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Sept 6, 2001

Premiums eat up teachers' raises

District has been forced to raise what employees pay for health care.

Audette Riley, teacher at Springfield School District, says employee health care is on life support. In the past 18 months, the board has spent \$2.5 million out the ailing benefits system. An additional \$700,000 loan was approved Tuesday. The loan came from district revenue left over from the previous fiscal year.

"We have a runaway horse," Superintendent Jack Ernst said of the growing costs.

Employees have felt the pinch. Health care premiums shot up 20 percent in July, and a 30 percent increase is slated for January. This month, a district committee will look at another

20 percent boost in July 2002. "Quite frankly, it's choking us. It's killing us," said Phil Graff, president of the local National Education Association. "It's wiping out any salary increase we had."

The district's 3,000 employees received a 2.5 percent cost-of-living increase plus regular step increases for experience or additional training this year. Much

of that increase was negated by the higher premiums.

"It's very frustrating getting the raise and simultaneously experiencing this increase," said Carolyn Nixon, president of the local Missouri State Teachers Association. "There have been situations where the employee ends up making the same or less pay."

About 8,000 teachers, staff,

Board expected to OK \$1.8 million in extra spending. 1B

retired staff and their families members are covered under the district's health care plan.

The district's health care budget is \$13 million, including about \$6.5 million from the di-

See HEALTH, Page 6

Wooring a new generation of hunters

An old pastime, a new breed

In past two decades, game population has

First civil suit filed over new DNA

GA News-Leader Thursday, September 6, 2001

FROM PAGE ONE

Health/School board frustrated with di

Continued from 1A

district — that pays premiums for employees — and about \$6.5 million from employees, who must pay for family members who are covered.

"Right now, the costs take up 8 percent of the budget," said Charlie Drewel, chief financial officer for the district. "We are not the only company that is experiencing a boom in health care costs."

Board members increased the district's budget for benefits for this school year based on early estimates. They have also made \$2.5 million in long-term loans since mid-2000 to keep the

Plank

fund in the black.

"What we hope to do is build up a reserve and pay back (the loan) into the general fund," Drewel said. "We haven't been able to do that yet."

Board members unanimously approved an additional \$700,000 loan Tuesday, but expressed frustration that earlier estimates were inadequate.

"I believed we were taking care of this with the current budget," said board member Ralph Plank. "Less than two months — all of the sudden, we're in conflict again."

Board members said they hoped the recent infusion of funds would help put the fund in good shape.

"The frustration on the board is that you've come to us several times for money," said board President Debbie Tolliver. "We need to look at the situation and get it together."

Tolliver and other board members were skeptical that the district would be paid back. "It sure doesn't look like we're ever going to get it," she said of the loans.

Ernst praised the board for budgeting more money this year, but

"When they try to tell us that the \$700,000 they are pumping into the health care fund is a raise to us — they aren't going to sell that to one teacher in the district."

— Phil Graff
local National Education Association president

added that if the district is going to keep paying health care bills on time, more money needs to be added.

"We are seeing a red flag on the cash flow," Ernst said. "We can get by with what the board approved, but we can't pay all our bills."

Drewel said high expenses at the end of the school year and a health care budget that allows only so much spending monthly put the district in a tough place. There's a gap between when the bulk of premiums come in and when bills are due, he said.

Board member Bruce Chrisope said the district will have to look at higher premiums in the future.

"We have not increased premiums fast enough," he said. "We hope that we get ahead of the curve."

Chrisope said that with the additional funds for health care, the district has increased employee benefits beyond salary raises.

Graff disagreed, saying that while the district spent more on health care, the scope of benefits didn't increase.

"When they try to tell us that the \$700,000 they are pumping into the health care fund is a raise to us — they aren't going to sell that to one teacher in the district," Graff said. "I'd like to see the salary increases higher than the premium increases. They are wiped out."

In the late 1980s, the district decided to self-fund health care. For years it was successful, and officials were able to keep the costs low.

Employees went about six years without a premium increase. Drewel said they should have been increased gradually over the years.

"We went several years where we enjoyed fairly low premiums," Drewel said. "It would have been easier to swallow if we had kept up."

Nixon agrees, saying that annual increases of 2 or 3 percent wouldn't have been as difficult as the dramatic spike in health care costs.

"If you don't plan and take care of things, they have a way of swallowing you," she said. "When premiums should have been increased gradually, they weren't."

There are 2,649 employees and 1,254 families covered in the plan. Monthly premiums are \$204 for employees and \$398 for families. Dental coverage is \$17.50 for an employee, \$84.50 for families, Drewel said.

"We're still slightly on the low end of what employees are paying," Drewel said. "We want to be able to pay the bills."

A benefits committee representing different employee groups will meet at 4 p.m. Sept. 18 to discuss possible premium increases or changes to the plan. Those changes may include the district's paying only part of the employee's premium.

