Conducted by the:



Sponsored by the University of Illinois Springfield Chancellor’s Office,

the Center for State Policy and Leadership at UIS,

and The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce

**Methodology**

The Sangamon County Economic Outlook Survey is a multi-mode survey (mail and phone) examining the economic perceptions, expectations, and evaluations of Sangamon County businesses, public, and non-profit organizations. The survey has been conducted biannually (March and September) since 2008[[1]](#footnote-1) with the goal of providing a longitudinal analysis of the local economy through the lens of area organizations. The original sample included all known businesses/firms/organizations in Sangamon County provided by the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce in the fall of 2007. The Fall 2014 sample was updated by the Survey Research Office in August 2014.

The final sample included 1198 Sangamon County organizations representing the private sector, the non-profit sector, and the public sector. A printed questionnaire and letter requesting participation in the study were sent to these individual businesses and non-profit organizations on August 28th, 2014, with follow-up phone interviews on September 5th, 2014. The second wave of surveys were sent on September 12th and the survey was closed on September 19th. The survey also included a web option. Respondents were required to enter their unique project ID number to complete the web version in order to eliminate duplicate responses. The Fall 2014 results are from 207 respondents. The overall survey has a 20.8% response rate and represents fourteen different economic sectors.

For more information about this survey, please contact Dr. Ashley Kirzinger at akirz2@uis.edu or (217) 206-6591. Special thanks to Richard Schuldt, Dr. Beverly Bunch, Dr. Patricia Byrnes at the University of Illinois Springfield, and Paul Marsh at the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce for their guidance on this project.

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**Intensity Index Scores**

The “Intensity Index Score” is developed using the economic indicator questions, which have consistently appeared in every Outlook Survey. The score is the average of all ratings when the following values are assigned to each response: large decline (-100), small decline (-50), stay the same (0), small increase (+50), and large increase (+100). The Intensity Index score measures the expected change in each of the economic factors over the next 12 months.

**Table 1. Business demographics of respondents**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Responses | Valid frequency |
| Sector |  |  |
| Private sector (for-profit) | 133 | 65.5% |
| Non-profit sector | 35 | 17.2% |
| Public sector (government) | 35 | 17.2% |
| Primary Economic Activity[[2]](#footnote-2) |  |  |
| Construction | 21 | 10.1% |
| Manufacturing | 9 | 4.3% |
| Wholesale trade | 4 | 1.9% |
| Retail trade | 35 | 16.9% |
| Transportation/ warehousing | 6 | 2.9% |
| Finance/ insurance/ real estate | 20 | 9.7% |
| Medical/ health care | 12 | 5.8% |
| Education/ educational services | 13 | 6.3% |
| Accommodations/ food/ entertainment/ recreation | 18 | 8.7% |
| Information and communications systems | 5 | 2.4% |
| Business and professional support services | 26 | 12.6% |
| Personal services | 17 | 8.2% |
| Natural resources and mining | 1 | 0.5% |
| Public administration | 20 | 9.7% |
| Unidentified | 0 | 0% |
| Years in operation |  |  |
| Median number of years in current location | 197 | 23 years |
| Median number of years in Sangamon County | 193 | 37 years |
| Median number of years in Illinois | 194 | 40 years |
| Number of employees |  |  |
| Less than five employees | 27 | 13.5% |
| Five to ten employees | 45 | 22.5% |
| 11-20 employees | 50 | 25.0% |
| 21-35 employees | 26 | 13.0% |
| 36-50 employees | 13 | 6.5% |
| 51- 100 employees | 16 | 8.0% |
| 101-200 employees | 17 | 8.5% |
| More than 200 employees | 6 | 3.0% |

**Executive Summary**

The Fall 2014 Sangamon County Economic Outlook Survey studies local businesses, firms, and non-profits in order to gauge expectations for the next twelve months across several economic indicators. The results continue a positive trajectory in expectations about individual firms and sectors, and also indicate a steady increase in expectations about the overall economy. When asked about the economic outlooks for their own individual firms, their firm’s sectors, and the overall Sangamon County, local employers are positive. In previous surveys, expectations about the individual’s own firm or business as well as their firm’s sector received better expectations than the overall Sangamon County economy. This continues to be true in the Fall 2014 survey, however, the difference in expectations is less. Individuals have very positive expectations about their own organization (an *IIS* of +14, which is the second highest expectation since the outlook survey began in 2008), as well as positive expectations for both their firm’s sector (*IIS* of +11) and the overall Sangamon County economy (*IIS* of +8). In fact, expectations for the overall Sangamon County economy increased 6 points from the Spring 2014 survey. This is a steady increase of a total of 22 points since Fall 2012.

Figure 1 displays the longitudinal analysis of Intensity Index Scores (*IIS*) for the overall Sangamon County economy, respondents’ firm’s sector, and individual firms/businesses/organizations.

