

# Outlook 2018

Memphis Economic Study

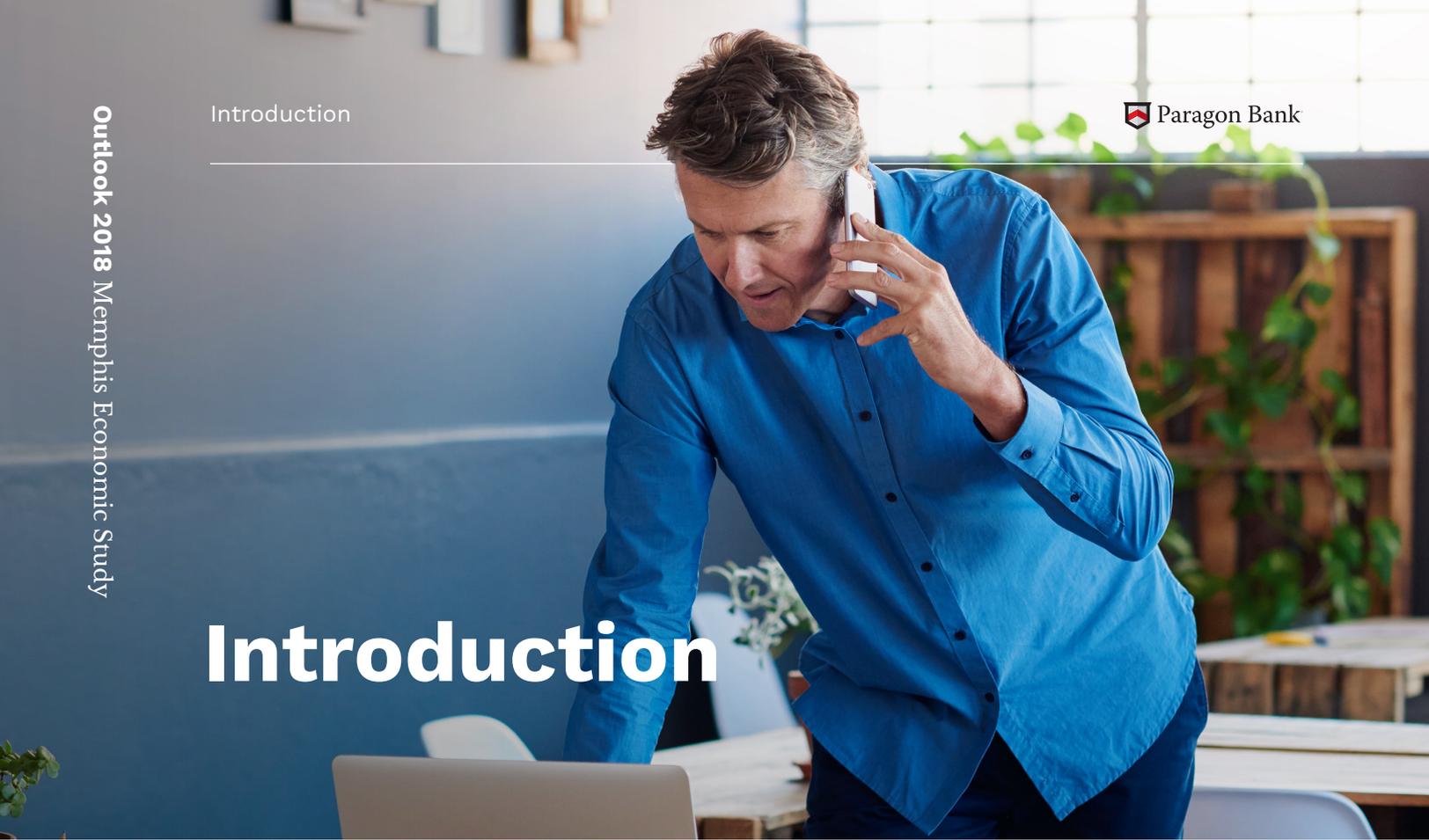
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# Introduction

The **Outlook 2018 Memphis Economic Study** is the final report of the Memphis Consumer Sentiment Survey (MCSS) of residents in the Greater Memphis Metropolitan Area conducted by The Sparks Bureau of Business and Economic Research (SBBER) at The University of Memphis and sponsored by Paragon Bank.

The purpose of this survey was to collect perceptions of the Greater Memphis Economy by using an instrument consisting of ten questions.

Results are from **1,070 telephone** surveys completed by residents within the Central Business Districts of Shelby County in West Tennessee and DeSoto County in North Mississippi.

For some survey questions, data is comparable with national data gathered by the Michigan Consumer Sentiment Survey (UMCSENT).

# Executive Summary

The MCSS provided a unique look at the views of 1,070 consumers in Memphis. The focus of the survey was on attitudes about current and future economic conditions locally and for the nation.

Overall, consumer sentiments were positive, much like national results reported by The Conference Board Consumer Confidence Index® and the UMCSSENT. Sentiments also mirror results in the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) Consumer Sentiment study of Tennessee consumers.

**Memphians who responded to the MCSS survey were, in general, positive about the outlook for the Memphis economy and the national economy. They were, in general, positive about making big and small purchases and believed that their financial conditions were going to improve in the future. Most of the survey results were consistent with other measures of consumer confidence and sentiment which reflect positive attitudes about the economy and its future.**

Two factors that impact consumer sentiments are income expectations and job opportunities. Most respondents indicated that jobs were either easy to find or could be found with some effort. Since most Memphians depend upon jobs for money, the availability of jobs is a major factor in determining their outlook about the economy.

Respondents were positive about purchases of durable goods and were actively engaged in some aspects of the online economy. Two thirds of the respondents used some form of online banking and bought or sold goods online, while only a third shopped for groceries online or used Uber or other forms of transportation services. Clearly, changes are occurring in the manner of how consumers make purchases and those changes can be expected to accelerate over time.

