



# Wyandot County, OH Business Retention and Expansion Program

---

*A narrative based on local perceptions*

Final Report – December 2016



**Wyandot County, OH**  
**Business Retention & Expansion Program**  
**Final Report**

**December 2016**

Prepared by:

Gregory Moon

Executive Director, Wyandot County Office of Economic Development

Executive Director, Wyandot County Regional Planning Commission

and

The Wyandot County Business Retention and Expansion Task Force

Support for this program provided by:

Wyandot County Board of Commissioners

Wyandot County Office of Economic Development



## Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Introduction .....</b>                            | <b>4</b>  |
| Program Goals .....                                  | 5         |
| Implementation .....                                 | 5         |
| Program Benefits and Outcomes.....                   | 6         |
| <b>Wyandot County, OH Demographic Overview .....</b> | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Economy in Wyandot County, OH .....</b>           | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Cost of Living in Wyandot County, OH.....</b>     | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>BR&amp;E Survey Results.....</b>                  | <b>10</b> |
| Participant Information.....                         | 10        |
| Future Plans .....                                   | 11        |
| Labor Force & Training.....                          | 11        |
| View of Wyandot County.....                          | 12        |
| <b>Action Plan.....</b>                              | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Summary .....</b>                                 | <b>16</b> |
| <b>Appendix A: 2016 BR&amp;E Survey Results.....</b> | <b>18</b> |
| Section - GENERAL INFORMATION .....                  | 18        |
| Section - BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT.....                  | 21        |
| Section - LOCAL WORKFORCE.....                       | 27        |
| Section - FUTURE PLANS.....                          | 35        |

## Introduction

Since 2008 local public, business, and community leaders have made an effort to ensure the annual implementation of a Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program in Wyandot County. The retention of existing business has been and remains a primary goal of these leaders. Enhancing the ability of area businesses to profitably grow and expand is vital to sustaining and improving local economic viability.

Prior to 2008, a BR&E program was facilitated sporadically in Wyandot County, but the program became an annual occurrence and a staple for municipal, county, regional, and statewide economic development organizations across the United States. As stated in the 2006 Wyandot County BR&E Final Report, the best “barometers” of how well the community functions as a place to do business and a place to live and work are existing businesses and the existing workforce. Research shows that in Ohio, an average net job growth of 70% comes from existing businesses, and that number increases to as high as 86% in rural areas.<sup>1</sup>

Not only does the success of existing businesses allow for a larger tax base,

increased local spending, enhanced public services, and an overall better quality of life, but strong local businesses also play a major role in the attraction of new business to an area. Satisfied existing businesses can serve as a community's best ambassadors when recruiting new firms as well as being a source of leads when seeking new firms to recruit.<sup>2</sup>

In Wyandot County BR&E programs were completed in 1996, 2006, and annually since 2008. After completion of the 2008 BR&E program, a group of public and business leaders realized that Wyandot County needed a local presence to address the issues as well as take advantage of the strengths reported by local businesses. Those discussions spurred a partnership with Ohio State University Extension, and that year a full-time Extension Educator member was hired to run the local economic development effort. In 2009 the Wyandot County Office of Economic Development (WCOED), a 501(c)(6) nonprofit public / private partnership was formed, and led by the same OSU Extension Educator who served as its director, and in turn carried out the responsibility of implementing the

---

<sup>1</sup> Kraybill, D. 1995. Retention and Expansion First. *Ohio's Challenge* 8(2):4-7 [Department of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH].

<sup>2</sup> Morse, G. 2004. *The Retention and Expansion of Existing Businesses*. CARDI-Cornell, Ithaca, NY.  
[http://www.cdtoolbox.net/economic\\_development/000195.html](http://www.cdtoolbox.net/economic_development/000195.html).

county's BR&E program.

The Wyandot County BR&E program was led by the Extension Educator/WCOED Executive Director from 2009 – 2014. After the WCOED separated from its relationship with OSU Extension at the end of 2014, the Wyandot County BR&E program has since been wholly facilitated by the Wyandot County Office of Economic Development.

## Program Goals

The overarching or long term goals of the Wyandot County BR&E program continue to remain similar to those started in the initial 1996 BR&E program offering:

- **To formalize and implement a concerted effort that assists in the retention and expansion of existing businesses and the workforce**
- **To increase the competitiveness of local businesses**
- **To create a narration of the local economy**
- **To enhance local business climate and image for potential business**

## Implementation

As was the practice in the previous year, a combination of methods was used to collect data that supported the Wyandot County Business Retention and Expansion program. The Wyandot County Office of Economic Development Executive Director served as the local BR&E practitioner; developing the survey tool, scheduling retention calls, and conducting on-site visits. The BR&E questionnaire was made continuously available on the WCOED website and could be emailed or mailed to participating employers.

Since the Wyandot County BR&E program is conducted by leadership from the WCOED, the organization's executive committee and top-level members served as the local BR&E Task Force. This group of public and private sector leaders set the parameters for local businesses that would be targeted throughout the year. As in 2015, the task force determined that the top-15 employers (in terms of total employment) should be visited, and a remaining 15 employers would be visited based on need; for a total of at least 30 local businesses visited per year. In 2015 well over 30 local business visits were conducted by the WCOED Executive Director although only 25 BR&E surveys were recorded as completed in this year's Final Report. The incomplete surveys we deemed unusable due to incomplete or inadequate information collected during a BR&E visit.

The BR&E practitioner either directly called or emailed potential participants to schedule BR&E visits. Those identified to participate in the program were offered the option to take the annual BR&E questionnaire online prior to the visit, or to complete the questionnaire verbally during the visit.

Following a practice that has begun since 2013, the Wyandot County Commissioners joined the BR&E practitioner on a visit roughly once a month, and other members of the WCOED were invited to join retention calls as well. The inclusion of the commissioners enhanced one of the primary facets of the BR&E program, which is to open direct lines of communication between local business, policy, and community leaders.

## Program Benefits and Outcomes

Data from the local BR&E effort is also used to assess the economy and provide a detailed understanding to state-wide community leaders, public leaders, and economic developers. The data provides evidence-based information that these individuals and entities can use to develop efforts to address areas seen as

opportunities or threats on the wider state-level.

Locally, the 2016 Wyandot County BR&E program led to the identification of multiple potential and realized expansion projects by local employers. Those projects that were still in the planning phases better equip the economic development office to prepare and assist those organizations with any challenges these projects might face when moving forward. The advanced notice also allows the WCOED to help expedite requested assistance at the time these projects might be implemented.

Early identification of local expansion projects is a key advantage of the Wyandot County BR&E program as projects identified in previous years and during the 2016 program were successfully implemented. In total, 5 Wyandot County businesses moved forward with expansion projects in 2016 where the WCOED was able to directly provide assistance. These 5 projects resulted in the creation of 137 new full-time jobs, new annual payroll of almost \$5.2 million, new capital investment of over \$37.5 million, and the retention of 611 existing jobs.

## Wyandot County, OH Demographic Overview<sup>3</sup>

- In 2015, Wyandot County had an estimated population of [22,467](#). Since the year 2000, the population of Wyandot County has decreased by 1.9 percent ([22,908](#) in 2000).
- The median value of a home in Wyandot County was [\\$104,000](#). Of the total [9,327](#) housing units, [72.2%](#) were owner-occupied.
- Wyandot County's median age was [42](#). The U.S. median age was [37.6](#).
- The average county household size was [2.38 people](#). [52.3%](#) of households are occupied by a married couple of which [34.7%](#) have a child under 18 years. [14.6%](#) of households are occupied by single parents of which [53.6%](#) have a child under 18 years.
- In November 2016, the unemployment rate in Wyandot County was [3.4%](#), the state of Ohio was [4.4%](#), and the U.S. average was [4.4%](#) (not seasonally adjusted).
- Of the population, [90.1%](#) had a high school diploma or higher degree ([86.7%](#) across the U.S.), and [14.1%](#) had a bachelor's degree or higher ([29.8%](#) across the U.S.).
- The mean commute time for those living in Wyandot County was [22.7 minutes](#). The national average was [25.9 minutes](#).

|  | Wyandot<br>County | Ohio      | United<br>States |
|--|-------------------|-----------|------------------|
| <b>Total population change since year 2000</b> | -1.9%             | 1.9%      | 11%              |
| <b>Male population</b>                         | 49.3%             | 48.9%     | 49.2%            |
| <b>Female population</b>                       | 50.7%             | 51.1%     | 50.8%            |
| <b>Median age (years)</b>                      | 42.0              | 39.2      | 37.6             |
| <b>Total households</b>                        | 9,327             | 4,585,084 | 116,926,305      |
| <b>Average household size</b>                  | 2.38              | 2.46      | 2.64             |
| <b>Percent high school graduate or higher</b>  | 90.1%             | 89.1%     | 86.7%            |
| <b>Percent bachelor's degree or higher</b>     | 14.1%             | 26.1%     | 29.8%            |

<sup>3</sup> Information obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates <http://factfinder2.census.gov> and Ohio Labor Market Information, Civilian Labor Force Estimates <http://ohiolmi.com/asp/laus/vbLAUS.htm>, which reflect the most current information on Wyandot County, OH.

