



The **INSIDE**

Allen Economic Development Group

President's Pitch

Relationships important to development

Economic development is built on trust between the parties that are involved. Site selection, economic development, business development, and community development are all about bringing the right partners to the project. It is our focus at Allen Economic Development Group to be that trusted partner. Four goals are in our "Values Statement" developed in our '21 – '24 Strategic Plan:



AEDG Values Statement

- Be inclusive in our representation of the economic and development interests of all residents of Allen County.

- Be recognized as an ethical, diligent, and trustworthy organization.

- Be known throughout the region and state as a premier and effective

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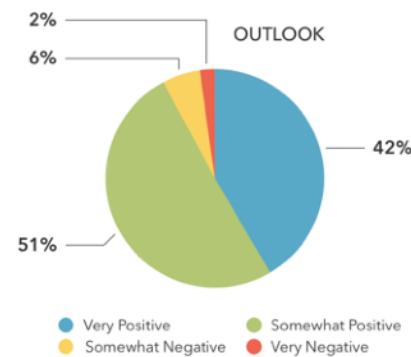
Optimism remains: poll

Allen County businesses are expecting a good year, according to a recent AEDG survey.

Over 93 percent of companies that answered a recent forecast survey distributed by Allen Economic Development Group report having a very positive or somewhat positive outlook for the remainder of 2021.

That optimism was supported with 66 percent of the companies reporting that production has stayed the same or increased since March 2020. When asked about expected sales this year, an overwhelming 94 percent of respondents anticipate sales to stay the same or increase.

Nearly 2 out of 3 companies said the number of employees has stayed the same or increased during the pandemic. Every respondent but one said wages are expected to stay the same. Of those, 27 percent of respondents said wages would be stagnant while 44 percent said the increase



Eighty-nine companies of various sizes and sectors responded to the recent AEDG outlook survey.

would be up to 3 percent, 13 percent said the increase would be 3-5 percent, and 15 percent said the increase would be greater than 5 percent.

Just over 30 percent of the respondents expect employment to decrease by 3 percent or more. Over half of those that expect decreases in their workforce numbers are employers with 10-100 employees.

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Dirt is moving at the site of the new Perry PRO Tech corporate office on Commerce Parkway. The company plans to relocate to its new, \$6.1 million, 50,000 sf headquarters in 2022.

What are the challenges facing your business now?

ANSWER CHOICES	▼	RESPONSES	▼
Weak economy and sales for our products to U.S. customers		14.61%	13
Weaker global growth and slower export sales		3.37%	3
Trade uncertainties (tariffs, trade negotiations)		13.48%	12
Strengthened U.S. dollar relative to other currencies		1.12%	1
Challenges with access to capital or other forms of financing		7.87%	7
Unfavorable business climate		17.98%	16
Increased raw material costs		42.70%	38
Rising health care costs		37.08%	33
Transportation and logistics costs		33.71%	30
Supply chain challenges with inventory management		29.21%	26
Attracting and retaining a quality workforce		60.67%	54
Other		14.61%	13

Total Respondents: 89

Survey

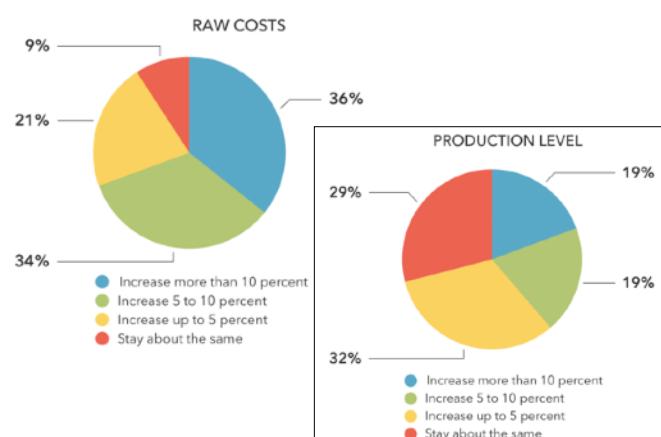
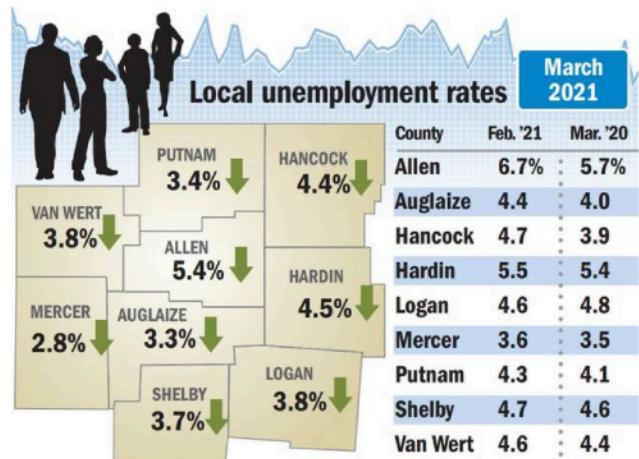
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Although optimistic, several factors of concern were noted by the survey participants. The top concern among all companies except the smallest category of “fewer than 10 employees” was attracting and retaining a quality workforce. The need for employees was a factor for 61 percent of the companies. Other challenges include the increase of raw material costs, 43 percent, and rising health care costs, 37 percent. Transportation and logistics costs, followed by supply chain challenges, 34 percent and 29 percent respectively, rounded out the top five.