In regard to the future, most respondents felt that they would be financially better off a year from now and were positive about the greater Memphis area over the next year. Most respondents felt that jobs would either be more plentiful or the same next year. Nearly half of the respondents thought that Memphis would experience continuous good times for the next five years.

In regard to the national economy, most respondents believed that inflation would rise, gas prices would definitely rise, and wages would not keep pace with inflation. In spite of those concerns, most respondents believed the national economy would continue to grow over the next 12 months.

# The Greater Memphis Area Consumer Sentiment Survey

July 2018



The Greater Memphis Area Consumer Sentiment Survey was conducted by the Sparks Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of Memphis during July 2018.

The survey results reflect the attitudes of 1,070 Memphis consumers. Approximately 25,000 randomly selected phone numbers were called to obtain the data for the survey. Of the non-responding phone numbers called, 58% were unanswered, 25% had messages that the number was no longer in service, and 17% were answered by someone who refused to answer the survey questions.

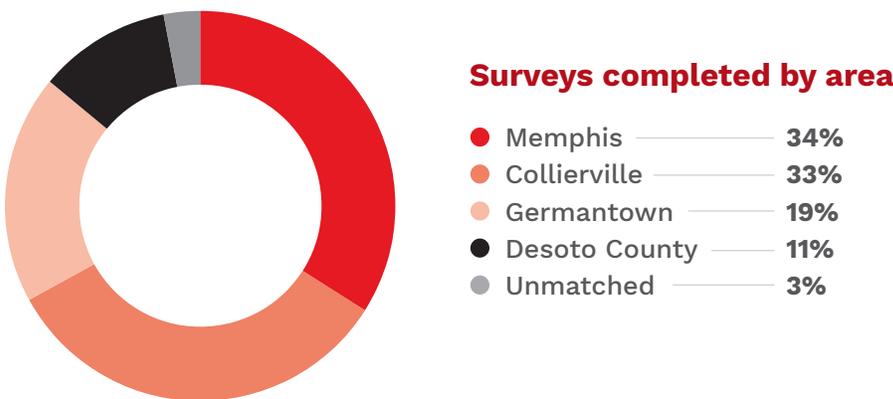
The Memphis survey was designed to be similar to the UMCSSENT and MTSU surveys, but did not attempt to copy the other surveys precisely.

The survey results provide a first-time, concentrated look at consumer sentiments in several core markets in Memphis.

The survey did not cover all parts of the city, so the survey results cannot be generalized to the city overall. In order to develop an index, multiple surveys and more extensive research would need to be conducted. The survey results may not reflect the attitudes of consumers in areas that were not surveyed.

## AREAS SURVEYED

This chart shows those areas surveyed and the number of responses from each area. Both core city and suburban areas were included in the survey target population, primarily the Poplar business corridor and DeSoto County. The Memphis survey asked a series of questions about current conditions in Memphis, future conditions in Memphis, the status of the national economy, and purchasing plans.



## CURRENT FINANCIAL ATTITUDE

Over 86.0 percent of the respondents indicated that they were either the same (50.7%) or better off (35.6%) financially than they were one year ago. Only 11.3 percent of the respondents reported that they were worse off than they were one year ago—a very positive sign for an economy that traditionally struggles with

low income and high poverty. A strong local economy over the last year has created income opportunities and stronger personal financial wellbeing for Memphis residents. Improved financial wellbeing should increase consumer purchases, including major durable goods purchases.



## COMPARED TO FIVE YEARS AGO

Rebounding national and local economic conditions since the Great Recession are reflected in the positive attitudes of survey participants regarding their financial condition over the last five years. More than half (54.6%) of respondents reported they were better off

financially than in the past and 26.7 percent were financially the same as they were five years ago. Only 15.7 percent indicated that they were worse off than they were five years ago. The long-run trend toward improved financial wellbeing is a positive sign for the future.



Thinking back 5 years ago, would you say that you (and the family living here) are:

- Better off financially than you were 5 years ago — 54.6%
- The same financially as you were 5 years ago — 26.7%
- Worse off financially than you were 5 years ago — 15.7%
- Don't know — 3.0%

## OUTLOOK FOR MAJOR PURCHASES

Most respondents (53.8%) believed that this is a good time to make major purchases of durable goods that last over three years and frequently involve financing in some form. An additional

24.2 percent were uncertain about making large purchases. Only 18.8 percent believed that now is a bad time to make purchases of durable goods for the home.



Do you think now is a good time or a bad time to buy major household items?

- Good time to buy — 53.8%
- Uncertain — 24.2%
- Bad time to buy — 18.8%
- No answer — 3.2%

## ATTITUDE TOWARD THE JOB MARKET

Job growth is a critical determinant of the economic status of Memphis consumers and their spending patterns. When asked about the availability of jobs locally, nearly half of respondents (47.0%) felt that jobs could be found with some effort, while 20.1 percent felt that jobs were easy to find. Only 15.0 percent of the

respondents felt that jobs were hard to find. It seems obvious that the multitude of help-wanted signs and widely publicized information regarding low unemployment rates, job creation, and job fairs has created a positive image of the local labor market.



Would you say that jobs in the Greater Memphis Area are:

- Can be found but it takes some effort — 47.0%
- Easy to find — 20.1%
- Don't know — 17.9%
- Hard to find — 15.0%

## SPENDING ONLINE AND NON-TRADITIONAL GOODS AND SERVICES

In regard to the spending patterns of Memphis consumers, respondents were asked about their use of online non-traditional goods and services. In particular, questions in the survey addressed buying or selling goods online, online banking, online transportation services like Uber and Lyft, and online grocery shopping.

than two-thirds of the respondents used online commerce in some form — 30.3 percent used it frequently and 36.7 percent used it occasionally. Another third of the respondents (33.0%) said they did not use online services to buy or sell goods. The strong growth of online businesses is reflected in the high level of penetration of the Memphis market.

