



ANNUAL REPORT



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Introduction

The Almaguin Community Economic Development (ACED) department is pleased to present the 2025 ACED Annual Report for the review and consideration of ACED's members, municipal partners, and regional stakeholders. ACED remains a regionally inclusive economic development services organization, committed to supporting the long-term economic and social prosperity of the Almaguin region. Our work continues to focus on taking strategic action while stewarding strong, collaborative relationships between municipalities, businesses, community organizations, and economic development partners.

Economic development is a broad and evolving matter, shaped by local context, community priorities, and changing economic conditions. ACED recognizes that its definition and application can vary across the region. For this reason, ACED's work in 2025 was guided by evidence-based research, established strategic frameworks, and ongoing input from member municipalities and partners. This approach ensures that initiatives reflect shared priorities and deliver meaningful value at both the regional and local levels.

Each year, ACED staff develop a work plan that outlines key focus areas, performance targets, and strategic rationale for the year ahead. This work plan serves as a foundation for accountability and progress, while allowing flexibility to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges. Throughout 2025, the ACED Board continued to play an active role in guiding this work through regular meetings, discussion periods, and collaborative decision-making.

The 2025 Annual Report highlights the outcomes of this collective effort. It reflects a year of continued service delivery, regional collaboration, and intentional groundwork to support future growth, investment, and community resilience across Almaguin.

Exiting Director's note

I am writing this final Director's note with a mix of emotions as I reflect not only on the 2025 year, but my history with ACED and BACED over the last thirteen years. The first of which is a profound sense of gratitude for having been afforded the opportunity to work with so many diverse, progressive, and committed community builders throughout my time in my various roles. The second emotion I find myself feeling is a sense of excitement for what the future will bring under a new agreement and new leadership. While it is true that the journey we have walked to date has been full of twists, turns, success, and learning opportunities, I remain steadfast and bold in my confidence that all of Almaguin benefits through enhanced collaboration made possible by strong, productive relationships. 2025 was an opportunity for ACED to reflect on the organization and rethink many facets of how services are delivered, how we ensure equity and equality, and how we ensure that our partners priorities are both reflected and embraced in the work that we do. It has been encouraging to see the ACED Board discuss and deliberate strategies for ensuring the growth and sustainability of ACED. To me, this is a

reflection of a strong common will among communities and individuals who have demonstrated their immense passion for and investment in driving positive economic growth time and time again. It is with that kind of support that mountains get moved. I am confident that with our continued collaborative efforts ACED and its regional impact will continue to grow.

New Directors Note

As I step into the role of Director at the beginning of 2026, this Annual Report offers a chance to reflect on the work completed in 2025 from my perspective as Economic Development Officer. It was a year defined by steady progress, strong collaboration, and meaningful on-the-ground support for businesses, municipalities, and partners across the region. Much of this work focused on maintaining core services, advancing long-standing regional initiatives, and strengthening relationships that are foundational to economic development success. I am grateful for the leadership and direction provided throughout 2025, and for the trust placed in me to support this work during a period of transition. Looking ahead, 2026 represents both continuity and opportunity. As Director, my focus will be on building upon the strong foundation already in place, ensuring ACED remains responsive to community needs, and advancing strategic initiatives that position the region for long-term resilience, growth, and shared success.

Guiding Direction

ACED develops their annual plans and initiatives under the direction of the following guiding documents which have been created through comprehensive consultation and using a wealth of data and evidence-based research. These plans are listed below for reference:

[The 2018 RED Plan](#)

[The 2020 Ag Strategy](#)

[The 2021 Brand Strategy](#)

[The 2016 BR&E Report](#)

Collaborative Foundation

Developing and stewarding strong relationships with economic development stakeholders across the region is a core function of the ACED department. These partnerships strengthen initiatives through shared resources, expertise, and networks, delivering direct benefits to local businesses and communities. They also help reduce costs and improve overall efficiency, with collaboration continuing to serve as a cornerstone of regional economic development success.

