



QBRE

Questa Business Retention & Expansion Report

2025



■ QEDF MISSION STATEMENT



The Questa Economic Development Fund supports the transition of Questa and the surrounding communities to a diversified, sustainable post-mining economy.

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On the Cover: Miguel Rael, Wildcat's Den, Tatyana dePavloff, Sew Artful, Rosie Turpin, Rosie's Smokehouse, Jayson Rice, Thrift de Questa, Brittany Maes, Berkshire Hathaway Photo: Flag Mountain, Questa by E. Wilde

■ LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



It is with great pleasure that I present the Questa Business Retention and Expansion Report, a vital undertaking made possible by the New Mexico Economic Development Department's Local Economic Assistance & Development Support (LEADS) grant, and the participation of the local businesses in and around the communities of Questa, New Mexico.

This comprehensive report reflects the valuable insights gleaned by actively engaging with over forty-five Questa businesses through one-on-one interviews, in-person surveys, personal site visits, as well as the feedback provided in the Rate Questa Survey.

The willingness to openly share their experiences and perspectives about their businesses' unique challenges, pressing concerns, and notable successes has been truly invaluable.

I want to extend my appreciation to QEDF Director Lynn Skall and Questa Business Retention and Expansion Coordinator Monique Parker, whose dedicated efforts in conducting these interviews and surveys and meticulously compiling and analyzing the data have been instrumental in making this report possible and this information available for the community.

As we present these findings, clear priorities emerge: Questa must tackle its housing crisis, cultivate a robust local workforce, further diversify business offerings, and foster stronger community support for local businesses, leveraging the community's inherent strengths for future prosperity.

The Questa Economic Development Fund remains steadfast in our commitment to collaborating with our regional partners to support and nurture our local businesses and communities. We believe this report serves as a crucial roadmap in guiding our collective efforts towards a future that ensures continued diversity, growth, and sustainability for Questa.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Malaquias Rael'.

Malaquias Rael, Jr.

Board Chair

Questa Economic Development Fund

mvr@QuestaEDF.com



■ QBRE PROJECT TEAM



The QBRE project team coordinated community outreach, conducted confidential business interviews and the Rate Questa Survey,, addressed organizational successes and challenges, communicated available business resources and funding opportunities, collected and organized the data, identified trends and areas of key needs, and summarized the findings into this final report.



LYNN SKALL
Director

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MONIQUE PARKER
QBRE Coordinator

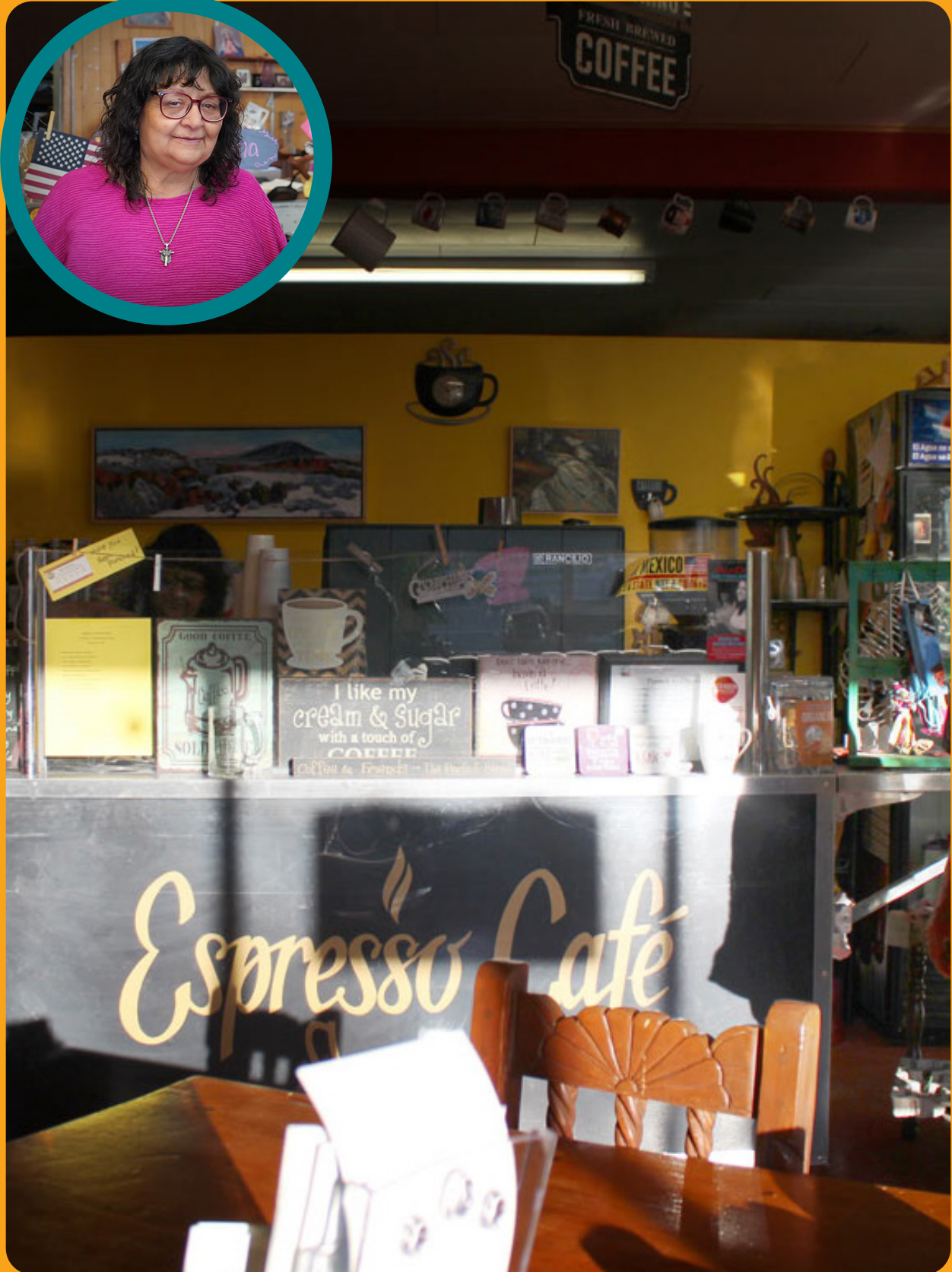
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QBRE PROJECT PARTNERS



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Rael's Market & Coffee Shop



■ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key findings from the QBRE project highlight the foundational role of small, often single-employee, micro-businesses in the Questa area's economy. A critical need exists to expand the local labor pool and enhance workforce development, significantly hampered by a lack of available and affordable housing. Business growth is further challenged by local spending habits and the limited variety of businesses and services, which restricts the attraction of a broader consumer base.

Despite these hurdles, a strong community spirit is pervasive, with generally positive perceptions of the local business climate, and substantial opportunities exist for new businesses and services. However, broader community issues—such as lack of public parks, childcare, and youth activities, alongside underlying concerns about social challenges like substance abuse—impact overall quality of life and impede economic growth potential.

■ BACKGROUND

PROJECT PURPOSE

The Questa Business Retention and Expansion (QBRE) project is designed to strengthen the local economy by supporting the growth and success of existing businesses. Through open dialogue, increased collaboration, identifying and addressing obstacles to growth, the project connects businesses with strategic resources and opportunities to help them thrive. As the first step in building a more competitive and economically resilient community, QBRE lays the groundwork for long-term prosperity.

The insights and findings gathered through this effort will serve as a valuable resource for local businesses and com-

munity leaders, guiding strategic future decision-making and helping to prioritize initiatives that support Questa's continued economic development.

OVERVIEW

The QBRE project was spearheaded by the Questa Economic Development Fund (QEDF) and funded by a Local Economic Assistance & Development Support (LEADS) grant from the New Mexico Economic Development Department (NM EDD).

QEDF recognizes that vitality and variety in local businesses are essential for Questa's economic growth, stability, job creation, and a strong tax base. The QBRE project served to build stronger relationships with business owners, enabling an understanding of their operations — both challenges and aspirations — and the opportunity to provide individualized assistance and connect them with crucial resources for growth.

Through confidential interviews, site visits, and a Rate Questa Survey, essential data was gathered on local business conditions and community services. The findings are compiled into this report.

METHODOLOGY

Between August 2024 and May 2025, the QBRE project team connected with over 45 local stakeholders, including business owners, Village of Questa council members and staff. Data collection involved individual outreach and in-person interviews with 32 business owners and key management personnel, along with company site visits. The diverse sample included 7 employers with 7 or more employees, 25 micro-business (6 or less employees) of which 14 were sole proprietors, across a broad representation of key industries.

The Rate Questa Survey was administered to 15 additional businesses, contributing to a total of 47 business survey respondents. Responses were also collected from all 5 Questa Village council members and 2 staff personnel, providing a multi-faceted view of the local business environment.

It's important to note that the focus was exclusively on independently-owned local businesses; the project did not include regional utility services, corporate-owned companies (such as Chevron, Granite, and Entact), the area's only two chain stores (Dollar General and Family Dollar), or Questa's regionally owned Health Center, Presbyterian Medical Services.