Respondents were surprisingly engaged in buying and selling goods online. Slightly more



How frequently do you buy or sell goods online?

- Occasionally — 36.7%
- Not at all — 33.0%
- Frequently — 30.3%

## BANKING ONLINE

Online banking is a popular convenience. More than two thirds of the respondents indicated they used online banking services either frequently (52.8%) or occasionally (15.3%). Similar data recently produced by Morning Consult for the American Bankers Association indicated that two thirds of bank customers

used some form of electronic banking. Much like the prior question regarding the use of online apps for purchasing and selling goods, 31.9 percent of the respondents said they did not use online banking. Clearly, improving online banking services will increase the number of users over time.



How frequently do you use online banking?

- Frequently ————— 52.8%
- Not at all ————— 31.9%
- Occasionally ————— 15.3%

## CONSUMER SENTIMENT TOWARD TECHNOLOGY IN THE SERVICE SECTOR

Memphians have traditionally been totally dependent upon personal transportation to move around the city. The recent increase in alternatives has not penetrated the Memphis market as much as other online services have. Only 37.4 percent of the respondents indicated they used Uber, Lyft, or other services — 8.6 percent used them frequently and 28.8 percent

used them occasionally. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (62.6%) did not use these services at all. A lot of room remains for these services to penetrate the Memphis market. Improved marketing may be necessary to offset the traditional reliance of Memphians on personal transportation.



How frequently do you use Uber, Lyft, or other transportation services?

- Not at all ————— 62.6%
- Occasionally ————— 28.8%
- Frequently ————— 8.6%

## GROCERY SHOPPING ONLINE

Similar patterns exist for online shopping at grocery stores. This is a new service for many local grocery chains, which has just begun to penetrate the Memphis market. More than two-thirds of respondents (68.0%) did not use online grocery shopping and another 21.9

percent only used it occasionally. One-tenth of the respondents used online grocery shopping frequently. Traditional shopping patterns are difficult to overcome and online shopping for groceries may take extra effort to change shopping patterns.



How frequently do you order food online from grocery stores or other food services?

- Not at all ————— 68.0%
- Occasionally ————— 21.9%
- Frequently ————— 10.1%

## Economic Outlook

The Memphis survey also contained questions regarding the outlook for the local and national economies for the next year and five years in the future. The respondents were optimistic about the future.

## FINANCIAL EXPECTATIONS FOR A YEAR FROM NOW

When asked about their financial status a year from now, 75.2 percent of the respondents said they would be better off (40.1%) or the same (35.1%) as they are this year. Only 9.8 percent of the respondents thought their financial

status would be worse a year from now. This optimism was reflected throughout the survey. Most Memphians surveyed were optimistic about their financial condition and about the local economy.



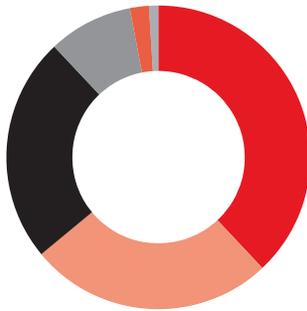
Do you think that a year from now you (and the family living here) will be:

- Better off financially ————— 40.1%
- The same ————— 35.1%
- Don't know ————— 15.0%
- Worse off financially ————— 9.8%

## EXPECTATIONS FOR BUSINESS CONDITIONS A YEAR FROM NOW

The outlook of Memphians was not without some concerns. Over one-third of the respondents (37.7%) were uncertain about business conditions over the next year. Some of the uncertainty may simply reflect a lack of knowledge about local businesses. Only 11.2 percent of the respondents felt like bad times

would occur in the next year. By contrast, 50.9 percent of the respondents expected good financial times or good financial times with reservations. Clearly, the respondents' overall optimistic views were reflected in their outlook for business conditions in Memphis.



Regarding business conditions in the Greater Memphis Area — do you think that during the next year we will have:

- Uncertain ————— 37.7%
- Good financial times ————— 26.4%
- Good financial times but with qualifications — 24.5%
- Bad financial times ————— 9.2%
- Bad financial times but with qualifications — 2.0%
- Don't know ————— 0.4%

## JOB MARKET A YEAR FROM NOW

Survey respondents were also optimistic about the trend in job openings over the next year. One-third of respondents (33.2%) believed more job openings would exist next year, while 19.1 percent believed fewer jobs openings would

exist. Thirty percent of the respondents believed the same number of job openings would exist next year. The growth of job opportunities is a major determining factor for consumer spending.



Regarding job openings in the next year, do you think that in the Greater Memphis Area there will be:

- More job openings than there are now ————— 33.2%
- About the same number of job openings as there are now — 30.4%
- Fewer job openings than there are now ————— 19.1%
- Don't know ————— 17.4%

## ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FIVE YEARS AHEAD

More than a quarter of respondents (27.1%) believed that good times could be expected for the next five years, and an additional 22.2 percent believed good times with qualifications could be expected. An additional 22.5 percent

of the respondents were uncertain about the long-term outlook. Finally, only 22.4 percent of the respondents felt like bad times or bad times with qualifications would occur over the next five years.



Which would you say is more likely - that in the Greater Memphis Area we'll have continuous good times over the next 5 years or so or that we will face difficulties.

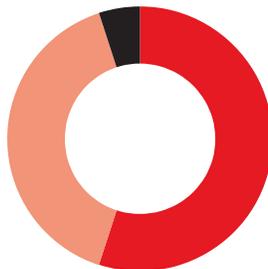


## NATIONAL OUTLOOK

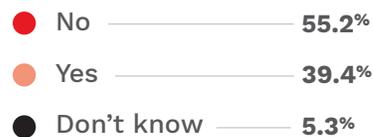
The survey ended with a series of questions about issues at the national level, including inflation, wages, gas prices, and general economic growth.

