Robbinsville Economic Development Advisory Committee

February 29, 2012

Dear Robbinsville Business Owner,

Thank you to those of you who responded to our survey so that your voice could be heard. It is part of our ongoing effort to foster an understanding and communication between the Robbinsville business community and the township. .

The survey results indicate there is optimism for improvement in the economy within the next year or two. Half of the responders are planning to increase their workforce and 35% have plans for expansion. This is a positive statement, particularly in light of recent economic conditions.

A number of people had good experiences with the township. Others offered recommendations for improvements.

The comments are included since they offer insight, are informative for those who took the time to complete the survey, and may inspire others to complete the next survey. To encourage participation, names are being withheld.

The Robbinsville Economic Development Advisory Committee (REDAC) has been appointed by the Mayor and Council to identify ways to promote business within the township. This survey is just one of the initiatives undertaken by the committee. Each month, a local business person is invited as a guest to share their experiences and suggestions aimed at helping us to monitor the pulse of the business community. We have been active in promoting smart growth development opportunities in town center south and along the Route 130 corridor. Two months ago we began formulation of a new initiative to "buy local" in support of our business community. We fully expect this to gain traction in the township.

If you are interested in providing input, contact us. If you are interested in joining the committee, submit an application on the web site for consideration by the town Council.

Follow this link: http://www.robbinsville-twp.org/formspermits.html and then select the *"Volunteer For Boards and Committees Appointment"* document.

This report on the survey results will be posted on the township website (*www.robbinsville-twp.org*).

We look forward to working with you on other business friendly ventures in the future.

Regards,

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Committee Members

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Robbinsville Business Survey Results

Robbinsville Economic Development Advisory Committee (REDAC)

Dru Gropp Damico, Chair, and Vito Galluccio, Vice Chair

2/29/2012 0:00

1. Participant Information:

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Company Name	14	100%

2. What type of business do you have?

14 responses: retail, clothing, restaurant, self storage, hair salon, garden center, financial services, other services, wholesale/distribution

3. How many full-time employees do you have?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
1-5	8	57.1%
6-10	1	7.1%
11-25	1	7.1%
26-50	2	14.2%
51-100	0	0.0%
> 100	2	14.2%
No Responses	0	0.0%
Total	14	100%

4. How many part-time employees do you have?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
1-5	12	85.7%
6-10	0	0.0%
11-25	1	7.1%
26-50	0	0.0%
51-100	0	0.0%
>100	1	7.1%
No Responses	0	0.0%
Total	14	100%

5. How many locations does your company have?

14 responses: 1 Loc - 7. Between 4 and 10 Locs - 5. Over 12,000 Locs - 1

6. Where are the locations?

13 responses: 11 in Robbinsville; 5 have multiple locations including national and intrenational locations

7. Does your business plan on hiring additional employees? If yes, when?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
No, we do not plan on hiring additional employees	6	42.8%
Immediately	2	14.2%
1-3 months	2	14.2%
3-6 months	2	14.2%
6 months - 1 year	1	7.1%
> 1 year	1	7.1%
No Responses	0	0.0%
Total	14	100%

8. If you answered 'yes' to question #7, will the new hires be full or part time?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Full time	5	62.5%
Part time	4	50.0%
Other	0	0.0%
Total	8	100%
1 Comment(s)		

9. In the next 12 months, does your company plan on expanding its operations?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes	3	21.4%
No	11	78.5%
No Responses	0	0.0%
Total	14	100%

10. If yes, does your company plan on future growth in Robbinsville?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes	5	35.7%
No	5	35.7%
No Responses	4	28.5%
Total	14	100%

11. If you answered 'yes' to Question #9, what is your primary reason for expansion in Robbinsville?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Good employee pool	0	0.0%
Centralized location	1	7.1%
Good transportation infrastructure	1	7.1%
Positive business climate	2	14.2%
Strong customer base	1	7.1%
Other	0	0.0%
No Responses	9	64.2%
Total	14	100%

12. If you answered 'no' to Question #9, what are your reasons for not expanding in Robbinsvile?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Expense	3	21.4%
Disruption of work day	0	0.0%
Taxes	3	21.4%
Other		
Selling business, the economy	4	28.5%
No Responses	4	28.5%
Total	14	100%

13. Should the Twp offer companies training for business growth and employee development?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes	8	57.1%
No	6	42.8%
No Responses	0	0.0%
Total	14	100%

14. Have you had dealings with the Township's Department of Economic Development?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes	3	21.4%
No	11	78.5%
No Responses	0	0.0%
Total	14	100%

15. If you answered 'yes' to Question #14, how would you rate that experience?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Poor	0	0.0%
Fair	0	0.0%
Good	1	7.1%
Excellent	2	14.2%
No Responses	11	78.5%
Total	14	100%

0 Comment(s)

16. Have you had dealings with the Township's Department of Planning, Zoning, and Engineering?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes	7	50.0%
No	7	50.0%
No Responses	0	0.0%
Total	14	100%

