

## Media Relations

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### UNH: Lodging Index Falls Due to Uncertainty in Nation's Capital

DURHAM, N.H. – The University of New Hampshire Lodging Executives Sentiment Index for September 2013 dropped to 76.8 compared with 78.1 in August 2013. Overall the lodging executives' sentiment for present and future business conditions have weakened slightly compared to last month's robust reporting.

"What lodging executives are saying is the current deadlock in Washington has impacted demand as occupancy has flattened," said Nelson Barber, associate professor of hospitality management, who manages the index.

Thirty-eight percent of lodging executives indicated current business conditions were good, a decrease from 44 percent last period, while 62 percent indicated conditions were normal, up from 56 percent during the same period. No executive indicated such conditions were bad in either period.

Managed by the Department of Hospitality Management at the UNH Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics, the LESI is based on a monthly survey of lodging executives representing companies with more than 2.5 million hotel rooms across lodging segments and geographic regions of the United States -- more than 55 percent of all U.S. rooms.

Executives are asked about the present and future business conditions, and to report their outlook during the next 12 months about room reservations and employment practices, such as an increase or decrease of their non-managerial work force.

The LESI indices follow the Institute of Supply Management's Index (ISM) method of tracking leading indicators. A LESI survey reading of greater than 50 indicates expansion whereas a reading below 50 indicates decline and the distance from 50 in either direction is indicating the strength of the expansion or decline. During September, the ISM Index increased to 55.4 from 53.3 in August 2013.

Over the next year, 62 percent of the executives thought business conditions will be better versus 69 percent last month, while 38 percent indicated they will be the same versus 31 percent last month indicating they would be the same. Executive sentiment for this period revealed that no executive thought they would be worse.

In addition, lodging executives expect hiring of non-managerial employees to remain flat in the next 12 months. This is in line with the September unemployment rate published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which decreased slightly to 7.2 in September compared with 7.3 in August. However, the LESI data is counter to the ISM Employment Index, which showed a strong increase of 2.1 percentage points, registering 55.4 percent.

For more information about LESI, visit <http://paulcollege.unh.edu/LESI>.

The [UNH Peter T. Paul College of Business and Economics](#) offers a full complement of high-quality programs in business, economics, accounting, finance, information systems management, marketing, and hospitality management. Programs are offered at the undergraduate, graduate, and executive development levels. The college is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, the premier accrediting agency for business schools worldwide.

The [University of New Hampshire](#), founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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*Nelson Barber, associate professor of hospitality management, is available to discuss the September LESI report. He can be reached at [nelson.barber@unh.edu](mailto:nelson.barber@unh.edu). The most recent LESI report is available at <http://paulcollege.unh.edu/LESI>.*

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