### Inflation

More than half of respondents (55.2%) believed that inflation would be higher over the next year.

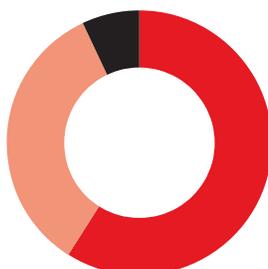


Thinking about the national economy over the next year, do you think inflation will remain low?

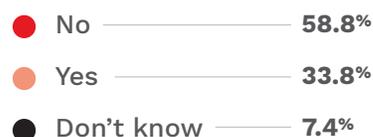


### Wages

Nearly three out of five respondents (58.8%) believed that wages would not keep pace with inflation.



Thinking about the national economy over the next year, do you think wage increases will exceed inflation?



### Gas prices

One factor influencing opinions regarding inflation was clearly the belief that higher oil prices could be expected. Four out of five respondents (80%) believed that oil prices will increase over the next year.

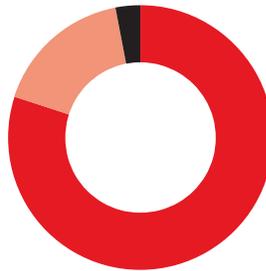


Thinking about the national economy over the next year, do you think gas prices will increase?

- Yes ————— 80.0%
- No ————— 16.5%
- Don't know ——— 3.5%

### Economic growth

Nearly two thirds of respondents (64.3%) believed the national economy will grow over the next year.



Thinking about the national economy over the next year, do you think the national economy will grow?

- Yes ————— 64.3%
- No ————— 29.5%
- Don't know ——— 6.2%

In spite of concerns about future inflation, rising oil prices, and declining real wages, most respondents believed that the national economy would continue to grow over the next year.

**Over 64.0 percent** of the respondents believed that the national economy would continue to grow, while **only 29.5 percent** believed it would not grow over the next year.

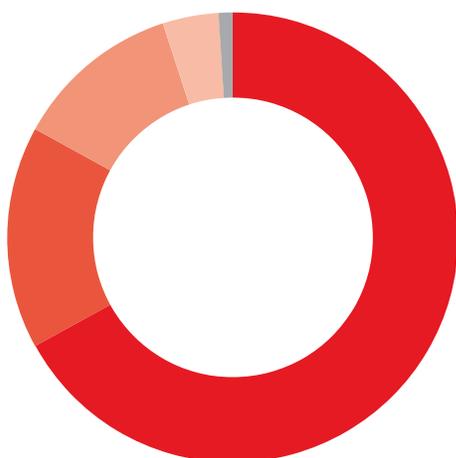
If a recession were to occur over the next year, it would be a surprise to many Memphians.

# Context for Survey Analysis

## The Importance of Consumer Sentiment

### CONSUMERS DRIVE THE ECONOMY

Personal consumption expenditures by consumers make up nearly 70.0 percent of the overall economy, with Government (17.0%), Business (18.0%) and Trade (Ex-I = -5.0%) making up the remainder. The large segment of the economy that reflects consumption is the basic reason most economists are concerned about the consumer. Consumers ultimately determine the growth or contraction of the economy.



**Percentage Shares of GDP,  
2nd Quarter 2018**

- Personal Consumption Expenditures — **69.4%**
- Gross Private Domestic Investment — **17.9%**
- Government Consumption Expenditures and Gross Investment — **17.1%**
- Net Exports of Goods and Services — **-4.6%**
- Residual — **0.2%**

Source: [www.bea.gov](http://www.bea.gov).

## Consumers are the foundation of the Memphis economy.

The current status, strength, and stability of the Memphis economy are a reflection of consumer attitudes regarding the economy — their views about the present and the future.



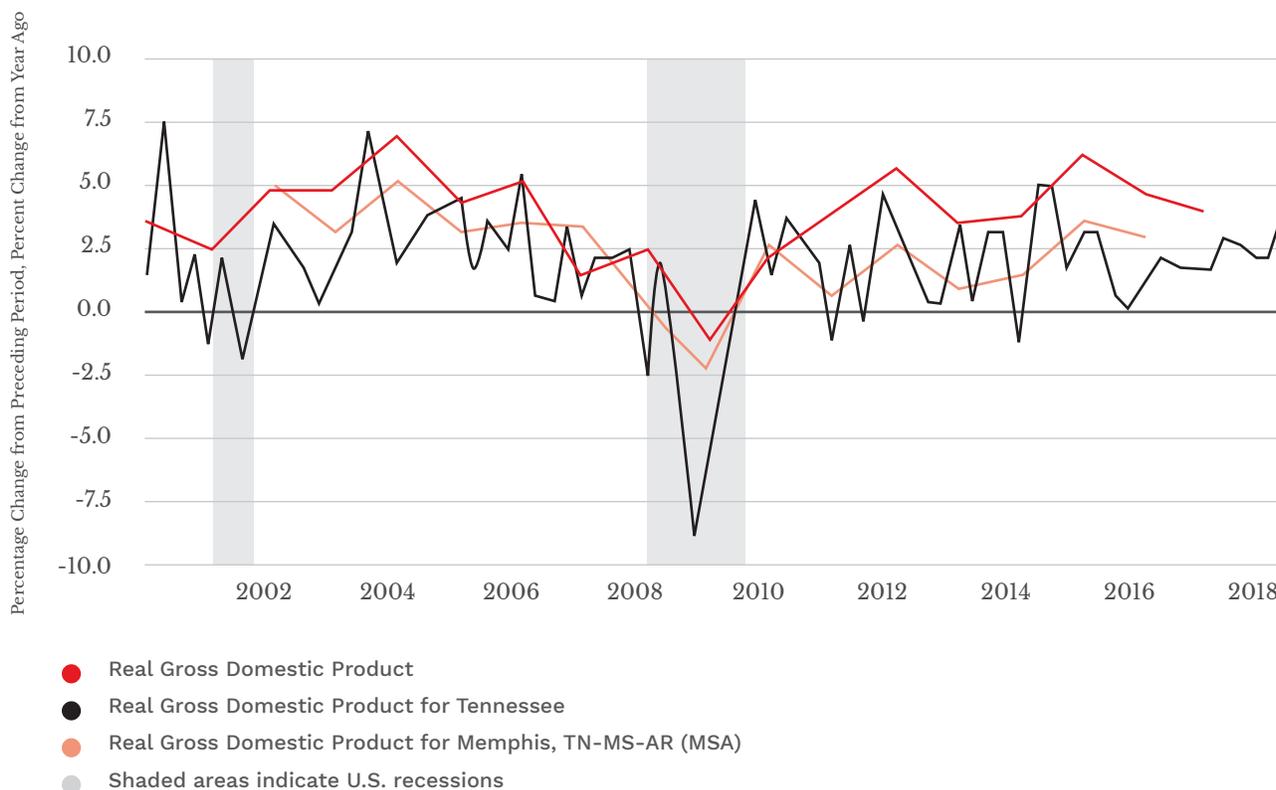
These are good times for the economy, with high growth rates, low inflation rates, strong job growth, and mostly positive economic data. As a result, consumers should have very positive attitudes about current conditions in the economy and about the future.

