



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

To: Ames Media  
From: Ames Economic Development Commission  
Date: February 11, 2011  
Re: 2010 Business Climate Survey Results

### **AEDC survey reports general optimism in local business community**

Ames, IA – Board members of the Ames Economic Development Commission (AEDC) met Friday morning to hear results of the recent business climate survey of local area businesses and their views of doing business in the Ames community.

AEDC Vice President of Existing Business & Industry Ron Hallenbeck led the survey efforts to determine the business needs, concerns and health of our local serving business base, as well as to assess the opportunities and risks for retention and expansion. 540 local businesses were initially approached, resulting in 118 interviews – 88 of which were conducted in person by AEDC staff and volunteers from the Young Professionals of Ames. An additional 30 companies responded via an online survey to net an overall response rate of 22%. According to Hallenbeck, this is the first all-encompassing effort for the AEDC to gather extensive data from the community's local businesses to create a singular database of information to be used in helping to better understand this segment of our local business economy. In the past, the Executive Call Survey has focused primarily on companies doing much of their business outside of the Ames area.

The businesses surveyed represents over 16,500 employees supporting 16 different business sectors including construction, education, finance, restaurants, retail, health care, and business services.

Important trends emerged after analyzing survey results. Almost sixty-one percent (61%) of the businesses surveyed have increasing sales, and almost one third are planning some sort of expansion or renovation of facilities. There is also optimism that a more favorable business climate is emerging within the community. The businesses stated that they are hearing from their customers the need for more entertainment venues, retail alternatives, and restaurants in the community.

Plans are being developed to support the hiring of almost 100 new jobs in Ames over the next few years, facility expansion requiring an additional 258,000 square feet, and the capital investment potential for over \$170,000.

On the legislative front 80% of the businesses believe there will be adverse regulatory legislation in the areas of Right to Work/Fair Share, healthcare reform, and uncertainty in tax reform.

Overall there is a good feeling about doing business in Ames, but there is a definite desire to grow the number of businesses in the community. Over the next few months the Business Climate Survey data will be further analyzed with that of the recent Executive Call Program data to get a more thorough picture of the Ames business community.

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