

News Release Backgrounder:

Highlights from the Immigration & Multicultural Survey of Vernon Residents taken January 2015

Survey Findings:

- The vast majority of Vernon Residents (95%) feel it is very or somewhat important to welcome new immigrants into our community.
- Vernon is considered to be multi-cultural by two-thirds of respondents, primarily because several ethnic groups live here.
- The majority agree that Vernon is a welcoming place for all ethnicities and that communities are better off if they have many distinct cultures. Vernon residents self-identified the main benefits of living in a multicultural community were cultural diversity, acceptance, tolerance and a broadened perspective about different viewpoints. Conversely, respondents named language barriers, different beliefs & values, misunderstandings and non-integration as the main challenges of living in a multicultural community.
- The majority also agree that immigrants are very important to building a stable economic future for Vernon and that Vernon is accepting of different ethnic and cultural groups.
- Nearly 80% percent of respondents always or sometimes encounter immigrants or visible minorities in their daily life around Vernon. However, forty-five percent of all respondents reporting having witnessed prejudice or discrimination while living in Vernon.
- Three-quarters of all respondents were somewhat or very interested in learning more about different cultural groups. Respondents under 40 years old were more likely to be interested in learning about different cultural groups compared to older respondents.
- Over 7 out of 10 respondents were very or somewhat interested in attending multicultural themed activities such as ethnic food fairs, music, dance or athletic type showcases or festivals.

About the Survey:

The survey was conducted by a professional research firm telephoning a random sample of 300 Vernon residents in January 2015. While 88% of the survey respondents were born in Canada and an additional 10% had lived in Canada for at least the last ten years, each household in Vernon had an equal opportunity of being selected. The research is accurate to $\pm 5.7\%$, 19 times out of 20. The statistics have been weighted to match the age distribution of the population of Vernon.

Why Immigration Matters:

- Today nearly 400,000 small businesses in BC provide almost half of all jobs. 7 out of 10 small business owners in rural BC are aged 55 and up. With this demographic shift toward fewer working Canadians and a shrinking pool of entrepreneurs, immigration is one way of addressing the issue.
- While our future economic stability is dependent on addressing succession planning for small business and addressing the skilled labour shortage, immigration also contributes to the social vibrancy of our community. Many people express their interest in learning and participating in a multi-cultural community, and feel that a community is better off when it has many distinct cultures. The investment of public dollars into attracting and ensuring the successful settlement of newcomers in our community has compounding benefits for all residents.