2025 project partners include (in no particular order):

Almaguin's Municipalities
Almaguin Highlands Chamber
FedNor
O.M.N.D.
O.M.A.F.R.A.
NECO Community Futures

Almaguin Brand Ambassadors
The Business Centre NPS
Explorers' Edge / RTO 12
Explore South River
Women's Own Resource Centre
The Labour Market Group

Discovery Routes Trails Org.
I.I.O.N
N.O.H.F.C.
Almaguin Highlands Secondary School
A.H. Health Council

Regional Results Report

Key Performance Indicators

Work Plan Item KPI Description	2023 Result	2024 Result	2025 Result	Notes
1.0 - Business Support				
A. Core Business Support				
Businesses Supported (Unique)	51	61	46	
Total Interactions	85		58	
Jobs Created	24	13	10	Note 1
Jobs Retained	15	15	12	
Program Referrals	32		36	
B. Business Support Events				
Events Hosted/Supported	6	5	7	
Business Attendees	120	200	190	
C. AHCC Partnerships				
Membership Increase	20%	7%	0%	Note 2
2.0 Community Development				
A. Organization Support				
Organizations Supported	1	3	4	
B. Regional Recreation Support				
Programs / Facilities Supported	4	10	3	
Applications Supported	3	5	1	
3.0 Economic Capacity Building				
A. Long term housing				
Recommendations Made	N/A	12	N/A	Note 3
B. Transportation Development				
Initiatives Supported	2	2	3	
Marketing Initiatives				
C. A.H.S.S. Student Engagement				
Initiatives created / launched	2	3	3	Note 4

Work Plan Item KPI Description	2023 Result	2024 Result	2025 Result	Notes
4.0 Marketing & Promotion				
A. Brand Strategy Implementation				
Brand Ambassadors Onboarded	41	20	14	
Brand Ambassadors Retained	41	41	60	

Brand ambassador training sessions	1	1	3	
Marketing Partnership Projects	8	NA	1	
Key Brand Assets Created	16	3	0	
Marketing campaign activities (original content)	31	47	192	Note 5
B. Tourism Promotion				
Partnerships Developed/engaged	5		2	
Projects/content marketed	12	19	11	
Business Interactions for Summer Star Party	N/A	N/A	60	
C. Shop in Almaguin Campaigns				
Campaigns Launched	2	2	2	
Business Promoted	81	60	87	
5.0 Special Events & Projects				
B. Red Gala				
Total Attendees	120	120	67	Note 6

Notes:

Note 1: Job creation and retention statistics reflect data collected locally and data provided by supportive agencies that serve the region. This information is intended as a high level-view of known activity rather than a statement of ACED's contributions to individual businesses. ACED does not directly fund businesses; however, it is assumed that through information sharing and direct referrals that ACED plays a supportive role that supports job creation.

Note 2: AHCC experienced both membership growth and attrition during the reporting period. They were left with the same total amount of members from 2024 at the end of the year, accounting for the gains and losses. ACED is not directly responsible for membership increases for the AHCC; rather, through the cooperative relationship with the AHCC, ACED supports events and initiatives both in partnership with, and that benefit, AHCC members. The creation of a staff position for the AHCC has enabled increased

focus on attracting new members, retaining members, and monitoring membership activity.

Note 3: The Long-Term Housing Strategy Recommendations were completed in 2024. Quarterly meetings take place to discuss progress and provide updates, but no new recommendations were made in 2025.

Note 4: In 2025, 3 initiatives were completed – The Life Skills Workshop, The Longitudinal Study, and The Summer Company Presentations with the Business Centre. Due to scheduling conflicts, The Career Accelerator Event did not take place.

Note 5: Explore Almaguin saw a huge uptick in original content being developed daily for Instagram, Facebook and content articles on Explore Almaguin due to the new CMO who was very motivated to create and develop new content.

Note 6: Due to weather and timing of the event, we saw a lower attendance for the RED Gala than in previous years. The December event date was selected based on the Keynote speakers' availability.

2025 RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS

2025 Highlights Infographic (See below)

Attachments

Appendix 1 – 2025 AHSS Student Engagement Report

Appendix 2 – Wrap Up Almaguin Shop Local Results

REGIONAL RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS 2025

The following infographics highlight key accomplishments of the Almaguin Community Economic Development (ACED) department.

