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2006 Nebraska Rural Poll Results: Views of Life in Nebraska's Rural Communities

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CENTER FOR APPLIED RURAL INNOVATION

A Research Report*

Views of Life in Nebraska's Rural Communities

2006 Nebraska Rural Poll Results

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IANR

Center Research Report 06-3, September 2006.

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Executive Summary

Many rural communities have experienced population growth during the past decade. Communities can continue to attract new residents and maintain their current population by enhancing and promoting their amenities and services. How do rural Nebraskans feel about their community? Are they satisfied with the services provided? Are they planning to move from their community next year?

This report details 2,482 responses to the 2006 Nebraska Rural Poll, the eleventh annual effort to understand rural Nebraskans' perceptions. Respondents were asked a series of questions about their community. Trends for some of these questions are examined by comparing data from the ten previous polls to this year's results. For all questions, comparisons are made among different respondent subgroups, that is, comparisons by age, occupation, region, etc. Based on these analyses, some key findings emerged:

- ***During the past three years, the proportion of rural Nebraskans that have viewed positive change in their communities has increased.*** Following a seven year period of general decline, the proportion saying their community has changed for the better increased from 22 percent in 2003 (the lowest point over the eleven year period) to 32 percent this year. (page 2)

- ***By many different measures, rural Nebraskans are positive about their community.***

  - ✓ *Many rural Nebraskans rate their community favorably on its social dimensions.* Many rural Nebraskans rate their communities as friendly (73%), trusting (62%) and supportive (65%). (page 7)
  - ✓ *Many rural Nebraskans express positive sentiments about their community.* Over two-thirds (69%) agree with the statement that "my community is very special to me." And approximately two-thirds agree with the statement that "I feel I can really be myself in my community." (page 10)
  - ✓ *Over one-half of rural Nebraskans say it would be difficult to leave their community.* Fifty-two percent say it would be difficult for their household to leave their community. Less than one-third (31%) indicate it would be easy for their household to leave their community and 17 percent gave a neutral response. (page 11)

- ***While residents living in or near larger communities are more likely to view positive change in their communities, residents of smaller communities are more likely to rate their community favorably on its social dimensions and to have positive sentiments about their community.***

  - ✓ *Residents living in or near larger communities are more likely than residents of smaller communities to say their community has changed for the better during the past year.* Thirty-nine percent of persons living in or near communities with

populations of 10,000 or more believe their community has changed for the better, compared to 24 percent of persons living in or near communities with less than 500 people. (page 5)

- ✓ *Residents living in or near the smallest communities are more likely than persons living in or near larger communities to rate their community as friendly, trusting and supportive.* Approximately 67 percent of persons living in or near communities with populations under 5,000 say their community is trusting, compared to 55 percent of persons living in or near communities with populations of 10,000 or more. (page 7)
- ✓ *Persons living in or near smaller communities are more likely than persons living in or near larger communities to express positive sentiments about their community.* Forty-six percent of persons living in or near communities with less than 500 people agree with the statement that no other place can compare to my community. In comparison, approximately 27 percent of persons living in or near communities with populations of 5,000 or more agree with this statement. (page 10)

- ***Except for a few services that are largely unavailable in rural communities, rural Nebraskans are generally satisfied with basic community services and amenities.*** At least three fourths of rural Nebraskans are satisfied with the following services or amenities: fire protection (88%), emergency care services (76%), parks and recreation (76%), and library services (75%). On the other hand, at least one-third of rural Nebraskans are dissatisfied with the entertainment, retail shopping, local government and restaurants in their community. (page 7)

- ***Long-term residents are more likely than newcomers to the community to have positive feelings about their community.***

  - ✓ *Long-term residents are more likely than newcomers to the community to express positive sentiments about their community.* As an example, 71 percent of persons living in their community for more than five years agree with the statement that my community is very special to me, compared to 51 percent of persons living in the community for five years or less. (page 11)
  - ✓ *Long term residents are more likely than newcomers to say it would be difficult to leave their community.* Fifty-four percent of persons who have lived in their community for more than five years say it would be difficult to leave their community, compared to 35 percent of persons living in the community for five years or less.
    (page 12)

Introduction

Recent community level Census data and the recent report from this survey show that many communities in Nebraska have experienced growth. Communities have the potential to both attract new residents and maintain their current population by enhancing and promoting their amenities and services.

Given these challenges and opportunities, how do rural Nebraskans feel about their community? Are they satisfied with the services provided by their community? Are they planning to move from their community in the next year? This paper provides a detailed analysis of these questions.

The 2006 Nebraska Rural Poll is the eleventh annual effort to understand rural Nebraskans' perceptions. Respondents were asked a series of questions about their community.

Methodology and Respondent Profile

This study is based on 2,482 responses from Nebraskans living in the 84 non-metropolitan counties in the state. A self-administered questionnaire was mailed in February and March to approximately 6,200 randomly selected households. Metropolitan counties not included in the sample were Cass, Dakota, Dixon, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, Saunders, Seward and Washington. The 14-page questionnaire included questions pertaining to well-being, community, work, new residents, immigration, and making a living. This paper reports only results from the community portion of the survey.

A 40% response rate was achieved using the total design method (Dillman, 1978). The sequence of steps used follow:

1. A pre-notification letter was sent requesting participation in the study.
2. The questionnaire was mailed with an informal letter signed by the project director approximately seven days later.
3. A reminder postcard was sent to the entire sample approximately seven days after the questionnaire had been sent.
4. Those who had not yet responded within approximately 14 days of the original mailing were sent a replacement questionnaire.

Appendix Table 1 shows demographic data from this year's study and previous rural polls, as well as similar data based on the entire non-metropolitan population of Nebraska (using 2000 U.S. Census data). As can be seen from the table, there are some marked differences between some of the demographic variables in our sample compared to the Census data. Certainly some variance from 2000 Census data is to be expected as a result of changes that have occurred in the intervening six years. Nonetheless, we suggest the reader use caution in generalizing our data to all rural Nebraska. However, given the random sampling frame used for this survey, the acceptable percentage of responses, and the large number of respondents, we feel the data provide useful insights into opinions of rural Nebraskans on the various issues presented in this report.

The average age of respondents is 56 years. Sixty-nine percent are married (Appendix Table 1) and 71 percent live within the city limits of a town or village. On average, respondents have lived in Nebraska 48 years and have lived in their current community 32 years. Fifty-two percent are living in or

near towns or villages with populations less than 5,000. Ninety-two percent have attained at least a high school diploma.

Forty-nine percent of the respondents report their 2005 approximate household income from all sources, before taxes, as below $40,000. Thirty-six percent report incomes over $50,000.

Seventy-two percent were employed in 2005 on a full-time, part-time, or seasonal basis. Twenty-five percent are retired. Thirty-five percent of those employed reported working in a professional, technical or administrative occupation. Fourteen percent indicated they were farmers or ranchers. The employed respondents who do not work in their home or their nearest community reported having to drive an average of 31 miles, one way, to their primary job.

Trends in Community Ratings (1996 - 2006)

Comparisons are made between the community data collected this year to the ten previous studies. These were independent samples (the same people were not surveyed each year).

Community Change

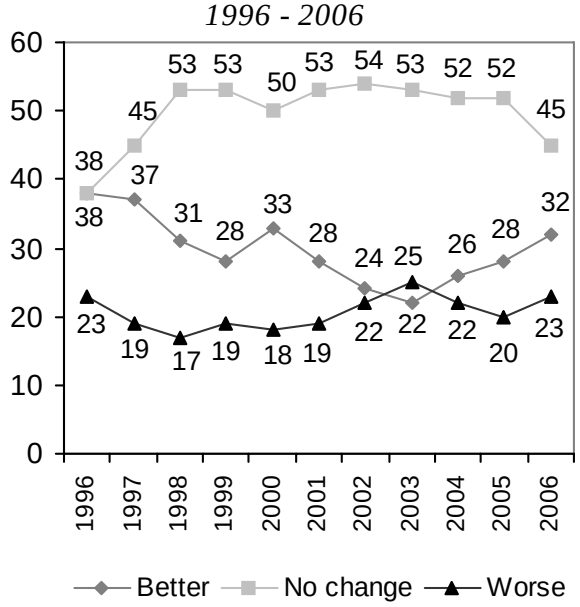
To examine respondents' perceptions of how their community has changed, they were asked the question, "Communities across the nation are undergoing change. When you think about this past year, would you say...My community has changed for the..." Answer categories were better, no change or worse.

One difference in the wording of this question has occurred over the past eleven years. Starting in 1998, the phrase "this past year" was added to the question; no time frame was given to the respondents in the first two studies. Also, this year the middle response "same" was replaced with "no change."

During the past three years, the proportion of rural Nebraskans that have viewed positive change in their communities has increased (Figure 1). Following a seven year period of general decline, the proportion saying their community has changed for the better increased from 22 percent in 2003 (the lowest point over the eleven year period) to 32 percent this year. This pattern seems to follow the economic conditions that existed in the state during this time period.

The proportion saying their community has stayed the same first increased from 1996 to 1998. It then remained fairly steady during the following eight years but then declined

Figure 1. *Community Change, 1996 - 2006*



this year. The proportion saying their community has changed for the worse has remained fairly steady across all eleven years.

When viewing the perceptions of community change over time by community size, responses in the smallest communities (those with populations less than 500) have been very stable over time (Figure 2). Between 1998 and 2000, the proportion saying their community has changed for the worse was approximately the same as the proportion saying their community has changed for the better. Starting in 2001, the proportion saying their community changed for the worse became greater than the proportion saying their community changed for the better. The gap between these two proportions became the greatest in 2003 and since that time has begun to shrink again.

Responses from the largest communities (those with populations of 10,000 or more) have had more variation over time as compared to the responses from the smallest communities (Figure 3). Between 1998 and 2002, the proportion saying their community has changed for the better was greater than the proportion saying their community had changed for the worse. However, in 2003, these two proportions were approximately the same. In 2004 through 2006, the proportion saying their community had changed for the better once again became greater than the proportion saying their community had changed for the worse. And this year, for the first time, the proportion saying their community has changed for the better was greater than the proportion saying there had been no change in the community.

