Pincher Creek No. 9’s Economy Is Powered by Micro-Businesses

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Snapshot

Pincher Creek No. 9 stands out for the depth of its micro-business base. Of 204 establishments, 174 have no employees and 21 have 1 to 4 employees, meaning 95.6% of all businesses sit in the smallest size bands. The pattern extends across sectors, often exceeding Alberta’s micro-business shares and highlighting a broad but highly small-scale entrepreneurial economy.

Talking Points

• Pincher Creek No. 9 recorded 204 business establishments, with 174 operating without employees and 21 employing 1 to 4 people, leaving just 9 establishments above that range.

• The smallest two business categories account for 95.6% of all establishments, while firms without employees alone represent 85.3%, underscoring a strongly owner-operated and independent business profile.

• Recent growth reinforced this structure: establishments without employees rose 16.8% over one year, while the 20 to 49 employee category doubled to 2 businesses from a very small base.

• Micro-business concentration is especially pronounced across sectors and often exceeds Alberta levels, including manufacturing at 88.9% locally versus 66.4% provincially, retail trade at 87.5% versus 62.3%, and accommodation and food services at 75.0% versus 45.0%.

Full Story

Pincher Creek No. 9 presents as a place where business activity is overwhelmingly small scale, with the strongest weight at the very smallest end of the market. In the 2025 business establishment data, the local base is dominated by firms without employees and by establishments with just 1 to 4 employees, giving the area a distinctly micro-business profile. That does not suggest a weak business environment on its own. Rather, it points to a local economy shaped by owner-operated firms, independent operators, and small teams.

The size breakdown makes that pattern unusually clear. Among the 204 establishments listed for Pincher Creek No. 9 in 2025, 174 had no employees, 21 had 1 to 4 employees, 5 had 5 to 9, and just 2 each fell into the 10 to 19 and 20 to 49 employee ranges. Put differently, the smallest two categories account for about 95.6% of listed establishments, with businesses without employees alone making up about 85.3%. Recent movement also reinforces that structure. Establishments without employees rose 16.8% over one year, while the 20 to 49 employee group increased 100%, albeit from a very small base of 2 businesses.

Sector-level micro establishment shares tell a similar story. In Pincher Creek No. 9, micro firms account for 97.8% of agriculture establishments, 90.0% in construction, 88.9% in manufacturing, and 87.5% in retail trade. In several industries, the share reaches 100%, including mining, wholesale trade, transportation and warehousing, finance and insurance, real estate, professional services, administrative support, health care and social assistance, arts and recreation, and other services. Compared with Alberta, the local pattern is more concentrated in very small firms across several sectors. Manufacturing sits at 88.9% locally versus 66.4% provincially, retail at 87.5% versus 62.3%, and accommodation and food services at 75.0% versus 45.0%.

Taken together, the data shows a business landscape that is broad in activity but narrow in firm size. That can be read as a sign of entrepreneurial density at the smallest scale, especially in sectors such as agriculture and construction where local micro shares are already high and, in some cases, still rising. At the same time, the figures also show that larger employer establishments remain limited in number. For Pincher Creek No. 9, the clearest business signature is not scale, but the prevalence of very small operators across much of the local economy.

Data Sources

- Statistics Canada, Business Register
- Statistics Canada, Business Register; Localintel, Micro Establishments Share of Census Areas