

Business Barometer October 2009

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The Economy Has Helped Business

A contractor in Chattanooga, Tenn.

I'm encouraged about business. For the past eight months, the economic situation has not hit our industry like it has others. Retailers and distributors tell me they are doing as well as they were a year ago.

Economists are pushing people to our industry. They say, "If you can't sell your home, improve it. Prices are down, so buy things cheaper. Fix it and make it better through landscape, curb appeal, adding water features, etc."

Medical studies provide proof that the sights and sounds of moving water release endorphins and calm people down. Water features create better well-being. Water features are added to hospitals, doctor offices and more because they are shown to relieve stress, shorten recovery time and more. The entire economic situation is playing into our hands.

Sales Match Those of Last Year

Aquatic garden and nursery in Athens, Ala.

Business has been good. Some people want to do new construction and maintaining current features.

We sell anything it takes for water gardening and features, and we see no difference in sales between last year and now.

Pump, Filter Replacements Continue

A retailer in Canoga Park, Calif.

The pump business has been pretty good this summer, because many people stay home instead of traveling. The building business is way down from last year.

People enjoy their water features and fall in love with their fish, so they maintain their features. Mostly we're selling replacement pumps and filters.

Retail Down, Maintenance Doubled

A retail/contractor business in Denver, Colo.

We are doing awesome. Retail is down about 30 percent from last year, but sales for construction of new water features, maintenance and upgrades are on point with last year's sales. Our maintenance division has doubled.

People determined that they must stay in their homes, so they are investing in them. Many businesses are closing, which gives us more work.

We saturate the Internet — from our website; sponsored links, which are huge; and paid advertising — as well as attending four to six home/trade show events each year. I recommend that businesses maintain continuous advertising and do not give up.