



**GREATER CHARLOTTETOWN AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**PROVINCE OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
2008 SUNDAY SHOPPING REVIEW**

**SUBMITTED TO
THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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Introduction

The Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the review of Sunday Shopping in Prince Edward Island.

The Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce represents 825 member businesses employing over 16,000 or 20% of the province's experienced labour force. Over 50% of these members are small businesses with five or less employees. Retailers account for approximately 12% of the membership.

Member Survey Results

In 2006 the Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce surveyed its membership to determine their level of support for Sunday shopping. Following the province's one-year trial period of extended Sunday shopping, the membership was re-surveyed to determine if any change in support and / or attitude had occurred. (See Appendix A)

The surveys clearly indicate that the general membership supports expanded Sunday shopping beyond the current 4-week pre-Christmas allowance. In 2006, 68% of survey respondents indicated support for expanded Sunday shopping in the Province. Following the one-year trial period, this support had increased to 71% of respondents. Of particular interest was the swing in support for year-round Sunday shopping – from 42% of respondents in 2006 to 56% in 2007. When

asked if respondents had changed their opinion following the one-year trial, 16% indicated they had.

Within the Chamber's retail membership the attitude towards Sunday shopping is divided. For the most part, smaller retailers favour Sunday shopping for the 4 weeks prior to Christmas only. Larger retailers support Sunday shopping year round.

Many of our retail members expressed concerns over the staffing challenges presented by opening for the extra day. Others feel that Sunday openings are simply spreading the same weekly volume of sales over seven days rather than six, while increasing their associated operating costs.

Industry Research

A review of the academic research on the issue of Sunday shopping indicates that total retail sales increase. This seems to be the result of three factors:

- the recapture of sales to residents
- the capture of additional sales from non-residents,
- the increased sales from substituting shopping for alternative leisure activities.

In addition, research suggests that with Sunday shopping, the number of people working in the retail sector increases. The outcomes are dependent on the number of hours stores are open on Sunday, the composition of local retail sales, and the ease of visiting of other shopping areas.¹²³⁴

¹ *The Economic Efficiency of Sunday Trading Restrictions*, J.A. Kay, CN Morris, The Journal of Industrial Economics, 1987

Other Considerations

Shopping is an important activity for our tourism visitors. In the 2007 Tourism PEI Exit Survey, shopping ranking third on the list of travel activities for visitors.⁵ With Sunday shopping the norm in Canada and across North America, our visitors expect to find the stores open for business.

The Chamber's position has been to provide a level playing field for our retail members. The current Retail Business Holidays Act allows certain businesses to open on Sundays while others, selling the same or similar products, must remain closed because of their type of business or number of employees.

Island retailers are competing with other Maritime power centers such as Moncton and Halifax where Sunday shopping is now available for consumers year-round. . It is a competitive disadvantage for Island stores to be closed on Sundays - the day that many retailers claim is the largest shopping day of the week.

²*The Impact of Sunday Shopping on Employment and Hours of Work in the Retail Industry: Evidence from Canada*, M. Skuterud, European Economic Review, 2005

³*Estimating the Economic Impact of Repealing Laws Prohibiting Sunday Sales*, Donald S.Elliott, Stanford L.Levin, International Journal of Retailing. Bradford: 1987.Vol.2, Iss. 1; pg. 31, 13 pgs

⁴*Should Stores Be Open on Sunday? The Impact of Sunday Opening on the Retail Trade Sector in New Brunswick*, Benoît Quenneville, Pierre Cholette, and Marietta Morry, Journal of Official Statistics, Vol.15, No.3, 1999, pp. 449-463

⁵ *OVERALL RESULTS OF THE 2007 PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND EXIT SURVEY: Results for the Main Season: From June 27 to September 30*
(<http://trc.upei.ca/files/Exit-Survey-Report1.pdf>)

PEI experienced positive growth of 8% in the retail sector over the past 5 years⁶ – much of it due to new retail businesses moving into the province. If we are to continue to attract new retail businesses to our province, we must be competitive with our sister provinces in the region.

Conclusion

In closing, The Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce recommends that the province leave the decision regarding Sunday opening to the individual retailer.

⁶ Statistics Canada, *Retail Trade by Province and Territory*
(<http://www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/trad17a.htm>)

Appendix A

Sunday Shopping Survey Results Comparison

	2006	2007
Number of Responses	254	201
General Membership		
	2006	2007
Support Expanded Sunday Shopping May 24-Dec 31	26%	15%
Support Expanded Sunday Shopping Year-round	42%	56%
Subtotal for Expanded Shopping	68%	71%
Support Christmas Only	21%	18%
Oppose Sunday Shopping	11%	11%
Retailers Only		
	2006	2007
Percentage of Total Respondents	19%	22%
Support Expanded Sunday Shopping May 24-Dec 31	28%	13%
Support Expanded Sunday Shopping Year-round	26%	33%
Subtotal for Expanded Sunday Shopping	54%	47%
Support Christmas Only	32%	40%
Oppose Sunday Shopping	15%	13%
Attitude Change		Yes
Since the introduction of extended Sunday Shopping in Prince Edward Island in May 2007, has your opinion on the issue changed?		16%