## **CPA**

## Practice **Advisor**

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Certified Public Acountants that were surveyed in the state of ...

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Despite lingering questions about the new Affordable Care Act, nearly half of Oklahoma's certified public accountants believe the state's business environment will improve in 2014, which would be almost a 10 percent increase from last year.

According to the 2014 Oklahoma Economic Outlook Poll, which surveyed members

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practically split on whether it would improve (41.2 percent) or remain unchanged (42 percent). A small percentage — 8.2 percent — said Oklahoma's economy would be worse in 2014. However, that is an improvement from last year when 15.5 percent said the state's economy would be worse.

"We currently have a good economy in Oklahoma and we seem to be improving compared to the nation," said Janelle Montgomery, a CPA who is an accounting professor at Rose State College in Midwest City.

Bill Schlittler, chief financial officer with Dolese Bros. in Oklahoma City, agreed with Montgomery.

"The Oklahoma economy has been humming along for the last two or three years," Schlittler said. "It seems like the rest of the country is catching up with Oklahoma."

Darrel White, a sole practitioner in Woodward, said the business climate in Oklahoma would likely stay the same, but that the overall economy in the state would improve.

"The energy industry is pretty stable, which has given us overall stability," White said. "We do have a more business-conducive environment, which I think has helped us comparatively to many other states." He added, "At some point, the national economy has to see some improvement, and I think we will benefit, especially in the ag sector."

Andrea Welsh, an auditor with Barnett & Jones Inc. in Tulsa, also said the state's business climate would probably stay the same.

"I see Oklahoma companies spending money in Oklahoma, but I don't see out-ofstate companies moving to Oklahoma in any real measure," Welsh explained. More than 70 percent (70.1), indicated optimism for their own companies or firms,

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Care Act and health-care costs as the most important issue facing the state, while 19.1 percent ranked Oklahoma's public education system and workforce training as the primary concern.

The Affordable Care Act and health-care spending ranked third in top issues facing the country. Politics and government spending ranked first and second, respectively.

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