**Expectations for non-profits continue decline**

As seen in figure 2, Sangamon County employers, on average, have been pessimistic about expected contributions to non-profit organizations. Since Fall 2010, expected contributions to non-profits has been negative. The Fall 2014 survey is not different and while it is a slight improvement since Spring 2014 (+1 in *IIS* scores), the overall expectations are still negative. In fact, this is the single item in the survey that has not rebounded since the recession.

According to the Urban Institute, a nonpartisan economic and public policy research organization, nonprofit organizations nationally fared relatively well during and after the recession. According to a series of briefs issued by the Urban Institute[[3]](#footnote-3) as well as a report from Indiana University’s School of Philanthropy,[[4]](#footnote-4) in many instances the nonprofit sector grew during the recession. However, this growth is limited to organizations focusing on healthcare and education. Organizations that focus on social assistance and the arts did not fare as well and are just beginning to experience renewed growth in contributions.

In Illinois, non-profit organizations struggle with late payments from the state government and declining government contracts. According to the 2013 National Study of Nonprofit-Government Contracts & Grants[[5]](#footnote-5), 75 percent of Illinois nonprofit organizations reported late payments from the government. In addition, 51 percent reported that the greatest decline in their resources is from state government contracts, and when nonprofits have state contracts, less than one-third reported that government contracts covered the full costs.

**Biggest assets and liabilities for Sangamon County employers**

The Fall 2014 Sangamon County Economic Outlook Survey includes a topical section examining the assets and liabilities for doing business in Sangamon County. Respondents were given 23 items and asked to report whether the item was a “big asset,” “small asset,” “neither asset nor liability,” “small liability,” or “big liability” for doing business in Sangamon County. Table 2 below presents the mean and standard deviation for responses to each item. Lower scores indicate more positive ratings. As seen in the table, respondents believe that “health care facilities and quality” is the greatest asset for doing business in Sangamon County while the “total state taxes on business” is the greatest liability. The other top asset in Sangamon County was “proximity to colleges/universities/technical schools.”

**Table 2. Assets or liabilities for doing business in Sangamon County**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Asset or liability? | Mean score (SD)[[6]](#footnote-6) |
| Health care facilities and quality | 1.96(.870) |
| Proximity to colleges/universities/technical schools | 2.35(.844) |
|  |  |
| Cost of living and housing | 2.57(1.01) |
| Access/proximity to transportation systems (highway, rail, air) | 2.59(.902) |
| Crime and public safety services | 2.71(.888) |
| Being located in the state capital | 2.72(.871) |
| Recreational, social, and cultural opportunities | 2.75(.851) |
| Cost of/ availability of land and business or expansion possibilities | 2.78(.818) |
| Access to/cost of communications networks | 2.81(.808) |
| Utilities- access to/cost of (electricity, natural gas, water supply, waste disposal) | 2.83(1.00) |
| Environment and climate | 2.87(.841) |
| Local government incentives to business | 2.91(.905) |
| K-12 education system | 2.92(.929) |
| Local business climate and reputation | 2.94(1.05) |
| Availability of workforce | 2.98(1.05) |
| Quality of workforce | 3.01(1.16) |
| State government incentives to business | 3.22(.973) |
| Local zoning/permits and regulations | 3.50(.849) |
|  |  |
| State permits and regulations | 3.65(.814) |
| Total local taxes on business | 3.72(.976) |
| State business climate and reputation | 3.81(1.17) |
| Workers compensation processes | 3.82(.969) |
| Total state taxes on business | 4.05(1.0) |

**The Sangamon County Economy**

The Fall 2014 survey indicates mixed expectations for the overall Sangamon County economy (see figure 3). Thirty-seven percent of respondents report that they expect an increase in the overall economy, 43.4 percent expect it to stay the same, and 29.5 percent expect a small decline over the next twelve months.

Table 3 displays the current Intensity Index Scores, the Spring 2014 Intensity Index scores, as well as the changes between the scores. In general, respondents’ expectations are more positive for Sangamon County now than in the spring. As seen in the table, respondents are positive towards the majority of the economic factors with a couple noticeable exceptions. First, respondents report negative expectations for contributions to non-profits in Sangamon County. However, contributions to non-profits are slightly more positive now than six months ago.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 3. Intensity Index Scores for overall Sangamon County factors | | | |  |  |  |
|  | **Fall 2014 *IIS*** | **Spring 2014 *IIS*** | **Difference**  **(Fall 2014- Spring 2014)** | | | |
| Overall employment | +10 | +4 | +56 | | | |
| Capital investment | +11 | +6 | +5 | | | |
| Interest rates | +22 | +25 | -3 | | | |
| Gross sales/revenue | +19 | +16 | +3 | | | |
| Inflation/ price of goods | +40 | +44 | -4 | | | |
| Contributions to non-profits | -11 | -12 | +1 | | | |
| Overall economy | +8 | +2 | +6 | | | |

