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State of the Workforce Event

**2016 State of the Workforce Survey
Executive Summary**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Results from the 2016 State of the Workforce Survey are based on 423 completed online surveys of businesses and educational institutions within the seven-county Ozark Region (Greene, Taney, Dallas, Christian, Webster, Polk, and Stone). Survey results have a +/- 5% margin of error at the 95% confidence interval. The Ozark Region Workforce Development Board (WDB), in partnership with the Missouri Job Center, sponsored the survey.

With assistance from the WDB and the Missouri Job Center, the survey was designed, administered, and analyzed by Opinion Research Specialists, LLC of Springfield, Missouri. Survey findings are summarized below.

Survey Participants Identified by Sector and Number of Employees

- The majority of organizations participating in the survey were for-profit (68%), followed by nonprofit/community-based organizations (12%), governmental entities (12%), and educational institutions (8%).
- 52% of participating organizations had less than 50 employees (full-time and parttime), 22% had between 50 and 199 employees, and 26% had 200 or more employees. Organizations ranged in size from one employee to 40,000 employees.

Difficulty Finding Qualified Job Applicants

- About 60% of organizations reported having difficulty filling positions over the past 12 months.
- Increased recruiting efforts within the region (52%) and not filling the job opening (36%) were the top two responses to hiring difficulties.

Deficiencies of Job Applicants

- Low number of applicants, lack of relevant work experience, lack of good communication skills (written, verbal, and nonverbal), and lack of relevant technical or occupational skills were the most frequently identified deficiencies of job applicants (each mentioned by about 50% or more of survey respondents).

Employee Improvement Needed

- Similar to last year's findings, more than 80% of respondents indicated that "most" or "some" of their current employees needed improvement in the areas of time management, leadership, critical thinking/decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, goal setting, interpersonal relations, and work ethics/habits.

Jobs/Positions Requiring a STEM Background

- 67% of respondents reported that at least some of their jobs/positions required employees to have a background in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics – compared to 71% last year.

Occupational Fields of Greatest Demand in the Next Five-to-Ten Years

- Same as last year, the top three occupational fields that organizations will look to recruit from over the next five-to-ten years are business, management, and administration; marketing, sales, and service; and information technology/computer science.

Impact of the Affordable Care Act on Employment Levels

- As a consequence of the Affordable Care Act, 14% of those surveyed said the number of full-time employees in their organization had decreased, while 18% said the number of part-time employees (< 30 hours) had increased.

Impact of the Affordable Care Act on Employer Provided Health Insurance

- 12% of those surveyed said the number of employees offered health insurance through their organization increased as a result of the Affordable Care Act, while 10% said it had decreased. Nearly 50% reported that the ACA had no impact on the number of employees offered health insurance.

Anticipated Impact of the New Overtime Rule

- One-third of those surveyed anticipated no changes as a result of the new overtime rule, while 32% expected to convert some salaried employees to hourly pay.

Impact of Governmental Regulations Concerns on Hiring

- 43% of organizations reported either “a lot” or “some” reluctance to hire additional employees due to concerns over the uncertainty of how new and proposed government regulations would impact their organization.

Benefits and Training Opportunities Offered to Full-Time Employees

- Similar to last year, more than 50% of those surveyed said their full-time employees were offered one or more of the following benefits: paid vacations/holidays, medical insurance, training or professional development, and retirement plans.

Retention Strategies

- The top three strategies used by organizations to retain their employees were to offer good working conditions, competitive pay/compensation, and training.

Organizational Hiring Plans

- 42% of organizations expect their organization to increase employment over the next six to twelve months, while 4% expect a decrease, and 54% to leave employment unchanged.
- Between 25% and 35% of organizations planned to hire additional full-time and/or part-time employees over the next 12 months – up slightly from last year.
- Between 40% and 50% of organizations planned to hire additional full-time and/or part-time employees over the next three-to-five years – down slightly from last year.

Evaluating Graduates Hired From Area Educational Institutions

- 68% of organizations surveyed had recently hired graduates from one or more area colleges/universities and 89% rated the overall level of preparation of these graduates as satisfactory.
- 63% of organizations had recently hired graduates from one or more area community colleges or vocational/technical schools and 82% rated the overall level of preparation of these graduates as satisfactory.
- 70% of organizations had recently hired graduates from one or more area high schools and 57% rated the overall level of preparation of these graduates as satisfactory.
- Compared to last year's findings, organizations this year were more likely to have hired high school and community college/vo-tech graduates and less likely to have employed college graduates. Perceptions of the graduates' overall level of preparation were similar to last year.

Evaluating Overall Performance of Area Schools

- 60% of respondents rated area schools favorably in terms of providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in today's workforce – about the same as last year.

Partnering with Area Schools

- 29% of organizations surveyed said they were currently working with area schools (high school, community colleges, universities) to design curriculum, develop training programs, and/or sponsor an apprenticeship program to students acquire the skills necessary to succeed in their industry.
- Of those not currently partnering with areas schools, between 50% and 55% expressed some level of interest in sponsoring an apprenticeship program with area schools.
- Of those not currently partnering with areas schools, between 49% and 57% expressed some level of interest in working with area schools to design curriculum/training programs.

Impact of Community Quality of Life in Attracting/Retaining Employees

- 71% considered the quality of life in their community to be a strength with respect to attracting and retaining workers in their organization – down from 79% last year.

Employee Retirements

- 37% of organizations estimated that more than five percent of their workforce would be eligible to retire in the next two years.
- 23% of organizations estimated that more than five percent of their workforce would retire in the next two years.