Community Social Dimensions

Respondents were also asked each year if they would describe their communities as friendly or unfriendly, trusting or distrusting, and supportive or hostile. For

Figure 2. *Community Change for Towns with Less than 500 People, 1998 - 2006*

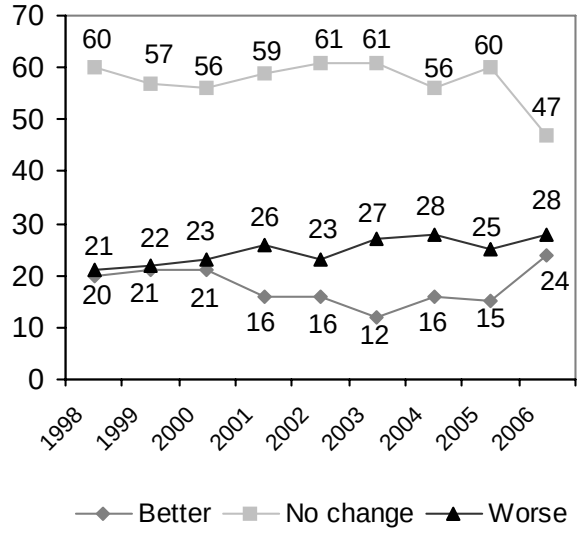
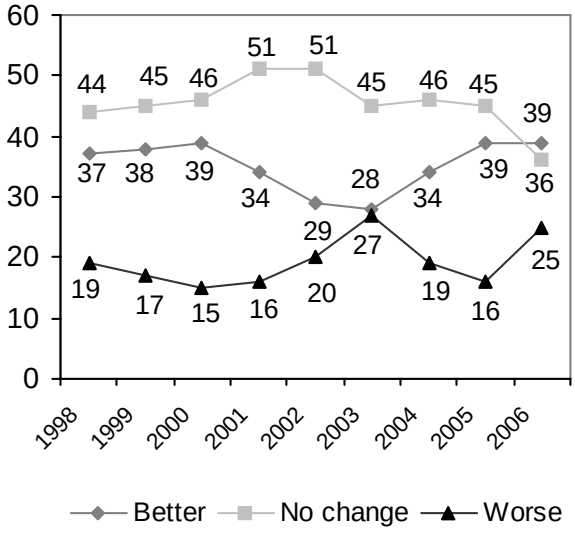


Figure 3. *Community Change for Towns with More than 10,000 People, 1998 - 2006*



each of these three dimensions, respondents were asked to rate their community using a seven-point scale between each pair of contrasting views.

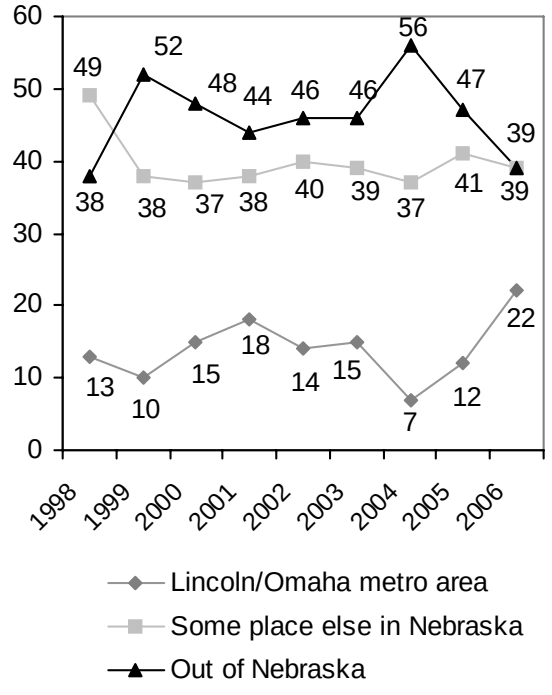
The proportion of respondents who view their community as friendly has remained fairly steady over the eleven year period, ranging from 68 to 76 percent.[1] The proportion of respondents who view their community as trusting have also remained fairly steady, ranging from 59 to 66 percent. A similar pattern emerged when examining the proportion of respondents who rated their community as supportive. The proportions rating their community as supportive have ranged from 60 percent to 68 percent over the eleven year period.

Plans to Leave the Community

Starting in 1998, respondents were asked, "Do you plan to move from your community in the next year?" The proportion planning to leave their community has remained relatively stable during the past nine years. Approximately three percent of the respondents in the first five studies for which this question was asked indicated they were planning to leave their community in the next year. During the most recent four years, that proportion was five percent.

The expected destination for the persons planning to move has changed over time (Figure 4). During the past three years of this study, the proportion of expected movers planning to leave the state has decreased, while the proportion planning to move to either the Omaha or Lincoln area has increased.

Figure 4. *Expected Destination of Those Planning to Move: 1998 - 2006*



The proportion planning to move to either the Lincoln or Omaha metropolitan areas steadily increased between 1999 and 2001 (from 10 to 18 percent). However, the proportion planning to move to one of those cities declined between 2001 and 2004 (from 18 to 7 percent). The proportion then increased to 12 percent last year and to 22 percent this year (the highest proportion during the nine year period). The proportion planning to move to some other place in Nebraska has remained fairly steady since 1999.

[1] The responses on the 7-point scale are converted to percentages as follows: values of 1, 2, and 3 are categorized as friendly, trusting, and supportive; values of 5, 6, and 7 are categorized as unfriendly, distrusting, and hostile; and a value of 4 is categorized as no opinion.

The proportion of expected movers planning to leave the state decreased from 1999 to 2003 (from 52 to 46 percent), then increased to 56 percent in 2004 – the highest proportion in all nine years that this question has been asked. However, the proportion planning to leave the state decreased to 47 percent last year and again to 39 percent this year.

Satisfaction with Community Services and Amenities

Respondents were also asked how satisfied they are with various community services and amenities each year. They were asked this in all eleven studies; however, in 1996 they were also asked about the availability of these services. Therefore, comparisons will only be made between the last ten studies, when the question wording was identical. The respondents were asked how satisfied they were with a list of 26 services and amenities, taking into consideration availability, cost, and quality.

Table 1 shows the proportions very or somewhat satisfied with the service each year. The rank ordering of these items has remained relatively stable over the ten years. In addition, many of the proportions remained fairly consistent between the years. A few services have shown some variation over time, however. Senior centers, nursing home care, day care services, mental health services and bus service all had the greatest satisfaction proportions in 1997. Since that time, they have shown a general decline in the proportion satisfied with each of these services. As an example, 69 percent of rural Nebraskans in 1997 were satisfied with the senior centers in their community. The proportion declined to 60 percent this year.

The Community and Its Attributes in 2006

In this section, the 2006 data on respondents' evaluations of their communities and its attributes are first summarized and then examined in terms of any differences that may exist depending upon the size of the respondent's community, the region in which they live, or various individual attributes such as household income or age.

Community Change

Almost one-third (32%) of the respondents state their community has changed for the better during the past year, 23 percent say their community has changed for the worse, and 45 percent believe their community has not changed (see Figure 1). The perceptions of the change occurring in their community by various demographic subgroups are examined (Appendix Table 2).

Residents living in or near the largest communities are more likely than persons living in or near the smallest communities to say that their community has changed for the better. Thirty-nine percent of persons living in or near communities with populations of 10,000 or more believe their community has changed for the better, compared to 24 percent of persons living in or near communities with less than 500 people (Figure 5).

The other groups most likely to say their community has changed for the better include: persons living in both the South Central and North Central regions (see Appendix Figure 1 for the counties included in each region), the youngest persons,

Table 1. *Proportions of Respondents Very or Somewhat Satisfied with Each Service, 1997 - 2006*

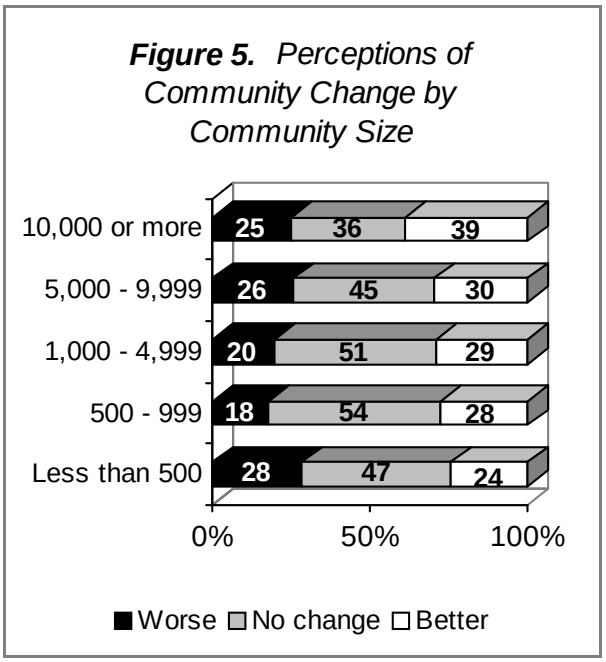
Service/Amenity	*2006*	*2005*	*2004*	*2003*	*2002*	*2001*	*2000*	*1999*	*1998*	*1997*
Parks & recreation	76	74	75	77	76	74	77	75	77	77
Library services	75	74	74	75	76	73	79	73	78	79
Basic medical care	73	73	73	72	71	73	72	71	73	75
Education (K - 12)	70	69	69	70	70	70	73	72	74	71
Highways/bridges	70	69	70	70	70	66	68	68	66	NA
Sewage/waste water disposal	68	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sewage disposal	NA	65	68	65	67	63	64	65	63	69
Water disposal	NA	64	66	63	65	62	62	62	61	67
Solid waste disposal	65	64	65	64	65	61	60	61	59	61
Law enforcement	65	65	64	66	64	62	64	63	63	66
Housing	63	61	62	61	62	58	57	63	62	62
Streets	61	61	61	62	63	53	59	63	59	NA
Senior centers	60	63	63	65	66	62	62	65	66	69
Nursing home care	58	58	59	61	62	58	59	62	63	65
Restaurants	55	55	57	55	53	55	55	57	58	60
Retail shopping	48	49	50	46	47	48	47	50	48	53
Day care services	42	44	47	46	45	43	46	45	50	51
Local government	42	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
County government	NA	49	50	53	49	51	50	54	53	50
City/village government	NA	47	46	49	47	48	46	52	50	48
Head start programs	39	40	42	41	39	39	40	38	40	44
Entertainment	36	34	37	34	35	34	33	35	35	38
Mental health services	29	31	32	31	32	31	31	30	33	35
Airport	28	33	34	34	34	31	31	NA	NA	NA
Airline service	16	16	19	17	17	16	16	NA	NA	NA
Taxi service	12	13	14	12	12	11	9	8	8	12
Rail service	11	11	14	12	12	11	10	12	11	15
Bus service	8	8	12	11	10	11	9	11	11	14

NA = Not asked that particular year

respondents with the highest household incomes, persons with the highest education levels, and respondents with sales or professional occupations.

