

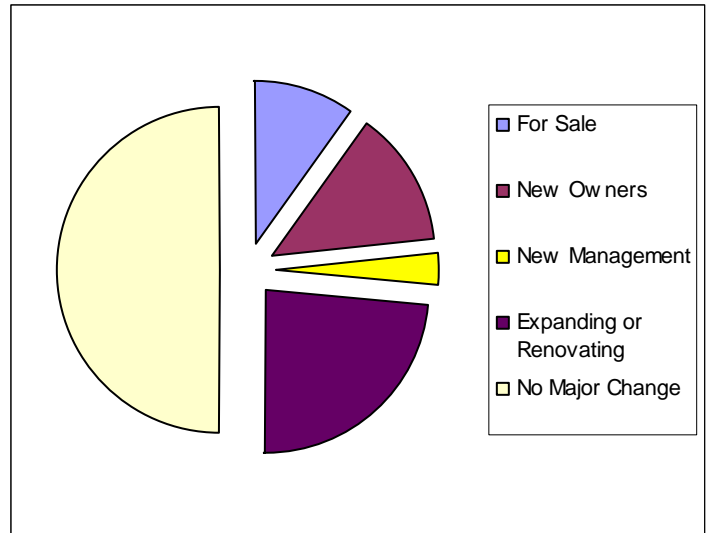
BRE RETAIL SURVEY SUMMARY

HALF OF BUSINESSES SURVEYED EXPERIENCING MAJOR CHANGE

Overview and Survey Use

The State of Washington is very interested in the success and growth of businesses around the state. The EDCs, though grant funding from CTED, are tasked to collect first-hand information about business needs and experiences in their counties. In the past, this survey was directed toward the manufacturing industry and did not apply well to Pacific County retailers. In order to improve the applicability to rural counties and shorten reporting time, a new retail survey was developed and an online database has been designed by Synchronist. Now, information from all over the state is rapidly accessible by state decision makers. The goal of this process is to identify the economic climate of Pacific County as a place to do business and to learn of areas in need of improvement. *Surveys are a great tool in identifying needs, trends, etc. Please take the time to respond to surveys, they are of great importance.*

How many businesses do you know with new owners, for sale, under new management, or expanding or renovating? We found that fully 50% of businesses surveyed are going through one of these changes. 23% are expanding or renovating their stores. 13% have new owners. Ten percent are for sale, and three percent have new managers. These are time consuming, money intensive opportunities for growth. A chance to revamp, restructure, and start anew. The first key to any major business change is planning. Having a business plan will help develop a strategy for successful change, or may indicate that more market research is needed. Often a loan is required to start a new business or to purchase or expand an existing business. Thorough planning will make it easier to answer a lender's questions

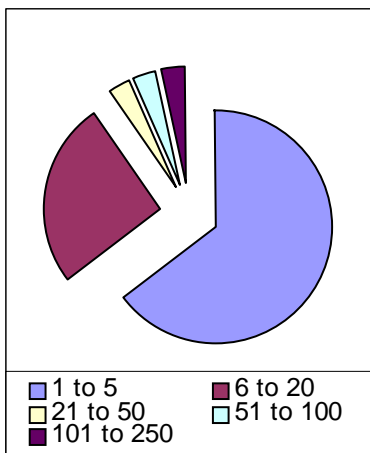


Percentage of Businesses by Type of Change

and help them see your vision. This year, the EDC has successfully assisted numerous Pacific County businesses in finding a funding source that's right for them. Most often this begins with providing forms and infor-

mation on planning, licensing, and funding. We then put the applicant in contact with one or more of our lending resources. For forms, information and links, visit: www.pacificedc.org.

The Majority of Area Businesses employ between 1 and 5 workers.



COMMON THEME CONCERNING PACIFIC COUNTY RETAIL BUSINESS OWNERS: WORKFORCE

We Asked: What are you experiencing with area workforce?

We Heard: Finding quality workers is our largest area of concern.

Over 30% of surveyed businesses are having difficulty attracting and keeping qualified staff. The ratings given for worker availability, quality, and stability were all below average. We repeatedly heard that it is difficult to find dependable entry level workers with soft skills and work

ethic. Often job applicants want more money than the position pays, do not want to work nights or weekends, and will only work a limited number of hours. Not only are entry level jobs difficult to fill, but state-wide we are "waiting for the age bubble to burst." A large number of our working professionals in education, utilities, government, transportation, and healthcare are retiring. So, what can we do to help solve an existing and pending labor shortage? One

outcome of these survey results is that we have worked with Grays Harbor College and the Lodging and Restaurant Association to put together an intensive "Hospitality Boot Camp" course for restaurant, retail, and hospitality workers. The idea is to give applicants better skills and marketability. The EDC's partners include the Workforce Development Council, Grays Harbor College, and local school districts to find out-of-the-box solutions to these growing problems.