

## Annual survey results reveal trends for business in Waukesha County

**(Waukesha, WI)** – The Waukesha County Business Alliance, Waukesha County Center for Growth, Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow and Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington (WOW) Workforce Development board gathered results from a survey that reveals trends for business in Waukesha County. These organizations partnered to distribute a similar survey in 2015 to guide an economic development plan that ultimately ended in the creation of the Waukesha County Center for Growth.

Overall, more businesses are growing as compared to 2015. Seventy-six percent of businesses plan to expand in the next three years, whether it be through expanding their staff, moving to a larger physical space, making acquisitions or growing their revenue, etc. This is up from 72 percent in 2015. Sixty-one percent of businesses have reached 100 percent capacity at their current physical location, up from 55 percent in 2015, but 40 percent do not own or lease sufficient property to allow for expansion of their current facility. Twenty-seven percent plan to move to a new facility, which is up from 17 percent in 2015. Eighty-five percent plan to expand their workforce in the next three years (up from 84 percent in 2015), but nearly 60 percent say staff recruitment is impacting their business (up from 58 percent in 2015). Sixty-seven percent of businesses report finding a skilled workforce to be the primary challenge they faced when starting or growing their business.

The Waukesha County Center for Growth was created to be the economic development organization for the county and serves as the central point of contact for businesses looking to grow in Waukesha County. The Center for Growth can help organizations find new locations in which to expand their businesses, assist in gaining financial help to grow their business, lead the effort on workforce development initiatives and more.

“The results of the survey this time around further reinforces why it was so important to create the Waukesha County Center for Growth,” said Suzanne Kelley, president and CEO of the Waukesha County Business Alliance. “With the addition of the Talent & Education Manager position to focus on workforce development issues, we are poised to address the business needs in the county and ensure that all businesses have the tools they need to succeed.”

“Our efforts to make Waukesha County the epicenter of economic development in the region are working,” said Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow. “Sixty-five percent of local businesses say they consider Waukesha County a very desirable place to do business, up from fifty-three percent just two years ago. The Waukesha County Center for Growth is already exceeding its goals, and we’re excited to see what will come in the future.”

Here are more key findings as it relates to all sectors, and specifically manufacturing:

- Seventy percent plan to put new technological innovations into place within the next two years
- Nearly 60 percent say staff recruitment is impacting their business (up from 58 percent in 2015) because...
  - Forty percent say potential employees don’t have enough job experience
  - Thirty-four percent cite wage levels as the main challenge
  - Forty-two percent say potential employees don’t have the appropriate training or education
  - Fifty-eight percent can’t find employees that fit their business culture
  - Eighty-two percent can’t find enough qualified workers
  - Sixteen percent say potential employees don’t have available transportation to work

- Only one percent say Waukesha County doesn't have enough community quality of life amenities
- Sixty-eight percent of businesses see the value of training their employees because it leads to higher retention of employees
- The major suppliers of 36 percent of businesses are also located in Waukesha County. The major suppliers of 46 percent of businesses are located in the Milwaukee7 region
- When choosing to locate a business, the top two most important factors are availability of customers and availability of workforce
- Seventy-two percent of businesses in Waukesha County were founded before the year 2000
- Eighty-four percent of companies said their sales grew in the past year
- Ninety-four percent of companies expect their sales to grow in the coming year

#### Manufacturing

- Eighty-six percent of manufacturers are experiencing difficulty attracting and/or retaining employees
- Seventy percent of manufacturers own the space they are currently located in
- Fifty-eight percent of manufacturers have reached 100 percent capacity at their current physical location
- Seventy-two percent plan to put new technological innovations into place within the next two years
- Seventy-nine percent plan to expand their business in the next three years
- Eighty-eight percent of manufacturers plan to expand their workforce in the next three years
- Seventy-two percent of manufacturers say staff recruitment is impacting their business
- Eighty-four percent of manufacturers say there is a lack of qualified candidates
- Seventy-seven percent of manufacturers have customers located nationwide
- Eighty-seven percent of manufacturers report finding a skilled workforce to be the primary challenge they faced when starting or growing their business
- Eighty-one percent of manufacturers said their sales grew in the past year
- One hundred percent of manufacturers expect their sales to grow in the coming year

To see the full results of the survey, visit [www.waukesha.org/news-press-room/media-kit/](http://www.waukesha.org/news-press-room/media-kit/) and download the 2017 Waukesha County Annual Business Survey results under "Waukesha Statistics."

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#### **About the Waukesha County Business Alliance**

Waukesha County Business Alliance is a countywide chamber of commerce with over 1,200 member companies, representing 75,000+ employees. The mission of the Alliance is to drive economic growth in Waukesha County. The Alliance provides opportunities for its members to advocate on behalf of the business community, develop themselves and their employees, network and build strong business relationships and promote their business. Learn more: [www.waukesha.org](http://www.waukesha.org)

#### **About the Waukesha County Center for Growth, Inc.**

The Waukesha County Center for Growth, Inc. is Waukesha County's economic development organization. Created in 2016 by Waukesha County in partnership with the Waukesha County Business Alliance, the Wisconsin Small Business Development Center and local municipalities, the mission for the Center for Growth is to serve as the central point of contact for businesses looking to grow in Waukesha County. The Center for Growth works to ensure each organization doing business in Waukesha County will reach its fullest potential. For more information, please visit [www.waukesha.org/EDO](http://www.waukesha.org/EDO).

#### **About Waukesha County**

The mission of Waukesha County government is to promote the health, safety, and quality of life of citizens while fostering an economically vibrant community. We are committed to delivering effective, high quality programs and services in a courteous, fiscally prudent manner. More information about Waukesha County departments and services is available online at [www.waukesha.gov](http://www.waukesha.gov). Follow Waukesha County

Executive Paul Farrow on social media for updates about County programs and events. County Executive Farrow is on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/CountyExecutivePaulFarrow](https://www.facebook.com/CountyExecutivePaulFarrow) and on Twitter as @PaulFarrowWI

**About the Waukesha-Ozaukee-Washington (WOW) Workforce Development Board**

The WOW Workforce Development Board is one of Wisconsin's eleven regional Boards established through federal legislation to address local economic workforce issues. The WOW Workforce Development Board works in collaboration with local elected officials, economic development corporations, businesses, and the community to address macroeconomic workforce issues in the three-county area. The Board is committed to finding workforce solutions through long-term planning and timely responses to the changing economy. Learn more at [www.wowwdb.org](http://www.wowwdb.org).