## Economy in Wyandot County, OH<sup>4</sup>

| ECONOMY                                   | Wyandot County | Ohio      | United States |
|---|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| <b>Civilian labor force (Nov. 2016)</b>   | 12,600         | 5,694,000 | 159,451,000   |
| <b>Unemployment Rate (Nov. 2016)</b>      | 3.4%           | 4.4%      | 4.4%          |
| <b>Mean travel time to work (minutes)</b> | 22.7           | 23.2      | 25.9          |
| <b>Median earnings (dollars)</b>          | 30,698         | 30,060    | 30,926        |

| POPULATION BY OCCUPATION  | Wyandot County | Ohio  | United States |
|---|----------------|-------|---------------|
| <b>Management, business, science, and arts occupations</b>          | 25.0%          | 35.1% | 36.7%         |
| <b>Service occupations</b>  | 15.9%          | 17.6% | 18.1%         |
| <b>Sales and office occupations</b>                                 | 18.3%          | 23.9% | 24.1%         |
| <b>Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations</b> | 12.5%          | 7.7%  | 8.9%          |
| <b>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations</b>  | 28.3%          | 15.8% | 12.2%         |

| ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLDS BY HOUSEHOLD INCOME | Wyandot County | Ohio   | United States |
|--|----------------|--------|---------------|
| <b>Less than \$10,000</b>                | 5.9%           | 8.1%   | 7.2%          |
| <b>\$10,000 to \$14,999</b>              | 6.0%           | 5.6%   | 5.3%          |
| <b>\$15,000 to \$24,999</b>              | 12.4%          | 11.5%  | 10.6%         |
| <b>\$25,000 to \$34,999</b>              | 11.3%          | 10.9%  | 10.1%         |
| <b>\$35,000 to \$49,999</b>              | 16.1%          | 14.3%  | 13.4%         |
| <b>\$50,000 to \$74,999</b>              | 22.1%          | 18.5%  | 17.8%         |
| <b>\$75,000 to \$99,999</b>              | 13.4%          | 12.0%  | 12.1%         |
| <b>\$100,000 to \$149,999</b>            | 9.2%           | 11.7%  | 13.1%         |
| <b>\$150,000 to \$199,999</b>            | 1.9%           | 3.9%   | 5.1%          |
| <b>\$200,000 or more</b>                 | 1.7%           | 3.4%   | 5.3%          |
| <b>Median household income (dollars)</b> | 47,555         | 49,429 | 53,889        |

<sup>4</sup> Information obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates <http://factfinder2.census.gov> and Ohio Labor Market Information, Civilian Labor Force Estimates <http://ohiolmi.com/asp/laus/vbLAUS.htm>, which reflect the most current information on Wyandot County, OH.



## Cost of Living in Wyandot County, OH<sup>5</sup>

| COST OF LIVING        | Wyandot County | Ohio | United States |
|-----------------------|----------------|------|---------------|
| <b>Overall</b>        | 88             | 88   | 100           |
| <b>Grocery</b>        | 102.6          | 99.2 | 100           |
| <b>Health</b>         | 114            | 98   | 100           |
| <b>Housing</b>        | 54             | 67   | 100           |
| <b>Utilities</b>      | 92             | 99   | 100           |
| <b>Transportation</b> | 106            | 100  | 100           |
| <b>Miscellaneous</b>  | 105            | 98   | 100           |

- Cost of living indices are based on a U.S. average of 100. If Wyandot County scored above the cost of living index in any category it would indicate that local residents experience a cost of living above that of the U.S. average. Likewise, a cost of living index less than 100 in a category would indicate a cost of living below the U.S. average. The same applies to the figures representing cost of living for the State of Ohio.
- Overall, the cost of living index for Wyandot County is 88.4. Comparatively, this is the same overall cost of living index for the State of Ohio.
- The Wyandot County, OH cost of living does exceed that of the national average in three separate categories, but the large differentiator is in the cost of local housing.
- The overall cost of living in Wyandot County is 11.6% below that of the U.S. average.

---

<sup>5</sup> Information obtained from Sperling's Best Places <http://www.bestplaces.net/>, which reflects the most relevant cost of living data for Wyandot County, OH.

## BR&E Survey Results

### Participant Information

The 2016 Wyandot County Business Retention and Expansion program included the completion of surveys and retention calls beginning as early as January and as late as December. Survey data was formally gathered from 25 local businesses, of which the aggregated data is included in Appendix A. All of these participating employers were visited by the BR&E practitioner to discuss further the responses provided in the survey. As mentioned earlier, a number of other businesses were also visited by the BR&E practitioner throughout 2016 but survey data was not included in the aggregated responses due to an insufficient amount of data collected.

Those participants who did provide survey responses included a sampling of various types of businesses located in Wyandot County and represented a variety of other various aspects as well. Geographically, 75% of respondents were located in the City of Upper Sandusky, 21% in the Village of Carey, and 4% in Village of Sycamore.

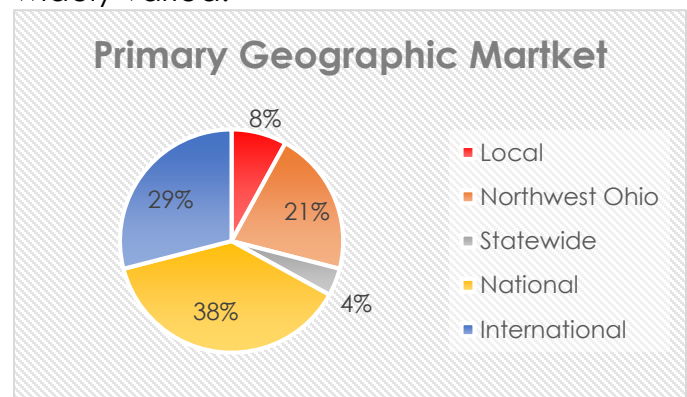
The age of local participating operations also varied widely. The vast majority, 75%, had operated in Wyandot County for over 20 years. The other 25% was evenly distributed between 1-5 years, 6–10 years,

and 11-20 years in operation. The primary industry sectors of respondents was as follows:

| Industry Sector            | Percent of Respondents |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Manufacturing              | 58%                    |
| Agricultural/Forest/Mining | 17%                    |
| Transportation/Utilities   | 8%                     |
| Construction               | 8%                     |
| Service                    | 4%                     |
| Other                      | 4%                     |

In comparison, the primary type of space occupied by survey respondents included 74% that were located in an industrial/manufacturing facility, followed by 17% in an office space, and 9% in a retail setting. 96% of respondents indicated they owned the space their business occupied.

The scope of respondents' primary geographic market, or areas where their goods and services were sold or delivered, widely varied:



Varying industries and customer bases among local businesses help to enhance

sustainability in the local economy, and provide stability when fluctuations may arise in certain business sectors.

## Future Plans

2016 BR&E data again showed overall profitable growth among participants was occurring as 83% reported plans for growth over the next 3 years, and 17% reported their business as stable. No respondents reported a projected decline in business.

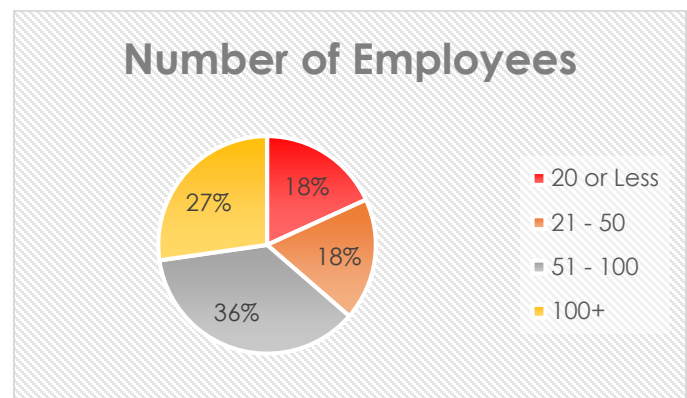
Of the respondents who did report their company was growing, 68% noted that a change in its employment level would take place as a result of that growth.

Most businesses reported the reason for their growing operations as coming from increased demand in their current market bases (52%). 26% of those who reported growth over the next 3 years stated it was due to entry and growth in new markets.

Also similar to previous year BR&E data collected, nearly all (78%) of the businesses who indicated they were growing also reported they had plans to modernize, renovate, or expand their operation, or they had recently completed a related project.

## Labor Force & Training

In terms of participating employer size, the following graph shows the employee count distribution of survey respondents:

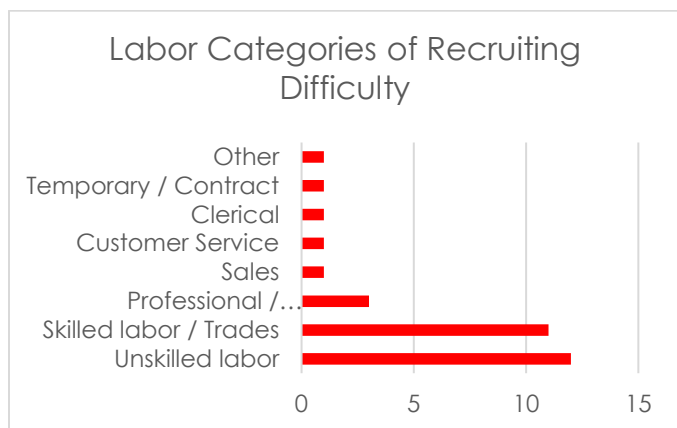


The average length of employment for the majority of respondents indicated that turnover, while still present, was not a primary concern for problem for many Wyandot County employers. Nearly 63% of respondents said the average length of employment at their location was 10 years or more, 25% reported an average length of employment of 5-10 years, and only 13% as 1-5 years.

As has been the case in both local and national data collected on the subject, labor availability continues to be an area of difficulty for employers. This year, almost 70% of respondents indicated they had difficulty recruiting employees locally. As

2016 Final Report

can be seen in the following graph, unskilled labor as well as skilled labor positions continue to be the most difficult to recruit:



General competency skills (basic math, reading/writing, problem solving, etc.) were identified as the top skills seen lacking in potential employees interviewed by respondents. The other top lacking skills following general competency skills were (in order): Other Technical skills, Customer service skills (interpersonal communications), Equipment operation skills, and Mechanical skills.

When asked what type of training is needed for respondents' current employees, the majority ranked their employees as not needing any type of training. For those that did provide a response, the two highest ranked areas of needed training were in Other Technical skills and Equipment Operation skill sets.

