



Final Report

Holmes County, Ohio

Manufacturing Business Retention and Expansion Program

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
BRE Program Objectives	1
BRE Program Outcomes	2
BRE Program Participants	2
Holmes County Demographic Overview	2
BRE Survey Highlights	3
Action Strategies/NEXT Steps	4
Appendix A Selected Survey Results	5
Appendix B: Holmes County Economic Development Council Members.....	14
Appendix C: Survey Instrument	15

Introduction

Retention of existing businesses and community encouragement of local firms' continued growth has become an essential aspect of many local and regional economic development programs. While attraction of new businesses is a highly visible aspect of most economic development programs, studies have shown that businesses that already exist in a community account for up to 80% of all net change in local employment, and up to 90% in rural areas (Kraybill, 2001).

Recognizing the importance of local manufacturing firms, the Holmes County Economic Development Council (HCEDC) in conjunction with Ohio State University Extension established a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Program to assist these firms in achieving their growth objectives and to improve the overall business environment in Holmes County, Ohio.



BRE Program Objectives

The objectives of the Holmes County BRE Program are to:

- Identify and address concerns and issues of existing businesses.
- Identify opportunities to stimulate local job growth.
- Establish and maintain an ongoing program that develops and fosters long-term positive/productive relationships among public and private entities in Holmes.

BRE Program Outcomes

Expected outcomes of the program are: to improve communication between the HCEDC and local business, grow existing businesses (e.g., new markets, new products, partnerships, spin-offs, suppliers, etc.), and enhance the HCEDC's organizational visibility. Last, the survey should become the impetus to establish and implement a comprehensive strategic plan for economic development in Holmes County

BRE Program Participants

In 2016, the Holmes County Economic Development Council under the leadership of Mark Leininger, Executive Director surveyed existing manufacturing businesses about their perceptions, plans, and concerns as a business in Holmes County. A partnership was established with the Ohio State University Extension BRE Program utilizing Survey Gold software for survey analysis and other BRE tools to assist in accomplishing an effective local program.

The local BRE Initiative was sponsored by the Holmes County Economic Development Council, with Mark Leininger acting as Coordinator and working with Ohio State University Extension to develop the survey and to identify participants. American Electric Power (AEP) provided a grant through their Local Economic Advancement Program (LEAP) fund to assist in the development of the project. Please contact the Holmes County Executive Director if you are interested in learning more about the program

Holmes County Demographic Overview

(Source: Statsmaerica.org)

- The population in 2014 in Holmes County was 43,898, up 3.6% since 2010.
- There were 12,516 Households, of which 10,142 were considered family households
- Of the 25 and older population, 5.1% had a bachelor's degree, and 33.5% had a high school degree or equivalent. Also, almost 35% had a less than 9th grade educational attainment.
- The poverty rate in 2014 was 12.4%, up from 10.7% in 2000.
- The labor force consisted of 19,839 individuals and the unemployment was 3.9%, well below the state of Ohio's 5.6%.
- The per capita income was \$32,778 up from \$22,646 in 2004. This is a 44.7% increase between 2014 and 2004.
- For the manufacturing sector, there were over 8,800 jobs with average earnings of \$45,637 in 2014. The 8,800 jobs make up almost 30% of all jobs in the county.
- The average one-way commute in Holmes County takes 23 minutes; 52% of commuters drive their own car alone, 23% carpool with others, 1% take mass transit and 10% work from home (source: Sperling's).

BRE Survey Highlights

The following is a summarization of the 2016 Holmes County Business Retention and Expansion Survey.

- 28 businesses were either emailed a manufacturing survey or directly contacted by Executive Director Leininger with 20 responses yielding a 71% response rate. While a 100% response rate would be ideal, research suggests that 71% is a great response rate. Also it should be noted that this is the second survey conducted in Holmes County, but the first one in over five years. It is anticipated that a BRE survey will be conducted every 2-4 years moving forward.
- 50% of the respondents indicated that Holmes County was an excellent place to do business while the remaining 50% thought it was a good place to do business
- All respondents would recommend to another business to locate to Holmes County
- 19 of the businesses have been operating in Holmes County more than 10 years
- 16 of the 20 respondents own their space
- 12 of the respondents primary geographic area is National; 1 is International, 5 are Statewide, and 2 are local
- All amenities were rated positively by the respondents
- 60% of the respondents indicated that they *would not* be interested in faster internet speed if they had to share in the cost of installation
- 12 of the 20 respondents indicated that they had plans to modernize or expand with the majority being warehouse or manufacturing space. Survey data indicate at least 60-80 potential new jobs
- 17 of the 20 respondents are considering opening a branch plant or office; two in Holmes County and the other outside of Ohio, but in the U.S.
- Only one respondent is considering closing, selling or moving their business.
- Over 75% of the respondents believe the labor force is good to excellent, but 65% think the labor force availability is average
- Managerial and computer skills training rated the highest in terms of current training needs

