



Evansville Economic Development Project



Phone Survey Report



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PHONE SURVEY SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Evansville Economic Development Committee contracted Whalen & Associates, Inc. in June, 2007 to design and facilitate a process that would result in an Economic Development Plan. The project fulfills an action item of Evansville's Smart Growth Plan. The Smart Growth Plan on page 133 states that Evansville "needs more commercial and industrial development to permit the City to reduce its relatively high property tax rate without reducing services." The project's planning team - consisting of Mayor Sandy Decker, City Administrator Dan Wietecha, Chamber of Commerce Promotional Director Bridgit Larsen and consultant Judy Whalen began meeting in July, 2007. A series of information gathering activities were designed to provide data from which an economic development plan would be developed. The major information gathering activities included:

- **Focus Groups** – Five focus groups were conducted August 27-28, 2007. Representatives from 26 businesses in the categories of agribusiness, manufacturing, construction/development, retail and service participated in the focus groups. The purpose of the focus groups was to:
 - To gather information about major concerns about economic development
 - To create awareness about the City's commitment to economic development
 - To gather ideas and assess interest in an Economic Development Summit.
- **Phone Survey** – Through collaboration with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at UW-Whitewater, 136 businesses were identified to be contacted by the SBDC. Thirty-three phone surveys were completed as of January 20, 2008. The phone survey continued until all of the 136 businesses had been contacted at least once.
- **Summit** – The Economic Development Summit was conducted January 12, 2008 to provide business representatives the opportunity to provide further input into the topics that should be

addressed in the Economic Development Plan. The agenda included two speakers addressing entrepreneurship and ways to differentiate your business, a summary of the focus group that were conducted and three interactive sessions during which participants explored topics related to economic development. Resources from the Summit are available on the City's website: www.ci.evansville.wi.gov/Summit.htm

PHONE SURVEY PROCESS

- Bud Gayhart, Program Director of the UW-Whitewater (UW-W) Small Business Development Center volunteered the services of the SBDC to conduct a telephone survey of Evansville businesses to gather information that would be useful in the Economic Development Project. The Planning Team drafted the interview questions and identified the companies to be included in the survey. Kendra Lord, a UW-W student employed by the SBDC, conducted the phone interviews and recorded the responses. Five categories of businesses were used to classify the companies that were selected. The categories included:
 - Agribusiness
 - Construction
 - Manufacturing
 - Retail
 - Service

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- The Planning Team developed five questions that were asked of each company that was contacted.
 1. Do you plan to attend the Economic Development Summit?
 2. What percent of your client base is local? (Local defined by company.)
 3. Did you increase employment in 2007? If so, by what percentage?

- If NO, what factors prevented your business from expanding?
 - Do you have plans in the next three years to expand your business by adding more employees, developing new products or services, increasing your physical space, etc.? Please explain.
4. From a business standpoint, what products or services do you wish were available in the Evansville area to support your business?
 5. What is the biggest challenge your business faces?

SELECTED COMPANIES

- The Planning Team reviewed the list of businesses in the Evansville area and decided that while gathering information from all 435 businesses invited to the Summit would be useful, it would be impractical. Consequently, the Planning Team decided to narrow the list to selected companies that have several employees and a physical location. The final list included 136 companies to be contacted. (See Appendix for the List of Companies contacted.)

SURVEY PARTICIPATION

- The response rate for the phone survey was 37.5% which is comparable to other communities of similar size.
 - Total number of companies selected: 136
 - Number of companies that spoke to the interviewer: 51

HIGHLIGHTS OF RESPONSES

1. What percent of your client base is local? (The definition of local is determined by the person being surveyed.)

The five categories of businesses indicated large percentages of local client base. Some businesses in the Agribusiness and Retail categories indicated local client base percentages of 100%. Interestingly, two businesses, who classified themselves in a category of “Other,” indicated their local clientele base to be as low as 1 – 10%. The actual breakdown of each category is:

- Agribusiness: 4% to 100%
- Construction: 1% to 90%
- Manufacturer: 0% to 65%
- Retail: 5% to 100%
- Service 5% to 90%
- Other: 1% to 10%

2. Did you increase employment during 2007? YES NO If YES, by what percentage? If NO, what factors prevented your business from expanding? (the number of employees?)

