Each year representatives from our Business Connections program visit companies in targeted sectors – Advanced Manufacturing, Logistics, Defense, Corporate Operations and Support Services and Ag Innovation. This collaborative, proactive outreach and retention initiative helps us understand the growth and development needs facing our regional businesses. Key takeaways from these visits include:

- Our region’s low cost of doing business and cost of living are strengths along with customer and supplier access.
- Continuing to develop workforce partnerships and programs to help fill the number of open jobs is of great importance to area companies.
- Companies are concerned about the business impact of tariffs, Illinois’ legalization of marijuana and the increase of the Illinois minimum wage.

### WHO WE VISITED

**TOP 5 BUSINESS SECTORS VISITED**

- **Advanced Manufacturing**: 38%
- **Industrial Goods**: 11%
- **High-End Business Service**: 8%
- **Consumer Goods Producer**: 6%
- **Transportation**: 6%
- **Other**: 18%

**SALES AND MARKET SHARE**

Extremely positive economic feedback from companies visited with majority indicating market share and sales are increasing:

- **Growing**: 84%
- **Maturing**: 10%
- **Declining**: 3%
- **Emerging**: 2%

### PRIMARY MARKETS

- **Local**: 2%
- **Regional**: 33%
- **International**: 8%
- **National**: 21%
- **No Market Indicated**: 36%
WORKFORCE

Companies are asked to rank workforce attributes on a scale of 1-7 (low to high). Productivity, quality, and stability ranked high; however, availability is a national issue. The average ratings by category are:

- **5.7** **WORKFORCE PRODUCTIVITY**
- **5.5** **WORKFORCE QUALITY**
- **5.3** **WORKFORCE STABILITY**
- **4.4** **AVAILABLE WORKERS**

Of the companies interviewed, 62% are experiencing recruitment issues. Specific workforce needs include:

- **48%** Skilled Labor (CNC operators, CDL drivers, tool & die makers)
- **28%** Technical Labor (IT, engineers)
- **12%** Unskilled Labor

EXPANSION

Of the 145 companies visited, **21% plan to expand in the next 3 years**. This represents:

- **532,000** SQUARE FEET OF REAL ESTATE
- **208** ADDITIONAL JOBS

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BUSINESS CONNECTIONS PROGRAM:

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ABOUT US

The Quad Cities Chamber, through its economic development division Quad Cities First, leads economic development in the six-county, bi-state region. Quad Cities First is a public-private partnership created in September 2009 to promote the growth of the greater Quad Cities area by marketing the region as a premier business destination, serving as an expert resource for companies making location and expansion decisions and acting as a business advocate to align the region’s public and private sector resources for the benefit of the greater Quad Cities region.