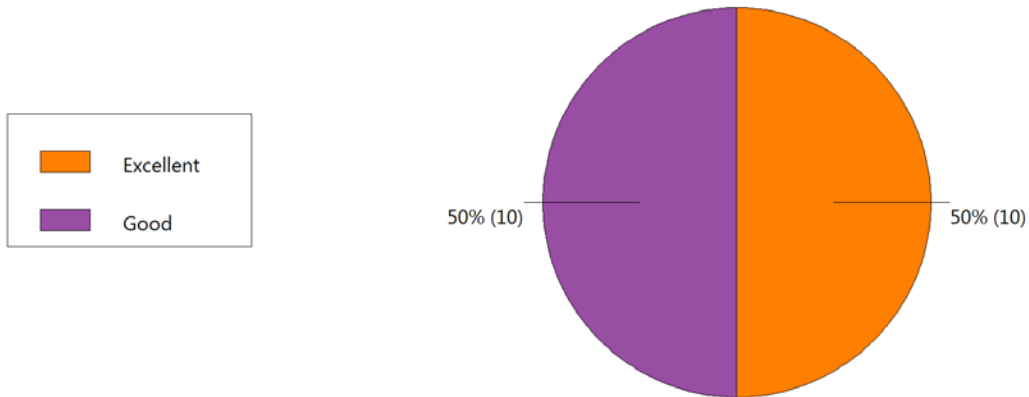
Action Strategies/NEXT Steps

Before an action strategy is discussed, it is important for the HCEDC to celebrate businesses in Holmes County and to build on county strengths. Businesses thrive in attractive, accessible communities. These communities draw resources the businesses require, whether those resources are quality employees, infrastructure improvements, technology, or desired goods and services. Businesses need these resources to be successful and profitable. Holmes County has many of these resources at their disposal. The HCEDC should consider ways to further capitalize on these resources, to celebrate the strong business climate, and continue to build on the county's success.

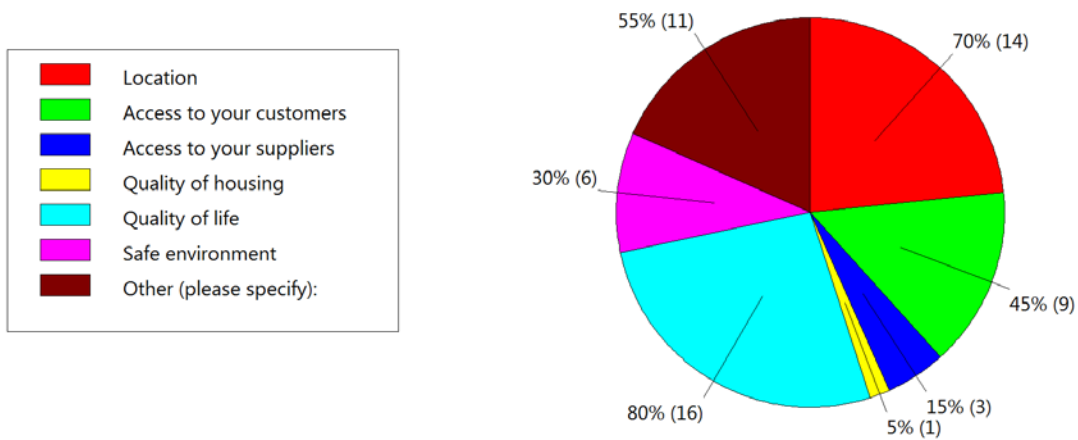
1. The survey results should be shared at the 2016 Holmes County Economic Development annual meeting. Focus should be on identifying volunteers to work with the Executive Director to identify positive and negative issues that should be further explored. Local media and all businesses surveyed should be invited.
2. The Executive Director should meet with the 6 businesses that requested to be contacted individually to share the comprehensive results of the survey and to discuss any other items that could aid in job retention and creation.
3. The Executive Director should meet independently with the 12 businesses that are planning to modernize or expand to determine how the HCEDC can assist in a timely manner. Lastly, the Executive Director should contact the business that plans on closing or selling to identify immediate business concerns.
4. A database should be created identifying available lands and utilities with appropriate contact information
5. Survey data should be used to identify local organizations to assist in workforce training and development issues

Appendix A Selected Survey Results

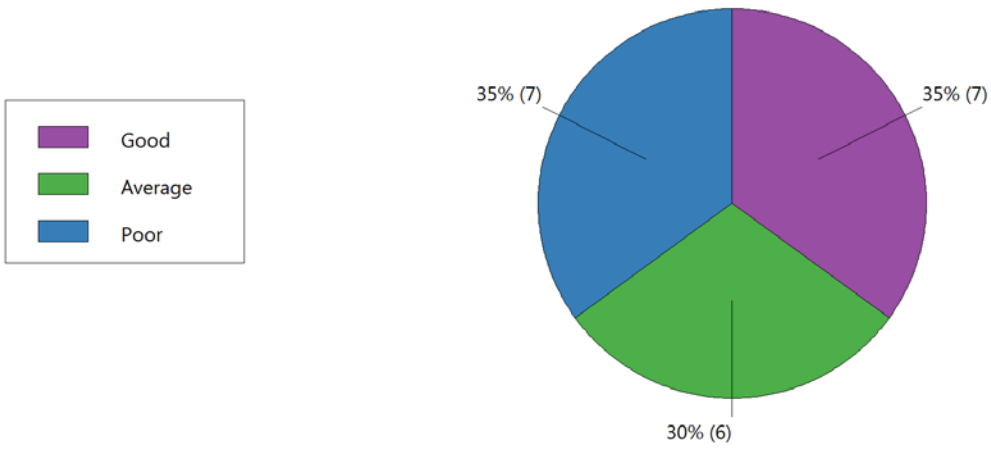
What is your overall opinion of HOLMES COUNTY as a place to do business?



