



**ANALYSIS OF
SARASOTA COUNTY BUSINESS CLIMATE SURVEY 2007**

Prepared for:

The Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County

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Executive Summary

The Economic Development Corporation conducted a Business Climate Survey in 2005. The purpose was to determine the attitudes of Sarasota County's business owners/managers about the existing business climate. The results in 2005 identified key issues to be addressed, and are used as a baseline to measure progress toward improving these specific concerns, and the overall business climate in the county.

The 2007 Sarasota County Business Climate Survey tracks changes in the owners/managers' perceptions of the business climate by comparing the findings to the 2005 study, and identifies the main issues that emerge in today's environment.

The results from the 2007 random telephone sample are discussed in the next sections since they are representative of the business community at-large. The 2007 supplemental online survey results are referenced when the data differ from the random sample. Both data sets are compared to the 2005 online/hard copy survey.

Business owners/managers expressed less satisfaction with the current overall business climate than they did in 2005. Less than half of the respondents (46%) express dissatisfaction with the climate in 2005, while more than half (61%) express the same level of dissatisfaction in 2007.

Escalating insurance, taxes and other direct business costs were cited most frequently as the reasons for the downturn, along with transportation, workforce issues, affordability of housing and real estate market conditions. The 2007 survey saw slightly higher levels of satisfaction on issues such as the crime rate and educational offerings than 2005. The availability of a quality workforce went from the top issue in 2005 to the fifth most important issue in 2007. Cost of healthcare insurance became the top issue in 2007.

The primary purpose of the 2007 Sarasota County Business Climate is to identify priority issues to be addressed by the community, and specifically, the Economic Development Corporation. These include:

- Cost of healthcare insurance
- Quality of roads
- Cost of living
- Affordability of housing
- Overall quality of workforce

"Understanding the challenges that Sarasota County businesses face in their pursuit of success is vital to the EDC and our community partners," said EDC President Kathy Baylis. "Armed with information from the survey, we can respond to the needs

of businesses and continue to work towards a sustainable economy that ultimately improves the quality of life in Sarasota County.”

Despite describing less satisfaction with the business climate, businesses continue to prosper in Sarasota County and surrounding areas. According to the 2006 Sarasota County Economic Profile, the gross metropolitan product, the economic value produced by Sarasota-Bradenton businesses, continues to increase at a rate faster than most other metro regions and job growth has been recognized in manufacturing sectors, professional technical services, financial services and creative services.

METHODOLOGY

The results of the 2005 Business Climate Survey identified key issues to be addressed, and were used as a baseline to measure progress toward improving these specific concerns, and the overall business climate in the county.

The 2005 survey was made available to the business community both in hard copy and electronically via a PDF file and a link to the online questionnaire on the EDC website. The 2005 survey was distributed in both forms to EDC investors and value-added businesses. An email of the PDF file and link to the survey at the EDC website was sent to all chambers of commerce in the county, and to the Sarasota Convention & Visitors Bureau and the Sarasota Manatee Area Manufacturers Association asking them to distribute to their respective memberships. Additionally, hard copies of the survey were provided to the Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce and the Venice Area Chamber of Commerce for distribution in their monthly newsletters.

For the 2005 survey, 150 surveys were completed and returned. The results from these surveys have been previously reported, and are compared to the 2007 survey in the sections that follow.

An objective of the 2007 research was to ensure representation of the county's entire business community. Therefore, a random, proportionate telephone survey was conducted among a sample selected from the Sarasota County Local Business Tax, formerly the Occupational License. The interview was conducted among business owners/managers, and 105 surveys were completed. This number of interviews has an associated sampling error of 9.8 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