UNDERSTANDING QUESTA'S ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The Village of Questa, New Mexico is located in northern Taos County at the intersection of State Highways 522 and 38, at the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. It serves as a central hub for the surrounding smaller communities, including Amalia, Cerro, Costilla, El Rito, Lama, San Cristobal, and Sunshine Valley.

Questa itself is home to approximately 1,797 residents ranking 89th in population among New Mexico's 106 municipalities. While the surrounding communities are smaller in population (El Rito's population was 961 and Amalia's around 213 at last census count), they share deep historical and cultural connections with Questa, often relying on the municipality for services, thus forming a broader economic and social region.

Historically, the Questa area was traditionally an agriculture-based economy. In 1916, Questa's molybdenum mine opened, providing hundreds of diverse, well-paying jobs for the region. There was an expectation that the next generation would begin their tenure at the mine immediately upon graduation from high school.

Although the mine experienced market fluctuations throughout the 20th century, it remained the dominant employer and economic force in the region until 2014, when after almost 100 years, the mine closed permanently due to a lack of demand and international competition for molybdenum.

Currently, the largest employers in the area are the international corporations associated with the mine's environmental reclamation project, a long-term initiative that will continue into the second half of the 21st century.

As of the date of this report, there are 74 registered businesses within the Village of Questa. Much of the current business activity remains rooted in long-standing, legacy family operations. The local workforce currently stands at 843 employed individuals. Economically, the region is further characterized by residents commuting to nearby Taos and Red River to shop and for more job opportunities.

Demographically, Questa has a median age of 52 years, which is notably higher than the state average of 39. Over 81% of its residents are Hispanic, reflecting a shared cultural heritage with the surrounding communities. The village also boasts a high homeownership rate of 83%, well above the New Mexico average of 70%, with a median property value of \$225,300 in 2023. While the median household income is around \$41,071, the poverty rate is approximately 11%. There is a high cost of living to income ratio.

The Questa Economic Development Fund (QEDF) is collaborating with many local area partners to support new and existing businesses to create new jobs and build a sustainable, diverse economy. The area is seeing the emergence of many new businesses, such as a handmade furniture store, a hair salon, an alterations service, a cannabis dispensary, local honey production, an adobe brick manufacturer, thrift shops, and a telehealth travel nurse, signifying a broadening of the local commercial sectors.

Questa, along with its neighboring villages, demonstrates a strong collective commitment to strategic economic growth.

Source: 2020 & 2023 U.S. Census Bureau



Taos Bakes



STATISTICS

In the 2023 Census, Questa, NM had a population of 1,797 people with a median age of 52.7 and a median household income of \$41,071. The employed population in 2023 was 843 and the poverty rate was 11%.

The 5 largest ethnic groups in Questa, NM are White Hispanic (54.3%), Other Hispanic (21.5%), White (Non-Hispanic) (16.1%), Two+ Hispanic (5.54%), and Asian (Non-Hispanic) (1.8%).

97.9% of the residents in Questa, NM are U.S. citizens.

In 2023, the median property value in Questa, NM was \$225,300, and the homeownership rate was 82.6%.





Sangre de Cristo Valley Market

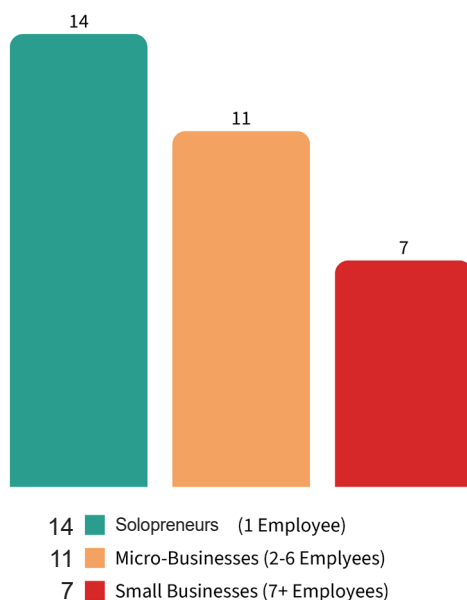
THE FINDINGS

Questa business conditions are impacted by workforce dynamics, operational challenges, and unique market and community factors. While significant hurdles exist, notable opportunities for growth are also present. When asked what Questa could use in terms of additional businesses or services, several areas of opportunity were identified, indicating a general desire for increased economic vibrancy and diversification.

COMPOSITION OF INDEPENDENTLY-OWNED BUSINESSES

Questa's businesses reflect a variety of sizes, industries, and tenure. The QBRE sample included 7 employers with 7 or more employees, 25 micro-businesses (defined as having fewer than six employees), with 14 of those being sole proprietors. The participating businesses represented a variety of key industries, such as food service, food production, construction, retail, agriculture, personal care services, manufacturing, outdoor recreation, creative industries, and healthcare.

NUMBER OF SMALL BUSINESSES, MICRO-BUSINESSES, & SOLO ENTREPRENEUR PARTICIPANTS



BUSINESS TENURE & FACILITY OWNERSHIP

Questa's business landscape shows a mix of long-standing establishments and recent entrepreneurial growth. Half of the businesses interviewed have been operating for five years or more, with 11 of those active for over a decade. This includes two businesses that have been open for 20 years and one for 33 years, indicating a solid foundation of established enterprises. Concurrently, the other half of the businesses are relatively new, having been in existence for under five years. Of these, 5 of the businesses are start-ups within the last 18 months, which shows recent entrepreneurial activity in the community.

Regarding business properties, operational premises vary. Nine businesses own their commercial buildings, while eight rent or lease their spaces. The largest group, however, comprises 15 businesses that operate directly from personal residences.

CLIENTELE & MARKET REACH

Questa businesses boast a diverse customer base that extends beyond the immediate local area. Eighteen businesses report that roughly half their customers are local residents from Questa and the surrounding communities.

Beyond local support, businesses also attract significant regional and tourist clientele:

- **Regional Customers:** Thirteen businesses serve customers from Red River (12 miles east) and the many communities around the 84-mile Enchanted Circle. Eleven specifically mentioned they draw their clientele from Taos, 24 miles south of Questa.
- **Tourism:** Ten businesses directly cater to tourists, highlighting Questa's appeal as a destination.
- **Broader Reach:** Three businesses attract out-of-state customers, and several businesses draw clientele from Southern Colorado's San Luis Valley (38 miles north of Questa).

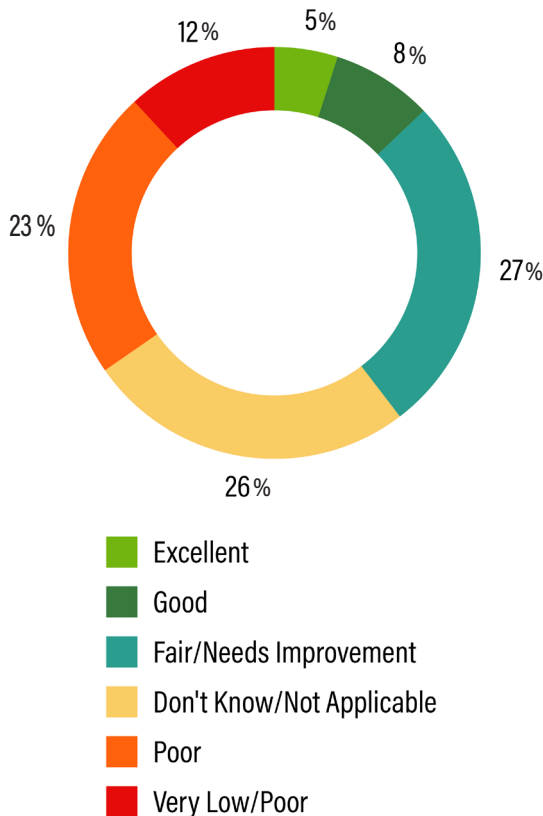
Notably, some businesses serve specialized or non-local markets: Two businesses cater to contractors or local companies, and five businesses report their entire customer base is from outside the immediate Questa area. This indicates Questa's capacity to provide specialized goods or services that attract a broader market.

WORKFORCE CHARACTERISTICS & CHALLENGES

A key finding is that 14 of the 32 businesses surveyed operate with just one employee, reporting that many are too small to afford additional staff and struggle to dedicate time to vital administrative tasks like funding pursuits, professional development, bookkeeping, and marketing. Questa businesses are primarily categorized as small or micro; for example, the two largest independently owned employers have only 10 - 12 staff, with one including five family members. Additionally, 13 businesses rely on seasonal employees, and 10 depend entirely on family members.

Looking ahead, two businesses need to replace recently lost employees. Nine plan to hire more seasonal or part-time staff for the busier summer season, with several expressing difficulty, specifically finding younger workers. Five businesses noted a perceived lack of work ethic or disinterest in trades among youth.

