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THE CENTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

A Research Report*

Educational Quality and County Government Services: Rural Nebraskans' Perceived Impacts of Recent and Proposed Legislation

1999 Nebraska Rural Poll Results

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Nebraska
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

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Executive Summary

Many changes have been occurring in rural Nebraska in the area of local finances. Recent school finance legislation has changed the formula that distributes state aid to schools (LB 806) and also imposed new property tax levy limits on school districts (LB 1114). Discussions have also arisen about consolidating county offices and services. Given all these changes, how do rural Nebraskans feel about these issues? How do they feel the new school finance legislation has affected the quality of education in their local school district? Do they support the consolidation of certain county government offices and services with a neighboring county? How do they feel the consolidation of these offices and services will impact the quality of the services they provide?

This report details results of 3,036 responses to the 1999 Nebraska Rural Poll, the fourth annual effort to take the pulse of rural Nebraskans. Respondents were asked a series of questions about local finance issues including: their perceptions of the impacts of the new school finance legislation, whether or not they support the consolidation of various county offices and services, and how they feel consolidation would impact the offices' ability to carry out their functions. Comparisons are made among different subgroups of the respondents, e.g., comparisons by community size, region, income, occupation, etc. Based on these analyses, some key findings emerged:

- ***Forty-three percent of rural Nebraskans believe the quality of education in their local school district has not changed as a result of the changes to the school aid formula.*** Thirty-four percent believe the quality of education has either greatly decreased or decreased somewhat as a result of these changes, and twenty-three percent believe the quality of education has increased.

- ***Over one-half of rural Nebraskans believe the property tax levy limits have not changed the quality of education in their local school district.*** Thirty-three percent believe these limits have caused the quality of education to decline, and nine percent believe they have caused the quality to increase.

- ***Respondents with higher educational levels were more likely than those with less education to believe the levy limits had caused the quality of education in their school district to decrease.*** Forty-six percent of the respondents with a graduate degree believed the levy limits had caused the quality of education to decline in their local school district, but less than one-third of those who had not attended college shared this opinion.

- ***Although the pattern was not entirely consistent, there was some tendency for the following groups to be the most concerned about the quality of education being affected by changes in the school aid formula as well as property tax levy limits: those who have children at home; those who are married; and those age 30 to 49.***

- ***Most rural Nebraskans oppose the consolidation of county offices and services.*** Over one-half of the respondents opposed the consolidation of six of the eight offices or services listed. The remaining two offices had over forty percent opposing their consolidation.

- ***Most rural Nebraskans believe the consolidation of various county offices with a neighboring county would negatively affect their ability to carry out their functions if they were located in the neighboring county.*** Over one-half of the respondents believed the consolidations would have a negative impact for seven of the eight offices or services listed.

- ***The two offices and services receiving the most support for consolidation are the county weed superintendent and county jail.*** Thirty-nine percent supported the consolidation of the county weed superintendent office and thirty-six percent supported the consolidation of the county jail. Support for consolidating the six remaining offices ranged from 21% to 30%.

- ***The offices or services receiving the most opposition toward consolidation are the county sheriff, county treasurer, and county clerk.*** The proportions opposing the consolidation of each of these offices were 67%, 63% and 61%, respectively. Additionally, at least two-thirds of the respondents believed these offices would lose some of their ability to carry out their functions if they were consolidated and located in a neighboring county.

- ***The groups most likely to oppose consolidation - regardless of the specific office or service under consideration - included the following: those living in communities with less than 500 people, women, those age 65 and older, persons with incomes less than $20,000, the widowed respondents, and those whose education had not gone beyond the high school level.***

Introduction

Many changes have been occurring in rural Nebraska in the area of local finance. Recent school finance legislation has changed the formula that distributes state aid to school districts as well as impose property tax levy limits on school districts. LB 806, passed in 1997, changed the distribution of state aid by giving relatively more assistance to school districts with low costs per student. In addition, property tax levy limits were reduced to $1.10 per $100 in property valuation by LB 1114 enacted in 1996.

School districts are not the only local political subdivision undergoing changes. Discussions about possibly consolidating various county offices and services with neighboring counties have arisen in the past few years. Pressures to reduce government spending have prompted many of these changes and discussions. However, tradeoffs will have to be made between cost savings and the quality of services that can be provided.

Given all these changes, how do rural Nebraskans feel about these issues? How do they feel the new school finance legislation has affected the quality of education in their local school district? Do they support the consolidation of certain county government offices and services with one or more neighboring counties? How do they feel the consolidation of these offices and services will impact the quality of the services and functions they provide?

This paper provides a detailed analysis of these questions. Respondents were asked a series of questions about local finance issues: their perceptions on the impacts of recent school finance legislation and their views on consolidation of county offices and services. Comparisons are made among different subgroups of the respondents, e.g., comparisons by community size, region, income, age, occupation, etc.

Methodology and Respondent Profile

This study is based on 3,036 responses from Nebraskans living in the 87 non-metropolitan counties in the state. A self-administered questionnaire was mailed in February and March to approximately 6,100 randomly selected households. Metropolitan counties not included in the sample were Cass, Dakota, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy and Washington. The 18 page questionnaire included questions pertaining to well-being, community, work, the future of rural Nebraska and local finance issues. This paper reports only results from the local finance issues portion of the survey.

A 50% response rate was achieved using the total design method (Dillman, 1978). The sequence of steps used were:

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.

The average respondent was 54 years of age.

Seventy-six percent were married (Appendix Table 1[1]) and fifty-one percent lived within the city limits of a town or village. On average, respondents had lived in Nebraska 47 years and had lived in their current community 34 years. Eighty-one percent were living in or near towns or villages with populations less than 5,000.

Fifty-eight percent of the respondents reported their approximate household income from all sources, before taxes, for 1998 was below $40,000. Twenty-seven percent reported incomes over $50,000. Ninety-two percent had attained at least a high school diploma.

Seventy-six percent were employed in 1998 on a full-time, part-time or seasonal basis. Twenty percent were retired. Twenty-nine percent of those employed reported working in a professional/technical or administrative occupation. Twenty-six percent indicated they were farmers or ranchers.

Perceived Impact of Recent School Finance Legislation

Two recent school finance bills could potentially affect the quality of education provided by local schools. Recent changes to the school aid formula and property tax levy limits affect the way school districts operate.

To see how rural Nebraskans believe these changes have affected the quality of education in their local school district, they were asked the following questions.

"As you are probably aware, in 1997 the Nebraska Legislature passed LB 806. This legislation increased state aid to schools (K - 12) by about $130 million. It also changed the distribution of state aid, giving relatively more assistance to school districts with low costs per student. How do you think these changes to the school aid formula have affected the quality of education in your local school district?"