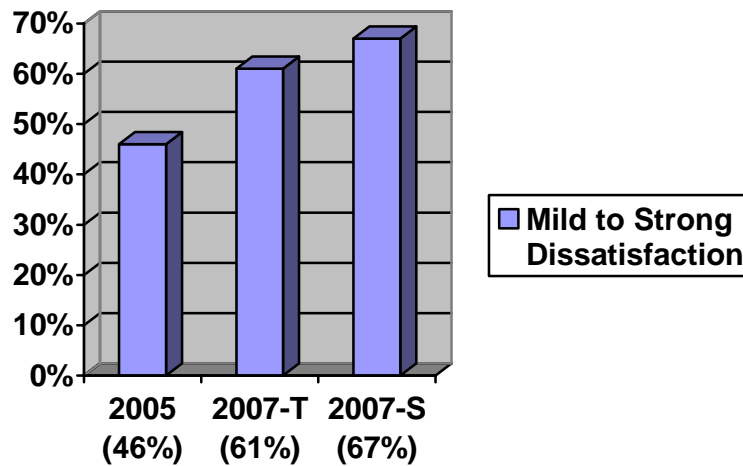
A supplemental survey was also conducted in 2007, and it was administered electronically, and resulted in 148 returned questionnaires. An email with the link to the EDC website, which hosted the survey, was sent to EDC investors and value-added businesses asking them to complete the questionnaire. An email with the link was also sent to all chambers of commerce asking them to distribute to their respective memberships.

The telephone survey for the 2007 survey was conducted from January 4-12, 2007, and the emails and subsequent reminder emails were sent from January 9 -17 with an end-date of January 18th for completion of the online survey.

KEY FINDINGS

Business owners/managers in the 2007 study expressed less satisfaction with the current overall business climate in Sarasota County than did their counterparts in the 2005 survey. In the 2005 survey just under one-half or 46% of the respondents indicated that they were somewhat or less satisfied with the overall business climate. This compares to 61% in the current year among the random telephone sample and to nearly seven out of ten (67%) in the supplemental sample (online).

Percentage of owners/managers who are somewhat or less satisfied with overall business climate



In the 2007 research before respondents were even asked about their overall satisfaction they were asked what the single most important issue is that is currently facing their business. The issue most prevalent on the mind of owners/managers in both 2007 surveys (random telephone and online) involved direct business costs, specifically increases in insurance costs (property, workers' compensation and health) and taxes (property and tangible). Other factors included in increasing business costs are advertising/marketing and rent expense. Thirty percent (32%) of the supplemental and 23% of the random telephone sample cited these increases as foremost in their mind.

It is interesting to note that another 18% in the 2007 random telephone survey said that they had "no issues" or that they had "plenty of work". This compares to less than 1% of the supplemental survey who volunteered that they were "no problems" relating to their business.

Owners/managers in both 2007 surveys commented on having a "lack of work" and a "need to build the business". Businesses in 2007 also referred to the "downturn" in

real estate and “lack of affordable housing”. Those who completed the 2007 survey online (supplemental) expressed more concern with real estate and housing issues and with “not finding qualified employees” than did the telephone sample. An equal percentage from both 2007 surveys referred to difficulty in doing business in Sarasota County and a higher percentage in the supplemental sample referred specifically to permitting issues.

In the 2005 survey and again in 2007 key issues were determined by analyzing any gaps between ratings of importance and satisfaction on a number of topics presented to respondents.

The key concerns that business owners/managers identified in the 2005 survey were affordable housing, worker availability, the overall cost of living, and taxes.

These same issues are still among the top concerns of businesses in 2007. However, the single most critical issue for today’s owners/mangers is the cost of healthcare insurance. This is closely followed by affordability of housing, the overall cost of living and quality of roads. This latter issue had the second highest rating of importance among owners/managers in 2007.

Both the overall quality and availability of workforce are key considerations for today’s owners/managers.

Real property taxes, the cost and availability of commercial property insurance, and energy costs are also major concerns facing business today. Other taxes, namely, tangible business property and corporate income tax rate are of importance in today’s business climate and had lower levels of satisfaction compared to their importance.

The cost of workers’ compensation insurance, which received a somewhat lower importance rating than commercial property insurance among current owners/managers received a lower rating of satisfaction than did the other type of insurance.

Other issues that had a lower satisfaction rating than their importance included availability of communication systems, crime rate, and quality of education (K-12, community college and technical schools, and colleges/universities), and availability of flights from Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport.

Four issues in the 2007 study had higher satisfaction ratings than the importance attributed to them, and they include availability of public transportation, availability of business financing, construction permitting process, and availability of shipping from Port Manatee.

The following displays the issues to be addressed by the community in order to improve the business climate. Also shown are areas for improvement, to maintain and promote and to defer.

