

For Immediate Release

New North, Inc.

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UWO COVID-19 economic impact research: Children could be the next hurdle for Wisconsin businesses

UW Oshkosh, WEDC and New North announce fifth statewide survey results

NEW NORTH, August 26, 2020 – As school districts announced their fall reopening plans, 43 percent of Wisconsin business leaders responding to the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh's fifth statewide COVID-19 economic impact survey believe their local district's plans would have significant impact on workforce availability.

Another one-third of respondents were still unsure about the impact, said Jeffrey Sachse, interim director of UWO's Center for Customized Research and Services.

"This comes as most businesses report fewer than a quarter of their employees normally face childcare needs with typical accommodations including scheduling changes or flexible hours," Sachse said. "This is poised to again be a significant issue as businesses generally are ill-equipped to offer other accommodations at the same time that the state's childcare infrastructure is strained beyond capacity."

Businesses representing 39,705 employees across Wisconsin responded to the survey administered from Aug. 6 to 21.

For the month of July 2020, they reported:

- Income gains of \$5.7 million
- Inventory gains of \$4.7 million
- Wage and productivity gains of \$2.5 million
- Other financial losses of \$1 million

"The August survey results again point to a business community that is recovering, though recovery slowed significantly from the June reopening. Employment gains also slowed despite a declining state unemployment rate, suggesting that firms are either unable to add additional staff or are hesitant to do so given ongoing uncertainties," Sachse said.

Businesses similarly continue to express concerns regarding customer traffic and anticipate additional rounds of financial assistance even as their interest in currently available programs diminishes.

The survey is a partnership of UWO, the state's nine Regional Development Organizations, including New North, and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. The August survey received a total of 441 responses and is reported with a margin of error of +/- 3%.

The September survey is scheduled to begin the week of Aug. 31.

Results can be found at uwosh.edu/ccrs/covid-19-survey.

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New North, Inc., is a 501(c)3 non-profit, regional marketing and economic development corporation fostering collaboration among private and public sector leaders throughout the 18 counties of Northeast Wisconsin, known as the New North region. The New North brand unites the region both internally and externally around talent development, brand promotion and business development, signifying the collective economic power behind the 18 counties. The counties include Outagamie, Winnebago, Calumet, Waupaca, Brown, Shawano, Oconto, Marinette, Door, Kewaunee, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Fond du Lac, Green Lake, Marquette, Florence, Menominee and Waushara. To find out more information about New North, Inc., please visit our website at www.thenewnorth.com.

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