

# THE VILLAGE OF KEREMEOS

## BUSINESS RECRUITMENT & RESIDENT ATTRACTION STRATEGY

Final Report

September 2017

CTQ



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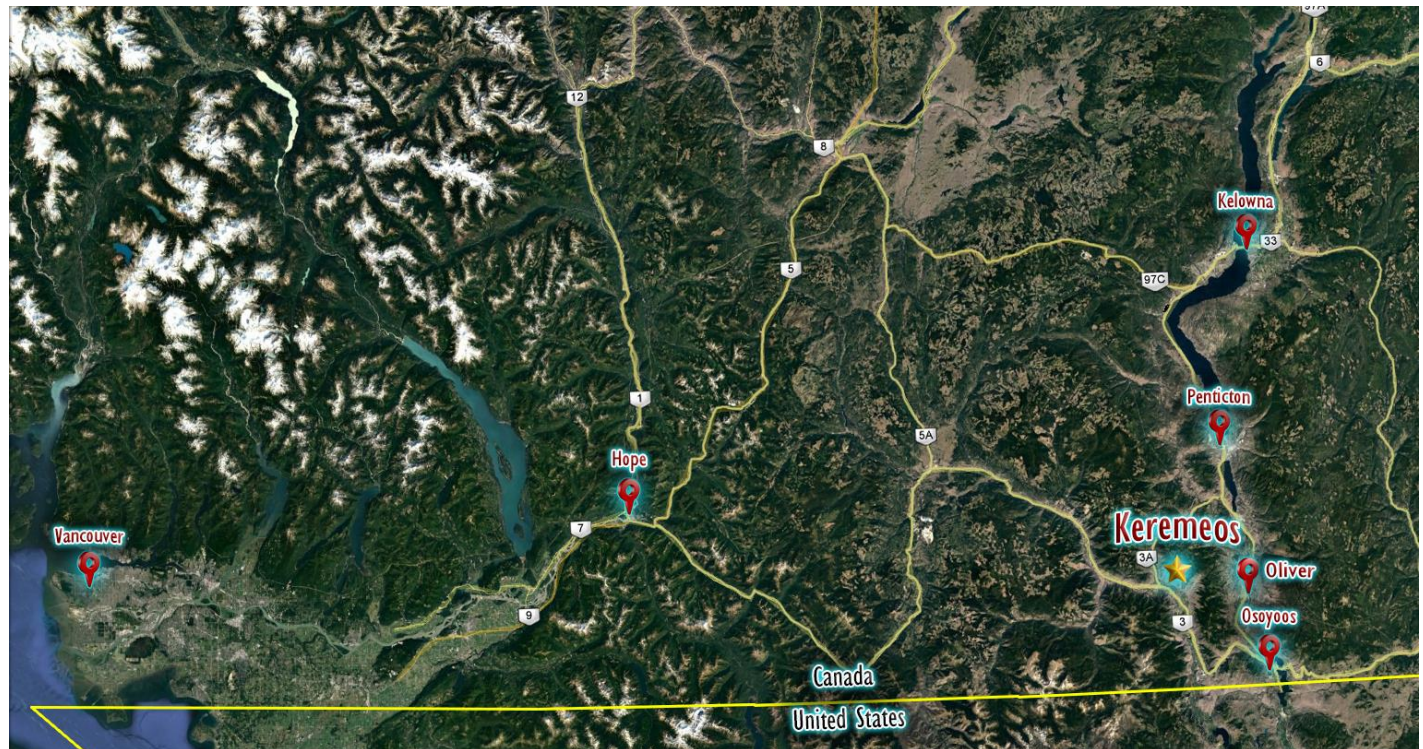


## 1.0 Introduction

### **Project Study Area**

The Village of Keremeos is located in the South Similkameen Region of British Columbia (BC) and is accessible via the Crowsnest Highway (Hwy 3) from East and West, and Highway 3A from the north. The Village is approximately 50 kilometers from Penticton and 350 kilometers from Vancouver. Keremeos is located 50 kilometers from the United States border via Highway 3. It is the

second largest community in the Similkameen Valley with just over 1500 people. The Village's main street, 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, runs along Highway 3 which receives a high amount of traffic, especially during the summer months. The vibrant small town is surrounded by beautiful mountains and located on the Similkameen River. Keremeos is the self-proclaimed Fruit Stand Capital of Canada and has a thriving agriculture sector.



## **Purpose**

In an effort to increase the number of permanent residents and businesses in Keremeos, the Village Council supported the development of a *Business Recruitment & Resident Attraction Strategy*. Business recruitment and retention is imperative to meet the needs of current and future residents and to ensure the economic vitality of the Village.

It is critical to focus efforts on **recruiting and retaining businesses** in Keremeos in order to:

- Stem the leakage of consumer dollars to areas like Penticton, Vancouver, and the United States.
- Promote shopping local.
- Diversify and grow the local economy by providing residents with basic services.
- Increase the number of business people with entrepreneurial talent and money to invest back into the community.
- Increase the tax base, from commercial building expansion, in Keremeos to allow for the maintenance and enhancement of public infrastructure and services.



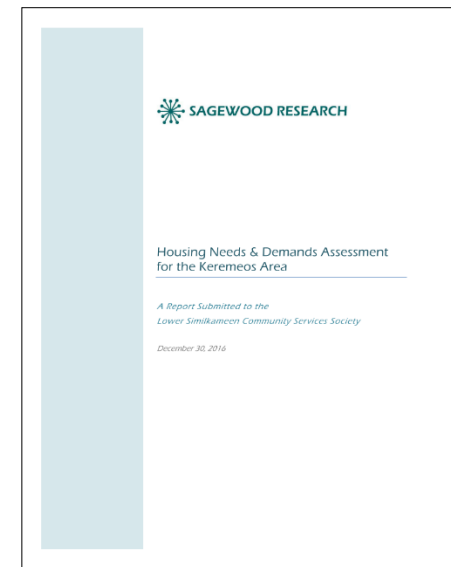
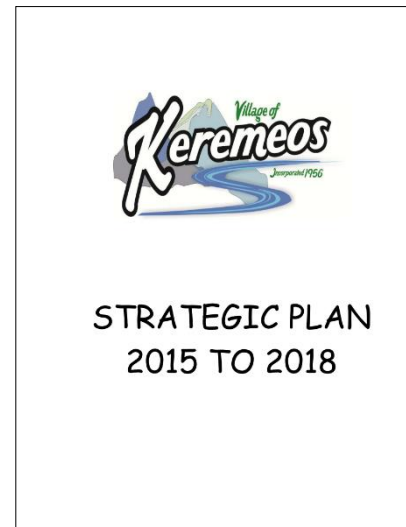
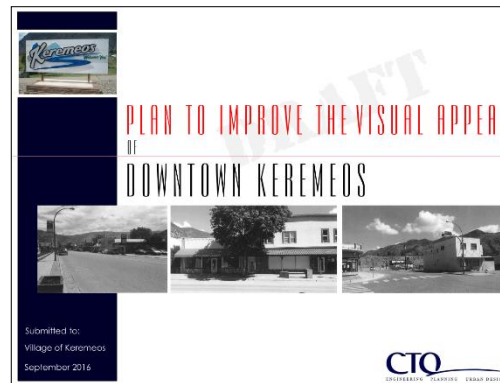
It is also critical to focus efforts on **attracting permanent residents** to the Village in order to:

- Maintain the necessary services for an aging population, that Keremeos is currently faced with.
- Attract young families and new development to Keremeos to enhance the Village's quality of life and economy.
- Increase the number of skilled workers and professionals in the Village to support new and existing businesses, services, and operators.
- Increase the tax base by increasing the number of permanent residents in Keremeos to allow for maintenance and enhancement of public infrastructure and services, as well as the construction industry.
- Support a mix of housing forms to satisfy various demographics of the community

## Past Reports & Plans

The following reports prepared for the Village of Keremeos and surrounding area were reviewed prior to the completion of this report:

- Plan to Improve the Visual Appeal of Downtown Keremeos, 2016
- Housing Needs & Demands Assessment for the Keremeos Area, 2016
- South Okanagan-Similkameen Economic Development Group (SOSEDS) – Foreign Direct Investment Strategy, 2016
- Strategic Plan 2015-2018
- Business License List, 2015
- Keremeos Age-Friendly Action Plan, 2015
- Keremeos Business Walk Report, 2014
- Village of Keremeos Official Community Plan, 2013
- Citizens Survey, 2013
- South Similkameen Economic Development Strategy, 1999



## **Project Initiation & Process**

This project was initiated in late April 2017 after the Village of Keremeos received a grant from Phase 2 of the BC Rural Dividend Fund which provides financial aid for communities with less than 25,000 people. With the help of the BC Rural Dividend Fund and CTQ Consultants, the Village and stakeholders contributed to the development of a *Business Recruitment & Resident Attraction Strategy* through public consultation and ongoing communication.

A mission statement and vision statement for the Village of Keremeos were outlined in the *Village of Keremeos Strategic Plan 2015-2018*. A mission statement describes the who, what, and how related to the operation of the Village and a vision statement outlines the legacy Keremeos would like to leave to the next generation. This plan has been developed in keeping with the Village's mission statement and vision statement.

## *Mission Statement*

To provide effective governance, services and amenities for our residents in a responsive manner.

## *Vision Statement*

A vibrant, safe, and healthy community with a small town atmosphere.



