



CITY OF MENIFEE

SUBJECT: Menifee Keeping Existing Employers Profitable Business Walk Results

MEETING DATE: July 7, 2021

TO: Mayor and City Council

PREPARED BY: Kayla Charters, Management Analyst

REVIEWED BY: Gina Gonzalez, Economic Development Director

APPROVED BY: Armando G. Villa, City Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Receive and file the 2021 Menifee Keeping Existing Employers Profitable Business Walk Results.

DISCUSSION

The Economic Development Department (“EDD”), in partnership with the Menifee Valley Chamber of Commerce (“Chamber”), holds the Menifee Keeping Existing Employers Profitable (“K.E.E.P.”) Business Walk annually. Although the annual Business Walk was completed during a time when COVID-19 challenges continued to be present versus, this event was still held and modified using mixed-media methods. This allowed for completion of the Business Walk, while respecting social distancing requirements.

For this year’s Business Walk, 100 businesses were randomly selected in coordination with City staff, and they were either contacted via email, by phone or in-person (as a last resort) starting April 25th. The Chamber Board of Directors played a large role in this event and worked alongside Economic Development City staff to complete the surveys. The overall surveys were expanded this year to cover various aspects of doing business in Menifee, including finances, impacts of the COVID-19, needs moving forward, workforce, certainty and more.

In addition, the surveys asked Menifee businesses questions regarding certainty when it comes to recovery from the pandemic, requesting financial assistance, how the City and Chamber can assist moving forward, innovation implemented and more. The results of the surveys assist the Economic Development Department and the Chamber to shape business and program strategies, initiatives, and workshops for current and future years.

The topics for the workshops are decided upon from the results of the business surveys. The

businesses are asked what areas they need assistance in, and the results are then tallied and ranked to turn the responses into topics for current and future resources, needs and workshops put on by the City and the Chamber. For example, the 2021 Business Impact Report revealed that businesses are seeking assistance in marketing and advertising, community information, hiring assistance, and digital system upgrades, which will be turned into the topics for City/Chamber workshops. In addition, staff was able to ask businesses what was a smart decision that was made as a result of the pandemic and what was a mistake that was made, so the information can be shared widely through the business community through partnerships on events and programming.

The Business Walk is a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (“CEDS”) task being identified as a “high-priority initiative” through the “Existing Business Retention and Expansion (“BRE”)” element of the strategy. The Economic Development Department, in partnership with the Menifee Valley Chamber of Commerce, utilize the results of the business walk to achieve the following purposes (as quoted in CEDS):

- Identify any needs for business assistance and connect businesses with available support resources.
- Probe their sense of locational advantages and disadvantages in Menifee, including such issues as the desirability of and potential for bringing key suppliers or business-service firms to the City.
- Identify any needs for coordinating operational or expansion requirements with local regulatory bodies.

The survey revealed how many businesses applied for funding assistance and which type of funding. These results allowed staff to share resources with those who did not apply, share other various resources that businesses may be eligible for outside of the funding they applied for. For the businesses that did not apply for funding, when asked the reason that they did not apply, most responded that they were not affected by the pandemic financially and did not need the assistance. There were three responses that stated they did not know how to apply, which further demonstrates the value of this survey. We can now reach out to these businesses to assist with available funding opportunities and assistance with applying.

Of the survey responses, 81% of the businesses were highly or somewhat confident that their business would recover from the pandemic, leaving 19% unsure. Although some businesses may have some uncertainty about their ability to recover, this gave the City the opportunity to share with these businesses all the resources available to them to aid that they may have been unaware of. During the pandemic, it was critical to reach out to Menifee businesses throughout these times of uncertainty to not only measure the severity of impacts of the pandemic, but to create “touches” with Menifee businesses to show that the City of Menifee is available as a resource and CARES about the business community.

As a result, the Economic Development Department will continue to incrementally survey the business community before and after milestone marks in the economy to ensure the business needs during the pandemic are being met to stay successful.

STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVE

Livable and Economically Prosperous Community

This item assists in fostering a robust economy by opening a line of communication with the Menifee business community and assuring Menifee businesses have access to the resources available to them.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no new fiscal impact related to the production of the report. The Business Walk is part of the existing Menifee Valley Chamber of Commerce and City of Menifee's Memorandum of Understanding line-item programming. Department Staff time to produce the impact surveys and business outreach was expended to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Funding allocated by the State.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Menifee K.E.E.P. Annual Business Walk 2021 Report