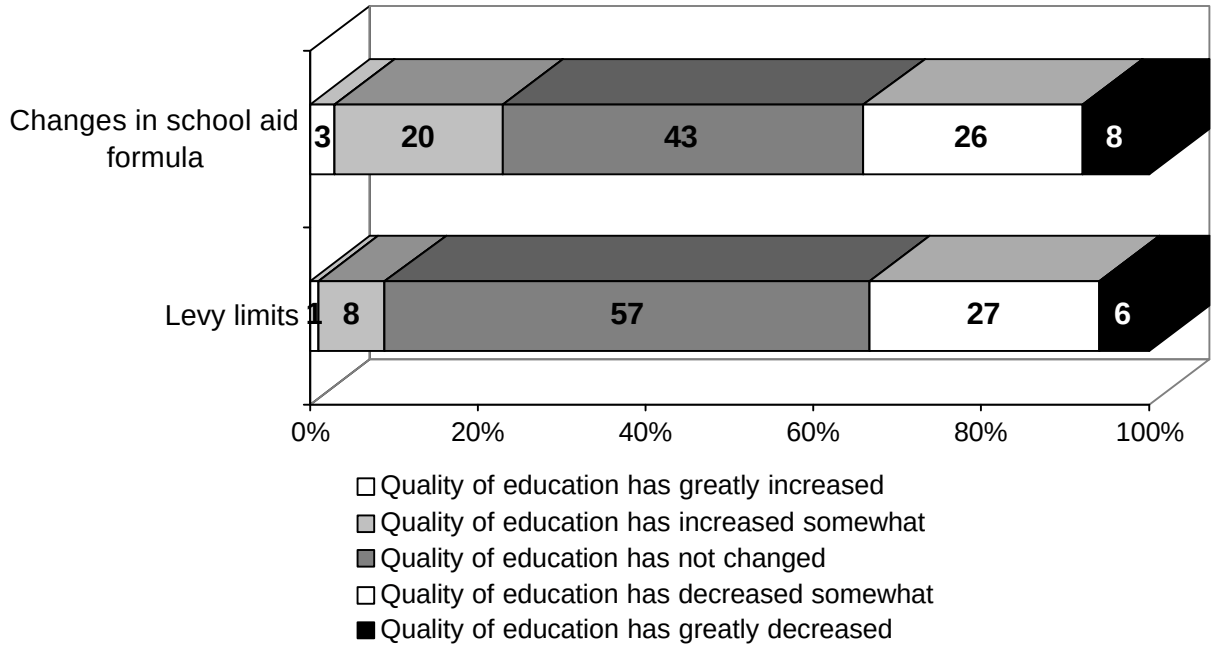
"LB 1114, enacted in 1996, required school districts to reduce their property tax levy to $1.10 per $100 in valuation. How do you think these levy limits have affected the quality of education in your local school district?"

Answer categories for both questions were as follows:
1 = the quality of education has greatly increased
2 = the quality of education has increased somewhat
3 = the quality of education has not changed
4 = the quality of education has decreased somewhat
5 = the quality of education has greatly decreased

Forty-three percent of rural Nebraskans believe the quality of education in their local school district has not changed as a result of the changes to the school aid formula (Figure 1). Thirty-four percent believe the quality of education has either greatly decreased or decreased somewhat as a result of these changes. Twenty-three percent

[1] Appendix Table 1 also includes demographic data from previous rural polls, as well as similar data based on the entire non-metropolitan population of Nebraska (using 1990 U.S. Census data).

Figure 1. *Perceived Impact of Recent School Finance Legislation*



believe the quality of education has either greatly increased or increased somewhat.

Over one-half (57%) of rural Nebraskans believe property tax levy limits have not changed the quality of education provided by their local school district. Thirty-three percent believe the limits have decreased the quality of education in their local school district and nine percent believe they have caused an increase in the quality of education[2].

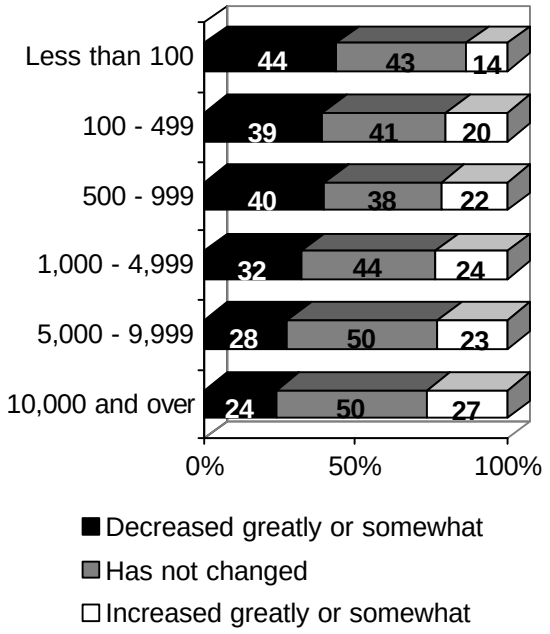
Perceptions about the impact of changes to the school aid formula were analyzed by community size, region, and various individual attributes (Appendix Table 2). These perceptions differed by many of these characteristics[3].

Respondents living in smaller communities were more likely than those living in larger communities to believe the changes to the formula had decreased the quality of education in their local school district (Figure 2). Forty-four percent of the respondents living in or near communities with less than 100 people felt the quality of

[2] The proportion believing the limits have decreased the quality of education represents the combined percentage of "greatly decreased" and "decreased somewhat" responses. Similarly, the proportion believing the quality has increased is the combination of "greatly increased" and "increased somewhat" responses.

[3] Differences between groups means there were statistically significant differences between the groups' responses. Statistically significant differences are based on a probability of less than 5% that the difference was due to chance alone.

Figure 2. *Perceived Impact of Changes to the School Aid Formula on Quality of Education by Community Size*



education had either decreased somewhat or greatly decreased. However, only twenty-four percent of those living in or near communities with populations of 10,000 or more shared this same opinion.

Differences in perceptions also occurred by education. Respondents with higher levels of education were more likely than those with less education to believe the quality of education had decreased as a result of the changes. Approximately thirty-nine percent of those with a college degree felt the quality of education had declined (either somewhat or greatly), compared to only twenty-eight percent of those with less than a 9th grade education.

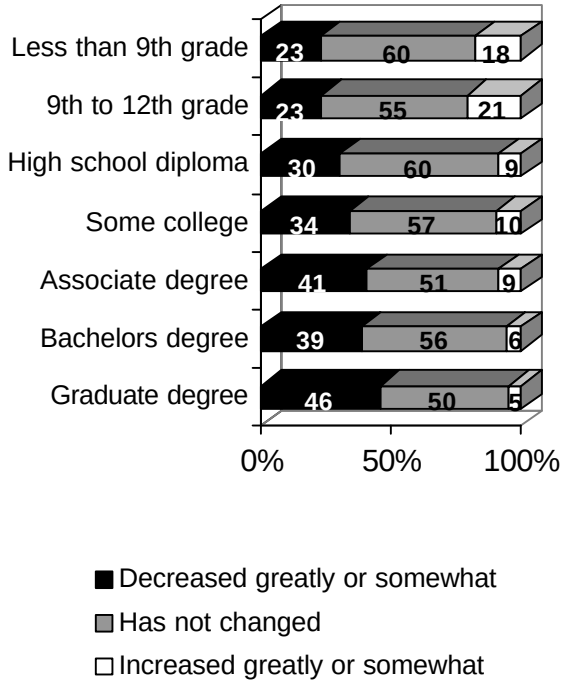
Other groups that were more likely to believe these changes to the formula decreased the quality of education in their local school district include: respondents with household incomes ranging from $30,000 to $59,999, persons between the ages of 30 and 49, and those who are married.