Community Social Dimensions

In addition to asking respondents about their perceptions of the change occurring in their



community, they were also asked to rate its social dimensions. They were asked if they would describe their communities as friendly or unfriendly, trusting or distrusting, and supportive or hostile. Overall, respondents rate their communities as friendly (73%), trusting (62%) and supportive (65%).

Respondents' ratings of their community on these dimensions differ by some of the characteristics examined (Appendix Table 3). Persons living in or near the smallest communities are more likely than persons living in or near the largest communities to rate their community as friendly, trusting and supportive. Approximately 67 percent of persons living in or near communities with populations under 5,000 say their community is trusting, compared to 55 percent of persons living in or near communities with populations of 10,000 or more.

When comparing responses by age, persons age 65 and older are more likely than younger respondents to view their community as trusting and supportive. Both the oldest and youngest respondents are the age groups most likely to rate their community as friendly.

Widowed respondents are the marital group most likely to view their community as trusting and supportive. As an example, 70 percent of widowed respondents say their community is trusting, compared to 54 percent of divorced/separated respondents.

Satisfaction with Community Services and Amenities

Next, rural residents were asked to rate how satisfied they are with 29 different services and amenities, taking into consideration cost, availability, and quality. Residents report high levels of satisfaction with some services, but other services and amenities have higher levels of dissatisfaction. Only four services listed have a higher proportion of dissatisfied responses than satisfied responses and those services are largely unavailable in rural communities.

The services or amenities respondents are most satisfied with (based on the combined percentage of "very satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" responses) include: fire protection (88%), emergency care services (76%), parks and recreation (76%), library services (75%), religious organizations (74%), basic medical care services (73%), highways and bridges (70%) and education (K - 12) (70%) (Appendix Table 4). At least one-third of the respondents are either "very dissatisfied" or "somewhat dissatisfied" with entertainment (43%), retail shopping (39%), local government (37%) and restaurants (34%).

The ten services and amenities with the greatest dissatisfaction ratings were analyzed by community size, region and various individual attributes (Appendix Table 5). Many differences emerge.

Younger respondents are more likely than older respondents to be dissatisfied with the entertainment, retail shopping and restaurants in their community. As an example, 56 percent of persons between the ages of 19 and 39 are dissatisfied with entertainment, compared to only 27 percent of persons age 65 and older.

Persons living in or near communities with populations of 500 or more are more likely than persons living in smaller communities to express dissatisfaction with the entertainment in their community. Persons living in or near communities with populations ranging from 500 to 4,999 are the group most likely to be dissatisfied with their retail shopping. Persons living in or near the largest communities are more likely than persons living in or near smaller communities to be satisfied with the restaurants in their community while the latter group is more likely to say they have no opinion.

Persons living in both the Panhandle and North Central regions are more likely than persons living in other regions of the state to express dissatisfaction with the retail shopping in their community. Persons living in the South Central region are the regional group most likely to be satisfied with the entertainment in their community.

When comparing responses by household income, persons with higher household incomes are more likely than persons with lower incomes to be dissatisfied with the entertainment and restaurants in their community. Females are more likely than males to be dissatisfied with their community's retail shopping.

Both the divorced/separated persons and persons who have never married are more likely than the other marital groups to express dissatisfaction with the entertainment and retail shopping in their community. The divorced/separated respondents and married persons are the marital groups most likely to be dissatisfied with the restaurants in their community.

Persons with higher education levels are more likely than persons with less education to be dissatisfied with the entertainment and restaurants in their community. When comparing responses by occupation, persons with occupations classified as "other" and persons with professional occupations are the groups most likely to be dissatisfied with their community's entertainment. Persons with professional occupations are the group most likely to express dissatisfaction with the retail shopping.

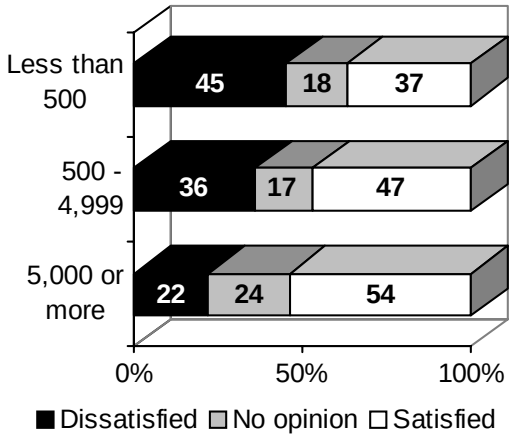
Persons living in the North Central region are more likely than persons living in other regions of the state to express dissatisfaction with their local government. Forty-six percent of North Central residents are dissatisfied with their local government, compared to 32 percent of residents of the Southeast region.

Other groups most likely to express dissatisfaction with their local government include: persons age 40 to 64, males, persons who are divorced/separated and persons with some college education.

The groups most likely to be dissatisfied with their streets include: persons under the age of 65, divorced/separated respondents, persons with some college education and farmers/ranchers. When examining satisfaction with streets by community size, persons living in or near communities with populations of 500 or more are more likely than persons living in or near the smallest communities to be satisfied with their streets. Persons with higher household incomes are more likely than persons with lower incomes to be satisfied with the streets in their community, while the latter group are more likely to have no opinion.

Persons living in or near smaller communities are more likely than persons living in or near larger communities to express dissatisfaction with the cellular phone service in their community. Forty-five percent of persons living in or near communities with less than 500 people are dissatisfied with their community's cellular phone service, compared to 22 percent of persons living in or near communities with populations of 5,000 or more (Figure 6).

Figure 6. *Dissatisfaction with Cellular Phone Service by Community Size*



Persons living in the Panhandle and North Central regions are more likely than persons living in other regions of the state to express dissatisfaction with their cellular phone service. Approximately 37 percent of residents of these two regions are dissatisfied with their cellular phone service, compared to 26 percent of persons living in the South Central region.

Other groups most likely to express dissatisfaction with the cellular phone service in their community include: persons with higher household incomes, persons under the age of 65, persons with some college education and laborers. The widowed respondents are the marital group *least* likely to be dissatisfied with their cellular phone service.

The groups most likely to express dissatisfaction with the transportation services (bus, rail and airline services) in their community include: persons living in or near the largest communities, residents of the Panhandle and persons with higher education levels. Persons with the highest household incomes are more likely than persons with lower incomes to be dissatisfied with their airline service. Older persons are more likely than younger persons to be dissatisfied with the bus and rail service in their community.

Persons with professional occupations are the occupation group most likely to be dissatisfied with the bus and airline services.

Persons living in or near the smallest communities are more likely than persons living in or near the larger communities to

express dissatisfaction with their law enforcement. Thirty-five percent of persons living in or near communities with less than 500 people are dissatisfied with their law enforcement. However, only 18 percent of persons living in or near communities with populations of 5,000 or more are dissatisfied with this service.

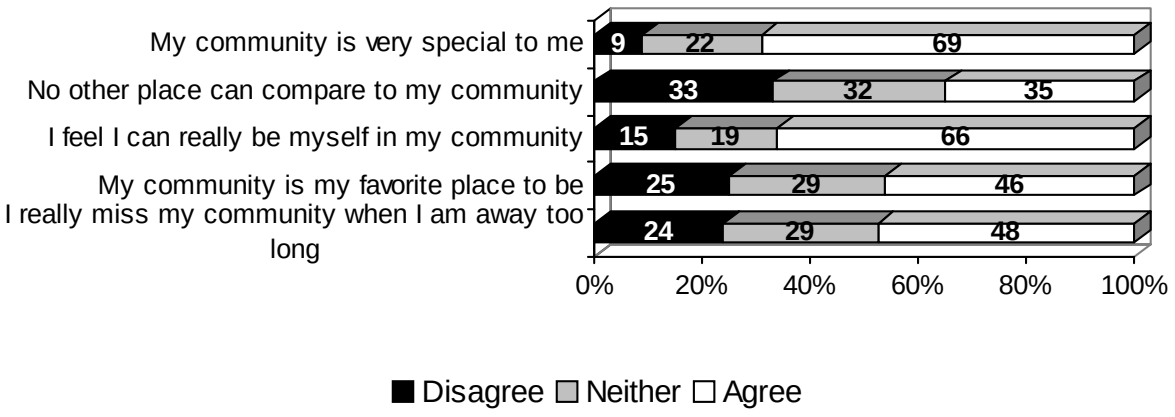
Persons living in the North Central and Panhandle regions are more likely than persons living in other regions of the state to be dissatisfied with the law enforcement in their community. Twenty-eight percent of persons living in these two regions are dissatisfied with their law enforcement, compared to 19 percent of persons living in the Northeast region of the state.
Other groups most likely to be dissatisfied with their community's law enforcement include: persons under the age of 65, divorced/separated respondents, and persons without a four year college degree.

The respondents were next given some statements about their community and were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with each. Over two-thirds (69%) agree with the statement that "my community is very special to me." (Figure 7) And approximately two-thirds agree with the statement that "I feel I can really be myself in my community."

Responses to this question differ by many of the characteristics examined (Appendix Table 6). Persons living in or near smaller communities are more likely than persons living in or near larger communities to express positive sentiments about their community. Persons living in or near the smallest communities are more likely than residents of larger communities to agree with each of these statements about their community. As an example, 46 percent of persons living in or near communities with less than 500 people agree with the statement that no other place can compare to my community. In comparison, approximately 27 percent of persons living in or near communities with populations of 5,000 or more agree with this statement.

Older persons are more likely than younger persons to agree with each statement listed. For example, 63 percent of persons age 65

Figure 7. *Feelings About Community*



and older agree with the statement that my community is my favorite place to be, compared to approximately 33 percent of persons under the age of 40.

Long term residents are more likely than newcomers to the community to express positive sentiments about their community. As an example, 71 percent of persons living in their community for more than five years agree with the statement that my community is very special to me, compared to 51 percent of persons living in the community for five years or less.

When comparing responses by marital status and education, widowed respondents and persons with a high school diploma or less education are the groups most likely to agree with each statement.

