# AEDC Business Confidence Index Survey

Prepared for:
Anchorage Economic
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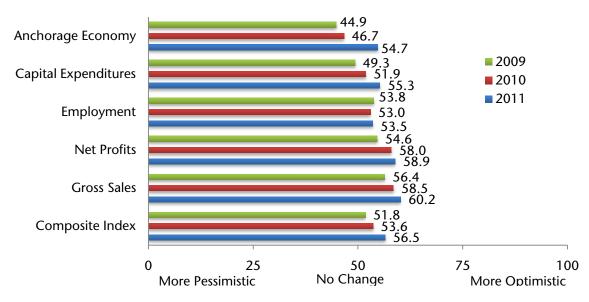
## **Summary of Key Findings**

The Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) contracted with McDowell Group, an Alaska research and consulting firm, to conduct the third annual AEDC Business Confidence Index Survey. This year, 198 Anchorage, Eagle River and Chugiak businesses and organizations participated in the on-line survey. The purpose of the survey was to assess factors that affect Municipality of Anchorage businesses and the overall economy, and derive a statistical measure of business confidence. The survey was conducted from December 1, 2010 to January 5, 2011.

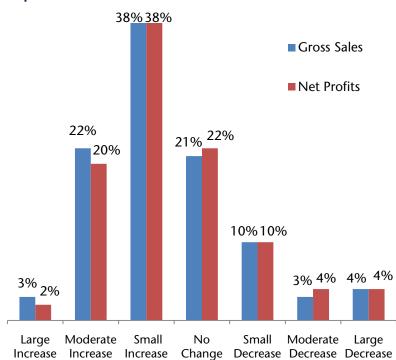
The AEDC Business Confidence Index for 2011 is 56.5, indicating that the business community overall has a moderately positive outlook for 2011. (An index between 51 and 100 indicates an optimistic outlook; below 50 indicates a pessimistic outlook.) Businesses expressed slightly more confidence in the upcoming year than they did at this time last year. The 2010 AEDC Business Confidence Index was 53.6, up from the 2009 index of 51.8. Respondents forecast small increases in several aspects of their own business or organizational activity. Expectations of gross sales in 2011 produce a confidence index of 60.2. The confidence indices for net profits, employment and capital expenditures are 58.9, 53.5, and 55.3 respectively. Survey participants expect the Anchorage economy will fare slightly better in 2011 (confidence index is 54.7).

When compared with 2010 and 2009 results, businesses are overall more optimistic about the year ahead. In 2010, Anchorage businesses had a confidence index of 58.5 for gross sales and 58.0 for net profits; indices for gross sales and net profits were 56.4 and 54.6 respectively in 2009. In 2010, the confidence index for employment was 53.0, similar to an index of 53.8 in 2009. The outlook for capital expenditures had a measure of 51.9 in 2010 and 49.3 in 2009. Businesses were more pessimistic about the Anchorage economy in 2010 and 2009 (confidence indices of 46.7 and 44.9 respectively). The chart below compares indices from 2009 to 2011.



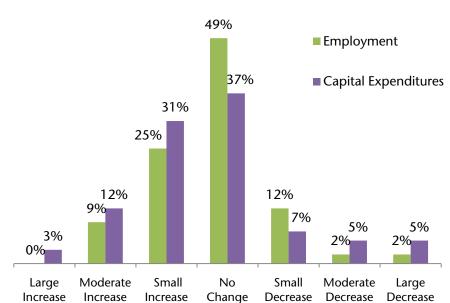


As shown in the following chart, respondents expressed about equal confidence in increases in gross sales and net profits.