CORE ACTIVITIES



Total Support Interactions



Total Unique Business Clients



Expansions Supported by Staff



Start Ups Supported



Referrals to Agencies



Private Investments*



Jobs Created*



Jobs Maintained*

2025 PROGRAMS

ALMAGUIN SUMMER STAR PARTY



Tickets Sold



Businesses Promoted



Partnership Dollars Accessed



Locations Featured



ACED Contribution



Targeted Content Created

AHSS ENGAGEMENT

In-Class Presentations



Youth Outmigration Surveys Completed



Student who Completed the Summer Company Program



ACED Contribution

Life Skills Workshop



Workshop Sessions



Student Participants



Support Personnel

CHAMBER SUPPORTS AND PARTNERSHIPS



Events Hosted or Supported



Total Participants



Partnership Funds Invested

PUBLIC & COMMUNITY GRANTS

\$ 711K

- Community Economic Development Grants from NECO
- 3 NOHFC Internships Community Infrastructure Funding

SUPPORTS FROM THE BUSINESS CENTRE



Consultations with Almaguin Entrepreneurs



Between 3 Summer Company Students in Almaguin



Total Business Centre Clients from Almaguin

= 13%

Of Total Client List

SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS



Review Boards that ACED sits on

NECO - 5

IION/ SFEP - 6

RNIP - 4

Almaguin Applications Approved

MUNICIPAL SUPPORT



Municipal In-Office Days



Individual Municipal Projects Supported

*Figures represent 2025 actual and projected data shared from partner support agencies pertaining to Almaguin business projects. ACED refers business clients to these organizations based on their needs and eligibility.

REGIONAL RESULTS HIGHLIGHTS 2025

The following infographics highlight key accomplishments of the Almaguin Community Economic Development (ACED) department.

[EXPLOREALMAGUIN.CA](https://www.explorealmaguin.ca)

2025 SHOP LOCAL CAMPAIGNS

Summer Shop Local (July 2- July 31)



23727
Views



407
Engagement



2 Separate Social
Media Campaigns

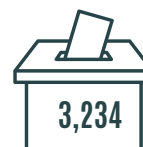


\$400 ACED Contribution

Wrap Up Almaguin Campaign (November 24- December 14, 2025)



37
Businesses Directly
Supported



3,234
Ballots Submitted



\$500 ACED Contribution

SOCIAL MEDIA STATISTICS

ACED Facebook



1851
FB Likes
3% growth since 2024



45
Number of
Original
Posts



7,015
Total Views

Almaguin Tourism Facebook



2929
FB Likes
7% growth since 2024



135
Number of
Original
Posts



445,008
Total Views

Explore Almaguin Instagram



1,071
IG Likes
37% growth since 2024



96
Number of
Original
Posts



168,154
Total Views



166
Events Promoted on
the Website



20
Articles Written



3
New Pages Created
on the Website



77
Business Directory
listings enhanced



16
Tourism Pieces of
Content Developed



2 Brand Event Hosted

15 Tourism Assets Created

3 Co-Creation Labs Hosted
with Explorers' Edge

74 Brand Ambassadors
Registered

Draft

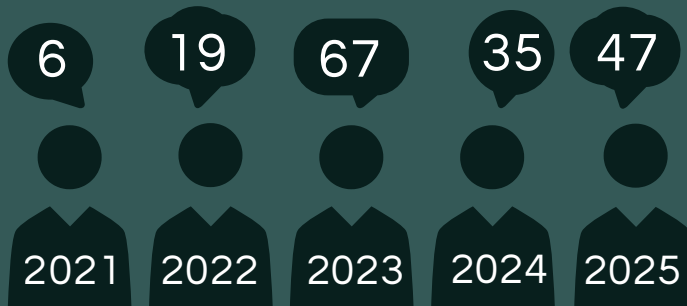
AHSS Student Engagement Report 2025



LONGITUDINAL SURVEY RESULTS

March-June 2024

Number of Completed Surveys



Length of Time Residing in Almaguin

(Average/Median)



30% of Students in 2025 have moved to the area within the past 5 years.

How Would You Rate Your Experience Living in Almaguin?

Comments included that they find the communities friendly and the area beautiful, but it also feels isolated with limited opportunities.