## 2.0 Situational Analysis – What is the current situation?

### Population

The demographic profile of many small communities in BC is changing as a result of low birth rates, increased mobility, technology and an aging population. Keremeos is currently home to a large proportion of seniors (55+) who are living off government or private pensions. Business recruitment and resident attraction is difficult in smaller communities, so it is important to consider the steps that it may take to maintain a healthy and vibrant community.

### Population Profile

Over the past fifteen years, Keremeos has seen an increase to the number of permanent residents, as experienced throughout the region and province. While many rural communities are impacted by out-migration, Keremeos continues to grow at a steady rate. Despite the steady increase in permanent residents, Keremeos is affected by an aging population.

**Table 1** – Recent Population Changes in the Village of Keremeos and Respective Regions

	<b>2001</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>% Change from 2001 to 2016</b>
<b>Village of Keremeos</b>	1 195	1 283	1 330	1 502	25.7
<b>RDOS</b>	77 424	80 010	80 742	83 022	7.2
<b>Province of BC</b>	4 076 881	4 241 691	4 400 057	4 648 055	14.0

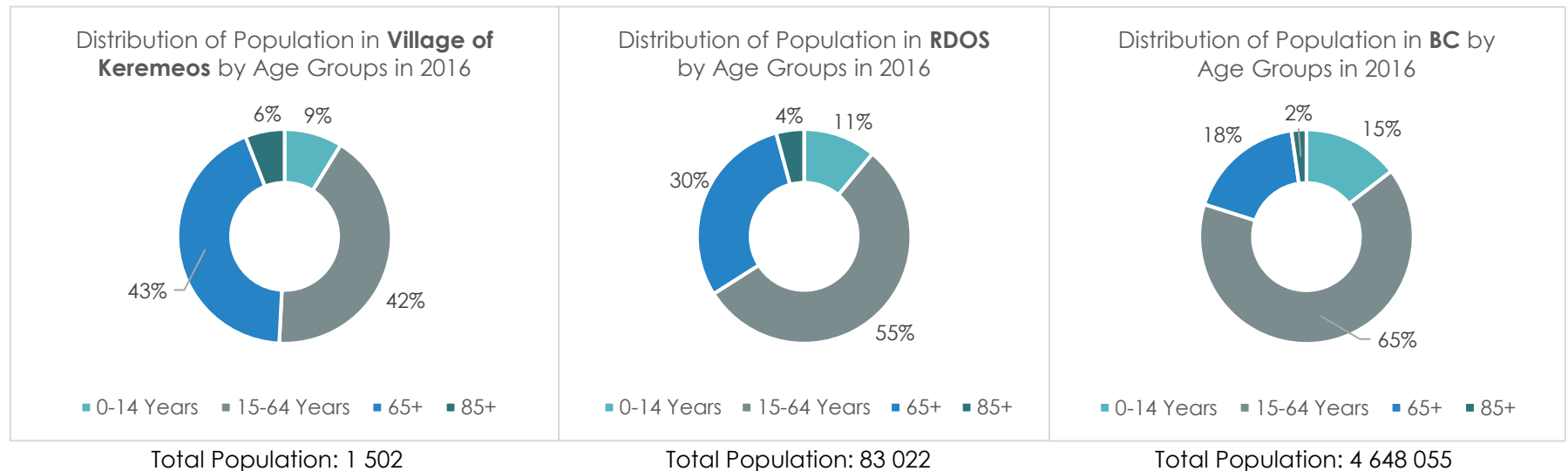
Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census of Population and BC Stats, Population Estimates

## Recent In-migration & Motivations

According to the *Housing Needs & Demands Assessment for the Keremeos Area, 2016*, nearly one third of the respondents had moved to the area in the past 5 years and 65% of respondents had lived within the area for twenty years or less. The housing needs assessment was done for the Keremeos area which includes the Village of Keremeos, and the hamlets of Olalla, Cawston, and Hedley. Of those who moved to the area in the past 20 years, 18% did so for retirement, 17% moved to Keremeos for the town atmosphere, 15% for the mild climate, and 13% for the affordability. Of those who had migrated to Keremeos, the largest proportion of respondents (47%) had come from communities outside of the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) but within the province of BC.

## Age Characteristics

As recognized in the *Keremeos Strategic Plan 2015-2018*, Keremeos is impacted by an aging population. The average age in Keremeos **56.3 years**, compared to the Provincial (BC) average of **42.3 years**. Penticton has an average age of **49.1 years** and the RDOS **49.9 years**.

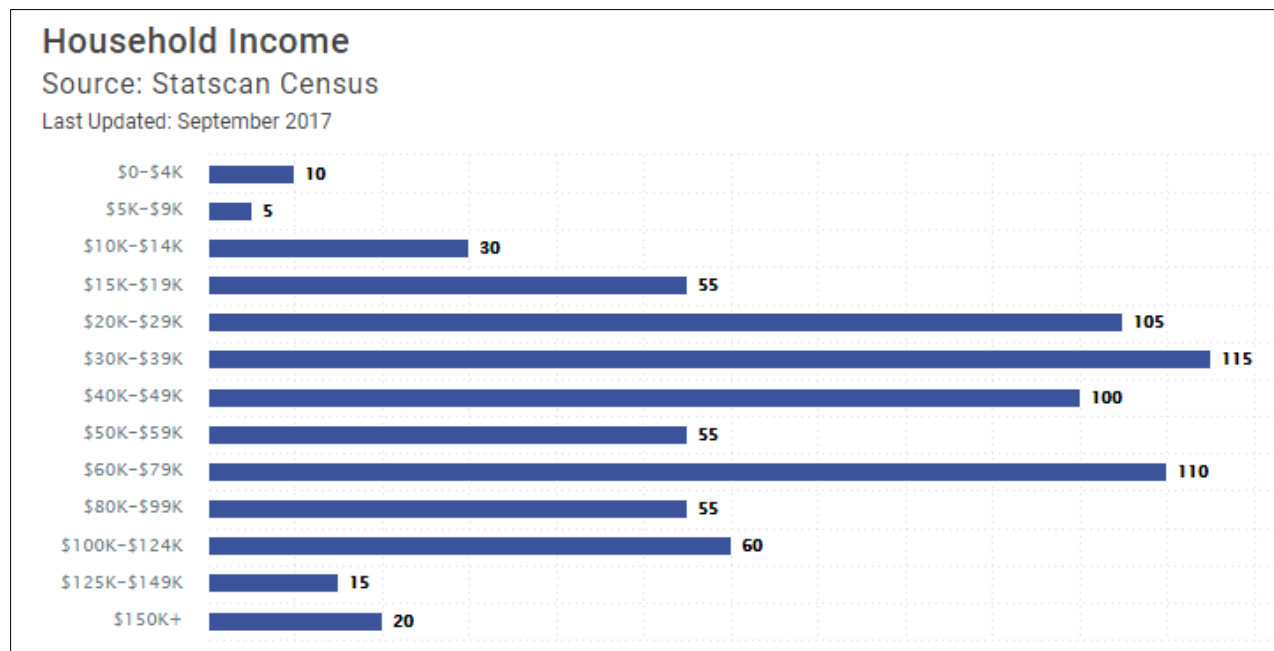




The relatively higher median age seen in Keremeos can be attributed to an out migration of youth, younger workers and young families (in search of professional, educational, and recreational opportunities) and an in-migration of seniors (as recent retirees). It is imperative that the Village of Keremeos focus recruitment efforts on young individuals and families to maintain the necessary services required by an aging population.

## Household Income

A report published by the Village in 2015 indicated that the median household income for Keremeos was **\$43,631**. The top source of income for households in the Keremeos Area is government pension (62%), followed by company or private pension (25%). Even though some respondents indicated more than one “top sources of income” a majority of people living in the Village rely on their pension for income.