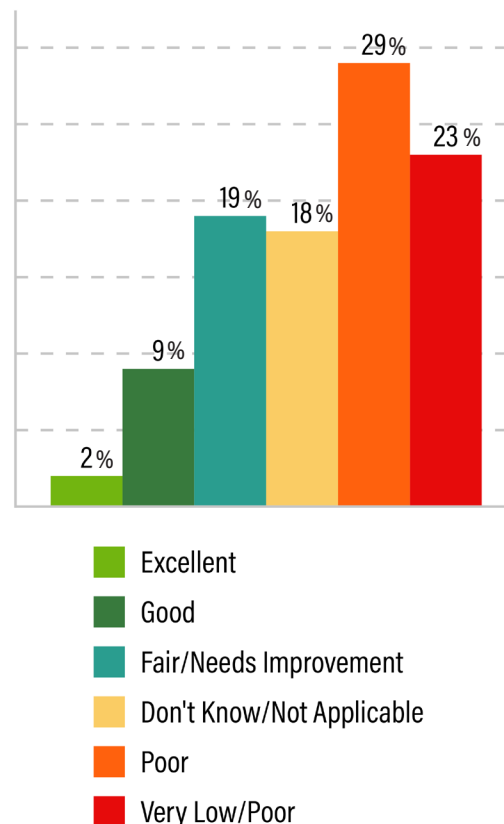
RATING THE AVAILABILITY OF FINDING & KEEPING QUALITY EMPLOYEES



The biggest challenges in finding and retaining employees stem from several factors:

- The scarcity of available labor is stark, with businesses reporting a non-existent skilled and even non-skilled workforce in the area, and a common lament that people “simply do not want to work.” This leads to excessive competition for a limited talent pool. The seasonal worker pool is even more severely impacted.
- Many employees seek better-paying work in neighboring Taos or Red River, or pursue opportunities with the local national companies, such as Granite, working at the mine.
- The issue extends to the younger generation, with observations that young people are less inclined to work, and some local workforce members are unable to pass drug tests.
- Most small local businesses cannot offer employee benefits (e.g., health insurance, retirement plans) due to slim profit margins, further hindering retention.
- The severe housing shortage makes it exceptionally difficult to attract new workers.

RATING THE AVAILABILITY & COST OF HOUSING FOR RENT OR PURCHASE

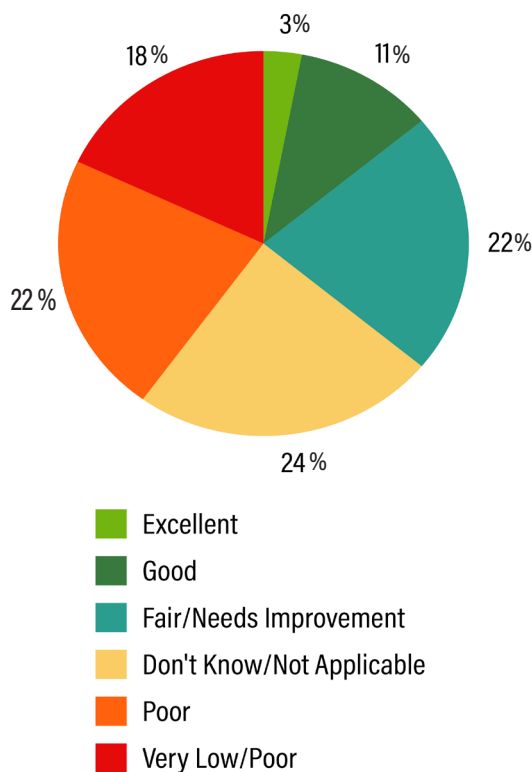


- Five businesses report high employee tenure for some roles, but still experience high turnover in many positions due to transient lifestyles, personal issues, desires for higher pay, or lack of willingness to work.

Although hiring for all positions is a challenge, the hardest jobs to fill include skilled mechanics (especially with electric car knowledge), computer/marketing professionals, bookkeepers, hair stylists, and truck drivers with CDL certifications. Two businesses state that all roles are difficult to fill, and one struggles to provide comprehensive training across product lines and services due to staffing shortages.

Businesses find employees through various channels: Questa High School, *Questa del Rio News* and/or *The Taos News* classifieds, Facebook, Craigslist, and many rely on word-of-mouth. While some family-run businesses face succession planning challenges, others are successfully navigating these transitions by investing in training and certification for younger generations. However, businesses largely perceive the local availability and quality of trades training, certifications, and apprenticeships as a significant challenge, with most finding them either insufficient or in need of substantial improvement, and a notable portion expressing unfamiliarity with available programs.

RATING THE AVAILABILITY OF TRADES TRAINING, CERTIFICATIONS & APPRENTICESHIPS



The average hourly wage ranges from \$11.50 - \$18 per hour, with the median wage of \$15 per hour. The majority of businesses with staff do not offer comprehensive benefits. While a few provide health insurance options where employees can pay to participate, only one covers 60% of health and dental insurance, and only four businesses offer paid time off. These limited benefits contribute to finding and keeping employees.

OPERATIONAL & SUPPLY CHAIN IMPEDIMENTS

Beyond staffing, a critical concern for 30% of businesses is “lack of time.” Owners often struggle to manage all aspects of their operations—such as bookkeeping, marketing, and phone calls—without adequate staff.

OTHER NOTABLE CHALLENGES INCLUDE:

- **Equipment Needs:** Four businesses require new equipment or repairs to existing machinery.
- **Supply Chain Issues:** Supply chain disruptions impact four businesses, leading to long delivery waits or frequent trips to Taos for parts and supplies. Resupply delays are significant, and ordering products often entails waiting weeks for arrival and paying higher shipping costs.
- **Market Fluctuations:** Two businesses noted a decrease in local patronage and two experienced slower periods since the pandemic. Several businesses experience slower winters, especially with a light snow year resulting in fewer winter tourists.
- **Expansion Challenges:** Broader growth is hampered for four businesses struggling to find suitable buildings or land for expansion. Four other businesses face unique challenges with existing, older premises that require significant upgrades and capital investment.
- **Economic Pressures:** High food costs affect three businesses, and while some suppliers deliver locally, it's often at a significant cost, squeezing margins.

There's also a need for Questa businesses to modernize. However, this is sometimes met with concern that it will adversely impact the strong traditional community heritage and culture. Growth may be hindered if modernization is resisted.

MARKET DYNAMICS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Questa businesses face a unique challenge regarding resident spending habits. A dozen business owners reported that many long-time Questa locals opt to go to Taos to shop, and some will drive up to 140 miles round trip to big box stores in Española, New Mexico, rather than spending money locally. This behavior directly impacts local sales and business vitality, leading to concerns that money is flowing out of town. There is an earnest plea for more locals to support locally owned establishments.

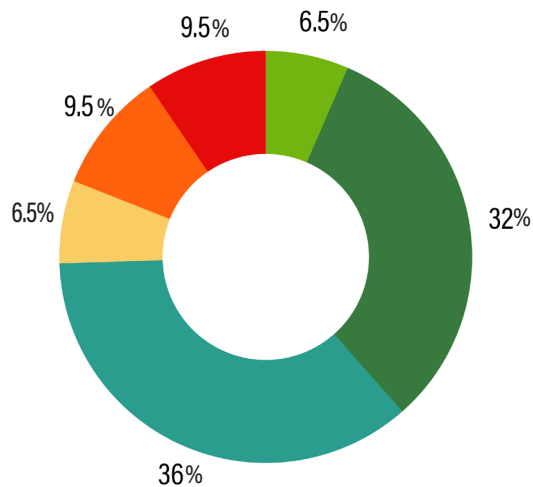
Reasons behind this pattern appear to stem from a complex mix of factors, including the perception of better deals or wider selections at larger stores, despite many local retailers expressing a willingness to place special orders.

Furthermore, many businesses identified community negativity as a hindrance, suggesting that a prevailing sentiment of “*envidia*”, meaning “envy” or “jealousy”, among some residents contributes to an unwillingness to support local establishments. Adding to these local challenges, one business also reported concern over local theft. In contrast, businesses consistently observe that “new” residents who have moved to Questa from out of town are generally supportive and prioritize shopping locally.

The limited customer base is a significant concern, with one business owner indicating that a substantial portion of their customers and contract work originates from Red River and Eagle’s Nest, with only approximately one-third coming from Questa itself. This highlights a perception of insufficient local population and customer traffic to sustain a wider array of businesses.

While existing businesses are generally well-regarded, the overall volume of customers is deemed inadequate, 36% of participants indicating a need for improvement and 19% rating it “poor,” suggesting potential market engagement challenges. This points to an insufficient and inconsistent customer base.

RATING THE QUALITY & VOLUME OF CUSTOMERS



- Excellent
- Good
- Fair/Needs Improvement
- Don't Know/Not Applicable
- Poor
- Very Low/Poor

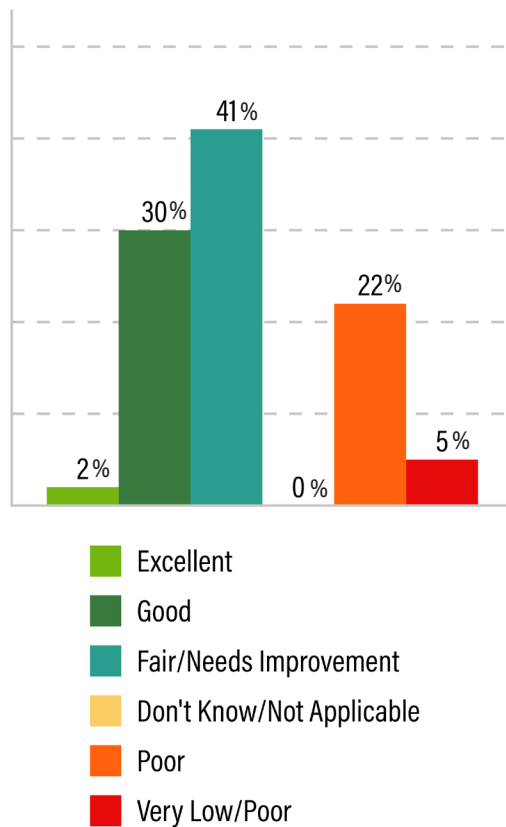


Yerba Cannabis Co.