About 64% of all the respondents indicated a current relationship with a college,

university, or vocational school to help find and train talent.

New questions were implemented in the 2016 BR&E survey to track the average starting salaries of workers. \$11.80 per hour was the combined average starting wage reported when asked for the average starting salary of unskilled workers. \$18.43 per hour was the combined average starting salary for skilled workers.

## View of Wyandot County

Business leaders in and around Wyandot County play a pivotal role in the overall attractiveness of the area to potential businesses looking at expansion. If existing businesses are performing well and have positive interaction with local public and private leadership, it is a good indicator of what potential businesses can expect if they were to locate operations close by. Suppliers and customers dependent on existing local businesses may also wish to be in closer proximity to that business if it is thriving and can offer cost advantages, which can lead to attraction of that outside industry as well. The BR&E program aims to identify characteristics of Wyandot County that can aid or hinder business growth as well as potential business attraction efforts in the immediate area.

When asked from a business perspective about general views of Wyandot County, 21% of survey participants indicated a

quality of life in Wyandot County that was excellent, 75% rated it as good, and 4% as average. When asked for their general opinion of Wyandot County as a place to do business; 4% responded it was excellent, 91% rated it as good, and 4% ranked Wyandot County as average.

Participants were asked for their top 3 reasons for locating or keeping their business in Wyandot County. The top 3 responses were (in order): location, access to customers, and access to suppliers. The access that Wyandot County's location provides to local businesses continues to be a major location factor for the county and has remained a consistent strength as when asked this question these 3 factors have been ranked as the top three for the past four years of BR&E data.

Among services and amenities in Wyandot County that local businesses are most satisfied with; roads, highways and freeways received the top ranking by a wide margin over all other options, and has consistently done so over the past three years. The 2, 4-lane freeways, 9 state routes, and 3 rail lines intersecting Wyandot County are heavily relied upon and make it attractive to area businesses.

Restaurants were ranked as the top local service or amenity that businesses were dissatisfied with.

Other questions asked to gauge overall challenges for local business due to local

zoning and other regulations yielded positive results. Only two responses indicated difficulty with these items. One was actually due to service from an outside gas provider, and the other for building permit approvals also handled outside of Wyandot County.

When asked for respondents' top 3 challenges doing business in Wyandot County, participants indicated that recruiting or retaining employees was the top challenge followed by unskilled workers.

When asked if local rules and regulations have been a hindrance to local business operations or expansion efforts, only 7% reported that those rules had been a hindrance. Local zoning ordinances were indicated as the primary difficulty.

## Action Plan

A primary objective of any Business Retention & Expansion program, outside of creating a narrative of the strengths and weaknesses in a local economy, is to assist in crafting a course of action for local community, public, and business leaders as well as economic development professionals. This action plan should work to address concerns and build on the strengths identified in the collected BR&E data.

Changing negative trends in the local economy does not take place in the short-term, and therefore the action plan must also lay the groundwork for sustaining local economic prosperity.

The BR&E assessments done for Wyandot County in 1996, 2006, 2012 - 2015 and now in 2016 all expressed similarly trending data in many areas, which has been noted throughout this report. The data has maintained the importance of past action plan objectives, which were derived after the initial implementation of the Wyandot County BR&E program. The differentiating trends between data from year-to-year also highlight new areas that should be targeted moving into the future. The changes in data derived over the past five-plus years has led to the creation of new objectives for this updated action plan as well:

***Objective One: Enhance and encourage cooperation between business leaders, government leaders, and education leaders to further the goals and purposes of the BR&E initiative.***

Collaboration and cooperation among local leaders remains the number one factor that can either enhance and/or limit the success and effectiveness of the BR&E program. This aspect becomes even more prevalent in a rural community such as Wyandot County. A gathering of resources and efforts from many individuals are necessary to disseminate and collect

survey information as well as make company visits. Over the past two years the county commissioners and various WCOED board members took part in BR&E visits, which should remain a common practice in the future.

This cooperation also extends outside of actual data collection into carrying out the objectives defined by the BR&E program. Local policy and decision changes are made by a number of individuals. The more closely these individuals are exposed to the BR&E program and collected data, the more informed their decision making can become and ultimately the better they can serve their local businesses and residents.

***Objective Two: Improve the quality and quantity of the local workforce to satisfy the current and anticipated future needs of local businesses.***

This objective was stated in the original Wyandot County BR&E study conducted in 1996, and current collected BR&E data makes this objective more relevant today than ever. As previously noted, workforce, and particularly the availability of needed workforce, remains to be one of the largest issues facing local employers. Although it is expressed year-after-year by Wyandot County employers, this issue is widespread. Organizations in many areas of Ohio and the nation face problems finding skilled and trained talent. Many labor market experts through examining available



government data estimate as many as 25 million, or 47%, of all new job openings from 2010 to 2020 will fall into the 'middle-skills' range, which the U.S. is already seeing a shortage of qualified workers in.<sup>6</sup>

As can be seen in the data reported this year, local business continue to have difficulty recruiting skilled talent. The economic development office should continue garnering new relationships between local industry and education as a direct means to convey the need for certain types of skilled talent. The introduction of local school youth and school administration to the types of positions in high demand by local employers is another instances of how the local skills gap can begin to be addressed.

Outside of skilled labor, unskilled labor positions are in almost as great of a demand by local employers. Again, the need for employers to coordinate more closely with local education appears to be apparent as much of the needed aptitudes for unskilled labor positions includes problem solving, team work, and interpersonal communication skills.

### **Objective Three: Connect local business leaders to programs, services, and other**

### **resources available through local, State, and Federal agencies.**

What could be argued as one of the primary benefits of a local Business Retention & Expansion program is the fact that it many times leads to the early identification of growth and expansion plans considered by local employers. In Wyandot County, the BR&E program has led to the identification of these potential projects and in many cases applicable resources were identified and successfully used to help make those projects a reality

The Wyandot County Office of Economic Development has knowledge of these resources and programs from which local businesses can benefit. Many forms of assistance are available and have been garnered to help remove roadblocks to local business expansion.

A strong BR&E program creates a direct outlet of communication to community and policy leaders, which results in a more business- and growth-friendly environment for local industry.

---

<sup>6</sup> Kochan, T., Finegold, D., & Osterman, P. (2012). WHO CAN FIX THE "MIDDLE-SKILLS" GAP?. Harvard Business Review, 90(12), 81-90.

**Objective Four: Connect the needs of local business to policymakers at the state and federal levels by participating in opportunities to relay collected informational from the local BR&E effort.**

As previously stated, a local BR&E program serves as a direct line of communication between industry and local policy and decision makers. Although, that communication and the BR&E response data should not be limited to the local level. It is the responsibility of local BR&E practitioners to also relay this information to greater levels outside the local jurisdiction making the larger region and state more business-friendly wherever possible.

Much of the information collected in the Wyandot County BR&E program assesses opinions of working not only in the county, but within the state of Ohio. The concerns expressed by local companies should be directed to those individuals who can possibly have a positive effect on those issues from a more macro-level.

## Summary

Data collected through the Wyandot County Business Retention & Expansion program continues to assist local economic development officials, community leaders, and stakeholders in planning future strategies that best aid local business growth.

The identification of rapidly growing local firms continues to provide local economic development officials with the ability to proactively assist with the growth of area businesses.

Four local expansion projects were implemented during 2016, which included heavy involvement and assistance from the Wyandot County Office of Economic Development. These projects were all originally discovered through the BR&E program.

As noted throughout this report, much of the data collected during the 2016 BR&E program mirrored that of previous years. Overall, the outlook on the local economy appears to remain positive. Businesses are making investments in many areas of their operations, generally increasing their market bases, and in many cases increasing local employment levels.

The geographic location, infrastructure, and access provided by Wyandot County continue to be identified as the top decision-making factors for companies to both locate and remain in Wyandot County. Ensuring continued transportation access and other heightened public services continues to remain a large driver keeping existing businesses in the area.

While overall the local economic narrative continues to show many strengths, there are still ongoing concerns faced by local businesses that will help to guide ongoing



efforts for local leaders. Again in 2016, the difficulty to recruit and retain both skilled and unskilled labor was seen as one of the greatest hardships for local firms. Although it is a local issue, the lack of needed labor is a problem plaguing firms across the country.

In Wyandot County, local leaders must continue to find ways to combat the negative trends identified by the BR&E program, and build upon those items identified as most valued to the profitable growth of local industry.

A strong Business Retention & Expansion program is regarded by many to be a key offering of any local economic development organization. The implementation of Wyandot County's BR&E program by the local economic development office has proven that theory to be highly effective in both providing a better understanding of the local economy as well as helping to sustain and enhance it.

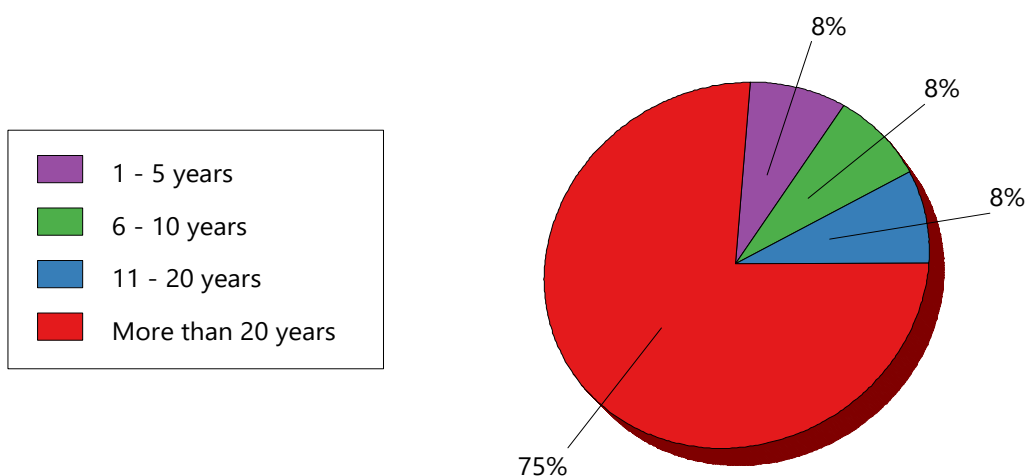
## Appendix A: 2016 BR&E Survey Results

### Survey Results

The following is a graphical depiction of the responses to each survey question. Additional comments provided by respondents, if any, are included after each graph.