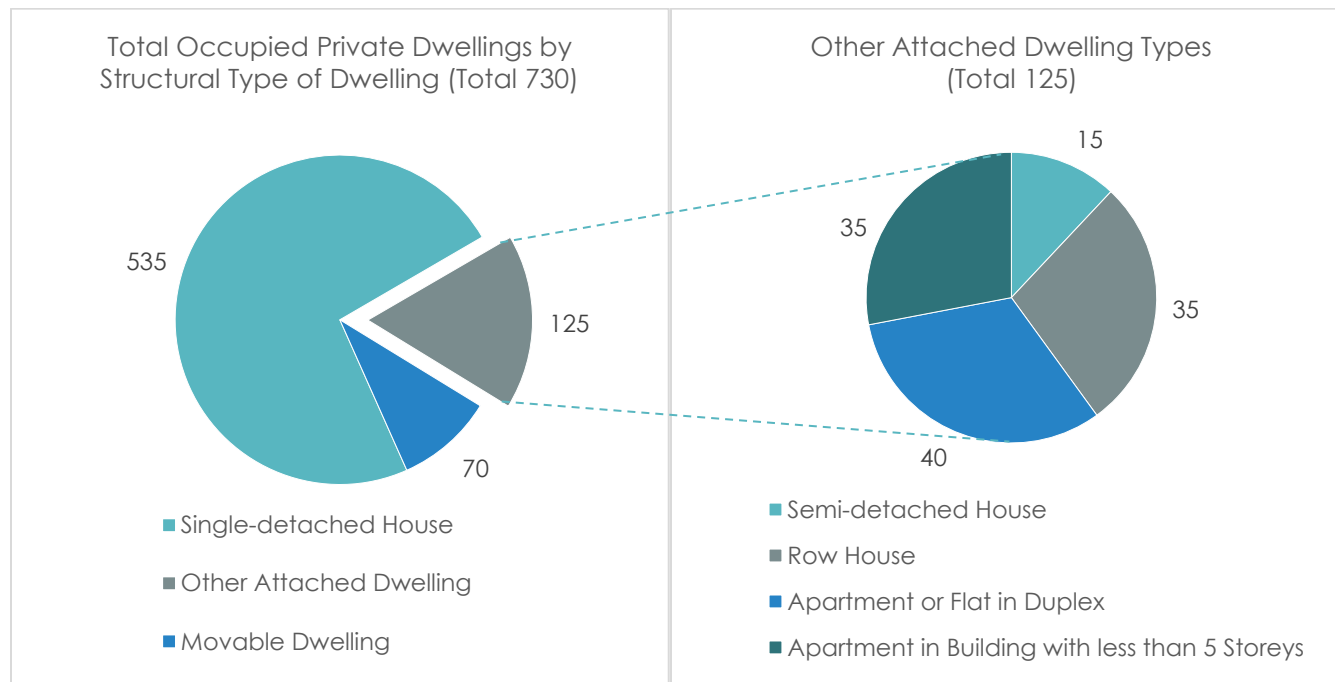


## Housing

### Housing Characteristics

In 2016, there were 732 private dwellings occupied in the Village of Keremeos. The typical housing form found in Keremeos is a single-detached dwelling (See Figure 1). Although a majority of the population lives in single-family residential units, there are a variety of property types available. The *Housing Needs and Demands Assessment Report, 2016*, indicated that 91% of respondents had acceptable housing conditions (58% adequate or 33% exceptional).

**Figure 1** – Household and Dwelling Characteristics in Keremeos, in 2016



Despite the availability of single-detached dwellings and acceptable housing conditions, Keremeos is lacking residential forms such as affordable multi-family housing and small lot residential. To meet the needs of younger families and recent retirees looking to downsize, affordable multi-family housing units and small lot residential are necessary.

## Real Estate

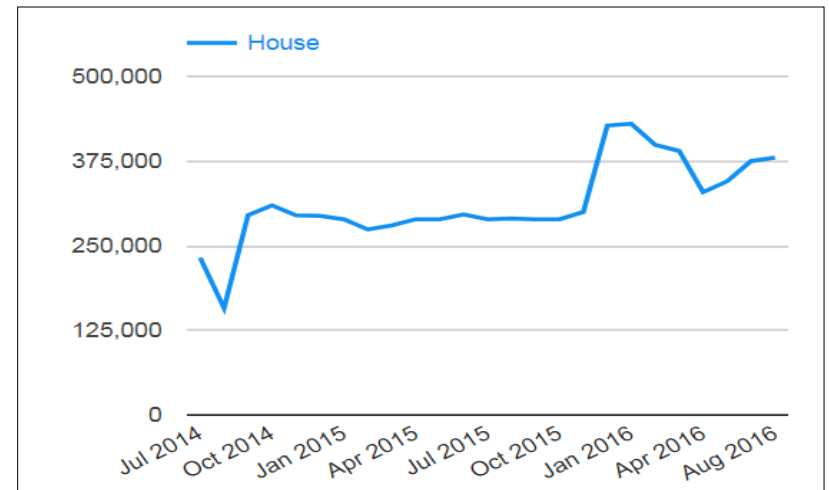
As of 2016, the average price of a home in Keremeos is \$380,000. Although the average price of a home is relatively high compared to other Canadian suburbs, Keremeos still offers affordable housing options when compared to surrounding urban centers like Penticton, Kelowna, and Vancouver. **Table 2 – Average Price of a Single-detached Home in 2016**, outlines the affordability of homes in Keremeos when compared to nearby urban centres.

Keremeos has a relatively large choice of properties for sale, varying from undeveloped farmland to single-family houses on the river. Over the past year, the number of houses available for sale has decreased. This can be attributed to homebuyers that are investing in Keremeos and buying up available properties faster than they come on the market.

**Table 2 – Average Price of a Single-detached Home in 2016**

	2016
<b>Village of Keremeos</b>	\$380,000
<b>City of Penticton</b>	\$460,000
<b>City of Kelowna</b>	\$650,000
<b>City of Vancouver</b>	\$1,364,000

**Figure 2 – Average Price of a Single-detached House in Keremeos from July 2014 – August 2016**



## Economic Context

The Village of Keremeos relies mostly on agriculture and tourism to fuel the economy. Keremeos is known for the number of fruit stands within the Village and the availability of agricultural land, much of which is in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The Village is located at the intersection of Highway 3 and 3A. A significant number of tourists travel through Keremeos during the summer months and contribute to the local economy. While not all travelers along the numbered highway stop in Keremeos, opportunities to enhance the tourism industry are present. The seasonality of agriculture and tourism tend to cause fluctuations to the Village's economy. To maintain a steady and growing economy, the Village must work to expand the number of employment opportunities in Keremeos and recruit workers to fill any new and existing positions.

The businesses, services and operators in Keremeos provide the basic necessities for residents. However, many residents shop outside of the Village in search of higher order goods and affordable alternatives to products that are available in the Village. While it is not feasible for Keremeos to offer all higher order goods, opportunities should be sought to recruit missing businesses, services, and operators. This will help to ensure the economic vitality of the Village, and increase the amount of money spent in the Village and reinvested into the local economy.





### 3.0 Community Engagement Findings

In 2017 an Open House was held at Victory Hall to determine the needs of the community. While the *Business Recruitment and Resident Attraction Strategy* was discussed in conjunction with four other visual improvement projects, the public had the opportunity to provide their input prior to the preparation of this report. A survey was made available to those that attended the Open House and online for two weeks following the event. The following information is a compilation of the information received at the Open House and from subsequent surveys.

- Most participants felt the quality of life in Keremeos was **moderate-high**.
- It was generally felt that Keremeos is **a desirable place to live** because of the natural environment, low cost of living, small-town charm, friendly residents, and proximity to larger urban centres.
- It was felt that the quality of life in Keremeos would increase with the addition of **more amenities** and **recreational activities**.
- A majority of participants would like to see the Village **beautified**, and expanded to include more stores (specialty stores, restaurants, and professionals).
- When shopping outside the Village, most people are buying groceries, health foods, clothes, kitchen/house items, electronics, or visiting hair salons, vet clinics, or seeking amenities such as indoor pools in Penticton.



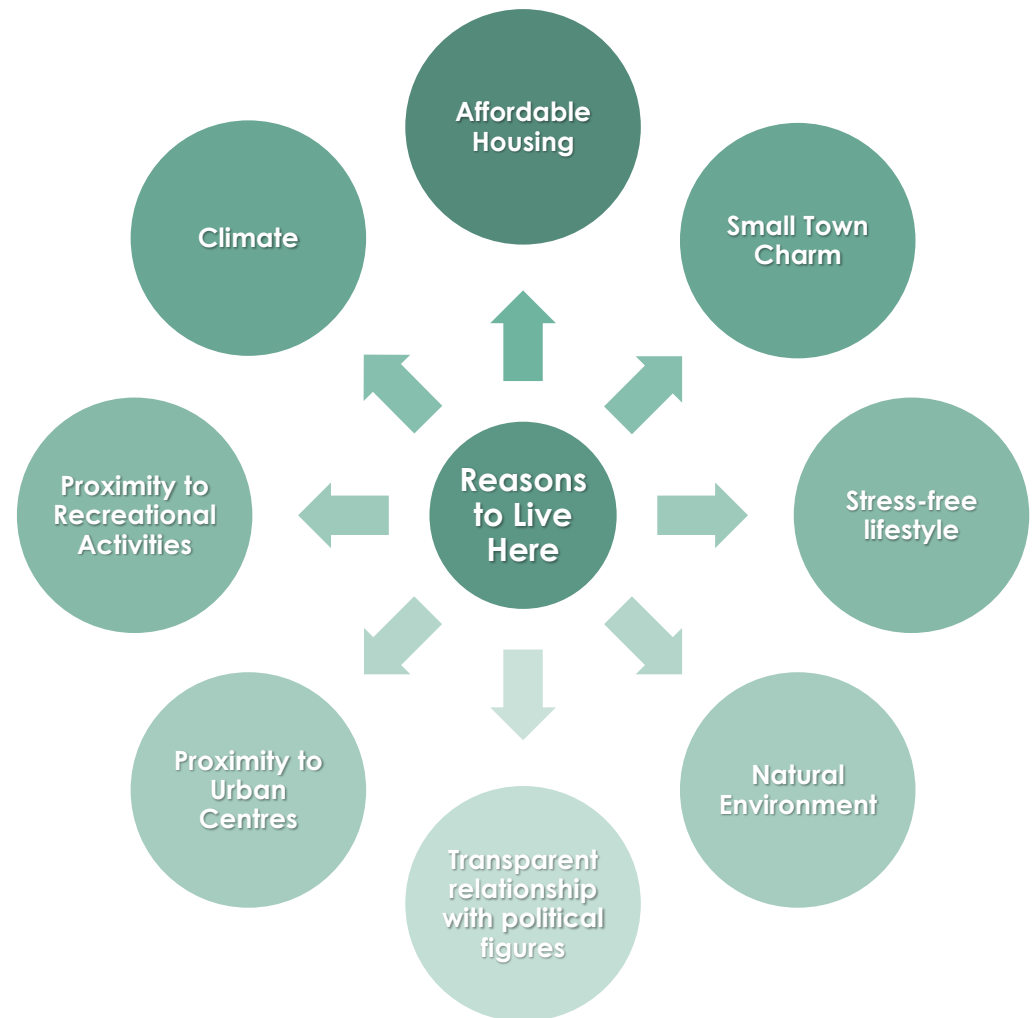
- Everyone who filled out a survey believed that **Keremeos would benefit from more small locally-owned businesses.** Currently, there are perceived “gaps” in the businesses and services available to residents of the Village. It was suggested that continued efforts to improve the existing local businesses, services, and operators were also necessary. Overwhelmingly residents would like to see a greater variety of products that are more affordable than what is currently available. Nevertheless, there was a general understanding that greater support for local businesses is necessary.
- The public would like to see, in no particular order, more:
  - medical & social services;
  - health food stores;
  - clothing stores;
  - kitchen/home stores;
  - electronic stores;
  - hair salons;
  - art and jewelry stores;
  - craft stores;
  - a quality hotel/ motel;
  - more restaurants;
  - more professionals (doctor, optometrist, lawyer), and
  - a variety store
- The housing market was perceived to be **reasonably priced**, but the public felt that there was low availability of rental properties.
- All respondents felt that the Village Council and Mayor were easy to contact/ interact with.
- All respondents would support the implementation of/ partnership with Okanagan College to start up an Agricultural Education Program located in Keremeos.