17. If you answered 'yes' to Question #16, how would you rate that experience?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Poor	2	14.2%
Fair	3	21.4%
Good	1	7.1%
Excellent	2	14.2%
No Responses	6	42.8%
Total	14	100%

3 Comment(s): Great job Bob & Cyndi.
The process took too long and was very costly.

18. What are the main hurdles that your business has experienced when dealing with the Township?

9 responses:
- Incredibly positive experience with Recreation Department
- Some employees are great; others are hard to deal with
- Attention is on the Town Center, others not included in township activities
- Phone messages not returned,
- Inspections scheduled for a day, not AM/PM. Inspector did not show up
-Town Center restrictions, RE taxes, obtaining approvals, building dept
- Business struggling & concern township's quest for ratables will bring in competition that will put me out of business.
- Assured there was no problem before project started then denied after I paid for drawings & engineering.

19. What is your opinion of how our local economy compares to the national economy?

9 responses:
- on par with national, lagging, growing, positive outlook, not good,
- the stretch of Rt 130 that our business is on is underdeveloped
- people not spending as much here as other communities,
- RE taxes are too high, lack of industry

20. What is your opinion on when the economy will turn around?

11 responses:
- I think the economy is already turning around and that consumers have to take a good look at the growth and strength that has accurred in the past year and start to take advantage of it. I think that most of the stagnation that we are still seeing is based fear not actual conditions. Until that fear is addressed will not see a turn around for 2+yrs
- In my opinion, an entrepreneur's mindset, business savvy, marketing creativity, and ability to adapt and be resilient has more impact on his/her business than the public perception of the economy. My business has continued to grow in the last 5 years, despite the "economic downturn." Generally, my perspective has always been a positive outlook.
- I pray everyday soon!!
- 12 - 24 months
- I do not know how Robbinsville will fare in the future unless R/E taxes are reduced.
- Once the housing market opens and banks start lending money again, hopefully that will kick start the economy.

21. Describe the level of communication and feedback from the township on business concerns?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Poor	1	7.1%
Fair	7	50.0%
Good	3	21.4%
Excellent	2	14.2%
No Responses	1	7.1%
Total	14	100%

22. What would you like to see improved regarding business development and retention?

9 responses:
- tax breaks, easing requirements to attract more business, more help and flexibility, advice without being directed to a code book, less taxes, facilitiation of improvement on existing businesses
- I don't have any current issues with the business climate. I do however think that the cost of doing business here is high (taxes) and a reduction or rebate would help with development and retention
- The frustration I feel as a business owner more so comes from the state and federal regulations, taxes, and deterrents of growth. On a local level, I feel the township is very entrepreneur-friendly, in large part because the mayor himself understands being a business owner and the best conditions that will help businesses thrive.
- Encouraging local Robbinsville businesses to do business with each other. maybe a "Buy Robbinsville" campaign to highlight and educate businesses what products and services are in Robbinsville
- No more storage facilities
- Make it easier for bussiness to improve on thier existing bussinesses.

23. Does your company handle government/public contracts?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes	6	42.8%
No	8	57.1%
No Responses	0	0.0%
Total	14	100%

24. If you answered 'yes' to Question #23, in what area?

5 responses: Employee Deferred comp/retirement plans; finance; storage; and state/county supplies

25. Do you have union?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes	1	7.1%
No	13	92.8%
No Responses	0	0.0%
Total	14	100%

26. What is your present overall level of statisfaction with Robbinsville Township?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Poor	2	14.2%
Moderate	5	35.7%
Good	2	14.2%
Excellent	5	35.7%
No Responses	0	0.0%
Total	14	100%

27. Have you sponsored Township events such as the Robbinsville Community Day or other programs?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes	7	50.0%
No	7	50.0%
No Responses	0	0.0%
Total	14	100%

28. Would you be interested in receiving more information regarding sponsorship opportunities?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes	10	71.4%
No	4	28.5%
No Responses	0	0.0%
Total	14	100%

29. In your opinion, what can the Township do to improve the business environment in Robbinsville?

9 responses:
- More exposure - promotion county and state wide.
- Free advertisement in township publications
- Tax and other cost reductions
- increased commercial development on 130 like the gateway in Hamilton. Expand allowable uses, i.e., fast food and gas stations to attract national retailers.
- Start holding town events like Princeton's music on weekends, to promote and encourage support of local businesses.

30. Does your business utilize environmentally friendly (green) business practices?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes	7	50.0%
No	7	50.0%
No Responses	0	0.0%
Total	14	100%

31. If you answered 'yes' to question #30, what are they?

6 responses:
- recycling paper, ink, water, garbage
- solar panels
- added natural ventilation to greenhouses to reduce electric motors

32. If you answered 'no' to question #30, would you be interested in learning more?

	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes	5	35.7%
No	5	35.7%
No Responses	4	28.5%
Total	14	100%

33. What programs should the Township provide to assist your business' development?

6 responses:
- community events businesses can get involved with. Business to business, business to consumer. Facilitate doing business with each other.
- taxing ratables in industrial park and 130,
- fund raising programs