"I'm projecting that we're looking at another 20 percent increase in the summer 2002," Drewel said. "By the time we get there, we'll need additional funds."

Nixon, a reading specialist at Middle School, serves on the committee and hopes a solution can be reached.

"We'll try to come up with a solution that we can all live with," she said.

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FOCUS put on school health benefit

District's employees, officials and consultant's meet about premiums.

By Chaudette Pflky
News-Leader

Springfield Public Schools' employees want a health care plan that is healthier.

Worried about chronically low cash reserves and increasing premiums, a committee of teachers, staff, district officials and health care representatives met for more than two hours Thursday.

"How many years is it going to take us to catch up?" asked Tom Groundwater, a custodian at Rountree Elementary. "I'm really concerned."

Health care premiums shot up 20 percent in July, and a 10 percent increase is slated for January. The committee will look at a proposal to boost the premiums another 15-20 percent in July 2002.

Charlie Drewel, chief financial officer for the district, said premiums could go up a total of 40 percent in the next year.

In the coming months, committee members will look at redesigning the health care plan, evaluating what the district and employees contribute and looking for ways to cut down on medical expenses.

Dwight Cane, vice president of managed care at St. John's Health System, suggested the district consider a disease management program that might

identify health risks and encourage lifestyle changes earlier in the process.

About 3,000 teachers, staff, retired staff and their family members are covered under the district's health care plan.

"Your people need to understand that this health plan is their health plan," Cane said.

Rick Wessel, a benefits consultant, said some changes are within the committee's control.

"I'd rather see the plan tweaked here and there, without drastic changes," he said.

"You do have options. We could cut back on benefits while leaving the contribution the same."

Changes such as increasing the deductibles, changing the plan's structure or deleting preventive care. No decisions are expected in the near future.

In the past year, about 75 percent of the district's claims were through the St. John's Regional Health Care plan.

There have been improvements in recent years. The prescription drug plan is better and about 85 percent of claims are

processed within two weeks.

The district's health budget is \$13 million, but about \$6.5 million from that — that pays premium employees — and six million from employee must pay for family members who are covered.

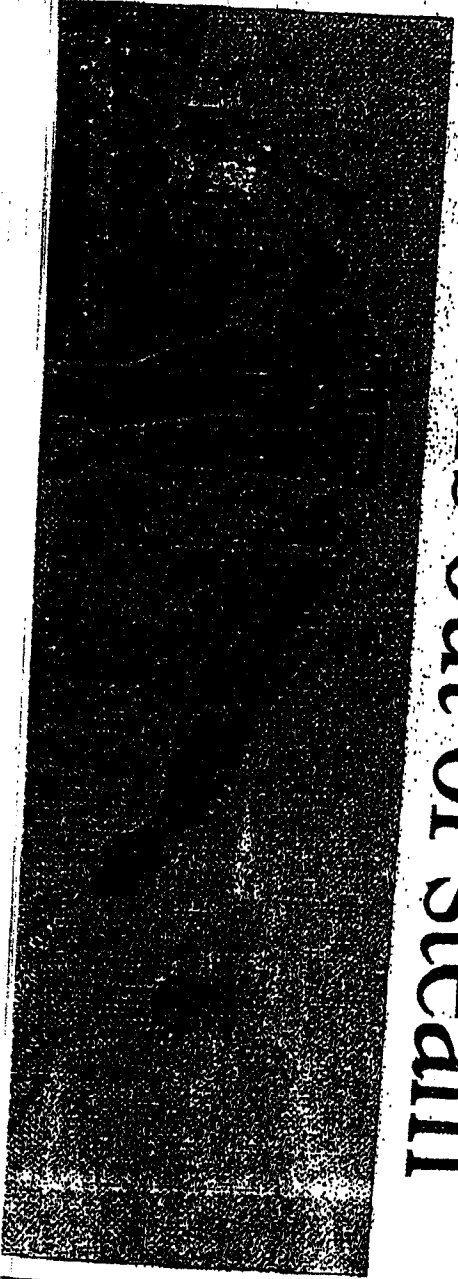
Board members in the district's budget for this school year he early estimates. They made \$1.2 million in loans since mid-2000 to keep it in the black.

Santa train runs out of steam

New rules make it impossible to continue, its workers say.