ADDRESS:

- **Cost of healthcare insurance**
- **Quality of roads**
- **Cost of living**
- **Affordability of housing**
- **Overall quality of workforce**

IMPROVE:

- **Overall availability of workforce**
- **Real property taxes for your business**
- **Energy costs**
- **Tangible business property tax**
- **Cost of commercial property insurance**
- **Availability of commercial property insurance**
- **Corporate income tax rate**
- **Cost of labor**
- **Cost of workers' compensation insurance**
- **Availability of flights from Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport**

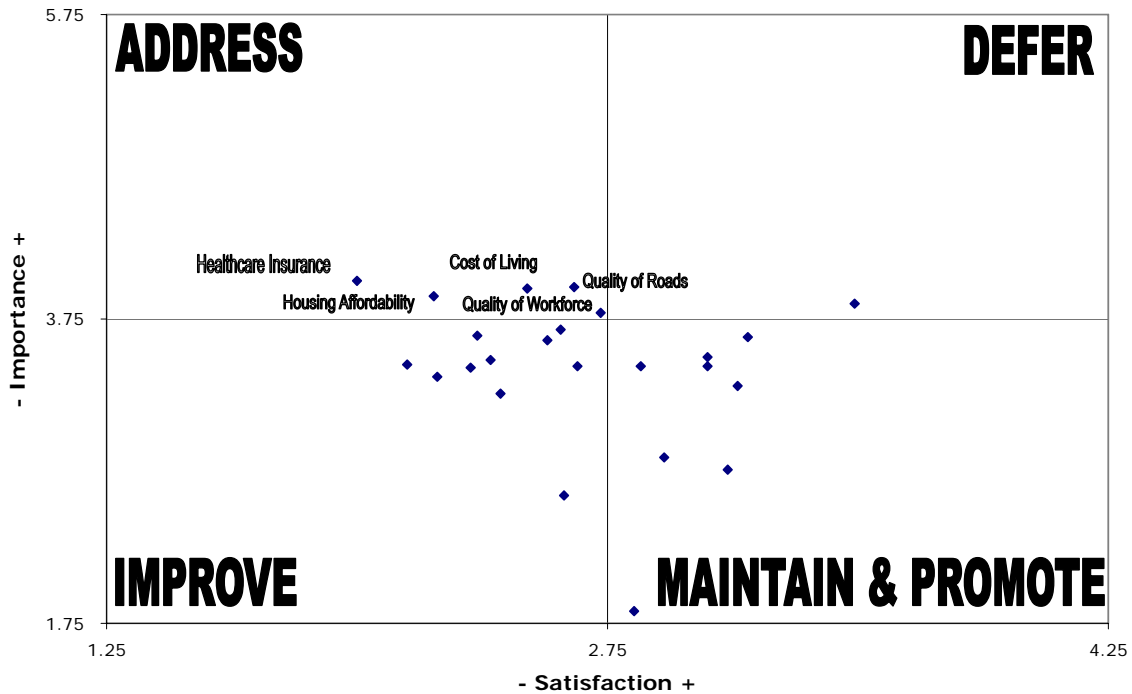
MAINTAIN AND PROMOTE:

- **Availability of communication systems**
- **Crime rate**
- **Quality of K-12 educational system**
- **Quality of programs at community college and technical schools**
- **Quality of education at colleges/universities**

DEFER:

- **Availability of public transportation**
- **Availability of business financing**
- **Construction permitting process**
- **Availability of shipping from Port Manatee**

Business Issues Priorities



Business owners/managers who participated in the 2007 supplemental survey gave a higher importance rating to all of the issues listed above, and their satisfaction on most of the same issues was lower than the ratings given by the random telephone sample. Based on the results of the supplemental survey quality of roads would be in the Improve Category while the Address Category would consist of the following:

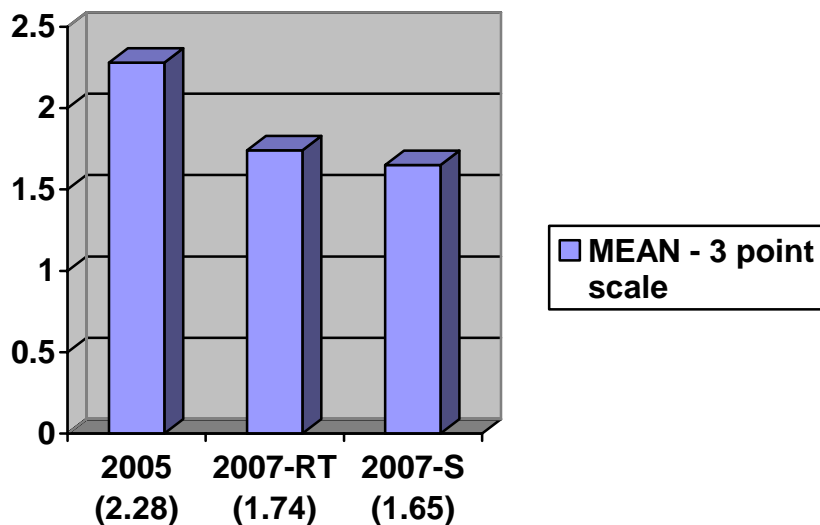
SUPPLEMENTAL SAMPLE – ADDRESS ISSUES:

- **Cost of healthcare insurance**
- **Cost of living**
- **Affordability of housing**
- **Overall quality of workforce**
- **Overall availability of workforce**
- **Real property taxes for your business**
- **Energy costs**
- **Tangible business property tax**
- **Cost of commercial property insurance**
- **Availability of commercial property insurance**

Owners/managers in 2005 and 2007 were asked to rate the business climate as better, the same or worse compared to two years ago. The percentages from the 2005 survey to 2007 are nearly reversed. That is, in 2005 41% indicated that it was “better” and only 15% said “worse” than two years prior. In the 2007 random sample 41% said “worse” and only 17% felt that it was a “better” business climate. It is even a larger decline among the supplemental sample in which 13% gave a rating of “better” and 46% rated it “worse”.

Mean ratings are calculated based on a three-point scale from “1”, which is “worse” to “3”, which is “better”. The following graph displays the mean ratings for the 2005 survey, and the 2007 random telephone sample and supplemental online survey. As shown, the 2005 mean is higher (at 2.28) compared to a 1.74 mean rating among the random sample and even slightly lower at 1.65 for the supplemental online survey.

Mean ratings of business climate compared to two years ago



In 2007 business owners/managers were asked the main reason for their rating of either “better” or “worse”. Not surprisingly, those who said that the business climate is “better” attributed it to having plenty of work, that their business is expanding or that the area is experiencing growth and the local economy expanding.

Owners/managers who rated the business climate as “worse” primarily attributed it to the recent downturn/deflation in real estate. This reason was given by bank managers and presidents interviewed by telephone who said that there is much uncertainty in the marketplace. Painting contractors and other construction related businesses along with some retail establishments said that it has hurt their businesses.

The next most frequently given reason, for rating the business climate “worse” than two year earlier, involved increases in direct costs such as advertising, office rents, insurance of all types and taxes. The third most often mentioned response is that Sarasota County is “difficult to do business in”. They specifically indicated that it “lacks community support for small business” or that it “has too many barriers” or that it is “anti-development”.

The data from 2007 suggest that the supplemental online survey participants had higher levels of dissatisfaction with the business climate overall and with specific issues discussed in the survey. This is to be expected with a self-selecting sample, they tend to be at the extremes of the bell curve – either extremely positive or negative.

The companies in the supplemental survey are also larger since less than one-half (43%) have five or fewer employees compared to 82% in the random telephone sample with this same number of employees. The supplemental sample in addition to being larger tends to have been established in Sarasota County for a longer period of time. Participants in the supplemental online survey are also almost evenly distributed between north of Osprey (51%) and south of Osprey (49%). This compares to 71% who are north of Osprey in the random telephone survey and only 29% south of Osprey.

Another distinction between the two samples is that the supplemental survey has a higher percentage (16%) who indicated that they have used EDC business services contrasted to only 1% in the random sampling.

Among the 2007 random telephone survey over 90% of the businesses that have been in business in the county for five years or less have fewer employees (one to five) compared to the more established businesses. As the number of years in business increases so does the percentage with six or more employees.

Another finding from the random telephone survey is that owners/managers who are newer to Sarasota County expressed higher levels of satisfaction with the current business climate than those in business for six years or longer. These newer businesses (with fewer employees) also placed higher importance on some issues affecting the county such as “cost of living”, “affordability of housing” “energy costs”, “quality of roads” “crime rate”, and “cost of healthcare insurance” and “cost of workers’ compensation insurance” than did the more established businesses. These larger businesses, who have been in business in the county for six years or longer, expressed more concern and less satisfaction with taxes – including “corporate income tax rate”, “real property taxes”, “tangible business property” and both “cost and availability of commercial property insurance”. This latter group also placed higher importance on education at all levels in the county, and on the “construction permitting process”.