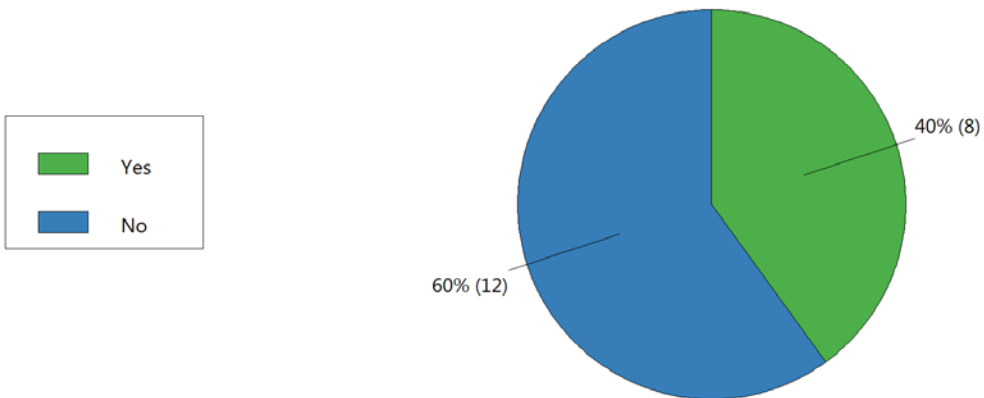
What are your top three (3) reasons for establishing or keeping your business in HOLMES COUNTY?



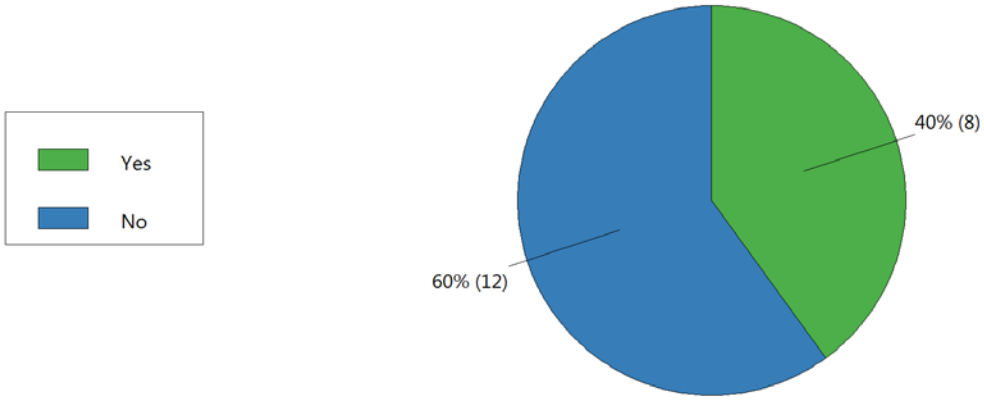
How would you rate High Speed Internet Access?



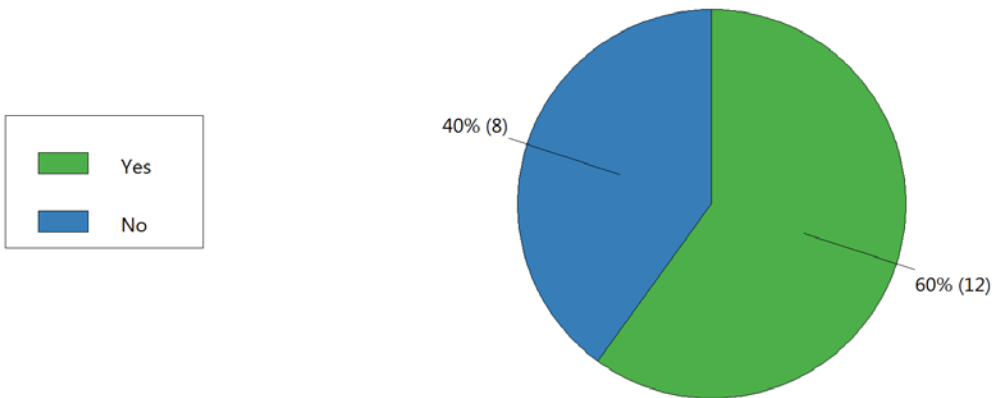
Would you be interested in faster Internet speed, more capacity, and/or more options if it required that you share in the cost of installing the necessary infrastructure?