### Section - GENERAL INFORMATION

#### 1. How long has your business been operating in Wyandot County?



#### Comments/Notes for "6 - 10 years":

2007

#### Comments/Notes for "More than 20 years":

1944

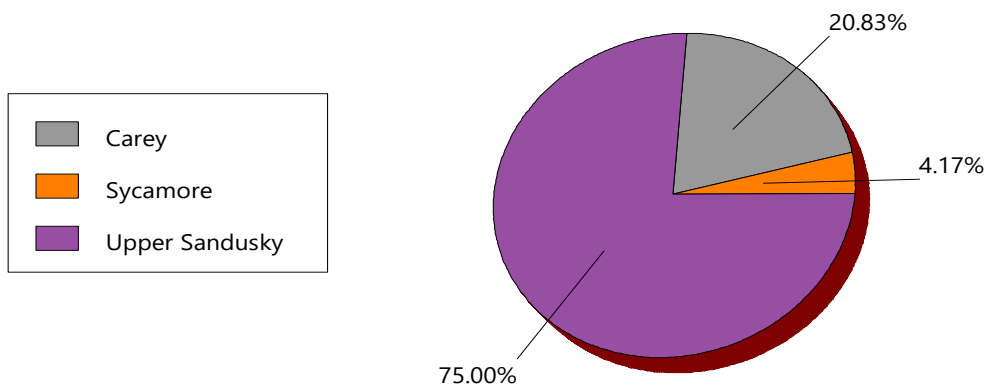
1950

1963

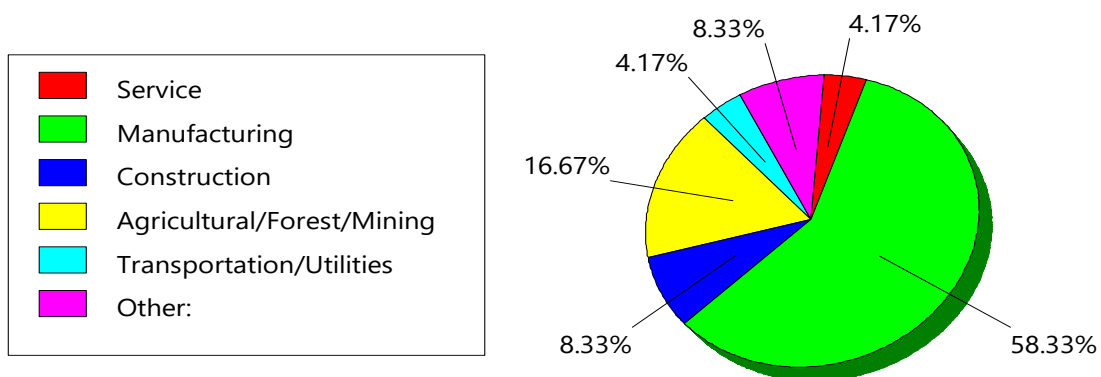
1974

1981

*2. In which of the following areas is your business located?*



*3. Please select the primary industry sector that best describes your business:*

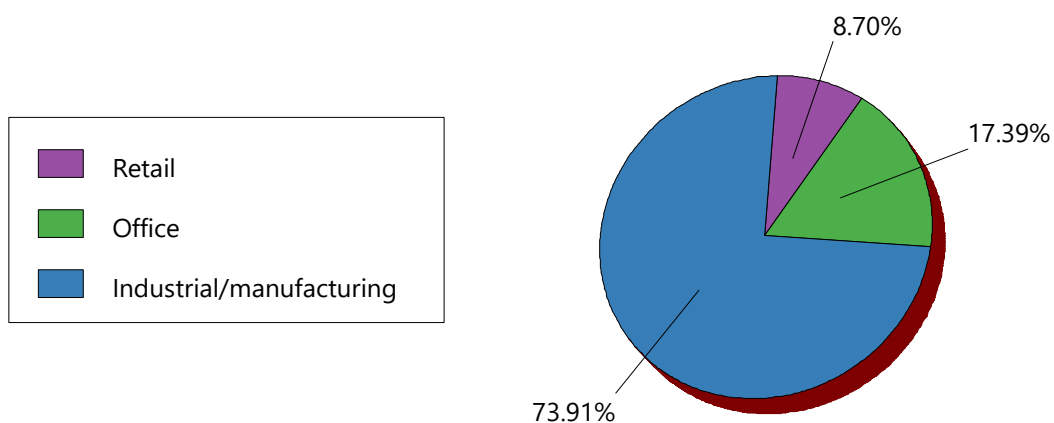


**Comments/Notes for "Other:"**

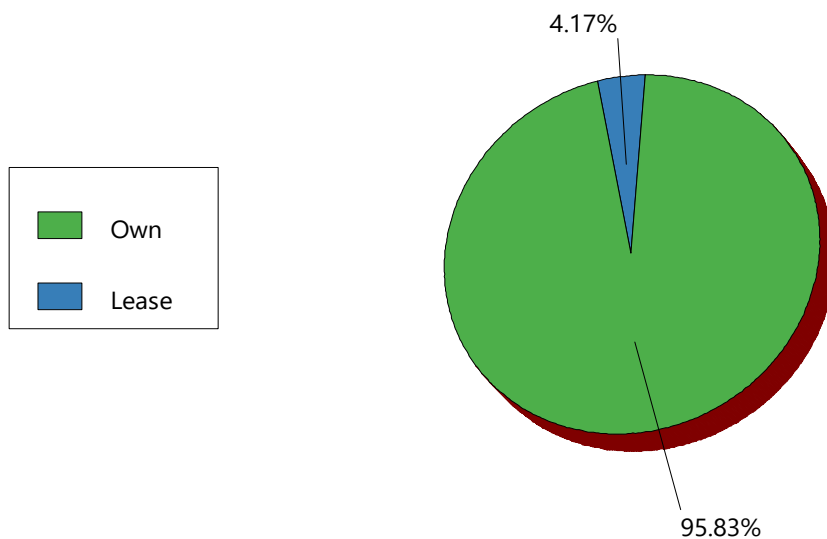
Financial Services

Legal

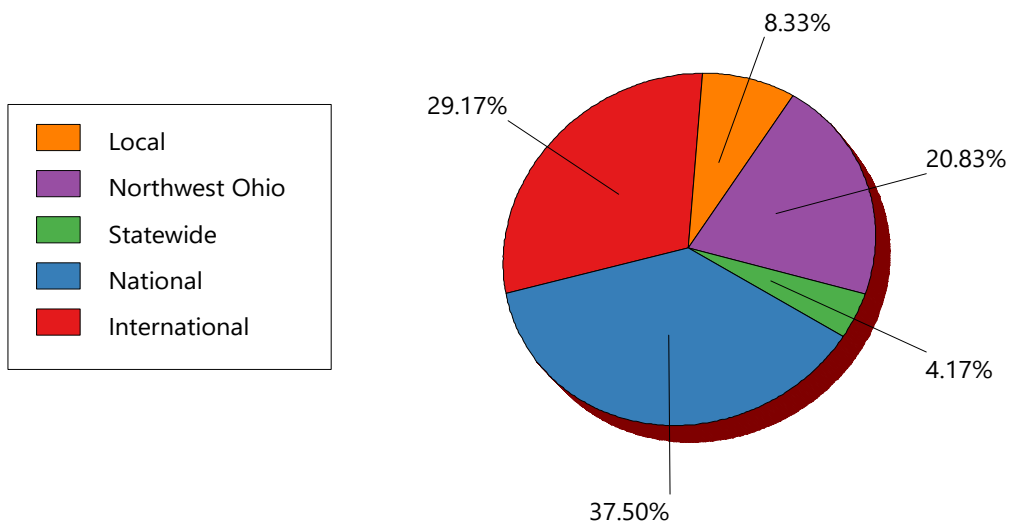
4. What is the primary type of space your business occupies?