There's a clear need for a greater variety of businesses, with specific suggestions like a local car wash; 22% of respondents rate the variety of businesses as "poor," indicating a need for economic diversification to enhance resilience and opportunities. The current variety is very limited, which correlates with the small population and the challenges presented by the convenience of online shopping. The sometimes sporadic operating hours of establishments often pose a challenge, and early closing times deter some customers.

RATING THE VARIETY OF BUSINESSES & SERVICES IN THE AREA



CarQuesta Auto Parts



KEY NEEDS FOR BUSINESS GROWTH

To boost their competitiveness and potential for growth, businesses identified crucial operating needs:

- **Physical Expansion:** Seven businesses highlighted the importance of physical expansion, detailing desires for more land for production, dedicated shop space for equipment/trucks, or the ability to remodel existing facilities and add features like restrooms, storage, or a loading dock.
- **Premises Ownership:** Three businesses expressed a strong preference for owning their premises instead of renting.
- **Operational Tools:** Five businesses cited a need for new equipment (storage units, freezers, grills, trucks), while two others would benefit from new software integration or Point-of-Sale (POS) systems.
- **Human Capital:** Five businesses indicated a demand for more skilled, part-time, or youth employees. Additionally, three businesses noted that available childcare would enable them to work more, and two sought a bookkeeper or accounting help.
- **Customer Growth:** Five businesses emphasized attracting more clients or a larger supporting population, with four explicitly requesting help with marketing and advertising or more time for these efforts.
- **Operational Efficiency:** Eleven businesses believed better time management would improve operations.
- **Business Signage:** Four businesses identified a need for proper signage to enhance visibility, but lack sufficient funds to invest in this improvement.

EXPANDING BUSINESS & RETAIL OPPORTUNITIES

A significant number of businesses expressed a desire for more overall business activity and a greater variety of businesses in Questa, noting the current difficulty in finding essential items locally. Specific suggestions include:

- A local car wash, with a suggestion for a potential site across from the Questa VFW. It was noted that the Village could invest in this to generate revenue and enhance town beautification.
- Strong interest in another 5 - 10 shops in the Questa Business Park, with a broader vision to diversify the economy by developing these spaces into usable offices.
- The recent establishment of a new cannabis dispensary and other new retail outlets is seen as a positive for additional tax dollars for town improvements.
- There's demand for retail options like a boutique or clothing store.
- Service-wise, ideas included meeting facilitation, a women's business networking group, a spa or wellness center, and a quick lube service.
- A conference center for community events and meetings was also mentioned.

DIVERSIFYING DINING & FOOD OPTIONS

There is a strong sentiment for more restaurant variety in Questa, with current local establishments sometimes perceived as expensive. There's a desire for more diverse and healthy food choices, including suggestions for Thai or Asian cuisine, and restaurants offering organic food. Respondents expressed they would dine out more frequently if a greater range of culinary options were available. A pizza place and a fast-food Dairy Queen were also specifically mentioned.

OVERVIEW OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

The presence of financial services is generally viewed positively. The Questa Credit Union is highly regarded for its community support, including free tax assistance. There's a desire for more financial institutions in town, with specific mention for Centinel Bank to return to Questa.

ENHANCING VISITOR ACCOMMODATIONS

Several businesses stressed the need for a new hotel in town. Current overnight accommodations are minimal to non-existent, with short-term rentals often described as old-fashioned and costly, and the only other options being RV parks. There is consensus that a new hotel would better attract and serve tourists and out-of-town visitors, especially for high school sports and other events.

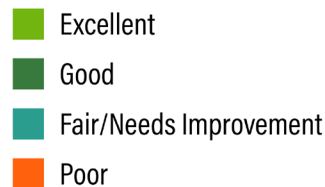
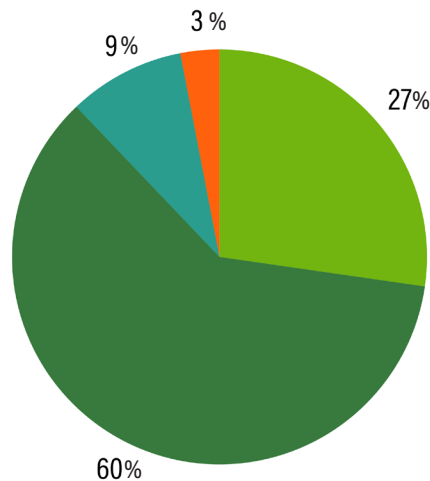


QuestaAdobe

IMPROVING COMMUNITY AMENITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE

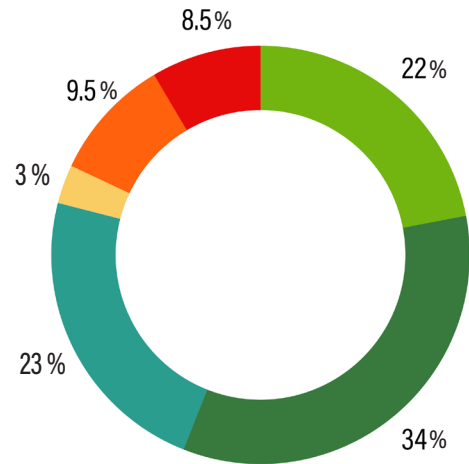
While many businesses expressed the need for new resources, 27% rated Questa's quality of life as "excellent", and 60% as "good". One respondent felt the town was good as it is, and others praised existing assets like the Questa Library and the Questa Business Bridge.

RATING THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE



- To cater to younger residents, a dedicated place for kids and teenagers was suggested, potentially including a skateboard park or splash park; a dog park was also mentioned.
- Business owners specifically emphasized the need to enhance the quality of Questa's parks and open spaces, and to further diversify outdoor recreation opportunities. There is also a call for much-needed public restrooms.

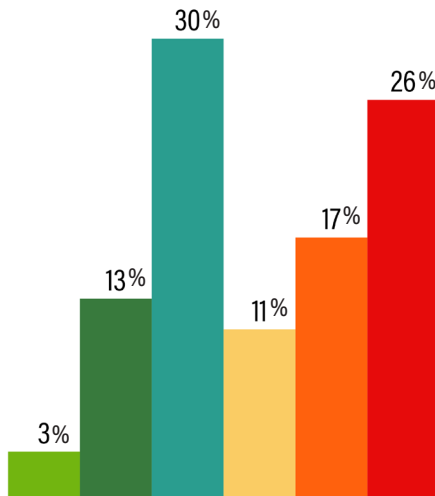
RATING THE QUALITY OF PARKS, OPEN SPACES & RECREATION



- Businesses also like to see more promotion of area activities in town, such as fishing and hunting and highlighting the recreational opportunities available in the nearby Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. More promotion will encourage visitors to stop and explore local attractions.
- A dedicated community or conference center was identified as a needed resource, envisioned as a versatile space for local events and meetings.
- The ease of doing business in Questa is also largely positive (40% "good," 8% "excellent"), pointing to a generally accommodating environment. However, despite this overall positive sentiment, 33% of respondents believe the ease of doing business "needs improvement," suggesting areas for streamlining or enhanced efficiency.
- Respondents consistently conveyed that Questa is overall a great place to live and work, reinforcing a strong community spirit.

IMPROVING COMMUNITY AMENITIES & QUALITY OF LIFE (CONT'D)

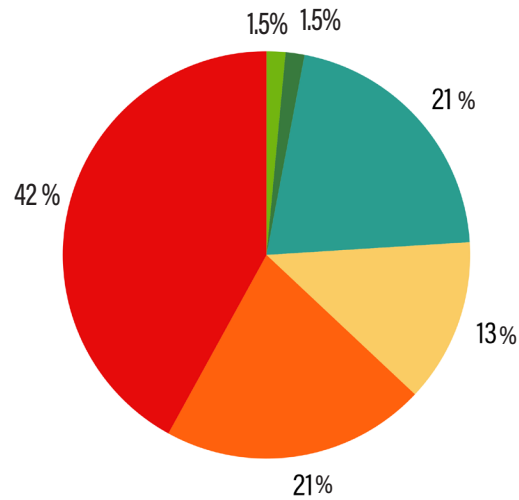
RATING THE QUALITY OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES



- Excellent
- Good
- Fair/Needs Improvement
- Don't Know/Not Applicable
- Poor
- Very Low/Poor

- There is a strong and recognized demand for expanded local childcare services to support working families.
- Strengthening basic pedestrian infrastructure like sidewalks, crosswalks, and walking trails was frequently mentioned to enhance safety and access for all residents, from youth to elders.
- Respondents expressed deep concern regarding the prevalence of substance abuse in the community. A significant majority of businesses rated the local drug situation as poor or very poor, highlighting it as a critical social challenge impacting overall well-being and requiring urgent attention.

