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RELEASE: Iowa Business Council Members See a Positive Start for 2020

DES MOINES – Today, the Iowa Business Council (IBC) released its final Economic Outlook Survey for 2019. Business leaders expect higher sales headed into 2020 and remain positive overall about Iowa's economic climate.

The survey measures members expectations for sales, capital spending and employment for the next six months. If the index measures above 50, sentiment is positive. This quarter, the survey averaged just above 60. The index is down five full points since the first quarter of 2019, indicating some economic trepidation as the year comes to a close. Members cite potential upcoming disruptors as the current and upcoming political environment, change in consumer habits and regulation.

"We are optimistic for Iowa's overall economy as we conclude 2019," IBC Executive Director Joe Murphy stated. "As we look to 2020, the Iowa Business Council will continue to champion solutions that create a streamlined and competitive tax climate, implement programs that actively cultivate a workforce pipeline, and collaborate with other organizations to increase Iowa's overall population and diversity."

63 percent of IBC members expect higher sales in the next six months while expectations for capital spending and employment largely remain the same. Primary business obstacles facing IBC members trend on theme for 2019: nearly 90 percent cite the attraction, development and retaining of a quality workforce as their top challenge. 44 percent note unfavorable business climate like infrastructure, regulations, and taxes hurts their growth.

Over 60 percent of IBC members acknowledged positions in IT as their toughest to fill. Throughout 2019, members highest workforce needs included data analysts, health care professionals, skilled tradesmen, and hourly retail associates.

While there has been positive political movement on trade in the past several weeks, 55 percent of IBC members identify quantifiable impact on their bottom line due to tariffs and trade uncertainty. Business leaders are hopeful the Senate will pass the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement early next year to provide more certainty in the marketplace.

The Economic Outlook Survey has been completed by the IBC 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.

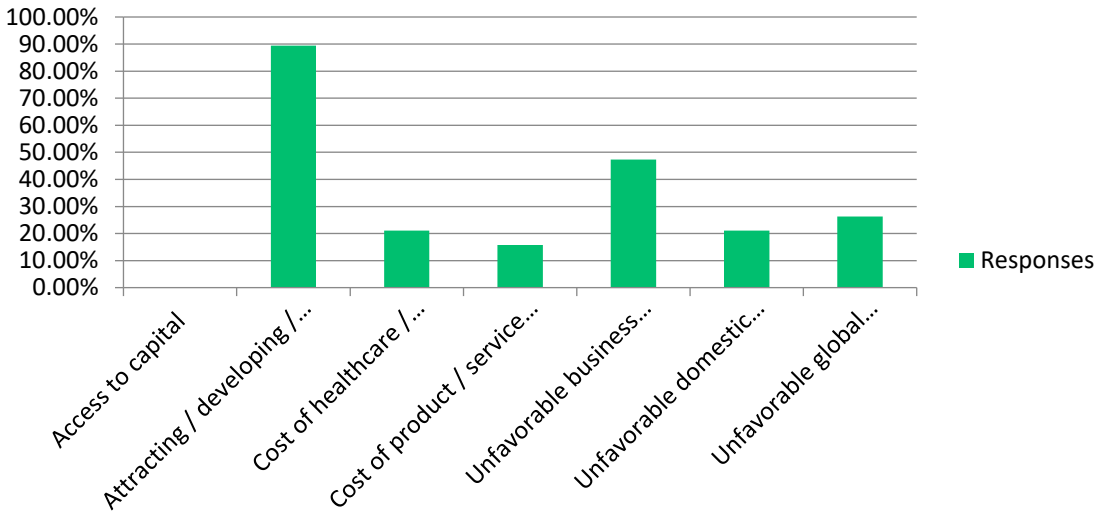
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About the Iowa Business Council

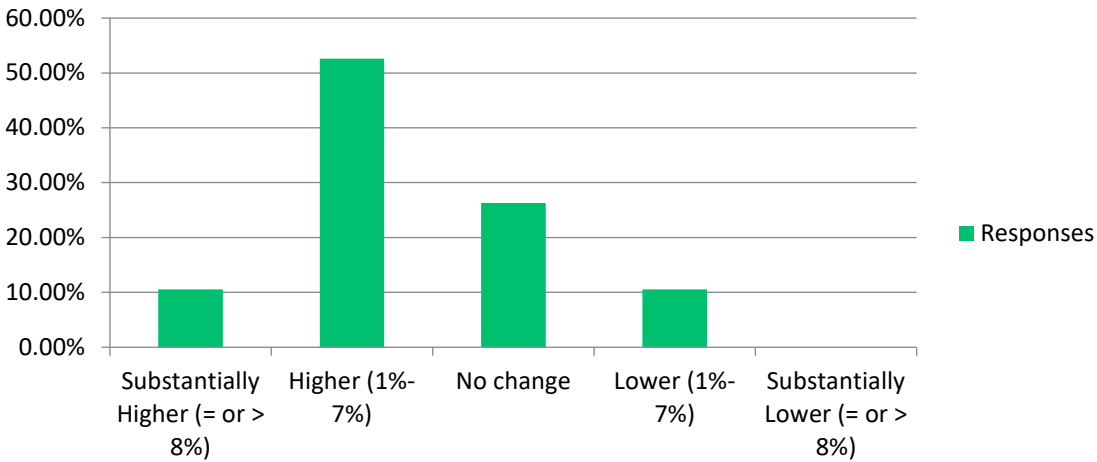
The Iowa Business Council (IBC) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization whose 23 members are the chief decision makers of major Iowa employers. One in six jobs in Iowa are tied to an IBC company. IBC member companies have invested billions of dollars of capital in Iowa's commercial infrastructure; lead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

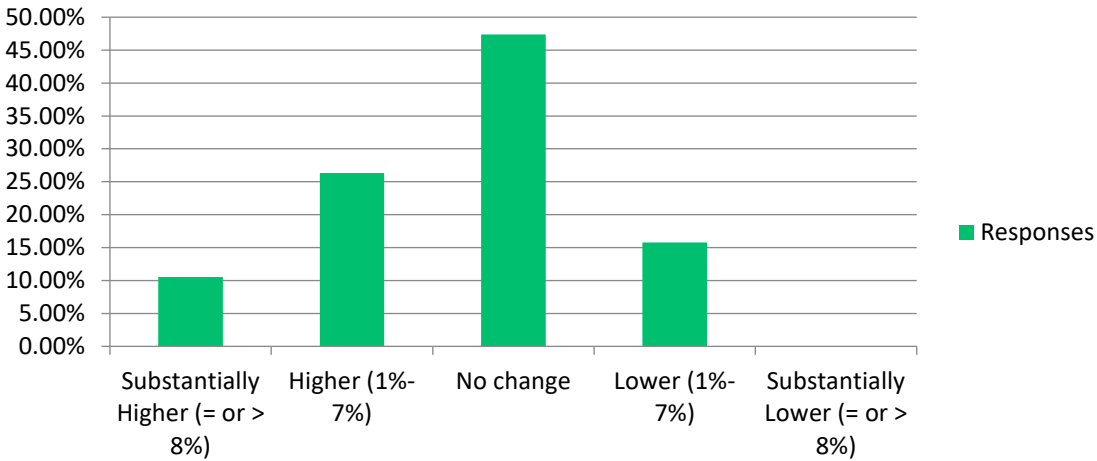
What are your current primary business challenges? You may select up to three.



How do you expect your company's SALES to change in the next six months?



How do you expect your company's CAPITAL SPENDING to change in the next six months?



How do you expect your company's EMPLOYMENT to change in the next six months?