Perceptions about the impact of property tax levy limits on the quality of education also differed by many of these characteristics (Appendix Table 3). The respondents living in communities with populations ranging from 500 to 999 were more likely than those living in communities of different sizes to believe the levy limits have either greatly or somewhat decreased the quality of education in their local school district. Forty-three percent of the respondents living in communities of this size felt the quality of education had decreased, while only twenty-four percent of those living in both the smallest and largest communities felt the same.

Respondents with higher educational levels were more likely than those with less education to believe the quality of education had declined as a result of the levy limits (Figure 3). Forty-six percent of the respondents with a graduate degree believed the quality of education had declined, while only twenty-three percent of the respondents with less than a high school diploma shared this opinion.

Differences also emerged among occupation groups. Respondents with professional occupations were the group most likely to believe the levy limits had caused the quality of education in their local school

Figure 3. *Perceived Impact of the Levy Limits on Quality of Education by Education Level*



district to decrease. Forty-three percent of the respondents with this type of occupation felt the quality had declined, but only twenty-three percent of those with sales occupations believed the limits had a negative impact.

Of the income and age groups, the respondents with incomes ranging from $50,000 to $74,999 and persons between the ages of 30 and 49 were those most likely to believe the limits had caused the quality of education to decline.

Also, the respondents with children in their homes were more likely than those with no children at home to believe the levy limits had caused the quality of education in their local school to decrease. Thirty-eight percent of those with children in their home believed the limits had caused the quality of education to decline, compared to thirty-two percent of those with no children at home. This group of respondents (those with children at home) are likely to be especially concerned about educational quality and also in the best position to notice any detrimental effects.

Views on Consolidating County Offices and Services

Much discussion has taken place in recent years about the possibility of consolidating various county services and offices. To determine if rural Nebraskans support these consolidations, they were asked the following question.

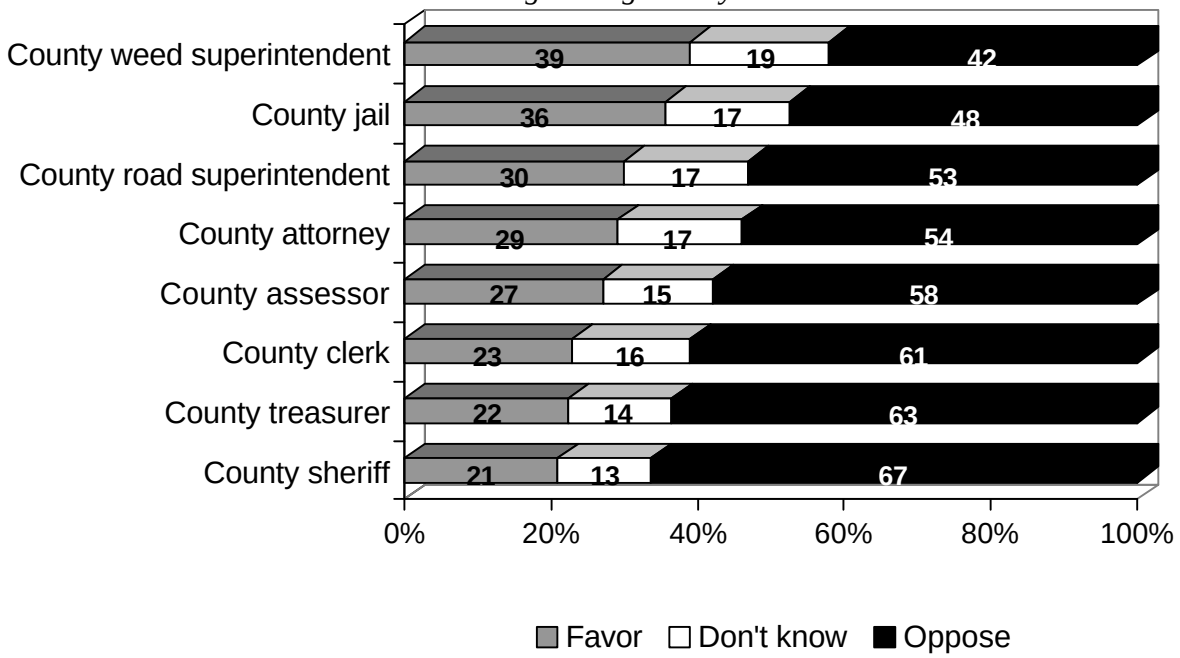
"Listed below are different services provided by your county government or offices of county government. For each one, please indicate whether you favor or oppose having your county consolidate that service or office with a neighboring county."

Respondents indicated their views by using a five-point scale, where 1 = strongly favor, 3 = don't know, and 5 = strongly oppose.

They were also asked their perceptions of the effect of consolidation on the quality of services offered by the offices. The exact question wording follows.

"If the following offices were consolidated with a neighboring county, how do you think it will affect their ability to carry out their functions for your county <u>if the</u>

Figure 4. *Support for Consolidating County Services and Offices with a Neighboring County*



consolidation resulted in the office being located in the neighboring county?"

Respondents answered this question using a five-point scale where 1 = greatly reduce, 3 = stay the same, and 5 = greatly improve.

Most rural Nebraskans oppose the consolidation of county offices and services. In only two cases — for the county weed superintendent office and county jail — did more than one-third of the respondents support consolidation (Figure 4). Those receiving the least support were county sheriff (21%), county treasurer (22%) and county clerk (23%)[4].