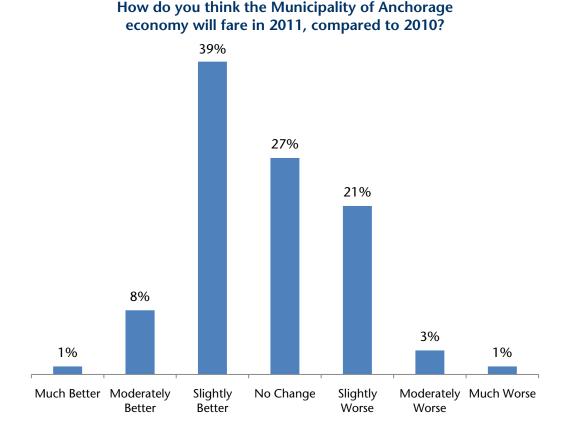
**Expectations for Gross Sales and Net Profits in 2011** 

Businesses are more confident about increases in capital expenditures than they are for employment in 2011.



**Expectations for Capital Expenditures and Employment in 2011** 

Nearly half of the respondents (48 percent) expect the Anchorage economy to fare better in 2011 compared to 2010, with the largest percentage believing it will fare just slightly better (39 percent).



Health insurance continues to be perceived as the most significant barrier to future business growth. Just over half of all respondents also consider the availability of professional/technical workforce to be a significant or moderate barrier to growth.

Respondents believe the most important project to the Anchorage economy is the Alaska gas pipeline (30 percent), followed by the natural gas pipeline from the North Slope to the Cook Inlet (18 percent), and Cook Inlet resource development (16 percent).

When asked if they support establishment of a sales tax to offset business and residential property taxes in Anchorage, the majority of respondents (58 percent) support it.

Do you support establishment of a sales tax to offset business and residential property taxes in Anchorage?

|     | Percent |
|-----|---------|
| Yes | 58%     |
| No  | 42      |

When asked if their business sees a direct impact from Alaskans spending their Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend, the majority of respondents (64 percent) do not see a direct impact.

# Does your business see a direct impact from Alaskans spending their Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend?

|     | Percent |
|-----|---------|
| Yes | 36%     |
| No  | 64      |

## **Introduction and Methodology**

The Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) contracted with McDowell Group to conduct the third annual survey of Anchorage business and organizations. The purpose of the survey was to assess factors that affect Anchorage businesses and the overall economy, and derive a statistical measure of business confidence.

The survey asked about barriers to growth, the effect of high energy costs, plans for capital improvements, and the importance of business development and infrastructure projects. A business confidence index was calculated from expectations for gross sales, net profits, employment, capital expenditures, and opinions on how well the overall Anchorage economy will fare in 2011. An index above 50 indicates a positive outlook while an index below 50 shows a negative outlook. The maximum possible index is 100.

McDowell Group designed the survey instrument in consultation with AEDC staff. Most questions remained unchanged from the 2009 and 2010 surveys so results could be benchmarked with 2009 and 2010 results.

The web-based survey was launched on December 1, 2010 and survey responses were accepted until January 5, 2011. AEDC sent a series of emails to their investors, providing information and a link to the survey website. The Anchorage and Chugiak-Eagle River Chambers of Commerce also encouraged member participation in the survey.

A total of 198 organizations completed the survey, representing a broad cross-section of the Anchorage business community in terms of size and business sector. The highest percentage of respondents represented the tourism and hospitality sector.

## **2010 Business Performance**

- Just over half of respondents (54 percent) reported their net profits increased in 2010 when compared to 2009. The prior year's survey results showed a significantly lower percentage of respondents (36 percent) reporting an increase in net profits.
- Nine percent of respondents experienced no change in net profits in 2010, similar to responses in 2009 and 2008 (11 percent each year).
- Just over one third of respondents (34 percent) had decreasing net profits in 2010 when compared to 2009. December 2009's survey results showed decreasing net profits for 40 percent of businesses surveyed. The December 2008 survey found that only 21 percent of surveyed businesses reported decreasing profits compared to the previous year.

In terms of net profits, how did your business perform this year compared to last year?

|                   |                             | •                           |                             |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
|                   | Dec. 2010<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2009<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2008<br>Survey Results |
| Large increase    | 6%                          | 5%                          | 11%                         |
| Moderate increase | 19                          | 13                          | 28                          |
| Small increase    | 29                          | 18                          | 21                          |
| No change         | 9                           | 11                          | 11                          |
| Small decrease    | 16                          | 15                          | 12                          |
| Moderate decrease | 10                          | 16                          | 2                           |
| Large decrease    | 8                           | 9                           | 7                           |
| Not applicable    | 4                           | 12                          | 8                           |

Note: Due to rounding, some columns may not add up to 100 percent.

