

BUSINESS

Counties hit recovery benchmarks

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

A recent report from the National Association of Counties, ranked Minnesota third in the nation in the number of counties that have recovered from the recession.

Nine Minnesota counties in greater Minnesota have met or surpassed prerecession levels, according to the study. The report measures recovery based on four categories: jobs, unemployment rate, economic

More information

The full report is available at <http://explorer.naco.org>.

North Dakota, with 16 counties, top the list. Following Minnesota's nine counties are Kansas, with eight counties, and Montana, with three counties.

The Minnesota counties are Clay, Marshall, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Stevens, Wilkin, Jackson and Murray counties. All nine counties are located in the northwest, west central or southwest portion of Minnesota.

"The National Association

of Counties study shows counties in greater Minnesota are on the front end of the economic recovery," Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben said in a news release.

"While Minnesota ranks third nationally for the number of recovered counties, we must continue to focus on growing jobs and increasing economic opportunity for all of Minnesota."

State manufacturers report optimism

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

State manufacturers are hopeful when it comes to increasing employment and production in 2015, according to a recent report.

Minnesota manufacturers are optimistic about the industry in 2015, with more than 90 percent saying they expect production and employment levels to increase or stay the same – up more than 10 percent from 2014 for both indicators – according to a survey by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

and the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis.

In the random survey of Minnesota manufacturers conducted in November, 52 percent of those that responded expect orders to grow in 2015 and 42 percent expect to hire more workers.

"Based on the results of the annual Manufacturing Business Conditions Survey, manufacturers have a positive outlook for their industry and for the state's economy in 2015," DEED Commissioner Katie Clark Sieben said in a news release. "In terms of new jobs,

Minnesota's manufacturing industry is growing at more than double the national pace, and the continued positive expectations from industry leaders reflect added confidence for the coming year."

Among other findings in the survey:

- 93 percent expect exports to increase or stay the same, up 2 percent from 2014.
- 95 percent expect productivity to increase or stay the same, up 5 percent from 2014.
- 85 percent expect profits to increase or stay the same,

up 17 percent from 2014.

- 85 percent expect investments in plants or equipment to increase or stay the same, up 5 percent from 2014.
- 90 percent expect orders to increase or stay the same, up 13 percent from 2014.

In addition, manufacturers were also optimistic about the outlook for the overall state economy in 2015. The survey showed manufacturers were more optimistic than a year ago about overall corporate profits, economic growth, consumer spending, business investments and employment.



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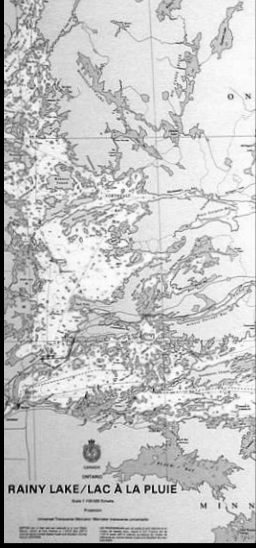
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