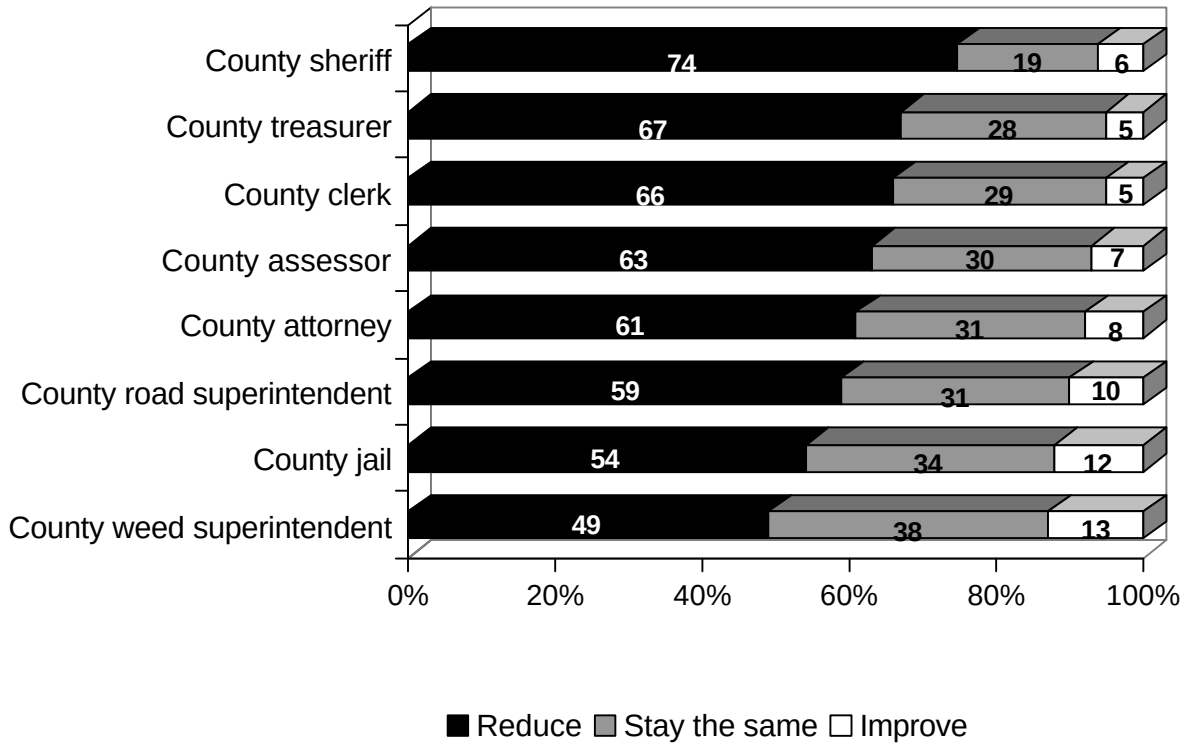
Furthermore, at least forty-nine percent of the respondents believe that consolidation would reduce the ability of each office to carry out their functions (Figure 5)[5]. The offices that most respondents felt would be affected negatively by consolidation include the county sheriff (74%), the county treasurer (67%), and the county clerk (66%).

The extent of opposition to consolidation for

[4] The proportion supporting consolidation represents the combined percentages of "strongly favor" and "favor" responses. Similarly, the proportion opposing consolidation is the combination of "strongly oppose" and "oppose" responses.

[5] The proportion believing that consolidation would reduce the ability of the offices to carry out their functions represents the combined percentages of "greatly reduce" and "reduce."

Figure 5. *Perceived Effects of Consolidating County Offices with a Neighboring County*



each of the eight offices or services was examined to see if there were differences according to the following characteristics of the respondents: size of community, region of the state, income, age, gender, marital status, education and occupation (Appendix Table 4). With six of these characteristics, a very clear pattern emerged. Almost without exception, those most likely to oppose consolidation - regardless of the specific service or office under consideration - were: those living in communities with less than 500 people, women, those age 65 and older, persons with incomes less than $20,000, those who are widowed, and those whose education had not gone beyond the high school level.

Differences were also apparent across occupations, but the pattern was not quite as clear cut. However, farmers/ranchers and laborers were the two occupational categories that generally tended to be most opposed to the consolidation of offices and services.

In general, these same groups were also those most likely to believe the ability of the offices to carry out their functions would be reduced if they were consolidated with a neighboring county (Appendix Table 5).

The exact reason for these particular groups of respondents to be the most strongly opposed to consolidation can only be speculated upon. However, “the home” for

any consolidated offices or services is not likely - at least in most cases - to be in communities with less than 500 population. As a consequence, people living in this size of community may be particularly concerned about the centralization of offices in larger, more distant communities. Greater distances also impose costs - both travel costs and time away from home and work. This may help explain why those with limited incomes are so strongly opposed to consolidation. Similarly, many of the elderly and those who are widowed may not own vehicles or be able to drive. If that is the case, then additional distance to county offices and services would be particularly onerous for these two groups.

Conclusion

Forty-three percent of rural Nebraskans believe recent changes to the school aid formula have not changed the quality of education provided by their local school district. Over one-half believe the levy limits have not affected the quality of education. However, approximately one-third believe these changes have caused the quality of education to decrease.

The groups most likely to believe the quality of education had decreased as a result of these changes include those with higher educational levels and persons between the ages of 30 and 49. In addition, those who are married as well as those who have children at home were somewhat more likely to believe these changes have caused the quality of education to decline.

When asked if they would support the consolidation of various county offices and services with a neighboring county, most rural Nebraskans said no. Over one-half of rural Nebraskans opposed the consolidation of six of the eight offices or services listed. In addition, over forty percent opposed the consolidation of the remaining two offices. The offices or services that received the least amount of opposition were the county weed superintendent office and the county jail. The offices receiving the most opposition to consolidation were the county sheriff, the county treasurer and the county clerk.

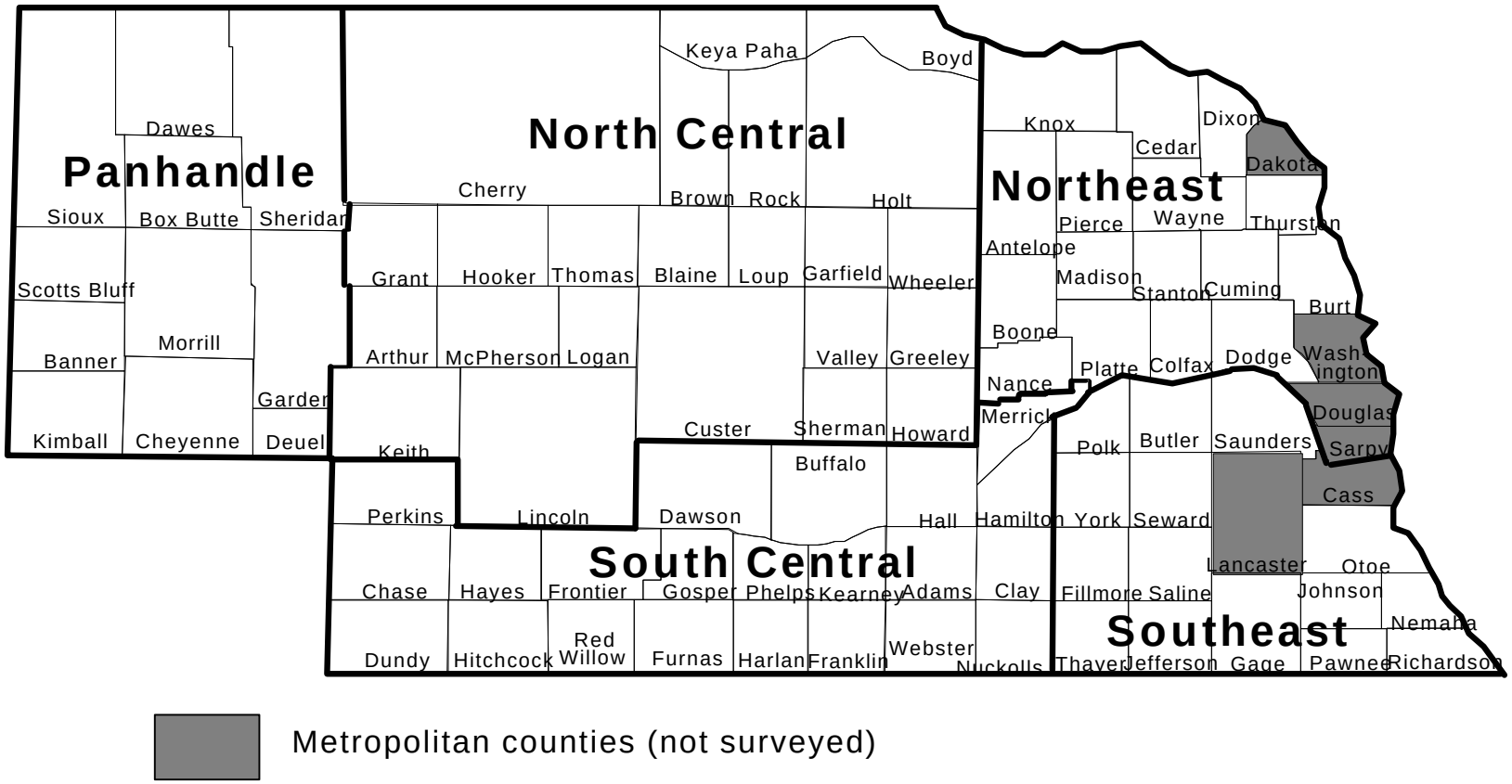
The majority of rural Nebraskans believe that if these offices were consolidated and located in the neighboring county, the offices would lose some of their ability to carry out their functions for their county.

