

# LOCALNEWS

## State chamber unveils survey findings

### MN CHAMBER REPORT

A recent annual report from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce underlines the continued disconnect between business needs and action at the Capitol.

The 11th annual Business Barometer survey, co-sponsored by the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and Himle Rapp & Company, a public affairs firm from Minneapolis, found Minnesota employers understand the impact state policy-makers have on their bottom lines.

According to the survey, nearly 90 percent of respondents to the survey said the governor and Legislature play a role in shaping the state's business climate. Thirty-five percent of respondents said they play a very important role.

At the same time, 63 percent – including 24 percent strongly so – said elected officials generally do not understand the everyday challenges facing businesses. More than two-thirds said a government decision played a role in a business decision at least several times a month.

“We’re seeing improvement in the economy,” Bill Blazar, Minnesota Chamber interim president, said in a release. “But businesses continue to believe that Minnesota under the present administration and Legislature is pointed in the wrong direction – that current policies will hurt their ability to compete with their peers in today’s global economy.”

The findings provide three pieces of advice for policy-makers if Minnesota is to develop and grow its economy, Blazar noted:

- Decrease, then control

increases in business costs. Two-thirds of businesses reported that their tax burden is accelerating, and half said workers’ compensation and unemployment insurance costs are rising. One-third of businesses are concerned about energy affordability, and more than half of the respondents are facing higher health care costs in spite of the promises of the federal Affordable Care Act.

■ Continue regulatory reform. Half of Minnesota business owners and managers reported that their business decisions are being influenced by government regulations on a weekly basis, and 72 percent said government doesn’t do a good job of balancing the proper amount of regulation with the need of businesses to keep growing.

■ Accelerate workforce development. No message was clearer than the need to address the talent gap in Minnesota. Fewer than half of employers said Minnesota has plenty of workers with the right skills for their industry, and the consensus is that this will affect their ability to do business within a couple of years – if it hasn’t already.

“The workforce findings are of special concern,” Blazar said. “Employers are telling us that workers are less prepared than they were two years ago in the technical skills needed for specific industries. The problem is exacerbated in light of the projected worker shortage that Minnesota



Bill Blazar

faces.”

Taxes, identified by 62 percent of the poll respondents, once again ranked as the major barrier to job creation. Two-thirds of the respondents said their tax burden was higher than five years ago, up slightly from 2012 and 2013 results. Nearly half of the respondents said the tax increases enacted by the 2013 Legislature were damaging to long-term growth.

All of these issues warrant attention by the governor and Legislature, Blazar said, and the Minnesota Chamber is prepared to advance specific initiatives in each of these areas.

“The Business Barometer has been very accurate at identifying future challenges for policy-makers,” Todd Rapp, president of Himle Rapp & Company, said in a release. “Today, even though there is a lot of optimism about Minnesota’s economic future, addressing the skills gap and controlling business costs are two areas where the Minnesota Legislature could help turn this optimism into a major economic boom.”

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

The Minnesota Chamber is the state’s largest business advocacy organization representing 2,300 companies of all types and sizes across the state.

## NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 361 (INTERNATIONAL FALLS) STATE OF MINNESOTA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a special election has been called and will be held in and for Independent School District No. 361 (International Falls), State of Minnesota, on Tuesday, November 4, 2014, for the purpose of voting on the following questions:

### SCHOOL DISTRICT QUESTION BALLOT INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 361 INTERNATIONAL FALLS SPECIAL ELECTION November 4, 2014

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS To vote, completely fill in the oval next to your choice like this:

To vote for a question, **fill in the oval** next to the word “YES” for that question. To vote against a question, **fill in the oval** next to the word “NO” for that question.

#### SCHOOL DISTRICT BALLOT QUESTION 1 APPROVAL OF SEVEN MEMBER SCHOOL BOARD

<input type="radio"/>	YES	Shall the school board of Independent School District No. 361 consist of seven members?
<input type="radio"/>	NO	

The polling places for this election and the precincts served by those polling places will be as follows:

East Ward-Kootasca Building  
Center Ward-Union Hall  
West Ward-Aquinas Hall  
Beaver, Meding, Ray - Mail  
Kooch Poll 1-Ranier  
Kooch Poll 2-Union Hall  
Kooch Poll 4-Aquinas Hall  
Kooch Poll 5-RRCC  
Ranier Community Building

Any eligible voter residing in the school district may vote at said election at the polling place designated above for the precinct in which he or she resides. The polls for said election will open at 7:00 o'clock a.m. and will close at 8:00 o'clock p.m. on the date of said election.

A voter must be registered to vote to be eligible to vote in this election. An unregistered individual may register to vote at the polling place on election day.

Dated: October 6, 2014

BY ORDER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD


Willi Kostiuk  
School District Clerk



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**Tami Renollet - Agent**  
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