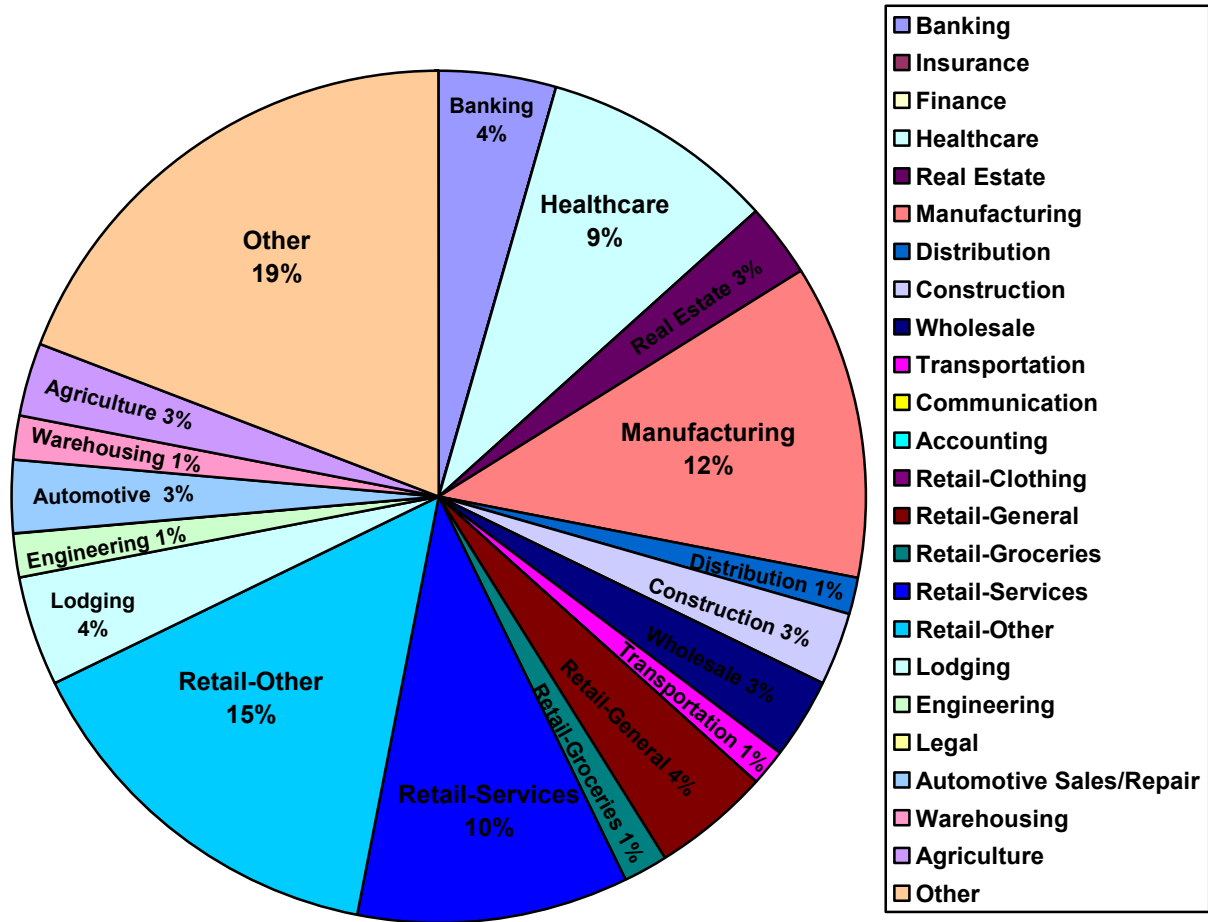


2009 Business Retention and Expansion Survey Results

1. What is your company's primary line of business?



Banking (3)	Retail-Clothing
Insurance	Retail-General (3)
Finance	Retail-Groceries (1)
Healthcare (6)	Retail-Services (7)
Real Estate (2)	Retail-Other (10)
Manufacturing (8)	Lodging (3)
Distribution (1)	Engineering (1)
Construction (2)	Legal
Wholesale (2)	Automotive Sales/Repair (2)
Transportation (1)	Warehousing (1)
Communication	Agriculture (2)
Accounting	Other (13)