By Cheryl Whitteit
News-Leader

The Santa Claus Express appears to have reached the end of its line. Railroad workers who've tended the train over the years

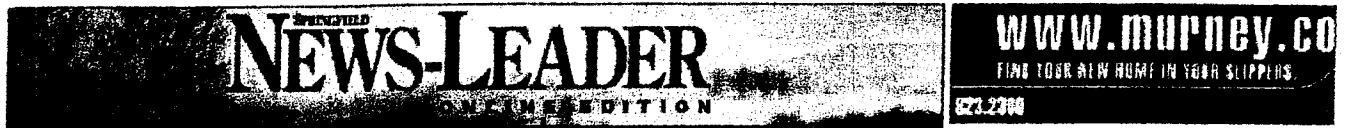


Senator OK new health care plan

By Paul Slone
The Associated Press

JERFERTON CITY — The House on the sidelines today, the Missouri Senate hours debating an expansion of the state's Medicaid program before health reform in the

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Companies' health care costs soar Issue a priority for manufacturers' association, based on survey results.

By Sandy Z. Poneleit
News-Leader

When Rick Floyd purchased A-One Manufacturing LLC in Strafford in January, he didn't realize the company's health insurance premiums would more than double.

Floyd said the company — whose employees number 30 — had been part of a larger group when it was owned by Corning Cable Systems, formerly Champion Products Inc. With its 300 or so employees, rates were much lower.

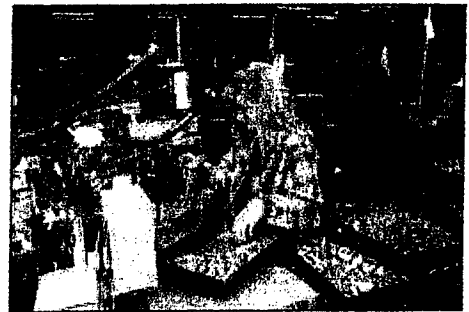
"So now what we are doing is trying to look at different methods of getting these rates lowered down without the employees having to sacrifice too much of their insurance," he said.

For many employers, skyrocketing health care costs are a growing concern, driven higher by the impact of legislation, drug prices and greater use of services, among other factors.

Higher premiums can force reductions in coverage, jeopardize employee retention and affect a company's bottom line.

Floyd's situation spurred Rita Needham, executive director of the Springfield Area Manufacturers Association, to conduct a survey of its members. Among the results:

- Health care premiums, on average, increased 24.3 percent over the past year.
- One member had a 0 percent increase, but incurred a significant increase the previous year; for two



Marcie Gregory assembles quick disconnect couplers at Foster Manufacturing Co. on Thursday. The company will pay \$160,000 this year in health-care premiums for its 43 workers. Steve J.P. Liang / News-Leader

members, the increase was 60 percent.

•Of the 40 members, about 80 percent provide health care coverage for employees. Those who don't would like to, but find it cost-prohibitive.

•62 percent have 50 or fewer employees. Needham said such small companies "are going to be seriously impacted because it is more difficult to get competitive pricing for health care (plans)."

The responses attested to the urgency of the issue, Needham said.

"... Especially at this point of time when the manufacturing industry has been affected by a downturn in the economy — to have increased health care costs on top of that, it's really hard to bear," she said. "It's causing our employers to make some tough choices."

The issue has become a priority for SAMA, with a legislative forum held last week to address the topic and the pending formation of a task force to research and explore alternatives.

"It's time that we get involved, get up to speed on what the issues really are and look for positive options — it impacts everyone," Needham said.

According to the National Association of Manufacturers, health care premiums nationwide have risen an average of 13 percent. And many businesses statewide have seen increases of 20 percent or more over the last year, according to Associated Industries of Missouri.

At Foster Manufacturing Co., president Jim Conley said the company has seen compounded double digit increases for the proposed health care plan in each of the last three years. Controller Georgia Ipsen said Foster's total health care premium bill this year will be \$160,000 for the work force of 43.

"We find ourselves as a manufacturer terribly squeezed by these health care costs," Conley said. Through the economic slowdown, no employees have been laid off, he said. Employees share in premium costs — paying about 20 percent — but this year's

plan includes a decrease in some benefits to contain costs.

Despite disheartening increases, Conley said he believes "if we didn't have the quality health care plan, we wouldn't be as successful at retaining our employees."

Most insurance companies are exhibiting an upward medical cost trend of about 15 percent, with drug costs up 16 percent last year, said Don Slone, president of Benefits Inc. For some companies, 42 percent of their total medical bill is due to prescription drugs.

The Health Insurance Portability Act, enforced July 1, 1997, states that insurance companies cannot decline small groups of three to 24 employees. "This has impacted rates tremendously," Slone said, along with a 15 to 18 percent jump in medical rates for doctors and hospitals.

Darren Coffman, president of Benefits Unlimited Inc., said his firm insures about 900 employer groups and he can "guarantee the rates are going to go up." For his 14 employees — insurance 100 percent paid by the company — costs rose 34 percent last year and will go up 30 percent this year, he said.

In recent months, several large insurance companies — including Mutual of Omaha and Conseco — have opted out of the group and individual health insurance business because they've lost money, Slone said. There are only about 15 companies selling major medical health insurance in Missouri.