## **2011 Expectations for Business**

### **Gross Sales/Annual Operating Budget**

- In terms of gross sales (or operating budgets) a majority of businesses (63 percent) expect an increase in 2011, with 25 percent expecting a moderate or large increase.
- Only 17 percent of respondents expect gross sales to decrease in 2011 and 21 percent anticipate no change. In 2009, 27 percent expected gross sales to decrease in 2010. In 2008, 34 percent expected gross sales to decrease in 2009.

In terms of gross sales/annual operating budget, how do you expect your organization to perform next year compared to this year?

|                   | Dec. 2010<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2009<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2008<br>Survey Results |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Large increase    | 3%                          | 6%                          | 4%                          |
| Moderate increase | 22                          | 22                          | 26                          |
| Small increase    | 38                          | 32                          | 27                          |
| No change         | 21                          | 15                          | 8                           |
| Small decrease    | 10                          | 13                          | 17                          |
| Moderate decrease | 3                           | 10                          | 15                          |
| Large decrease    | 4                           | 4                           | 2                           |

Notes: Results re-calculated to remove "not applicable" responses. Due to rounding, some columns may not add up to 100 percent.

#### **Net Profits**

- A majority of respondents (60 percent) expect an increase in net profits in 2011 (2 percent expecting a large increase, 20 percent a moderate increase, and 38 percent a small increase.)
- Eighteen percent expect net profits to decrease in 2011, while 22 percent anticipate no change. In 2008, 36 percent expected a decrease in net profits in 2009.

In terms of net profits, how do you expect your organization to perform next year compared to this year?

|                   | Dec. 2010<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2009<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2008<br>Survey Results |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Large increase    | 2%                          | 4%                          | 5%                          |
| Moderate increase | 20                          | 24                          | 20                          |
| Small increase    | 38                          | 30                          | 23                          |
| No change         | 22                          | 18                          | 15                          |
| Small decrease    | 10                          | 12                          | 21                          |
| Moderate decrease | 4                           | 9                           | 14                          |
| Large decrease    | 4                           | 4                           | 1                           |

Notes: Results re-calculated to remove "not applicable" responses. Due to rounding, some columns may not add up to 100 percent.

#### **Employment**

- A third of businesses (34 percent) anticipate hiring more workers in 2011. No respondents expect a large increase, 9 percent expect a moderate increase, and 25 percent a small increase. Of the 16 percent that expect job cuts, most anticipated small decreases.
- Half of respondents (49 percent) anticipate no change in employment in 2011.

In terms of employment, how do you expect your organization to perform next year compared to this year?

|                   | Dec. 2010<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2009<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2008<br>Survey Results |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Large increase    | -                           | 2%                          | 3%                          |
| Moderate increase | 9                           | 7                           | 13                          |
| Small increase    | 25                          | 24                          | 23                          |
| No change         | 49                          | 49                          | 35                          |
| Small decrease    | 12                          | 11                          | 20                          |
| Moderate decrease | 2                           | 4                           | 6                           |
| Large decrease    | 2                           | 2                           | 1                           |

Notes: Results re-calculated to remove "not applicable" responses. Due to rounding, some columns may not add up to 100 percent.

### **Capital Expenditures**

- Just under half of the respondents (46 percent) expect an increase in capital expenditures in 2011 with 3 percent expecting a large increase, 12 percent a moderate increase, and 31 percent a small increase.
- Over a third of respondents (37 percent) expect no change in their capital expenditures in 2011.
- Seventeen percent of respondents expect a decrease in capital expenditures in 2011.