5. Do you own or lease your space?

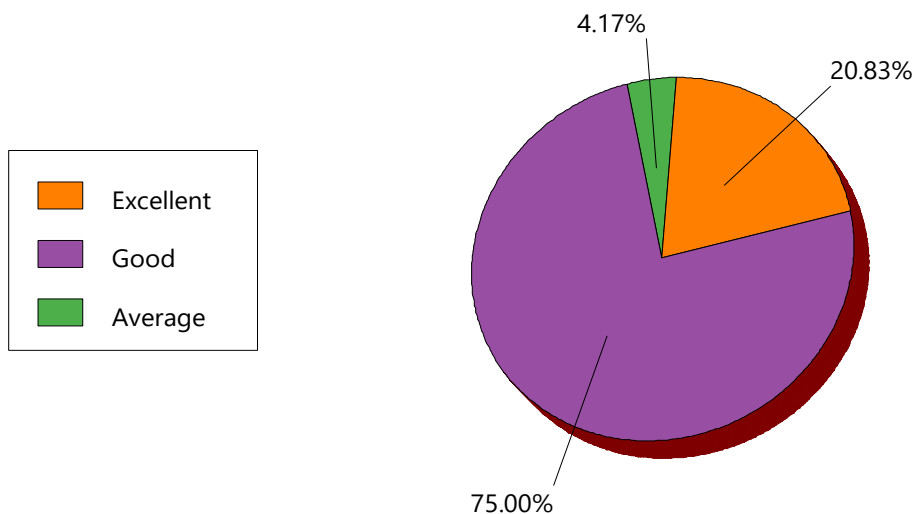


6. What is your company's primary geographic market?

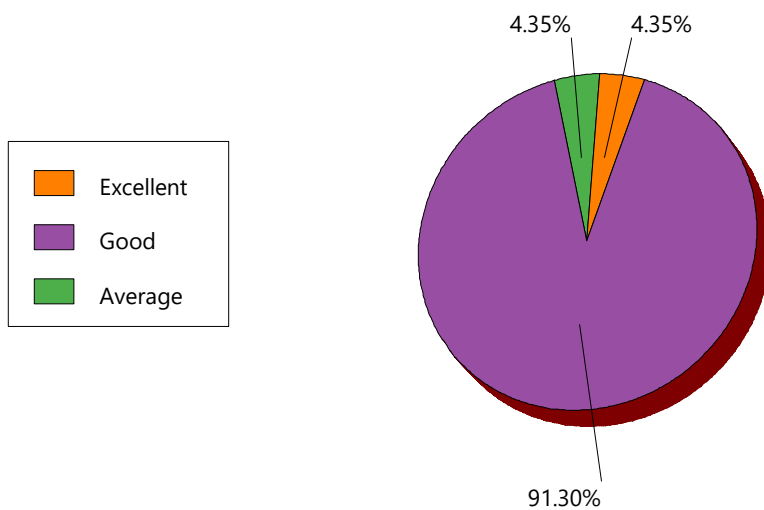


## Section - BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

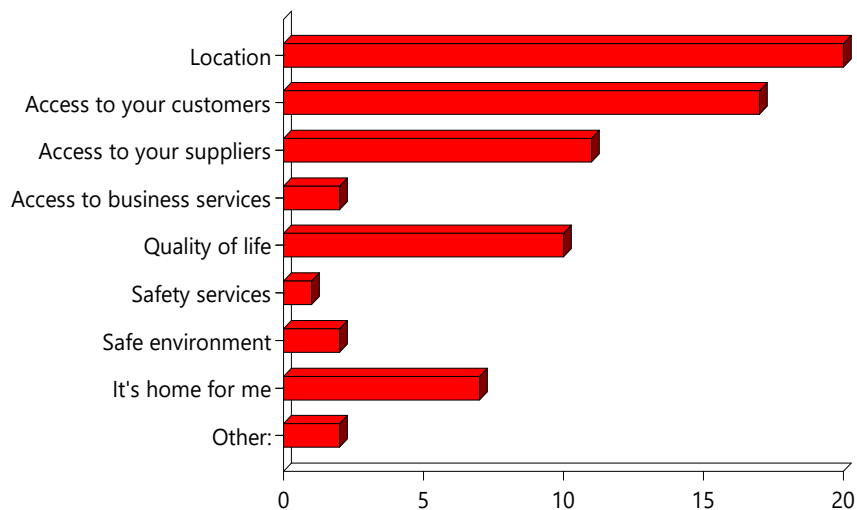
7. From your perspective as a businessperson, please rate the overall quality of life in Wyandot County.



8. What is your overall opinion of Wyandot County as a place to do business?



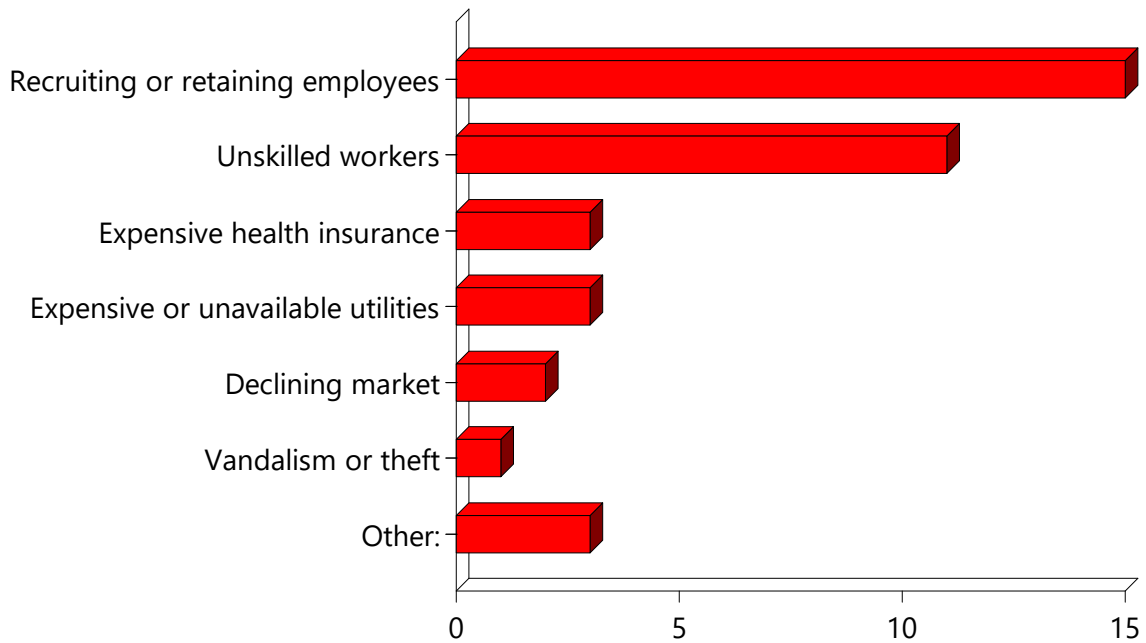
9. What are the top three (3) reasons you chose to locate and keep your business in Wyandot County?



**Comments/Notes:**

Access to Route 30 & 23  
business started here

*10. What are the top challenges you face as a business owner/operator in Wyandot County?*



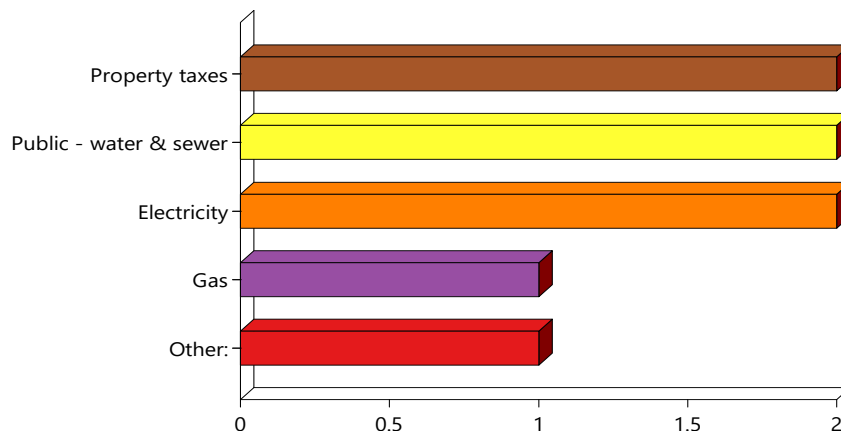
**Comments/Notes:**

Aging population - keeping younger people with significant assets in Wyandot County

drug use

The farming economy

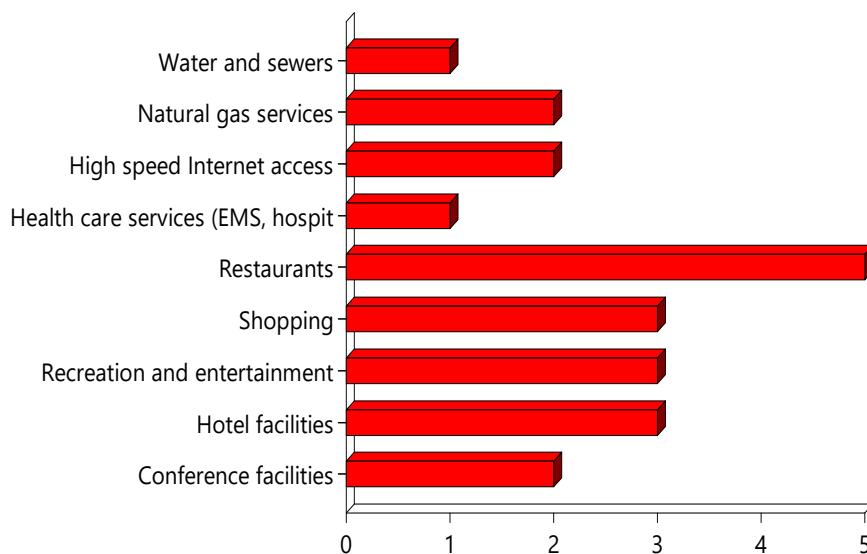
11. Please indicate the business costs in Wyandot County that you believe are more expensive than they ordinarily should be (if any):



**Comments/Notes:**

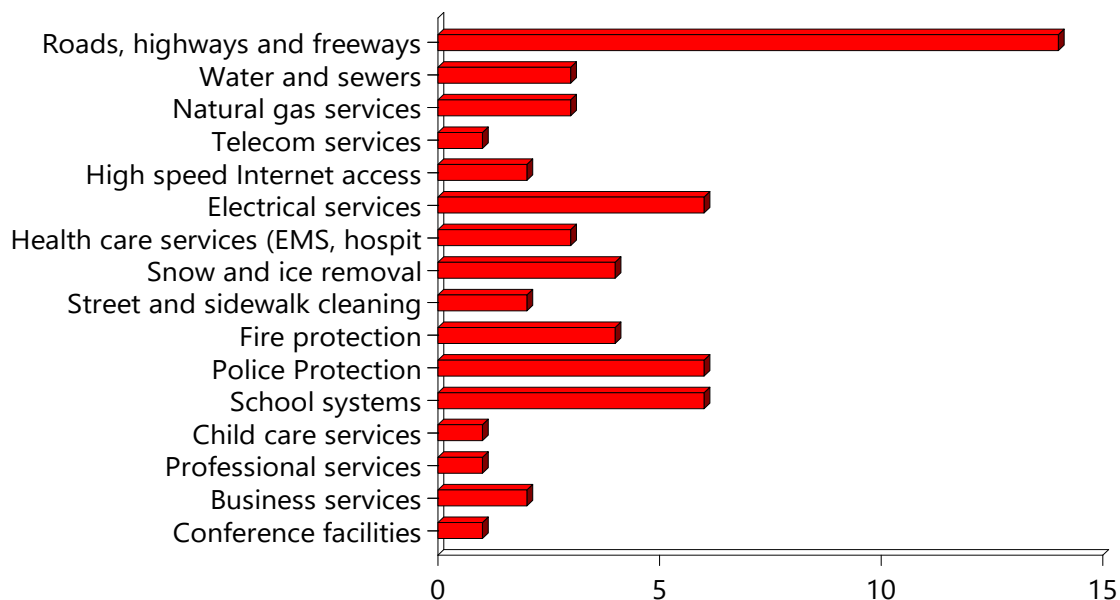
Costs seems fair in comparison

12. From your perspective as a businessperson, please select the SERVICES and AMENITIES in Wyandot County that you are DISSATISFIED with (if any):