The groups most likely to oppose consolidation - regardless of the specific office or service under consideration - included the following: those living in communities with less than 500 people, women, those age 65 and older, persons with incomes less than $20,000, the widowed respondents, and those whose education had not gone beyond the high school level.

The perceived impacts of consolidation and new school finance legislation may reflect rural Nebraskans' desire for local control. One respondent's comment on the levy limits illustrates this. "This law removes considerable decision-making prerogative from locally elected school boards. Needs in one district may differ from that of a neighbor. Willingness to pay and to tax themselves for something they want in their education system may now be denied local patrons. Without regard to any variables, every district in the state has the same taxing

limitation under this law. A district may conduct an election to exceed the levy limitation, but in a small district that election may put the very valuation it depends on at risk."

Appendix Figure 1. Regions of Nebraska



Appendix Table 1. *Demographic Profile of Rural Poll Respondents Compared to 1990 Census*

	1999 Poll	***1998 Poll***	***1997 Poll***	***1996 Poll***	***1990 Census***
Age : [1]					
20 - 39	21%	25%	24%	22%	38%
40 - 64	52%	55%	48%	49%	36%
65 and over	28%	20%	28%	29%	26%
Gender: [2]					
Female	31%	58%	28%	27%	49%
Male	69%	42%	72%	73%	51%
Education: [3]					
Less than 9th grade	3%	2%	5%	3%	10%
9th to 12th grade (no diploma)	5%	3%	5%	5%	12%
High school diploma (or equivalent)	36%	33%	34%	34%	38%
Some college, no degree	25%	27%	25%	26%	21%
Associate degree	9%	10%	8%	7%	7%
Bachelors degree	15%	16%	14%	14%	9%
Graduate or professional degree	8%	9%	9%	10%	3%
Household income: [4]					
Less than $10,000	8%	3%	7%	8%	19%
$10,000 - $19,999	15%	10%	16%	17%	25%
$20,000 - $29,999	18%	17%	19%	19%	21%
$30,000 - $39,999	18%	20%	18%	18%	15%
$40,000 - $49,999	15%	18%	14%	15%	9%
$50,000 - $59,999	9%	12%	10%	9%	5%
$60,000 - $74,999	8%	10%	7%	7%	3%
$75,000 or more	10%	10%	8%	7%	3%
Marital Status: [5]					
Married	76%	95%	73%	75%	64%
Never married	7%	0.4%	8%	7%	20%
Divorced/separated	8%	1%	9%	8%	7%
Widowed/widower	10%	3%	10%	10%	10%

[1] 1990 Census universe is non-metro population 20 years of age and over.

[2] 1990 Census universe is total non-metro population.

[3] 1990 Census universe is non-metro population 18 years of age and over.

[4] 1990 Census universe is all non-metro households.

[5] 1990 Census universe is non-metro population 15 years of age and over.

Appendix Table 2. *Perceptions of Changes in Education Quality as a Result of Changes to the School Aid Formula by Community Size, Region and Individual Attributes, 1999*

	How do you think these changes to the school aid formula have affected the quality of education in your local school district?					
	Greatly increased	*Increased somewhat*	*Has not changed*	*Decreased somewhat*	*Greatly decreased*	*Significance*
			Percentages			
Community Size			(n = 2711)			
Less than 100	0	14	43	32	12	
100 - 499	4	16	41	29	10	
500 - 999	2	20	38	28	12	
1,000 - 4,999	3	21	44	25	7	$\chi^2 = 59.79$
5,000 - 9,999	4	19	50	24	4	(.000)
10,000 and up	3	24	50	18	6	
Region			(n = 2756)			
Panhandle	3	19	46	25	6	
North Central	4	21	42	25	8	
South Central	4	20	40	26	10	$\chi^2 = 17.47$
Northeast	2	21	43	26	9	(.356)
Southeast	3	18	46	27	6	
Individual Attributes:						
Income Level			(n = 2549)			
Under $10,000	5	26	35	21	12	
$10,000 - $19,999	3	22	46	22	7	
$20,000 - $29,999	5	20	41	26	7	
$30,000 - $39,999	2	18	42	29	9	
$40,000 - $49,999	2	19	42	28	9	
$50,000 - $59,999	1	20	39	30	9	$\chi^2 = 49.29$
$60,000 - $74,999	3	16	46	29	6	(.008)
$75,000 and over	2	18	52	22	6	
Age			(n = 2731)			
19 - 29	3	26	38	23	11	
30 - 39	1	19	43	28	9	
40 - 49	3	17	44	26	11	$\chi^2 = 42.95$
50 - 64	2	18	45	27	8	(.000)
65 and older	5	24	41	25	6	

Appendix Table 2 Continued.

	How do you think these changes to the school aid formula have affected the quality of education in your local school district?					
	Greatly increased	*Increased somewhat*	*Has not changed*	*Decreased somewhat*	*Greatly decreased*	*Significance*
Gender			(n = 2734)			
Male	3	19	45	25	8	$\chi^2 = 6.83$
Female	3	20	39	28	9	(.145)
Marital Status			(n = 2742)			
Married	3	18	43	27	9	
Never married	4	19	42	27	8	$\chi^2 = 23.23$
Divorced/separated	2	21	47	22	8	(.026)
Widowed	4	29	38	23	6	
Education			(n = 2701)			
Less than 9th grade	9	31	33	18	10	
9th to 12th grade	7	31	31	19	13	
H.S. diploma	3	22	44	25	7	
Some college	3	21	41	27	9	
Associate degree	2	14	43	30	11	$\chi^2 = 73.94$
Bachelors degree	2	14	45	30	9	(.000)
Grad/prof degree	1	15	45	30	9	
Occupation			(n = 1953)			
Prof/tech/admin	2	18	42	28	11	
Admin. support	2	17	44	26	11	
Sales	3	20	49	23	6	
Service	2	23	41	27	6	
Farming/ranching	2	14	48	28	8	
Skilled laborer	3	22	38	26	11	
Manual laborer	0	25	43	26	7	$\chi^2 = 34.97$
Other	0	13	41	39	7	(.171)
Children in Household			(n = 1883)			
No children	3	18	46	25	8	$\chi^2 = 4.98$
Children	3	19	42	27	10	(.290)