0- Very Dissatisfied 1- Dissatisfied 14- Neutral 22- Satisfied 10- Very Satisfied

Top 5 Activities Enjoyed in the Region



Spending Time at the Lake
75%



Spending Time with Family and Friends
75%



Events, Festivals and Fairs
40%



Winter Activities
49%



Fishing
53%

LONGITUDINAL SURVEY RESULTS

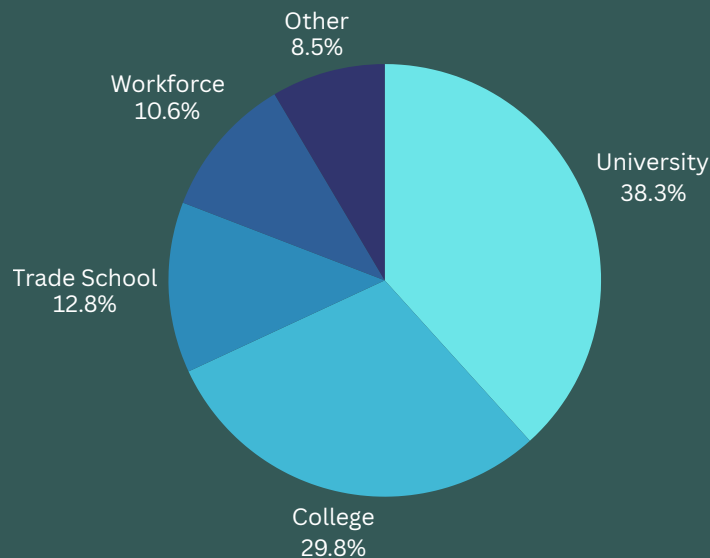
Top 6 Fields Being Pursued by Students After Graduation

Construction/Trades	15%
Medical/Health Services	11%
Arts & Entertainment	11%
Education or Government	8%
Professional Services - i.e. lawyer, accountant, etc.	8%
Personal Services -i.e. hairstylist, esthetician, massage therapy, etc.	6%



2025 saw a larger variety in career paths, including by-law, media studies, fire fighting, truck driving, and a increase in students interested in the Trades.

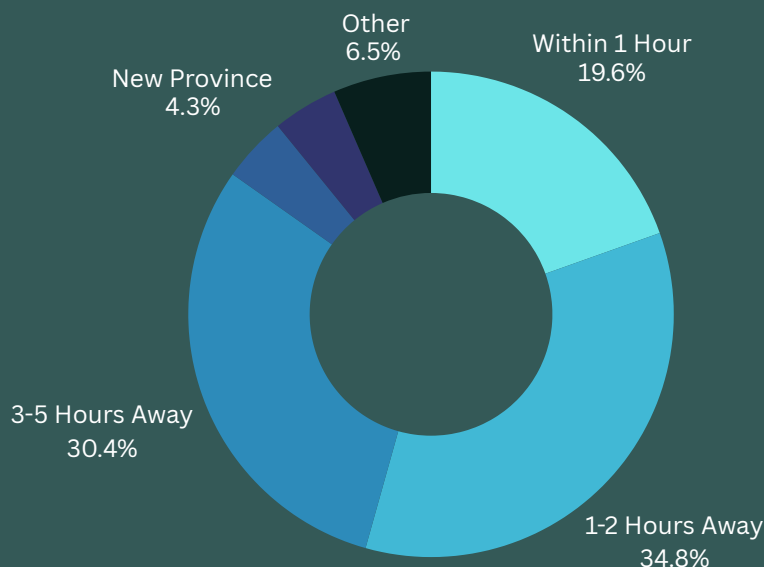
Post Secondary Plans



Both 2024 and 2025 saw a majority of students choosing University. 2025 saw almost 13% of students choosing to pursue Trade School, compared to 0% in 2024. The 'Other' response was mostly students choosing to take a gap year, with 1 student pursuing the military.

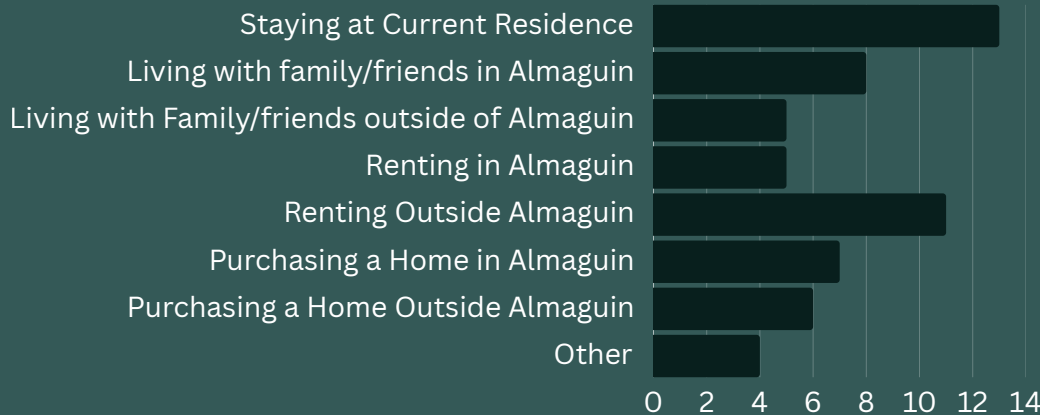
Commute for Post Secondary Education

Similar to past results, majority of students chose a post-secondary institution within Ontario a few hours away.