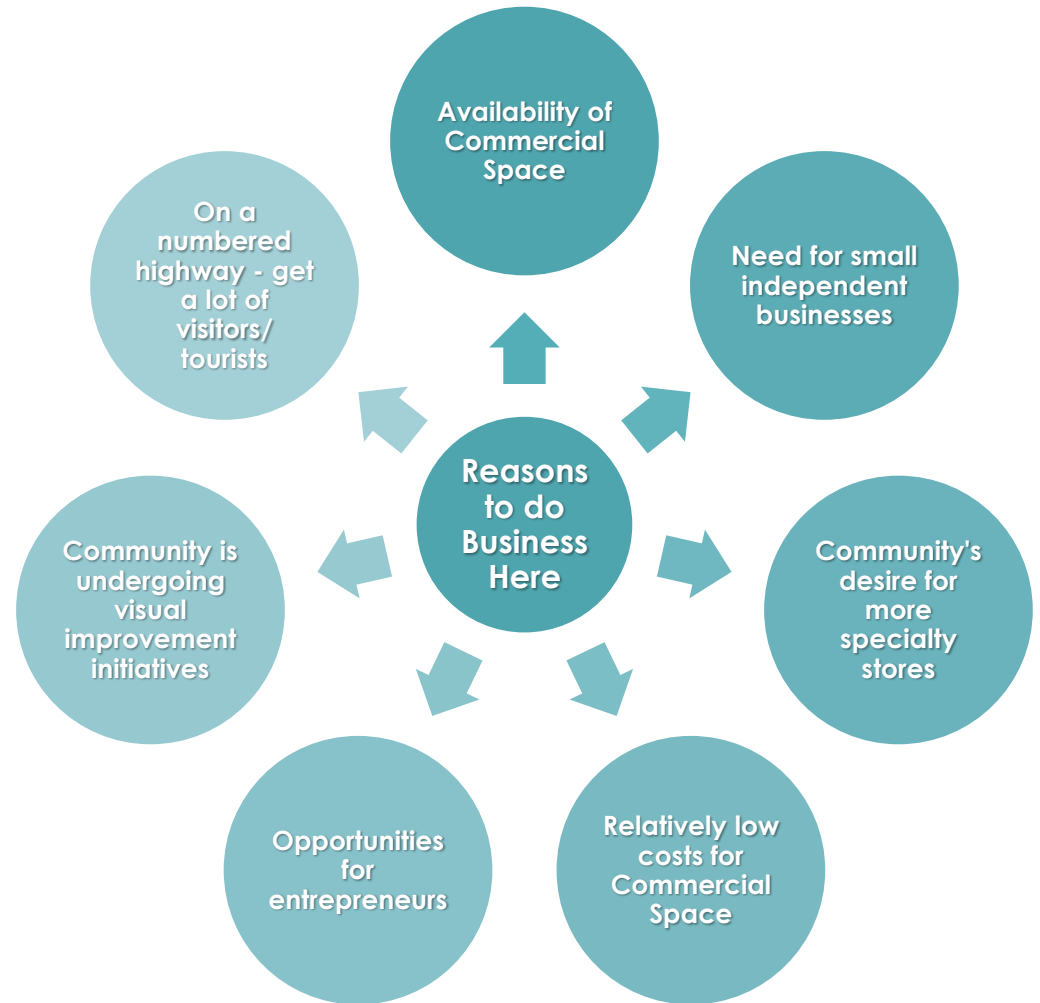
## 4.0 Reasons to Live in Keremeos

### 360° of Attraction

There are many reasons to live and do business in the Village of Keremeos. According to the residents and visitors to Keremeos, the Village offers a stress-free lifestyle with small-town charm. The relaxed-pace of life is accompanied by the surrounding natural environment and moderate climate. Keremeos is surrounded by mountains with nearby hiking trails and provincial parks. The Similkameen River runs through the southern portion of the Village and is often used for kayaking, fishing, and swimming during the warmer months. Within close proximity to the Village are even more amenities and opportunities for recreation. To top it off, the Keremeos real estate market is still relatively affordable. In comparison to other communities in the Okanagan region and throughout British Columbia, Keremeos is an affordable alternative.



Not only is Keremeos a beautiful place to live, but it is a strategic community to do business. The location of the Village, at the intersection of Highway 3 and 3A, makes it a prime spot for business development. There are seasonal variations associated with traffic volumes along Highway 3. Nevertheless, during the summer months, upwards of 5000 cars per day have been recorded to travel along Highway 3 right outside of the Village boundary. The local economy benefits greatly from the seasonal travelers and high traffic volumes. Along with geographic location, Keremeos has available commercial space and relatively low costs. The Village is looking to expand their business community to eliminate the need to travel to nearby cities for material goods such as electronics, furniture, and specialty store items.





## 5.0 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)

### SWOT Analysis

Information regarding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the Village were drawn from the *Keremeos Strategic Plan 2015 to 2018*, and other pertinent information regarding the Village. For the purpose of this report, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats are characterized in the following terms:

- **Strengths** – (Positive, Internal): Positive attributes or assets that the Village of Keremeos has in comparison to neighbouring regions
- **Weaknesses** – (Negative, Internal): Local issues or characteristics that limit the current and future growth of Keremeos
- **Opportunities** – (Positive, External): Areas where the Village of Keremeos can capitalize on current trends and economic opportunities
- **Threats** – (Negative, External): Trends that threaten the Village's current or future prospects in the context of business recruitment & resident attraction





## Strengths

- Proactive Council and Staff
- Good water and air
- Healthcare Centre
- K-12 Education
- Recreation facilities, outdoor pool and skating rink
- Aging population - more volunteers; creates employment; disposable income
- Variety of properties available
- Affordable residential prices
- Proximity to major urban centres
- Availability of commercial space on 7th Avenue
- Small town charm/ relaxed pace of life
- Moderate-High Quality of life
- Strong agricultural base & ALR - fruit stands/ orchards/ fresh fruit



## Weaknesses

- Aging population - increased reliance on services and younger population
- Lack of public transportation
- Burn out in volunteers
- Lacking businesses
- Vacancy which breeds more vacancy
- Aging infrastructure
- Size of community/ small tax base
- Support for local businesses
- Promotion of the Village
- Website - need for a more user-friendly platform
- Youth exodus/ lack of young workers
- Quality hospitality/ accommodations
- Seasonality of available work
- Lack of post-secondary education
- Transient population
- ALR land restricts non-ALR uses around the Village.



## Opportunities

- Regional trail development
- Expansion of Village boundary
- Increase year-round tourism
- Increase public transportation
- Increase density
- Beautification to enhance visual appeal
- Market the Village and its availability of affordable housing
- Draw in entrepreneurs and young business owners to fill vacant/ underutilized commercial spaces downtown
- Partner with Okanagan College and introduce an Agriculture Program to the Village. Alternative forms of agriculture are being practiced all over the world, especially within urban centres.
- Adopt principles used in other communities to enhance bylaw enforcement



## Threats

- Rising costs of living and housing
- Environmental concerns (floods, fire, drought)
- Availability of seasonal workers
- Global economy
- Out-migration of youth and young workers to larger metropolitan areas in search of higher education and employment
- Demographics - influx of recent retirees to the Okanagan and exodus of young professionals
- Proximity to big box stores (competition) and the perceived high costs of goods/ services in the Village.
- Loss of volunteer support

\*Source: Keremeos Strategic Plan 2015 to 2018 (2014) and an analysis of the Village's current situation

## 6.0 Goals

A number of goals have been determined in order to increase the number of permanent residents in the Village and attract new businesses, services, and operators. Using the information gathered in the beginning of this report, eight goals were identified.