Appendix Table 3. *Perceptions of Changes in Education Quality as a Result of Levy Limits by Community Size, Region and Individual Attributes, 1999*

	How do you think these levy limits have affected the quality of education in your local school district?					
	Greatly increased	*Increased somewhat*	*Has not changed*	*Decreased somewhat*	*Greatly decreased*	*Significance*
			Percentages			
Community Size			(n = 2739)			
Less than 100	0	6	70	19	5	
100 - 499	2	7	52	30	8	
500 - 999	1	9	48	34	9	
1,000 - 4,999	1	7	60	26	5	$\chi^2 = 71.70$
5,000 - 9,999	1	8	66	24	2	(.000)
10,000 and up	1	12	62	19	5	
Region			(n = 2782)			
Panhandle	2	8	62	22	6	
North Central	1	8	59	28	4	
South Central	1	8	54	28	8	$\chi^2 = 19.05$
Northeast	1	9	58	26	7	(.266)
Southeast	2	8	56	29	6	
Individual Attributes:						
Income Level			(n = 2576)			
Under $10,000	3	13	53	24	7	
$10,000 - $19,999	0*	9	61	26	4	
$20,000 - $29,999	2	9	58	26	6	
$30,000 - $39,999	1	7	54	29	9	
$40,000 - $49,999	1	8	57	29	6	
$50,000 - $59,999	1	10	46	35	8	$\chi^2 = 57.82$
$60,000 - $74,999	1	5	53	33	8	(.001)
$75,000 and over	1	7	65	24	4	
Age			(n = 2758)			
19 - 29	2	8	62	20	7	
30 - 39	0*	8	55	28	9	
40 - 49	2	6	54	30	9	$\chi^2 = 51.92$
50 - 64	1	7	58	28	6	(.000)
65 and older	2	11	58	25	3	
Gender			(n = 2760)			
Male	2	8	58	26	6	$\chi^2 = 7.39$
Female	1	9	53	30	7	(.117)

Appendix Table 3 Continued.

	How do you think these levy limits have affected the quality of education in your local school district?					
	Greatly increased	*Increased somewhat*	*Has not changed*	*Decreased somewhat*	*Greatly decreased*	*Significance*
Marital Status			(n = 2769)			
Married	1	8	57	28	7	
Never married	2	7	61	25	4	χ^2 = 19.56
Divorced/separated	1	9	56	28	6	(.076)
Widowed	2	14	54	25	5	
Education			(n = 2726)			
Less than 9th grade	4	14	60	20	3	
9th to 12th grade	3	18	55	19	4	
H.S. diploma	1	8	60	24	6	
Some college	1	9	57	28	6	
Associate degree	1	8	51	33	8	χ^2 = 74.76
Bachelors degree	1	5	56	32	7	(.000)
Grad/prof degree	1	4	50	36	10	
Occupation			(n = 1974)			
Prof/tech/admin	1	4	52	33	10	
Admin. support	1	10	50	32	8	
Sales	1	10	67	20	3	
Service	1	9	54	30	6	
Farming/ranching	1	6	63	25	6	
Skilled laborer	1	10	56	25	8	
Manual laborer	0	9	55	26	10	χ^2 = 53.47
Other	0	9	54	27	11	(.003)
Children in Household			(n = 1896)			
No children	1	9	59	26	6	χ^2 = 16.19
Children	1	6	54	29	9	(.003)

Appendix Table 4. *Support for Consolidating County Offices with Neighboring County by Community Size, Region and Individual Attributes, 1999.*

	County clerk			***County treasurer***			***County assessor***			***County attorney***		
	Favor	*Don't know*	*Oppose*	*Favor*	*Don't know*	*Oppose*	*Favor*	*Don't know*	*Oppose*	*Favor*	*Don't know*	*Oppose*
						Percentages						
Community Size		(n = 2889)			(n =2888)			(n = 2874)			(n = 2870)	
Less than 500	20	15	65	19	14	67	24	15	61	28	16	56
500 - 4,999	23	15	63	22	14	64	28	15	58	29	16	54
5,000 and over	28	19	53	29	16	55	30	18	52	30	18	52
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 20.93 (.000)			χ^2 = 22.78 (.000)			χ^2 = 13.44 (.009)			χ^2 = 2.82 (.588)	
Region		(n = 2935)			(n = 2934)			(n = 2920)			(n = 2916)	
Panhandle	25	13	62	26	12	62	28	13	59	32	15	54
North Central	19	16	65	19	16	66	25	16	59	30	16	54
South Central	25	17	59	25	15	60	29	16	55	30	18	53
Northeast	21	18	62	20	15	65	26	16	58	27	19	54
Southeast	24	14	62	23	13	64	27	14	59	30	14	56
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 13.55 (.094)			χ^2 = 15.14 (.057)			χ^2 = 6.95 (.542)			χ^2 = 8.57 (.379)	
Income Level		(n = 2696)			(n = 2697)			(n = 2684)			(n = 2681)	
Under $20,000	16	17	67	15	16	68	19	16	66	23	17	60
$20,000 - $39,999	21	17	62	21	16	64	26	17	57	27	17	55
$40,000 - $59,999	25	13	62	23	13	65	28	14	59	31	17	52
$60,000 and over	35	14	52	36	11	53	40	12	48	38	12	49
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 61.61 (.000)			χ^2 = 73.41 (.000)			χ^2 = 67.82 (.000)			χ^2 = 33.98 (.000)	
Age		(n = 2905)			(n = 2904)			(n = 2890)			(n = 2887)	
19 - 39	22	23	55	22	20	58	27	20	53	27	20	53
40 - 64	25	13	62	24	12	64	29	14	57	32	15	53
65 and over	20	15	65	21	15	65	23	15	62	26	16	58
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 35.52 (.000)			χ^2 = 27.34 (.000)			χ^2 = 23.57 (.000)			χ^2 = 17.42 (.002)	
Gender		(n = 2910)			(n = 2909)			(n = 2895)			(n = 2892)	
Male	26	15	59	25	14	61	30	14	56	33	16	51
Female	16	18	66	16	16	68	20	17	62	22	17	61
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 32.78 (.000)			χ^2 = 30.45 (.000)			χ^2 = 32.05 (.000)			χ^2 = 36.64 (.000)	
Marital Status		(n = 2920)			(n = 2919)			(n = 2905)			(n = 2902)	
Married	24	15	61	24	13	63	29	15	57	31	16	54
Never married	21	24	55	19	23	58	23	24	53	27	24	50
Divorced/separated	22	18	61	21	16	64	24	17	60	26	20	54
Widowed	14	16	70	15	15	69	18	15	67	20	15	65
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 25.10 (.000)			χ^2 = 22.68 (.001)			χ^2 = 27.62 (.000)			χ^2 = 25.17 (.000)	
Education		(n = 2875)			(n = 2874)			(n = 2860)			(n = 2856)	
High school or less	18	17	65	18	17	66	21	16	63	25	17	58
Some college	21	14	64	21	13	66	25	15	60	29	16	56
College grad	34	15	51	34	13	54	40	15	46	37	16	47
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 62.79 (.000)			χ^2 = 69.82 (.000)			χ^2 = 79.90 (.000)			χ^2 = 35.17 (.000)	
Occupation		(n = 2061)			(n = 2061)			(n = 2052)			(n = 2056)	
Prof/tech/admin.	30	14	56	31	13	57	36	14	50	34	13	53
Farming/ranching	23	14	62	20	13	67	28	14	59	32	17	51
Laborer	19	18	63	19	16	65	22	16	61	26	17	57
Other	22	17	61	22	14	64	24	15	61	28	16	56
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 22.90 (.001)			χ^2 = 28.73 (.000)			χ^2 = 30.06 (.000)			χ^2 = 12.43 (.053)	

Appendix Table 4 continued.