In addition, respondents still expect interest rates and inflation to increase over the next twelve months. Since Fall 2009, the majority of survey respondents report that they expect inflation to increase to some degree (either small or large). This is despite the fact that the current inflation rate is 1.6 percent, which is only a .1 percentage point increase since October 2013.[[7]](#footnote-7)

**Examining Expectations for Economic Sectors**

In examining respondents’ expectations for each economic sector, we find that respondents hold slightly different expectations for the forthcoming year. Still, for nearly all sectors, the Intensity Index Scores display positive expectations (see Table 4). Once again, the medical/ health care sector is the most positively rated economic sector in Sangamon County with an *IIS* of +41. This is a nine point increase from Spring 2014 and continues an upward trend in expectations regarding the medical/health care sector. The least positively rated sectors are natural resources/ mining and manufacturing with respective *IIS* scores of -14 and -10. When compared to six months ago, respondents report lower expectations for nine of the fourteen listed economic sectors. Yet, respondents remain optimistic about their own firm’s sector, regardless of which sector they work in. For example, while all respondents report negative expectations for the manufacturing sector, on average, those working in manufacturing still report positive expectations.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 4. Intensity Index Scores for specific economic sectors | | | |  |
|  | **Fall 2014 *IIS*** | **Spring 2014 *IIS*** | **Difference**  **(Fall 2014- Spring 2014)** | |
|
| Own firm's sector | +11 | +9 | +2 | |
| Construction | +19 | +16 | +3 | |
| Manufacturing | -10 | -1 | -9 | |
| Wholesale trade | +5 | +6 | -1 | |
| Retail trade | +8 | +13 | -5 | |
| Transportation/ warehousing | +4 | +10 | -6 | |
| Finance/ insurance/ real estate | +18 | +19 | -1 | |
| Medical/ health care | +41 | +32 | +9 | |
| Education/ educational services | +6 | +3 | +3 | |
| Accommodations/ food/ entertainment / recreation | +7 | +8 | -1 | |
| Information and communications systems | +19 | +16 | +3 | |
| Business and professional services | +10 | +11 | -1 | |
| Personal services | +6 | +5 | +1 | |
| Natural resources/ mining | -14 | -4 | -10 | |
| Public administration | -4 | +7 | -3 | |

As seen in figure 4, the four sectors that receive the most positive ratings by respondents are the medical/ healthcare sector (+41 *IIS*), the construction sector (+19 IIS), the information/ communication sector (+19 IIS), and the finance/ insurance/ real estate sector (+18 *IIS*). Consistently, these four sectors have been the most positively rates sectors since the Spring 2012 survey.

**Overall Expectations for “Your” Firm/ Organization**

The Fall 2014 Survey indicates that expectations for individual business­­es/ firms/ organizations over the next 12 months are very similar to the Spring 2014 results. Respondents rate all economic aspects of their own firm/ business/ organization positively, with gross revenue/ sales (*IIS* of +8) and overall status (*IIS* of +14) receiving the most positive ratings. Overall, expectations regarding capital investment are the least positive (*IIS*  of +8). Interesting, expectations regarding total number of employees experienced a five point increase from Spring 2014 to Fall 2014, from an *IIS* of +6 in Spring 2014 to +11 in Fall 2014. Overall, the *IIS* scores remain very stable between the Spring and Fall of 2014 (see Table 5).

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 5. Intensity Index Scores for own firm/ business/ organization expectations | | | |
|  | **Fall 2014 *IIS*** | **Spring 2014 *IIS*** | **Difference (Fall 2014 - Spring 2014)** |
|
| Capital investment | +8 | +11 | -3 |
| Total number of employees | +11 | +6 | +5 |
| Gross revenue/ sales | +14 | +14 | 0 |
| Profitability | +9 | +8 | +1 |
| Overall status | +14 | +13 | +1 |

As seen in figure 5, 44.9 percent of respondents report that they expect an increase in their gross revenue/ sales over the next 12 months. This is followed by 40.1 percent expecting an increase in overall status, 38.4 percent expecting an increase in profitability, 32.9 percent expecting an increase in total number of employees, and 31.0 percent expecting an increase in capital investment. The majority of all respondents report that they expect capital investment and the total number of employees employed by their organization to remain the same (respectively, 53.5 percent and 53.9 percent).