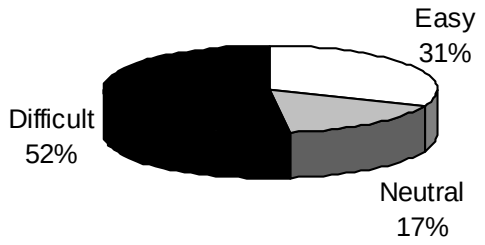
Two items had statistically significant differences by household income. Persons with the lowest household incomes are more likely than persons with higher incomes to agree with the statements that no other place can compare to my community and I really miss my community when I am away too long.

Females are more likely than males to agree with the statement that no other place can compare to my community. When comparing responses by occupation, differences are detected for each statement listed with the exception of my community is very special to me. For the remaining four statements, farmers and ranchers are the group most likely to agree with each statement. Forty-one percent of farmers and ranchers agree with the statement that no other place can compare to my community. In comparison, only 14 percent of persons with occupations classified as "other" share this opinion.

Next, respondents were asked a question about how easy or difficult it would be to leave their community. The exact question wording was "Assume you were to have a discussion in your household about leaving your community for a reasonably good opportunity elsewhere. Some people might be happy to live in a new place and meet new people. Others might be very sorry to leave. How easy or difficult would it be for your household to leave your community?" They were given a seven point scale where 1 indicated very easy and 7 denoted very difficult. Over one-half (52%) of rural Nebraskans say it would be difficult to leave their community[2] (Figure 8). Less than one-third (31%) indicate it would be easy for their household to leave their community.

Responses to this question are examined by region, community size and various

Figure 8. *Difficulty or Ease of Leaving Community*



[2] The responses on the 7-point scale are converted to percentages as follows: values of 1, 2, and 3 are categorized as easy; values of 5, 6, and 7 are categorized as difficult; and a value of 4 is categorized as neutral.

individual attributes (Appendix Table 7). Many differences emerge.

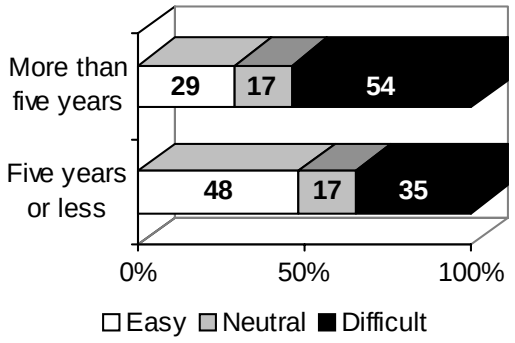
Residents living in or near the smallest communities are more likely than persons living in or near larger communities to think it would be difficult to leave their community. Sixty-three percent of persons living in or near communities with less than 500 people say it would be difficult to leave their community, compared to 43 percent of persons living in or near communities with populations ranging from 5,000 to 9,999. Older persons are more likely than younger persons to say it would be difficult to leave their community. Sixty-two percent of persons age 65 or older think it would be difficult to leave their community, compared to 45 percent of persons age 19 to 29.

Similarly, widowed persons are the marital group most likely to say it would be difficult to leave their community. Sixty percent of widowed respondents believe it would be difficult to leave their community, compared to 42 percent of divorced/separated respondents and 44 percent of persons who have never married.

Long term residents of the community are more likely than newcomers to say it would be difficult to leave their community. Fifty-four percent of persons who have lived in their community for more than five years say it would be difficult to leave their community, compared to 35 percent of persons living in the community for five years or less (Figure 9).

Other groups most likely to say it would be difficult to leave their community include persons with the lowest education levels and farmers and ranchers.

Figure 9. *Ease or Difficulty Leaving Community by Length of Residence in Community*



Finally, to determine rural Nebraskans' trade and employment patterns, they were asked a series of questions. First, they were asked the population of their community or nearest community. Next, they were asked if that was the community they most closely identify with in term of their business/ employment, retail trade, services, school, etc. If not, they were asked the size of the community they most closely identify with in terms of the items listed.

Most rural Nebraskans (80%) identify with their community or nearest community in terms or their employment, retail trade, services and school. Of those 20 percent of respondents identifying with a different community, most (70%) say that community has a population of 5,000 or more. In fact, 43 percent identify with a community with a population of 20,000 or more.

The responses to this question were analyzed by community size, region and various individual attributes (Appendix Table 8). Some differences are detected.

Many persons living in or near smaller

communities identify with a different community for their employment, retail trade or school. Just over one-half (51%) of persons living in or near communities with less than 500 people identify with a different community, compared to seven percent of persons living in or near communities with populations of 10,000 or more.

Persons living in the Southeast region are more likely than persons living in other regions of the state to identify with a different community. Twenty-eight percent of persons living in the Southeast region identify with a different community, compared to 16 percent of persons living in the South Central region.

Other groups most likely to identify with a different community include persons lower education levels and persons who have lived in their community for five years or less.

Plans to Leave the Community

To determine rural Nebraskans' migration intentions, respondents were asked, "Do you plan to move from your community in the next year?" Response options included yes, no or uncertain. A follow-up question (asked only of those who indicated they were planning to move) asked where they planned to move. The answer categories for this question were: Lincoln/Omaha metro areas, some place in Nebraska outside the Lincoln/Omaha metro areas, or some place other than Nebraska.

Only five percent indicate they are planning to move from their community in the next year, 11 percent are uncertain and 84 percent have no plans to move. Of those who are planning to move, 61 percent plan to remain in the state, with 22 percent planning to move to either the Lincoln or Omaha area and 39 percent plan to move to another part of the state. Thirty-nine percent are planning to leave Nebraska.

Intentions to move from their community differed by many of the characteristics examined (Appendix Table 9). Younger respondents are more likely than older respondents to be planning to move from their community in the next year. Fourteen percent of persons between the ages of 19 and 29 are planning to move next year, compared to only three percent of persons age 65 and older. An additional 15 percent of the younger respondents indicate they are uncertain if they plan to move.

Newcomers to the community are more likely than longer term residents to be planning to move from the community in the next year. Eleven percent of persons living in their community for five years or less plan to move from their community next year, compared to four percent of persons living in their community for more than five years. An additional 16 percent of newcomers are uncertain if they plan to move.

Both persons who are divorced/separated and persons who have never married are the marital groups most likely to be planning to move from their community in the next year.

Conclusion

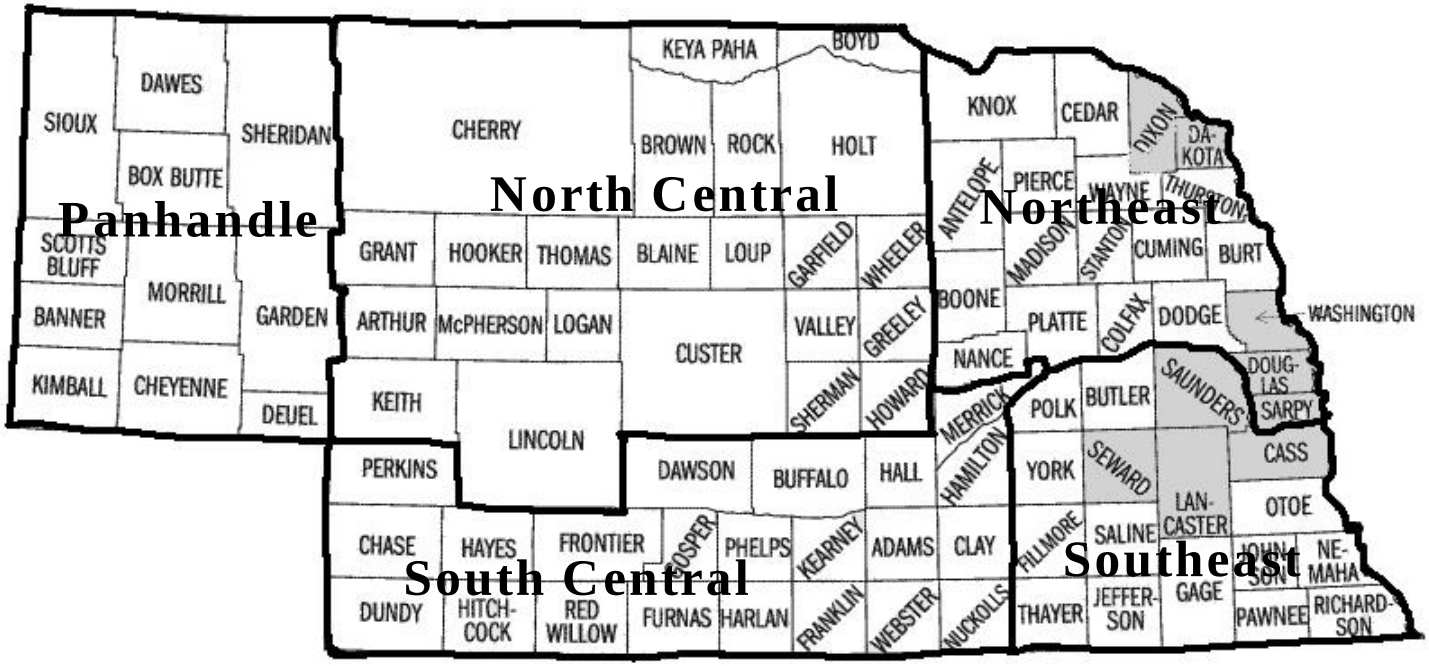
Rural Nebraskans are generally positive about their communities. The majority believe their community has either stayed the same or changed for the better during the past year. In addition, most characterize

their communities as friendly, trusting and supportive. Many also say their community is very special to them and that they can be themselves in their community. Over one-half indicate it would be difficult for their household to move from their community. Furthermore, most rural Nebraskans are planning to stay in their community next year. Only five percent are planning to move and eleven percent are uncertain.

Many differences are detected by community size. Residents of larger communities are more likely than residents of smaller communities to think their community has changed for the better during the past year. However, residents of smaller communities are more likely than residents of larger communities to express positive sentiments about their community. The smaller community residents rate their communities higher on their social dimensions (as being friendly, trusting and supportive) and are more likely to have higher levels of attachment to their community. Thus, smaller communities have positive attributes that can be marketed to potential new residents.

Differences of opinion are also detected by length of residence in the community. Newcomers are less likely than longer term residents to express positive sentiments about and attachment to their community. They are also more likely to say it would be easy for their household to leave their community and that they do plan on leaving their community next year. It is expected that attachment to the community will increase over time, but communities need to work to assimilate new residents into the community or they may move away.