1. Increase the Awareness of Keremeos
2. Beautify the Village
3. Make Keremeos More Pedestrian Friendly
4. Promote Year-Round Tourism
5. Increase Resident Attraction
6. Enhance Quality of Life
7. Enhance the Business Community
8. Stem Leakage of Consumer Spending



## 7.0 Action Planning – *How are we going to get there?*

This strategy has been prepared to enhance the ability of the Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with the Village, to increase the number of permanent residents and recruit businesses. Retention is an important component to ensure the successful recruitment of new businesses, and efforts to retain existing businesses should be taken. Efforts to retain new and existing businesses may include:

- Facilitating small business counselling (to determine business needs)
- Assistance with enhancing small business marketing in the Village and surrounding area
- Assistance with accessing financing for growth and diversification of small businesses
- Assistance with helping small businesses in the community address other obstacles for growth and enhancement (other than financial)
- Maintaining the attractiveness of the Village for new and existing businesses and residents

The Action Planning stage of this report takes into consideration the existing conditions of the Village, determined through a Situational Analysis (see section 2.0) and makes recommendations for the near future based on specific goals (outlined in section 6.0). There are several goals identified to help increase the desirability for people to live and work in Keremeos. Each goal is accompanied with specific actions and methods for reaching the identified goal. The first four goals are related to the recruitment of businesses and permanent residents through the overall enhancement and promotion of the Village. The goals relate to increasing awareness of the Village and expanding the tourism industry, these efforts will aid with the recruitment of new businesses and permanent residents in the long run.



## GOAL 1 – Increase Awareness of Keremeos

Furthering awareness of the Village of Keremeos and all that it has to offer will have a significant impact on business recruitment and resident attraction. Appropriate marketing and communication channels should continue to be utilized to promote the Village's location, tourism assets, quality of life and business opportunities.

### Primary Actions

1. **The Village's Brand.** Supporting and building upon the Similkameen Valley Planning Society's (SVPS) existing branding strategy of "Rustic, Rugged, Real" would bring **identity** to the Village of Keremeos and help with the recruitment of new businesses and residents. Branding strategies may be marketing-led, focusing on developing a brand that makes a memorable impact, or design-led branding which focuses more on the aesthetic look rather than the brand's marketing message. Regardless, a branding strategy allows for the successful integration of the brand to the Village's operations. See the District of Elkford branding strategy and integration to multiple platforms including their website.



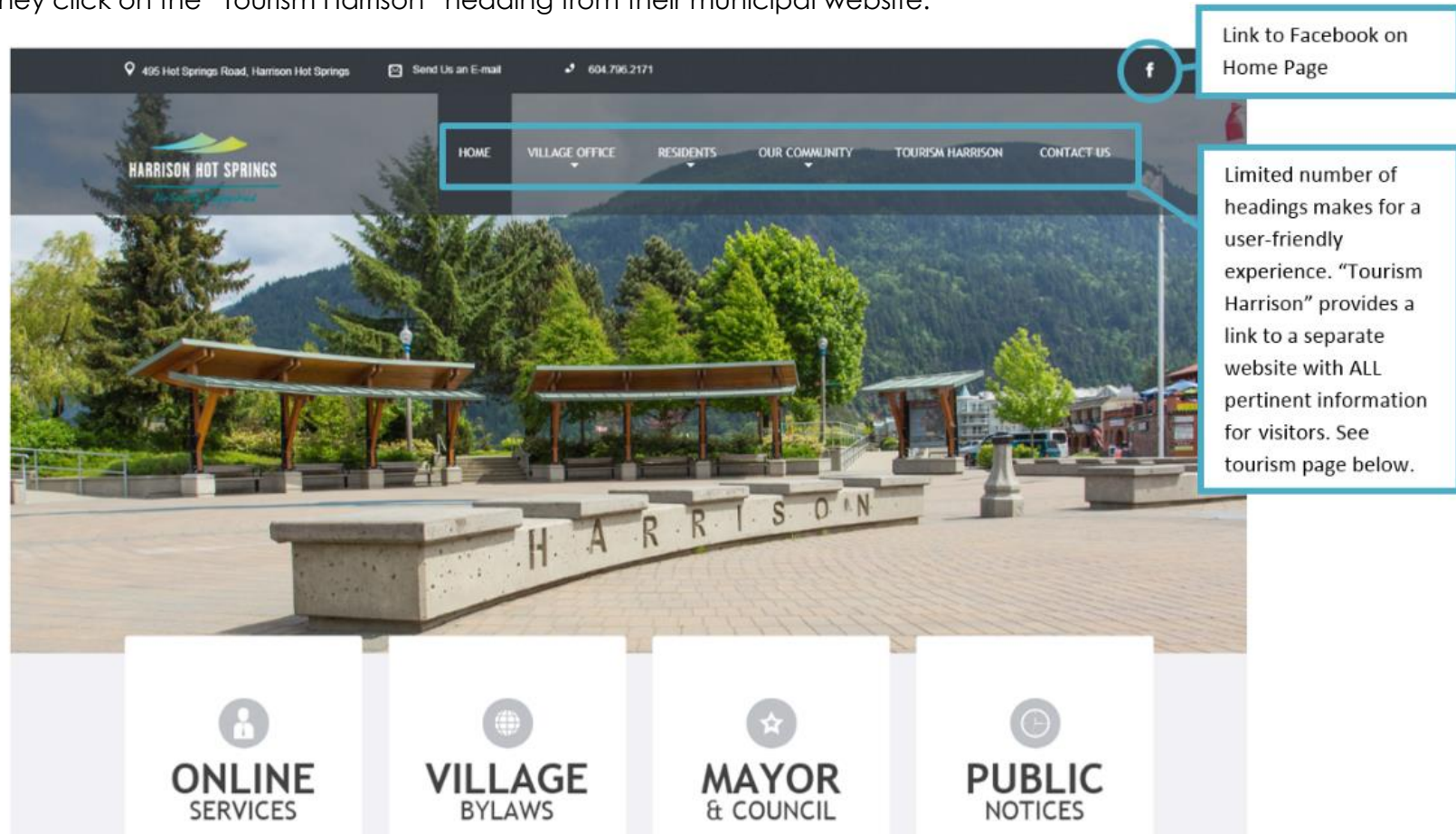
The District of Elkford's branding and marketing initiative began in 2006 with the re-branding process and has grown into a well-developed, "seriously fun" brand. The District's branding has received multiple awards on an international level and has put Elkford on the map. Their willingness and effort to incorporate the brand into almost all aspects of the District's operations has added to its success.

2. Update the Village entrance **signs**. The current sign located at the junction of Highway 3 and Highway 3A should be updated/ enhanced to reflect the branding theme of the region and the Village. An additional sign could be located at the west entrance into the Village before the Keremeos bypass to bring awareness to travelers about the Village.
3. Update the Village website to create a more **user-friendly** platform. There is a significant amount of information available on the Village website, but it is not necessarily clear where to find it. Efforts to **simplify** the information available on the Village of Keremeos website should be taken.



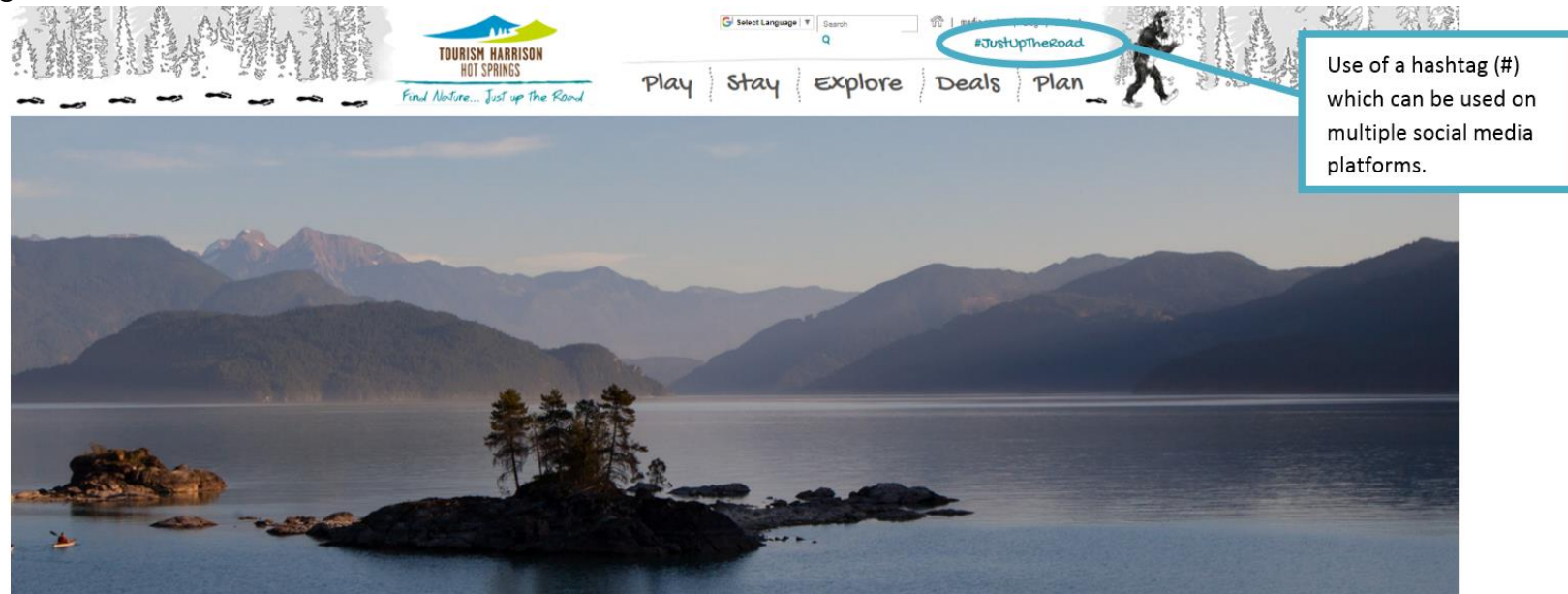


The Village of Harrison Hot Springs website provides a good example for a user-friendly platform with links to the different social media platforms that they use. The Village of Keremeos should enhance their website by organizing the information available into fewer headings. One of these headings should be related to tourism that provides information about things to do in the area, places to stay, dine, and play. The Village of Harrison Hot Springs has a separate webpage for Tourism that users are redirected to when they click on the "Tourism Harrison" heading from their municipal website.





