

RBA survey sees spike in favorable business conditions

By [THOMAS ADAMS](#) - 12/16/2010 4:16:15 PM

Some 48 percent of Rochester Business Alliance Inc. members surveyed think business conditions in their industry are good or very good, compared with 14 percent in May 2009, RBA officials said Thursday.

Only 13 percent think conditions are bad or very bad, compared with 39 percent who thought that in May 2009, the survey found.

Some 24 percent think overall business conditions in the Rochester market are good or very good, compared with 7 percent who thought that in May 2009.

"There is a lot to feel good about in these results," RBA president and CEO Sandra Parker said in a statement. "Businesses are not just seeing better times ahead, they've actually begun to experience them."

Some 63 percent of survey respondents expect conditions in their industry to be good or very good a year from now, up from 44 percent in May 2009 and 39 percent in November 2008.

Seven percent expect future conditions to be bad or very bad, compared with 16 percent in May 2009 and 18 percent in November 2008.

Some 39 percent said employment levels have increased in the last 12 months, compared with 15 percent in May 2009. Some 45 percent said employment is unchanged, compared with 22 percent in May 2009, and 16 percent said employment has decreased, compared to 63 percent in May 2009.

Fifty-four percent of RBA members think employment at their business will be higher a year from now, compared to 37 percent in May 2009, with 38 percent anticipating no change, compared to 49 percent in May 2009, and 7 percent expecting a decrease, compared to 14 percent in May 2009 and 24 percent in November 2008.

Some 87 percent of those who plan to hire will add full-time staff, the survey showed.

Roughly 59 percent of the membership said sales are better than a year ago, with 22 percent reporting no change and 19 percent saying sales have worsened. Some 72 percent expect sales to be better a year from now.

Some 57 percent reported higher profits than a year ago, with 22 percent reporting no change and 21 percent showing a decline. Some 62 percent expect profits to be higher a year from now, with 33 percent expecting no change and 5 percent expecting a decrease.

"Still, there is significant frustration about the way our elected officials conduct the people's business in Albany," Parker said. "Businesses are angry over the lack of spending restraint that has resulted in New Yorkers paying some of the highest state and local property taxes in the nation."

Some 57 percent said the cost of doing business is higher than a year ago, with 32 percent saying it is unchanged and 11 percent citing improvement. Some 49 percent expect the cost to be higher a year from now, with 35 percent anticipating no change and 16 percent expecting improvement.