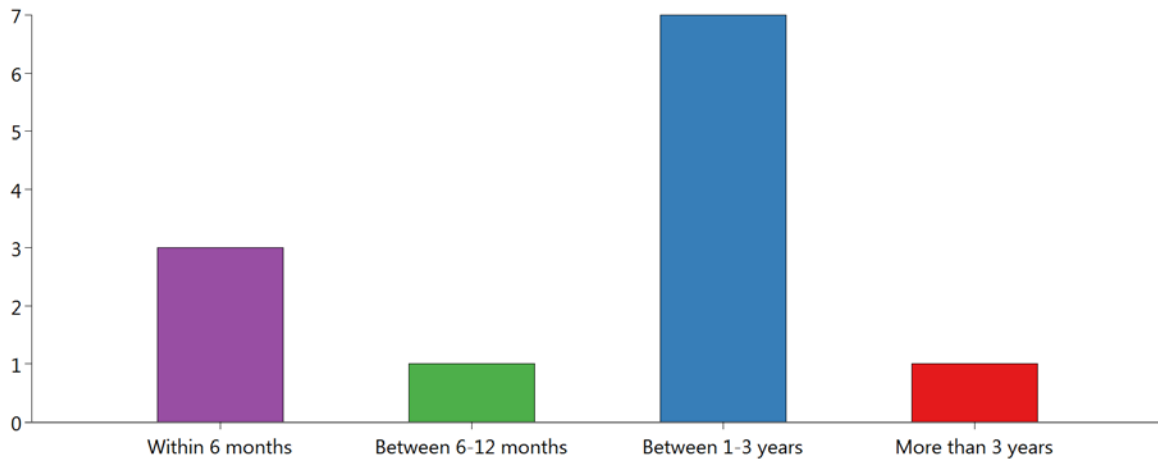
Your business likely buys some materials, supplies, and services from suppliers outside this area. Could some of these items be produced profitably in Holmes County in your opinion?



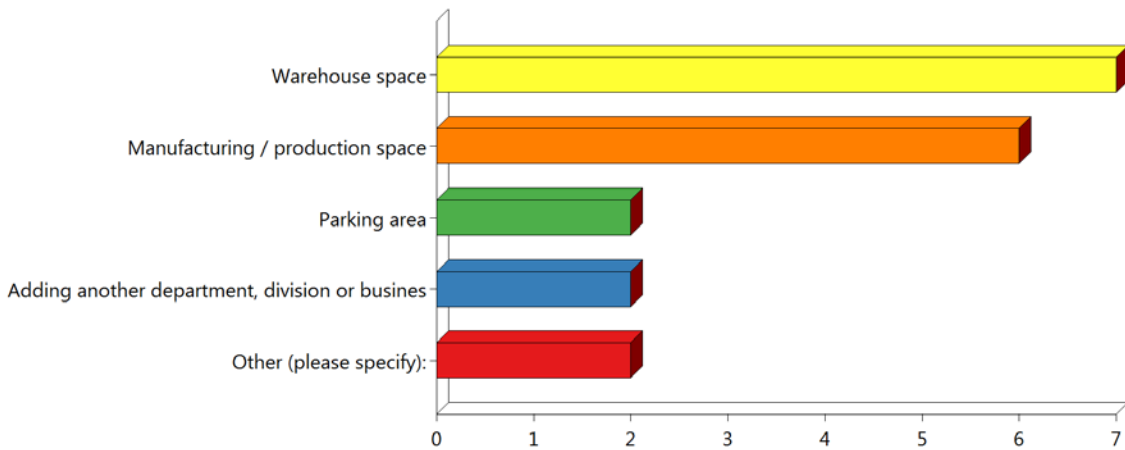
Do you have any plans to modernize or expand your present buildings or equipment?



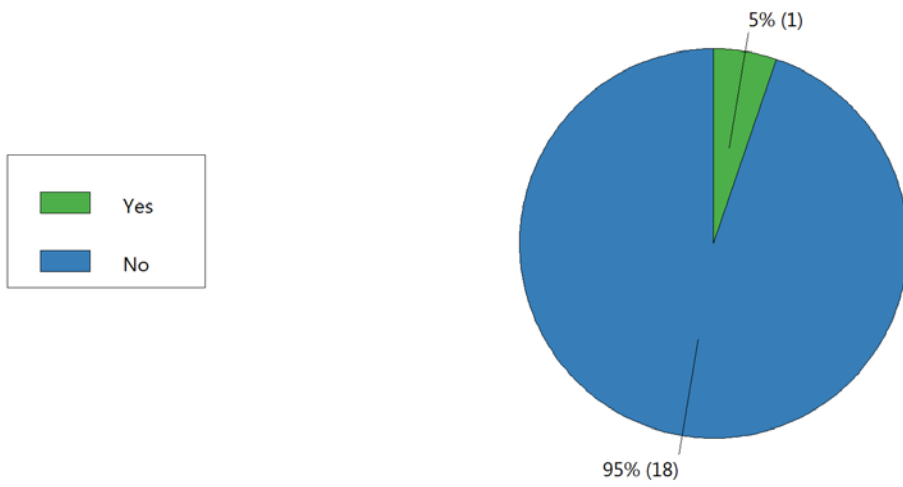
When would the work be started?