Though the choices have been pared down, Slone said, "There are creative ways out there to still have a major medical health plan for your employees and keep it affordable."

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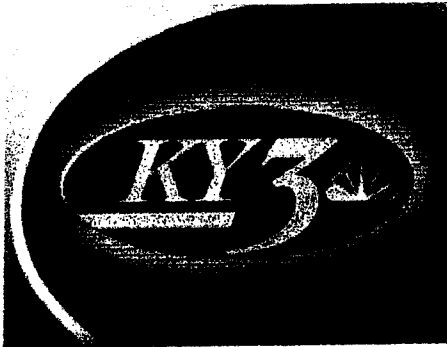
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Health insurance premiums will skyrocket for some state employees

8/21/02

By: Jack Wang, KY3 News

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SPRINGFIELD -- Many Missouri state employees face huge increases in their health insurance premiums in January. For one group, unless they change plans, the premiums will be more than five times higher than what they are now.

The Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan covers state employees. The increase in insurance premiums comes despite the fact that state workers will get no general pay raises because of a smaller-than-expected increase in state revenues.

"It's a frustration with state employees," said Lt. Terry Moore of the Missouri Highway Patrol, who is a 26-year state employee. "For the last several years, we have not received any pay increases but everything else goes up."

In 2002, an employee pays a monthly premium of \$26 per month for the state's Premier Health Plan, one of three plans that state employees can choose. In 2003, the same plan jumps to \$141 a month. For an employee and his or her family, Premier Health Plan participants pay \$214 per month. In 2003, it's going to cost \$572 per month.

"The last couple of years, it's been going up, not just for state workers but for everybody," said Paul Fite, a spokesman for Premier Health Plan.

Fite says prescription drug costs have raised the costs of doing

business. He also cites the rising costs of medical technology, more malpractice lawsuits and an aging population. State employees' use of doctors also increased.

"There were more claims filed than expected and those claims were more expensive, higher in cost than anticipated," Fite said.

If the state had more money, instead of a budget crunch, Missouri could pay more for its employees' premiums.

The rising costs for state workers could affect services for Missouri residents because workers may leave for other jobs and the state may have trouble attracting good applicants for open positions. The Highway Patrol, for instance, is already down more than 100 uniformed troopers from its authorized strength.

"There are other agencies and departments who are paying a lot more, who have a lot better benefits," said Moore.

When a reporter asked other state workers in Springfield about the health insurance premiums, they refused on-the-record interviews because they fear reprisals from their supervisors and bosses. Many say they're frustrated also because working for the state used to be a desired job.

Missouri Department of Transportation employees are the exception to the rising costs. The Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission, which runs MoDOT, budgeted \$6 million to pick up the tab for the added premium expenses for its employees in this fiscal year, which started July 1.

Missouri Consolidated Health Care Plan

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K Y T V S p r i n g f i e l d M O

Economic survey reveals local optimism

by Cheryl Capages
SBJ Reporter

Despite a bear market and the best efforts of terrorists, business leaders polled by Commerce Bank believe that next year the national economy will be better — not worse — and most are confident that American business is meeting its challenges.

Questionnaires for Commerce Bank's 2002 Economic Survey were sent to approximately 1,000 business and civic leaders. About 29 percent — 289 — were filled out and returned.

The survey results will be presented at 11:45 a.m. Oct. 30 during Commerce's Economic Conference and luncheon at the University Plaza Convention Center.

Of those who responded, 79 percent affirmed that they believe the national economy is worse than a year ago, yet 45 percent are optimistic that it will be better next year. Another 36 percent thought the economy would be about the same as now in 2002.

Local optimism generally tracks last year's responses to the same question — 71.3 percent thought this year's economy would be better or stable. However, last year's poll was taken before the economy started slowing down.

Rick Gutman, CFP, senior vice president and manager for the Commerce Trust Company, said the poll is usually "right on."

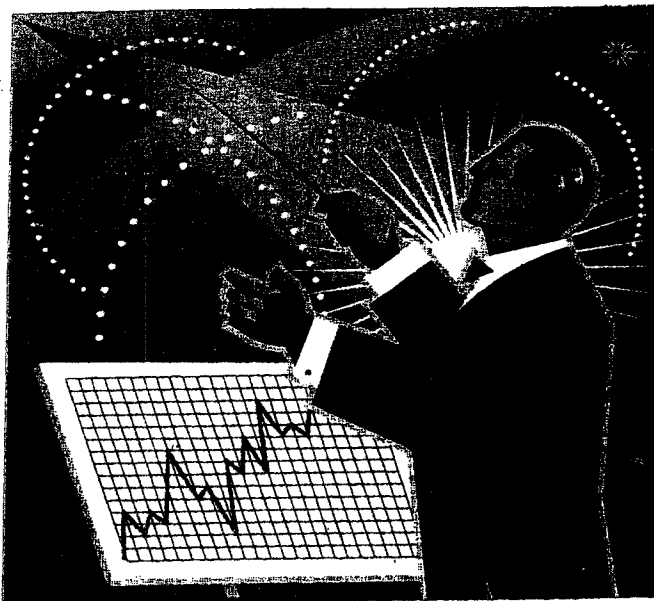
Those being polled represent a fair cross-section of area businesses, he said. "Our audience pretty much foretells what's going to happen in the economy — some times better than other times," Gutman said.