2. Which of the following best describes your business? (Mark all that apply)

Locally owned and operated - 47

Regional chain - 1

National chain - 2

Franchise - 3

3. Do you feel that your business is a destination?

Yes - 33

No - 20

Business Climate

Based on the following factors, please rate Lake City as a place for your company to do business on a scale of 1-5 (1 being poor and 5 being excellent)

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
4. Availability of Skilled Labor	2	3	18	11	5	13
5. Availability of Unskilled Labor		1	5	13	18	15
6. Technical Training Programs	9	6	14	2	2	19
7. Highway Accessibility	1	2	7	10	25	7
8. Rail Accessibility	4	3	3	5	9	26
9. Accessibility to Major Airport	6	6	9	7	5	20
10. Proximity to Major Markets	1	8	14	10	9	11
11. Availability of Credit	2	2	11	12	8	17
12. Availability of Incentives	9	3	18	3	3	16
13. Availability and Cost of Land	10	10	9	8	2	14
14. Availability and Cost of Buildings	7	12	12	8	2	11
15. Cost to rent or lease building space	4	9	12	8	3	16
16. Proximity to Service Suppliers	2	6	19	9	6	11
17. Environmental Quality		2	9	19	14	8
18. Regulatory Environment	3	6	12	12	4	11
19. Crime Rate	1	1	3	18	25	4
20. Local Taxes	6	3	26	9	2	5
21. State Taxes	7	6	23	9	2	4
22. Proximity to Colleges/Universities	3	6	18	6	5	14
23. Proximity to Retail Services	4	9	18	7	8	7
24. Proximity to Medical Services			8	12	26	7
25. Housing Cost and Availability	3	10	18	10	5	7

26. Please rank in order those factors your business would consider the three greatest strengths of Lake City as a location for your business and those factors your business would consider the three greatest weaknesses of Lake City as a location for your business.

Strengths

- Location (6)
- **Proximity to major markets (7)**
- **Scenic beauty/lake (15)**
- Traffic through town (2)
- Lake City industries (4)
- Active national wildlife association
- **Low crime rate (9)**
- Near major retail outlets
- Availability of unskilled labor (6)
- **Highway accessibility (12)**
- Availability of credit (3)
- Good City government
- Good customer base
- **Sense of community (7)**
- Chamber of Commerce (2)
- Retail Action Team
- Walk to work/close to home (2)
- Quality of life (4)
- Environmental Quality (4)
- Natural resources
- Proximity to services (2)
- Work ethic (5)
- Stable economy
- City Staff (3)
- Reliability of City services
- No “big box” retailers in town
- Business relationships/referrals (2)
- Regulatory environment (2)
- The Graphic & their support of business efforts
- Low operating costs (4)
- No competition (2)
- Education system
- Social networks for woman
- The Jewel
- Small town charm (6)
- High speed internet
- Proximity to Medical services (2)
- Availability and cost of land (2)
- Availability and cost of buildings (2)
- Housing
- Raw material access
- Good school system
- Good retail services
- Tourism
- River Road (route around lake)
- Historic Downtown

Weaknesses

- Real Estate Taxes
- Cost of real estate
- Lack of trade centers
- DNR- shoreline agreement/ordinance
- Boats blocking view of lake (2)
- The division of downtown by the Marina
- River cuts off any enterprise on east side
- Half-sided town – no bridge to WI
- Need more employment – light industry
- Industry – small amount (2)
- Too close to “big box” stores (2)
- Too many regulations – zoning
- Technical training programs (2)
- Taxes high and unequal
- High utility rates for businesses (4)
- Skilled labor (2)
- **Local taxes (6)**
- **State taxes (6)**
- Property taxes high
- Small population (2)
- No growth
- Low wages
- Young people leaving town for work elsewhere
- Social outlets/amenities for young families/singles (4)
- Not enough to offer after 5pm.
- Need TIF money
- **Downtown – no retail mostly services (6)**
- Signage
- Lack of upscale apparel/fashion
- Downtown aesthetics (2)
- Empty business buildings (3)
- Poor business district
- Little money for renovations
- Flower gardens on lots that should be buildings
- No motel downtown