In terms of capital expenditures, how do you expect your organization to perform next year compared to this year?

|                   | Dec. 2010<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2009<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2008<br>Survey Results |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Large increase    | 3%                          | 4%                          | 5%                          |
| Moderate increase | 12                          | 8                           | 10                          |
| Small increase    | 31                          | 23                          | 22                          |
| No change         | 37                          | 42                          | 28                          |
| Small decrease    | 7                           | 9                           | 16                          |
| Moderate decrease | 5                           | 8                           | 10                          |
| Large decrease    | 5                           | 5                           | 8                           |

Notes: Results re-calculated to remove "not applicable" responses. Due to rounding, some columns may not add up to 100 percent.

## **Barriers to Business Growth**

Businesses were given a list of factors that could potentially inhibit growth and were asked to rate the significance of each barrier.

- Health insurance and the availability of professional/technical workforce are considered the
  two most significant barriers to growth, with 62 percent rating health insurance as a
  significant or moderate barrier, and 53 percent rating federal regulations as a significant or
  moderate barrier.
- Half of respondents (50 percent) considered federal regulations to be a significant or moderate barrier. Last year's survey respondents considered health insurance and federal regulations to be the two most significant barriers.
- While not considered a significant barrier, labor related factors, such as the availability of professional/technical workforce, job readiness of entry-level workforce, and availability of semi-skilled workers were considered moderate barriers by many businesses (41 percent, 37 percent, and 34 percent respectively.)
- Respondents were also asked if there were any other barriers that prevented their organization from achieving growth. A list of all responses is provided in the Appendix.

To what extent are the following factors a barrier to your organization's growth?

|  | Significant<br>barrier | Moderate<br>barrier | Not a<br>barrier | Not applicable |
|--|------------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Health Insurance*                                  | 34%                    | 28%                 | 26%              | 11%            |
| Federal regulations                                | 29                     | 21                  | 41               | 9              |
| Workers Compensation Insurance*                    | 14                     | 29                  | 44               | 12             |
| Access to capital                                  | 13                     | 26                  | 50               | 11             |
| Availability of professional/technical workforce   | 12                     | 41                  | 38               | 10             |
| Energy prices                                      | 12                     | 39                  | 40               | 10             |
| State regulations                                  | 10                     | 37                  | 47               | 6              |
| Cost of commercial/lease rental property           | 10                     | 29                  | 45               | 15             |
| MOA taxes  | 10                     | 25                  | 51               | 14             |
| Federal taxes                                      | 9                      | 32                  | 47               | 12             |
| MOA regulations                                    | 9                      | 27                  | 57               | 8              |
| Job readiness of entry-level workforce*            | 7                      | 37                  | 41               | 15             |
| State taxes  | 6                      | 13                  | 63               | 18             |
| Availability of semi-skilled workers               | 5                      | 34                  | 46               | 15             |
| Energy supply*                                     | 5                      | 17                  | 66               | 13             |
| Transportation linkages with suppliers and markets | 5                      | 17                  | 57               | 22             |

Notes: \* indicates barrier not included in December 2008 survey. Due to rounding, some rows may not add up to 100 percent.

# **Capital Improvement Plans**

- Over a quarter of respondents (27 percent) anticipated capital improvement projects in the next two years; two out of three of these organizations (64 percent) expect their plans to lead to new job creation.
- Among those respondents that did not have capital improvement plans in the near future, a majority (62 percent) said the recent economic climate did not affect their growth plans.

# Are you planning significant capital improvements in the next two years (2011-2012)?

|  | Dec. 2010<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2008<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2008<br>Survey Results |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Planning Capital Improvement               | 27%                         | 31%                         | 34%                         |
| Will create jobs                           | 64                          | 73                          | 74                          |
| Will not create jobs                       | 36                          | 27                          | 26                          |
| Not Planning Capital Improvement           | 73%                         | 69%                         | 66%                         |
| Recent economic climate did not affect pla | ans 62                      | 69                          | 74                          |
| Recent economic climate affected plans     | 38                          | 31                          | 26                          |

## **2011 Expectations for the Economy**

#### **Alaska Economy**

• Compared to 2010, nearly half of the respondents (47 percent) believe the Alaska economy will do better in 2011, with 38 percent believing it will be slightly better, 8 percent moderately better, and 1 percent much better. Three out of ten respondents (29 percent) expect the Alaska economy to fare worse in 2011, with 23 percent believing it will be just slightly worse.