Below is the Tourism page for the Village of Harrison Hot Springs (that you are redirected to after clicking on the Tourism Harrison heading).



4. Engage in **social media**. Today, one of the best ways to reach the younger demographic is through social media. The Village of Keremeos and the Chamber of Commerce should both consider expanding their online presence to include social media platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Some specific recommendations include:
- Developing a Keremeos Geofilter (Snapchat). This can be done for the whole Village or specific areas like downtown, the Columns, or various fruit stands (see City of Kelowna Geofilters).
  - Have Instagram photos that people set their location to Keremeos running on your website (see Village of Harrison Hot Springs Tourism Page)

See above and previous page (24) to see how the Village of Harrison Hot Springs has incorporated a link to Facebook and a hashtag (#) which may be used on multiple social media platforms. Efforts to engage in social media will bring further awareness to the community and should be taken.

5. Create a **Promotional Welcome Package** for new/ prospective residents in Keremeos. Many communities, through public relations (PR) initiatives maintain a welcome package for new businesses, residents, and tourists. These packages can be distributed around the community, region, and even to non-profit organizations to promote the Village as a desirable place to visit, live, and do business. The package could include, but is not limited to, a list of available real estate, “Starting a Business in Keremeos 101” pamphlet (see below for details), list of upcoming events, dates for coffee with the mayor, information about the art walk, and things to do in the area.
6. Put together a **“Starting a Business in Keremeos 101” pamphlet** to include a list of vacant commercial space, a list of 1001 businesses you can start from home (see Appendix A), instructions how to sign up for the *Similkameen Valley Business Listing*, and any other relevant information for potential business owners.

## GOAL 2 – Beautify the Village

Beautification can benefit the Village in a number of different ways. It can increase the desirability of the Village for permanent residents and businesses as well as enhance the tourism sector. The Village of Keremeos has already initiated several visual improvement initiatives aimed at beautifying the Village. The primary objectives for beautifying the Village are included below.

### Primary Actions

1. Update the **Downtown Design Guidelines**. This initiative is currently underway and will improve the Village's existing building design guidelines (prepared in 1991) that have no clear theme and provide little direction for implementation by property owners. The updated design guidelines will include language and example images for acceptable storefront/ building entryways, colour, materials, doors, windows, building height & mass, proportion to the street, and architectural details.
2. Develop a **Comprehensive Concept Plan**. A Comprehensive Concept Plan is being developed for Downtown Keremeos (along 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue) and addresses desired improvements to the public realm. The plan includes the design and location of several elements including curb flares, street trees and shrubs, lighting and benches.

3. Implement a **Pocket Park** along 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This initiative is underway and preliminary concepts have been prepared for review and public input. The addition of a pocket park in the heart of Keremeos will allow for a public gathering space while simultaneously beautifying the Village.



4. Implement a **Signage Strategy**. This strategy has also already been initiated by the Village of Keremeos. A signage strategy will include recommendations to improve the existing entrance sign (located at Highway 3 and Highway 3A), the implementation of an additional entrance sign (at west entrance), and wayfinding signage to be placed throughout the Village.
5. Enhance/ Maintain **Downtown Façade Program**. Work to maintain the existing Downtown Façade Program that is in place to assist business owners with the visual improvement of their property. Explore the potential to expand the Façade Program to assist even more business owners.
6. Consider reimplementing the **Revitalization Tax Exemption**. Despite unsuccessfully implementing a Revitalization Tax Exemption in 2005, the Village of Keremeos should reconsider implementing this tax exemption following the completion of the Downtown Design Guidelines.
7. Implement a **“Kit of Parts” Donor Program**. A Donor program allows members of the community to buy a piece of public property and donate it to the community, for the benefit of the Village. The program should include “kit of parts” elements as well as trees and hardware available for purchase. In many cases these elements may act as a memorial of a family member or friend. See the District of Peachland’s *Partnership Program – Streetscape Components*. The District of Peachland was oversubscribed after implementing a similar type of program.

### GOAL 3 – Make Keremeos More Pedestrian Friendly

In keeping with the beatification objectives, it is important for the Village to enhance the pedestrian experience. Keremeos is heavily reliant on motor vehicles for transportation as there is no local taxi services and limited transit options. Walkability becomes extremely important as an alternate form of transportation. Improvements to the public realm will have a positive impact on tourists, residents, and business owners.

#### Primary Actions

1. **Redirect Semi-Trucks and Recreational Vehicles (RV)** away from parking on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In order to enhance the visual appeal of Keremeos and improve the pedestrian experience downtown, larger vehicles should be directed to an alternate location to park. While there is an existing parking lot for semi-trucks (located at 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Veterans Ave.) an alternative parking lot for RVs must be established. Signage will need to be improved along 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue to help enforce parking standards. The Village will also have to update their current bylaw to allow for the proper management of parking along 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue.



2. Enhance the **local trail systems** and include appropriate wayfinding signage. Specifically, signage should direct residents and visitors to the Riverfront Promenade and the Rail Trail.
3. Implement **wider sidewalks** in commercial areas to promote foot traffic and allow businesses to spill out into public areas.
4. Additional **crosswalks** should be implemented to ease pedestrian mobility throughout the Village. Specific locations are to be determined upon correspondence with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and the public.
5. Implement more **benches & lighting** (i.e. tree lights) to enhance the pedestrian experience.

#### GOAL 4 – Promote Year-Round Tourism

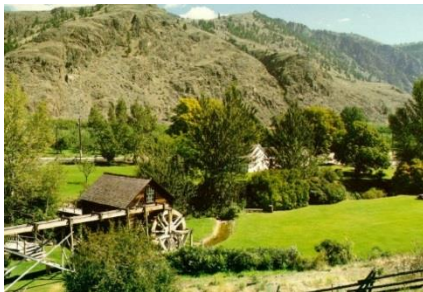
Tourism is an important component of future business recruitment and resident attraction. Even though Keremeos is surrounded by natural elements and beauty, the Village needs to do more to promote these advantages. Tourist visitation and expenditure can be enhanced through sound planning and marketing of the area's events and attractions. Growing the Village's tourism profile will add to the success of resident attraction and business recruitment/ retention.

##### Primary Actions

1. Work with Similkameen Country, Similkameen Valley Planning Society (SVPS) & Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA), through SVPS, to prepare promotional **tourism material** for the Village of Keremeos. The Village's brand or theme should be incorporated into all promotional material.
2. **Promote** all that Keremeos has to offer: waterfront promenade, museum, Keremeos Columns, Grist Mill, shopping along 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, fruit stands, the Rail Trail, wine, and the Similkameen River (that supports kayaking, swimming, and fishing)



3. Initiate the conversation with local business owners regarding their hours of operation. Encourage local businesses to **extend their hours of operation** whether it be more hours per week, more days per year, or extending operations into the holiday seasons. The intent is to enhance the local economy and extend the tourist season for Keremeos.
4. Increase length of stay of visitors. Encourage existing accommodations in Keremeos to update their buildings and recruit new quality hotels/ motels/ and bed and breakfasts. Explore potential funding opportunities or tax breaks for existing accommodation to upgrade their facilities.
5. Develop a **Tourism Action Plan** specifically for the Village of Keremeos. In order to develop key initiatives for growing the tourism industry within the Village, and not just the South-Okanagan, a Tourism Action Plan should be developed. Much of the efforts to increase tourism in the South-Okanagan happen through multiple facets and tend to be disjointed. This initiative would give the key players in tourism a chance to sit down together and plan for the future accordingly.
6. **Extend the tourism season.** It is imperative that Keremeos work towards expanding the tourism season to allow local businesses to stay open during the non “peak-season” (June, July & August). Efforts should be made to program the outdoor skating rink for games, sports, and winter festivities to increase opportunities for tourism in the winter months. Other strategies may be adopted to promote tourism during the winter.
7. Monitor the tourism industry year-round to be able to see improvements or challenges. For example, keep track of the existing accommodations occupancy rates.



## GOAL 5 – Increase Resident Attraction

Efforts to increase the number of permanent residents in Keremeos are being taken to enhance the vibrancy and longevity of the community. Keremeos continues to grow due to its desirable natural setting and requires an increased number of permanent residents to economically expand its business community. Typical to surrounding Okanagan communities, Keremeos is subject to an aging population. Recruitment of younger people is important to balance the demands of an elderly population.