**Biggest Challenges Facing Sangamon County Employers**

Survey respondents were asked to identify the three biggest challenges for their business/ firm/ organization over the next 12 months from a list of pre-identified challenges. As seen in Table 6, government regulations and taxation weigh the heaviest on the minds of local area employers (which is consistent with previous results). Forty-seven percent of respondents report that government regulations and taxation is going to be one of the biggest challenges facing them in the next 12 months. One-third of employers are also concerned about providing healthcare for employees (including the implementation of the Affordable Care Act) with 33.3 percent of respondents citing this as one of the biggest challenges for their business/ firm/ organization.[[8]](#footnote-8) State government finances also received 33.3 percent of respondents reporting that it will be one of their biggest challenges.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Table 6. Biggest Challenges Facing Sangamon County Employers | | | |
|  | **Frequency** | | **Valid Percent** |
| Government regulations and taxation | | 98 | 47.3% |
| Healthcare for employees (e.g., Affordable Care Act) | | 69 | 33.3% |
| State government finances | | 69 | 33.3% |
| Availability of skilled/ trained workers | | 54 | 26.1% |
| Competition from local/ state/ national firms | | 51 | 24.6% |
| Employee (union and nonunion) compensation and benefits (not healthcare) | | 50 | 24.2% |
| Consumer confidence/ spending | | 47 | 22.7% |
| Energy prices | | 33 | 15.9% |
| Commodity prices | | 32 | 15.5% |
| Inflation | | 27 | 13.0% |
| Interest rates | | 12 | 5.8% |
| Global competition | | 8 | 3.9% |

It is important to note that none of the challenges received a majority of respondents reporting that it was going to be one of the three biggest challenges facing their organization over the next twelve months. This may be due to differences in responses among types of sectors (public, non-profit, or private). While all three types of employers report that government regulations and taxation, healthcare for employees, and state government finances are their biggest challenges, a lower percentage of non-profit and public sector respondents report facing any of these challenges (see figure 6)[[9]](#footnote-9). In particular, a majority of private sector employers report that government regulations and taxation and healthcare for employees are going to be their biggest challenges over the next 12 months, compared to less than one-fourth of public sector and non-profit sector employers. The only shared concern is with state government finances, in which 33.8 percent of public sector and 42.6 percent of private sector employers report that it is one of their biggest challenges.

**Topical Section for the Fall 2014 Survey**

The topical section for the Fall 2014 Sangamon County Economic Outlook Survey includes two unique sections: the assets and liabilities for conducting business in Sangamon County and the effect that the Illinois State Fair has on local businesses.

*Assets and liabilities for doing business in Sangamon County*

The Fall 2014 Sangamon County Economic Outlook Survey includes a topical section examining the assets and liabilities for doing business in Sangamon County. Respondents were given 23 items and asked to report whether the item was a “big asset,” “small asset,” “neither asset nor liability,” “small liability,” or “big liability” for doing business in Sangamon County. The scale ranges from 1 to 5, with “1” representing “big asset” and “5” representing “big liability. Table 7 presents the mean and standard deviation for responses to each item. Lower scores indicate more positive ratings. As seen in the table, respondents believe that “health care facilities and quality” is the greatest asset for doing business in Sangamon County while the “total state taxes on business” is the greatest liability. The other top asset in Sangamon County was “proximity to colleges/universities/technical schools.” As seen in figure 7, on average, 2 items were categorized as assets for doing business in Sangamon County (mean score of less than 3), while five items, on average, were categorized as a liability. Sixteen items received average scores between 2.5 and 3.5, indicating relatively neutral evaluations (neither an asset nor a liability).

Asset

Liability

**Table 7. Assets or liabilities for doing business in Sangamon County**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Asset or liability? | Mean score (SD) |
| Health care facilities and quality | 1.96(.870) |
| Proximity to colleges/universities/technical schools | 2.35(.844) |
|  |  |
| Cost of living and housing | 2.57(1.01) |
| Access/proximity to transportation systems (highway, rail, air) | 2.59(.902) |
| Crime and public safety services | 2.71(.888) |
| Being located in the state capital | 2.72(.871) |
| Recreational, social, and cultural opportunities | 2.75(.851) |
| Cost of/ availability of land and business or expansion possibilities | 2.78(.818) |
| Access to/cost of communications networks | 2.81(.808) |
| Utilities- access to/cost of (electricity, natural gas, water supply, waste disposal) | 2.83(1.00) |
| Environment and climate | 2.87(.841) |
| Local government incentives to business | 2.91(.905) |
| K-12 education system | 2.92(.929) |
| Local business climate and reputation | 2.94(1.05) |
| Availability of workforce | 2.98(1.05) |
| Quality of workforce | 3.01(1.16) |
| State government incentives to business | 3.22(.973) |
| Local zoning/permits and regulations | 3.50(.849) |
|  |  |
| State permits and regulations | 3.65(.814) |
| Total local taxes on business | 3.72(.976) |
| State business climate and reputation | 3.81(1.17) |
| Workers compensation processes | 3.82(.969) |
| Total state taxes on business | 4.05(1.0) |

