

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Partnership for Community Growth & Development

Contact: Alicia Stephens, Executive Director

Phone 816/407-9242, Fax 816/407-9138

email: astephens@thniklibertymo.com

Business Retention & Expansion Report is Available

The Partnership for Community Growth & Development partnered with Aquila and the City of Liberty to visit members of the business community to gather data about doing business in Liberty. Aquila provides the software program which is used and the City provides a staff liaison on the business retention committee. The one-on-one business visits completed by the Partnership are also part of the 2006 contract for services with the City of Liberty. "Business retention is a critical component of successful economic development programs. We are working to retain businesses in Liberty, which benefits the community by maintaining jobs, encouraging expansion investments and consequently growing the tax base," said Partnership executive director, Alicia Stephens.

The interviews represent 33 Liberty businesses and over 5,300 employees.

KEY FINDINGS

GROWTH - businesses are healthy and growing in Liberty. Half of the businesses visited indicated that they currently are or planning to invest significantly in their business. That investment could be in equipment, real estate, employee growth or physical expansion. Half of those with expansion plans provided investment figures which total \$13.5 million. Some of this information was used in identifying businesses eligible for the Partnership's first annual Community Growth Awards.

LOCATION – Liberty's location in the Kansas City metro area is a major factor for the business community. Two-thirds of those interviewed are 100% pleased with their Liberty location; the remaining one-third was above average in their satisfaction rating.

WORKFORCE – not a single business ranked its workforce below average in stability and productivity. Two-thirds ranked the stability at 6 or higher on a seven-point scale. Productivity was even better with 90% of the businesses ranking it 6 or higher. Once again this goes hand-in-hand with the ranking the business community gives the Liberty School District - a near perfect score.

CONCERNS – as was the case in 2005, there were issues noted with the City bureaucracy but significantly fewer this - 9% in 2006 compared to 65% in 2005.

The concern heard most frequently was traffic. Not only was it listed as a community weakness but also as a barrier to further expansion. Signage was the next most frequently mentioned concern.

In 2006, a new process was put into place to identify issues and seek resolution at the Partnership committee level. The Partnership believes this new resolution process will address concerns before they become problems. The Partnership's Business Retention Committee will address issues as they arise,

seeking immediate resolution. A good example is signage. The Partnership's Business Retention Committee will present a signage proposal to City Council this month.

The full report is available on the Partnership website: www.thinklibertymo.com click on News and then Business Retention & Expansion Report.

If you have questions about the report or if you are a Liberty business that would like to participate, contact the Partnership at 816/407-9242.

The Partnership for Community Growth & Development is a not-for-profit organization which is funded by private and public dollars.