- Low traffic patterns
- Locals not loyal (2)
- Locals don't want to be caught looking in a jewelry store
- Availability of land
- **Housing cost (5)**
- Rental cost
- **Proximity to markets too far (6)**
- Difficult to relocate executives and junior executives
- Difficult attracting employees
- City government
- City Council strife (2)
- Council ineffective (3)
- Some City Council members
- The lodging association
- Economic Development
- Reluctance to accept change (3)
- Commitment to city mission statement to support and strengthen our business community
- Communication between entities (2)
- Railroad through middle of town (2)
- Proximity to customers (2)
- Proximity to suppliers (4)
- Utilities issues
- Some City staff – Zoning & EDA
- City staff & Police not trained to cater to needs of tourists
- Not a lot of business woman or organizations
- 4 lanes through downtown (2)
- County building values are not correct
- No community center
- No convention facilities
- No high-speed communications infrastructure
- Lack of access to a small business development center
- Availability of skilled labor (2)
- Unskilled labor
- Regional market competitiveness
- Commitment
- Technology
- Lack of rental space
- Poor marketing (2)
- Too many employed out of town
- Transportation
- Winter attractions
- No maintenance of trees around the lake – obstructs view
- Parking (2)

For Downtown Businesses, would you be in favor of adopting standard retail hours? Yes - 13 No - 17

- No – problem enforcing it, but some suggested uniform hours may help
- Yes – All open 8-6?
- No - Each owner needs to decide hours and cost to be open
- Yes – 9-5 caters to unemployed
- No – Customer base may have different schedules
- Yes – Don't want to come to town to shop and find half of the stores closed
- Yes – “core hours” that every downtown business commits to, additional hours at owners' discretion
- Yes – Consistency knowing what time stores/businesses are open
- Yes – Makes it easier for shift workers to shop
- Yes – I'm already open 7-11, 7 days a week
- Yes & No – Mixed feelings on this topic
- No – businesses should be able to set their own business hours
- No – All businesses are not the same, that would be too much control by city, not needed
- Not a downtown business, but as a customer standard hours would be nice
- No – stores are independently owned and should not be mandated hours
- No – different businesses require different hours depending on customer base
- No – It's too expensive to hire people to cover slow business hours
- No – each business has it's own client needs
- Undecided
- No – We are a bakery so all of our products are sold very early. We work 3am to 4pm five days a week.
- No – Sunday is a family day. Might be willing to stay open until 6pm – no later.

- Yes – One night a week open for business would be great
- Yes – businesses need continuity
- Yes – being open later will be a huge draw for the downtown.

27. How long has your business been located in Lake City? Years

<1 (1) 1-3 (6) 3-5 (2) 5-10 (5) >10 (40)

28. How would you rate the City of Lake City as a location for your business?

Poor - 2 Below Average – 2 Neutral – 14 Above Average – 21 Excellent - 16

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
29. Lake City is a good location for my business' customers	1	1	10	21	17	4
30. My company is planning to stay in Lake City		1	4	15	33	1
31. My company is considering leaving Lake City	32	9	6		1	5
32. My company is considering expanding	5	5	16	16	6	6
33. My company is considering closing	31	6	5		3	8
34. Lake City has an adequate amount of space to accommodate my expansion needs	1	5	12	22	9	5

	0-10	11-50	51-100	101-200	200+
35. How many full-time employees does your company employ in Lake City?	40	8	3		1
36. How many part-time employees does your company employ in Lake City?	47	4	1	1	
37. How many seasonal employees does your company employ in Lake City?	48	3	1	1	

38. In the next year, do you expect the number of employees at this location to:

Significant Decrease - 0 Slight Decrease – 6 Remain Stable – 34 Slight Increase – 12 Significant Increase - 1

39. Approximately what percentage of your employees live in Lake City?

0-20% (7) 21-40% (2) 41-60% (11) 61-80% (7) 81-100% (25)