*How does the Illinois State Fair affect your organization?*

According to a 2011 Economic Impact Study conducted by the University of Illinois’ Regional Economics Applications Laboratory in the Institute of Government and Public Affairs, the 2011 Illinois State Fair generated $47 million in business revenue. In an effort to examine how the Illinois State Fair affects Sangamon County businesses, survey respondents were asked two questions regarding the possible effect that the Illinois State Fair may have on their business/organization. First, they were asked whether the Illinois State Fair has no economic impact, an economic impact of less than $15,000, an economic impact between $15,000 and $30,000, an economic impact between $30,001 and $50,000, or an economic impact of more than $50,000 on their own business/organization. Three-fourths of survey respondents report that the Illinois State Fair has no economic impact on their own business/organization. Fourteen percent of employers report that the Illinois State Fair has an economic impact of less than $15,000 on their business/organization. Only 7.4 percent of Sangamon County employers report that an economic impact of the Illinois State Fair on their business/organization of more than $15,000 (see figure 8). In addition, 58.8 percent of survey respondents from the accommodations/food/entertainment/recreation sector report that the Illinois State Fair has no economic impact on their business.

Secondly, respondents were asked whether their organization experienced an increased number of employees (including part-time workers), expanded hours of operation, or an increase in gross revenue/sales due to the Illinois State Fair. Slightly less than 8 percent of local employers report that they experience an increase in gross revenue/sales, 2.4 percent experienced expanded hours of operation, and only 1 percent report that they increased their number of employees.

**Sangamon County Economic Outlook Survey**

**(*N=207)***

Section 1: Sangamon County Economic Expectations

Over the next 12 months, what are your expectations for the local economy in Sangamon County? Do you think each aspect of the local economy will see a large decline, small decline, stay the same, small increase, or large increase?

Overall employment (Intensity index score: +9.5)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n)* |
| Large decline | 0%(0) |
| Small decline | 14.6%(30) |
| Stay the same | 52.4%(108) |
| Small increase | 32.5%(67) |
| Large increase | 0.5%(1) |

Capital investment (Intensity index score: +11.0)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n)* |
| Large decline | 1.5%(3) |
| Small decline | 12.2%(24) |
| Stay the same | 50.0%(98) |
| Small increase | 35.2%(69) |
| Large increase | 1.0%(2) |

Interest rates (Intensity index score: +21.8)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent (*n*) |
| Large decline | 0%(0) |
| Small decline | 4.6%(9) |
| Stay the same | 49.7%(97) |
| Small increase | 43.1%(84) |
| Large increase | 2.6%(5) |

Gross sales/revenue (Intensity index score: +19.0)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 0%(0) |
| Small decline | 12.7%(25) |
| Stay the same | 37.6%(74) |
| Small increase | 48.7%(96) |
| Large increase | 1.0%(2) |

Inflation/price of goods (Intensity index score: +39.7)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 0%(0) |
| Small decline | 1.5%(3) |
| Stay the same | 25.1%(51) |
| Small increase | 66.0%(134) |
| Large increase | 7.4%(15) |

Contributions to non-profits (Intensity index score: -11.4)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 3.0%(6) |
| Small decline | 30.2%(61) |
| Stay the same | 54.0%(109) |
| Small increase | 12.4%(25) |
| Large increase | 0.5%(1) |

The overall economy (Intensity index score: +7.8)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 1.5%(3) |
| Small decline | 18.5%(38) |
| Stay the same | 43.4%(89) |
| Small increase | 36.1%(74) |
| Large increase | 0.5%(1) |

Section 2: Expectations for Sangamon County Economic Sectors

Over the next 12 months, what are your expectations for following economic sectors in Sangamon County? Do you think each aspect of the local economy will see a large decline, small decline, stay the same, small increase, or large increase?

Construction (Intensity index score: +18.6)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 1.5%(3) |
| Small decline | 13.4%(27) |
| Stay the same | 35.6%(72) |
| Small increase | 45.5%(92) |
| Large increase | 4.0%(8) |

Manufacturing (Intensity index score: -10.4)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 4.0%(8) |
| Small decline | 25.3%(50) |
| Stay the same | 58.1%(115) |
| Small increase | 12.6%(25) |
| Large increase | 0%(0) |

Wholesale trade (Intensity index score: +4.6)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 0.5%(1) |
| Small decline | 14.7%(29) |
| Stay the same | 60.9%(120) |
| Small increase | 22.8%(45) |
| Large increase | 1.0%(2) |

Retail trade (Intensity index score: +7.9)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 0.5%(1) |
| Small decline | 19.7%(40) |
| Stay the same | 44.8%(91) |
| Small increase | 33.5%(68) |
| Large increase | 1.5%(3) |