	County sheriff			***County jail***			***County road superintendent***			***County weed superintendent***		
	Favor	*Don't know*	*Oppose*	*Favor*	*Don't know*	*Oppose*	*Favor*	*Don't know*	*Oppose*	*Favor*	*Don't know*	*Oppose*
						Percentages						
Community Size		(n = 2870)			(n = 2857)			(n = 2879)			(n = 2880)	
Less than 500	19	13	69	33	18	49	28	17	55	37	18	45
500 - 4,999	20	12	68	35	16	49	30	16	54	39	19	42
5,000 and over	26	15	60	41	17	42	36	19	46	42	22	36
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 16.31 (.003)			χ^2 = 12.77 (.012)			χ^2 = 14.61 (.006)			χ^2 = 11.52 (.021)	
Region		(n = 2916)			(n = 2903)			(n = 2924)			(n = 2925)	
Panhandle	25	10	64	36	16	48	33	13	54	38	16	47
North Central	18	12	70	36	17	47	28	17	55	36	19	46
South Central	23	13	64	37	16	47	33	18	49	40	21	39
Northeast	19	15	67	36	19	45	28	17	55	38	19	43
Southeast	20	11	69	34	14	52	30	16	54	42	18	40
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 14.22 (.076)			χ^2 = 9.69 (.287)			χ^2 = 12.91 (.115)			χ^2 = 12.11 (.146)	
Income Level		(n = 2678)			(n = 2670)			(n = 2687)			(n = 2688)	
Under $20,000	17	14	69	27	19	54	24	18	58	29	20	50
$20,000 - $39,999	21	13	66	35	17	49	29	17	55	38	20	42
$40,000 - $59,999	21	11	68	39	15	46	34	15	51	42	17	41
$60,000 and over	27	10	63	49	12	39	41	15	45	53	15	32
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 17.53 (.008)			χ^2 = 61.57 (.000)			χ^2 = 41.30 (.000)			χ^2 = 68.01 (.000)	
Age		(n = 2886)			(n = 2874)			(n = 2894)			(n = 2895)	
19 - 39	20	15	66	34	20	46	31	20	49	41	23	37
40 - 64	22	11	67	41	14	45	33	15	53	42	17	41
65 and over	19	14	66	28	18	54	26	18	57	33	19	48
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 9.38 (.052)			χ^2 = 40.24 (.000)			χ^2 = 19.26 (.001)			χ^2 = 28.97 (.000)	
Gender		(n = 2891)			(n = 2879)			(n = 2899)			(n = 2900)	
Male	23	12	65	39	16	45	33	15	52	42	17	41
Female	15	14	71	28	17	55	25	20	55	32	22	45
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 25.73 (.000)			χ^2 = 33.82 (.000)			χ^2 = 18.35 (.000)			χ^2 = 27.65 (.000)	
Marital Status		(n = 2901)			(n = 2889)			(n = 2909)			(n = 2910)	
Married	21	12	67	38	15	47	31	16	53	41	18	41
Never married	22	18	60	31	26	43	35	22	43	41	26	33
Divorced/separated	26	15	60	33	18	49	29	18	53	36	20	44
Widowed	14	15	71	20	20	60	20	20	60	25	22	53
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 20.09 (.003)			χ^2 = 47.19 (.000)			χ^2 = 24.55 (.000)			χ^2 = 35.57 (.000)	
Education		(n = 2856)			(n = 2843)			(n = 2865)			(n = 2866)	
High school or less	18	14	68	29	18	53	25	17	58	32	20	48
Some college	22	11	67	36	16	48	29	16	55	40	19	42
College grad	25	11	64	47	14	39	42	16	42	52	17	31
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 18.06 (.001)			χ^2 = 60.55 (.000)			χ^2 = 61.62 (.000)			χ^2 = 77.90 (.000)	
Occupation		(n = 2048)			(n = 2045)			(n = 2055)			(n = 2054)	
Prof/tech/admin.	23	10	67	44	12	44	39	16	46	48	17	34
Farming/ranching	21	11	69	42	15	43	31	12	57	44	15	41
Laborer	21	13	66	33	17	50	27	18	55	36	21	43
Other	19	13	69	34	18	49	29	17	54	36	20	44
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 5.47 (.485)			χ^2 = 23.14 (.001)			χ^2 = 28.68 (.000)			χ^2 = 29.09 (.000)	

Appendix Table 5. *Perceptions of the Effects of Consolidation of County Offices by Community Size, Region and Individual Attributes, 1999*

If the following offices were consolidated with a neighboring county, how do you think it will affect their ability to carry out their functions for your county if the consolidation resulted in the office being located in the neighboring county?