The Service sector had the most businesses that increased employment. The percentage of increase in employment in the Service sector ranged from 5% to 50%. The average for the sector is 24%.

The businesses in the Agribusiness category did not expand employment, while the categories of Construction, Manufacturing and Retail had only one respondent that had increased employment.

Again, the two businesses that classified themselves as “Other,” had a strong increase in employment of 20% and 25% for an average of 22.5%

The percentage of increase for each category is:

- Agribusiness: no increase
- Construction: 20% (1 business)
- Manufacturing: 35% (1 business)
- Retail: 10% (1 business)
- Service: 24% average (8 businesses)
- Other: 22.5% average (2 businesses.)

3. Do you have plans in the next three years to expand your business by adding more employees, developing new products or services, increasing your physical space, etc.? YES NO If YES, please explain.

Of the 38 responses to this question, 26 responses indicate growth plans in the next three years, while 12 did not have plans to expand their business. Two of the responses indicated growth, but by adding a site in a different location. Some of the growth plans are planning to grow by adding new products and services. Other growth plans are based upon expanding the client base

- Opportunities for retail businesses include adjusting hours of operation, expanding services, utilizing internet access, and exceeding customers' needs and expectations.
- Opportunities for agribusiness and commercial businesses include developing a "want list" for the type of labor desired, implementing a plan to attract and retain the desired type of labor pool and collaborating with area resources including technical colleges and universities.
- Opportunities to convert "worldly residents" to "local business supporters" involve developing methods for their involvement in the community so they view their location as their "community of choice."
- Making accommodations to meet the needs of residents is important at all levels of service in the community including businesses, city government, and community service organizations.
- Maximizing relationships with collaborative partners is another opportunity to assist in differentiating a business or community. Collaborative partners include: the Evansville Chamber of Commerce, Blackhawk Technical College, UW-Whitewater and its Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and its Wisconsin Innovation Service Center (WISC.)

4. From a business stand point, what products or services do you wish were available in the Evansville area to support your business?

Of the 34 companies responding to this question, office supplies was mentioned most frequently with 5 responses. Interestingly, 9 respondents indicated there was nothing that was desired either because their needs were already being met or because the unique

nature of their business does not lend itself to local vendors. Grouping all the items that indicate a desire for retail services results in 23 responses.

Items that were mentioned include:

- Office supplies (5)
- More retail – clothing, downtown stores, shopping centers (4)
- Mailing Service – UPS, FedEx (2)
- More options for internet service – land line, high speed (2)
- Craft, art supply, scrap booking store (2)
- More manufacturing (2)
- Lower prices – more competition (2)
- Antique shops – more shops that create appreciation for the historical aspects of the community (1)
- Blueprint or full-size printing services (1)
- Affordable healthcare (1)
- Job fairs (1)
- Equipment rental (1)
- Building supplies (1)
- Competitive hardware (1)
- Landscape materials (1)
- Marketing services (1)
- Organic food (1)
- Local choice for phone service (1)
- Research materials (1)
- Better restaurants (1)
- Better transportation (1)
- Tire supplier (1)
- Solar resources (1)

- Supply store for beauty supplies (1)
- Stock yards (1)

5. What is the biggest challenge your business faces?

Of the 33 companies responding to this question, one challenge was mentioned by companies in every category except Agribusiness. That challenge is “having enough business.” The challenge was expressed as “keeping people coming through the door and wanting to purchase what is offered,” “Convincing people that live here to do their business here.” or “Trying to get people to locally shop here.” A complete list of the challenges for each category of business is included in the Appendix.

