Business activity was little changed in New York State, according to firms responding to the December 2019 Empire State Manufacturing Survey. The headline general business conditions index held steady at 3.5. New orders were also little changed, while shipments grew modestly. Delivery times were somewhat shorter, and inventories held steady. Employment continued to expand, though the average workweek was unchanged. Input price increases continued to slow, and selling prices increased slightly. Optimism about the six-month outlook picked up, and capital spending plans were notably stronger.

**Growth Remains Sluggish**
As has been the case for the past several months, manufacturing firms in New York State reported that business activity was little changed over the month. The general business conditions index remained subdued for the seventh consecutive month, coming in at 3.5 in December. Twenty-eight percent of respondents reported that conditions had improved over the month, while 25 percent reported that conditions had worsened. The new orders index edged down three points to 2.6, indicating little change in orders. The shipments index edged up three points to 11.9, indicating that shipments increased modestly. The unfilled orders index fell six points to -13.8, indicating that unfilled orders continued to decline. Delivery times shortened, and inventories held steady.

**Input Price Increases Continue to Slow**
The index for number of employees was unchanged at 10.4, indicating that employment expanded for the fourth consecutive month. The average workweek index was 0.8, a sign that the average workweek was unchanged. Input price increases continued to decelerate, with the prices paid index moving down five points to 15.2, a multi-year low. The prices received index was little changed at 4.3.

**Optimism Improves**
Indexes assessing the six-month outlook suggested that optimism about future conditions improved for a second consecutive month. The index for future business conditions climbed ten points to 29.8. Unfilled orders are expected to increase in the months ahead, and delivery times are expected to lengthen. The capital expenditures index climbed seven points to 26.1, and the technology spending index rose twelve points to 27.5.
Current Indicators
Change from Preceding Month

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Current Indicators, continued
Change from Preceding Month

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Note: Data are seasonally adjusted.
Forward-Looking Indicators
Expectations Six Months Ahead

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Shipments

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Forward-Looking Indicators, continued
Expectations Six Months Ahead

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