Encouraging consumers to spend money is a policy action frequently taken in reaction to weak economic data. For example, inflating the economy generates jobs and income opportunities and encourages consumer spending. Similarly, tax cuts and increases in debt — by consumers, businesses, and government — are a stimulus to the economy and to the nation's consumers. Other policy decisions act to slow growth and consequently reduce consumer spending. Increasing interest rates and reducing debt are two actions that are effective constraints on consumer spending.

## LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH MIRRORS THE NATION'S

When the national economy is expanding or contracting, similar patterns will exist in Memphis. Decades ago, the Memphis economy was smaller and more generic and typically experienced smaller downturns and upturns than the nation. Fewer Memphis industries were cyclically sensitive. However, since that time, the Memphis economy has increased direct ties between national and global economic conditions and the economic wellbeing of Memphis is now heavily determined by national economic conditions.

### Real GDP: U.S., TN and the Memphis MSA



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Both the Tech Recession and the Great Recession slowed the Memphis economy. The post-recession recoveries have been positive for Memphis, but the momentum seen in the 90s seems to have been lost.

Currently, the national economy is experiencing a protracted recovery from the Great Recession. Many measures of economic activity are hitting multi-year highs, and the outlook, in general, remains positive.

The second quarter Bureau of Economic Analysis GDP growth rate estimate was 4.2 percent and the second quarter 2018 Department of Commerce Consumer Spending estimate was 4.0 percent. Unemployment rates have fallen to below 4.0 percent in most markets and employer expansion plans are mostly constrained by the lack of workers. Economic forecasts anticipate rising inflation rates and increasing pressure on policymakers to restrain the current expansion. Recent Federal Reserve Board decisions to increase interest rates reflect concerns about the impact of the overheated economy.

Growth at the high end of the 2.5-3.0 percent level that is sustainable without inflation seems most likely for the remainder of 2018.

## CONSUMER CONFIDENCE SHAPES OUR ECONOMIC FUTURE

Consumer confidence, expectations, and sentiment indicators are all measures that try to capture the attitude of consumers in anticipation of movements in the overall economy.

If consumers are positive about their current economic conditions, they continue to spend and the economy can be expected to reflect their spending. If consumers are not positive about current conditions but expect things to be better in the future, then they may be expected to spend more in future time periods. If consumers are negative about either their current economic conditions or those in the future, then economic conditions can be expected to become worse. Economic downturns reflect downturns in consumer attitudes and reductions in consumer spending.

