



PRESS RELEASE

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Northern Virginia Business Leaders Grow More Pessimistic on National Economy, Majority Still See Data Centers as Positive

Tysons, VA – Optimism among Northern Virginia business leaders dipped according to the [2026 Third Quarter Northern Virginia Chamber \(NVC\)](#) and [Pinkston Business Leader Survey](#). Thirty-six percent expect the regional economy to grow over the next six months, down slightly from 40% in the second quarter. Nearly half (47%) are pessimistic about the national economy, up from 38% last quarter.

While concerns about artificial intelligence and data centers have dominated headlines this quarter, a majority of business leaders (53%) believe data centers have a positive impact on Northern Virginia's economy, while 34% believe they have a negative impact and 13% have no opinion.

“Northern Virginia tends to feel the effects of federal policy shifts before most other regions, and business leaders are telling us that uncertainty is weighing on confidence,” said **NVC President and CEO Julie Coons**. “We have our fingers on the pulse and are actively pursuing local policy changes that address the issues that matter most to employers in our region. Fortunately, we have a blueprint for action. [The NOVA Roadmap](#) gives us a clear path forward on priorities like housing affordability issues and growing our tax base.”

“The national economy is growing at a modest pace, but there are some concerns on the horizon for Northern Virginia business leaders, according to this latest third quarter survey,” said **Pinkston Senior Vice President D.J. Jordan**. “Nationally, the President’s foreign policy and trade decisions are weighing on our region, and locally, housing affordability is a major concern for business operations, wages, and recruitment and retention.”

The NVC/Pinkston Business Leader Survey represents the perspectives, sentiments, and strategic planning of CEOs, corporate executives, and business owners. You can find the 2026 Q3 survey report [HERE](#), while the past seven surveys can be found [HERE](#).

Key Q3 findings include:

- **Regional and National Optimism Decline:** 36% of business leaders believe the Northern Virginia economy will grow over the next 6 months, down from 40% in the Q2 survey. 22% believe it will decline, the same as last quarter. 47% of business leaders are pessimistic about the national economy (up from 38% last quarter), and only 34% are optimistic about the national economy.
- **Data Center Support:** 53% of business leaders believe that data centers have a positive impact on Northern Virginia’s economy, while 34% believe they have a negative impact. 13% have no opinion.
- **Company Outlook Optimism Drops:** 66% of business leaders are optimistic about their company outlook, which is down from 77% in the Q2 survey. 14% are pessimistic, which is slightly up from 11% in the Q2 survey.
- **President Trump’s Foreign Policy Impact:** Nearly half (49%) of business leaders say their companies are being negatively impacted by President Trump’s foreign policy decisions.
- **Top Policy Issues for the 2027 General Assembly Session:** When asked about their top policy priorities for the 2027 General Assembly session (respondents could select more than one), 33% cited housing affordability, 27% reduced taxes, 16% each cited AI regulation, data center regulation and taxes, and keeping



right-to-work, 15% transportation and infrastructure investments, and 10% childcare affordability and availability.

The success of Northern Virginia's economy is critical to both the Commonwealth and the Greater Washington region. Northern Virginia's [share of Greater Washington's regional economy is 46%](#) and boasts the presence of numerous Fortune 500 companies, while Northern Virginia's [\\$321 billion GDP](#) represents nearly 42% of the GDP of the Commonwealth of Virginia and is larger than 24 other states.

Between September 21-28, 2026, 169 CEOs, corporate executives, and business owners who do business in Northern Virginia completed [this survey](#). Most of the respondents lead companies in the government contracting, aerospace and defense, financial services, technology, professional services, retail, and real estate industries. Thirty-seven percent are based in Fairfax County or the City of Fairfax, 8% in Prince William County or the City of Manassas, 20% in Alexandria, 11% in Arlington County, 15% in Loudoun County, 3% in Falls Church, and 6% in other NOVA locations.

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About NVC

For over 100 years, the [Northern Virginia Chamber \(NVC\)](#) — the largest and most influential chamber in Greater Washington — has driven innovation and economic growth. NVC has championed key developments such as Metro, Dulles Airport, and George Mason University. Representing nearly 400 members, NVC continues to lead on affordability, workforce, and regional development through NOVA Roadmap and through exclusive programming and events. Learn more at www.nvcbusiness.org.

About Pinkston

[Pinkston](#) is a branding and public affairs firm that offers a collection of strategic capabilities, including public relations, crisis management, research, social media, and video production. Founded in 2001 and based in Falls Church, Virginia, Pinkston serves a wide range of clients, including Fortune 500 companies, innovative technology startups, non-profit organizations, and government agencies. Learn more at www.pinkston.co.