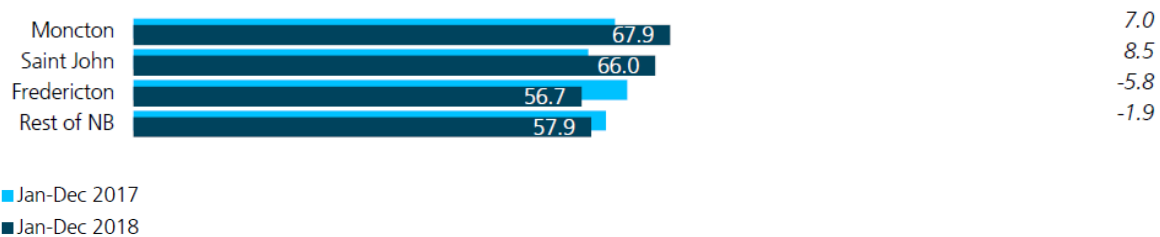


Business Optimism Jumps 8.5% in Greater Saint John

Economic Development Greater Saint John and Saint John Chamber pleased with CFIB report

For Immediate Release

February 14, 2019-Saint John - Small business optimism edged up in January across Canada, but Saint John saw an 8.5 percent rise in optimism among owners compared to the same time last year. It's welcome news to Saint John Region Chamber and Economic Development Greater Saint John (EDGSJ).



“We are seeing a surge of optimism in Saint John. There are number of projects on the go and in spite of the rising level of input costs, businesses are gaining confidence in their future,” says David Duplisea, Chief Executive Officer, Saint John Region Chamber.

“It’s some validation the needle is starting to move. It starts in the business sector first and then we hope to see it show up in the Consumer Confidence Index. We’re also hoping the work we do to help businesses start, grow, innovate, and find the talent they need will only help drive up optimism in the future,” says Ron Gaudet, Chief Executive Officer, Economic Development Greater Saint John.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB)* surveyed 930 of its members and found growth in six industries was influencing optimism. Professional and enterprise services lead the way, growing by 5.2 points followed by Retail (5.1), Information, Arts & Recreation (4.6), Finance, Insurance & Real Estate (2.5), Hospitality (1.0) and Personal Services (0.2).

Some other interesting national insights:

- 41 percent of members say lack of skilled workers has slowed their growth, followed by insufficient domestic demand (36%).
- 65 percent of member say taxes and regulations contribute to major cost restraints, followed by wages (54%)

Full report can be viewed here: <https://www.cfib-fcei.ca/sites/default/files/2019-01/business-barometer-Canada-2019-01.pdf>

**January 2019 findings are based on 930 responses, collected from a stratified random sample of CFIB members, to a controlled access web survey. Data reflect responses received through January 20. Findings are statistically accurate to +/- 3.2 per cent 19 times in 20.*

For additional comments, contact:

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About the Saint John Region Chamber-The Saint John Region Chamber of Commerce is a nationally accredited business organization dedicated to fostering an economic climate that enhances growth, prosperity, and an improved quality of life in the community. With close to 600-member businesses, representing the interests of 37,000 people, The Chamber is a dynamic advocate and the principal voice for the business community of Greater Saint John. It offers a variety of programs, activities, services, and networking opportunities designed to enhance the business prospects of members and the overall business climate of the area.

About Economic Development Greater Saint John-Economic Development Greater Saint John (EDGSJ) is the regional economic development agency for the City of Saint John, the towns of Quispamsis, Rothesay, Grand Bay-Westfield and St. Martins. It is dedicated to steady, long-term economic growth for the region by focusing on four areas of growth: Entrepreneur development, Workforce development, Business Investment & Innovation and Marketing Greater Saint John.