LACK).	12%			
LAND AVAILABILITY (NOT).	1%			
ACCESS (NOT) TO RAW MATERIALS	9%			
PROPERTY TAXES (HIGH).	8%			
OTHER (DESCRIBE) _____	81%			

NONE (VOL)	6%			

Q39 How do you think the next five years looks for your business, compared to the last five years? Would you say the next five years looks...

N=317

24%	much better than the last five years,	1
34%	somewhat better than the last five years,	2
31%	about the same,	3
7%	somewhat worse, or	4
4%	much worse?	5

Q40 How do you think the next five years looks for small business in Piscataquis County as a whole, compared to the last five years? Would you say the next five years looks...

N=305

11%	much better than the last five years,	1
36%	somewhat better,	2
32%	about the same,	3
17%	somewhat worse, or	4
4%	much worse?	5

Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself.

Q41 For how many years have you lived in Piscataquis County?

N=304

mean=28 years
median=25 years

Q42	Were you born in Maine or somewhere else?		
		N=338	
		61%	BORN IN MAINE (GO TO Q44) 1
		39%	BORN SOMEWHERE ELSE 2
Q43	(IF NOT BORN IN MAINE) In what state were you born?		
		N=132	
		44%	OTHER NEW ENGLAND STATE
		28%	NEW YORK, NEW JERSEY, PENNSYLVANIA
		28%	OTHER STATE OR COUNTRY
Q44	And about military service, are you:		
		N=336	
		23%	A military veteran or currently on active duty in the service? 1
		77%	Not 2
Q45	What's the highest grade in school you've completed so far?		
		N=336	
		0%	8 TH GRADE OR LESS 01
		3%	SOME HIGH SCHOOL 02
		33%	HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE OR GED 03
		3%	SOME TRADE SCHOOL, VOCATIONAL SCHOOL OR NON-COLLEGE POST-SECONDARY TRAINING 04
		3%	TRADE / VOCATIONAL SCHOOL GRADUATE 05
		19%	SOME COLLEGE 06
		6%	ASSOCIATES (TWO YEAR) DEGREE) 07
		22%	COLLEGE GRADUATE 08
		11%	POST-COLLEGE, GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE 09
Q46	In what year were you born?		
		N=336	
		25%	1900-1942
		26%	1943-1950
		26%	1951-1957
		23%	1958 - present
Q47	Are you single or married?		
		N=336	
		20%	SINGLE 1
		80%	MARRIED 2

READ IF NECESSARY: In this study, we need to make sure that we talk with business people in all income groups to make sure the total group we talk with represents Piscataquis County. To do this, I'll ask about ranges of income so that you won't have to reveal your exact income, but it is important that you choose the right category.

Q48 What was your household's total income from all sources before taxes for 1999, for all household members combined? Was it \$25,000 or more, or was it less than that? (INCLUDES ALL PEOPLE LIVING IN R's HOUSEHOLD)

N=300	
4%	\$0 - \$10,000
4%	\$10,001 - \$15,000
7%	\$15,001 - \$20,000
10%	\$20,001 - \$25,000
20%	\$25,001 - \$35,000
34%	\$35,001 - \$50,000
21%	over \$50,001

Sex of Respondent

N=330	
45%	MALE OWNER OR SPOUSE
51%	FEMALE OWNER OR SPOUSE
4%	MALE OWNER, OTHER RESPONDENT

Town of respondent (based upon telephone extension)

N=340	
39%	DOVER FOXCROFT
17%	GREENVILLE
16%	GUILFORD
13%	MILO
5%	BROWNVILLE
5%	MONSON
2%	DEXTER
3%	OTHER

Number of telephone attempts to contact respondents

N=339
mean=3
median=2

Length of interviews

N=333
mean= 23 minutes
median= 20 minutes

THANK R AND EXIT

Piscataquis County Micro-Enterprise Survey

Respondent Volunteered Responses

This document presents respondent answers to interviewer prompts such as “anything else?” as well as other respondent volunteered responses from a telephone survey of 369 micro-enterprise owners in Piscataquis County. The Survey was conducted by the Margaret Chase Smith Center for Public Policy at the University of Maine in September and October, 2000. Presented below are the question number from the questionnaire (e.g., Q2), a brief descriptor of the question, followed by the individual responses offered (paraphrased) by respondents.