Please refer to the following sections for more detailed information.

DETAILED FINDINGS

This section displays responses to each question from both 2007 surveys – random telephone and supplemental online.

Please note that tables in this section may not add to 100% due to rounding.

“Is your business headquartered in Sarasota County?”

| RESPONSE | % of RANDOM (N=105) | % of Supplemental (N=148) |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Yes | 96% | 89% |
| No | 4% | 11% |
| TOTAL | 100% | 100% |

“How many years has your business been in operation in Sarasota County?”

| RESPONSE | % of RANDOM (N=105) | % of Supplemental (N=148) |
|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Less than 1 year | 7% | 6% |
| 1 to 5 years | 29% | 22% |
| 6 to 10 years | 26% | 11% |
| More than 10 years | 39% | 62% |
| TOTAL | 100% | 100% |

“What is the zip code for your primary business location in Sarasota County?”

| RESPONSE | % of RANDOM (N=105) | % of Supplemental (N=148) |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| North of Osprey | 71% | 51% |
| South of Osprey | 29% | 49% |
| TOTAL | 100% | 100% |

“Including yourself how many full-time employees do you have working in Sarasota County?”

| RESPONSE | % of RANDOM (N=105) | % of Supplemental (N=148) |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1-5 | 82% | 43% |
| 6-10 | 11% | 14% |
| 11-25 | 5% | 15% |
| 26-50 | 2% | 7% |
| 51-100 | - | 10% |
| 101-500 | 1% | 10% |
| 500 or more | - | 1% |
| None | - | 1% |
| TOTAL | 100% | 100% |

“Excluding yourself, how many part-time employees do you have working in Sarasota County?”

| RESPONSE | % of RANDOM (N=105) | % of Supplemental (N=148) |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1-5 | 36% | 46% |
| 6-10 | 3% | 6% |
| 11-25 | 1% | 4% |
| 26-50 | 1% | 3% |
| 51-100 | - | 2% |
| 101-500 | - | - |
| 500 or more | - | 2% |
| None | 58% | 37% |
| TOTAL | 100% | 100% |

“Which of the following best describes your business?”

| RESPONSE | % of RANDOM (N=105) | % of Supplemental (N=148) |
|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Accommodation & Food Svcs. | 7% | 7% |
| Administration & Support & Waste Mgmt. & Remediation | 1% | 4% |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting | 1% | - |
| Arts, Entertainment & Recreation | 2% | 2% |
| Construction | 17% | 7% |
| Educational Services | - | 3% |
| Finance & Insurance | 3% | 13% |
| Health Care & Social Assistance | 4% | 7% |
| Information | 3% | 1% |
| Manufacturing | 11% | 10% |
| Professional, Scientific & Technical Svcs. | 7% | 14% |
| Public Administration | - | 1% |
| Real Estate & Rental & Leasing | 2% | 13% |
| Transportation & Warehousing | 7% | 1% |
| Utilities | - | - |
| Wholesale Trade/Retail Trade | 16% | 10% |
| Other Services | 21% | 8% |
| TOTAL | 100% | 100% |

“What is the single most important issue that your business is currently facing in Sarasota County?”

| RESPONSE | % of RANDOM (N=105) | % of Supplemental (N=148) |
|--|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| No Problem/ Plenty of Work | 18% | 1% |
| Lack Qualified Employees | 8% | 12% |
| Lack of Work/Need to Build Business/Season Shortened | 16% | 7% |
| Downturn in Real Estate Market | 6% | 5% |
| Lack of Affordable Housing | 3% | 10% |
| Sarasota County/Permitting Difficult | 7% | 6% |
| Increase in Business Costs | 23% | 32% |
| Road Construction/Traffic Congestion | 5% | 5% |
| Red Tide | 3% | - |
| Lack of Parking | 2% | 1% |
| Health Reimbursement Decreasing | 2% | |
| Cost of Living | - | 4% |
| Funding Business | | 3% |
| Other (single mentioned responses) | 8% | 14% |
| TOTAL | 100% | 100% |

“How would you rate your satisfaction with the current overall business climate in Sarasota County? Would you say you are...?”

| RESPONSE | % of RANDOM (N=105) | % of Supplemental (N=148) |
|----------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Extremely satisfied | 7% | 2% |
| Very satisfied | 32% | 30% |
| Somewhat satisfied | 41% | 52% |
| Not very satisfied | 10% | 12% |
| Not at all satisfied | 10% | 3% |
| TOTAL | 100% | 100% |
| MEAN RATING | 3.17 | 3.16 |

Please note that the mean rating is based on a five-point scale from “1”, which is “Not at all satisfied” to “5”, which is “Extremely satisfied”.