	County clerk			**County treasurer**			**County assessor**			**County attorney**		
	Reduce	*Stay the same*	*Improve*	*Reduce*	*Stay the same*	*Improve*	*Reduce*	*Stay the same*	*Improve*	*Reduce*	*Stay the same*	*Improve*
Community Size		(n = 2847)			(n =2846)			(n = 2843)			(n = 2840)	
Less than 500	68	28	4	70	26	4	65	30	6	61	33	6
500 - 4,999	67	29	5	67	28	5	63	30	7	61	30	10
5,000 and over	61	33	6	63	31	6	59	33	8	58	34	7
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 9.95 (.041)			χ^2 = 8.18 (.085)			χ^2 = 6.49 (.166)			χ^2 = 10.82 (.029)	
Region		(n = 2890)			(n = 2889)			(n = 2886)			(n = 2884)	
Panhandle	67	28	6	68	26	6	66	26	8	61	29	10
North Central	72	24	4	71	24	5	65	30	6	59	33	8
South Central	63	31	5	64	31	5	59	33	8	60	32	9
Northeast	67	29	4	68	28	4	64	30	6	62	31	7
Southeast	65	30	5	67	28	5	63	31	6	60	31	9
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 9.97 (.267)			χ^2 = 8.27 (.407)			χ^2 = 9.28 (.319)			χ^2 = 5.11 (.746)	
Income Level		(n = 2667)			(n = 2667)			(n = 2664)			(n = 2660)	
Under $20,000	71	25	4	72	24	5	68	27	5	64	29	8
$20,000 - $39,999	68	28	4	69	26	5	64	29	7	64	30	7
$40,000 - $59,999	65	30	5	66	30	4	61	32	6	57	34	9
$60,000 and over	56	38	6	57	36	6	52	38	10	53	37	10
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 28.73 (.000)			χ^2 = 28.44 (.000)			χ^2 = 32.63 (.000)			χ^2 = 20.30 (.002)	
Age		(n = 2860)			(n = 2859)			(n = 2856)			(n = 2854)	
19 - 39	63	32	5	65	30	5	61	32	7	60	34	6
40 - 64	65	30	5	66	29	5	61	32	7	58	32	9
65 and over	72	24	4	72	24	4	69	26	6	66	27	7
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 16.02 (.003)			χ^2 = 11.67 (.020)			χ^2 = 14.44 (.006)			χ^2 = 16.60 (.002)	
Gender		(n = 2865)			(n = 2864)			(n = 2861)			(n = 2859)	
Male	64	31	6	65	29	5	61	32	8	58	33	9
Female	72	25	3	72	25	3	68	27	5	67	27	6
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 17.65 (.000)			χ^2 = 14.27 (.001)			χ^2 = 16.55 (.000)			χ^2 = 24.38 (.000)	
Marital Status		(n = 2874)			(n = 2873)			(n = 2870)			(n = 2868)	
Married	66	29	5	67	28	5	62	31	7	60	32	9
Never married	63	31	6	63	31	6	58	35	7	57	35	8
Divorced/separated	64	31	5	65	30	5	63	31	6	63	30	8
Widowed	73	24	3	74	24	3	73	25	2	71	24	4
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 7.98 (.239)			χ^2 = 7.28 (.295)			χ^2 = 18.24 (.006)			χ^2 = 15.78 (.015)	
Education		(n = 2833)			(n = 2832)			(n = 2829)			(n = 2827)	
High school or less	70	26	4	71	25	4	68	27	5	65	29	6
Some college	69	27	4	70	25	4	65	28	7	61	31	9
College grad	55	38	8	55	37	8	49	40	11	52	36	12
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 52.81 (.000)			χ^2 = 56.85 (.000)			χ^2 = 73.07 (.000)			χ^2 = 42.89 (.000)	
Occupation		(n = 2039)			(n = 2040)			(n = 2038)			(n = 2036)	
Prof/tech/admin.	60	33	7	60	33	7	56	35	10	58	34	9
Farming/ranching	65	31	4	68	29	4	61	33	6	57	34	8
Laborer	70	26	5	71	24	5	67	27	6	64	28	7
Other	66	31	3	68	29	3	65	31	4	61	32	7
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 19.37 (.004)			χ^2 = 25.50 (.000)			χ^2 = 26.13 (.000)			χ^2 = 6.48 (.372)	

Appendix Table 5 continued.

	County sheriff			County jail			County road superintendent			County weed superintendent		
	Reduce	*Stay the same*	*Improve*	*Reduce*	*Stay the same*	*Improve*	*Reduce*	*Stay the same*	*Improve*	*Reduce*	*Stay the same*	*Improve*
						Percentages						
Community Size		(n = 2846)			(n =2817)			(n = 2844)			(n = 2837)	
Less than 500	76	18	6	54	35	11	61	29	10	52	36	12
500 - 4,999	75	19	6	54	33	13	60	30	10	49	38	13
5,000 and over	70	23	7	52	35	13	52	37	11	43	43	14
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 7.35 (.119)			χ^2 = 2.35 (.672)			χ^2 = 13.32 (.010)			χ^2 = 10.39 (.034)	
Region		(n = 2892)			(n = 2860)			(n = 2888)			(n = 2881)	
Panhandle	74	20	7	56	32	12	58	30	12	50	37	13
North Central	75	19	6	54	34	12	62	28	10	54	33	13
South Central	74	20	6	53	35	13	57	34	10	48	40	13
Northeast	75	19	6	53	36	12	61	30	9	51	38	11
Southeast	75	19	7	55	32	13	58	30	12	46	40	14
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 1.09 (.998)			χ^2 = 3.43 (.904)			χ^2 = 10.20 (.252)			χ^2 = 9.49 (.303)	
Income Level		(n = 2667)			(n = 2643)			(n = 2666)			(n = 2660)	
Under $20,000	75	19	6	60	31	9	62	29	10	55	36	10
$20,000 - $39,999	76	18	6	55	33	12	62	29	10	51	36	13
$40,000 - $59,999	74	20	6	52	35	12	56	35	10	46	41	12
$60,000 and over	70	23	7	43	40	17	49	38	13	39	45	17
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 6.51 (.368)			χ^2 = 34.92 (.000)			χ^2 = 28.64 (.000)			χ^2 = 32.78 (.000)	
Age		(n = 2862)			(n = 2832)			(n = 2859)			(n = 2852)	
19 - 39	76	18	6	55	33	12	57	34	9	47	41	12
40 - 64	74	20	7	49	36	14	56	32	11	46	40	14
65 and over	75	20	6	61	30	8	65	26	9	58	32	10
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 2.01 (.733)			χ^2 = 33.61 (.000)			χ^2 = 18.66 (.001)			χ^2 = 35.13 (.000)	
Gender		(n = 2867)			(n = 2835)			(n = 2863)			(n = 2856)	
Male	73	21	7	51	36	13	57	31	12	47	39	14
Female	79	16	5	61	29	10	62	30	8	53	37	10
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 12.02 (.002)			χ^2 = 26.37 (.000)			χ^2 = 11.95 (.003)			χ^2 = 12.01 (.002)	
Marital Status		(n = 2876)			(n = 2844)			(n = 2872)			(n = 2865)	
Married	75	19	6	53	35	13	59	31	11	49	38	13
Never married	67	25	8	50	40	10	51	35	14	41	43	16
Divorced/separated	69	21	10	55	31	15	57	33	11	49	38	13
Widowed	79	17	4	67	26	8	65	30	5	59	35	6
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 15.02 (.020)			χ^2 = 22.52 (.001)			χ^2 = 14.91 (.021)			χ^2 = 19.62 (.003)	
Education		(n = 2834)			(n = 2806)			(n = 2832)			(n = 2825)	
High school or less	77	18	5	60	31	9	65	27	8	56	34	10
Some college	75	18	7	54	34	13	59	30	11	49	38	14
College grad	69	23	8	42	40	18	47	38	15	37	45	18
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 18.31 (.001)			χ^2 = 57.59 (.000)			χ^2 = 62.37 (.000)			χ^2 = 66.63 (.000)	
Occupation		(n = 2043)			(n = 2027)			(n = 2042)			(n = 2040)	
Prof/tech/admin.	73	21	6	48	38	14	51	37	12	40	45	15
Farming/ranching	77	17	5	51	35	14	63	27	11	50	37	14
Laborer	75	18	7	58	33	10	61	30	8	52	36	11
Other	76	18	5	54	33	13	57	33	10	49	39	13
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 4.74 (.578)			χ^2 = 11.55 (.073)			χ^2 = 20.43 (.002)			χ^2 = 17.92 (.006)	

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