He added, "We have a pretty diverse economy here, and so you don't have anybody overweighting this report in the way of producer-manufacturing or retail sales," etc.

Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce President Jim Anderson described the survey findings as "cautious optimism."

Sept. 11 impact

The questionnaire added sev-



eral questions this year — one concerned the impact of the events of Sept. 11 on local businesses. Of those polled, 52.5 percent of the respondents felt an immediate and negative impact on their businesses after the terrorist attack, but 47.5 percent said they didn't.

"That reinforces (that we have a) diversified economy," Anderson said. "We're about as insulated from economic downturns as any community I think you're going to find because of that diversification of that economic base."

Of those businesses that reported an immediate and negative impact as a result of the terrorist attack, 32.9 percent reported that their investment/financial markets were affected.

Another 29.4 percent delayed or canceled major purchases in their businesses. Only 21.5 percent reported that shipping or sales/business travel were delayed or canceled.

And 7.7 percent said they would institute a hiring freeze as a response to the attack, with

8.5 percent reducing or laying off staff.

The respondents to the poll expect that the prime rate will be 5.99 percent by the fourth quarter next year. Last year's respondents fell woefully short on their estimation of what the prime rate would be the end of the fourth quarter 2001 — 9.2 percent — but the economy was stronger then and the prime rate at the end of the fourth quarter of 2000 was 9.5 percent, Gutman said. Earlier this month it was 6 percent, but it has dropped to 5.5 percent, he said.

Gutman said the economy is finally cycling like it should, after eight years of prosperity, but he added that if a recession does occur — defined as two consecutive quarters of no growth — then it will probably be mild.

He said that fiscal and business incentives in place have been just enough to help, not strangle, the free enterprise system. Unlike the extreme measures taken during Jimmy Carter's administration — like

freezing prices — the incentives have kept the economy going during the rough spots, like now.

"We were coming out of the slump before Sept. 11, and we are going to delay the recovery for about six months ... we should see a slight gain in the first quarter and then start to bounce back to real recovery second quarter," Anderson said.

Gutman said economists look at growth in the gross domestic product — which is the market value of all the final goods and services produced on American soil. It has been "next to nil this year," — 1.3 percent as the final GDP for the first quarter, 0.3 percent for the second quarter. The third quarter's advance GDP number — an early number that will be reassessed twice more — will be issued Oct. 31, Gutman said.

The final GDP forecast expected "is in the neighborhood of -0.5 percent to 1 percent" which represents "minimal growth for the year."

Inflation, which Gutman describes a "too many dollars chasing two few goods" is at 0.2 percent and is "benign."

Businesses' largest worry

Health care, not finances or labor availability, was listed as the biggest concern by 35.8 percent of the survey respondents.

The biggest issue was cost. The majority of respondents — 69.8 percent — said managed care was not meeting their companies' needs as far as cost control was concerned.

Also, 58.6 percent indicated managed care was not meeting their needs in terms of flexibility, while 46.4 percent found convenience of managed care to be a problem.

Larry Wallis, chief executive officer of Cox Health Systems, Inc., said "It's a utilization issue ... in regard to managed care. One of the dilemmas is this — with (health maintenance organizations) the access to health care is very easy and there is not an incentive to the patient to be as concerned with the health care costs. The original concept of HMOs — and it's still there — is that if people are able to

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• Health care costs worry businesses

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access health care easier, they are going to have a healthier long-term lifestyle because they are going to take care of health care problems on the front end, and sometime down the road they are not going to have the problems that some people have who do not access health care at the front end."

Unfortunately, the cost savings are in the future, he said.

For instance, Wallis said, if a person can be convinced to quit smoking, then they might not have to be treated later for lung cancer.

→ Because of overuse of the system and the far-off cost-savings, "That concept is something that is going to have to be revisited."

→ In his opinion, Wallis said, managed care is just not working. "It's not necessarily preventive care that they are coming in for," he added.

"A \$10 copay (in an HMO) is a lot different incentive than if you have a \$500 deductible," as in traditional insurance programs.

As for the issue of flexibility, Wallis said, "it's a trade off" because volume business means lower prices.

→ "That's the way the system has evolved, including in Springfield, Missouri ... the provider has to have a network of physicians that can deliver to the table," he added.