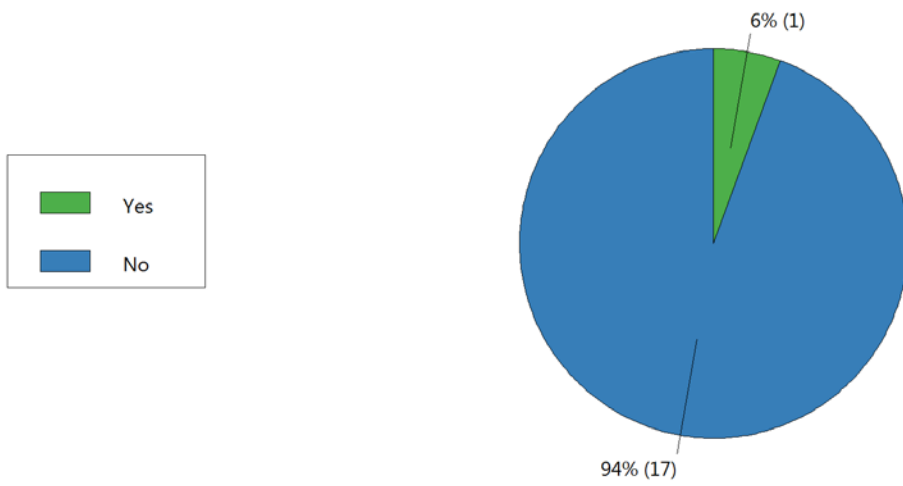
What kind of expansion is planned?



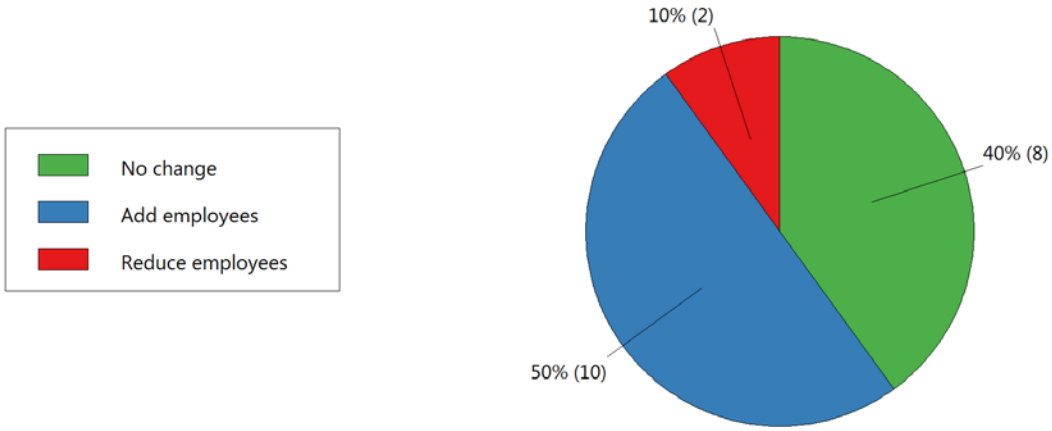
Are you considering closing this business?



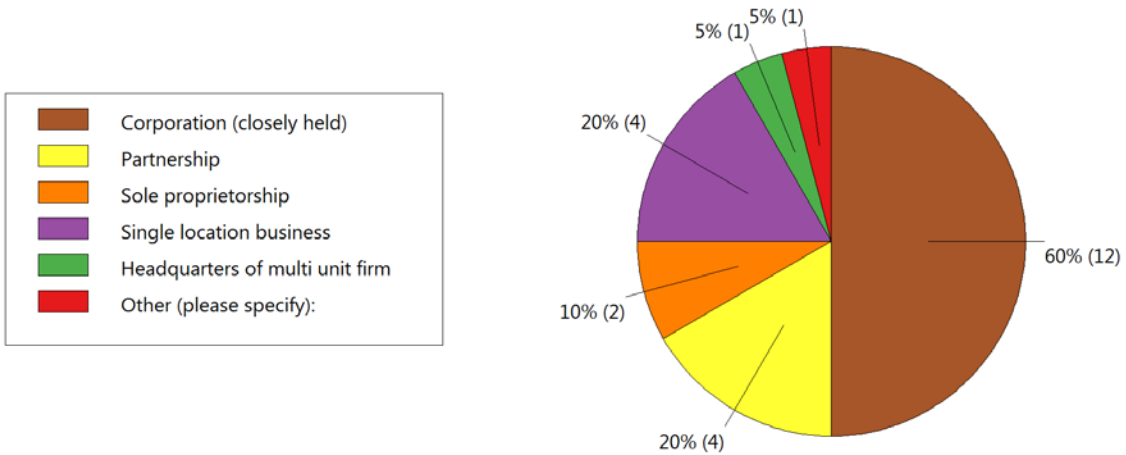
Are you considering selling this business?