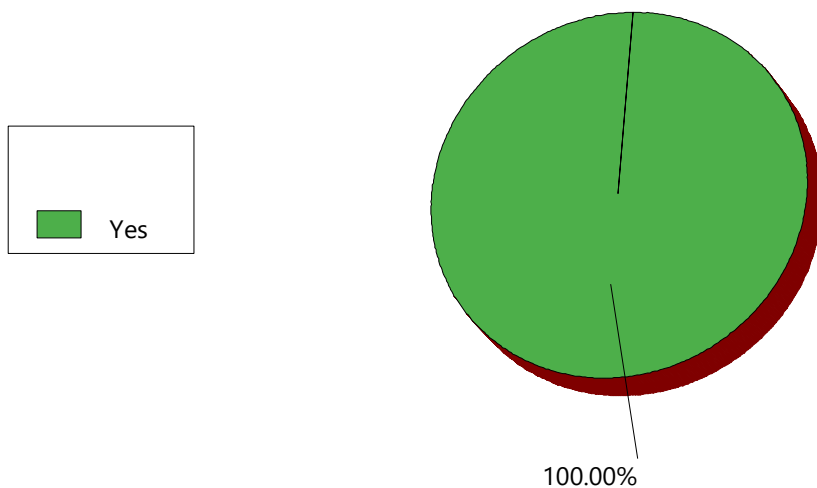




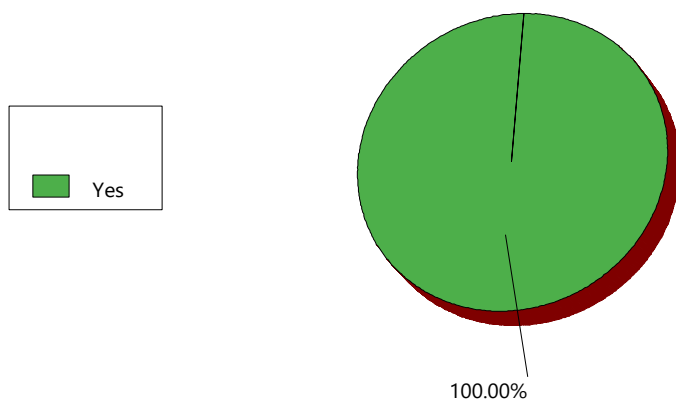
13. Please select the SERVICES and AMENITIES with which you are most SATISFIED.



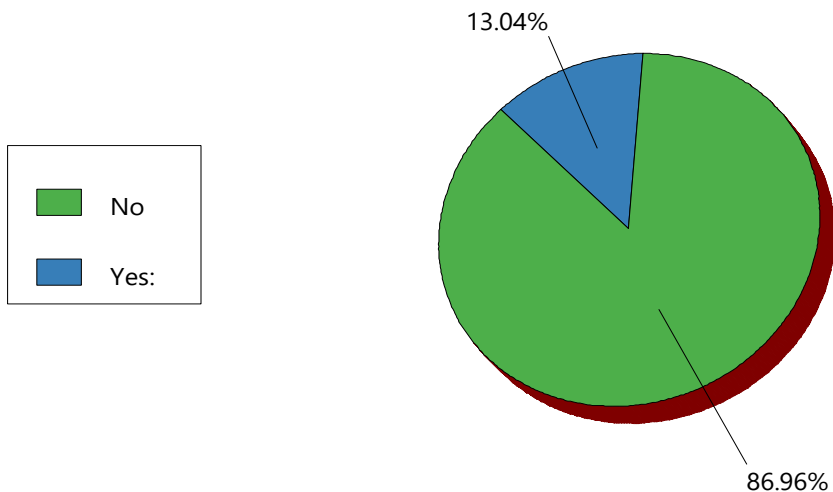
14. Have local public agencies been responsive to your needs when asked?



15. Have you been able to find and understand local rules and regulations (zoning, permitting, etc.) when needed?



16. Have any local rules and regulations (zoning, permitting, etc.) been a hindrance to your business operations or expansion efforts?



**Comments/Notes for "Yes:"**

Columbia Gas is slow

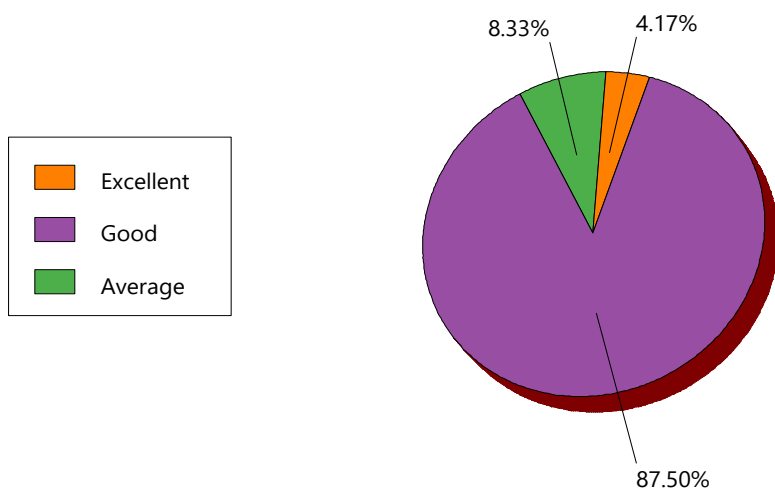
Some difficulty with building permit approvals

## Section - LOCAL WORKFORCE

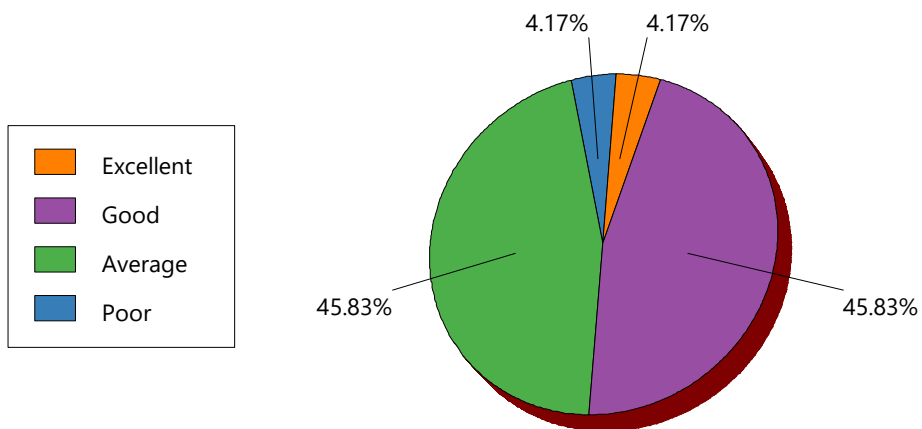
### Instructions Provided To Respondents

Please rate the following aspects of the Hourly and Salaried labor force in Wyandot County:

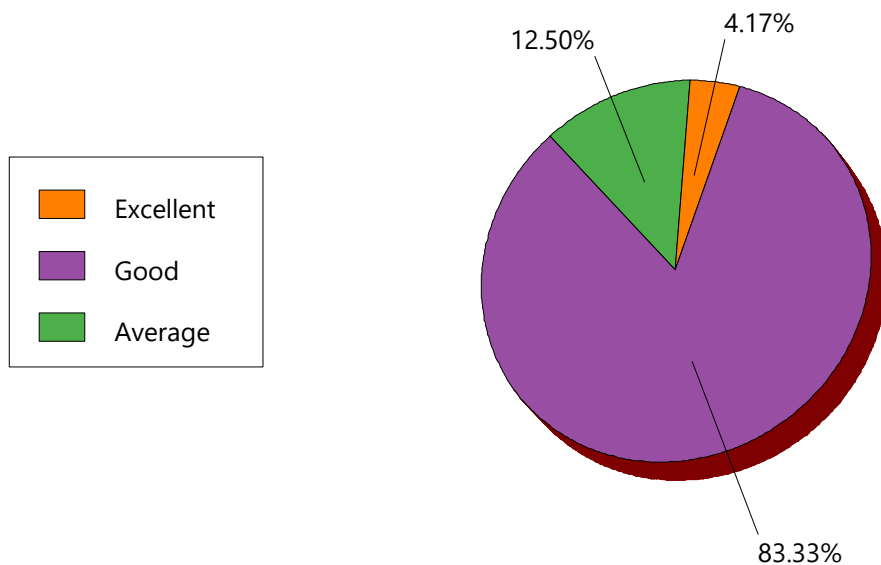
17. How would you rate the *QUALITY* of the local management and staff (SALARIED) labor force?



