

Minnesota employers upbeat about current economy But higher costs threaten continued job growth, Business Barometer finds

Minnesota employers are pleased with the performance of today's economy, but they warn that the state's high costs of doing business – if left uncurbed – could slow additional growth. These are among the findings of the 12th annual Business Barometer co-sponsored by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and Himle Rapp & Company, a public affairs firm headquartered in Minneapolis. The Minnesota Chamber is the state's largest business advocacy organization representing 2,300 companies of all types and sizes across the state.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

BUSINESS CLIMATE

- 47% are trying to add jobs in the next 12 months
- 82% say the Governor and Legislature play a role – 31% say a very important role – in determining the business climate; only 14% say the role of policy-makers is not very important.
- 48% say legislators understand everyday business challenges; 41% say they do not.

TAXES

- 56% say high taxes are one of the two biggest barriers to job creation, a consistent finding throughout the years of the survey.
- 62% say their business tax burdens are greater than five years ago.

TRANSPORTATION

- 59% say the state's transportation system is better than four years ago in the areas they most frequently travel.
- 77% believe the current transportation and transit system will serve their business needs for the next 10 years.
- When told the state faced an estimated \$7 billion shortfall in transportation needs, 47% say the state should find new revenue and 48% say it should not.

WORKPLACE MANDATES

- 74% say they currently offer paid sick leave to employees or expect to offer it in the near future.

The Minnesota Business Barometer surveyed a random sample of owners or managers of 350 Minnesota businesses with at least five employees. Survey interviews were conducted by The Morris Leatherman Co. of Minneapolis. The sample surveyed accurately reflects the breadth of Minnesota's business community in the areas of size, location and type (manufacturing, retail and service). The survey was conducted in July and August and has a margin of error of 5.3 percent.