

# RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL

## **CEOs nationwide choose Nevada as No. 2 state for business**

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Nevada was named one of the best states for business, according to a poll of 458 chief executive officers across the country.

The December e-mail poll, which was conducted by the Chief Executive Group, the publisher of Chief Executive Magazine, ranked Nevada in a tie for second with Florida. Texas earned the top spot, and Arizona and North Carolina followed the Silver State.

California was ranked the worst state, just below New York, Massachusetts and Washington, D.C.

"I think there are a lot of compelling reasons why Nevada is a great place to do business," said Fred Sibayan, president/CEO of Reno-based Etherware LLC. "Statistically, you are seeing Nevada's growth. The growth, obviously, is coming from the Western states, and California is one of those states that probably a tremendous amount of this growth is coming from. I believe that some of the ways of doing business in California are not as appealing as the way business is being conducted in the state of Nevada."

William J. Holstein, editor-in-chief of Chief Executive Magazine, agreed that it was Nevada's growth that seemed to attract CEOs to Nevada.

"The fact that there is growth attracts other growth," Holstein said. "People are attracted to growth and attracted to the fact that there is a relatively uncomplex system controlling the business environment."

Holstein said the CEOs that responded to the poll typically ran companies with less than \$4 billion in sales each year from all over the country.

The poll asked two questions: What states are the best to do business in and what are the worst to do business in? The company took the negative votes and subtracted them from positive votes to rank the states.

CEOs voted based on business regulations, cost structure (including tax rates), infrastructure and quality of life, Holstein said.

Michonne Ascuaga, CEO of John Ascuaga's Nugget in Sparks, said that several factors contribute to Nevada's business environment, including the lack of regulation from the state.

"I think there is not that much bureaucracy here," Ascuaga said. "This is a pretty easy state to do business in. The tax climate is good and the growth is phenomenal."

The impact of the myriad of polls that have surfaced recently that claim Nevada to be among the top states for business could be used to lure more companies to the state, said Ron Weisinger. The executive director of the Northern Nevada Development Authority said a poll from CEOs could add more credibility to the state.

"When national site selectors are looking to work in relocating a corporation, let's face it, it is going to be the CEO of that company that is going to wind up making the decision," Weisinger said. "So when a group of fellow CEOs feels that Nevada is rated where it is, what you are doing is you are already giving direction to national site selectors to make sure to keep their eyes and ears open for the best locations in Nevada."

Chuck Alvey, president and CEO of the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada, said CEOs' high opinion of the Silver State could be used as a public relations tool when trying to sell the area to new companies.

"One of the reasons this is important is for public relations," said Chuck Alvey. "It gives us credibility when you have the brand of one of the best places to do business from a CEO organization like that."

This was the first time the Chief Executive Group has conducted this poll. Holstein said the magazine plans to make the poll annual.

"One big implication of this to (Nevada) is that business is going to keep coming to Nevada," said Holstein from his New Jersey office. "You have not seen the end of businesses investing in Nevada or relocating to Nevada. You could have some very powerful forces at work here that could change the lifestyle and the way of life out there."

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