How do you think the overall Alaska economy will fare next year, compared to this year?

|                   | Dec. 2010<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2009<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2008<br>Survey Results |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Much better       | 1%                          | -                           | 3%                          |
| Moderately better | 8                           | 7                           | 5                           |
| Slightly better   | 38                          | 30                          | 13                          |
| No change         | 25                          | 15                          | 14                          |
| Slightly worse    | 23                          | 37                          | 44                          |
| Moderately worse  | 4                           | 10                          | 17                          |
| Much worse        | 2                           | 2                           | 3                           |

Note: Due to rounding, some columns may not add up to 100 percent.

### **Anchorage Economy**

• Compared to 2010, almost half of the respondents (48 percent) believe the Municipality of Anchorage economy will fare better in 2011, with 39 percent believing it will fare slightly better. A quarter of the respondents (25 percent) expect the Municipality of Anchorage economy to fare worse in 2011, with 21 percent believing it will be just slightly worse.

How do you think the overall Municipality of Anchorage economy will fare next year, compared to this year?

|                   | Dec. 2010<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2009<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2008<br>Survey Results |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Much better       | 1%                          | -                           | 3%                          |
| Moderately better | 8                           | 8                           | 8                           |
| Slightly better   | 39                          | 25                          | 16                          |
| No change         | 27                          | 21                          | 14                          |
| Slightly worse    | 21                          | 32                          | 47                          |
| Moderately worse  | 3                           | 13                          | 11                          |
| Much worse        | 1                           | 2                           | 1                           |

Note: Due to rounding, some columns may not add up to 100 percent.

## **Importance of Projects for the Economy**

- Three out of four respondents (74 percent) consider the Alaska gas pipeline to be very important for the Anchorage economy, followed closely by Cook Inlet resource development (73 percent), and the natural gas pipeline from the North Slope to Cook Inlet (66 percent). In last year's survey responses, the same three projects received the same ranking as "very important" by the majority of respondents.
- Business leaders were given the opportunity to rate each project individually and then
  identify the most important project among the full list. The importance of the top three
  projects remained consistent, with the Alaska gas pipeline rated the most important, followed
  by the natural gas pipeline and Cook Inlet resource development. (See table on the following
  page.)
- A quarter of responses (24 percent) mentioned other projects they also consider important to the Anchorage economy. These responses are included in the report Appendix.

# How important do you think the following projects are for the Municipality of Anchorage economy?

|  | Very<br>important | Somewhat<br>important | Not<br>important |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Alaska gas pipeline                                    | 74%               | 22                    | 4                |
| Cook Inlet resource development                        | 73                | 24                    | 3                |
| Natural gas pipeline from North Slope to<br>Cook Inlet | 66                | 28                    | 6                |
| Anchorage port expansion                               | 42                | 49                    | 9                |
| Upgrade of utility infrastructure                      | 35                | 57                    | 8                |
| Affordable workforce housing                           | 33                | 47                    | 21               |
| Workforce training                                     | 31                | 60                    | 9                |
| Knik Arm Bridge  | 25                | 35                    | 40               |
| Beluga whale habitat                                   | 24                | 35                    | 42               |
| Seward Highway to Glenn Highway<br>Connection (H2H)    | 21                | 44                    | 34               |
| Update of Title 21 municipal land use plan             | 19                | 53                    | 28               |
| Anchorage neighborhood revitalization                  | 17                | 58                    | 26               |
| Industrial park development                            | 13                | 57                    | 30               |

Note: Due to rounding, some rows may not add up to 100 percent.

 While the Alaska gas pipeline is still considered very important to the Anchorage economy, over the past three years, the number of businesses that consider it the most important project for the Municipality of Anchorage economy has been dropping (from 56 percent to 30 percent.)