RATING THE LOCAL SUBSTANCE ABUSE SITUATION



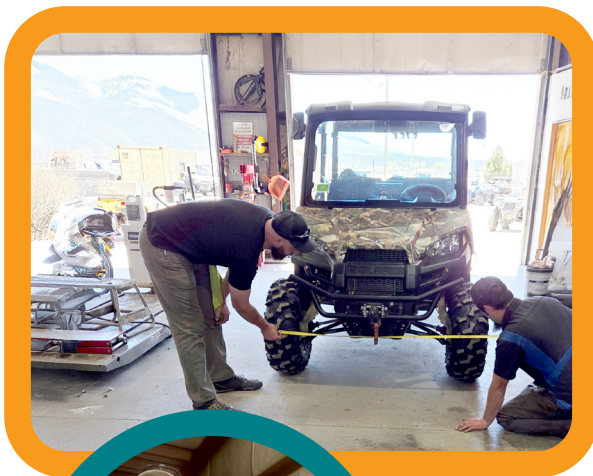
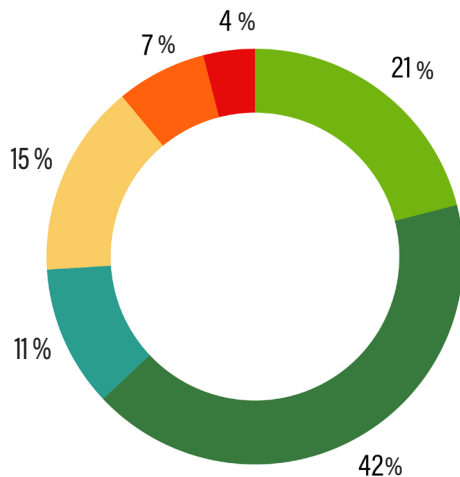
- Excellent
- Good
- Fair/Needs Improvement
- Don't Know/Not Applicable
- Poor
- Very Low/Poor

- While the feedback on the *Questa del Rio News* and its coverage was overwhelmingly positive, some suggestions emerged that the newspaper could enhance its role in community health and drug awareness.
- Many businesses had a positive view of the community's emergency services, while a smaller portion indicated a need for improvement.



Furniture Barn

RATING THE QUALITY OF LOCAL EMERGENCY SERVICES (EMT, FIRE, POLICE)

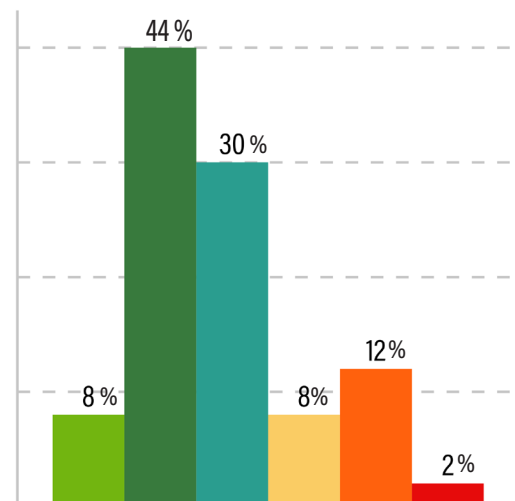


J&L Powersports

LEVERAGING COMMUNITY STRENGTHS & POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS

Despite identified challenges, a strong foundation of positive perceptions exists within Questa's business community, indicating significant opportunities for collaboration and growth.

RATING THE OVERALL BUSINESS CLIMATE



- A majority of respondents (44% good, 8% excellent) hold a positive view of Questa's general business climate, suggesting a resilient environment for commerce.
- Business license costs stand out as a significant strength, with an overwhelming 96% rating them as "excellent" (52%) or "good" (44%), indicating favorable initial administrative costs.
- Regulations and permitting are largely viewed positively (48% "good").
- The cost of doing business is generally seen favorably (40% good, 8% excellent), though 33% see room for improvement.



Yoga Sala



CONCLUSION

The Questa Business Retention and Expansion Project unveils a complex yet resilient economic landscape in Questa. Characterized by a prevalence of long-standing family-owned businesses and a predominance of micro-businesses, the community is actively navigating the transition from a mine-dependent economy towards diverse new sectors.

Businesses benefit from a strong local identity and a community widely regarded as a great place to live and work. However, significant challenges persist. Foremost among these are critical workforce issues, including the difficulty of recruiting and retaining talent due to higher-paying wages elsewhere, a lack of available local labor, compounded by Questa's severe housing crisis. Operational hurdles related to owner time management, supply chain complexities, and the need for facility upgrades further constrain growth.

Critically, a significant outflow of local spending, with many Questa residents opting to shop at larger regional stores, undermines the vitality of local establishments. This challenge is amplified by internal community dynamics, including a perceived “*envidia*”, meaning “envy” or “jealousy”, reflected in a general lack of support for local ventures. With a limited variety of businesses, the urgent need for strategies that reinforce local patronage and enhance Questa's appeal as a destination are more important than ever.

Despite these challenges, considerable opportunities abound. Businesses express the need for physical expansion, modern equipment, and targeted marketing support. There is strong demand for a greater variety of retail, dining, and service options, including a new hotel to boost visitors' overnight stays and a desire for improved community amenities like childcare, youth-focused facilities, and the development of a conference center.

As a direct result of this project's implementation, Questa businesses are increasingly engaging with available support and are pursuing and implementing the QBRE recommended strategic resources, including applying for grants and leveraging state-funded community programs.

The proactive efforts of organizations such as the Questa Economic Development Fund, the Village of Questa, and committed regional partners provide a strong foundation for continued community improvement, business growth, and expansion. The insights and data presented in this report will help inform strategic decision-making and guide the prioritization of future initiatives. With these collective efforts, Questa is well-positioned for long-term, sustainable economic resilience and an enhanced quality of life for all residents and businesses.

■ APPENDIX

EXHIBIT A

32 Businesses that participated in the QBRE Interview, Rate Questa Survey, and/or Facility Site Visit:

Bella's Nails
Cabresto Cabins
CarQuesta Auto Parts
Dan Frank Digital Design
Eagle Rock Mechanical
Empowered by You
Eternal Cuts
GG's Cakes
Groundbreaking Excavation
J&L Powersports
Maes, Brittany, Associate Real Estate Broker
Mind Your Gut
Northstar Tire & Auto
Northern Designs
QuestAdobe
Questa Bees
Questa Lumber & Hardware
Rael's Market & Coffee Shop
Roots & Herbs Farm
Rosie's Smokehouse
Sage Automatic Systems
Salls, William J., NP
Salon Del Sol
Sangre de Cristo Valley Market
Sew Artful
Sierra Hermosa RV Park
Taos Bakes
Thrift de Questa
Tru Adventure Outfitters
Wildcat's Den
Yerba Cannabis Co.
Yoga Sala

22 Businesses/Representatives that Completed the Rate Questa Survey:

ArtQuesta
Bright Rain Counseling
Cerro Vista Farm
Cutting Edge Excavation
Enchanted Circle Auto Lock
Furniture Barn
Gallegos, Donald,
Attorney at Law
Green Meadow Roofing
JB & Co Auto Repair
Milagro Micaceous
Sangre de Cristo Hotel
Shiloh Valley Outfitters
The Grill at El Monte Carlo
Topped Out Plumbing
Wilson's Tree Service

7 Village of Questa Representatives:

Mayor, John Ortega
Council Member,
Louise Gallegos
Council Member,
Jason Gonzalez
Council Member,
Katrina Gonzales
Council Member,
Brent Jaramillo
Village Administrator,
Karen Quintana Shannon
Village Project Manager,
Jacob LaFore



EXHIBIT B

QBRE Interview Questions

Date of Interview: _____

Name of QBRE: _____

Business Name: _____

Physical Address: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Website Address: _____

Social Networking (list all): _____

Hours of Operation: _____

Is Your business seasonal? ☐ Yes ☐ No

No. of Full time employees (including owner) _____

No. of Part time employees (including owner) _____

No. of Seasonal employees _____

No. of Contracted employees _____

Main Phone Number: _____

Contact: _____ Title: _____

Fill in all info & check preferred form of contact:

☐ Office Phone: ☐ Cell ☐ Text: ☐ Email:

How long at this company: _____

Preferred Method of contact: _____

☐ Office Phone: ☐ Cell ☐ Text: ☐ Email: _____

Other: _____

Circle your NAICS Code Specifically Describe Your Product/Service:

11 - Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting

21 - Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction

22 - Utilities

23 - Construction

31 - Manufacturing (food, beverage, etc.)

32 - Manufacturing (wood, paper, etc.)

33 - Manufacturing (primary/fabricated metal, etc.)

42 - Wholesale Trade

44 - Retail Trade, (motor vehicle, furniture, etc.)

45 - Retail Trade (sporting goods, book, music, etc.)

48 - Transportation and Warehousing (air, rail, truck, etc.)

49 - Transportation and Warehousing (postal service, couriers, etc.)