Appendix Figure 1. Regions of Nebraska



Metropolitan counties (not surveyed)

Appendix Table 1. *Demographic Profile of Rural Poll Respondents Compared to 2000 Census*

	2006 Poll	***2005 Poll***	***2004 Poll***	***2003 Poll***	***2002 Poll***	***2001 Poll***	***2000 Census***
Age : [1]							
20 - 39	16%	15%	18%	18%	16%	17%	33%
40 - 64	52%	51%	49%	51%	51%	49%	42%
65 and over	32%	34%	32%	32%	32%	33%	24%
Gender: [2]							
Female	31%	32%	32%	51%	36%	37%	51%
Male	70%	69%	68%	49%	64%	63%	49%
Education: [3]							
Less than 9th grade	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	7%
9th to 12th grade (no diploma)	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	5%	10%
High school diploma (or equivalent)	32%	33%	34%	34%	32%	35%	35%
Some college, no degree	25%	24%	24%	23%	25%	26%	25%
Associate degree	12%	13%	12%	11%	10%	8%	7%
Bachelors degree	15%	14%	15%	16%	16%	13%	11%
Graduate or professional degree	9%	10%	8%	9%	10%	8%	4%
Household income: [4]							
Less than $10,000	7%	8%	9%	8%	8%	9%	10%
$10,000 - $19,999	13%	14%	15%	14%	15%	16%	16%
$20,000 - $29,999	14%	16%	16%	16%	17%	20%	17%
$30,000 - $39,999	15%	16%	16%	16%	17%	16%	15%
$40,000 - $49,999	15%	14%	13%	13%	14%	14%	12%
$50,000 - $59,999	11%	10%	11%	11%	11%	9%	10%
$60,000 - $74,999	11%	10%	10%	11%	9%	8%	9%
$75,000 or more	14%	13%	11%	11%	10%	8%	11%
Marital Status: [5]							
Married	69%	71%	69%	73%	73%	70%	61%
Never married	8%	7%	9%	7%	6%	7%	22%
Divorced/separated	10%	11%	10%	9%	9%	10%	9%
Widowed/widower	13%	11%	12%	11%	12%	14%	8%

[1] 2000 Census universe is non-metro population 20 years of age and over.

[2] 2000 Census universe is total non-metro population.

[3] 2000 Census universe is non-metro population 18 years of age and over.

[4] 2000 Census universe is all non-metro households.

[5] 2000 Census universe is non-metro population 15 years of age and over.

Appendix Table 2. *Perceptions of Community Change by Community Size, Region and Individual Attributes*

	Communities across the nation are undergoing change. When you think about this past year, would you say... My community has changed for the			
	Worse	*No Change*	*Better*	*Significance*
		Percentages		
Community Size		(n = 2243)		
Less than 500	28	47	24	
500 - 999	18	54	28	
1,000 - 4,999	20	51	29	χ^2 = 56.04*
5,000 - 9,999	26	45	30	(.000)
10,000 and up	25	36	39	
Region		(n = 2337)		
Panhandle	30	46	24	
North Central	19	44	37	
South Central	21	41	38	χ^2 = 37.72*
Northeast	26	47	27	(.000)
Southeast	22	49	29	
Income Level		(n = 2094)		
Under $20,000	25	46	29	
$20,000 - $39,999	24	47	29	χ^2 = 21.33*
$40,000 - $59,999	21	47	31	(.002)
$60,000 and over	23	38	40	
Age		(n = 2303)		
19 - 29	16	45	39	
30 - 39	17	50	33	
40 - 49	25	44	31	χ^2 = 27.72*
50 - 64	28	42	30	(.001)
65 and older	20	47	33	
Gender		(n = 2276)		
Male	23	44	33	χ^2 = 1.03
Female	24	46	30	(.598)
Marital Status		(n = 2288)		
Married	23	45	32	
Never married	23	45	32	
Divorced/separated	29	39	32	χ^2 = 7.02
Widowed	20	47	33	(.319)
Education		(n = 2269)		
H.S. diploma or less	22	48	30	
Some college	26	44	30	χ^2 = 18.70*
Bachelors or grad degree	21	41	38	(.001)

Appendix Table 2 continued.

	Communities across the nation are undergoing change. When you think about this past year, would you say... My community has changed for the			
	Worse	*No Change*	*Better*	*Significance*
Occupation		(n = 1549)		
Sales	26	37	37	
Manual laborer	24	50	26	
Professional/tech/admin	22	41	37	
Service	22	43	35	
Farming/ranching	24	56	20	
Skilled laborer	30	38	32	χ^2 = 42.41*
Administrative support	38	44	18	(.000)
Other	24	49	27	
Yrs Lived in Community		(n = 2268)		
Five years or less	17	55	29	χ^2 = 13.37*
More than five years	24	43	33	(.001)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 3. *Measures of Community Attributes in Relation to Community Size, Region and Individual Attributes*

	My community is...				***My community is...***				***My community is...***			
	Unfriendly	*No opinion*	*Friendly*	*Chi-square (sig.)*	*Distrusting*	*No opinion*	*Trusting*	*Chi-square (sig.)*	*Hostile*	*No opinion*	*Supportive*	*Chi-square (sig.)*
						Percentages						
Community Size		(n = 2232)				(n = 2142)				(n = 2139)		
Less than 500	10	12	78		12	22	67		11	19	70	
500 - 999	7	13	81		12	18	70		12	16	72	
1,000 - 4,999	12	14	74	χ^2 =	14	20	67	χ^2 =	10	22	68	χ^2 =
5,000 - 9,999	14	19	68	22.17*	19	24	57	33.32*	13	25	61	22.73*
10,000 and up	12	18	70	(.005)	19	26	55	(.000)	14	26	60	(.004)
Region		(n = 2318)				(n = 2216)				(n = 2210)		
Panhandle	11	15	74		19	22	59		10	21	69	
North Central	10	13	77		13	20	67		13	23	64	
South Central	12	16	72	χ^2 =	17	22	61	χ^2 =	13	24	63	χ^2 =
Northeast	11	17	72	5.04	15	24	60	8.74	12	21	67	4.21
Southeast	12	17	71	(.753)	14	23	64	(.365)	12	24	64	(.838)
Individual Attributes:												
Income Level		(n = 2074)				(n = 1997)				(n = 1988)		
Under $20,000	12	20	68		18	24	58		15	27	58	
$20,000 - $39,999	10	15	75	χ^2 =	16	24	61	χ^2 =	13	23	64	χ^2 =
$40,000 - $59,999	14	16	70	13.53*	17	23	60	3.66	11	24	65	11.47
$60,000 and over	11	14	76	(.035)	15	22	64	(.723)	13	20	68	(.075)
Age		(n = 2283)				(n = 2185)				(n = 2178)		
19 - 29	8	17	76		13	29	58		11	28	61	
30 - 39	16	14	70		20	21	60		11	27	62	
40 - 49	15	14	71	χ^2 =	15	24	61	χ^2 =	11	23	66	χ^2 =
50 - 64	12	17	71	24.98*	18	24	58	26.28*	15	25	60	28.84*
65 and older	8	15	77	(.002)	12	19	69	(.001)	11	17	72	(.000)

Appendix Table 3 continued

	My community is...				***My community is...***				***My community is...***			
	Unfriendly	*No opinion*	*Friendly*	*Chi-square (sig.)*	*Distrusting*	*No opinion*	*Trusting*	*Chi-square (sig.)*	*Hostile*	*No opinion*	*Supportive*	*Chi-square (sig.)*
Gender		(n = 2258)		χ^2 =		(n = 2162)		χ^2 =		(n = 2155)		χ^2 =
Male	11	16	73	0.16	16	22	63	4.19	12	22	66	1.23
Female	11	16	72	(.921)	16	25	58	(.123)	13	24	63	(.542)
Marital Status		(n = 2269)				(n = 2173)				(n = 2165)		
Married	11	16	73		16	22	62		12	22	66	
Never married	12	16	72	χ^2 =	16	25	59	χ^2 =	12	32	56	χ^2 =
Divorced/separated	13	19	68	6.35	17	29	54	14.02*	14	27	59	16.17*
Widowed	10	13	78	(.385)	12	19	70	(.029)	13	18	69	(.013)
Education		(n = 2250)				(n = 2154)				(n = 2148)		
H.S. diploma or less	9	19	72	χ^2 =	15	23	62	χ^2 =	12	23	66	χ^2 =
Some college	14	15	72	15.23*	17	24	59	6.09	14	24	63	4.08
Bachelors degree	11	14	76	(.004)	16	20	64	(.192)	11	22	67	(.395)
Occupation		(n = 1547)				(n = 1519)				(n = 1513)		
Sales	9	23	68		21	22	57		18	25	57	
Manual laborer	11	20	70		17	28	55		13	28	59	
Prof/tech/admin	13	13	74		16	23	61		11	25	65	
Service	12	16	73		14	27	59		10	22	68	
Farming/ranching	9	15	76	χ^2 =	12	18	70	χ^2 =	8	20	72	χ^2 =
Skilled laborer	13	18	69	15.81	16	23	60	15.44	12	25	63	18.75
Admin support	13	22	66	(.325)	17	30	54	(.349)	17	28	56	(.175)
Other	15	12	73		19	19	61		7	33	60	
Yrs Lived in Comm.		(n = 2251)		χ^2 =		(n = 2164)		χ^2 =		(n = 2157)		χ^2 =
Five years or less	14	14	72	2.53	17	24	58	1.43	14	22	65	0.73
More than five years	11	16	73	(.282)	16	22	62	(.490)	12	23	65	(.694)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 4. *Level of Satisfaction with Community Services and Amenities*

Service/Amenity	***Dissatisfied****	***No opinion***	***Satisfied****
		Percentages	
Entertainment	43	22	36
Retail shopping	39	13	48
Local government	37	21	42
Restaurants	34	11	55
Streets	30	9	61
Cellular phone service	30	21	49
Bus service	27	65	8
Airline service	25	59	16
Rail service	24	65	11
Law enforcement	23	12	65
Internet service	21	30	50
Housing	20	17	63
Taxi service	19	68	12
Airport	19	53	28
Highways and bridges	18	13	70
Basic medical care services	17	10	73
Mental health services	15	57	29
Education (K - 12)	14	17	70
Solid waste disposal	13	22	65
Nursing home care	12	31	58
Emergency care services	11	12	76
Parks and recreation	11	12	76
Sewage/waste water disposal	11	21	68
Day care services	9	49	42
Senior centers	7	33	60
Head start programs	7	55	39
Library services	6	19	75
Religious organizations	5	21	74
Fire protection	4	8	88

* Dissatisfied represents the combined percentage of “very dissatisfied” or “somewhat dissatisfied” responses. Similarly, satisfied is the combination of “very satisfied” and “somewhat satisfied” responses.