Q2 - Primary Product. Response if indicated other:

- organic vegetables
- herbs and herbal products
- blueberry
- entertainment complex
- museums and cruises
- recycle wood chips
- contractor
- auto service
- general store
- trapping/fur
- retail hardware and build materials
- home construction
- wreaths
- food, fishing, hunting, ,clothing
- build small industrial and residential, etc.
- barber/stylist
- autobody shop
- Mat's structures R&D
- residential care facility for mental illness
- home and garden
- live bait and info
- insulation installation
- sales rep and buy and sell
- convenience store, gas
- take photographs & anything in color photos including lecturing
- veterinarian
- Maine maple syrup
- marine dealer

- fruit and vegetable
- chiropractic HC
- product & services, local railroad, nature tours, photography
- meat
- sewing for people
- hardware
- artist
- income tax prep.
- plant material
- logging
- electrical
- wild blueberries
- engraved glass & cross stitch items
- alterations
- horse supplies and riding apparel
- build houses
- travel
- deli products
- paintings
- hardware & building materials
- payroll, bookkeeping
- church
- strawberries
- ceramic teeth
- computer consulting
- optician
- hunting & fishing equipment
- wood carving & walking sticks
- carriage harnesses
- retail flowers
- riding stable
- cosmetology
- restaurant + gift shop & antiques
- breeding farm + school for equestrian professional
- training riders for horses
- take-out food
- physical therapy
- video store + signs shop
- pet grooming/kennel

Q3 - Legal Structure. Response if indicated other:

- non-profit group
- thought legal partnership, but was told it was a sole proprietorship
- coolers???
- co-owned by 3 people, not legally partners

Q5a - Reasons for starting business. Response if indicated other:

- possible others but unwilling to discuss
- had business and wanted to continue
- state asked them to provide the service
- something to do
- saw need in c
- grew out of his other job as a need to keep crew busy in off seas on
- Doctors advice, get out of the mill-a sthma
- wanted to stay in ME, no other jobs a available
- preparing for retirement
- others were charging high prices which helped those who can't afford to pay
- retirement job for husband, but he didn't stay with it
- wanted to work in home town
- build homes
- no jobs available
- tired of other job
- expanded to D-F invited by Dr.
- got fed up with old job
- move back to Maine
- what always have done & wanted to do
- promote equestrian support for young people
- no other good jobs in area
- needed to work

Q7 - What did you do before you went in this business? Response if indicated other:

- got employee
- student
- army
- tax prepare and administrative work
- foster care
- school
- expansion

Q13 - Do you sell products from anywhere else? Response if indicated other:

- wholesale, party lot of University for example
- farmers market
- there is a gift shop and travel service
- door to door
- on the road
- co-ops
- profit leaders
- from another person's office
- hailed to the mills
- nursing homes and private homes
- gallery in N.Y.C.
- free lance
- contracted with nursing home and home care agencies

Q18 - What kinds of advertising do you use? Response if indicated something else:

- farmers markets
- sell thru coop
- truck has name
- chamber of commerce
- cable tv
- technical proposals
- race program
- National Federation women club, once a year
- public presentations
- craft coop.
- business cards
- sponsorship or events/organizations (school year books)
- pens, magnets, and business cards
- faxing newsletters to business clients
- working on the Internet
- Inn associates
- referrals from Dr.
- business cards
- Christmas message in the local paper
- small one-time newspaper

Q27a - Why difficult to find good workers. Response if indicated other:

- seasonal
- nobody wants to do it
- hard to find good people
- just don't want to work
- limited work force
- screws by their welfare
- lack of population
- no one seems to want to work
- not enough people around, lots of competition in summer
- nobody wants to work who is available
- have to train because of the post office as part of store
- new work force has no training
- poor work ethic
- don't want to work
- out in the cold 8-9 hours a day--few willing to do this
- cannot hire young (under 21) because of beer sales
- hours too few
- people do not want to work
- no motivation, gov't makes hiring impossible
- people don't want to work
- seasonal
- she doesn't know why no one wants the job
- never had to find workers, been there for 15 years
- can't afford to hire
- people not want to work
- lack workers, ethics

- most good people want full time
- short season
- skilled people don't want to come to rural Maine
- nobody wanted part time work
- specialty industry
- most who want the jobs are young women + they leave - get married
- do not want work, can't find dependable help
- young people do not have the desire to work

Q28a - Why difficult to keep employees. Response if indicated other:

- too hard, nobody likes to do it
- this year fired four employees, unable to do the work
- Brother-in-law was best worker, personal reasons took job out of area, other good worker went to college to study landscaping
- not a big business
- people not want to work
- short season

Q30a - Employee benefits. Response if indicated anything else:

- paid holidays
- 25% discount
- paid holidays
- lunch
- paid holidays
- parts at cost
- employee discounts
- lunch
- store discounts
- 15% discount on materials
- discounted services
- health club membership
- holiday pay
- free massages, free treatment

Q34a - Why ending the business. Response if indicated:

- state regulation
- no profit/ not worth it
- sick of it, other interests
- getting old
- stress on lack of profits
- refuse
- tired of it
- offered opportunities to go back to school + become dentist
- market is changing & doesn't want to work for the new customers
- too expensive to hire help, family is not here now
- turned 62, had heart attack, business cannot support 3 people
- semi-retired, does not pay much & keeps adding on paper work

- tired, move somewhere else
- too stressed, too much time
- lack of income

Q35 - Interested in getting advice or information. Response if indicated anything else:

- already getting training at TDC
- record keeping
- where and how to sell and groups that want someone to lecture on how to take pictures in Maine
- go to blueberry school every year to get advise & info on all topics
- financing availability
- insurance
- local ordinances

Q36 - Sources relied on for information or advice. Response if indicated anyone else:

- MOFGA
- patrons/customers
- personal experience
- customers
- word of mouth
- other maple producers assoc.
- practice management consulting industry
- trade association meetings/conferences
- annual meeting for growers run by UMO
- professional associations/meetings
- supplies
- Coop distributor for hardware
- newspapers have good tips
- Coop. Ext
- trade shows
- other professionals in field, video tapes, books, trade shows, conferences
- NFIB
- other therapists
- trade shows, conferences
- government publications, tax booklets

Q37 - Assets of Piscataquis County for owning or operating a business. Response if indicated other:

- isolation
- tourism
- natural resources
- natural resources
- a great place to live
- location-attracts tourists, advertising campaigns by state and local
- nature and the tourists who come to see it
- friendly people
- natural resources/area/landscape etc.
- good people, a lot of business, people that need regular haircuts
- remoteness

- community atmosphere
- beautiful scenery
- lack of competition
- peace and beauty attracts visitors
- most beautiful in the entire state
- farming, tourists
- natural resources, good people in the community
- community
- not over crowded
- low overhead
- lot of small businesses-personal service
- sense of community
- good people
- word of mouth
- had building that needed to be used
- knowing the people that you serve
- no competition for blueberries
- good schools
- people know you
- people
- people are open to new ideas
- natural beauty + quiet, isolation
- lots of info available about starting businesses
- good people, honest
- location, school system, many families
- close knit community
- small community atmosphere, loyal customers
- good area for hunting & fishing
- no competition
- tourists
- low start up costs
- a great place to live
- a lot of well-attended craft fairs
- central location

Q38 - Disadvantages or barriers to small business in Piscataquis County. Response if indicated other:

- distance, low population
- lousy economy
- government
- have to travel to get supplies
- insurance costs
- distance
- lack of commitment by major land owners to well-being of area
- lazy work force
- weather conditions
- too far not enough people, no jobs
- has to travel a lot
- depressed economy can't generate money but expenses as high as anywhere
- no money

- cost of operation, heat, etc. access to libraries, tech centers etc.
- compete with Home Depot etc.
- too much competition from smaller operators
- poverty
- poverty and remoteness (terrible electrical and telephone service, means computer use is hurt, lottery machine goes off 10-15 times a day)
- money earned is very low
- long way to supplies, etc.
- low pop, low income, long distance to supplies and service
- no community support/customer loyalty
- low pop. pool
- distance fun cities
- locals don't want to see you set ahead
- distance too hard for supplies
- remote location
- no loyalty to buying locally
- travel for supplies
- not enough per capita income, depressed economy
- negative attitude of public, not wanting the business there
- lack of commercials
- poor
- low per capita income
- no money, poor population
- depressed economy, people are poor
- lack of population
- lack of market base, lack of financing
- isolation + dwindling population
- road system, poor condition of roads
- poverty
- poverty
- too small population
- small population- poor + spread out, hard for new small business to break into local network
- low income
- small population
- nothing here, no people/businesses/jobs
- can't survive on income from local people
- low income
- uncooperative town government- spend fortunes on attracting big business & don't support small business
- economy
- poor economy
- low population + low incomes
- no money in area except when summer travelers are here
- low population
- far from clientele & competition
- no market- tourists go to coast, locals go to Bangor
- a lot of poor people
- lack money, interest, people, support
- a lot of competition
- weather + very poor economy
- low income population - people only buy the necessities