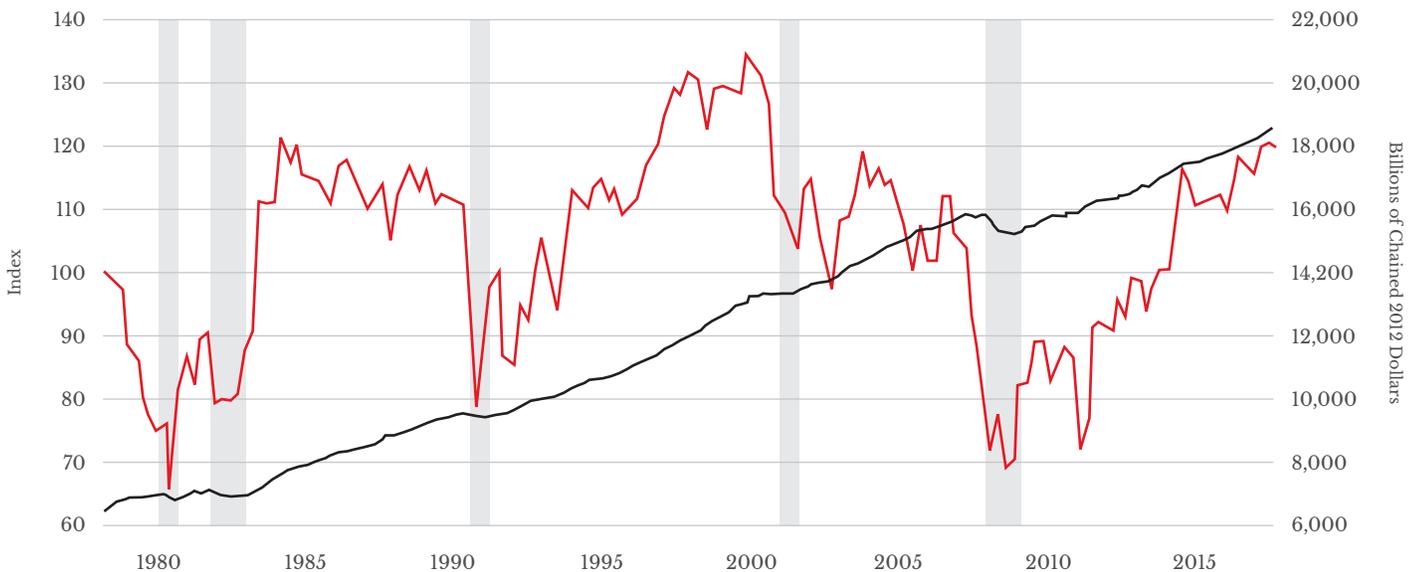


Current national evidence suggests that consumers remain confident about the future path of the economy. The August data on consumer confidence reported by The Conference Board reached near record levels driven by the tight labor market and opinions regarding the strength of the overall economy.

Many other measures of consumer sentiment and confidence exist. Most indicator series are similar and attempt to provide information about the direction of the economy before

official data are available. This chart shows the consumer sentiment index measured by UMCSENT and its relationship to the growth of the national economy's GDP.

### Michigan Consumer Sentiment and Real GDP



● University of Michigan: Consumer Sentiment, Q1 1978 = 100 (left)      Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, University of Michigan  
 ● Real Gross Domestic Product (right)  
 ● Shaded areas indicate U.S. recessions

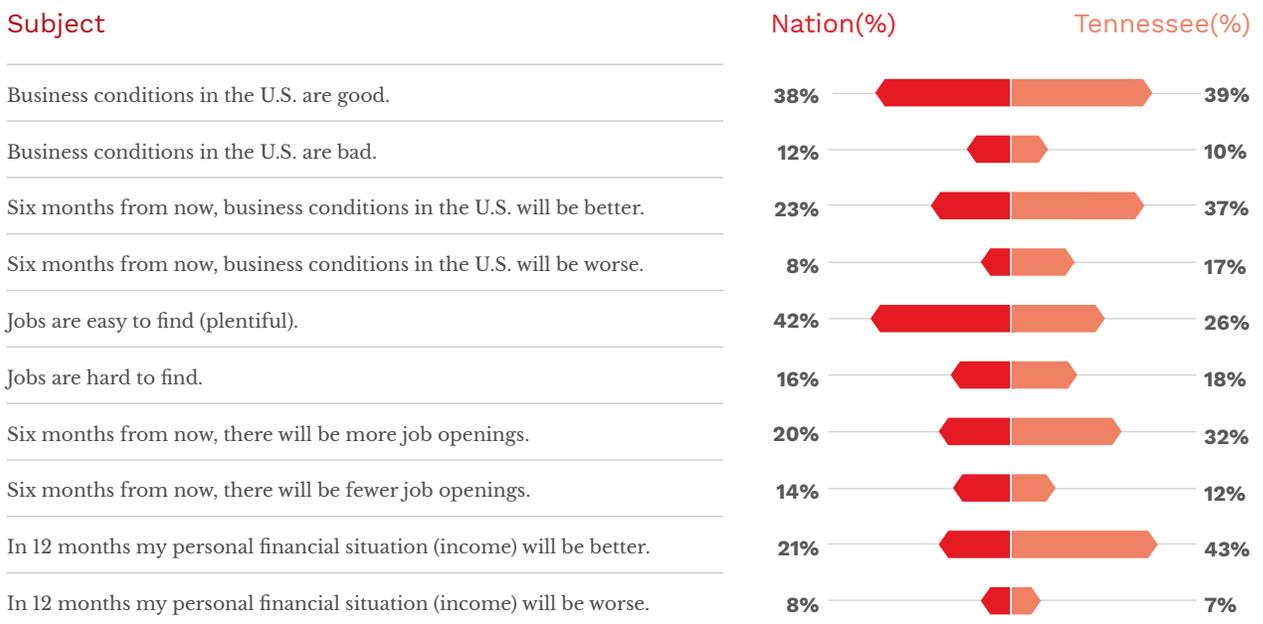
Two things stand out from the chart. First, the economy of the nation has consistently grown through most years, and that fact alone should give some support for making long-run plans and investment decisions. Even the brief downturns from periodic recessions have not offset the structural growth pattern of the

nation's economy. Second, the UMCSENT index is highly volatile but in general tends to drop dramatically before each recession and increase in each expansion. The latest expansion clearly has been associated with increases in consumer sentiment.

## WHAT'S THE MOOD OF CONSUMERS IN TENNESSEE?

MTSU produces a limited version of a state index of consumer confidence. The consumer data measures statewide consumer attitudes regarding business conditions, employment, and personal finance currently and for six to 12 months in the future for Tennessee and the nation.

### Comparing Tennessee Consumers to Consumers across the Country as a Whole



Source: Tennessee Consumer Outlook Index, June 2018, (<http://www.mtsu.edu/consumer/docs/tennconsumeroutlookjune2018.pdf>).

The results suggest that the survey participants were generally positive about the current Tennessee economy and the national economy and the outlook for the next six months. The survey participants suggested that jobs were not plentiful now, but the outlook for jobs would

be better in the next six months — a surprising outcome, given the strength of the state’s economy. Most respondents believed that their personal financial conditions would be better over the next year — a positive indicator that consumer spending will also increase.

None of the indicator series are perfect and no current measure provides 20/20 views of the future of the economy. The economic policies and actions of the federal government are influenced by indicators of consumer confidence, but are not dependent upon those measures. To the extent that consumer

expectations or views are reflected in commonly accepted measures of economic performance, policy actions may take place. Typical data points of concern are measures of economic growth, measures of labor market performance, and measures of inflation.