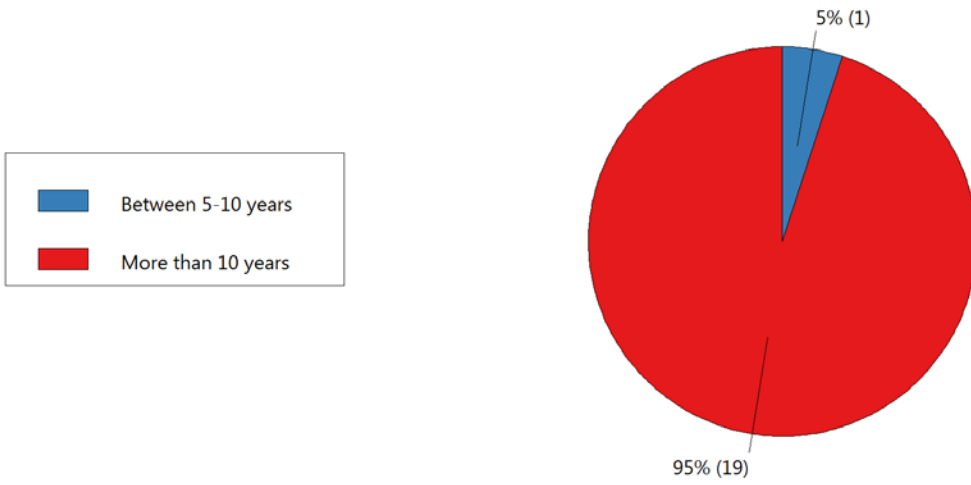
What impact would expanding, moving, closing or selling have on the number of employees in Holmes County?



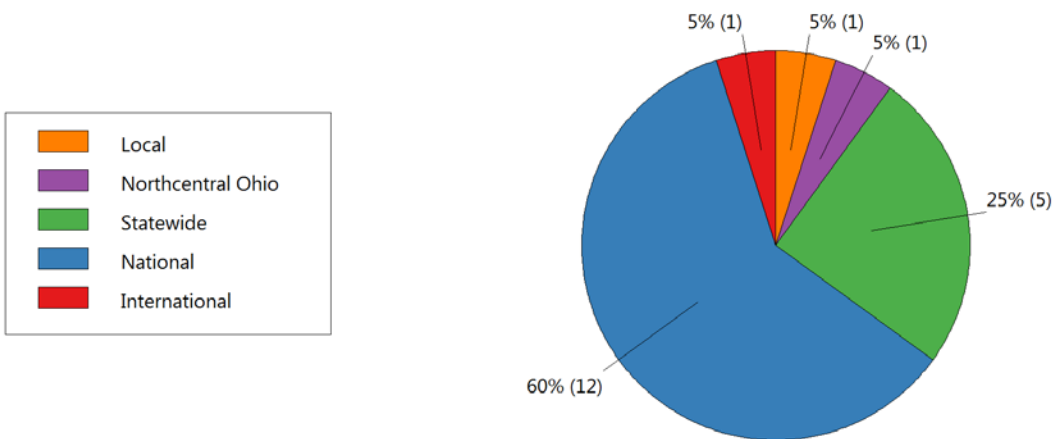
Which of the following best describes your business?



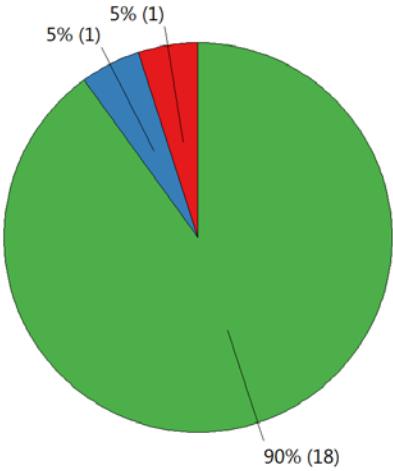
How long has this business been operating in HOLMES COUNTY?



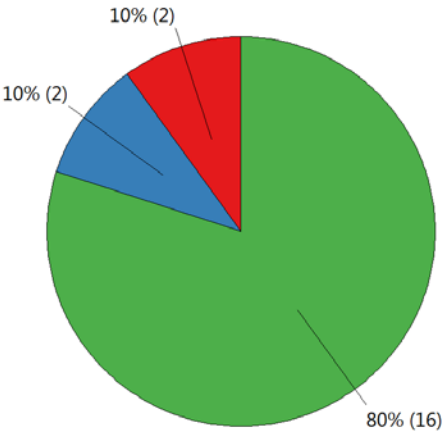
What is your company's primary geographic market?