51 - Information

52 - Finance and Insurance

53 - Real Estate, Rental and Leasing

54 - Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services

55 - Management of Companies and Enterprises

56 - Administrative & Support, Waste Management
& Remediation Services

61 - Educational Services

62 - Health Care and Social Assistance

71 - Arts, Entertainment and Recreation

72 - Accommodation and Food Services

81 - Other Services (except Public Administration)

92 - Public Administration

Do you have a business license with the Village of Questa?

If the owner of the company does not manage or operate the business, list owner's name and their contact info:

Who are your customers?

What are the greatest challenges that affect your business and operations?

What would make your company more competitive/successful?

What are you pleased about that you have implemented that has made your business more successful?

What other business/services do you think the community needs or that you would like to see established?

Do you own/lease your building?

Are you interested in purchasing your property?

What is preventing you from purchasing your space?

What other economic development initiatives would you like to see implemented that would improve the business climate/community:

What changes do you anticipate for your workforce in the next 6 months?

What is your biggest challenge in finding/keeping employees?

What are the most common reasons employees leave?

What are your hardest job positions to fill and why?

How do you find new employees?

What is the current average wage range paid to your workers?

What benefits do you offer your employees?

How long is the average employee's tenure at your company?

What is your company's annual gross income?

\$0-\$100k _____ \$100k-\$249k _____ \$250k-\$499k _____

\$500k-\$999k _____ \$1mil-\$3mil _____ \$3mil-\$5mil _____

\$10mil+ _____ Prefer not to answer _____

What do you feel has the most impact on your business revenues?

What do you feel is the outlook for your industry in the state?

Is your current facility adequate for your future operations for the next 2-3 years?

Do you currently have expansion plans?

What do you feel are the biggest obstacles to implementing expansion plans for your business?

Is your business currently experiencing barriers or challenges to technology needs?

Is there new technology you're aware of that could benefit your business operations and/or product lines?

Are you planning to invest in this new technology?

How do you advertise/promote your business?

If you do not already have a website would you be interested in one?

If no, please explain why not.

Do you have any additional comments?

Follow-Up Action Items for QBRE Team:

EXHIBIT C

Rate Questa Survey Findings & Detailed Stakeholder Feedback

This appendix presents the quantified results of the Rate Questa Survey and compiles detailed stakeholder feedback excerpts, providing both statistical insights and qualitative depth. The information gathered is input from 48 local respondents, including 41 businesses and 5 Questa Village council members and 2 Village personnel. The Rate Questa Survey evaluated the community across key areas: Overall Business Climate, Cost of Living, Community Services, Education, and Quality of Life.

Findings reveal a business environment with notable strengths, yet balanced by significant challenges, particularly concerning workforce and market dynamics. The feedback highlights the need for targeted strategies to support Questa's economic vitality, reflected in verbatim comments from surveyed businesses when ratings were indicated as "low" or "very low."

Rate Questa Survey

RATE THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS AND QUALITY OF LIFE FACTORS:

1=Excellent/High 2=Good 3=Fair/Needs Improvement 4=Don't Know or Not Applicable 5=Poor 6=Very Poor/Low

	1	2	3	4	5	6	# Of Responses
General Business							
General Business Climate	8.3%	43.8%	31.3%	0%	14.6%	2%	48 responses
Variety of Businesses/Services in Area	1.6%	30.4%	41.3%	0%	21.7%	5%	46 responses
Cost of Doing Business	8.3%	37.5%	33.3%	4.2%	16.7%	0%	48 responses
Ease of Doing Business	8.3%	39.6%	33.3%	4.2%	10.4%	4.2%	48 responses
Quality/Volume of Customers	6.4%	31.9%	36.2%	6.4%	19.1%	0%	47 responses
Availability/Quality of Workforce	6.2%	8.3%	29.2%	25%	18.8%	12.5%	48 responses
Finding/Retaining Employees	2.1%	8.3%	25%	27.1%	27.1%	10.4%	48 responses
Competitive Wage Rates	8.3%	25%	22.9%	22.9%	12.5%	8.4%	48 responses
Quality of Employee Benefits	0%	10.4%	29.2%	41.7%	10.4%	8.3%	48 responses
Availability of Products/Raw Materials	8.3%	31.3%	27.1%	8.3%	18.8%	6.2%	48 responses
Business Regulations/Permitting	4.3%	47.8%	17.4%	17.4%	10.9%	2.2%	46 responses
Cost of Business License	52.2%	43.5%	2.2%	2.1%	0%	0%	46 responses
Cost of Living							
Do you shop local for services/products?	YES	89.6%	NO	10.4%	-	-	48 responses
Housing/Rent	4.4%	8.9%	26.7%	22.2%	22.2%	15.6%	45 responses
Housing for Purchase	2%	12.5%	14.6%	18.8%	31.3%	20.8%	48 responses
Availability of Housing	0%	6.2%	14.6%	14.6%	33.3%	31.3%	48 responses
Buildings/Land	6.2%	6.2%	29.2%	22.9%	16.7%	18.8%	48 responses
Availability of Buildings/Land	4.2%	6.2%	33.3%	16.7%	18.8%	20.8%	48 responses
Landline Telephone	8.3%	35.4%	16.7%	35.4%	4.2%	0%	48 responses
Internet	25%	39.6%	18.8%	12.5%	2.1%	2%	48 responses
Electricity	22.9%	43.8%	20.8%	4.2%	4.2%	4.1%	48 responses
Natural Gas and/or Propane	16.7%	52.1%	25%	2%	4.2%	0%	48 responses

1=Excellent/High 2=Good 3=Fair/Needs Improvement 4=Don't Know or Not Applicable 5=Poor 6=Very Poor/Low

	1	2	3	4	5	6	# Of Responses
Water	12.5%	52.1%	16.7%	10.4%	6.3%	2%	48 responses
Waste and Trash Removal	12.5%	47.9%	29.2%	2.1%	4.2%	4.1%	48 responses
Insurance (Health, Vehicle, Home)	2%	25%	35.4%	12.5%	18.8%	6.3%	48 responses
Fuel (Gas/Diesel)	6.3%	39.6%	39.6%	0%	10.4%	4.1%	48 responses
Groceries	4.2%	52.1%	31.3%	0%	10.4%	2%	48 responses
Property Taxes	8.3%	35.4%	29.2%	8.3%	12.5%	6.3%	48 responses
Community Services							
Village of Questa Governance	8.3%	45.8%	20.8%	14.6%	6.3%	4.2%	48 responses
Planning/Zoning/Developmental Services	0%	17.4%	23.9%	30.4%	26.1%	2.2%	46 responses
Motor Vehicle Department	8.7%	52.2%	15.2%	8.7%	6.5%	8.7%	46 responses
Police	15.2%	37%	19.6%	13%	10.9%	4.3%	46 responses
Fire Protection	22.9%	39.6%	10.4%	16.7%	6.3%	4.1%	48 responses
Emergency Medical Services	25%	47.9%	4.2%	14.6%	4.2%	4.1%	48 responses
Healthcare Facilities	14.6%	35.4%	22.9%	12.5%	8.3%	6.3%	48 responses
Mental Health Services	4.1%	18.8%	12.5%	43.8%	12.5%	8.3%	48 responses
Access to Prescriptions	18.8%	47.9%	14.6%	8.3%	8.3%	2.1%	48 responses
Social Services	2.1%	16.7%	18.8%	33.3%	20.8%	8.3%	48 responses
Child Care Services	2.2%	8.3%	12.5%	37.5%	18.7%	20.8%	48 responses
Senior Services	2.1%	25%	22.9%	29.2%	10.4%	10.4%	48 responses
Community Facilities	2.2%	13%	30.4%	10.9%	17.4%	26.1%	46 responses
Availability of City Utilities (Sewer, water, etc.)	10.4%	43.7%	25%	18.8%	0%	2.1%	48 responses
Availability of Other Utilities (Cell, TV, Internet, Landline phone, etc.)	15.2%	65.2%	6.4%	8.7%	2.3%	2.2%	46 responses
Financial Institutions	18.8%	47.9%	18.8%	4.1%	6.3%	4.1%	48 responses
Access to and Availability of Contractors (Plumbers, Building, Etc.)	4.3%	27.7%	29.8%	4.2%	25.5%	8.5%	47 responses
Public Library	37.5%	39.6%	8.3%	14.6%	0%	0%	48 responses
Questa del Rio Newspaper	46.8%	40.4%	6.4%	4.3%	0%	2.1%	47 responses
Access to Supplies (Repair parts, building materials, etc.)	16.7%	58.3%	20.8%	0%	4.2%	0%	48 responses
Education							
Public Schools	6.3%	25%	27.1%	27.1%	10.4%	4.1%	48 responses
Private Schools	4.3%	12.8%	17%	59.6%	2.1%	4.2%	47 responses
Home School Support	2.1%	6.3%	20.8%	68.8%	0%	2%	48 responses
After School Programs	2.1%	14.6%	10.4%	47.9%	16.7%	8.3%	48 responses
Higher Education	6.3%	25%	29.2%	29.2%	8.3%	2%	48 responses
Trades Training and Certifications	2.1%	10.4%	25%	25%	18.8%	18.7%	48 responses
Apprenticeships	4.2%	12.5%	18.7%	22.9%	25%	16.7%	48 responses

EXHIBIT C (CONT'D)

1=Excellent/High 2=Good 3=Fair/Needs Improvement 4=Don't Know or Not Applicable 5=Poor 6=Very Poor/Low

	1	2	3	4	5	6	# Of Responses
Quality of Life							
Overall Quality of Life	271%	60.4%	8.3%	0%	4.2%	0%	48 responses
Cleanliness of Town	2.2%	34.8%	34.8%	0%	19.6%	8.6%	46 responses
Parks & Open Spaces	8.3%	271%	29.2%	6.3%	16.7%	12.4%	48 responses
Outdoor Recreation	35.4%	41.7%	16.7%	0%	2.1%	4.1%	48 responses
Crime Rate	0%	16.7%	41.7%	10.3%	16.7%	14.6%	48 responses
Substance Abuse Rate	2.1%	2.1%	20.8%	12.5%	20.8%	41.7%	48 responses
Quality of Roads	6.2%	25%	41.7%	0%	14.6%	12.5%	48 responses
Traffic	20.8%	54.2%	18.8%	0%	4.2%	2%	48 responses
Places to Eat Out	4.2%	41.7%	37.5%	2.1%	12.5%	2%	48 responses

Customer Base & Competition

"More locals need to shop in locally-owned and operated establishments."