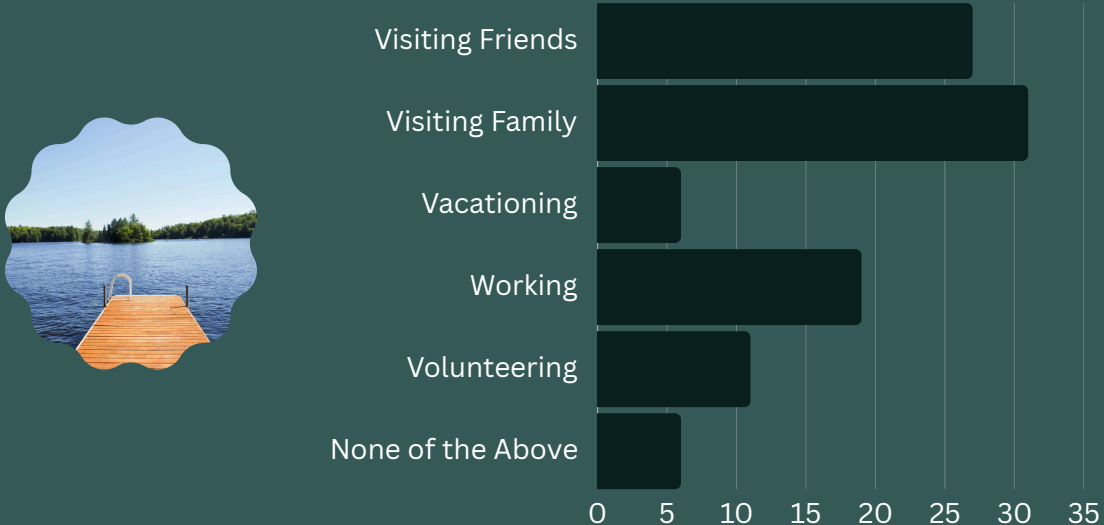


LONGITUDINAL SURVEY RESULTS

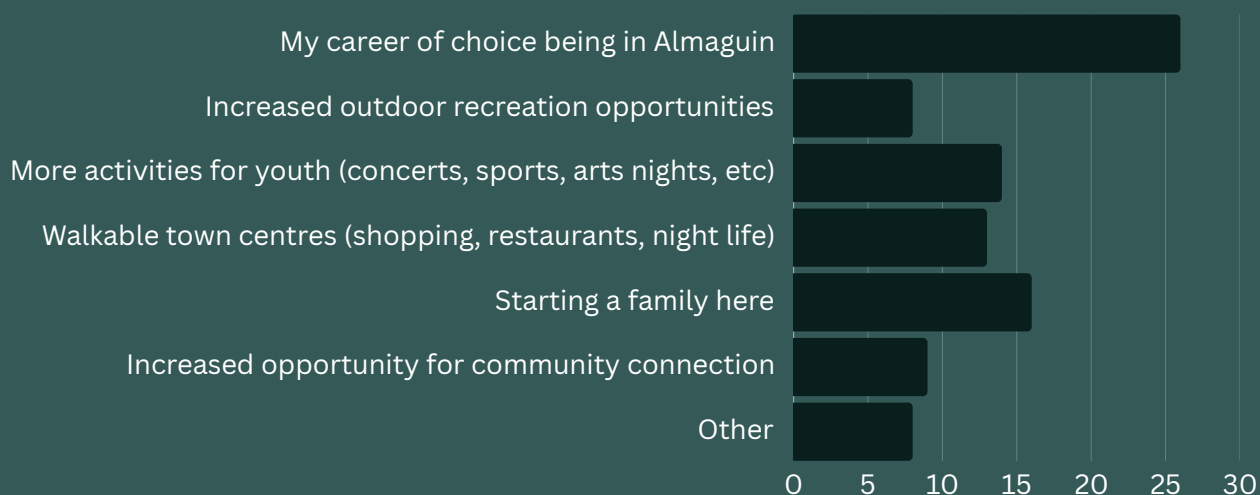
Planned Living Arrangements After Graduation



How Do You Plan on Staying Connected with the Region?

