

### **Introduction**

The Pequot Lakes community requested the assistance to of the Region Five Commission in surveying its residents, businesses, and visitors in the late summer of 2007. A community group met on Tuesday, August 7, 2007 and determined that three pieces of additional information would be useful to the business community and residents who are faced with a pending decision related to the expansion of MN 371. Obtaining information related to the nature and composition of visitors to Pequot Lakes business district. This report documents the effort to gather this information through the use of an intercept survey of visitors to the city.

### **Methodology**

An intercept survey is a survey conducted by “intercepting” people as they go about their normal activities. Respondents are stopped by surveyors and asked to take a few minutes to answer a few questions related to the nature of their visit. Our surveyors where stationed at 5 locations around Pequot Lakes consisting of: the one block in front Sibley Station on Government Drive, the two blocks in front of the Legion and Leslie’s along the north side of Main street, in front of Thurlow’s Hardware on Front street, outside the Oasis on Hwy 371, and rotated the fifth location between the entrance of the Lakes Latte shop and the Post Office on the west side of Hwy 371 on Main street. The surveys were conducted on the following dates: Tuesday, August 21, Wednesday, August 22, Friday, August 24, and Saturday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Two days where chosen during the normal workweek and two during the weekend, in an effort to account for the predicted difference in foot traffic between weekend days.

The surveys were collected between the hours of 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. by four of the surveyors and between 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. by one of the surveyors on the identified days. The weather was consistently sunny and fair during survey hours with the exception of Tuesday, August 21 when it rained for two hours.

The survey questions used came from a collaborative effort involving the Pequot Lakes community. The questions were refined and agreed upon before the survey was administered.

Incentives were used to ensure that surveyors achieved the maximum possible number of responses. The goal was for each data collector to take a survey every 10 minutes. ( 6 surveys an hr x 5 hrs a day = 30 surveys a day, x 4 days = 120 surveys per person, x 5 data collectors = 600 surveys) All data collectors reached their goal.

### **Results**

Surveyors successfully gather 600 completed surveys over the 4 days of survey activity. Each question is listed below and is accompanied by a summary of the data.

***How did you learn about Pequot Lakes?***

<b>How did you learn about Pequot Lakes?</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Advertising	2.90%	16
Family/Friends	26.27%	145
Drove though	14.31%	79
I am a resident	36.59%	202
Seasonal resident	17.75%	98
Referred by a business	2.17%	12
Other (please specify)		149
<b>answered question</b>		<b>552</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>48</b>

Respondents also listed Recreation / Vacation (n=18), Breezy Point (n=17), Nisswa (n=11), and Brainerd (n=10)

A high percentage (37%) of responses to this question listed being a resident as the means of learning about Pequot Lakes.

***What do you like about Pequot Lakes?***

There was a wide variety of responses, but in general the information could be clumped into a few overarching themes. Respondents overwhelmingly (nearly 200) mentioned the shopping experience in some form or another as thing that they like about the community. Unique, small, friendly, cute, and charming were mentioned as a way to describe the shopping experience. Respondents (n = 125) also mentioned the small nature of the community as something they liked. This theme was generally signaled by the use of words such as little, small town, quaint, and small community.

The people in the community (n= 45) being friendly, interesting or nice emerged as a strong theme. Respondents also listed the lakes (n=41), Sibley Station (n=28), and Store (n=26) as things the liked about the community.

(A complete listing of the free responses can be provided upon request)

Response themes	
Shopping	172
Small	120
People	47
Lakes	41
Sibley Station	28
Stores	26

***What could be improved in Pequot Lakes?***

Responses to this question covered a variety of topics. The following items emerged as themes. There was a large number (n=53) of people that deliberately stated that nothing should be changed. The other three common areas for improvement were traffic (n=54), parking (n=34), and restaurants (n=15).

***What other communities do you visit in this area?***

Respondents listed the communities along the Highway 371 corridor and the Brainerd Lakes Area in an overwhelming amount of the responses. Several communities were mentioned in an overwhelming majority of responses (more than 95%).

***How do those areas compare with Pequot Lakes?***

No apparent themes emerged from the response to this question. Many respondents (n=42) listed Pequot Lakes as being the same as other communities.

***Please rate the importance each of the following had on your decision to stop in Pequot Lakes today?***

<b>Please rate the importance each of the following had on your decision to stop in Pequot Lakes today?</b>					
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Moderately Important</b>	<b>Of Little Importance</b>	<b>Unimportant</b>
Visibility of Businesses	31% (184)	28% (163)	11% (64)	15% (89)	15% (86)
Advertising	11% (66)	23% (130)	15% (85)	23% (132)	29% (165)
Shopping Experience	38% (208)	36% (201)	12% (67)	7% (39)	7% (40)

Business visibility is clearly an important factor in the decision to stop in Pequot Lakes (59% of respondents rated this as either very important or important). Advertising was not a primary factor in the decision to stop (52% of respondents rated this lower than moderately important). The Shopping Experience was a very important factor in respondent’s decision to stop in Pequot Lakes (74% of respondents ranked this as either important or very important).

***Was Pequot Lakes your intended destination today?***

<b>Was Pequot Lakes your intended destination today?</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	78.06%	459
No	21.94%	129
<b>answered question</b>		<b>588</b>

If not, what was the final destination?

Top Responses:

Breezy Point	N= 20
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Nisswa	N= 17
Brainerd	N= 16

***How often do you come to Pequot Lakes?***

<b>How often do you come to Pequot Lakes?</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
First time visitor	11.15%	60
Resident	16.91%	91
Once a year	28.81%	155
Once a month	8.92%	48
More than once a month	9.48%	51
Once a week	5.20%	28
More than once a week	19.52%	105
<b>answered question</b>		<b>538</b>

***What activities brought you to Pequot Lakes today?***

<b>What activities brought you to Pequot Lakes today?</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Shopping	65.07%	339
Dining	31.48%	164
Business	16.31%	85
Passing through	5.76%	30
Recreation	8.64%	45
Other (please specify)		146
<b>answered question</b>		<b>521</b>

Other: ordinarily local errands such as Post Office, hair cut, groceries, hardware store.

Shopping is the reason most respondents (65%) were brought to Pequot Lakes.

***What is your Zip-Code?***

Respondents came from a wide variety of places, but most were from the metro area (n=150) and Pequot Lakes (n= 159). Many also came from the Brainerd and the surrounding cities.

***Gender***

<b>Gender</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Male	40.84%	234
Female	59.16%	339
<b>answered question</b>		<b>573</b>

*How many of the following were in your party today?*

<b>How many of the following were in your party today?</b>			
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Average</b>	<b>Response Total</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Adults	1.89	1090	578
Children (1-15)	0.17	94	561
<i>answered question</i>			<b>580</b>

*Age*

<b>Age</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
16-25	9.33%	54
26-35	7.94%	46
36-45	14.85%	86
46-55	24.01%	139
56-65	24.18%	140
over 65	19.69%	114
<i>answered question</i>		<b>579</b>

A majority of the respondents were over the age of 46 (68%).

*Weekend / Week Day*

<b>Weekend/ Week Day?</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Weekend	64.20%	382
Weekday	35.80%	213
<i>answered question</i>		<b>595</b>

## **Summary**

Respondents:

- Were mostly older than 46 (68%) and female (59%).
- Overwhelmingly listed the shopping experience as something they liked in Pequot Lakes
- Saw Pequot Lakes as their destination for the day (78%)