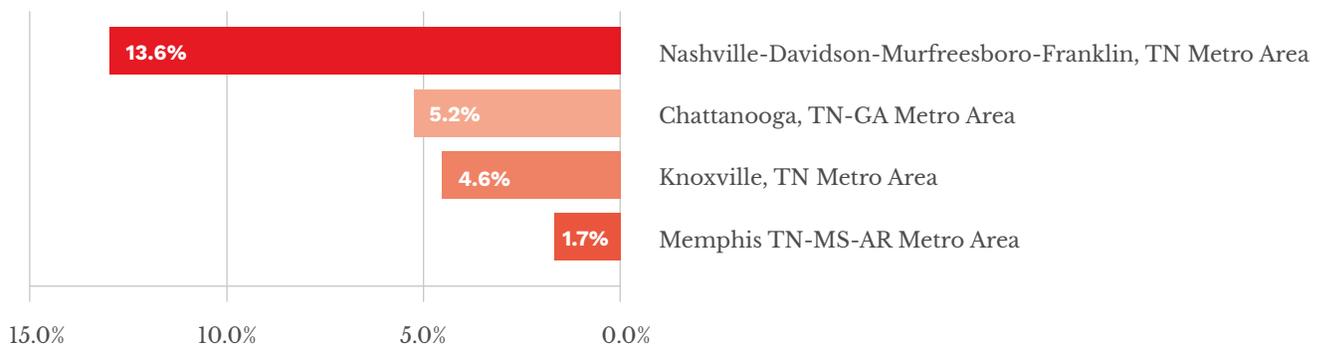
## Dynamics Unique to Memphis

### MEMPHIS’S DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH LAGS OTHER TENNESSEE CITIES

Population growth is one of the most basic drivers of an economy, because it fuels both consumer spending and business creation. Memphis has grown, but the growth has been slow. Other metro areas in Tennessee have grown more rapidly, especially Nashville.

#### Population Growth, 2010-2017

Select Tennessee Metropolitan Statistical Areas



Source: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

Slow population growth offsets the positive impacts of employment and income gains and reduces the dynamics of a community. Memphis must make itself more attractive by creating more high-quality jobs and income

opportunities for current and potential residents. Making improvements in quality of life factors and business concerns are essential parts of an overall plan for making Memphis more attractive.

## CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS ARE ENGINES FOR DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH

Suburban growth patterns have been the drivers for economic expansion for decades in Memphis and urban centers around the nation.

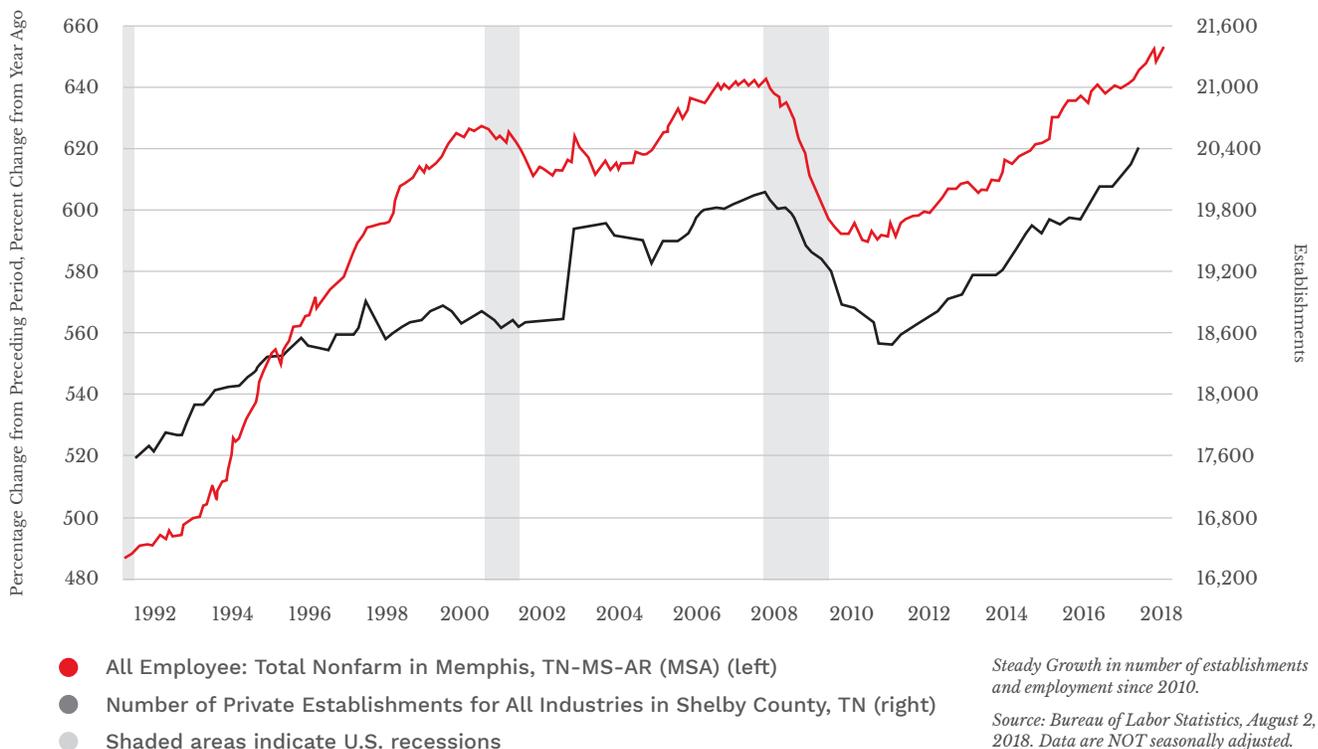
Businesses that serve consumers directly follow the simple model that says to follow the consumers. Locating close to the consumer is a pattern that reflects the direct relationship between the growth of the consumer base and the expanding opportunities to serve them.