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of business climate issues and then their satisfaction with the same issues. The questions were worded as follows:

“Thinking specifically of your business, as I read each of the following issues please tell me how important each is to you. The choices are “Extremely important”, “Very important”, “Somewhat important”, “Not very important” or “Not at all important”.

“In terms of your business, how satisfied are you with each of the following issues? For each issue that I read please tell me if you are “Extremely satisfied”, “Very satisfied”, “Somewhat satisfied”, “Not at all satisfied” or “Not at all satisfied”.

The next table is based on the responses to the two questions mentioned above (importance and satisfaction) among the 2007 random telephone sample. Mean ratings are shown in the first two columns and the third column shows the gap between importance and satisfaction. The issues are ranked from most to least important

Please note that the mean ratings for importance and satisfaction are based on five-point scales from “1” (“Not at all important”/“Not at all satisfied”) to “5” (“Extremely important”/“Extremely satisfied”).

| MEAN RATINGS AND GAP BY 2007 RANDOM TELEPHONE SAMPLE | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|------------|
| BUSINESS CLIMATE ISSUE | IMPORTANCE | SATISFACTION | GAP |
| Cost of healthcare insurance | 4.00 | 2.00 | -2.00 |
| Quality of roads | 3.96 | 2.65 | -1.31 |
| Cost of living | 3.95 | 2.51 | -1.44 |
| Affordability of housing | 3.90 | 2.23 | -1.67 |
| Availability of communication systems | 3.85 | 3.49 | -0.36 |
| Overall quality of workforce | 3.79 | 2.73 | -1.06 |
| Overall availability of workforce | 3.68 | 2.61 | -1.07 |
| Real property taxes for your business | 3.64 | 2.36 | -1.28 |
| Crime rate | 3.63 | 3.17 | -0.46 |
| Energy costs | 3.61 | 2.57 | -1.04 |
| Quality of K-12 educational system | 3.50 | 3.05 | -0.45 |
| Tangible business property tax | 3.48 | 2.40 | -1.08 |
| Cost of commercial property insurance | 3.45 | 2.15 | -1.30 |
| Quality of programs at community college and technical schools | 3.44 | 3.05 | -0.39 |
| Availability of commercial property insurance | 3.43 | 2.34 | -1.09 |
| Corporate income tax rate | 3.44 | 2.85 | -0.59 |
| Cost of labor | 3.44 | 2.85 | -0.78 |
| Cost of workers' compensation insurance | 3.37 | 2.24 | -1.13 |
| Quality of education at colleges/universities | 3.31 | 3.14 | -0.17 |
| Availability of flights from Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport | 3.26 | 2.43 | -0.83 |
| Availability of public transportation | 2.84 | 2.92 | +0.08 |
| Availability of business financing | 2.76 | 3.11 | +0.35 |
| Construction permitting process | 2.59 | 2.62 | +0.03 |
| Availability of shipping from Port Manatee | 1.83 | 2.83 | +1.00 |

The table on the next page shows the responses to these questions (importance and satisfaction) among the 2007 supplemental online survey.

Please note that the mean ratings for importance and satisfaction are based on five-point scales from “1” (“Not at all important”/“Not at all satisfied”) to “5” (“Extremely important”/“Extremely satisfied”).

