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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local CPA Firm Conducts Economic Survey Re Future of Vermont Businesses

- *Sales Levels Increasing*
- *Employment Remains Stable*
- *Capital Spending Decreases*
- *Demands for Shumlin to Address Healthcare and Broadband Issues*

Williston, VT January 31, 2012 – The Certified Public Accounting firm of Davis & Hodgdon Associates CPAs – PLC, located in Williston, Vermont, conducted an Economic Survey earlier this month regarding the future of Vermont-based businesses. The survey was based on one developed and used by the Vermont Business Roundtable. The survey was completed by more than 50 state businesses.

The firm's client base, made up of organizations located across the state, responded to a range of questions. Respondents were asked to identify their type of industry, headquarter location and scope of marketplace along with forecasting their company sales, capital spending, employment status and best venue for advertising. In addition, they were asked to identify economic issues that respondents would like to see addressed by Governor Shumlin in 2012.

Vermont industries surveyed included construction, educational services, finance and insurance, health care and social assistance, hotel and restaurant, manufacturing, professional and technical, retail, transportation and warehousing and wholesale trade.

Respondents were asked how they anticipated their companies' sales changing over the next six months. Over half (55%) foresaw their sales increasing by 10% to 30%. Only 10% estimated that sales would decrease by the same percentage range. Approximately 31% believe their sales levels will remain the same for this period.

When asked to forecast their companies' capital spending over the next six months, 56% indicated they would see decreases of over 70%. Only 34% indicated they would increase their capital spending.

On the employment front, 46% of the businesses surveyed responded that they did not anticipate any changes in their companies' employment levels over the next six months. However, 38% intend to hire one to three people in the same time period. Only 4% of respondents indicated they will decrease hiring by three to ten people.

Of these Vermont businesses surveyed, it was revealed the use of online advertising surpasses print, radio and television combined (39% versus 16%, 6% and 4% respectively). However, "other" forms of advertising including word-of-mouth, sales calls, meetings and client referrals came in at 35%, slightly behind online advertising including social media platforms as the best venue for advertising in the Green Mountain state.

Respondents indicated they want a number of business economic issues addressed by Governor Shumlin this year. Not surprisingly, concerns over rising healthcare costs and the need for improved broadband service top the list.

How does Davis & Hodgdon's managing partner, John Davis, sum up the results? "The waters appear calm and this is significant in terms of moving forward," shares Davis. He continues, "These economic indicators, based on a sampling of thriving Vermont-based organizations doing business in- and out-of-state, show promise. Sales are projected to increase, employment is stable and businesses are still remaining prudent with capital spending somewhat decreasing. We also see that business owners are demanding the Governor address important issues like healthcare costs and improved broadband service. All of this bodes well for our state's economic future. Compared to some other states, I believe we are in an enviable position to move forward."

For complete survey results, go to <http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e5ggy6wigwhzwc0k/results>
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