"Small local businesses like ours already operate on a slim marginal profit line; we cannot afford to take on additional expenses."

"If businesses are not making sales in Questa, it adversely affects local wages."

"The clientele in Questa generally cannot or do not want to pay competitive rates for my services."

"Customers in Questa often prefer less expensive, unlicensed handyman over licensed contractors like myself who face higher overhead like insurance."

"We service the Enchanted Circle since there are not enough customers in Questa."

"Our money is often going out of town to support other businesses instead of keeping it local."

Workforce Challenges

"There are too many employers competing for the same pool of employees in Questa."

"Potential employees will travel to Taos and Red River for better paying jobs."

"Businesses should pay more competitive wages and create a better work environment to retain their staff."

"Finding employees that want to work every day and care about their job is hard to find in Questa."

"Skilled and even non-skilled workforce is non-existent in our area."

"A lot of the local workforce can't pass a drug test."

"Most businesses do not offer employee benefits due to the high costs."

"Customer service is lacking, and the wait time for service is long."

"There's a lack of young people: they move away since there's nowhere to work or live."

Infrastructure & Supply Chain

"Some vendors deliver locally, but at a significant cost to businesses."

"Materials/products are difficult to obtain and require trips to Albuquerque or Santa Fe to restock supplies."

"Orders take weeks to arrive for installation, and the price is often higher for products due to shipping costs."

"The infrastructure for small businesses in Questa needs improvement."

"For businesses, it's hard to find commercial land or property."

Business & Operational Costs

"Insurance costs for businesses are too high."

"The cost of commercial electricity is too expensive; I pay a premium for the electricity for my business in Questa."

"Questa's GRT rate is too high; it is hard to make a profit because of this."

Trades & Contractors

"Expanding the range of specialty items and supplies in town, such as emergency water lines, would greatly benefit residents."

"Questa needs contractors: plumbers, electricians, etc.""

"It's hard to get local contractors to call you back or follow through."

"Contractors are difficult because they are either all booked up, or the younger generation is not getting into the trades."

"The contractors are too expensive; one charged \$450 to put antifreeze in my toilet."

"Contractors will go to where the higher paying jobs are outside of the area."

"The contractors are backed up 3-4 months; it's hard to get help."

"We face delays securing licensed contractors as many do not work in town."

"We spent thousands of dollars on a well, well equipment and labor; it was hard to find help to put the well in."

Economic Diversification & Opportunities

"Questa culture won't die—we have a strong community, but we won't grow if we don't modernize."

"The new dispensary will bring in tax dollars to help make improvements in town."

"I'd like to see another 5-10 shops in the Questa Business Park."

"It doesn't make sense to have a business park where you have to pay to put up the building and also pay rent once the structure is up."

"We need to diversify the economy with other businesses and turn the business park into usable office spaces."

"The variety of businesses in Questa is very limited, and it's hard to find items you need."

"Questa could use a local car wash."

"If they knocked things down across from the VFW, you could put in a car wash — we need one."

"The Village should invest in a car wash to make money for the village and invest in new sidewalks; the town needs beautification."

"The town needs a hotel to serve tourists and out-of-towners."

"Right now, the places visitors can stay in Questa, like the cabins, are often a bit old-fashioned and can cost a lot; what we really need is a new hotel in town."

Affordability & Income

"While Questa is more affordable than Taos or Red River, it's gotten expensive to live here."

"The cost of living is high to income ratio."

"Things are expensive in Questa and geared towards tourists."

"Questa's low-income families make it challenging to raise prices. Businesses require profits to expand."

"Property values have increased while wages have stayed the same."

Housing Availability & Cost

"Housing in Questa is a major problem: it's hard to attract and retain employees when they can't find local housing."

"Rents are crazy if you can find a place to live."

"There's no housing available; families sit on properties wanting high rates to sell or rent them."

"It looks like a lot of buildings and houses are not for sale or rent even though they are vacant."

"There are a lot of boarded up places, not just on the main road, but all around the community."

"It's possible one might luck out on a rental or an RV spot, but as far as moving into a house or apartment...if you have no family here, it may be difficult."

"Potential employees who want to move into the area can't find housing."

"Now that we have contractors working in Questa doing mine reclamation, they will pay a premium for a rental, so we cannot find a one bedroom to rent under \$1000. Contractors have increased the cost basis for homes, rent, and land."

"Very little land or commercial buildings are available, and there are a lot of empty houses."

"There are very few safe, livable homes here where you can raise a family, and the ones that are safe are overpriced."

"There's at least a hundred abandoned buildings and storage units that are run down."

EXHIBIT C (CONT'D)

Household Expenses & Services

- "Our grocery store is great; we don't have to go all the way to Taos for food."
- "While I get some things from Questa Market, I still make weekly trips to Taos."
- "Groceries are expensive here."
- "More organic food options are needed in Questa."
- "The cost of health, home, and vehicle insurance is too high here. So are property taxes."
- "Kit Carson Internet is expensive and doesn't always work."
- "The internet frequently goes out."
- "The costs for fuel are high compared to Taos; I wish there was a local incentive for gasoline."
- "The landfill often closes early and opens late, making it hard to get to if you work."
- "The landfill costs are high."
- "The cost of trash removal is too high; it's unfair that some people pay, and some who don't and live outside of Questa dump trash in Questa bins."
- "The Questa dumpsters from waste management could be larger."
- "I wish the cell coverage was more extensive."

News Coverage

- "*Questa del Rio News* does a great job with local stories, but I really think they should interview the therapist at the health center and do more to raise awareness of mental health/substance abuse issues of our teens in the community."
- "I read the *Questa del Rio News* cover-to-cover and think they are doing a great job. I just wish the newspaper would cover the teen suicides and bring awareness to this issue. They should also write more about the Green Energy project."

Village Governance, Development & Planning

- "The Questa Village makes it relatively easy to start a business, and the license required is offered at a very low cost."
- "Couldn't the Village advocate for the community to address the issues with lack of sidewalks and safe walking paths with DOT? It's unclear who can address these issues."
- "The Village of Questa needs a different approach to business and community engagement."
- "Getting things done through the Village often takes longer than expected."
- "The Village should do ordinances in town to keep it clean and to utilize family buildings."
- "Supposedly the Village is working on water issues."
- "The Village needs to have better communication with local businesses."
- "Our zoning needs a lot of work."
- "The Village of Questa needs to improve planning and zoning services."
- "It would be nice to have our own planning and zoning, so we don't have to go through Taos County. Taos has regulations that shouldn't be applied to rural Questa. Why does the Town of Red River go through Santa Fe? Can't Questa go through Santa Fe until we get planning and zoning going here in Questa?"
- "The Questa Village needs to make time to address the housing issues."
- "What are the priorities of the Questa Village? The governance could be so much better."
- "If people would fill out their Median Household Income survey, maybe the Village could get funding to fix infrastructure."

Questa del Rio News



Community Facilities & Infrastructure

"We could use more facilities and resources, but I understand that living rurally means away from certain services and that's OK."

"There's no community or conference center or place to host a birthday party."

"There is a strong need for childcare in our community."

"Childcare services were shut down in Questa and now we have to go to Red River."

"The Questa Youth and Family Center is underutilized, the parks are not in great shape, and there's no easy access for public bathrooms."

"Growing up, I remember having access to La Cienega gym and outside area to play basketball. Now, there is hardly a place for the youth to practice if the school facilities aren't available. There's always scheduling conflicts to use their fields and gyms."

"If there were a fire here, there's nowhere to house firefighters from out of town."

"The village should put in a community center and offices."

"We need to find ways to move past just discussing good ideas for our community's infrastructure. Take the skate park concept, for example—it's a great idea that hasn't yet broken ground."

"People walking on streets creates a negative stereotype; we need a public walkway from the traffic light to the lake, and eventually to the new Red River Nature Trail."



