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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: December 20, 2016

To: The Honorable Chair and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "CHH", is written over the printed name "C.H. Huckelberry".

Re: **Tucson Metro Chamber Poll**

The Tucson Metro Chamber frequently polls its members on significant issues to gauge the sentiment of their members. Two questions in the Chamber's recent poll relate to County issues (See attached).

The first is Question 2, which asks the members their greatest challenge to operations and profit margins. A large number indicated the difficulty in hiring qualified workers. This response emphasizes the importance of workforce investment and workforce training. A trainable, qualified workforce will become one of the key future constraints to economic expansion; hence, the importance of emphasizing education funding and post-education workforce specialty training programs that tailor skills development to actual employer needs. Therefore, we must examine the effectiveness of all of the County's workforce investment programs to ensure they are delivering needed community skill development.

The other part of the survey I find interesting is the near unanimous agreement that funding of transportation infrastructure should be a "top 3" priority of the Arizona Legislature. As you know, our Legislative Agenda for the last four years has consistently emphasized transportation as our top priority. Hopefully, the State Legislature will address this critical issue in the 2017 Session.

CHH/anc

Attachment

c: Tom Burke, Deputy County Administrator for Administration  
Jan Leshner, Deputy County Administrator for Community and Health Services  
Carmine DeBonis Jr., Interim Deputy County Administrator for Public Works  
Michael Racy, Racy Associates Inc.



**TUCSON  
METRO  
CHAMBER**

# VIPDIRECT

A special communication from President & CEO Michael Varney exclusively for Chairman and Keystone investors in the Tucson Metro Chamber



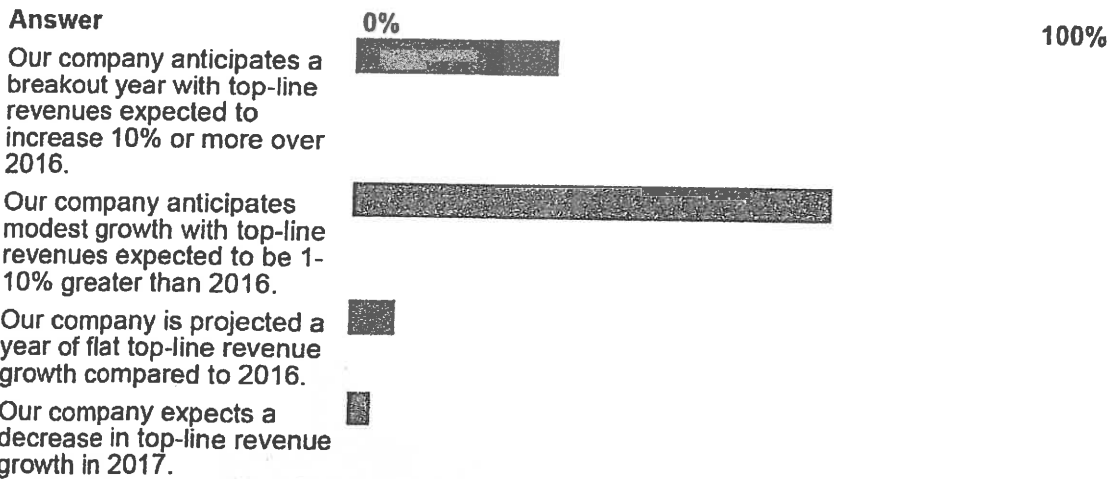
Michael Varney  
President & CEO  
Tucson Metro Chamber

The TucsonMetro Chamber recently polled investors at the Chairman and Keystone levels about their opinions on business operations and growth, education funding and transportation infrastructure funding. Results from some of these survey responses are quite enlightening and will be used to help the Tucson Metro Chamber advance its advocacy agenda.

VIP Direct surveys ask the opinions of Tucson's leading business executives. Look for more VIP Direct polls and communications as an added benefit of your company's investment in the Chamber at the Chairman or Keystone level.

VIP Direct polls are not scientific, but we believe they serve a purpose as a barometer of sentiment among leading business executives in our region. Here are the results of the most recent survey with commentary from the Chamber included.