Which of these projects do you think is most important for the Municipality of Anchorage economy?

|  | Dec. 2010<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2009<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2008<br>Survey Results |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Alaska gas pipeline                                    | 30%                         | 36%                         | 56%                         |
| Natural gas pipeline from<br>North Slope to Cook Inlet | 18                          | 20                          | 25                          |
| Cook Inlet resource development*                       | 16                          | 15                          | -                           |
| Anchorage port expansion                               | 7                           | 4                           | 2                           |
| Affordable workforce housing*                          | 5                           | 2                           | -                           |
| Knik Arm Bridge  | 5                           | 6                           | 4                           |
| Seward Highway to Glenn<br>Highway Connection (H2H)    | 4                           | 6                           | 2                           |
| Upgrade of utility infrastructure**                    | 4                           | -                           | -                           |
| Anchorage neighborhood revitalization                  | 2                           | 2                           | -                           |
| Beluga whale habitat**                                 | 2                           | -                           | -                           |
| Workforce training                                     | 2                           | 4                           | 7                           |
| Industrial park development                            | 1                           | 1                           | 1                           |
| Update of Title 21 municipal land use plan             | -                           | -                           | -                           |
| Other  | 5                           | 4                           | 4                           |

Notes: \* indicates project not included in December 2008 survey. \*\* indicates project not included in the December 2008 or 2009 surveys. Due to rounding, some columns may not add up to 100 percent.

#### **Business Support for an Anchorage Sales Tax**

• Six out of ten respondents (58 percent) support the establishment of a sales tax to offset business and residential property taxes in Anchorage.

Do you support establishment of a sales tax to offset business and residential property taxes in Anchorage?

|     | Percent |
|-----|---------|
| Yes | 58%     |
| No  | 42      |

### **Impact of PFD Dividend**

• One out of three respondents (64 percent) do not see a direct impact from Alaskans spending their Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend.

Does your business see a direct impact from Alaskans spending their Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend?

|     | Percent |
|-----|---------|
| Yes | 36%     |
| No  | 64      |

## **Respondent Characteristics**

#### **Business Sector**

- The tourism and hospitality sector, followed by the non-profit and finance/insurance/real estate sectors had the largest number of survey respondents.
- Professional services respondents include legal, accounting, consulting and other similar business services.
- The mining/oil category includes production and support services.

# Which sector best describes your organization? (Self-identified)

|                               | Dec. 2010<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2009<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2008<br>Survey Results |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Tourism/hospitality           | 13%                         | 6%                          | 7%                          |
| Finance/insurance/real estate | 10                          | 9                           | 10                          |
| Non-profit                    | 10                          | 7                           | 6                           |
| Construction/maintenance      | 9                           | 5                           | 4                           |
| Professional services         | 9                           | 12                          | 14                          |
| Media/communication           | 7                           | 10                          | 5                           |
| Wholesale/retail trade        | 7                           | 4                           | 5                           |
| Transportation                | 6                           | 5                           | 16                          |
| Engineering/architecture      | 4                           | 7                           | 11                          |
| Health care                   | 4                           | 4                           | 2                           |
| Mining/oil                    | 4                           | 6                           | 9                           |
| Utilities                     | 4                           | 3                           | 3                           |
| Manufacturing                 | 3                           | 3                           | 1                           |
| Alaska Native Corporation**   | 2                           |                             |                             |
| Information technology        | 2                           | 3                           | 2                           |
| Arts/education                | 1                           | 3                           | 1                           |
| Government/military           | 1                           | 7                           | 3                           |
| Fishing/seafood               | -                           | -                           | 1                           |
| Personal services*            | -                           | 2                           | -                           |
| Other                         | 5                           | 3                           | 3                           |

Note: \* indicates sector not included in December 2008 survey. .\*\* indicates sector not included in the December 2008 or 2009 surveys.

#### **Organization Size**

- Businesses reporting more than \$10 million in annual gross sales (or annual operating budgets for non-profit organizations) represented 26 percent of all respondents.
- A quarter of respondents (25 percent) reported between \$1 million and \$5 million in annual gross sales (or annual operating budgets). Twenty-one percent reported annual gross sales under \$250,000.