Appendix Table 5. *Measures of Satisfaction with Ten Services and Amenities in Relation to Community Size, Region and Individual Attributes*

	Entertainment			***Retail shopping***			***Local government***			***Restaurants***		
	Dissatisfied	*No opinion*	*Satisfied*	*Dissatisfied*	*No opinion*	*Satisfied*	*Dissatisfied*	*No opinion*	*Satisfied*	*Dissatisfied*	*No opinion*	*Satisfied*
						Percentages						
Community Size		(n = 2246)			(n = 2256)			(n = 2277)			(n = 2268)	
Less than 500	38	32	30	40	21	40	35	23	41	34	18	48
500 - 4,999	45	23	32	44	16	40	35	21	45	35	12	53
5,000 and over	43	17	39	37	8	55	40	20	41	35	8	57
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 40.45* (.000)			χ^2 = 73.47* (.000)			χ^2 = 6.51 (.164)			χ^2 = 27.29* (.000)	
Region		(n = 2343)			(n = 2355)			(n = 2372)			(n = 2365)	
Panhandle	45	23	32	44	8	47	41	19	40	34	13	53
North Central	45	25	30	44	13	43	46	19	35	33	12	54
South Central	39	19	42	34	11	55	36	19	45	33	10	57
Northeast	44	19	36	40	14	46	34	23	43	34	9	57
Southeast	42	27	31	41	17	42	32	24	45	37	15	48
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 29.21* (.000)			χ^2 = 36.54* (.000)			χ^2 = 26.52* (.001)			χ^2 = 14.66 (.066)	
Income Level		(n = 2106)			(n = 2111)			(n = 2124)			(n = 2115)	
Under $20,000	36	28	36	38	12	50	35	20	44	27	14	60
$20,000 - $39,999	39	26	34	38	15	48	37	23	40	33	11	56
$40,000 - $59,999	46	17	37	41	12	47	38	21	42	36	10	54
$60,000 and over	47	17	36	41	11	48	37	19	44	40	9	51
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 33.87* (.000)			χ^2 = 6.21 (.400)			χ^2 = 5.73 (.454)			χ^2 = 22.06* (.001)	
Age		(n = 2306)			(n = 2318)			(n = 2334)			(n = 2329)	
19 - 39	56	15	29	47	16	37	36	29	35	38	11	52
40 - 64	47	20	33	43	12	45	42	21	38	38	11	51
65 and over	27	28	45	31	12	58	28	17	55	25	11	64
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 105.23* (.000)			χ^2 = 51.43* (.000)			χ^2 = 80.20* (.000)			χ^2 = 39.97* (.000)	
Gender		(n = 2283)			(n = 2294)			(n = 2309)			(n = 2301)	
Male	42	23	35	37	13	50	39	20	42	34	11	55
Female	43	20	37	46	12	42	33	23	44	34	11	55
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 2.38 (.305)			χ^2 = 15.71* (.000)			χ^2 = 7.92* (.019)			χ^2 = 0.20 (.905)	
Marital Status		(n = 2294)			(n = 2305)			(n = 2320)			(n = 2313)	
Married	43	21	36	39	13	48	37	20	43	36	11	54
Never married	47	21	32	42	19	39	34	27	39	32	13	55
Divorced/separated	48	22	30	44	13	43	47	24	29	38	12	51
Widowed	29	28	44	35	10	55	28	20	52	23	13	64
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 27.32* (.000)			χ^2 = 18.02* (.006)			χ^2 = 34.58* (.000)			χ^2 = 20.22* (.003)	
Education		(n = 2276)			(n = 2286)			(n = 2301)			(n = 2293)	
High school or less	38	25	37	38	13	49	34	22	44	30	13	57
Some college	45	23	32	41	14	45	40	23	37	37	11	53
College grad	45	16	39	40	11	49	37	17	47	36	9	55
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 24.87* (.000)			χ^2 = 5.58 (.233)			χ^2 = 20.65* (.000)			χ^2 = 14.17* (.007)	
Occupation		(n = 1559)			(n = 1565)			(n = 1569)			(n = 1568)	
Prof/tech/admin.	50	16	34	46	11	44	38	21	42	39	10	51
Farming/ranching	48	18	34	41	12	47	41	24	35	36	9	56
Laborer	30	31	39	38	21	41	33	24	43	31	15	54
Other	51	17	33	43	13	44	42	21	37	40	11	49
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 35.00* (.000)			χ^2 = 16.98* (.009)			χ^2 = 9.79 (.134)			χ^2 = 10.70 (.098)	

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.
Only the ten services with the highest combined percentage of very or somewhat dissatisfied are included in this table.

Appendix Table 5 continued.

	Streets			Cellular Phone Service			Bus Service			Airline Service		
	Dissatisfied	*No opinion*	*Satisfied*	*Dissatisfied*	*No opinion*	*Satisfied*	*Dissatisfied*	*No opinion*	*Satisfied*	*Dissatisfied*	*No opinion*	*Satisfied*
						Percentages						
Community Size		(n = 2265)			(n = 2258)			(n = 2197)			(n = 2195)	
Less than 500	34	12	54	45	18	37	21	72	7	21	64	15
500 - 4,999	28	10	63	36	17	47	23	71	7	21	68	12
5,000 and over	32	7	61	22	24	54	32	59	9	30	50	20
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 14.34* (.006)			χ^2 = 91.51* (.000)			χ^2 = 35.23* (.000)			χ^2 = 61.98* (.000)	
Region		(n = 2360)			(n = 2355)			(n = 2288)			(n = 2289)	
Panhandle	29	10	61	37	21	43	36	56	8	33	41	26
North Central	34	8	59	39	16	46	30	64	6	27	58	15
South Central	30	7	63	26	18	56	30	64	7	29	54	17
Northeast	32	10	59	28	24	48	20	67	13	22	63	15
Southeast	26	11	63	28	26	45	22	71	7	15	73	12
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 11.18 (.192)			χ^2 = 45.22* (.000)			χ^2 = 50.91* (.000)			χ^2 = 81.95* (.000)	
Income Level		(n = 2115)			(n = 2107)			(n = 2056)			(n = 2058)	
Under $20,000	30	12	58	25	35	39	28	59	14	19	63	18
$20,000 - $39,999	30	10	60	30	24	46	26	66	8	21	63	16
$40,000 - $59,999	31	7	62	35	13	52	26	69	5	24	61	15
$60,000 and over	31	6	64	32	12	57	28	66	6	34	49	17
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 14.15* (.028)			χ^2 = 106.62* (.000)			χ^2 = 27.43* (.000)			χ^2 = 40.16* (.000)	
Age		(n = 2325)			(n = 2320)			(n = 2253)			(n = 2254)	
19 - 39	35	10	55	38	13	49	18	79	3	22	69	9
40 - 64	34	8	59	35	15	50	28	65	7	27	57	15
65 and over	23	10	67	18	34	48	29	57	14	23	56	22
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 31.84* (.000)			χ^2 = 145.52* (.000)			χ^2 = 72.09* (.000)			χ^2 = 40.42* (.000)	
Gender		(n = 2297)			(n = 2293)			(n = 2231)			(n = 2232)	
Male	31	9	61	31	18	51	28	65	7	26	58	15
Female	30	9	61	28	27	45	25	65	11	22	59	19
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 0.42 (.818)			χ^2 = 19.30* (.000)			χ^2 = 9.85* (.007)			χ^2 = 7.44* (.024)	
Marital Status		(n = 2308)			(n = 2305)			(n = 2242)			(n = 2243)	
Married	31	9	60	32	16	52	27	67	7	26	59	15
Never married	29	8	63	33	27	40	24	68	9	22	61	17
Divorced/separated	36	8	57	34	23	43	30	62	9	25	59	17
Widowed	22	11	67	17	41	43	28	57	16	23	55	22
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 13.60* (.034)			χ^2 = 105.16* (.000)			χ^2 = 27.69* (.000)			χ^2 = 7.86 (.248)	
Education		(n = 2291)			(n = 2287)			(n = 2225)			(n = 2226)	
High school or less	30	12	59	26	25	49	23	66	10	19	64	18
Some college	34	9	58	34	20	46	28	66	6	26	59	15
College grad	27	5	68	31	15	54	30	62	8	33	50	17
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 30.21* (.000)			χ^2 = 28.84* (.000)			χ^2 = 16.55* (.002)			χ^2 = 40.48* (.000)	
Occupation		(n = 1559)			(n = 1569)			(n = 1539)			(n = 1540)	
Prof/tech/admin.	34	6	60	34	13	53	29	67	4	33	54	13
Farming/ranching	38	9	53	29	15	56	25	67	8	21	64	16
Laborer	27	16	57	41	18	42	20	75	4	20	66	15
Other	31	8	62	34	17	49	27	67	6	27	56	16
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 28.21* (.000)			χ^2 = 13.55* (.035)			χ^2 = 12.93* (.044)			χ^2 = 24.09* (.001)	

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.
Only the ten services with the highest combined percentage of very or somewhat dissatisfied are included in this table.

Appendix Table 5 continued.

