



## news release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Results of Regional Business Survey Released

Mankato, Minn. (December 4, 2009) – The results of a Regional Business Survey are now available online [greatermankato.com/community-publicpolicy.php](http://greatermankato.com/community-publicpolicy.php). The survey was conducted in November by Greater Mankato Growth (GMG), who was asked by area Representatives Kathy Brynaert, Tony Cornish and Terry Morrow to help gather input from the regional business community.

“We are fortunate to have legislators who are so interested in hearing directly from their business constituents on legislative business matters and who took the initiative to contact Greater Mankato Growth about working together to gather this important information from our business community,” said Jonathan Zierdt, GMG President and CEO. As the region’s integrated chamber of commerce and economic development organization, GMG communicates legislative information to businesses and collects information from the overall business community to share with legislators.

Information from the survey will be used by these local representatives to collectively share the perspective of the Greater Mankato regional center with their colleagues in the House of Representatives, which recently formed a new bipartisan caucus made up of legislators committed to making Minnesota a better place to do business. The bipartisan caucus issued its own state-wide business survey in October. That survey served as a starting point for creating the regional survey created by the three Representatives and GMG. “We took the state survey and added some detail to give us more precise insight into our regional business climate,” explained Zierdt.

Some key findings include:

- When asked to rank the importance of six specific factors to the success of their business, the results were:
  - Most important: Close proximity to customers– this speaks well for Greater Mankato status as a regional business center, including Blue Earth and Nicollet Counties and the communities immediately adjacent.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> most important: Well-educated workforce– this also is good news for Greater Mankato where the presence of five diverse higher education institutions make an educated talent pool more accessible.
- When asked to rate Minnesota as a place for doing business, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent, the average rating was less than 3 for all categories, which included sales taxes, property taxes, income taxes, unemployment insurance, worker’s compensation rates, health care benefit costs, environmental regulations and regulatory enforcement fairness.
- When asked what transportation factors affect their business, 47.8% of respondents selected snow/ice removal on roads, 39.1% selected easy of access to regional corridor highways (169 and 14) and 34.8% said expansion of Hwy. 14 to four lanes.
- When asked to gauge the impact of the recession on their business’ gross revenues, 77% saw a decrease, 13.5 % saw an increase and 9.5% saw no impact. In addition, 50.5% of respondents said they have delayed hiring new employees as a result of the recession, 73.3% delayed capital equipment purchases and 56.7% delayed expansion plans. “This means that as the economy continues to improve, we should see many businesses reinitiating their expansion plans at the same time,” said Zierdt.

The survey was executed online, with Greater Mankato Growth sending it directly to its 750+ member businesses and the three representatives also sending it to the businesses from their areas. The survey was completed by 97 businesses. “We are grateful to all the businesses, who have provided this information, which will be valuable to our legislators as they consider next steps for enhancing Minnesota’s business environment,” said Zierdt. The survey ran through Midnight November 30. Survey results were previewed at a Community Summit hosted by Southern Minnesota Advocates on December 2.

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