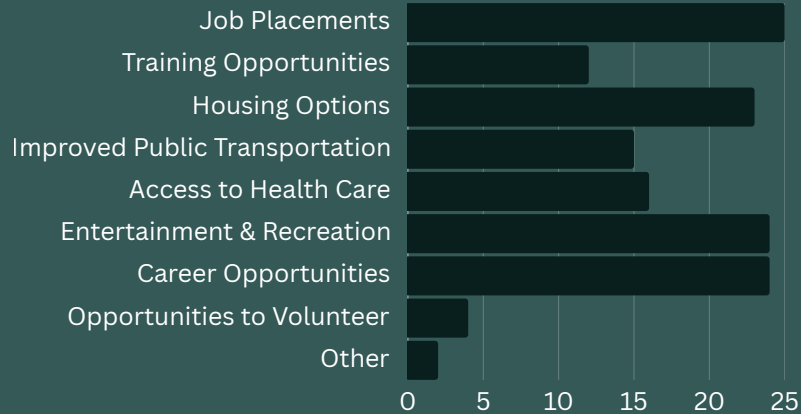


What Would Encourage You to Stay In the Region?



LONGITUDINAL SURVEY RESULTS

What Type of Support Would You Like to See From The Community?



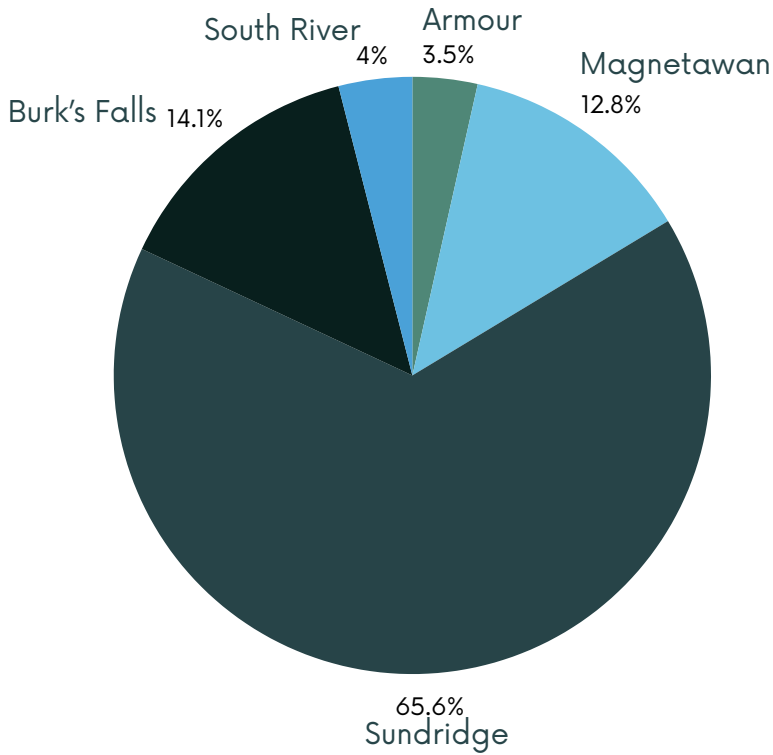
Observations from the Survey

1. There is a significant number of students who have moved to the area within the last 5 years.
2. Most students enjoy living in Almaguin, and those who don't find that there is a lack of activities and minimal job opportunities for youth in the community.
3. 2025 saw an increase in students interested in pursuing construction/trades, and a greater variety of potential career paths.
4. Most students stated they would stay in Almaguin if their career of choice was available. There also seems to be an increase in young people wanting to buy houses or start families here, and some students feel like Almaguin is a good area for both.
5. Areas for ACED and Municipalities to focus on:
 - Helping students find jobs in the area
 - Attracting job positions in the medical and health fields to Almaguin
 - Encouraging student placements with construction/trades companies
 - Developing recreation or events targeted towards young adults
 - Looking into both increased transportation and housing options for students/recent graduates
 - Life skills workshops to help create financially responsible young people capable of home ownership in the near future.



The following infographics highlight some of the key findings from the Christmas Shop Local Campaign.

Participation in Each Town



Total Entries



New Emails for Newsletter



Top 5 Businesses Who participated