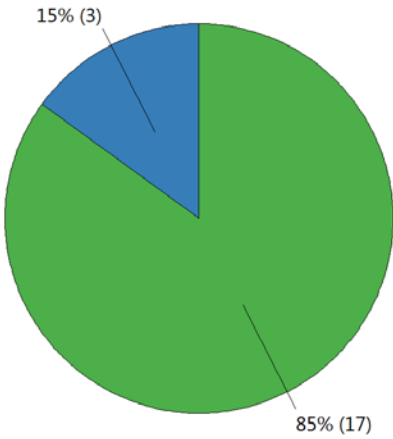
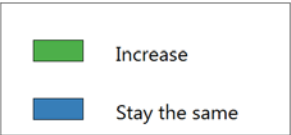
Sales - Total revenue



Profits



Number of Employees



Appendix B: Holmes County Economic Development Council Members

Board Members

Ray Eyler - Holmes County Commissioner
Bob Boss - First Knox National Bank
Paula Meiler- The Commercial & Savings Bank
Tim Boyd - Overhead Door
Ernie Hershberger - Homestead Furniture
Darrick Hummel - Hummel Insurance
Dan Jackson - Department of Job and Family Services
Kimberly Hall - Critchfield, Critchfield & Johnston
Shasta Mast - Holmes County Chamber of Commerce
Glenn Miller - Holmes/Wayne Electric Cooperative
Leah Miller - Small Farm Institute
Carlos Mullet - Weaver Leather
Mark Maglott - Century Link
Antony Mullet – Kaufman Realty
Arnold Oliver - Holmes County Planning Commission
Craig Lawhead - Killbuck Saving Bank
Tony Synder - Pomerene Hospital
Dave Wheeler - AEP Ohio

Appendix C: Survey Instrument

Answer questions as they relate to you. For most answers, check the boxes most applicable to you or fill in the blanks.

Please provide the following

First Name

Last Name

Business Name

Email

Survey Date

1. Today's date

Local Business Environment

2. What is your overall opinion of HOLMES COUNTY as a place to do business?

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

3. What are your top three (3) reasons for establishing or keeping your business in HOLMES COUNTY?

- Location
- Access to your customers
- Access to your suppliers
- Access to business services
- Available restaurants / hotels
- Recreation facilities / entertainment
- Quality of housing
- Quality of life
- Safety services
- Safe environment
- Other (please specify):

4. Would you recommend another business to locate in HOLMES COUNTY?

- Yes
- No

Please describe your business needs or concerns that could be addressed by local government or local private entities.

5. Immediate needs or concerns

6. Long-term needs or concerns (more than 2 years)

From your perspective as a businessperson, please rate the following amenities and services in HOLMES COUNTY.

7. Roads, highways and freeways

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

8. Water and sewer services

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

9. Natural gas services

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

10. Telecom services

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

11. High speed Internet access

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

12. Electrical services

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

13. *Air service*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

14. *Health care services*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

15. *School system*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

16. *Restaurants*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

17. *Professional services*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

18. *Shopping*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

19. *Recreation/cultural/arts*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

20. *Activities/entertainment*

- Excellent

- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

21. *Street repairs*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

22. *Fire protection*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

23. *Police protection*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

24. *Business services*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

25. *Hotel facilities*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

Internet

26. *Would you be interested in faster Internet speed, more capacity, and/or more options if it required that you share in the cost of installing the necessary infrastructure?*

- Yes
- No

Please indicate whether you believe the cost of doing business in Holmes County is high, acceptable, or low.

27. *Building costs*

- High

- Acceptable
- Low

28. *Corporate taxes*

- High
- Acceptable
- Low

29. *Environmental regulations*

- High
- Acceptable
- Low

30. *Health care Insurance*

- High
- Acceptable
- Low

31. *Inventory taxes*

- High
- Acceptable
- Low

32. *OSHA requirements*

- High
- Acceptable
- Low

33. *Payroll taxes*

- High
- Acceptable
- Low

34. *Property taxes*

- High
- Acceptable
- Low

35. *Public utilities*

- High
- Acceptable
- Low

36. *Transportation of product to market*

- High
- Acceptable
- Low

37. *Workers compensation*

- High
- Acceptable
- Low

Local Suppliers

38. Your business likely buys some materials, supplies, and services from suppliers outside this area. Could some of these items be produced profitably in Holmes County in your opinion?

- Yes
- No

Local Suppliers Detail

39. If you answered "yes" in question 38, please identify the materials, supplies, or services that could be produced profitably here rather than shipped into the area.

Plans To Modernize

40. Do you have any plans to modernize or expand your present buildings or equipment?

- Yes
- No

Plans To Modernize Detail

41. When would the work be started?

- Within 6 months
- Between 6-12 months
- Between 1-3 years
- More than 3 years

42. What kind of expansion is planned? (Check all that apply.)

- Warehouse space
- Manufacturing / production space
- Office space
- Parking area
- Adding another department, division or business
- Other (please specify):

43. Do you face constraints to modernization or expansion? (Check all that apply.)

- No constraints
- Need financial assistance
- Need physical facility planning assistance
- Insufficient space
- Other (please specify):

Opening Branch Plant/Office

44. Are you considering opening a branch plant or office?

- Yes
- No

Opening Branch Plant/Office Detail

45. Where are you planning to open?

- Elsewhere in HOLMES COUNTY
- Outside the County, but in Ohio
- Outside Ohio, but in the U.S.
- Outside U.S.