| MEAN RATINGS AND GAP BY 2007 SUPPLEMENTAL ONLINE SAMPLE | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|------------|
| BUSINESS CLIMATE ISSUE | IMPORTANCE | SATISFACTION | GAP |
| Cost of healthcare insurance | 4.44 | 1.95 | -2.49 |
| Cost of commercial property insurance | 4.33 | 1.95 | -2.39 |
| Cost of living | 4.28 | 2.44 | -1.84 |
| Affordability of housing | 4.27 | 2.12 | -2.15 |
| Overall availability of workforce | 4.26 | 2.54 | -1.72 |
| Availability of commercial property insurance | 4.22 | 2.18 | -2.04 |
| Overall quality of workforce | 4.21 | 2.80 | -1.41 |
| Availability of communication systems | 4.18 | 3.37 | -0.80 |
| Real property taxes for your business | 4.06 | 2.18 | -1.89 |
| Tangible business property tax | 3.93 | 2.30 | -1.64 |
| Cost of labor | 3.88 | 2.84 | -1.03 |
| Quality of roads | 3.87 | 2.80 | -1.07 |
| Crime rate | 3.78 | 3.30 | -0.48 |
| Energy costs | 3.77 | 2.59 | -1.18 |
| Quality of K-12 educational system | 3.77 | 3.14 | -0.64 |
| Quality of programs at community college and technical schools | 3.76 | 3.30 | -0.45 |
| Quality of education at colleges/universities | 3.73 | 3.41 | -0.32 |
| Cost of workers' compensation insurance | 3.65 | 2.47 | -1.18 |
| Corporate income tax rate | 3.59 | 2.57 | -1.02 |
| Availability of flights from Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport | 3.54 | 2.69 | -0.85 |
| Construction permitting process | 3.47 | 2.64 | -0.82 |
| Availability of business financing | 3.14 | 3.37 | +0.24 |
| Availability of public transportation | 2.93 | 2.85 | -0.07 |
| Availability of shipping from Port Manatee | 2.17 | 3.00 | +0.83 |

“How would you rate the current overall business climate in Sarasota County compared to two years ago? Would you say it is...?”

| RESPONSE | % of RANDOM (N=105) | % of Supplemental (N=148) |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Better than two years ago | 17% | 14% |
| Same as two years ago | 34% | 38% |
| Worse than two years ago | 41% | 48% |
| Wasn't here two years ago | 8% | - |
| TOTAL | 100% | 100% |
| MEAN RATING | 1.74 | 1.65 |

Please note that the mean rating is based on a three-point scale from “1”, which is “Worse”, “2” is “Same” to “3”, which is “Better”.

“Have you ever used business services provided by the EDC, for example Rapid Permitting, Securing Worker Training Grants, and Identification of Business Funding?”

| RESPONSE | % of RANDOM (N=105) | % of Supplemental (N=148) |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Yes | 1% | 16% |
| No | 99% | 84% |
| TOTAL | 100% | 100% |

APPENDIX

Sarasota County Business Climate Survey – 2007

Ask to speak to **name on list**_____. If not available ask to speak to the owner or manager.

Introduction: Hello, I'm_____ with Market Insight, a local research company and we are calling on behalf of the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County. We need your valuable input as a business leader in our community to help us better understand Sarasota County's current business climate.

Your information will assist in setting government and legislative priorities, and allocating resources. The survey only takes a few minutes and your individual responses are confidential.

(If he/she does not have time now to complete, ask for date and time to callback to conduct the interview.)

A. Which of the following titles best represents your position in the company? (READ LIST)

- Owner.....1 _____
- CEO/COO....2 _____
- Manager.....3 _____
- Or some other position and please specify_____

1. Is your business headquartered in Sarasota County?

- Yes.....1 _____
- No.....2 _____

2. How many years has your business been in operation in Sarasota County? (READ LIST)

- Less than one year.....1 _____
- 1 to 5 years.....2 _____
- 6 to 10 years.....3 _____
- More than 10 years.....4 _____

3. What is the zip code for your primary business location in Sarasota County? (RECORD ON LINE)

4. Including yourself, how many FULL-TIME employees do you have working in Sarasota County? (READ LIST)

- 1 – 5.....1 _____
- 6 – 10.....2 _____
- 11 – 25.....3 _____
- 26 – 50.....4 _____
- 51-100.....5 _____
- 101 – 500.....6 _____
- 500 or more.....7 _____
- None.....8 _____

5. Excluding yourself, how many PART-TIME employees do you have working in Sarasota County? (READ LIST)

- 1 – 5.....1
- 6 – 10.....2
- 11 – 25.....3
- 26 – 50.....4
- 51-100.....5
- 101 – 500.....6
- 500 or more.....7
- None.....8