Transportation/ warehousing (Intensity index score: +3.5)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 0.5%(1) |
| Small decline | 11.4%(23) |
| Stay the same | 69.7%(140) |
| Small increase | 17.4%(35) |
| Large increase | 1.0%(2) |

Finance/insurance/real estate (Intensity index score: +17.7)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 1.0%(2) |
| Small decline | 8.9%(18) |
| Stay the same | 45.5%(92) |
| Small increase | 43.1%(87) |
| Large increase | 1.5%(3) |

Medical/health care (Intensity index score: +40.9)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 1.5%(3) |
| Small decline | 4.4%(9) |
| Stay the same | 20.6%(42) |
| Small increase | 57.8%(118) |
| Large increase | 15.7%(32) |

Education/ educational services (Intensity index score: +6.4)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 0.5%(1) |
| Small decline | 13.9%(28) |
| Stay the same | 59.9%(121) |
| Small increase | 23.8%(48) |
| Large increase | 2.0%(4) |

Accommodations/food/entertainment/recreation (Intensity index score: +7.1)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 1.0%(2) |
| Small decline | 12.7%(26) |
| Stay the same | 58.3%(119) |
| Small increase | 27.0%(55) |
| Large increase | 1.0%(2) |

Information and communications systems (Intensity index score: +19.4)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 0%(0) |
| Small decline | 3.5%(7) |
| Stay the same | 56.7%(114) |
| Small increase | 37.3%(75) |
| Large increase | 2.5%(5) |

Business and professional support services (Intensity index score: +9.6)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 0.5%(1) |
| Small decline | 9.9%(20) |
| Stay the same | 60.6%(123) |
| Small increase | 28.1%(57) |
| Large increase | 1.0%(2) |

Personal services (Intensity index score: +5.5)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 0.5%(1) |
| Small decline | 12.4%(25) |
| Stay the same | 62.7%(126) |
| Small increase | 24.4%(49) |
| Large increase | 0%()) |

Natural resources and mining (Intensity index score: -13.7)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 2.5%(5) |
| Small decline | 35.5%(70) |
| Stay the same | 50.8%(100) |
| Small increase | 9.1%(18) |
| Large increase | 2.0%(4) |

Public administration (Intensity index score: -4.2)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 1.0%(2) |
| Small decline | 20.9%(42) |
| Stay the same | 65.2%(131) |
| Small increase | 11.4%(23) |
| Large increase | 1.5%(3) |

Which of the above economic sectors best describes your firm’s primary economic activity?

(Intensity index score for own sector: +10.8)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Construction | 10.1%(21) |
| Manufacturing | 4.3%(9) |
| Wholesale trade | 1.9%(4) |
| Retail trade | 16.9%(35) |
| Transportation/warehousing | 2.9%(6) |
| Finance/insurance/real estate | 9.7%(20) |
| Medical/health care | 5.8%(12) |
| Education/educational services | 6.3%(13) |
| Accommodations/food/entertainment/recreation | 8.7%(18) |
| Information and communication systems | 2.4%(5) |
| Business and professional support services | 12.6%(26) |
| Personal services | 8.2%(17) |
| Natural resources and mining | .5%(1) |
| Public administration | 9.7%(20) |

Section 3: Expectations for Your Business/Firm/Organization Sangamon County

Over the next 12 months, what are your expectations for your business/firm/ organization in Sangamon County? Do you think each aspect of the local economy will see a large decline, small decline, stay the same, small increase, or large increase?

Capital investment in firm (Intensity index score: +8.0)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 2.5%(5) |
| Small decline | 13.0%(26) |
| Stay the same | 53.5%(107) |
| Small increase | 28.0%(56) |
| Large increase | 3.0%(6) |

Total number of employees (Intensity index score: +10.5)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 0.5%(1) |
| Small decline | 12.7%(26) |
| Stay the same | 53.9%(110) |
| Small increase | 30.9%(63) |
| Large increase | 2.0%(4) |

Gross revenue/sales (Intensity index score: +13.9)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 2.5%(5) |
| Small decline | 16.7%(33) |
| Stay the same | 35.9%(71) |
| Small increase | 40.4%(80) |
| Large increase | 4.5%(9) |

Profitability (Intensity index score: +9.3)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 1.6%(3) |
| Small decline | 18.1%(35) |
| Stay the same | 42.0%(81) |
| Small increase | 36.8%(71) |
| Large increase | 1.6%(3) |

Overall status (Intensity index score: +13.6)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Large decline | 1.0%(2) |
| Small decline | 12.9%(26) |
| Stay the same | 46.0%(93) |
| Small increase | 38.1%(77) |
| Large increase | 2.0%(4) |