→ He said that has caused hospitals and physicians to group together and "that's what caused the limitation ... in choice." Wallis said there "is nothing out there ... other than going back to ... fee for service."

Cora Scott, spokeswoman for St. John's Health System, said she found it interesting that the employers were unhappy with health care costs but also wanted flexibility.

→ "There's a dichotomy between people wanting lower costs and yet all the flexibility in the choice of physicians. You see that correlation?"

Construction

Construction and sales of new residential housing on the national level are expected to be relatively unchanged from last year's poll — about 16.2 percent think it will increase, while 39.4 percent think it will remain unchanged. Last year 17.6 percent expected an increase, while 39.6 percent expected no change.

As for expectations in construction and sales of new residential housing in the greater Springfield area, 25.3 percent predict an increase, while 46.3 percent anticipate no change. Last year 31.6 percent expected an increase and 41 percent didn't.

— believe business conditions will remain the same and 26.1 percent think they will be better.

There was not much change in the percentage of respondents who plan to expand their facilities — 30.3 percent said they will expand next year; 29.6 percent respondents in last year's poll expected they would expand.

Forty-five percent of respondents stated they believe their own economic situation will be better by the end of 2002, 5 percent higher than last year.

Nearly 40 percent expect their economic situation will be unchanged, compared to last year's 47.5 percent. Just 11.5 percent predict their economic situation will worsen, compared to 9 percent last year.

Employment issues

Almost half — 49.5 percent — believe that the unemployment rate in the Springfield area will be about the same in 2002, but 43.4 percent think it will be higher.

Another 6 percent predict the already low rate of unemployment will be even lower, and they might be right. Anderson said unemployment for August is 3 percent.

Unemployment has remained below 4 percent for about eight years, he said.

Within the next 18 months, nearly 30 percent of respondents expect to increase their employee level, while 60.8 percent expect to maintain their current level.

Pay increases still are planned — nearly 40 percent will give a 3 percent to 6 percent increase, while 56.5 percent will give raises of 0 percent to 3 percent.

About 29.5 percent plan to add employees next year, while 60.8 percent plan to keep the status quo. Only 6.8 percent expect to decrease employment.

Last year 34 percent expected to increase employment, 62.2 percent expected to maintain their existing level, and 3.4 percent expected to decrease employment.

About 56.6 percent indicated they experience difficulty attracting quality applicants. The greatest shortage of applicants was in the area of skilled employees — about 32.7 percent have trouble finding them, while about 40 percent have difficulty in finding unskilled, low-skilled and technically skilled applicants.

Attracting quality management is anticipated to be difficult for 11.4 percent of the respondents.

About 87.7 percent state that local employment opportunities will be good or fair for Springfield college graduates, but only 32.3 percent said they will require a four-year degree of new employees next year. About 28 percent

about 46.6 percent said salary is the main concern of applicants; quality of life was next at 41.8 percent. Cost of living was expected to be a concern by 7.6 percent and the school system, 4 percent.

What can help expand business?

A new question posed to business and civic leaders this year concerned government incentives that would make business expansion more attractive. Although 31.4 percent weren't certain, another 36.5 percent thought equipment investment tax credits would help.

Anderson said "We are a conservative

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Health care costs worry businesses

on page 3

are easier, they are going to have a healthier long-term lifestyle. They are going to take care of themselves on the front end, and down the road they are not going to have the problems that some people do not access health care for." The cost savings are in the long run.

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Wallis said, managed care is working. "It's not necessarily that they are coming off an HMO) is a lot different if you have a \$500 traditional insurance

of flexibility, Wallis said, "because volume is going to be higher in the system has to be in Springfield, and the provider has to have a way to deliver to

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Unemployment has remained below 4 percent for about eight years, he said.

Within the next 18 months, nearly 30 percent of respondents expect to increase their employee level, while 60.8 percent expect to maintain their current level.

Pay increases still are planned — nearly 40 percent will give a 3 percent to 6 percent increase, while 56.5 percent will give raises of 0 percent to 3 percent.

About 29.5 percent plan to add employees next year, while 60.8 percent plan to keep the status quo. Only 6.8 percent expect to decrease employment.

Last year 34 percent expected to increase employment, 62.2 percent expected to maintain their existing level, and 3.4 percent expected to decrease employment.

About 56.6 percent indicated they experience difficulty attracting quality applicants. The greatest shortage of applicants was in the area of skilled employees — about 32.7 percent have trouble finding them, while about 40 percent have difficulty in finding unskilled, low-skilled and technically skilled applicants.

Attracting quality management is

about 46.6 percent said salary is the main concern of applicants; quality of life was next at 41.8 percent. Cost of living was expected to be a concern by 7.6 percent and the school system, 4 percent.

What can help expand business?

A new question posed to business and civic leaders this year concerned government incentives that would make business expansion more attractive. Although 31.4 percent weren't certain, another 36.5 percent thought equipment investment tax credits would help.