# Which of the following categories best describes your organization's annual gross sales or annual operating budget?

|                             | Dec. 2010<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2009<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2008<br>Survey Results |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Under \$250,000             | 21%                         | 19%                         | 10%                         |
| \$250,000 to \$500,000      | 9                           | 5                           | 4                           |
| \$500,000 to \$1 million    | 8                           | 8                           | 7                           |
| \$1 million to \$5 million  | 25                          | 20                          | 18                          |
| \$5 million to \$10 million | 10                          | 7                           | 13                          |
| More than \$10 million      | 26                          | 38                          | 47                          |
| Don't know                  | 2                           | 3                           | 3                           |

### **Current and Peak Employment**

- Almost half of respondents (46 percent) currently employ up to 10 people on a part-time or full-time basis.
- Five percent of respondents currently employ 500 or more people on a part-time or full-time basis.

# How many people (full-time and part-time) do you employ in Municipality of Anchorage currently?

|             | Dec. 2010<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2009<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2008<br>Survey Results |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Under 10    | 46%                         | 42%                         | 26%                         |
| 10 to 49    | 28                          | 26                          | 38                          |
| 50 to 99    | 8                           | 9                           | 8                           |
| 100 to 249  | 6                           | 9                           | 9                           |
| 250 to 500  | 7                           | 6                           | 9                           |
| 500 or more | 5                           | 8                           | 10                          |
| Don't know  | 1                           | 1                           | 1                           |

# How many people (full-time and part-time) do you employ in Municipality of Anchorage in a peak month?

|             | Dec. 2010<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2009<br>Survey Results | Dec. 2008<br>Survey Results |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Under 10    | 43%                         | 39%                         | 23%                         |
| 10 to 49    | 29                          | 27                          | 38                          |
| 50 to 99    | 8                           | 9                           | 10                          |
| 100 to 249  | 6                           | 10                          | 10                          |
| 250 to 500  | 10                          | 4                           | 8                           |
| 500 or more | 4                           | 9                           | 12                          |
| Don't know  | 1                           | 1                           | 0                           |

## **Appendix**

The following section includes verbatim responses for open-ended survey questions.

#### Are there any other barriers that prevent your organization from achieving growth?

- Land lord is not replacing un-sealed and un-insulated windows. It took 4.5 years to repair a leak in the roof. There are no recourse options for tenants that lease commercial property.
- Reliance on federal funding.
- Weather/snow (we are a ski area). Government investment in /support of our competitors.
- Downtown parking, Municipal regulations on signage, less-than-desirable element around Town Square, 5th/6th & 'G' St., construction.
- The economy.
- Current recession.
- Fear that the Alaska economy has ceased growing and is slated to decline in the future.
- EPA regulation, Port expansion, beluga whale endangered species.
- Uncertainty of business climate impacting largest customers.
- Multi-tasking sales force in our business (me), occupied with management and operations, vs. dedicated full-time sales forces in primary competitors' businesses.
- Seasonality in the tourism industry.
- Bad press from Sarah Palin has ruined Alaska's mystique to true adventurers; therefore, decreasing Alaska's tourism from adventurers. I have discussed this across Europe and Asia during my travels. She is all they know now and have NO interest in her or her state. I have done a survey on this and it's true.
- Federal environmental regulations.
- State fiscal policy on oil & gas development. Regulatory policy on resource development NGOs.
- Public transportation to our site.
- State regulations, wildlife assessment data, unlimited "public process" over regulation for simple projects.
- Ability to generate revenues in a down market.
- Amount of disposable income that families have.
- Federal funding.
- Over reach by EPA into every aspect of business. MSHA harassment to operations in the name of safety but not benefiting worker safety.
- They are internal.
- Cost of materials and surface transportation fees.
- The current Presidential administration; they are intent on killing small business and the sell out to the unions.
- Health screening related to our services.
- Economy.
- Politics; preferential treatment of competitors.
- Misinformation, bad media press, wrong data presented to our clients.
- Lack of economic growth, oil exploration and production decline. As a financial institution we are a reflection of the economy; if there is no growth in the economy, there is no growth in banking. Currently little demand for debt capital.
- Sluggish economic growth.
- View of Anchorage and Alaska as not the highest return on investment compared to other markets.
- It is much harder to grow in a slow economy. We're constantly reviewing our business plan to make sure that our present decisions adhere to our plan and if they don't, then we consider if our plan is holding us back. We allow ourselves to be somewhat malleable, which has proven to be a successful approach.
- Too much bureaucracy, not enough design projects being sent to the private sector.
- The housing bust and the Government's failure to address the problem.