Results of the AEDG survey mirror what is happening nationally. Allen County companies have shown great resilience throughout the pandemic, however, they are being hampered by the same obstacle affecting many companies — unfilled job openings. Helping employers find good employees is the focus of AEDG and several of our partnering agencies. Utilizing tools available at the local and state level we aim to assist companies through a variety of programs.

The most recent data shows Allen County at 5.4 percent, unemployment, down from 6.7 percent a month ago. Able-bodied residents returning to work will allow our region to rebound completely.

See survey results at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-YSBZRWMC/>



Stratton

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economic development organization.

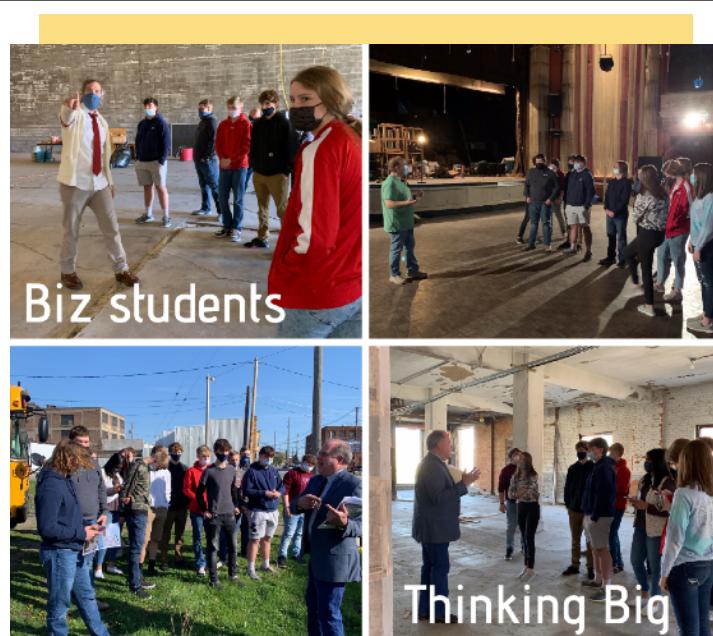
- To be a collaborative partner working with all economic development stakeholders in the County.

Economic Development is always a hot topic, and it gets hotter during an election year. Each Lima mayoral candidate has in one way or another offered his or her definition of economic development. What is included in development? It may involve incentivizing the creation of jobs, the establishment of quality housing, or the use of tax abatements to lure companies. We know infrastructure and utilities are vital. Education and training opportunities are a must for existing and future businesses. And what company will Lima/Allen County pursue as its next business partner?

As companies reopen their doors and meetings return to in-person affairs, many of these issues are discussed. And, honestly, they all have some merit. I think what is at the top of the list when it comes to economic development is the topic of RELATIONSHIPS.

Relationships made between company leaders and community leaders; between lenders and borrowers; between executives and frontline workers; between elected officials and the risk-takers wanting to start a new venture — all of those and many more are key when it comes to companies landing in Allen County, expanding in Allen County and excelling in Allen County.

Good relationships involve trust, faith, and perseverance. Our business community's steadfastness through the health pandemic of the last year is a true testament to how strong alliances outlast difficult circumstances. No matter what is included in your concept of economic development, at the basic level development implies progress, and that is what we have in Allen County. I am looking forward to hearing more from our business community about what is to come, and we will pursue building stronger relationships throughout 2021.



Freshmen from Columbus Grove enrolled in the High School of Business program recently toured four downtown Lima buildings as part of their class assignment to create a development plan. The students also heard from Rob Nelson, a co-owner of The Met and its future brewery, and Michael Bouson, co-owner of The Ohio Theater. Both men shared development plans of their respective buildings. The students were able to ask questions during the tour led by Dave Stratton, AEDG president, and enjoyed lunch at The Met.

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