APPENDIX

- **List of Companies Contacted**
- **Summary of Responses**



LIST OF COMPANIES CONTACTED

Company

- 1 Advanced Seamless Gutters
- 2 Agrecol
- 3 Alberici's Delicatessen
- 4 Albright Electric
- 5 All About You
- 6 All 'N One
- 7 Allegiance Carpet & Upholstery
- 8 Allen Custom Flatwork
- 9 Allen Realty
- 10 American Family Insurance
- 11 Anamax Rendering
- 12 Applianceworks
- 13 Attorney David Ross
- 14 Baker Manufacturing
- 15 Bank of Evansville
- 16 Barber-Salon Meredith
- 17 Baumberger Foundations
- 18 Berg Development
- 19 Big Sweeties Pet Supply Center
- 20 Brighter Beginnings
- 21 Brown Seed Farm
- 22 Buttchen Electric
- 23 Caxambas Associates
- 24 Cenex
- 25 Chesterfield Kennel
- 26 Coldwell Banker Success Realty (Chris Helgesen)
- 27 Coldwell Banker (John Morning)
- 28 Combs and Associates
- 29 CR Stone and Landscaping
- 30 Curves
- 31 Custom Quality Windows
- 32 D & B Welding and Fabricating
- 33 Dave Mosher & Associates
- 34 Dave's Ace Hardware of Evansville
- 35 Dean & St. Mary's Clinic
- 36 DeLong Company
- 37 Don-Martin Heating & Cooling
- 38 Double D Builders of Evansville
- 39 Double T Masonry
- 40 Douglas Batty
- 41 Dr. Jake Schoenenberger

- 42 Eaton Brothers Construction
- 43 Efmark Service Company
- 44 Enchanted Valley Gardens
- 45 Evansville Auto Auction
- 46 Evansville Floral
- 47 Evansville Golf Course
- 48 Evansville Hometown Pharmacy
- 49 Evansville Hotel Group
- 50 Evansville Manor
- 51 Evansville Physical Therapy
- 52 Evansville Veterinary Service
- 53 Family Dollar Store
- 54 Financial Services Center
- 55 Flatworks Design
- 56 Formecology
- 57 GL Rehabilitation Services
- 58 Goodspeed Gas N Go
- 59 Green Forest Restaurant
- 60 Grove Family Dental Clinic
- 61 Grove Quick Mart
- 62 Guidone & Company Antiques
- 63 Hagen Insurance
- 64 Harvard Corporation
- 65 Heacox & Sons Inc.
- 66 Helgesen Excavating
- 67 Helgesen's Ford
- 68 Hometown Lawn Service
- 69 Howell Heating & Air Conditioning
- 70 Indulge Spa & Salon
- 71 InnCare of Evansville
- 72 Inside Out Expressions
- 73 Jeff's Plumbing & Heating
- 74 K.G. Smith Septic & Drain Service
- 75 Kaehler Electric, Inc.
- 76 Kelly House
- 77 Kids Korner
- 78 La Trattoria Restaurant
- 79 Landmark Services Cooperative
- 80 Landmark Tire Center
- 81 Larson Acres
- 82 Litewire Internet Services
- 83 M & I Marshall and Ilsley Bank
- 84 Magee Construction