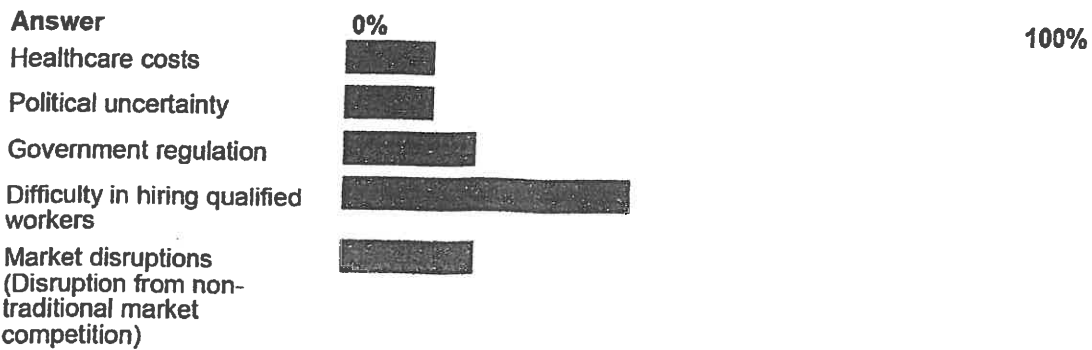
**1.) Based on your company's annual planning for the coming year, which of the following phrases best describes your company's outlook for growth?**



**CHAMBER COMMENTS:**

If you aren't feeling the positive vibes for business in Southern Arizona in 2017, check your pulse. A full 91 percent of respondents said they expect modest or "breakout" growth in 2017. More than one in four companies expect top-line revenue to grow more than 10 percent. A preponderance of economic data point to the same conclusion.

**2.) Of the following four choices, which one poses the greatest challenge to your operations and profit margin in the coming year?**



**CHAMBER COMMENTS:**

Four out of ten respondents say that hiring qualified workers is their #1 challenge. This conclusion meshes well with what Tucson Metro Chamber executives are hearing anecdotally. We simply must find a way to educate our young people, tap the resources of military veterans who have recently separated and improve the dialog between HR departments and educators. Thankfully, the Tucson Metro Chamber is out in front of this challenge.

- President & CEO Mike Varney has a seat on the leadership council of the Cradle to Career program.
- The Chamber has partnered with the Earn to Learn program to increase the number of local college grads and pair them with local employers to increase "brain gain".
- The Chamber originated and now manages a novel program called Intern to Career to create paid summer internship opportunities for high school seniors who are on a career track in auto technology, healthcare, engineering sciences, construction or hospitality.

3.) Of the following phrases, which one best summarizes your opinion about how important it is for the Arizona State Legislature to address increased funding for education in the 2017 legislative session starting in January?



**CHAMBER COMMENTS:**

Perhaps as an extension of their need for qualified talent, local business executives overwhelmingly expect and demand that the 2017 Arizona State Legislature make funding for education a high priority next year. By a landslide majority, 91 percent of local executives believe the Prop 123 was a step in the right direction toward improving education funding, but also believe more must be done.

4.) Of the following phrases, which one best summarizes your opinion about how important it is for the Arizona State Legislature to address increased funding for transportation infrastructure in the 2017 legislative session starting in January?

Answer

0%

100%

Funding for transportation Infrastructure (roads, bridges, etc.) should be a "top three" priority at the legislature. The legislature should take an "all of the above" approach to finding the money to improve transportation infrastructure.

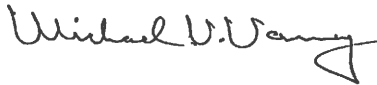
Funding for transportation infrastructure is important, but does not rise to a top-three priority.

Funding for transportation infrastructure is not a priority the legislature should consider in 2017 given all of the other more pressing priorities that need the legislature's attention.

### CHAMBER COMMENTS:

Not surprisingly (based on having our ear to the ground on this matter), two-thirds of local executives want something done to improve the condition of our transportation infrastructure. This sentiment is aligned with the 2014 Business Expansion and Retention (BEAR) Survey conducted by the Chamber. In that survey local executives said that improving our crumbling streets and roads was the top priority. The fact that survey respondents are comfortable with an "all of the above" approach may signal that even an increase in the gas tax would be preferable to continuing to drive on and look at poor streets and roads.

Sincerely,



Michael V. Varney  
President & CEO



 [TucsonChamber.org](http://TucsonChamber.org)

Tucson Metro Chamber | 465 W. St. Mary's Rd., Tucson, AZ 85701

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