

State business climate still 48th

The Great Lakes region — comprised of Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Ohio, Illinois and Michigan — made the best gain in manufacturing climate among the eight regions surveyed, according to Alexander Grant & Co.

Despite its gain, however, the Great Lakes region still remained last, in 48th place.

Michigan continued to rank 48th. Michigan Commerce Director Doug Ross ridiculed the standards and methodology of the Alexander Grant report (see related story).

THE SIXTH annual Study of General Manufacturing Climates of the 48 Contiguous States of America was released by the Chicago-based International accounting and consulting firm.

In the study, regions are composed of neighboring states that have similar conditions for manufacturing. These states often offer comparable resources and incentives to manufacturing firms.

Even though the Great Lakes region remained in last place, five of its six states moved up in national rankings — Wisconsin making a significant improvement to 31st from 42nd, Minnesota to 35th from 43rd, Ohio to 41st from 46th, Indiana to

22nd from 25th and Illinois to 42nd from 44th.

ALEXANDER Grant's rankings are based on 22 factors selected by state associations representing manufacturers. They can be grouped under two headings:

- Government-controlled factors — a state's fiscal policies and regulated employment costs.
- Non-government factors — labor costs, labor productivity and availability, energy costs and other matters of concern to manufacturers.

The report notes that Indiana led the region and ranked 10th nationally in government-controlled criteria. Wisconsin's higher national ranking also was because of improvement in government-controlled factors.

South Dakota replaced Florida as the state with the best overall manufacturing climate among the 48 contiguous states. North Dakota moved into second and Florida, first for three consecutive years, slipped to third.

The other top 10 states are Nebraska, 4th; Utah, 5th; Mississippi, 6th; Arkansas, 7th; North Carolina, 8th; Georgia, 9th; and Tennessee, 10th.

Ross: Grant is old-fashioned

Michigan Commerce Director Doug Ross called the Alexander Grant Co. study of business climates old-fashioned, ridiculing its high ranking of the Dakotas as desirable for manufacturing.

"The Grant study is designed to rank those business climates that are most hospitable to older types of manufacturing that rely on low-skill, labor-intensive production processes," Ross said.

"It's not a rating of climates for the new high-tech, high-skilled, flexible-process manufacturing in which the U.S. most competes with Japan and Western Europe for the global manufacturing future."

"That is why Grant ranks places like the Dakotas, Mississippi and Wyoming ahead of California, Massachusetts and Michigan," said Ross, a former state senator from Southfield.

"WHAT'S MORE, the states at the top of the Grant index are not even doing well at attracting older, low-skill industries since the business climate for that type of manufacturing is even more attractive in places like Mexico and Taiwan."

Ross noted that major manufacturers in new manufacturing technologies are concentrating their investments in states ranked by Grant as having low-average business climates: California, New York, Minnesota, Massachusetts and especially Michigan.

A study published in January by Engineering News-Record (ENR), a McGraw-Hill publication, showed that Michigan led the nation during 1984 in construction plans for manufacturing facilities. It reported a total of \$1.7 billion in new construction plans for Michigan was announced in 1984.

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— Doug Ross
state commerce director

"At the same time, non-auto manufacturers are making huge investments in our state," Ross noted. "The list includes the office furniture systems industry, the food processing industry, and our growing robotics/automated manufacturing industry."

THE TWO LARGEST investment decisions in recent months were those by General Motors to create 17,000 Michigan jobs through its EDS subsidiary, and Mazda's investment commitment of \$450 million for its Flat Rock assembly complex. General Motors also committed \$2.7 billion during 1984 to new or upgraded manufacturing facilities in Michigan — the largest investment anywhere by the world's largest manufacturing corporation.

"Dozens of other manufacturers have said 'Yes Michigan' in recent months," Ross noted, citing:

- GMF Robotics — after a nationwide search, chose Oakland County as the site for its assembly, research and office complex.
- CDJ Electronics and Computers — started operations in a \$1.1 million facility in Troy.

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State extends Runkel's contract

The State Board of Education has given Phillip E. Runkel high marks for his performance as Michigan's superintendent of public instruction. The eight-member elected board voted to extend the contract of the top public school official to October 1988.

Norman O. Stockmeyer Sr. of Westland, president of the State Board of Education, said that board members gave Runkel "good" to "excellent" ratings in their annual evaluation of the state school superintendent.

"All of the areas that were reviewed by State Board of Education members indicate a very satisfactory rating for the superintendent," Stockmeyer said.

"Perhaps the outstanding area in the board members' view was the ability to establish communication linkages with various groups in the state. The board

members also felt that his personal attributes were at an extreme high level."

THE ONE-YEAR contract renewal was approved by a 6-0 vote. Board members Annette Miller of Huntington Woods and Edmund F. Vandette of Houghton were absent but had concurred in the overall evaluation of the superintendent, according to Stockmeyer.

The agreement calls for an annual evaluation of the superintendent prior to June 1 of each year.

The contract states that: "If the evaluation of the superintendent is satisfactory, the State Board of Education shall extend the contract for one year maintaining a maximum of three years under that contract commencing with Oct. 1 of that year."

Summer camp at 'Ridge'

Registration is in progress for a Summer Camp in Arts and Sciences for students ages 6-18 at Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus.

Two three-week summer camp sessions will be offered: July 8-26 and Aug. 5-23. Orchard Ridge is at 1-696 and Orchard Lake Road in Farmington Hills.

Camp meets 9-3:30 Monday-Friday in four classes. Half-time students may enroll in two classes, from 9 a.m. to noon or 12:30-3:30.

Classes will be offered in computer science, art, dance, language, music, science, math, self-improvement, sports and theater. Class sizes are limited to allow individual attention and the testing of creative ideas.

A listing of camp offerings and tuition is available by calling OCC at 471-7596.

OCC's modern Smith Performing Arts Theater, with up-to-date lighting and sound equipment, will be used. Fully outfitted art, science and dance laboratories and the latest computer systems also will be used.

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Madonna sets open house

Madonna College will conduct an open house at 2 p.m. Sunday, June 23, on its campus at 38600 Schoolcraft, Livonia.

Admissions director Louis Brohl III will describe academic programs leading to associate, bachelor's and master's degrees in 40 career-oriented academic programs.

For other information about the open house or academic programs, contact the admissions office at 591-5052.

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