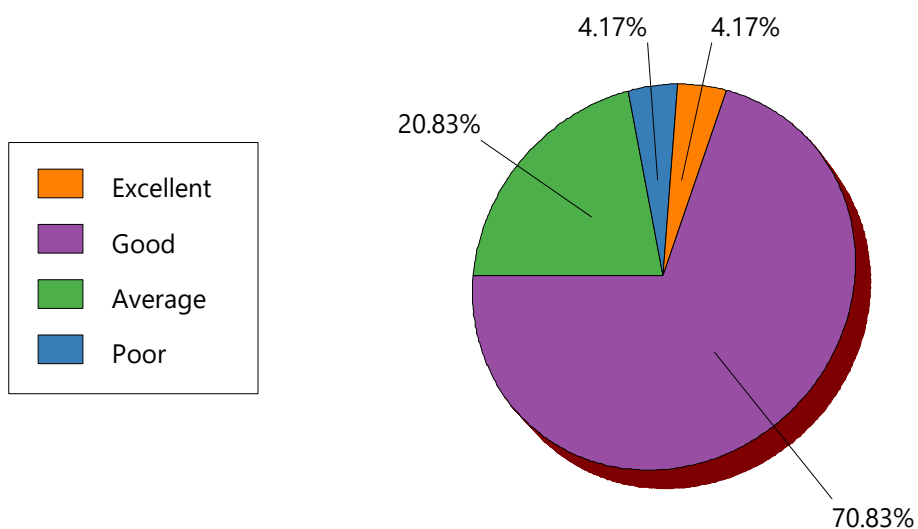
18. How would you rate the *AVAILABILITY* of the local management and staff (SALARIED) labor force?



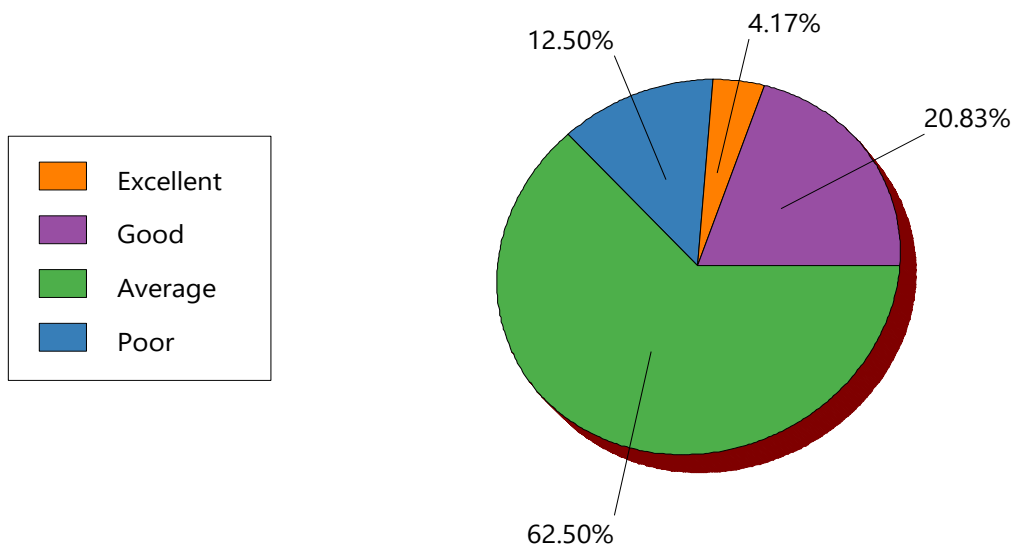
19. How would you rate the STABILITY of the local management and staff (SALARIED) labor force?



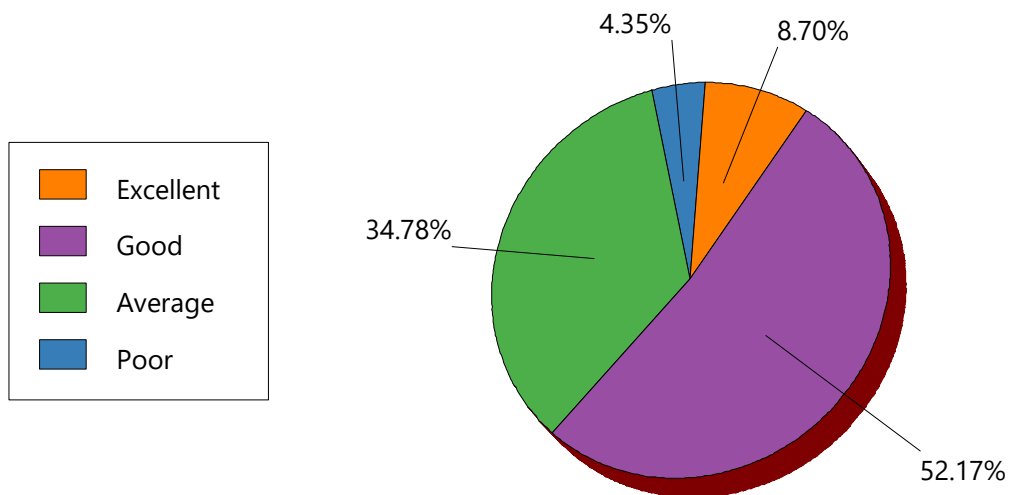
20. How would you rate the QUALITY of the local HOURLY labor force?



21. How would you rate the AVAILABILITY of the local HOURLY labor force?



22. How would you rate the STABILITY of the local HOURLY labor force?



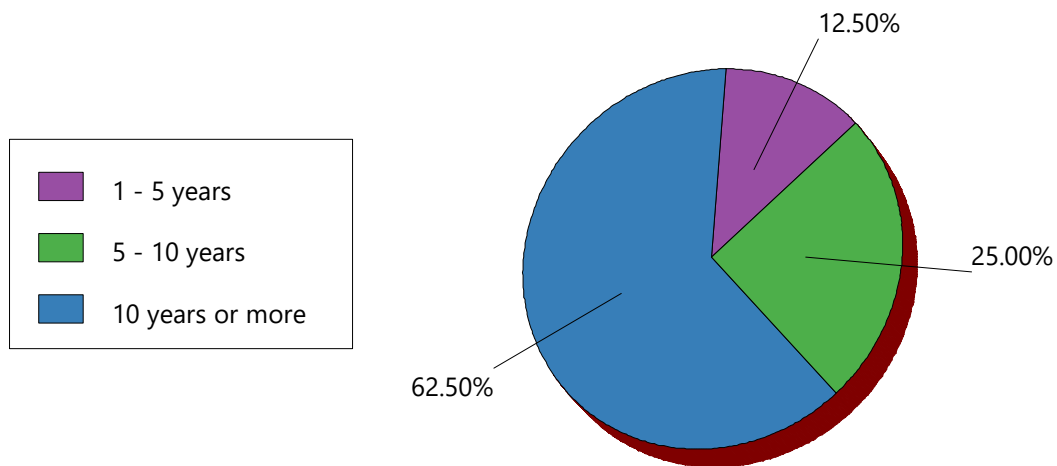
*23. How many employees work at your Wyandot County business location? Please break out the number of part-time vs. full-time employees if applicable.*

- 100 FT
- 12
- 200
- 225 FT; 92 PT
- 25 FTE
- 3 employees...2 full time and 1 part time
- 35 FT
- 350
- 36 FT
- 5
- 50 FT
- 500 FT; 30 PT
- 55
- 550
- 56 FT
- 59 FT; 12 PT
- 62 FT
- 8
- 800
- 90
- 95 (2 responses tallied)

*24. If your total workforce has increased since 12 months ago, please indicate by what number:*

- 0 (6 responses tallied)
- 17
- 20
- 25
- Increase by 1-part time
- N/A
- Temps decreased by over 100

25. What is the average length of employment?



Comments/Notes for "10 years or more":

15

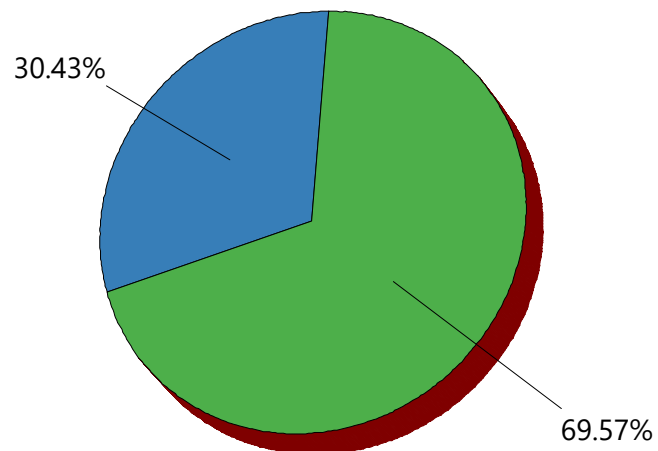
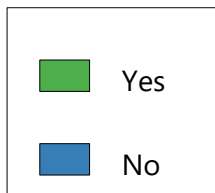
26. What is the average starting salary of your unskilled workers?