40. What are the three main factors that affect your company's ability to attract and retain employees?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business ethics (2) • Pay scale/wages (14) • Benefits (4) • Reliability of employees • Available workers • Labor market (2) • Job security (3) • Opportunity for advancement • Great working environment (4) • Low key and fun • Work place attitude/conditions (8) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job satisfaction • Schedule flexibility (5) • No specific job description – placed in the area they do best • Location (6) • Education/experience required (2) • Hours worked (4) • Availability/cost of housing (6) • It is difficult to attract young, talented people to a small town... even a beautiful one |
|---|---|

- No social outlets in town for younger employees
- Lake City is evolving into a retirement community as there isn't much to offer young people to stay.
- We need some new Economy Brain Power Companies (e.g. JMC, etc.)
- Need a business incubator
- Population
- Company "professional" reputation
- Commute is good (2)
- Open 7 days a week
- Drivers are home every night, no overnights
- Culture
- The economy
- Proximity of women with expendable income
- Proximity of fashion conscious women
- Proximity of entrepreneurial women
- Competition with larger manufacturers
- Being able to rent space to dealers
- Lack of jobs for spouses (2)
- Shrinking availability of retail businesses
- Educational opportunities
- Recreational and social environment
- High end bakeries are few and far between
- Brick oven for new bakers
- Great place to live and meet lots of new people
- Skilled workers(2)
- Opportunities for computer/electronic services and products
- Proximity to nursing schools

Services

The City of Lake City offers many services. Please rate the following services on a scale of 1-5 (1 being poor and 5 being excellent)

	1	2	3	4	5
41. City Streets	3	5	15	17	13
42. City Police	1	1	7	26	18
43. City Fire and Rescue			7	19	27
44. City Ambulance		1	7	23	22
45. Snow removal	1	3	15	15	19
46. City sewer service		3	10	23	17
47. City water service		2	12	21	18
48. Park and recreational services	1	4	7	17	24
49. Energy reliability and service	1	8	11	17	14

50. Any categories you rated low or wish to comment on, please describe what the City can do to improve these services or address your concerns.

- Maintain the gravel road past the DNR better or improve access to Sportsman's Club
- Repair streets (potholes and blacktop) (6) (specifically 7th, 10th, and Lyon)
- Stop signs on residential roads – it's very dangerous
- Police need to be more aware of traffic violations and drug offenses
- Parking should be increased for more time to eat and shop, 2 hours not enough
- **The new snow removal system downtown needs improvement(3)**
- Need a snow emergency plan
- Visitors don't understand the snow removal plan
- Clear snow from downtown parking and curb before businesses open and traffic obstructs clearing, and then return after hours if necessary to clear curb and gutters after sidewalks are shoveled
- **The City employees do a great job! (5)**
- Paint curbs
- The sidewalks need some work
- Offer grant money for building improvements
- TIF to bring in more manufacturing and retail
- Hotel downtown
- Classes on inventory control and turnover
- Advertisement and paper write-ups on businesses like Rochester Post Bulletin
- Better signage to direct traffic

- **Reduce the four lanes going through downtown to slow the traffic (2)**
- City emphasizes the courthouse and business district at the expense of parks and mid-income housing
- **Too many power outages (6)**
- City needs to inform businesses when shutting off service for maintenance/repair
- **Reduce power outage frequency and duration(2)**
- City Council would be wise to avoid micro-managing!
- Ambulance has slow response times
- Too much talk and wasted money on feasibility studies and no action
- Improve attitude – encourage visitors to come & stay instead of projecting a negative attitude
- More waste disposal cans along walking paths on Wabasha County Rd. 5
- Concerned with surface aquifers
- Energy costs are high
- Lower the base electrical rate for downtown merchants

- Routine maintenance on park and rec. facilities is being deferred too long
- Sewer service has had problems in the past
- Sewer and water rates very high compared to other communities
- Telephone service is a joke
- **Need a recreation center (3)**
- Activities for young adults and kids
- Need a bike trail, but city expects someone else to do it or expect volunteers to put it all together
- Contact from City government
- Cooperation with City government
- Incentive for doing business here
- Promote lake usage
- Promote sailing regattas all summer
- Trim the trees along the lake
- Promote ice boating
- Establish a museum similar to what Wabasha accomplished
- Bike trail must be completed – discretionary income of bikers is substantial

51. My business could benefit from improved communications connectivity.

Yes - 20 No - 24

If yes, please explain what additional capabilities would be of help to your business.

