



Iowa's Major Employers See Trade, Weather as Potential Disruptors

Sales and capital expenditures look to increase, filling workforce gaps and political climate are top challenges

(DES MOINES) – The Iowa Business Council (IBC) members express a positive overall business sentiment according to the quarterly economic outlook survey released today. The survey results reinforced a strong economy and overall growth for the next six months. About 70 percent of IBC members anticipate higher sales and the majority expect employment to increase. However, challenges remain in attracting and retaining a quality workforce, the cost of healthcare and an unfavorable business climate, such as regulations and taxes.

In addition, this quarterly survey asked members about economic disruptors for their industries in the upcoming year. The answers revealed 35 percent of members see global trade issues having the potential for negative economic implications and another 15 percent said weather could pose a problem in agricultural sectors, linking Iowa's historical ag economy with long-range market outcomes. Overall, businesses desire a stable political and economic environment that allows more growth and expansion.

The survey's overall index number from last quarter remains largely consistent and positive, indicating a confident view of the economy, despite a small dip from last quarter (*down from 65.5 to 63.75*). The index number is a numeric measure that gauges business sentiment with any number over 50 indicating a positive perspective of the economy.

"The lack of workforce coupled with trade and other business climate uncertainty pose risks for our members," IBC Executive Director Georgia Van Gundy said. "We continue to advocate for the passage of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement as well as work within the state to upskill our current population, attract new Iowans and collaborate with education to expose students to careers across Iowa."

As part of these efforts, IBC's third "Vision to Vitality" forum will be in Council Bluffs on July 30 to hear from community leaders, business owners, nonprofits, and education among others about barriers and best practices to actively attract and retain Iowans in the workforce. This forum will focus on "Growing the Workforce in Numbers—Southwest Iowa's Regionalism, Recruitment and Diversity Efforts."

The Economic Outlook Survey has been completed by the council members on a quarterly basis since 2004. The survey provides insight regarding the projected trends for the state of Iowa, which can be used for business and economic planning. The reported trends have a state-wide impact, especially when considering that IBC companies have a presence in all 99 counties.

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About the Iowa Business Council

The Iowa Business Council (IBC) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose 23 members are the chief decision makers of major Iowa employers. One in six jobs in Iowa are tied to an IBC company. IBC member companies have invested billions of



dollars of capital in Iowa's commercial infrastructure; lead the way in technology innovation, R&D, and grants procured; and are often the driving financial and volunteer forces behind philanthropic efforts all over the state.

IBC member companies include: Alliant Energy; Casey's General Stores, Inc.; Collins Aerospace; Corteva Agriscience; Deere & Company; Fareway; FBL Financial Group, Inc.; HNI Corporation; Hy-Vee, Inc., Iowa Bankers Association; Kent Corporation; MercyOne; Meredith Corporation; MidAmerican Energy Company; Pella Corporation; Principal; Ruan Transportation Management Systems; The Weitz Company; The University of Iowa Health Care; UnityPoint Health; Vermeer Corporation; Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield of Iowa; and Wells Enterprises, Inc.