



PUBLIC POLICY SURVEY RESULTS

October 27th, 2015



INTRODUCTION

Heartland Communications Consultants was contracted to develop and administer a public policy survey for the Hardin County Chamber of Commerce. The survey sought out the business community opinions on important public policy matters. The results detailed in the report below will help shape the Chamber's advocacy platform.

This report details the methodology used, key findings and detailed results.

METHODOLOGY

An online survey was conducted from Aug. 17 to Sept. 11, 2015.

All HCCC members who have opted in for regular Chamber email updates received an email notice inviting them to participate. The survey was also publicized on social media channels and at a monthly luncheon in order to encourage participation. Additionally, a press release was distributed to local media inviting non-members to participate.

There were 226 respondents to the survey. Fifty-eight identified themselves as non-members. Because of the open source nature of the survey instrument, we cannot definitively say that each respondent represented a distinct member business or organization.

It should be noted that on some questions respondents were allowed more than one choice. As a consequence, you will notice that some results don't tally up to 100 percent.

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KEY FINDINGS

This section is organized into four broad categories

- **Government Structure/Public Funding**
- **Economic Development/Quality of Life**
- **Chamber Public Policy**
- **Retention and Growth at Fort Knox**

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE / PUBLIC FUNDING

Under this section the survey evaluated four areas: county business license tax, employee withholding tax, revenue enhancement opportunities available to non-first class cities and government efficiencies.

Findings showed that a renewed discussion regarding consolidation of government services would be beneficial. Of those who responded all felt that renewed discussion with Police, Fire Protection, Planning & Zoning, Building & Code Enforcement, Waste Management, and Engineering would benefit the community. Here is the break down of percentage of respondents who replied yes to these specific services.

- **Waste Management 85%**
- **Planning & Zoning 84%**
- **Building & Code Enforcement 82%**
- **Engineering/Stormwater 81%**
- **Fire Protection 70%**
- **Police 63%**

A majority of respondents (85.4 percent) also felt that cities needed to operate on a level playing field regardless of classification as it pertains to revenue enhancement opportunities.

In regards to taxes, the majority respondents were not in favor of a business tax or an employee withholding tax for the purpose of economic development.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/QUALITY OF LIFE:

In a previous survey, Chamber members responded favorably regarding support for a local option sales tax. For that reason, in this most recent survey, the Chamber sought input on where tax dollars should be applied if a 1 percent sales tax was approved. The greatest support (46 percent) was for a Convention Center. Twenty-nine percent support a YMCA and the remaining 27 percent lean toward a countywide transportation system.

Because quality of place matters to tourism and economic development activity, the Chamber asked respondents to rank the value of additional attractions. Respondents ranked Water Park, Live Music Venues and Go Carts, Batting Cages and County Fair Type Rides as the top three priorities.

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CHAMBER PUBLIC POLICY:

As the Chamber outlines advocacy efforts with state legislature, it sought the opinion of the business community on what it considers the most pressing issues for our region's growth.

Of those with an opinion, respondents identified the top three issues as Right to Work, LIFT-Local Option Sales Tax and Medical Tort Reform & Medical Review Panel.

RETENTION AND GROWTH AT FORT KNOX:

Potential cuts at Fort Knox and the effects on the business community has been top of mind for not only the CORE Committee but the business community as well.

The survey identified potential funding streams to support Fort Knox growth and retention efforts and asked respondents to rank the potential sources in order of importance. Those with an opinion rated Local Government, Corporate Donations and State and Federal Government as the top three most important sources.

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DETAILED RESULTS

1. A survey the Chamber conducted in October 2013 indicated that 62 percent of our members supported allowing local communities the option to enact a local sales tax of up to 1 percent for capital improvement projects. The tax would expire when the project has been paid for. If this tax was approved, what specific project(s) should be a priority for the Hardin County community?

Top 5 priorities

- Convention Center
- YMCA
- County Wide Transportation
- Small Business Storefront
- Indoor Athletic Facility

2. In light of potential cuts at Fort Knox, we need a collaborative effort with the Kentucky Military Affairs Office, The Fort Knox CORE Committee and other regional organizations to protect the current missions and attract new ones via a Fort Knox Marketing Campaign. Where do you think the funding for a continuous and substantial Marketing Campaign should come from?

Top 5 Results

1. Local Government
 2. Corporate Donations
 3. State and Federal Government
 4. Counties & Communities surrounding Hardin County
 5. Dues Paying Memberships
3. Do you believe there should be renewed discussions about service provided by both County and City governments where it might be more cost effective to combine these efforts?

All respondents agreed a discussion would be effective.

- Waste Management 85%
- Planning & Zoning 84%
- Building & Code Enforcement 82%
- Engineering/Stormwater 81%
- Fire Protection 70%
- Police 63%

4. The County does not currently have a business license tax; do you see a need to implement this tax for purpose of funding economic development activities and incentives for both existing small business as well as potential new business being attracted to the area?
- 36.73%- Yes
 - 63.27%- No

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5. The County does not currently have an employee withholding tax; do you see a need to implement this tax for purpose of funding economic development activities and incentives for both existing small business as well as potential new business being attracted to the area?

- 26.55%-Yes
- 73.45%-No

6. The Elizabethtown Sports Park is now a proven creator of tourism and new economic activity. In order to entice these sports teams and their parents to come back to the park in the future, it has been said that the area needs additional forms of entertainment. Also, in order to attract additional Economic Development and job creation we need to enhance our "Quality of Place" attributes. What activities do you believe we need to acquire/build to fulfill this goal?

1. Water park
2. Live Music Venues
3. Go Carts, Batting Cages, County Fair Type Rides
4. Theater & Arts Venues
5. Social Nightlife

7. Your Chamber has taken a supportive position on the following list of Public Policy issues. Considering issues that might be important to or affect Local Government, which of these do you deem to be the most important for our community?

Top 5 responses

1. Right to Work
2. LIFT-Local Option Sales Tax
3. Medical Tort Reform & Medical Review Panel
4. Revision of Prevailing Wage Laws
5. Public Private Partnerships

8. Would you be in support of legislation allowing all non-first class Kentucky cities, which would include all Hardin County's incorporated cities, the same revenue enhancement opportunities?

- 85.4%- Yes
- 14.6%- No

9. Do you think your business would give hiring preference to veterans in the next six months to enhance your workforce?

- 62.39%-Yes
- 37.61%- No

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