

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the Kewaunee County Business Retention and Expansion Study are discussed in detail in the preceding Major Findings section. There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the data results. These include:

1. The interviewed Kewaunee County business region is diverse with the largest percentage of those interviewed dealing in agriculture, retail, and the fabricated metals industry.
2. Almost three quarters of the interviewed firms (72%) are the headquarters of the company, with 53% stating there are additional facilities located in other communities. Of the businesses responding, 84% are incorporated.
3. The interviewed Kewaunee County business community had its largest period of company start-ups 21 - 100 years ago. Of the executives responding, 42% state they, or a member of their family, were involved in establishing the business.
4. Of the responding Kewaunee County businesses, 50% are not at their original location.
5. The study finds that of the Kewaunee County businesses responding, 87% own the facility and 13% lease.
6. The top factors negatively impacting the companies' current or future development are market condition/economy and regulatory constraints.
7. Of the interviewed executives, 9% report supplying a portion of their products to federal government, 18% to state government and 32% to local. Kewaunee County executives are expressing an interest in initiating or expanding government contracts: 39% - federal; 45% - state; and 52% have local interest. A number of Kewaunee County business executives supply to a prime contractor who in turn sells to the government: 21% - federal; 21% - state; and 24% - local.

8. Nearly one third (32%) of the respondents say the majority of their customers are located within Wisconsin. Twenty-nine percent say they are in other areas across the nation, and 27% say they are in the local area.
9. When asked where primary competitors are located, the majority of the executives respond they are across the nation. More than two thirds of the executives (69%) feel competitors are "making significant inroads" or are a "future threat" to their business.
10. Many of the businesses (79%) reported having enough property to expand at the present location, and 35% (9 persons) have definite expansion plans.
11. Thirty-three percent of the responding executives, (11 persons) have plans for a new building either at the present site or elsewhere in the community. Just over half of the executives have plans to modernize or improve their present building(s) and 88% have plans to modernize or improve their equipment.
12. Results indicate 18% of the executives (6 persons) have plans to expand the business in another Wisconsin community; 18% reported plans to expand out of state.
13. The study found that 6% of the executives (two persons) indicated plans to move all or part of the operation, either now or in the future. One said a move is possible. All three indicated the move would be to another site in the local area.
14. Other states have contacted 18% of the interviewed businesses in an attempt to persuade them to relocate.
15. The interviewed executives currently employ 2,307 full-time people. Data gathered from those responding to all five questions in a series about employment (21 persons) reflect the following: Current employment is 2% lower than one year ago, but 14% higher than five years ago. The executives anticipate an increase of 5% next year and an increase of 21% over the next five years.
16. Highly skilled employees in Kewaunee County receive an average hourly wage of \$16.26, semi-skilled receive an average of \$11.06, and unskilled an average of \$8.80.

17. Kewaunee County executives report less difficulty recruiting for blue-collar positions than professional positions. Of those responding, 69% are having difficulty recruiting professional workers, 53% have problems recruiting blue-collar workers.
18. The Kewaunee County executives believe the most positive factors dealing with recruiting are the quality of life and cost of living. Some executives listed personal taxes and climate as more negative factors.
19. Of the respondents, 19% report an association with a union, encompassing 35% of the full-time employment base.
20. The study finds 47% of the executives rate their local economic development efforts "excellent" or "good," 29% responded "fair," 21% "poor," and 3% "no opinion."
21. Of the executives responding to this survey, 53% rated their local government "excellent" or "good," 29% responded "fair," 15% "poor," and 3% "no opinion."
22. The factor most negatively impacting the firms' present financial condition is market condition/economy.
23. Of the respondents, 82% are Area Chamber of Commerce members, 55% are members of other business organizations, and 81% are interested in participating in community organizations.
24. Of the executives responding to this survey, 79% feel their local community is an "excellent" or "good" place to do business. The state received an "excellent" or "good" rating from 82% of the respondents.
25. The study finds 26% of the executives feel Wisconsin's business climate has improved over the past few years, 50% feel it has not changed, 21% feel conditions have gotten worse, and 3% respond "no opinion."
26. Where Wisconsin's future business climate is concerned, 32% of the respondents feel the climate will improve over the next few years, 50% feel it will "stay the same," 12% feel conditions will deteriorate, and 6% respond "no opinion."

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Encourage local firms to modernize their business practices and to be more innovative. Provide training and financial incentives to make this possible.
2. Work closely with any firms that indicated relocation or expansion plans outside the area. Make it a priority to retain the businesses and their expansion efforts within Kewaunee County.
3. Develop brownfields and vacant buildings into properties ready to fulfill the needs of expanding businesses. Make these sites readily available to businesses that want to expand.
4. Pursue firms to locate in Kewaunee County that will compliment existing business in the county. Businesses such as computer companies, software companies, and paper product companies in particular should be marketed to in business attraction efforts.
5. Work with ITBEC, Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Green Bay and Door County Chambers of Commerce, and Northeast Wisconsin Economic Development Corporations to help make Kewaunee County businesses aware of international trade opportunities.
6. Contact a Federal Government procurement program specialist from the Government Services Agency (GSA) to present information to Kewaunee County businesses on – How to bid on and be granted Federal Government contracts.
7. Identify the five businesses in the study that reported possible plans to shut down or relocate and offer them appropriate assistance, whether it is education, services, financing, property, a buyer, or employees, we need to work with them.
8. Offer customized labor training to local businesses based on Kewaunee County Employer Forum recommendations and business retention study suggestions. Customized trainings to include:
 - Leadership skills - teaching empowerment techniques, team building initiatives, and quality circle programs to company supervisors and potential leaders

- Employee screening techniques - how to hire the right person for the job the first time.
 - People skills – communication and how to think on your feet.
 - Computer software training
 - Spanish language training
 - Ethics – how value systems and people with different motivations shape the workplace
 - Training solutions for employers to reduce turnover and training costs. Teaching the formula for determining turnover costs
9. Actively encourage employers to use customized trainings, especially trainings on turnover costs and employee retention.
 10. Introduce and emphasize job development programs being offered by county, state, and federal governments to employers. Develop handouts that describe all above agency programs and give contact numbers.
 11. Use Kewaunee County's security and quality of life to draw potential businesses here. This is a true asset and needs to be emphasized.
 12. An aggressive county-based economic development program is necessary to help businesses plan for future growth.
 13. Develop a workshop with the municipalities, Kewaunee County, and Wisconsin Department of Commerce to educate local officials and employers about what programs are available for business and community assistance.
 14. Encourage local governments to use a proactive approach to business and economic development. Work to improve communication lines between businesses and local officials.
 15. Currently, county employer's impressions of Kewaunee County government are not strong. We need to improve upon this through communication strategies and relationship building.