Colorado’s business leaders confident but tempered in the outlook for the economy as they look ahead to the third quarter

Colorado business leaders continue to show a positive outlook for the state economy in the third quarter of 2017, but at a more tempered pace than last quarter, according to the University of Colorado Boulder Leeds Business Confidence Index survey released today.

CU Boulder economist Richard Wobbekind (WAH-Be-kin), says the biggest concerns are confidence in the national economy and the quality and availability of labor.

Over-all outlook:

LBCI 3Q CUT 1

“So the third quarter responses show continued positive momentum in the economy but in a more tempered pace. We saw a decline in all six of the components of the Leeds Business Confidence Index.” (:15)

Employment number remains strong:

LBCI 3Q CUT 2

“Well when you look at the overall economy the unemployment rate - the lowest it’s been in Colorado recorded history and the lowest unemployment rate in the country – continues to give momentum that we have that growth in our employment that puts us in, right now, the number five spot year-over-year in terms of employment growth. (:21) We’re strong in a wide variety of areas – business and professional services, leisure and hospitality, retail. (:28)

Concerns:

LBCI 3Q CUT 3

“Areas of the greatest concern were decline in optimism about the national economy and the state economy overall with very slight declines in all of the more measurable categories (:13) - profits, sales, capital expenditures and hiring – all of those with very, very modest slowdowns quarter-over-quarter.” (:25)

Labor is the chief concern participants saw moving forward:

LBCI 3Q CUT 4

“The availability of labor. The quality of the labor. The preparedness of the labor. And in close second place was housing. (:08) The cost of housing. The availability of housing. So there were really two strong areas that were, kind of, red flags for the business community in terms of being able to compete and keeping the economy strong over the longer haul.” (:23)