### Primary Actions

#### 1. **Focus recruitment** efforts on:

- Entrepreneurs and independent businesses – to add to the business community and contribute to the local economy
- Current seasonal workers – to try and extend their stay in Keremeos, and contribute to the local economy for a greater amount of time
- Recent retirees – to increase the number of residents to support local business and services
- Skilled tradespeople and professionals – to enhance and diversify the existing work force
- Artists – to build upon the already vibrant artistic scene in the Village of Keremeos.

#### 2. Explore the potential **partnership with Okanagan College** to develop an Agriculture Program based out of Keremeos. Efforts must be made to extend the opportunities for post-secondary education in the Village to attract and retain young adults. Increasing the number of young students in Keremeos, even if only for a short period of time, may have a lasting effect (i.e. they decide to reside/ work in Keremeos)



3. Identify **potential land development areas** within the Village. The Chamber should work with the Village and local businesses to develop an **inventory** of available residential and commercial land for development, re-development and potential expansion. The Residential Comprehensive Land Use Area (see Schedule A – Future Land Use Map in the *Village of Keremeos Official Community Plan*) should be marketed to local and regional developers. Exploration into a boundary expansion for the Village of Keremeos may also be undertaken to meet the needs of a growing population.
4. Increase available **types of housing** in Keremeos (i.e. apartments, multi-family, and affordable housing). Encourage appropriate densification through zoning to allow for multi-family, mixed-use development, and small lot residential throughout the community. It is important to encourage the development of the “missing middle” housing forms (see image below). Policies may also need to be revisited in the Official Community Plan (OCP) to allow for a greater variety of housing forms in Keremeos. The Village must work with local and regional developers, builders, and relators to enhance the residential real-estate market.

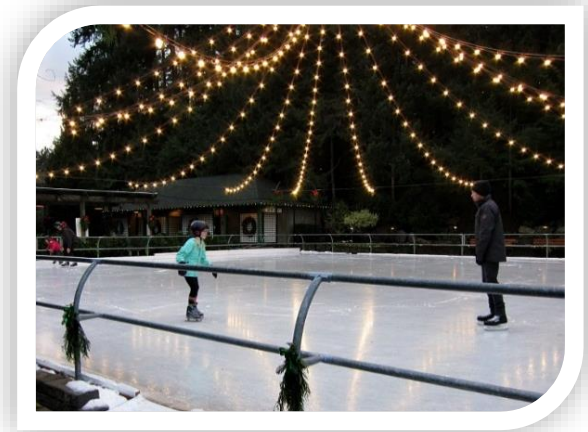


## GOAL 6 – Enhance Quality of Life

In order to attract more permanent residents to Keremeos, efforts must be made to enhance the Village's quality of life. Not only will this contribute to an increase in the number of permanent residents, but it will enhance the tourism and business sector by making Keremeos a more desirable place to live and do business.

### Primary Actions

1. Provide more **amenities & expand recreational facilities** to meet the needs of existing and future residents of Keremeos. The Village's current Recreation Centre is underutilized and does not meet the needs of the community. Initial efforts have been taken in the form of a pre-feasibility study to expand the recreational services available to the community. For more information please click the following link: [www.rdos.bc.ca/RecSurvey](http://www.rdos.bc.ca/RecSurvey). The RDOS should continue with their efforts to improve the existing recreational facilities in Keremeos, and once a clear direction is set, it may be warranted to conduct a detailed Recreation Centre Feasibility Study.
2. Improve **Public Transportation** for the Village of Keremeos. The Village should continue to have conversations with BC Transit to enhance services to Penticton from Keremeos to allow for greater mobility of residents to and from Keremeos.
3. The Chamber and local organizations should continue to expand the hosting of **community events**. Community events create a sense of belonging and promote social interaction. Keremeos would benefit greatly from even more public events such as:
  - Parks Alive – music in the parks
  - Arts Alive – artwork displayed for one month at a time, then stored in local art gallery (Oak Bay's Arts Alive example)
  - Indoor events at the Recreation Center in the colder months
  - Program outdoor hockey rink for: local hockey tournament, games, public skating, etc. (i.e. "Skate under the stars night")
  - Tree Light Up during Christmas time (in Pocket Park)





4. Maintain infrastructure and services to allow for residential densification/ growth. In order to allow for growth, consideration must be given to municipal infrastructure and services. The Village should continue to apply for grants to allow for the necessary upgrades and potential expansion of municipal services and infrastructure.

### GOAL 7 – Enhance the Business Community

The intent is to grow local entrepreneurs, attract outside investment and entrepreneurs, and support and increase the formation of small and medium businesses/ operators in the Village of Keremeos. Entrepreneurial talent and investment is the engine of any local economy, and without it, the local economy will stagnate or perish. Small and medium businesses are the key to success in smaller communities, such as Keremeos. There is a need to recruit new businesses to the Village to reduce the need to travel outside the Village for everyday items.

#### Primary Actions

1. Encourage **all local businesses** to join the *Similkameen Valley Business Listing*. It is important for residents and visitors to know what kind of businesses and services are available in the Village.
2. The Chamber should develop an annual business success report. This initiative should involve the annual review of local businesses to get a better understanding of what it is that they need from the community to be successful. Build upon the Business Walk Program Report that was last completed in 2015.

#### Business Walk Update





3. Attract businesses that “**fill the gaps**” in the local economy. It is important to expand the number of local businesses to meet the needs of the community. The Village should develop a list of desired businesses, services, and operators for the Village of Keremeos using the preliminary information collected through public consultation (see section 3 – Community Engagement Findings). This information should be used to recruit the appropriate types of businesses and services to the Village. In general, the Village should focus on recruiting the following:

- **Independent businesses** (i.e. young entrepreneurs, professionals, tourism businesses that complement current tourism sector businesses). The local community benefits proportionally more from independent businesses than from chains that generate equal employment. When business profits remain in the community, much of those resources are reinvested locally.
- Small/ Medium sized operators
- Viticulture and wine related businesses

Additionally, the Village should keep a record of the desired **Kinds of Businesses (KOBs)** for Keremeos and obtain files regarding how to start-up the desired kinds of businesses, the recommended marketing approach, and investment needed for potential business owners. The Village should be responsible for the set-up of these kinds of files and have them readily available for new and existing businesses owners.

4. Encourage the development of **home based businesses** in Keremeos (see Appendix A). There are a wide variety of businesses and services that may be provided out of someone's home. Regardless of their orientation, it is important to foster these businesses and secure their future to grow the local economy. If and when these businesses are ready to expand into larger facilities, it is prudent to facilitate their move to commercial or industrial locations within the Village.
5. Increase opportunities to celebrate the success of **local businesses** in Keremeos. Share success stories on businesses in the Village of Keremeos through social and media print.

6. Target specific **geographic areas** for business recruitment (i.e. Penticton Saturday Market). It is important to recruit businesses from appropriately sized communities to ensure successful integration into the Village. The Village should also reach out to larger centres outside of the South Okanagan/ Okanagan region. A more definitive marketing strategy may be required to successfully market the Village to larger urban centres.
7. Explore the potential for a Keremeos Market. This would provide the Village with an excellent platform for selling local fruit and drawing in nearby visitors. Keremeos has more than fruit to offer, and a local market would allow artists and crafters to display/ sell their products. The proposed “Pocket Park” would be an ideal location to hold the Keremeos Market.



### GOAL 8 – Keep Consumer Spending Local

The best way to maintain the local economy is to ensure the longevity of its current businesses, services, and operators. The Chamber must continue to work with, different organizations and adopt programs aimed at supporting local business owners. Some of these organizations and programs may include: Community Futures Okanagan Similkameen, Similkameen Country Chamber of Commerce, and Accelerate Okanagan. Without support from the Village it will be difficult to retain current and future businesses.

In an effort to grow the Village's economy, residents must support locally owned businesses, services, and operators. Leakage of consumer spending is quite high in Keremeos. This is largely due to the Villages proximity to the United States and Penticton where services and higher order goods are available. If more of the resident's income can be kept in Keremeos, the economic impact of resources and income already present in the Village can be extended.

## Primary Actions

1. Recruit “**missing**” **businesses campaign by the Chamber**, including services, and operators as outlined above (GOAL 8 – Objective 3).
2. Assist/ educate local businesses about advertising. Advertising is an important component of owning and operating a business. It is necessary to ensure the success of local businesses. Once a theme is determined for the Village of Keremeos this may be incorporated into local businesses advertising efforts with the help of Village Staff. Efforts should also be taken to promote the need for local businesses to take advantage of available training in marketing.
3. Work with groups like the South Okanagan-Similkameen Economic Development Group (SOSEDS) and Community Futures to combine efforts for enhancing the economy throughout the South Okanagan-Similkameen.
4. **Keep consumer spending local** by encouraging residents to shop within the Village. Although residents will continue to shop outside the Village for items that they simply cannot get in Keremeos, it is important to encourage residents to support local businesses and shop local when possible. Initiatives to promote shopping local should be undertaken. They may include:
  - Initiating a **buy local campaign** that provides continual reminders to shop local. The campaign should include an educational component to inform residents about the benefits of shopping local.
  - Developing a slogan such as “**Stronger together, shop local**”.
  - Hosting a **Customer Appreciation Day** (once or twice/ year) where local businesses offer a discounted rate on particular goods for that day (15% off). This is undertaken in Nelson and Kaslo.