	Rail Service			Law Enforcement		
	Dissatisfied	*No opinion*	*Satisfied*	*Dissatisfied*	*No opinion*	*Satisfied*
			Percentages			
Community Size		(n = 2182)			(n = 2286)	
Less than 500	21	68	11	35	11	54
500 - 4,999	21	71	8	25	12	63
5,000 and over	28	61	11	18	12	70
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 20.84* (.000)			χ^2 = 45.17* (.000)	
Region		(n = 2273)			(n = 2383)	
Panhandle	35	55	10	28	16	57
North Central	29	64	8	28	12	60
South Central	25	61	14	21	12	68
Northeast	18	72	10	19	12	69
Southeast	21	72	7	25	9	66
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 53.46* (.000)			χ^2 = 26.38* (.001)	
Income Level		(n = 2042)			(n = 2134)	
Under $20,000	21	65	15	26	12	63
$20,000 - $39,999	24	66	11	23	11	66
$40,000 - $59,999	24	68	8	24	13	62
$60,000 and over	26	64	10	19	11	69
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 12.42 (.053)			χ^2 = 9.88 (.130)	
Age		(n = 2239)			(n = 2345)	
19 - 39	18	77	5	25	14	60
40 - 64	25	66	8	26	11	62
65 and over	26	57	18	15	11	74
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 70.38* (.000)			χ^2 = 41.35* (.000)	
Gender		(n = 2218)			(n = 2318)	
Male	25	64	11	23	11	66
Female	21	69	10	23	13	64
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 4.77 (.092)			χ^2 = 1.18 (.554)	
Marital Status		(n = 2228)			(n = 2330)	
Married	24	66	10	23	12	66
Never married	22	70	8	20	14	66
Divorced/separated	27	64	9	36	12	52
Widowed	23	61	16	14	12	74
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 10.62 (.101)			χ^2 = 36.60* (.000)	
Education		(n = 2211)			(n = 2310)	
High school or less	21	66	13	24	11	65
Some college	25	66	9	25	13	63
College grad	28	63	9	18	12	71
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 12.49* (.014)			χ^2 = 11.89* (.018)	
Occupation		(n = 1533)			(n = 1573)	
Prof/tech/admin.	25	69	6	22	12	66
Farming/ranching	23	67	10	27	11	62
Laborer	21	68	12	22	14	64
Other	24	65	11	26	14	61
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 9.69 (.138)			χ^2 = 7.25 (.298)	

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.
Only the ten services with the highest combined percentage of very or somewhat dissatisfied are included in this table.

Appendix Table 6. *Feelings About Community by Region, Community Size and Individual Attributes*

	My community is very special to me.				***No other place can compare to my community.***			
	Disagree	*Neither*	*Agree*	*Chi-square (sig.)*	*Disagree*	*Neither*	*Agree*	*Chi-square (sig.)*
				Percentages				
Community Size		(n = 2353)				(n = 2343)		
Less than 500	7	17	76		23	31	46	
500 - 999	7	19	74		25	34	41	
1,000 - 4,999	11	18	71		33	29	39	
5,000 - 9,999	11	27	62	χ^2 = 33.6*	38	35	27	χ^2 = 56.7*
10,000 and up	8	26	66	(.000)	38	33	29	(.000)
Region		(n = 2379)				(n = 2370)		
Panhandle	9	26	65		35	34	32	
North Central	9	22	69		31	29	40	
South Central	10	24	67		34	31	35	
Northeast	8	22	70	χ^2 = 13.22	32	33	35	χ^2 = 5.95
Southeast	10	16	74	(.104)	32	34	35	(.652)
Income Level		(n = 2120)				(n = 2115)		
Under $20,000	12	22	66		31	31	38	
$20,000 - $39,999	7	23	70		30	34	36	
$40,000 - $59,999	10	22	68	χ^2 = 6.85	35	31	34	χ^2 = 16.4*
$60,000 and over	10	21	68	(.335)	39	33	28	(.012)
Age		(n = 2338)				(n = 2329)		
19 - 29	10	28	62		40	29	31	
30 - 39	13	28	59		36	38	26	
40 - 49	13	23	64		37	36	28	
50 - 64	9	24	67	χ^2 = 50.3*	36	32	32	χ^2 = 83.2*
65 and older	6	16	78	(.000)	23	29	48	(.000)
Gender		(n = 2310)				(n = 2301)		
Male	10	23	68	χ^2 = 4.47	34	33	33	χ^2 = 7.1*
Female	7	21	71	(.107)	30	32	39	(.028)
Marital Status		(n = 2322)				(n = 2313)		
Married	9	22	69		33	33	34	
Never married	11	28	61		31	35	34	
Divorced/separated	15	26	59	χ^2 = 35.3*	40	35	26	χ^2 = 44.4*
Widowed	5	16	80	(.000)	21	29	51	(.000)
Education		(n = 2302)				(n = 2294)		
H.S. diploma or less	7	19	73		27	31	42	
Some college	10	26	64	χ^2 = 16.8*	34	32	34	χ^2 = 39.4*
Bachelors degree	10	21	69	(.002)	38	35	26	(.000)
Occupation		(n = 1575)				(n = 1575)		
Sales	11	20	69		39	33	28	
Manual laborer	10	27	63		37	34	30	
Prof/tech/admin	10	25	65		39	34	28	
Service	11	24	65		35	37	29	
Farming/ranching	7	19	75		26	33	41	
Skilled laborer	10	30	61		37	30	33	
Admin support	7	25	68	χ^2 = 20.86	30	36	34	χ^2 = 25.6*
Other	17	39	44	(.105)	36	50	14	(.030)
Yrs Lived in Comm.		(n = 2241)				(n = 2233)		
Five years or less	15	34	51	χ^2 = 41.0*	40	34	25	χ^2 = 12.0*
More than five years	9	21	71	(.000)	32	32	36	(.003)

Appendix Table 6 continued.

	I feel I can really be myself in my community.				*My community is my favorite place to be.*			
	Disagree	*Neither*	*Agree*	*Chi-square (sig.)*	*Disagree*	*Neither*	*Agree*	*Chi-square (sig.)*
				Percentages				
Community Size		(n = 2300)				(n = 2305)		
Less than 500	12	16	72		19	28	53	
500 - 999	11	17	72		17	31	52	
1,000 - 4,999	17	17	66		26	27	48	
5,000 - 9,999	19	23	58	χ^2 = 24.9*	30	32	38	χ^2 = 32.9*
10,000 and up	15	21	64	(.002)	28	31	42	(.000)
Region		(n = 2324)				(n = 2331)		
Panhandle	18	22	60		27	32	42	
North Central	14	19	67		27	28	46	
South Central	16	19	66		27	29	44	
Northeast	14	18	67	χ^2 = 6.18	22	31	47	χ^2 = 10.05
Southeast	15	19	67	(.627)	24	27	50	(.261)
Income Level		(n = 2079)				(n = 2083)		
Under $20,000	17	18	65		24	27	50	
$20,000 - $39,999	17	21	62		24	32	44	
$40,000 - $59,999	15	18	67	χ^2 = 6.99	28	27	44	χ^2 = 11.70
$60,000 and over	13	21	66	(.322)	26	33	41	(.069)
Age		(n = 2285)				(n = 2292)		
19 - 29	20	18	62		39	27	35	
30 - 39	20	24	56		34	33	33	
40 - 49	18	22	60		25	36	39	
50 - 64	16	20	64	χ^2 = 54.9*	28	31	41	χ^2 = 138.1*
65 and older	9	15	76	(.000)	15	23	63	(.000)
Gender		(n = 2257)				(n = 2267)		
Male	15	20	65	χ^2 = 2.53	25	30	45	χ^2 = 0.61
Female	16	17	67	(.282)	25	29	47	(.736)
Marital Status		(n = 2269)				(n = 2276)		
Married	15	19	66		24	30	46	
Never married	19	25	56		34	29	37	
Divorced/separated	23	20	57	χ^2 = 44.3*	35	34	32	χ^2 = 66.7*
Widowed	7	14	79	(.000)	14	23	64	(.000)
Education		(n = 2248)				(n = 2260)		
H.S. diploma or less	14	17	69		19	26	55	
Some college	17	21	62	χ^2 = 11.2*	27	32	42	χ^2 = 50.3*
Bachelors degree	13	20	67	(.024)	30	32	38	(.000)
Occupation		(n = 1549)				(n = 1560)		
Sales	16	19	65		28	26	46	
Manual laborer	15	22	63		29	31	41	
Prof/tech/admin	16	21	63		31	32	36	
Service	21	21	58		26	36	39	
Farming/ranching	9	22	69		17	33	50	
Skilled laborer	16	21	63		26	36	38	
Admin support	21	25	55	χ^2 = 23.8*	30	29	41	χ^2 = 25.8*
Other	29	32	38	(.048)	37	31	31	(.028)
Yrs Lived in Comm.		(n = 2189)				(n = 2200)		
Five years or less	22	21	57	χ^2 = 11.8*	40	28	32	χ^2 = 36.9*
More than five years	14	19	66	(.003)	23	30	47	(.000)

Appendix Table 6 continued.

	I really miss my community when I am away too long.			
	Disagree	*Neither*	*Agree*	*Chi-square (sig.)*
			Percentages	
Community Size		(n = 2336)		
Less than 500	21	27	52	
500 - 999	16	33	52	
1,000 - 4,999	23	25	51	
5,000 - 9,999	28	31	41	χ^2 = 24.10*
10,000 and up	26	29	45	(.002)
Region		(n = 2362)		
Panhandle	25	29	45	
North Central	22	26	51	
South Central	26	26	48	
Northeast	22	32	46	χ^2 = 10.12
Southeast	23	28	49	(.256)
Income Level		(n = 2108)		
Under $20,000	23	27	50	
$20,000 - $39,999	21	32	46	
$40,000 - $59,999	27	24	48	χ^2 = 15.49*
$60,000 and over	26	30	44	(.017)
Age		(n = 2321)		
19 - 29	31	29	41	
30 - 39	31	31	38	
40 - 49	27	32	41	
50 - 64	25	31	44	χ^2 = 91.44*
65 and older	15	23	62	(.000)
Gender		(n = 2293)		
Male	24	29	47	χ^2 = 1.40
Female	23	27	49	(.496)
Marital Status		(n = 2305)		
Married	24	29	48	
Never married	27	30	43	
Divorced/separated	32	31	37	χ^2 = 37.24*
Widowed	14	26	60	(.000)
Education		(n = 2286)		
H.S. diploma or less	18	27	55	
Some college	28	31	41	χ^2 = 36.91*
Bachelors degree	26	28	46	(.000)
Occupation		(n = 1567)		
Sales	29	30	41	
Manual laborer	24	34	43	
Prof/tech/admin	29	29	42	
Service	24	31	44	
Farming/ranching	19	30	52	
Skilled laborer	24	36	40	
Admin support	26	26	49	χ^2 = 29.65*
Other	33	53	14	(.009)
Yrs Lived in Comm.		(n = 2225)		
Five years or less	38	25	37	χ^2 = 31.69*
More than five years	22	29	49	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 7. *Opinions About Leaving Community by Community Size, Region and Individual Attributes*