Right now, as you look over the next 12 months, what are the three biggest challenges facing your business/firm/organization.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Government regulations and taxation | 47.3%(98) |
| Healthcare for employees (e.g., Affordable Care Act) | 33.3%(69) |
| State government finances | 33.3%(69) |
| Availability of skilled/trained workers | 26.1%(54) |
| Competition from local/state/national firms | 24.6%(51) |
| Employee (union and nonunion) compensation and benefits (not healthcare) | 24.2%(50) |
| Consumer confidence/spending | 22.7%(47) |
| Energy prices | 15.9%(33) |
| Commodity prices | 15.5%(32) |
| Inflation | 13.0%(27) |
| Interest rates | 5.8%(12) |
| Global competition | 3.9%(8) |
| Other specify: | 4.3%(9) |

Others mentioned: bad location, federal funding of transportation projects, private donations

Section 4: Sangamon County Strengths and Weaknesses

*This section is the topical portion of the survey and changes during each survey administration. The Fall 2014 survey includes questions on minimum wage laws and quality of utility services.*

Thinking about businesses or organizations like yours, do you think the following are a big asset, small asset, neither an asset nor a liability, a small liability, or a big liability for doing business in Sangamon County?

Cost of/availability of land and expansion possibilities

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 6.6%(13) |
| Small asset | 24.2%(48) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 56.1%(111) |
| Small liability | 10.6%(21) |
| Big liability | 2.5%(5) |

Access to/cost of communications networks

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 5.6%(11) |
| Small asset | 25.3%(50) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 54.0%(107) |
| Small liability | 13.1%(26) |
| Big liability | 2.0%(4) |

Access/proximity to transportation systems (highway, rail, air)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 12.4%(25) |
| Small asset | 30.3%(61) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 44.3%(89) |
| Small liability | 11.4%(23) |
| Big liability | 1.5%(3) |

Availability of workforce

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 7.3%(15) |
| Small asset | 25.9%(53) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 36.6%(75) |
| Small liability | 22.4%(46) |
| Big liability | 7.8%16) |

Quality of workforce

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 11.5%(23) |
| Small asset | 23.5%(47) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 27.5%(55) |
| Small liability | 28.0%(56) |
| Big liability | 9.5%(19) |

Total state taxes on business

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 3.1%(6) |
| Small asset | 2.1%(4) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 23.7%(46) |
| Small liability | 29.4%(57) |
| Big liability | 41.8%(81) |

Total local taxes on business

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 2.6%(5) |
| Small asset | 6.1%(12) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 31.6%(62) |
| Small liability | 36.2%(71) |
| Big liability | 23.5%(46) |

Local zoning permits and regulations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 1.5%(3) |
| Small asset | 5.6%(11) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 47.2%(93) |
| Small liability | 32.5%(64) |
| Big liability | 13.2%(26) |

State permits and regulations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 1.0%(2) |
| Small asset | 2.1%(4) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 43.8%(85) |
| Small liability | 36.6%(71) |
| Big liability | 16.5%(32) |

Workers compensation processes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 2.5%(5) |
| Small asset | 3.0%(6) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 33.5%(68) |
| Small liability | 32.0%(65) |
| Big liability | 29.1%(59) |

Local business climate and reputation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 7.9%(16) |
| Small asset | 28.1%(57) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 33.0%(67) |
| Small liability | 24.1%(49) |
| Big liability | 6.9%(14) |

State business climate and reputation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 5.4%(11) |
| Small asset | 8.8%(18) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 21.1%(43) |
| Small liability | 28.9%(59) |
| Big liability | 35.8%(73) |

Local government incentives to business

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 6.3%(12) |
| Small asset | 20.9%(40) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 53.9%(103) |
| Small liability | 13.1%(25) |
| Big liability | 5.8%(11) |

State government incentives to business

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 5.1%(10) |
| Small asset | 12.3%(24) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 48.7%(95) |
| Small liability | 23.1%(45) |
| Big liability | 10.8%(21) |

Crime and public safety services

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 9.9%(20) |
| Small asset | 26.6%(54) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 47.3%(96) |
| Small liability | 14.8%(30) |
| Big liability | 1.5%(3) |

Being located in the state capital

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 7.4%(11) |
| Small asset | 31.5%(47) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 45%(67) |
| Small liability | 14.1%(21) |
| Big liability | 2.0%(3) |

Cost of living and housing

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 14.4%(29) |
| Small asset | 34.3%(69) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 35.3%(71) |
| Small liability | 11.4%(23) |
| Big liability | 4.5%(9) |

Recreational, social, and cultural opportunities

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 5.9%(12) |
| Small asset | 31.2%(63) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 47.0%(95) |
| Small liability | 13.4%(27) |
| Big liability | 2.5%(5) |

Health care facilities and quality

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 35.8%(73) |
| Small asset | 35.8%(73) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 25.5%(52) |
| Small liability | 2.5%(5) |
| Big liability | 0.5%(1) |