- Email updates of programs available
- Opportunities for business contacts
- Internet service is erratic
- Wireless
- **City-wide high speed wireless internet access would be nice(3)**
- Ability to receive a.m. radio signals
- Can't get local TV channel on DISH network
- If I were planning to expand, this would be a consideration
- Faster DSL
- Better cell phone reception
- Upgrade or improve telecommunications

Economic Development Authority

52. How would you rate Lake City as a place to do business? (1being poor and 5 being excellent)

1 – 1 2 – 5 3 – 12 4 – 23 5 – 12

53. My business has contacted the EDA regarding problems/concerns it has had in the past.

Yes - 22 No - 31

54. The EDA responds to my business' concerns.

Disagree – 1 Neutral – 13 Agree – 20 N/A - 18

55. Is there a specific concern that you would like to have addressed?

- High taxes
- Need more promotions to draw customers to town
- **Stop planning and start implementing**
- When a business is interested in coming to Lake City, please do more than hand them a packet of papers and say “good luck”
- Concerned about the City Council becoming the EDA Board!
- The EDA discriminates against women, it's a waste of money and should go away
- Parking
- Excessive use of TIF money and other incentives as compared to the state average
- 2 hour parking unnecessary

- L.C. could spend the money paid for a tire marker for more beneficial things.
- Slowing Hwy 61 traffic through town
- **No more condos!!**
- Chris was very good, but departed too soon
- Need someone good in marketing to market our community and downtown
- **Would like to see EDA be more proactive in steering the Council to address downtown needs**

- **Too many empty condos**
- Brush trees on lake front cleaned up
- Winterfest expanded
- Would like to strategize with Rob, Erin and others thinking out of the box to help with expansion (housing concerns, comp. plan/zoning) – Cheri Kramer
- Need growth

56. Are there other types of businesses that you would like to see more of in Lake City? Yes – 35 No - 10

- **Retail – Clothing (5)**
- Light industrial (3)
- **Unique specialty shops(4)**
- Upscale apparel
- Boutique-type stores
- A small department store
- A “dime” store
- A smaller-scale Hobby Lobby-type store
- Retail – general (3)
- Any business that draws customers to town
- **Manufacturing (4)**
- High tech. businesses
- Lumber yard (3)
- Airport
- New high school
- Restaurants (3)
- Antique stores (2)
- Churches
- Men’s clothing (2)
- Retail – shoes, books, etc.
- ANY
- Dry cleaner
- Shoe repair
- Office supply
- Additional grocery(3)
- Additional bakery
- Pharmacy/drug store (2)
- Hot dog carts
- Pop corn stand/cart
- Lemonade stand/Italian ice
- Italian restaurant
- Creative/artistic/cultural businesses
- A family sit-down café
- Hardware (2)
- Banquet/Reception Hall
- Convention Center
- Water slide (recreational activities to give people something to come to L.C. for)
- Target-type store
- Ben Franklin
- Brain Power Businesses – give them incentives to come to town (free offices, etc.)
- We need to bring in young families so we need to focus on strategies to entice them. Healthcare, schools, etc. will not survive long-term if we continue to grow the 55+ population, seasonal housing, etc. This is critical!

Community Involvement

57. Does your company belong to the Lake City Chamber of Commerce?

Yes - **43** No - 11

58. Would you like more information on the Chamber of Commerce?

Yes - No - **47**

Other comments or ideas:

- Parasailing
- Jet ski rental
- Fishing boat rental
- Popcorn wagon
- Fishing tackle and bait store
- Concerts
- Flea markets
- Thanks for doing this, everything starts in conversation!
- Water skiing museum tied to a natural history museum etc.
- Riverboat center funded by donations
- Buy Sugar loaf and making it a hiking park similar to Red Wing’s Barn Bluff