Anderson said "We are a conservative

area, thank heavens, and people are not after a bunch of tax incentives or abatements. They think the less government intervention the better." However, in the next couple of years, "for them to remain competitive or for them to expand their local business they are going to need to have some capital spending, and that would accelerate their decision to expand or to buy their equipment if there is some tax advantage."

Job training credits came in as the next most desirable incentive, with enterprise zone tax abatements and infrastructure site grants closely tied for third place.

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Company:	
Fax Number: 883-8964	Date: 10/31/01
Number of Pages (including cover): 3	Time: 10am

	FROM:	PHONE NUMBER:
	Susan Kirkman, Regional Manager	(417) 837-5333
X	Cozy Jones, Regional Marketing Rep.	(417) 837-5334
	Teresa Myers, Marketing Assistant	(417) 837-5332
	Brenda Snider, Senior Partner Coordinator	(417) 837-5335

Remarks:

Here's our Economic Svy.

See question 21/23



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2002 Economic Survey Results

1. Do you feel the recent terrorist attacks on America have had an immediate and negative impact on your business?
 - a. 52.5% Yes
 - b. 47.5% No

If yes, in what area?

 - a. 7.7% Hiring freeze
 - b. 8.5% Staff reduction/layoffs
 - c. 23.4% Major purchases delayed or cancelled
 - d. 32.9% Investment/financial markets impact
 - e. 21.5% Transportation issues such as shipping or sales/business travel delayed or cancelled
2. How confident are you that American business is meeting its challenges?
 - a. 51.5% Very confident
 - b. 42.0% Somewhat confident
 - c. 4.7% Not confident
 - d. 1.8% Not certain
3. How would you compare the national economy today with the same time one year ago?
 - a. 2.9% Better
 - b. 16.7% About the same
 - c. 79.0% Worse
 - d. 1.4% Not certain
4. In 2002, do you expect the national economy to be:
 - a. 45.0% Better
 - b. 36.0% About the same
 - c. 16.9% Worse
 - d. 2.1% Not certain
5. In 2002, what do you expect the national prime rate to be at the end of each quarter:
 - a. 3.49% 1st quarter 2002
 - b. 5.52% 2nd quarter 2002
 - c. 5.80% 3rd quarter 2002
 - d. 5.99% 4th quarter 2002
6. During 2002, what do you expect to happen to construction and sales of new residential housing nationally?
 - a. 16.2% Increase
 - b. 59.4% Remain the same
 - c. 19.0% Decrease
 - d. 1.4% Not certain
7. During 2002, what do you expect to happen to construction and sales of new residential housing in the greater Springfield area?
 - a. 25.3% Increase
 - b. 46.3% Remain the same
 - c. 26.3% Decrease
 - d. 2.1% Not certain
8. In 2002, do you expect the business conditions in the Springfield area to be:
 - a. 26.1% More favorable than at present
 - b. 53.3% About the same as present
 - c. 18.3% Less favorable than at present
 - d. 0.3% Not certain
9. In 2002, do you expect the unemployment rate in the Springfield area to be:
 - a. 43.4% Higher
 - b. 49.5% About the same
 - c. 6.0% Lower
 - d. 1.1% Not certain
10. At the end of 2002, will your economic situation be:
 - a. 45.0% Improved
 - b. 39.9% The same
 - c. 11.5% Worse
 - d. 3.6% Not certain
11. During the next 18 months, is your company's employment expected to:
 - a. 29.5% Increase
 - b. 60.8% Remain the same
 - c. 6.8% Decrease
 - d. 2.9% Not certain
12. What level of pay increase did you/will you give to your employees?

2001		2002	
a. 40.6%	0-3%	a. 56.5%	0-3%
b. 53.8%	3-6%	b. 39.3%	3-6%
c. 4.5%	6-10%	c. 3.7%	6-10%
d. 1.1%	over 10%	d. 0.5%	over 10%
13. Does your company plan to expand its facility over the next 18 months?
 - a. 30.3% Yes
 - b. 66.4% No
 - c. 3.3% Not certain
14. What government incentives would make business expansion more attractive to you? (Identify top TWO choices)
 - a. 10.5% Enterprise zone tax abatements
 - b. 10.2% Infrastructure site grants
 - c. 11.4% Job training credits
 - d. 36.3% Equipment investment tax credits
 - e. 31.4% Not certain
15. Are you experiencing difficulty in attracting quality job applicants?
 - a. 56.6% Yes
 - b. 43.4% No

If yes, in what areas?