## 8.0 Begin Implementation: Quick Wins

An extensive list of recommendations is provided in the Action Planning section of this report. The recommendations may be applied over the next 5-10 years as funding becomes available. At this time, it is not feasible to initiate every recommendation in the near future, so a list of quick wins is offered. It is felt that these initiatives will provide the greatest impact (for enhancing the Village's ability to recruit/ retain businesses and attract residents) for the least investment. Initiatives that have already begun are also outlined in the quick wins section.

1. **Signage at Entryways** – update existing and add new at West Entrance
2. Continue to support and build upon the SVPS **Branding Strategy**
3. **Pocket Park** (initiative underway)
4. **Comprehensive Concept Plan** (initiative underway)
5. **Façade Program** – expand the number of grant opportunities.
6. Implement a **“Kit of Parts” Donor Program** for streetscape revitalization.
7. **Traffic Management** – redirect Semi-truck and Recreational Vehicles away from 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
  - Communicate with Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI)
  - Designate an Alternative parking lot for Recreational Vehicles
  - Improve signage directing semi-trucks & RVs to their designated parking lots
  - Review and update existing bylaws to allow for traffic management along 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue
8. Implement **Wayfinding Signage** to Key Attractions (i.e. Riverfront Promenade)
9. Start Updating the **Village Website**
  - Adopt a more user-friendly platform (examples given above)
  - Needs to cater to the Villages significant assets
  - Engage in Social Media and begin building the community platform



10. Initiate a Discussion Regarding Business Hours for Current Businesses/ Operators

- Times of Week
- Times of Year (seasons)
- Time during Holiday Season



11. Develop a **Promotional Welcome Package** for the Village. This should include a press release of the information. The Package should include:

- What Keremeos has to offer (natural beauty, affordability, quality of life, and agricultural land)
- Key Contacts (including local relators, developers, and home builders). Seek funding or sponsorship for the development of the package from any key contacts.
- Reference to the "Starting a Business in Keremeos 101" pamphlet (as described in the GOALS section).

12. Put together a **"Starting a Business in Keremeos 101"** pamphlet to include a list of vacant commercial space, a list of 1001 home-based businesses (see Appendix A), instructions how to sign up for the Similkameen Valley Business Listing, and any other relevant information.

13. Review and update existing policies and zoning bylaws to allow for a variety of housing types in the Village. Updates to existing policies and bylaws should reflect the desire to implement more multi-family units, as determined throughout the public consultation process.

14. Identify **Potential Land Development Areas**. Areas suitable for new development or redevelopment should be outlined and made available to existing or potential residents of the Village. This information should also be made available/ promoted to builders and developers in the surrounding area.

15. Continue the conversation with BC Transit to enhance services to Penticton from Keremeos

16. Identify the **"missing business"** types and advertise the business opportunities for Keremeos. Expand upon the preliminary findings from the public consultation process that identified the desired kinds of businesses for Keremeos.



## 9.0 Cost Effective Wins

<b>1. Update Village Website</b>	Undertaken In-house
<b>2. Kit of Parts Donor Program</b>	Undertaken In-House. If a consultant is required to assist with the implementation of this process it is estimated that an additional \$2,000 may be incurred.
<b>3. Promotional Welcome Package</b>	Undertaken In-house joint Chamber/Village
<b>4. Starting A Business in Keremeos 101 Package</b>	Undertaken In-house by Chamber
<b>5. Undertake a detailed Recreation Centre Feasibility Study</b> Once a definitive direction is set for the Similkameen Recreation Centre, and depending on the level of preliminary work done, a detailed feasibility study could be undertaken. The cost of such a study is dependent on the preliminary work already complete.	Cost to be determined
<b>6. Pocket Park</b>	Initiative Underway – Funding provided by the BC Rural Dividend Fund
<b>7. Comprehensive Concept Plan</b>	Initiative Underway – Funding provided by the BC Rural Dividend Fund
<b>8. Update Design Guidelines</b>	Initiative Underway – Funding provided by the BC Rural Dividend Fund
<b>9. Develop Signage Strategy</b>	Initiative Underway – Funding provided by the BC Rural Dividend Fund

## Appendix A

As referenced in the South Similkameen Economic Development Strategy, 1999, please see an excerpt from - **1001 Businesses You Can Start From Home, 1992** by Daryl Allen Hall. A more recent version of this book **1101 Businesses You Can Start From Home, 1994** can be found online for purchase.

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clothes repair and alteration ■ crocheting ■ cuffs ■ curtains, custom ■ custom patterns ■ drapery studio ■ dress making ■ embroidery ■ painting ■ hosiery mending ■ knitting ■ needlepoint ■ needlework ■ pictures ■ reknitting ■ sewing alterations ■ sewing artists' clothing ■ sewing dance costumes ■ sewing dolls' clothes ■ sewing exchange ■ sewing for brides-to-be ■ sewing machine repairs ■ sewing/mending ■

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223

227

sewing (mobile) alterations ■ sewing on emblems ■ sewing souvenirs  
■ sewing stuffed toys ■ sewing uniforms ■ sewing work items ■ shirts  
(custom made) ■ slip covers, custom ■ western clothing ■ wool works

#### *Special Services*

accident investigator ■ advice consultant ■ agent ■ athletic shoe shop  
■ blind services ■ bookfinding ■ bookkeeper to go ■ bookkeeping  
■ books on wheels ■ building maintenance service ■ business  
opportunities opportunity ■ buyer-seller finder ■ chain saw jobs ■  
christmas trees and ornaments ■ chauffeur for the elderly ■ collection  
agency ■ college scholarship search service ■ colonics ■ computer  
consultant service ■ dating service—two approaches ■ day nursery  
■ do-it-yourself woodshop ■ economizing ■ elderly caretaking ■  
elderly day-care ■ elderly employment ■ electricity alternate systems  
■ electroplating ■ employment agency ■ errands about town ■ family  
bookkeeping service ■ family trees ■ festive decorating ■ financier  
■ finder service ■ flower service ■ foreign finder ■ fund raising ■  
gift wrapping ■ gun repair ■ haircuts at home ■ handyman ■ home  
deliveries ■ homemaking service ■ home secretary ■ hospital hair  
care ■ hospitality plus ■ housekeeping ■ house sitting ■ import/export  
broker ■ laundry for finery ■ lawn mower sharpening ■ lecturer ■  
left-handed shop ■ library rentals ■ limousine service ■ lingerie shop  
■ loading zone signs ■ modeling agency ■ money broker ■ music  
lessons for beginners ■ natural childbirthing ■ newsclipping agent ■  
notary public ■ office equipment rentals ■ package wrapping service  
■ paper recycler ■ picture framing shop, diy ■ plastics recycling ■ pr  
suggestions sales ■ rags to riches ■ red tape cutting service ■ remail  
service ■ reminder service ■ roommate finder ■ scrap metal ■ seminar  
promoter ■ shopping service ■ shoppers' transit ■ small business  
consulting ■ snow removal ■ swap meet—flea market promoter ■  
taped weddings ■ tax axe service ■ tax consultant ■ temporary-help  
agency ■ tool and equipment rentals ■ videotaping service ■ wedding  
store ■ window cleaner ■ work scout ■ yard sale

#### *Telephone*

after-hours phone orders ■ answering service (general) ■ appointment  
sales by phone ■ babysitter service ■ bird dog phoning ■ boosting  
sales by phone ■ car sales by phone ■ catalog orders ■ doctor's phone  
service ■ goods promotion by phone ■ market surveying by phone ■  
phone flea market ■ telephone answering service ■ wake-up service

#### *Travel*

backpacking vacations ■ boat tours ■ cabin rentals ■ campground  
■ canoe trips ■ convention tours ■ escorted camping trips ■ farm  
vacations ■ freighter hand ■ gold prospecting trip guide ■ home  
travel agency ■ interviews sales ■ jobs by long distance ■ job creation  
■ job fair ■ jobs for youth ■ luggage rental service ■ translator rental  
agency ■ travel agency ■ travel by tv

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#### *Typing*

legal home typing ■ secretarial service ■ steno service ■ typing  
instruction ■ typing school papers

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#### *Vending & Jobbers*

coin-op tv ■ duplicate key stand ■ fishing tackle vending ■ advertising  
specialties ■ office supplies ■ packaged popcorn ■ plastic laminating ■  
popcorn vending ■ produce vendor ■ rack merchandising ■ rawleigh,  
amway, fuller brush ■ rose vendor ■ sea foods vendor ■ shoes ■  
sunglasses ■ toy stuffed animal vendor ■ vending machines ■ wagon  
vending

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#### *Writing*

ad newspaper columns ■ biography writing ■ business rating guide  
■ club news service ■ collection letter writing ■ complaint service  
■ condo newsletter ■ freelance news reporter ■ ghost writing ■  
guidebook publishing ■ handlettering ■ handwritten works ■ hiking  
guidebook ■ home histories ■ household hints service ■ instant  
language booklet ■ instruction manual ■ letter writing service ■  
literary agent ■ logos ■ magazine article writing ■ mail addressing  
■ mailing lists composing ■ manuscript prepping ■ name lists sales  
■ newsletter writer-publisher ■ newspaper column ■ parents' guide  
■ pen pal matching ■ personal histories ■ poetry ■ pr brochures ■  
research specialty ■ résumé service ■ rural news reporter ■ specialty  
manuals ■ survival book ■ tour guide ■ who's who local directory ■  
writing social letters ■ writing space fillers ■ writing speeches ■ writing  
story plots ■

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