Environment and climate

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 5.5%(11) |
| Small asset | 23.4%(47) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 53.2%(107) |
| Small liability | 14.9%(30) |
| Big liability | 3.0%(6) |

K-12 education system

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 6.0%(12) |
| Small asset | 24.4%(49) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 46.3%(93) |
| Small liability | 18.4%(37) |
| Big liability | 5.0%(10) |

Proximity to colleges/universities/technical schools

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 14.2%(29) |
| Small asset | 44.6%(91) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 34.3%(70) |
| Small liability | 5.4%(11) |
| Big liability | 1.5%(3) |

Utilities- access to/cost of (electricity, natural gas, water supply, waste disposal)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Big asset | 8.0%(16) |
| Small asset | 31.0%(62) |
| Neither an asset nor a liability | 36.0%(72) |
| Small liability | 20.0%(40) |
| Big liability | 5.0%(10) |

Finally, we are interested in how, if at all, the Illinois State Fair in Springfield impacts your firm?

Would you say that the Illinois State Fair has no economic impact, an economic impact of less than $15,000, an economic impact between $15,000 and $30,000, an economic impact between $30,001 and $50,000, or an economic impact of more than $50,000 on your own business/organization?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| No economic impact | 77.8%(158) |
| Less than $15,000 | 13.8%(28) |
| Between $15,001 and $30,000 | 4.9%(10) |
| Between $30,001 and $50,000 | 1.5%(3) |
| More than $50,000 | 1.0%(2) |

Please select whether your organization experiences any of the following business operations changes due to the Illinois State Fair?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Increased number of employees (including part-time workers) | 1.0%(2) |
| Expanded hours of operation | 2.4%(5) |
| Increased gross revenue/sales | 7.7%(16) |

Section 5: Demographic Information

*This last section is used for analysis purposes only and is not intended to identify respondents.*

Are you in the private sector, non-profit sector, or public sector?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Private sector (for profit) | 65.5%(133) |
| Non-profit sector | 17.2%(35) |
| Public sector (government) | 17.2%(35) |

How many years has your organization been operating in your current location:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| 2 years or less | 2.5%(5) |
| 3-5 years | 2.5%(5) |
| 6-10 years | 9.6%(19) |
| 11-20 years | 28.4%(56) |
| 21-30 years | 18.8%(37) |
| 31-40 years | 9.6%(19) |
| 41- 50 years | 9.6%(19) |
| More than 50 years | 18.8%(7) |

How many years has your organization been operating in Sangamon County:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| 2 years or less | 0% |
| 3-5 years | 0.5%(1) |
| 6-10 years | 2.6%(5) |
| 11-20 years | 18.7%(36) |
| 21-30 years | 21.8%(42) |
| 31-40 years | 11.9%(23) |
| 41- 50 years | 13.0%(25) |
| More than 50 years | 31.6%(61) |

How many years has your organization been operating in Illinois:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| 2 years or less | 0% |
| 3-5 years | 0.5%(1) |
| 6-10 years | 1.0%(2) |
| 11-20 years | 17.0%(33) |
| 21-30 years | 21.6%(42) |
| 31-40 years | 11.3%(22) |
| 41- 50 years | 14.4%(28) |
| More than 50 years | 34.0%(66) |

Number of total full-time employees:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Valid percent(*n*) |
| Less than 5 | 13.5%(27) |
| 5-10 employees | 22.5%(45) |
| 11-20 employees | 25.0%(50) |
| 21-35 employees | 13.0%(26) |
| 36-50 employees | 6.5%(13) |
| 51-100 employees | 8.0%(16) |
| 101-200 employees | 8.5%(17) |
| More than 200 employees | 3.0%(6) |

1. The only exception being September 2011. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Fall 2014 survey is the third time that we input data for respondents who did not identify their primary economic activity. Missing cases were matched with their classifications provided by DUNS data and checked by researchers. Evaluations of own sector were compared between those who provided their classification as well as the new inputted data for those who did not and no differences were found (both *IIS* were +11), therefore we relied on the inputted dataset in order to increase the number of respondents included in the analysis. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. These briefs are available at www.urban.org/nonprofits-great-recession/. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Available at http://www.indiana.edu/~nonprof/results/inemploy/innonprofemploytrendsrecession.php [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Available at http://www.urban.org/publications/412962.html [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. SD refers to standard deviation. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ estimate, the CPI for Midwest urban cities has increased from 205 in Fall 2009 to 226 in Fall 2014, which is not considered a significant increase in inflation rates. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. The Sangamon County Economic Outlook Survey has included “healthcare for employees, Affordable Care Act” as a pre-identified challenge since Spring 2014. In both surveys, it is one of the biggest challenges list for Sangamon County employers. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. This may also be due to the fact that fewer non-profit and public sector employers participate in the survey. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)