Clearly, not all growth is suburban. Recent creative developments in the core of the city have occurred because of the strength and stability of the consumer, government, and industrial base.

## HISTORICALLY, TEPID JOB GROWTH HAD DAMPENED MEMPHIS'S ECONOMY

The future of Memphis is inextricably tied to earned income. Without business and job creation, it is difficult for the economy to expand. This chart shows both employment patterns and business creation patterns for Memphis.

### Growth of MSA Total Nonfarm Employment (1992-2018)



During the 90s, job creation rates for Memphis were frequently in excess of 10,000 net new jobs per year. Employment increased by approximately 140,000 jobs. However, the post-2000 period has been less promising. Following the Tech Recession, job growth stalled and then declined before recovering prior to the Great Recession. Dramatic job losses during the Great Recession set the community back another decade. As a result of the jobless recovery and the setback from the recession, total jobs in Memphis have grown little since the end of the 90s.

If job growth had continued to occur at 10,000 jobs per year, employment in Memphis would have increased by 200,000 jobs — four times the size of Amazon HQ2. In actuality, employment only increased from 628,000 jobs in August 2000 to a pre-recession peak of 643,000 jobs in January 2009, and to 654,000 jobs in August 2018. Business creation patterns for most of the last three decades have typically been a reflection of the employment growth patterns.

## Long-term Factors to Consider

### HOW CAN MEMPHIS STRENGTHEN ITS CORE CITY TO POWER GROWTH?

Without a strong core, cities struggle with concentrated poverty, inequality, and crime. Conversely, a strong economic city core promotes growth throughout the entire metro area. Making urban Memphis more attractive to young and high-income groups will make the city and the suburbs a magnet for future growth and improve economic conditions for all Memphians.

When consumers have stable, high-quality jobs, rising incomes, and positive expectations, they spend more money, businesses prosper, and sustainable growth reduces social and economic

problems. Problems that were once thought to be a basic part of the structure of the Memphis economy disappear in the face of improvements in economic opportunities.

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### SHOULD WE ANTICIPATE A DOWNTURN?

Some similarities exist between current economic conditions and the post-2000 growth period that preceded the Great Recession. The post-2000 recovery from the Tech Recession was associated with tax cuts, spending growth, financial industry deregulation, and low interest rates—conditions that are much like those that currently exist.

Excesses in the real estate market were a direct outcome of the economic conditions that prevailed at the time. Unrealistic spending by consumers, businesses, and government resulted in strong but unsustainable economic growth rates.

Recent concerns about consumer, business, and government debt, high growth rates and inflation may ultimately set the stage for the next economic downturn. Business cycles are not dead. Recent increases in interest rates are a clear anti-inflation action designed to slow growth and address some market excesses.

When the next downturn will occur is unclear. The indicators that signal a downturn seem to be increasing. For example, the national July data released by the National Association of Realtors indicated that pending home sales in the South declined by 1.7%. The NAR index of pending sales fell nationally for the seventh straight month. Increasing interest rates and declines in affordability are two concerns about the strength of the housing market. The absence of housing supply in many markets is keeping sales prices at record levels and continues to slow the overall sales data.

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## WHAT ROLE WILL THE GLOBAL ECONOMY PLAY IN MEMPHIS'S FUTURE?

Unlike in the past, the role of global economic change will play a larger role in determining the direction of short-run fluctuations and long-run growth expectations. Increasing economic uncertainty is related to the much larger role played by countries with traditions of instability—both political and economic.

For businesses, the race for profits cannot be driven strictly by the lowest cost of production, since the potential for supply chain disruptions also plays an important role in business decisions. Current decisions regarding tariffs and trade and the emerging leadership roles of major global players like China, South Korea, and India are unknowns and uncertainties that could not be anticipated even a few years ago.

Meeting the needs of the population is the engine that drives every nation forward. Globalization simply expands the market for goods and services to expand the economic opportunities that provide strength and stability to nations across the globe. Interdependence is the word that best describes the future for all nations. The challenges and opportunities of

the future are expanding in a direct relationship with the size of the pool of global consumers.

Unlike in the past, when economic and business news was segmented and our concerns reflected local issues, the dramatic expansion of information has overwhelmed consumers. In the recent past, who in Memphis would have been concerned about, or even known anything about, economic and political conditions in Turkey? Yet, the political instability and economic uncertainty related to Turkey now makes our national news and ultimately influences the value of international currency, trade, economic conditions in Europe, and the outlook of consumers as far away as Memphis.

# About This Report

## About the Survey

While the survey found that consumer sentiment in the Memphis Area was positive, the methodology of the survey and the demographics of respondents must be kept in mind. The survey was conducted via telephone,

which may have contributed to respondents being older. In addition, surveyors only used phone numbers associated with ZIP codes running east-west through the Central Business Districts.

## About SBBER

SBBER is the largest research and public service division of the Fogelman College of Business and Economics at the University of Memphis. SBBER staff conducts research related to economic, demographic, and business issues that impact Tennessee and the surrounding Mid-South states. Research projects have

included economic development, strategic plans and reviews, agency assessments, community resource inventories, welfare reform and career and technical education evaluations, gaming research, economic impact studies, labor market analyses, revenue forecasting, and survey research.

## About the Analyst



### **Dr. John E. Gnuschke**

is Director of SBBER and the Center for Manpower Studies (CMS), the applied business, economic, and labor market research divisions of the Fogelman College of Business and Economics. Dr. Gnuschke is also a Professor of Economics at the University of Memphis and serves as the Director of the Applied Information Technology Center. In his role as Director of SBBER, Dr. Gnuschke has conducted more than \$40 million in research projects, including economic impact studies, labor market assessments, economic development strategic plans, community resource inventories, and welfare reform evaluations. Dr. Gnuschke received his Ph.D. and M.A. degrees from the University of Missouri at Columbia. He is past president of the national Association for University Business and Economic Research (AUBER).

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