6. Which one of the following best describes your type of business? (READ LIST & CIRCLE ONE)

- Accommodation & Food Services..... 01
- Administrative & Support & Waste Mgt. & Remediation Services..... 02
- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting..... 03
- Arts, Entertainment & Recreation..... 04
- Construction..... 05
- Educational Services..... 06
- Finance & Insurance..... .07
- Health Care & Social Assistance (includes not-for-profits)..... 08
- Information (publishing, television, radio, telecommunications, etc.)..... 09
- Manufacturing (includes manufacturing, processing and printing)..... 10
- Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (includes legal services,
accounting, engineering, scientific research, etc.)..... 11
- Public Administration (includes government, public safety, national security
and international affairs, etc.)..... 12
- Real Estate & Rental & Leasing..... 13
- Transportation & Warehousing..... 14
- Utilities..... 15
- Wholesale Trade/Retail Trade..... 16
- Other (please specify) _____ NAICS Code: _____ xx

7. What is the single most important issue that your business is currently facing in Sarasota County?

8. How would you rate your satisfaction with the current overall business climate in Sarasota County? Would you say you are ...(READ LIST)

- Extremely satisfied.....5
- Very satisfied.....4
- Somewhat satisfied.....3
- Not very satisfied.....2
- Not at all satisfied.....1

9. Thinking specifically of your business, as I read each of the following issues please tell me how important each is to you. The choices are “Extremely Important”, “Very Important”, “Somewhat Important”, “Not Very Important” or “Not At All Important”.

What about...(READ EACH & CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE. REPEAT SCALE AS NEEDED.)

| | Extremely Important | Very Important | Somewhat Important | Not Very Important | Not At All Important |
|---|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Availability of business financing | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Availability of communications systems such as telephone, cable, cellular, WiFi zones, etc. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Construction permitting process | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Cost of living | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Affordability of housing | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Cost of healthcare insurance | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Crime rate | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Overall quality of workforce | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Overall availability of workforce | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Cost of labor | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Energy costs | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Cost of worker’s compensation insurance | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Corporate income tax rate | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Real property taxes for your business | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Tangible business property taxes | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Cost of commercial property insurance | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Availability of commercial property insurance | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Quality of K-12 educational system | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Quality of programs at community college and technical schools | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Quality of education at colleges/universities | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Availability of flights from Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Quality of roads | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Availability of shipping from Port Manatee | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Availability of public transportation | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

10. In terms of your business, how satisfied are you with each of the following issues? For each issue that I read, please tell me if you are “Extremely Satisfied”, “Very Satisfied”, “Somewhat Satisfied”, “Not Very Satisfied”, or “Not At All Satisfied”. We will start with.....(READ EACH & CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE. REPEAT SCALE AS NEEDED.)

| | Extremely Satisfied | Very Satisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Not Very Satisfied | Not At All Satisfied |
|---|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Availability of business financing | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Availability of communications systems such as telephone, cable, cellular, WiFi zones, etc. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Construction permitting process | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Cost of living | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Affordability of housing | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Cost of healthcare insurance | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Crime rate | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Overall quality of workforce | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Overall availability of workforce | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Cost of labor | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Energy costs | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Cost of worker’s compensation insurance | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Corporate income tax rate | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Real property taxes for your business | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Tangible business property taxes | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Cost of commercial property insurance | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Availability of commercial property insurance | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Quality of K-12 educational system | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Quality of programs at community college and technical schools | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Quality of education at colleges/universities | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Availability of flights from Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Quality of roads | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Availability of shipping from Port Manatee | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Availability of public transportation | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

11. How would you rate the current overall business climate in Sarasota County compared to two years ago? Would you say it is... (READ LIST)

- Better than two years ago.....3
- Same as two years ago.....2
- Worse than two years ago.....1
- Wasn't here two years ago.....6

(IF RESPONDENT ANSWERED "BETTER" OR "WORSE" IN Q. 11, ASK Q.11A. OTHERWISE, SKIP TO Q.12)

11a. Please tell me the main reason for your response.

12. Have you ever used business services provided by the EDC for example Rapid Permitting, Securing Worker Training Grants, Identification of Business Funding?

- Yes.....1
- No.....2

13. May I have your name for validation purposes only, and verify your company and the number that I reached you at?

NAME:_____

COMPANY:_____

TELEPHONE #:_____

Thank you for participating and you can see the results of this study on the EDC's website starting February 1st. Go to www.edcsarasotacounty.com

Interviewer:_____

Date:_____