	Assume you were to have a discussion in your household about leaving your community for a reasonably good opportunity elsewhere. How easy or difficult would it be for your household to leave your community?			
	Easy	*Neutral*	*Difficult*	*Chi-square (sig.)*
		Percentages		
Community Size		(n = 2342)		
Less than 500	24	13	63	
500 - 999	24	18	58	
1,000 - 4,999	28	19	54	
5,000 - 9,999	39	18	43	χ^2 = 47.09*
10,000 and up	36	16	48	(.000)
Region		(n = 2370)		
Panhandle	34	19	47	
North Central	31	15	54	
South Central	33	16	51	
Northeast	30	19	52	χ^2 = 10.03
Southeast	27	17	56	(.263)
Income Level		(n = 2115)		
Under $20,000	31	21	48	
$20,000 - $39,999	29	19	52	
$40,000 - $59,999	31	16	53	χ^2 = 15.87*
$60,000 and over	37	14	50	(.014)
Age		(n = 2330)		
19 - 29	43	12	45	
30 - 39	35	17	49	
40 - 49	33	17	50	
50 - 64	35	17	47	χ^2 = 57.30*
65 and older	21	17	62	(.000)
Gender		(n = 2303)		
Male	32	16	52	χ^2 = 2.00
Female	30	19	52	(.369)
Marital Status		(n = 2315)		
Married	30	17	53	
Never married	42	14	44	
Divorced/separated	42	15	42	χ^2 = 42.60*
Widowed	20	20	60	(.000)
Education		(n = 2295)		
H.S. diploma or less	26	17	57	
Some college	36	17	47	χ^2 = 24.25*
Bachelors degree	33	16	51	(.000)
Occupation		(n = 1572)		
Sales	38	17	45	
Manual laborer	35	22	43	
Prof/tech/admin	37	15	48	
Service	32	18	50	
Farming/ranching	23	12	65	
Skilled laborer	37	18	45	
Admin support	30	20	50	χ^2 = 35.34*
Other	44	19	36	(.001)
Yrs Lived in Comm.		(n = 2235)		
Five years or less	48	17	35	χ^2 = 40.01*
More than five years	29	17	54	(.000)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 8. *Size of Community Identify With by Community Size, Region and Individual Attributes*

	Is your community or nearest community the one you most closely identify with?			***What is the size of community you most closely identify with in terms of your employment, retail trade, school, etc.?***						
	Yes	*No*	*Chi-square (sig.)*	*Less than 500*	*500 - 999*	*1,000 - 4,999*	*5,000 - 9,999*	*10,000 - 19,999*	*20,000 and over*	*Chi-square (sig.)*
						Percentages				
Community Size	(n = 2270)					(n = 411)				
Less than 500	49	51		10	7	29	15	6	33	
500 - 999	73	27		2	9	18	20	15	36	
1,000 - 4,999	81	19		4	2	11	20	15	49	
5,000 - 9,999	85	15	χ^2 = 299.4*	0	0	6	3	43	49	χ^2 = 81.7*
10,000 and up	93	7	(.000)	6	4	11	7	11	62	(.000)
Region	(n = 2289)					(n = 411)				
Panhandle	79	21		9	2	23	21	34	11	
North Central	81	19		7	5	21	10	8	49	
South Central	84	16		8	4	14	9	11	55	
Northeast	82	19	χ^2 = 21.4*	3	8	19	10	11	50	χ^2 = 58.6*
Southeast	72	28	(.000)	6	5	20	25	11	33	(.000)
Individual Attributes:										
Income Level	(n = 2057)					(n = 371)				
Under $20,000	78	22		5	8	17	20	12	39	
$20,000 - $39,999	81	19		9	5	22	10	14	41	
$40,000 - $59,999	79	21	χ^2 = 4.43	6	6	20	16	9	44	χ^2 = 11.87
$60,000 and over	83	17	(.218)	2	2	18	15	12	51	(.689)
Age	(n = 2249)					(n = 403)				
19 - 29	79	21		7	4	25	11	14	39	
30 - 39	82	18		10	2	7	19	2	60	
40 - 49	80	20		5	7	16	21	11	40	
50 - 64	79	21	χ^2 = 1.25	6	5	20	10	16	42	χ^2 = 21.45
65 and older	81	19	(.869)	4	5	21	14	16	41	(.371)
Gender	(n = 2266)					(n = 400)				
Male	81	20	χ^2 = 0.51	7	6	21	12	11	42	χ^2 = 12.2*
Female	79	21	(.475)	2	2	14	19	15	47	(.032)

Appendix Table 8 continued.

	Is your community or nearest community the one you most closely identify with?			***What is the size of community you most closely identify with in terms of your employment, retail trade, school, etc.?***						
	Yes	*No*	*Chi-square (sig.)*	*Less than 500*	*500 - 999*	*1,000 - 4,999*	*5,000 - 9,999*	*10,000 - 19,999*	*20,000 and over*	*Chi-square (sig.)*
Marital Status	(n = 2237)						(n = 400)			
Married	80	20		5	4	20	15	12	44	
Never married	81	20		9	6	15	12	15	42	
Divorced/separated	77	23	$\chi^2 = 2.12$	4	7	15	13	13	48	$\chi^2 = 4.68$
Widowed	82	18	(.548)	8	8	18	18	15	35	(.994)
Education	(n = 2221)						(n = 399)			
H.S. diploma or less	79	21		8	8	16	14	17	38	
Some college	78	22	$\chi^2 = 9.33$*	5	3	21	13	13	46	$\chi^2 = 16.11$
Bachelors degree	85	16	(.009)	4	4	21	17	5	49	(.096)
Occupation	(n = 1546)						(n = 276)			
Sales	80	20		9	4	4	9	22	52	
Manual laborer	81	19		4	22	22	11	15	26	
Prof/tech/admin	83	17		3	3	22	16	8	47	
Service	82	18		0	0	23	23	14	40	
Farming/ranching	82	18		8	3	39	22	8	19	
Skilled laborer	74	26		6	0	10	15	17	52	
Admin support	71	29	$\chi^2 = 11.46$	6	0	6	13	19	56	$\chi^2 = 65.55$*
Other	86	14	(.120)	25**	0**	25**	0**	25**	25**	(.001)
Yrs Lived in Comm.	(n = 2161)						(n = 391)			
Five years or less	73	27	$\chi^2 = 9.54$*	6	3	16	13	13	50	$\chi^2 = 2.20$
More than five years	81	19	(.002)	6	6	20	15	13	42	(.821)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.
** Note: Row percentages are calculated using a row total that contains less than 10 respondents.

Appendix Table 9. *Plans to Leave Community by Community Size, Region and Individual Attributes*

	Do you plan to leave your community in the next year?				***If yes, where do you plan to move?***			
	Yes	*No*	*Uncertain*	*Chi-square (sig.)*	*Lincoln/Omaha metro areas*	*Some other place in NE*	*Some place other than Nebraska*	*Chi-square (sig.)*
					Percentages			
Community Size		(n = 2282)				(n = 105)		
Less than 500	4	86	10		9	73	18	
500 - 999	4	85	10		30	20	50	
1,000 - 4,999	8	82	10		18	52	30	
5,000 - 9,999	2	84	14	χ^2 = 21.64*	20**	20**	60**	χ^2 = 16.42*
10,000 and up	5	83	12	(.006)	29	20	51	(.037)
Region		(n = 2383)				(n = 106)		
Panhandle	4	80	17		10	30	60	
North Central	7	86	8		25	33	42	
South Central	4	84	12		8	39	54	
Northeast	5	82	13	χ^2 = 23.08*	30	41	30	χ^2 = 11.96
Southeast	5	88	8	(.003)	32	53	16	(.153)
Income Level		(n = 2192)				(n = 102)		
Under $20,000	6	79	15		26	35	39	
$20,000 - $39,999	4	84	12		8	56	36	
$40,000 - $59,999	6	85	9	χ^2 = 17.82*	24	38	38	χ^2 = 6.87
$60,000 and over	4	87	9	(.007)	35	25	40	(.333)
Age		(n = 2377)				(n = 107)		
19 - 29	14	71	15		27	40	33	
30 - 39	7	80	13		12	65	24	
40 - 49	5	81	14		18	27	55	
50 - 64	5	85	11	χ^2 = 50.29*	31	28	42	χ^2 = 11.44
65 and older	3	89	8	(.000)	12	53	35	(.178)
Gender		(n = 2385)				(n = 107)		
Male	4	85	11	χ^2 = 5.70	23	38	39	χ^2 = 0.21
Female	6	82	13	(.058)	20	42	39	(.902)
Marital Status		(n = 2385)				(n = 107)		
Married	4	87	9		19	41	41	
Never married	9	69	22		36	43	21	
Divorced/separated	11	69	19	χ^2 = 95.32*	21	29	50	χ^2 = 5.14
Widowed	2	87	12	(.000)	20**	60**	20**	(.526)
Education		(n = 2379)				(n = 107)		
H.S. diploma or less	3	87	10		25	46	29	
Some college	5	82	13	χ^2 = 12.93*	14	43	43	χ^2 = 4.90
Bachelors degree	6	83	11	(.012)	29	29	43	(.298)

Appendix Table 9 continued.

	Do you plan to leave your community in the next year?				***If yes, where do you plan to move?***			
	Yes	*No*	*Uncertain*	*Chi-square (sig.)*	*Lincoln/Omaha metro areas*	*Some other place in NE*	*Some place other than Nebraska*	*Chi-square (sig.)*
Occupation		(n = 1558)				(n = 76)		
Sales	8	83	9		18	27	55	
Manual laborer	4	84	12		0**	71**	29**	
Prof/tech/admin	7	80	13		29	26	45	
Service	5	83	12		33**	44**	22**	
Farming/ranching	1	92	7		0**	0**	100**	
Skilled laborer	5	84	11		13**	63**	25**	
Admin support	9	75	16	$\chi^2 = 21.39$	20**	40**	40**	$\chi^2 = 16.38$
Other	6	89	6	(.092)	50**	50**	0**	(.291)
Yrs Lived in Comm.		(n = 2249)				(n = 102)		
Five years or less	11	73	16	$\chi^2 = 35.20$*	12	46	42	$\chi^2 = 1.78$
More than five years	4	86	11	(.000)	24	38	38	(.410)

* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

** Note: Row percentages are calculated using a row total that contains less than 10 respondents.

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