

# 2015 BUSINESS CLIMATE RESULTS



From March through August 2015, The Economic Development Professionals group of the 7 Rivers Alliance conducted business retention, outreach, and engagement visits in 10 counties across Southwest Wisconsin, Southeast Minnesota, and Northeast Iowa. The purpose of this outreach was to gauge business health, confidence and identify potential barriers to growth.

Over 142 companies were contacted and 125 provided responses to a standardized survey. The results were analyzed by Dr. Chris Malone, Director of the Statistical Consulting Center at Winona State University.

This report summarizes the results of the Seven Rivers Alliance Business Response and Economic Development Survey from summer of 2015. A total of 125 business provided responses to this year's survey. Respondents were from Iowa (16), MN (3), and WI (106). La Crosse County had the most number of responding companies with 40 (40/125 = 32%). This survey included businesses across the age spectrum, i.e. newer businesses to a business that is over 150 years old. The survey reached several small businesses and included over 20 businesses who employ more than 100 people. The three digit NAICS codes were provided for about 80 of the 125 business. There were a total of 39 unique NAICS codes represented by this survey.

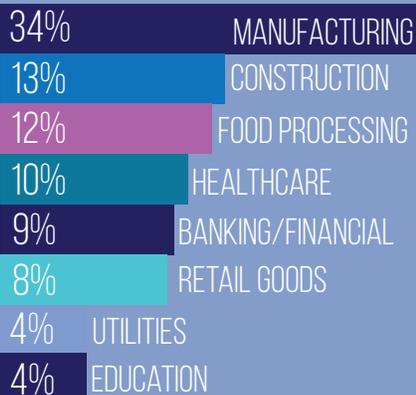
## OVER THE PAST 5 YEARS...

**38%** 7 RIVERS REGION HAS IMPROVED AS A PLACE TO DO BUSINESS

**40%** HAS STAYED THE SAME



## SECTORS SURVEYED

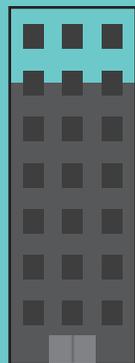


## BUSINESS HEALTH

**90%** RATED COMPANY HEALTH AS GOOD OR EXCELLENT

OVER 40% OF BUSINESSES EXPECT TO PRODUCE NEW PRODUCTS AT THEIR CURRENT LOCATION. FURTHERMORE, ABOUT 85% DO NOT EXPECT TO END PRODUCTION OF ANY ITEMS CURRENTLY BEING MANUFACTURED AT THEIR CURRENT LOCATION. THIS INDICATES A CLEAR MOTIVE FOR GROWTH IN THE COMING YEARS.

## BUSINESS CONFIDENCE



**80%** PLAN TO GROW THEIR BUSINESS IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

**65%** PLAN TO PRODUCE NEW PRODUCTS AT CURRENT LOCATION

**60%** REPORT AN INCREASE IN REVENUE OVER THE PAST YEAR

A commercial driver's license was mentioned by a few businesses as a skill-set needed.

## BARRIERS TO GROWTH



**3** OUT OF **4** COMPANIES REPORTED DIFFICULTY FINDING SKILLED WORKERS.



**1** OUT OF **3** WILL REPLACE WORKFORCE WITH MORE ADVANCED SKILLSETS.

## BUSINESS SATISFACTION

**98%** EXPRESSED A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE COMMUNITY



**37%** REPORTED AN OVERALL INCREASE IN BUSINESS PERFORMANCE DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS

**90%** REMAINED CONCERNED ABOUT REGULATORY ISSUES LOCALLY BUT NOT ENOUGH TO MOVE

GENERALLY SPEAKING, REGULATORY ISSUES DO NOT APPEAR TO BE A CONCERN. COMPLEXITY OF REGULATIONS WAS THE MOST COMMON CONCERN EXPRESSED WHEN REALTIONSIPS EXIST WITH REGULATORY AGENCIES.

**MOST BUSINESSES, ABOUT 3 OUT OF 4, DO NOT CONSIDER TURNOVER TO BE A PROBLEM AND ABOUT 80% HAVE AN ANNUAL TURNOVER RATE OF 10% OR LESS.**

## MARKETING AND TRADE

A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF BUSINESSES FROM THE 7 RIVERS REGION SELL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES.

IN ADDITION TO SELLING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES OUTSIDE THE U.S., NEARLY 30% USE SUPPLIERS OUT SIDE THE U.S. AND 60% USE SUPPLIERS ACROSS THE NATION.

**35%** OF THE BUSINESS EXPORT PRODUCTS



**MOST COMMON LOCATIONS:**

CANADA ASIA  
EUROPE MEXICO

## PERCEPTION OF COMMUNITY



OF BUSINESSES RESPONDED THAT THE COMPANY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE COMMUNITY WAS GOOD OR VERY GOOD.

ONLY ABOUT 10% OF BUSINESS EXPRESSED DIFFICULTY IN SECURING FINANCIAL CAPITAL.

**60** BUSINESSES EXPRESSED A CHANGE IN THEIR FIRMS ANNUAL SALES OR REVENUES.

**51** OF THEM EXPRESSED A POSITIVE CHANGE



Special thanks to the following individuals who conducted the business outreach: Charlie Handy and Brian Fukuda, La Crosse County; Vicki Markussen, La Crosse Area Chamber; David Connolly, Crawford County Economic Development

Corporation; Terry Whipple, Juneau County Economic Development Corporation; Steve Peterson, Monroe County Economic Development; Commerce & Tourism, Karen Dahl and Shaynan Holen, Vernon County Tourism, Promotion and Economic Development; Steve Bissen, Western Technical College; Della Schmidt and Natalie Siderius, Winona County; Val Reinke and Ardie Kuhse, Allamakee County Economic Development and Tourism; and Nikki Brevig, Decorah Area Chamber of Commerce.