

SATISFIED: Sign code has been changed and improved

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89 percent of respondents very or somewhat satisfied with street and storefront beautification; 81 percent with available parking in the downtown area; and 71 percent with snow removal from public rights-of-way.

Lack of affordable housing is believed to have a negative impact on employee hiring and retention by 66 percent of respondents. Those businesses that returned their surveys reported having over 550 employees who live outside the City of Sisters, and owners believe that if there were affordable housing opportunities available, 44 percent of the non-resident employees would choose to reside in the city.

The City sign code was described as too strict by 25 percent, just right by 33 percent, and not strict enough by seven percent. A full 35 percent don't know. There were 14 additional comments about inconsistent or unfair enforcement of the sign codes.

"The old sign code enforcement was complaint-driven.

Now it is enforcement driven," said City Manager Andrew Gorayeb.

Staff goes out on an occasional basis to do enforcement sweeps.

Gorayeb reported that many of the business owners may not be aware that a sign code review committee recently completed a thorough review of the code, making changes and improvements and encouraged owners to review the code on the City website.

Sixty-eight percent of business owners were very or somewhat supportive of a proposed paved bike path from downtown Sisters to Black Butte Ranch.

There were a number of written comments regarding public discourse in Sisters. All of them alluded to an atmosphere of negativity in town, using terms such as "noisy chaos of nay-saying project-stoppers," "bickering," and "disruptive open forums by citizens who

are divisive and confrontational," and saying the "City has been negatively changed by outsiders," encouraging the City to not "back down from ideas because a select few disagree."

Two-thirds of responding business owners live outside the Sisters city limits and the suggestion was made that those owners should be able to vote in City elections since their businesses are in Sisters. Ownership is evenly divided between men and women,

with 76 percent ranging in age from 35 to 64 years old.

Business owners who have not completed and returned the survey, even if they have already sent in their license renewal, are encouraged by City staff to take a minute to fill out the survey and return it to City Hall. The more surveys turned in, the more accurate the results, providing the City with a clear picture of attitudes and concerns of the business community.

HARVEST FAIRE:

New location takes advantage of park

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the Sisters Area Chamber of Commerce. "We understand the significant economic impact this event has had on our community, and we look forward to continuing in assisting local businesses and vendors thrive by bringing thousands of visitors and local residents to Sisters to enjoy the local shopping experience."

Justin Durham, managing owner of Sisters Coffee Company said, "While we're obviously a little sad to see the Harvest Faire move away from Hood Avenue, we do believe the new location and layout will provide a better experience for visitors. We are excited to station our walk-up espresso bar at Fir Street Park so attendees may enjoy our espresso and brewed coffee at the new site. We are thankful for the work of the Chamber to host this event for the past three decades and look forward to being involved in the Harvest Faire for years to come."

For more information, contact Jeri Buckmann at jeri@sisterscountry.com or call 541-549-0251.



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