46. When are you planning to open?

- Within 6 months
- Between 6-12 months
- Between 1-3 years
- More than 3 years

Constraints Faced

47. Do you face any constraints? (Check all that apply.)

- No constraints
- Need financial assistance
- Need physical facility planning assistance
- Insufficient space in existing building
- Not enough land for expansion
- Parking issues
- Infrastructure limitations
- Other (please specify):

Considering Closing

48. Are you considering closing this business?

- Yes
- No

Closing When

49. When are you considering closing your business?

- Within 6 months
- Between 6-12 months
- Between 1-3 years
- More than 3 years

Considering Selling

50. Are you considering selling this business?

- Yes
- No

Selling When

51. When are you considering selling this business?

- Within 6 months
- Between 6-12 months
- Between 1-3 years
- More than 3 years

Considering Moving

52. Are you considering moving your business?

- Yes
- No

Moving Details

53. *Why are you considering moving? (Check all that apply.)*

- Changing market conditions
- Overcrowded facilities
- Land limitation for expansion
- Transportation problems
- Workforce issues
- Environmental concerns
- Rigid code enforcement
- High taxes
- Lease expiration
- Other (please specify):

54. *Where are you considering moving to?*

- Elsewhere in HOLMES COUNTY
- Outside the County, but in Ohio
- Outside Ohio, but in the U.S.
- Outside U.S.

55. *When are you considering moving this business?*

- Within 6 months
- Between 6-12 months
- Between 1-3 years
- More than 3 years

Employee Impact

56. *What impact would expanding, moving, closing or selling have on the number of employees in HOLMES COUNTY?*

- No change
- Add employees
- Reduce employees

Employees Added/Removed

If you are increasing the number of employees, then enter the number (e.g., 100).

If you are decreasing the number of employees, enter a negative number (e.g., -100).

57. *About how many employees would be added/removed?*

Management and Staff

How would you rate the local management and staff work force?

58. *Quality*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor

- Very Poor

59. *Quantity*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

60. *Availability*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

61. *Stability*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

Labor Force

How would you rate the local labor force?

62. *Quality*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

63. *Quantity*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

64. *Availability*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very Poor

65. *Stability*

- Excellent
- Good
- Average

- Poor
- Very Poor

Employment and Training

66. How many employees work at the HOLMES COUNTY location of your company?

- Fewer than 10
- 11-20
- 21-50
- 51-100
- More than 100

67. Is any part of your workforce unionized?

- Yes
- No

68. Please check the areas in which your current employees need training. (Check all that apply.)

- Current employees do not need training.
- General skills (Basic math, reading/writing, problem-solving, etc.)
- Managerial skills (Finance, business planning, employee management/relations, etc.)
- Professional skills (Sales, marketing, accounting, etc.)
- Customer service (Interpersonal communications, product knowledge, etc.)
- Computer skills (Word-processing, database management, computer system installation/maintenance, etc.)
- Other technical skills
- Equipment operation skills
- Mechanical skills
- Specialized skills (Medical skills, legal knowledge, etc.)
- Other (please specify):

Business Information

69. Which of the following best describes your business? (Check all that apply.)

- Corporation (public)
- Corporation (closely held)
- Partnership
- Sole proprietorship
- Single location business
- Headquarters of multi unit firm
- Branch office of multi unit firm
- Other (please specify):

70. How long has this business been operating in HOLMES COUNTY?

- Less than 1 year
- Between 1-5 years
- Between 5-10 years
- More than 10 years

71. Do you own or lease your space?

- Own
- Lease

72. What is your primary title/position? (Check one.)

- Owner
- CEO/President/Managing Director
- COO, CFO, CIO or CTO
- Operations VP or Director
- Sales/Marketing/Business Development VP or Director
- General Manager
- Corporate Vice President
- Other (please specify):

73. What is your company's primary geographic market?

- Local
- Northcentral Ohio
- Statewide
- National
- International

Business Detail

Over the next three (3) years, do you think the following business factors will increase, stay the same, or decline?

74. Number of customers

- Increase
- Stay the same
- Decline

75. Sales - Total revenue

- Increase
- Stay the same
- Decline

76. Profits

- Increase
- Stay the same
- Decline

77. Number of employees

- Increase
- Stay the same
- Decline

Reasons for Increase/Decrease

78. What are the principal reasons for the increases or decreases?

Holmes County

79. From your perspective as a businessperson, please rate the overall quality of life in HOLMES COUNTY.

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor

Very Poor

80. Do you live in HOLMES COUNTY?

Yes

No

81. Would you like the Holmes County Economic Development Council Executive Director to contact you personally regarding this survey?

Yes

No

Conclusion

82. Thank you for completing this survey. In the space below, please add any comments, thoughts, or suggestions.