- Negative sentiment of home ownership.
- Public's general concern about the future of Alaska's economy.
- Home buyers' reluctance.
- Legislative changes on a federal level, customers being hesitant to award work to Native Corporations as a result of an overzealous and factually challenged media. Also, in-sourcing by the Federal Government. They are shrinking the workforce, growing the size of federal government and poaching our best professionals.

#### Are there any other projects you think are very important for the Anchorage Economy?

- Implement sales tax.
- Vocational school.
- Out-of-state employee tax.
- Upgrade of the electrical transmission system.
- Increase oil exploration and development.
- Natural Gas pipeline from NS to Anchorage.
- South Denali Visitor Center.
- The Alaskan Wet Dog Race. (http://wetdograce.com).
- Renewable Energy Resource Development.
- Drug testing to collect unemployment checks.
- Better schools for all levels of education.
- Wind power.
- Homeless problem.
- Pebble project.
- Susitna, Chakchamna, etc.
- Seed and venture funds/programs.
- Development of Alaska as a technology center.
- Renewable energy projects such as Fire Island.
- Keeping the military fully operational in Anchorage.
- Eagle River Greenbelt Trail/infrastructure project.
- Tourism.
- Resource availability and utilization.
- The Pebble min e project.
- K-12 education enhancement.
- Chuitna coal project.
- Supporting the fishing industries.
- Bridge to Hope
- Natural resource development.
- Renewable energy.
- Cut school administration 50%.
- Transportation improvements.
- Economic development that's sustainable.
- ACES tax relief to encourage oil production.
- Oil Production stop decline grow production.
- Continuation of 8(a) contracting by ANC's.
- Fireweed lane.
- Increase oil production on the North Slope.
- Any projects in rural AK impact Anchorage.
- Repeal property tax.
- Movie industry development.
- Upgrading of gas delivery infrastructure.
- Better cross town avenues.

- Knik Arm Bridge
- Cook Inlet natural gas development.
- Dedicated municipal and state tourism marketing.
- Hemp growth in rural areas for cloth.
- Increase farming of local food, less shipping.
- Knik Arm Rail Loop
- Fire Island wind farm.
- Chukchi Sea, Heavy Oil, NPRA, etc.
- Business incubators.
- Eagle River trail enhancements.
- Manage wildlife on municipal trails.
- Wishbone Hill Coal Project.
- Restart of LNG shipping.
- Broadband services to rural Alaska.
- Hydro power.
- Gas line to Valdez
- Recycle glass.....find a way to use it!
- Bus system including to valley/stop cutting services.
- Utilities improvements.
- Arts and education as a primary focus for municipality.
- Oil production. Stop the decline.
- State fiscal policy.
- Spenard Road.
- Neighborhood street and drainage projects.
- Increase oil and gas production in Cook Inlet.
- Donlin and Pebble mine development.
- Coal development and export.

#### Is there any other project or issue more important than the one you listed above?

- The Alaskan Wet Dog Race (<a href="http://wetdograce.com">http://wetdograce.com</a>)
- Wind power.
- K-12 education enhancement.
- Chuitna coal project.
- Renewable energy.
- Gas line to Valdez.
- Oil production. Stop the decline.
- Continuation of 8(a) contracting by ANC's.
- Increase oil production on the North Slope.