- 85 Magic Moments Child Care
- 86 Main Street Signs
- 87 Maple Grove Family Dental
- 88 Maple Grove Farms
- 89 Master Tech Carcare, Inc.
- 90 Matthias James Pottery
- 91 McDonalds/Cenex
- 92 McIntyre Foundations
- 93 Mercy Evansville Medical Clinic
- 94 Metal Culverts, Inc.
- 95 Midwest Dental
- 96 Modaff Appraisal
- 97 Napa Auto Parts of Evansville
- 98 Nelson Equipment Painting
- 99 Nelson Young Lumber Co.
- 100 Night Owl
- 101 North Prairie Productions
- 102 Otter Interiors/Exteriors
- 103 Pete's Inn
- 104 Petterson Plumbing
- 105 Piggly Wiggly
- 106 Pleasant Prairie Greenhouse
- 107 Prairie Threads
- 108 PrimeVest Financial Services
- 109 Professional Life Associates
- 110 R & K Construction
- 111 R.A. Heating & A/C
- 112 Radio Shack
- 113 RCI Electric Service
- 114 Real Coffee
- 115 Remax Preferred Realtors
- 116 Rock'N Rollz
- 117 Roger G. Roth, CPA
- 118 Romano's Pizzeria Restaurant
- 119 Rucks Tree Service
- 120 Shannon & DeMarb Law Office, LLC
- 121 Star Printing
- 122 State Farm Insurance
- 123 Stonefield Plant Farm
- 124 Stoughton Trailers
- 125 Subway
- 126 Symdon Chevrolet- Pontiac
- 127 The Black Sheep

- 128 Tipi Produce
- 129 Union Bank & Trust
- 130 United Suppliers
- 131 Utzig Carstar
- 132 Varco Pruden
- 133 Village Square Family Restaurant
- 134 Wee Ones Child Care
- 135 Wilke Chiropractic Office
- 136 Worthington Ag Parts

SUMMARY OF RAW DATA

1. What percent of your client base is local? (The definition of local is determined by the person being surveyed.)

- AGRIBUSINESS: 4% to 100%
- CONSTRUCTION: 1% to 90%
- MANUFACTURER: 0% to 65%
- RETAIL: 5% to 100%
- SERVICE: 5% to 90%
- OTHER: 1% to 10%

2. Did you increase employment during 2007? YES NO

If YES, by what percentage?

If NO, What factors prevented your business from expanding? (the number of employees?)

- AGRIBUSINESS
 - No - more efficient.
 - No - used up all the land.
- CONSTRUCTION
 - Yes - 20%
 - No - The building industry was slower.
 - No - The housing industry.
 - No - Decreased.
 - No - Took down to sole proprietor.
 - No - Weren't a lot of people building.
- MANUFACTURER
 - Yes - 35%
 - No - Ability to get good help.
 - No - Caters to building and contracting; has been down for the last year or so.
 - No - Housing.
- RETAIL
 - Yes - 10%
 - No - Not enough local business.
 - No - Maintained.
 - No - Full staff.
 - No - Didn't have the need.

- SERVICE
 - Yes – 5%
 - Yes – 7%
 - Yes – 10%
 - Yes – 20%
 - Yes – 25%
 - Yes – 25%
 - Yes – 50%
 - Yes – 50%
 - No – Had already expanded into another location in 2006; doing well.
 - No – Not enough business.
 - No – Small; stayed the same.
 - No – The economy in the summer.
 - No – Have a minimum number of dogs that are housed.
 - No – Construction cut off clients.
- OTHER
 - Yes – 20%
 - Yes – 25%

3. Do you have plans in the next three years to expand your business by adding more employees, developing new products or services, increasing your physical space, etc? YES, NO

If YES, please explain.

- AGRIBUSINESS
 - Yes – equipment and services offered.
 - Would like to expand.
- CONSTRUCTION
 - Hope to be doing more homes.
 - Just added solar, hope more solar.
 - Expanded space, expanding personnel, bringing in new Realtors.
 - Yes, all of the above; dependent on business.
 - Would like to get back to an S corp.
 - Hope to be able to do any of these things; dependent upon the housing industry.
 - Have plans; if the economy will allow, that is another issue.
 - No.
 - No.