William J. Salls, NP

Public Safety & Emergency Services

"We need crosswalks, sidewalks, and walking trails, especially for youth and elders."

"I do all my MVD business in Red River because the Questa MVD is often closed, or they can't help with what I need. The Questa MVD is not always open when they say they are; they have erratic hours."

"The Motor Vehicle Department in Questa seems to have a lot of turnover."

"We'd benefit from more visible community engagement from the Questa Police Chief."

"The Questa Police need to patrol beyond 9pm."

"I think the police need more training for criminal investigation."

"We don't have the police enforcement or fire department employees we need; it takes too long for emergencies for help—same with EMT's."

Healthcare & Social Services

"I'm happy to have the health clinic here, but it's challenging to attract and keep doctors."

"Overall, I would rate our community services as good. Healthcare options need immediate attention."

"The health center needs to answer the phone so you can speak with someone."

"There's no physician at the health care facility; there used to be a doctor."

"It's hard to find a healthcare provider that will see a child."

"We need a mental health/healthcare facility."

"We need to keep our pharmacy."

"The prescription my mother needs is not available in Questa."

"There's no social services here, no community center beyond the Youth Center where people can get together, no childcare."

"Someone needing social services would need to drive to Taos."

"We need senior services for people to come to your house to help the elderly."

EXHIBIT C (CONT'D)

School System & Curriculum

"Three are good teachers here, but substitutes are now working in place of teachers."

"Children are just pushed through school and not expected to do more."

"The four-day school week is hurting our kids' test scores, and it's clear we need to figure out a better way."

"Bring back the Monday through Friday school week."

"They need to bring back Civics courses."

"The school board needs to act in the best interest of the schools and the kids."

"We need to set better standards and create a culture where students can thrive."

"The teachers need to engage students and not just use technology in class."

"There's too much online curriculum."

"We need more afterschool programs besides sports."

"My child went to school in Questa; it was full of crime."

Dining & Food Options

"I would love more variety of places to eat out and healthy food options."

"We need more variety of restaurants in Questa."

"I wish we had more variety of restaurants and more restaurants in general."

"The restaurants are too expensive locally, but that's just a sign of the times."

"I'd eat out more if there were more variety of restaurants in town, like Thai or Asian."

"We need restaurants with organic food, and more activities than going to the bars."

Financial Services

"The Credit Union is great."

"It would be nice to have more financial institutions in town."

"There are great services, like Questa Credit Union helping the community with free tax aid."

"It would be nice to have Centinel Bank back in Questa."

Trades & Vocational Training/Higher Education Access

"There are huge opportunities in Questa for trades training."

"Exposure to different types of education is crucial for growing up in a small community. College isn't for everyone and that is okay! If the pandemic taught us anything, it was interesting to see what and who was considered essential workers."

"While the welding program is valuable, there's a strong need for training in other trades like mechanics, plumbing, and general shop skills."

"We need trades training: electric, building contractors, green hydrogen, plumbing, basic business/entrepreneurial."

"It's great they have a welding program, but they need better communication with the school counselor regarding certifications for college credit."

"Kids go to college for the wrong reasons and come back after dropping out after a year and are stuck. We need to implement more trades certifications to help the workforce and provide skills as a school alternative."

"A lot of people shouldn't take out loans and go to college; it would be better if they went to a trade school to learn welding, plumbing, and electronics."

"At the high school we can offer so much more in terms of trades, certifications, finance, budgeting, culinary, and sewing."

"There's nothing here in terms of apprenticeships or trades training."

"Higher Education is only available in Taos, but at least it's not too far."

"We need college classes in Questa."

Community Development & Vision

"Overall, Questa is a great place to live and work."

"I'd love a billboard for fishing and hunting in town."

"You have to drive through Questa to access the towns of Red River or Taos. There's nothing welcoming and telling people there is a 3-mile bike loop at Wild Rivers, for instance."

"There are no programs here to assist those who want to improve their quality of life."

"Questa is a small village with limited resources. There is no effort to expand businesses or the quality of life. There is no apparent vision to do anything to promote growth."

Youth Activities & Programs

"Besides sports and cheer, there are no afterschool programs, youth activities, or clubs."

"The youth center used to have afterschool and weekend activities, movies, crafts, games."

"After school programs are non-existent in Questa—not everyone is an athlete."

"We need to have other activities and programs for youth: cursive writing, financial planning skills, baking, mechanics, and home economics."

"I wish there were more activities for youth. Families here grow up hunting. We could have an archery team. We need more than traditional sports."

"We need more activities for kids of various ages: summer camps, a kid's golf course."

"The teens don't have safe gathering places."

Parks & Recreation

"While it's great we have a park by the library, it needs shade trees or a shade area."

"I wish MolyCorp Field wasn't locked up and closed."

"The library park is often locked up—there's no parks for the kids."

"We need to clean up and fix up the parks with grass and turf for the youth."

"Moly Corp Park has gone down hill; there's no good equipment, no money to water the field; it's sitting and going to waste."

"The kids park by the library has holes and is not kept up."

"We need a Parks and Recreation Department with full-time employees to weed and cut trees instead of waiting for the state to come cut to do it."

"We need sidewalks, clean parks. We need to add slides, a skate park, and picnic tables."

"We need more outdoor recreation: business with side-by-sides, dirt bikes, ATV rentals."

"We need more trails and outdoor recreation opportunities."

"We need a skatepark, basketball court, and a nice park like Red River has for its youth."

"We need to fix and clean up our parks to make them more usable."

Roads & Infrastructure

"The Village may be addressing the potholes, but it seems like the amount of work is overwhelming their capacity."

"Our roads are hard to keep up with. There's a need for more funding to repair them, but it appears resources are always minimal."

"Non-county roads should be improved; we need to inform the county about the number of people and voters who actually use these roads."

"Traffic through town needs to be controlled."

"There's a clear need to address the condition of our drainage and crucial roads like Embargo and Cabresto, ensuring they meet the needs of our community, including their role as fire roads."

"Our roads need more support than current funding sources provide."

"Roads outside the village limits are awful and unmaintained; no proper drainage."

"The quality of the roads is horrible: Cabresto, Lower Embargo, and Embargo."

"We need more signs and speed bumps to slow down traffic in town and on side roads."

"Public Works needs more personnel to maintain roads, parks, and public buildings."

"There needs to be measures to slow traffic down in Questa."

"The DOT right-of-way challenges need to be addressed to care for land and stormwater issues."



The Grill at El Monte Carlo



Sierra Hermosa RV Park

EXHIBIT C (CONT'D)

Town Appearance & Beautification

- "Questa could be cleaner. Lots of rundown properties; a little paint could go a long way."
- "Better landscaping would make Questa look a lot prettier."
- "The roads, trees, and abandoned buildings all need to be cleaned up. The back road (Old Red River Road) to Lama Foundation is the dirtiest; there's tons of trash—it's horrible."
- "There's too many miniature alcohol bottles laying around town."
- "Too many vacant buildings that do not add to the beauty of our town or allow or allow for new businesses."
- "There's a lot of trash in town that I pick up."
- "The buildings, downed trees, and abandoned infrastructures need to be cleaned up."
- "Questa buildings need touch ups; some need to be totally renovated."
- "Many buildings in the business corridor are not in use, or up to code and in need of repair, or otherwise are not integrated into the business community."
- "The trash, unkempt houses, burned houses—not a pretty site to go through, and the local businesses could spruce up. I'd like to see more town beautification."
- "Shops have 12-20 vehicles parked out front; it would be nice if they fenced it off to the public."
- "There are too many campers on properties and bad roads."
- "We need an ordinance that requires that within 100 feet of public roads, people need to put a fence up, clean up, and trim trees."

Public Safety & Substance Abuse

- "We need mental health awareness and support for substance abuse."
- "Drug awareness needs compassionate care and education."
- "The substance abuse and theft rates are too high for a small community."
- "Alcohol and drug use needs improvement; the laws need to be changed at the state level."
- "Substance abuse is common here among teens and young adults. We need positive things for youth to be involved in. It's a big problem. Get adults out of the way, let kids take charge."
- "Substance abuse rate is too high for a small town; we need to increase awareness/programs."
- "The substance abuse rate is a massive problem."
- "Too many people here seem to be dying by suicide and drugs."
- "It's the same ten individuals creating the crimes, bringing in the Fentanyl. Crack down on drugs...it's the only way to eliminate it."
- "The state and local law enforcement needs to make drug abuse a priority and crack down."
- "We want our village to feel safe, and that means criminals need to face real consequences when they're caught."
- "Drug and theft perpetrators are lowering the quality of life for residents and making our community less desirable. Quit making excuses: arrest these people and their drug dealers."
- "The crime is directly related to drug use and dealing in Questa."
- "People know who the drug dealers are, but won't turn them in. People know where to get the drugs in Questa. We need to encourage anonymous reporting to help reduce crime."
- "There seems to be a lot of vandalism in town off 38."
- "We've had theft multiple times at our businesses in Questa Village."
- "I have experienced theft right out of my truck in Questa."
- "It's always the same trouble makers; if they make an arrest they'll get right back out into the community. Questa police know who the drug users are, but nothing changes."





Questa Business Retention & Expansion Report 2025



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