- \$10/hour
- \$11.00
- \$30k (\$14.42)
- 10.00
- 11.00
- 12.26
- 12.80
- 12.95

*27. What is the average starting salary for your skilled workers?*

- \$12/hour
- \$19.00
- \$20
- 19.00
- 20.00
- 21.00
- \$18.00

*28. Does your business have difficulty recruiting employees?*





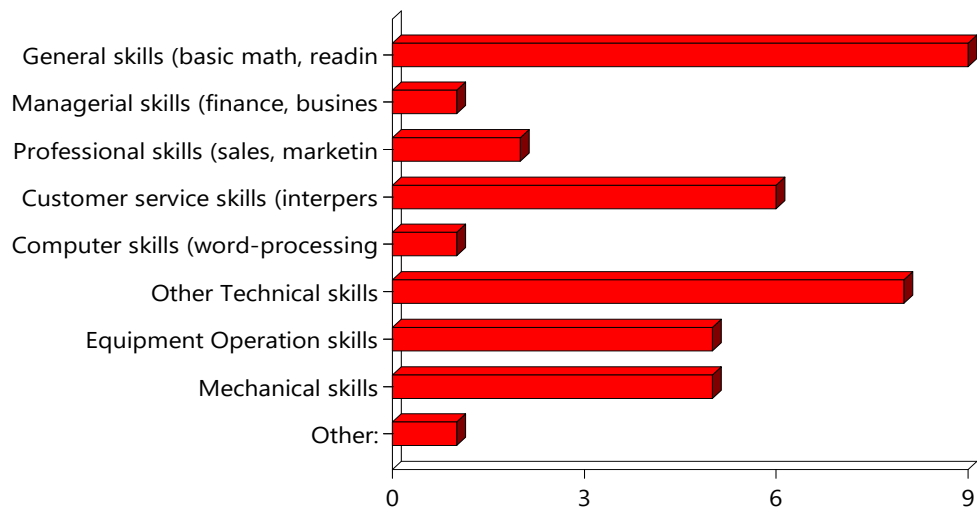
29. If so, with which types of labor categories are you experiencing recruiting problems?



**Comments/Notes:**

Drivers

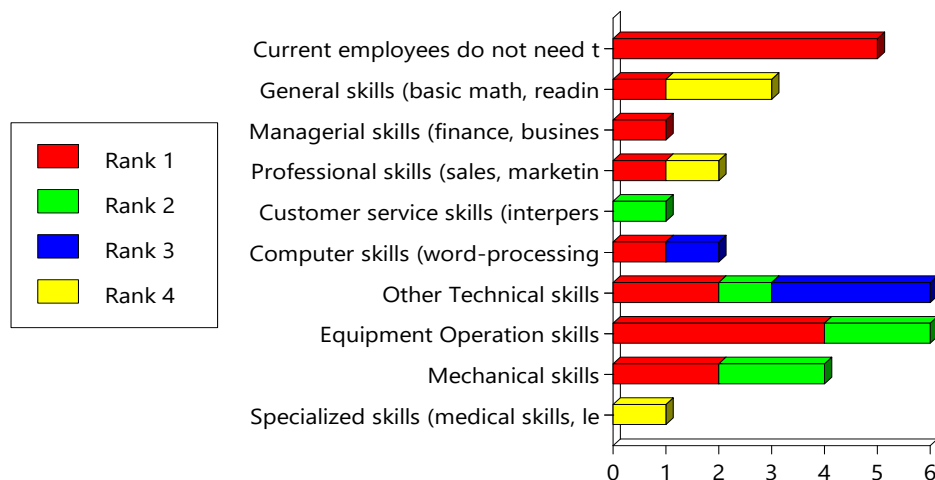
30. Please select the skills your find are lacking in potential employees you have interviewed (select all that apply):



**Comments/Notes:**

motivation to work

31. Please rank in order the top four (4) areas in which your CURRENT employees need training (most needed area first).



32. Does your company currently have any relationships with area colleges/universities/vocational schools, and if so, who?

- all
- have had some recruiting sessions at Ohio Northern mainly focusing on Engineers, which is another skill set we've had difficulty recruiting.
- I don't know if I would call it a relationship but we have worked with UNOH on serval occasions.
- Many in the area
- Marion Tech
- Marion Tech and Tri-Rivers - looking at beginning apprenticeship programs
- n/a (2 responses tallied)
- No (3 responses tallied)
- Owens & Tri-Rivers. Maintenance Tech apprenticeship program soon beginning, and workers will be able to attend either school.
- Owens Community College and Marion Technical College
- yes Owens CCMarion Tech

33. Does your organization currently utilize a workplace wellness program and/or safety program that offers direct incentives to your employees or business? If so, please explain:

- Companywide wellness program
- In-house wellness program
- No (4 responses tallied)
- yes
- Yes, corporate offers this program
- Yes, incentives for wellness check ups and safety incentives

*34. How many new and replacement employees do you expect to hire in the next 5 years because of expansion, retirements, leaving, firing, etc.?*

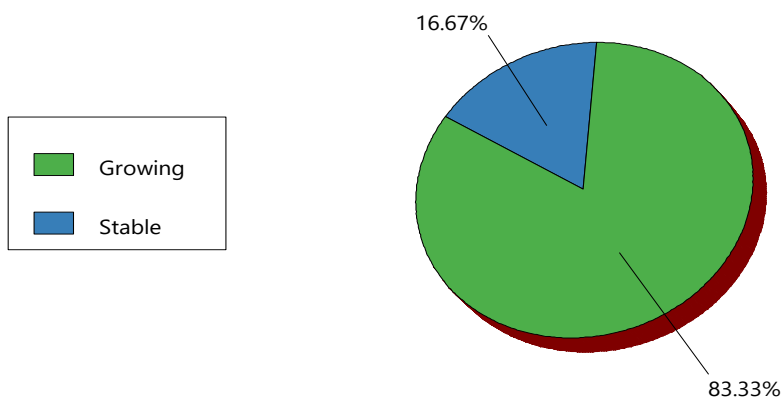
- 0
- 1
- 1 full time
- 10+ (2 responses tallied)
- 100+
- 2
- 25% of workforce is currently eligible to retire, and plans are to increase by 25 employees this year. A lot will be needed over the next few years.
- 4+
- workforce projected to increase by 20% over next 3 years, but also have many approaching retirement age.

## Section - FUTURE PLANS

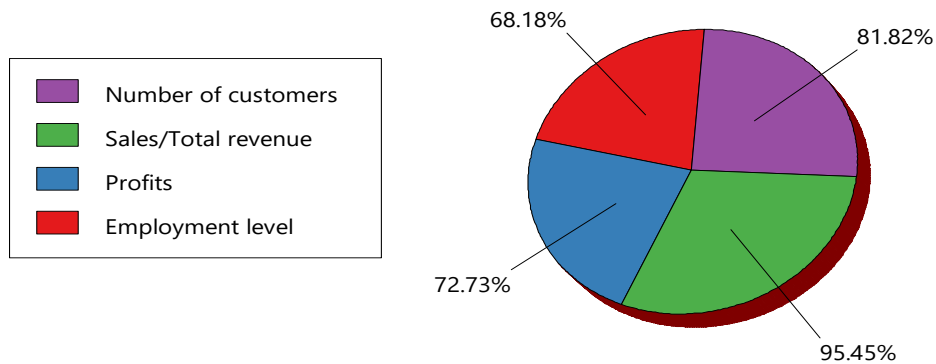
*35. Do you work with any customers or suppliers that may be able to profitably operate in the immediate area? If so, please identify them:*

- Already work with a number of local suppliers.
- n/a
- No
- not sure
- Skilled Nursing in home providers
- some if they were inclined to relocate

*36. Does your company have plans for growth over the next 3 years?*



*37. If yes, which of the following will increase as a result?*



*38. If you expect any of these business factors to change over the next 3 years, what are the principal reasons for the changes?*

- An aging population is in our demographic; however, i do have concerns about replacement population in Wyandot County.
- Continued growth in service department
- Entering into new domestic markets plus general market growth.
- Expansion into new market areas
- Growth in various markets.
- Growth with local customers and new customer contracts
- Increased demand by construction sectors that use our products.
- Increased demand from customers in various indistries
- More than likely an uptick coming in the market.
- New contracts with new customers beginning in about 1.5 years
- New customers and growth among current customers
- New product lines are being planned for Carey which will force other product lines to move. This will affect employment levels but unsure to what extent thus far.
- New products, and growing market base with current products.
- opening new markets
- Picking up market share with current customers and some new business with others.
- Picking up more of the local market share due to new technologies
- Presidential Election
- Sales are picking up with new customers
- the election

*39. If you have any plans to modernize, renovate, or expand your present building(s) or equipment in the near future; please describe the type of plans, time frame, and any constraints faced:*

- Addition of new production lines.
- current office renovations and new building construction are taking place
- Current renovation work is underway
- Currently - Cash Flow due to local ag market
- Currently undergoing expansions.
- doing so in all locations.
- Just new machinery & equipment
- Just regular equipment upgrades and new purchases.
- Looking at installing rail siding and potential expansion options.
- Main investment will be new equipment within current facility. Possible parking lot addition.
- None (4 responses tallied)
- Right now only expenditures for new M&E are planned. Further investments may be planned over a year from now.
- Some M&E investment coming over the next few years.
- We just renovated. It looks great.
- Working on addition of rail siding and new M&E purchase.

*40. If you are considering moving, closing, or selling this business; please describe where and when this would happen:*

- n/a
- NA
- nope
- unknown

*41. Is there anything the Wyandot County Office of Economic Development could do to help your business remain profitable and continue growing in the Wyandot County community?*

- Bring in a young population.
- close all chambers and put the resources into the WCED.
- Education and reliable work force biggest opportunity. From an Economic Development perspective, continued opportunities for any tax breaks/incentives for new spending and renovation.
- Help identify transportation options for finished product.
- Help in finding forms of assistance for growth projects.
- Help researching assistance programs for adding rail capabilities.
- Help with our compensation averages, and new business and expansion news.
- Help with expansion project.
- Keep business alive in Wyandot County by continuing to support the current businesses and bringing in new business which increases residents.
- Right to Work



Wyandot County Office of Economic Development

109 S. Sandusky Ave., Room 16

Upper Sandusky, OH 43351

Phone (419) 294-6404

Fax (419) 294-6415

Email [gmoon@wcoed.com](mailto:gmoon@wcoed.com)

URL [www.wcoed.com](http://www.wcoed.com)

The Wyandot County Office of Economic Development is a 501(c)(6) non-profit organization. The WCOED partners with the Wyandot County Board of Commissioners to fund a full-time Economic Development Director in Wyandot County. As such, the WCOED Executive Director also serves in a leadership capacity for the Wyandot County Regional Planning Commission.