 - a. 19.4% Unskilled or low skilled
 - b. 32.7% Skilled
 - c. 19.8% Technical
 - d. 16.7% Clerical
 - e. 11.4% Management
16. In the next century, what level of education will be required for the majority of employees you plan to hire?
 - a. 22.5% High school diploma
 - b. 27.7% Vocational training
 - c. 32.3% Four year degree
 - d. 17.5% Graduate degree
17. How do you view local employment opportunities for Springfield college graduates?
 - a. 37.7% Good
 - b. 30.0% Fair
 - c. 7.2% Poor
 - d. 3.1% Not certain

(Continued on back)

18. Are employees educated at local colleges and universities adequately prepared to do the jobs for which they were hired?
- SMSU
70.0% Yes 6.2% No 23.8% Not certain
 - Drury
71.9% Yes 6.3% No 21.8% Not certain
 - Evangel
49.2% Yes 6.0% No 44.8% Not certain
 - OTC
58.9% Yes 3.8% No 37.3% Not certain
 - Other (BBC, CBC, Vatterott, Springfield College, etc.)
23.0% Yes 7.2% No 69.8% Not certain
19. What do you feel the focus should be for the Springfield R-12 School District in the future? (Check only one)
- 43.2% Smaller teacher-student ratios
 - 16.3% Air-conditioning of all school buildings
 - 22.3% Major repair and renovation of older school buildings
 - 6.1% Construction of new school buildings
 - 12.1% Not certain
20. In attracting new employees to the area, what is their main concern?
- 7.6% Cost of living
 - 46.6% Salary
 - 6.0% School system
 - 41.8% Quality of life
21. What is your company's biggest concern?
- 28.8% Labor availability
 - 35.8% Healthcare
 - 5.7% Financing
 - 19.0% Government regulation
 - 9.7% Other
22. Which of the following represent Springfield's greatest advantage when competing with businesses in other cities? (Identify top TWO choices)
- 44.3% Labor costs
 - 29.3% Utility costs
 - 12.1% Taxes
 - 6.8% Transportation costs
 - 9.5% Other
23. Is managed healthcare meeting your company's needs in terms of:
- Cost control?
18.7% Yes 69.8% No 11.5% Not Certain
 - Quality?
48.6% Yes 37.9% No 13.5% Not Certain
 - Flexibility?
26.6% Yes 58.6% No 14.8% Not Certain
 - Convenience?
41.0% Yes 46.4% No 12.6% Not Certain
24. Do you see downtown/center city Springfield redevelopment as important to the community's quality of life?
- 68.5% Yes
 - 23.1% No
 - 8.4% Not certain
25. Is it time for Springfield and Greene County to consolidate Government and services such as:
- Governance activities of City Council and County Commission?
58.3% Yes 31.4% No 13.3% Not certain
 - City/County Planning and Zoning?
76.8% Yes 19.0% No 4.2% Not certain
 - City/County Police and Fire Protection?
67.1% Yes 24.6% No 8.3% Not certain
 - Building Regulations?
78.0% Yes 17.2% No 7.8% Not certain
26. Has the expansion of the following governmental/public services kept up with the growth of the Springfield metropolitan area:
- Traffic Engineering?
29.3% Yes 64.5% No 6.2% Not certain
 - Street Maintenance?
51.3% Yes 43.5% No 5.2% Not certain
 - Police Protection?
63.8% Yes 23.6% No 12.6% Not certain
 - Fire Protection?
80.1% Yes 9.2% No 10.7% Not certain
 - Sewage and Storm Sewage Lines?
38.2% Yes 46.8% No 15.0% Not certain
27. Would you favor gasoline tax increases for MODot road improvements?
- 47.0% Yes
 - 45.1% No
 - 7.9% Not certain
28. Should Springfield initiate annexation of urbanized areas that have developed adjacent to the city in order to "straighten" city boundaries and provide urban service to these areas?
- 61.9% Yes
 - 24.2% No
 - 13.9% Not certain
29. What impact will the development of additional convention/exposition complexes in Branson such as the proposed Branson Landing development have on Springfield?
- 63.2% Positive
 - 16.6% Negative
 - 20.2% Not certain
30. The City of Springfield currently has a hotel/motel tax to fund travel and tourism promotion and travel and tourism capital improvement projects. Would you support extending the hotel/motel tax to all of Greene County to assist in these efforts?
- 78.5% Yes
 - 17.0% No
 - 4.5% Not certain
31. Although third largest in population, the City of Springfield ranks eighth in the state in the amount of public funds provided for travel and tourism promotion. Would you support additional public funding for travel and tourism promotion?
- 51.1% Yes
 - 33.2% No
 - 15.7% Not certain
32. To what extent does Springfield's air service impact your business?
- 16.3% Significant impact
 - 51.8% Some impact
 - 29.6% No impact
 - 2.2% Not certain
33. Did you spend or save your Bush Tax Refund check?
- 82.4% Spent - viewed as disposable income
 - 39.8% Saved - created or added to savings/investments
 - 7.8% Did not receive refund