- **MANUFACTURER**
 - Not in Evansville, but looking for other venues.
 - More employees.
 - Expand employment.
 - No.
- **RETAIL**
 - Yes, carry more products.
 - Yes, expand the building. Will then need more employees.
 - Yes, need more local clients that have grown up in the area.
 - No.
 - No.
 - No.
- **SERVICE**
 - Yes, maybe find another location. Current location very limited.
 - Yes, plan to do all of the above. Need more employees, new product, new location.
 - Yes, increase employment.
 - Possibility, expand housing.
 - Yes, snow plow, lawn care.
 - Increasing households by 25%.
 - Products and services.
 - Yes.
 - Unknown.
 - No, don't own building; must stay at current capacity.
 - No.
 - No.
 - No.
 - No.
- **OTHER**
 - Yes, need more suppliers.
 - Yes, constantly growing, more employees and more business.
 - Increasing parking and doing renovations.

4. From a business standpoint, what products or services do you wish were available in the Evansville area to support your business?

- **AGRIBUSINESS**
 - Work for farmers.
 - Nothing the community could offer.
 - Landline based internet service, DSL.
- **CONSTRUCTION**
 - Office supplies.
 - Stock yards, cheaper prices for what is available.
 - More manufacturing, jobs, retail.
 - All that is need is available locally.
 - More solar.
- **MANUFACTURER**
 - Lack of qualified employees.
 - More competition; pricing is too high.
 - Competitive hardware.
 - More manufacturing.
- **RETAIL**
 - Retail in downtown area.
 - Office supply, art supply, scrap book.
 - Availability for research material.
 - Tire supplier.
 - Clothing stores.
 - Stores where people would want to stay locally.
 - Nothing. Wanted a motel and it is currently being put up behind them.
 - Nothing.
- **SERVICE**
 - Employees, not a good workforce.
 - Office supply stores.
 - More places that would make them appreciate the historical aspects of the community (antique stores, 8 to 10 of these types of stores).
 - Nasco stuff.
 - Art and craft stores.
 - Better transportation.
 - Affordable health care.
 - Job fair, anything to be able to show what type of services the business offers.

- Landscape materials.
- Better restaurants.
- Blue print or full size printing services.
- Office supply.

- Organic food.
- Building supply.
- Marketing services.
- Equipment rental.
- More for office supplies.
- UPS mailing.
- More shopping centers.
- Supply store for beauty supplies.
- Don't need anything that would support the business due to the nature of the business.
- Have what they need.
- Nothing.
- Nothing.
- Nothing.
- OTHER
 - FedEx.
 - Better choice of high speed internet.
 - Local choice for phone service (currently running out of Janesville).

5. What is the biggest challenge your business faces?

- AGRIBUSINESS
 - Uncertainty of the weather.
 - Product availability.
- CONSTRUCTION
 - Lack of work and the economy.
 - The competition with bigger chain-type yards.
 - Housing market is terrible.
 - Finding good help.
 - Certain type of unwelcome attitude from the community.
 - Supply and demand of developable land.
 - Controversy over growth.
 - Not having enough people building homes.
- MANUFACTURER
 - High taxes.
 - Need for welders and other employees.
 - Reliable help is a big problem.

- Keeping people coming through the door and wanting to purchase what is offered.

- RETAIL
 - Trying to get people to locally shop there.
 - Building the business with more clientele.
 - Public relations; cash flow for advertising.
 - Need more traffic through the store.
 - Continued sales.
 - Awareness; location makes it difficult to get customers.
- SERVICE
 - Layoffs, lose families.
 - Health insurance.
 - Stable clientele.
 - Winter.
 - Letting people know they are there.
 - Outside of town location. Hard to convince people to go locally and not just to their old salon.
 - Paying staff a livable wage with benefits.
 - Convincing people that live here to do their business here.
 - People in the bedroom community aren't really invested in the community at all.
 - Having enough business.
 - Finding enough qualified employees.
 - General economy.
 - Getting through the next year with the street development.
 - Getting more kids to enroll.
 - To get new clients, so they can become a full service salon.
 - There are none.
- OTHER
 - Shrinking margin; the rate of sale is so pressured.
 - Automobile market fluctuations.
 - The weather.

