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Nebraska's Rural Communities: Current Views and Strategies for the Future

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CENTER FOR APPLIED RURAL INNOVATION

A Research Report*

Nebraska's Rural Communities: Current Views and Strategies for the Future

2000 Nebraska Rural Poll Results

John C. Allen
Rebecca Filkins
Sam Cordes

Nebraska
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Center Research Report 00-3, August 2000.

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All of the Center's research reports detailing Nebraska Rural Poll results are located on the Center's World Wide Web page at http://www.ianr.unl.edu/rural/ruralpoll.htm.

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Executive Summary

Results from the 1999 Nebraska Rural Poll indicated that the future of Nebraska's rural communities is of continuing concern and interest. When asked their preferences for the future, the majority of rural Nebraskans indicated they would prefer to see the smallest communities continue to exist, an evenly dispersed rural population, and the traditional variety of businesses in rural communities. Yet, less than one-half expected these trends to actually occur in the future. Given that, how do rural Nebraskans feel about their community and the services available? Which economic development strategies do they feel would be effective in their community? Do their perceptions differ by the size of their community, the region in which they live or their occupation?

This report details results of 4,536 responses to the 2000 Nebraska Rural Poll, the fifth annual effort to take the pulse of rural Nebraskans. Respondents were asked a series of questions about their community. Trends are examined by comparing data from the four previous polls to this year's results. In addition to those items, respondents were asked to rate how effective various economic development strategies would be for their communities as well as which of these they would be willing to pay additional taxes for. For all questions, comparisons are made among different subgroups of the respondents, e.g., comparisons by community size, region, age, occupation, etc. Based on these analyses, some key findings emerged:

- ***The proportion of rural Nebraskans believing their community has remained the same has increased over time.*** In 1996, 38 percent felt their community had stayed the same. This has increased to 50 percent in 2000. The proportion believing their community has changed for the better has decreased from 38 percent in 1996 to 33 percent this year. Similarly, the proportion believing their community has changed for the worse has decreased over time (from 23 percent to 18 percent).

- ***Persons living in larger communities were more likely than those living in smaller communities to believe their community has changed for the better during the past year.*** Approximately 40 percent of those living in communities with populations of 5,000 or more believed their community had improved during the past year, while only 21 percent of those living in communities with less than 500 people shared this opinion.

- ***Respondents living in the Panhandle were more likely than those living in other parts of the state to believe their community had changed for the better.*** Forty-one percent of the Panhandle residents believed their community had changed for the better during the past year, compared to only 26 percent of those living in the North Central region.

- ***The majority of rural Nebraskans believe their communities are friendly, trusting and supportive.*** Sixty-eight percent view their community as friendly, 59 percent say it is trusting and 60 percent rate their community as being supportive.

- ***Over one-third of rural Nebraskans are dissatisfied with the following services and amenities in their community: entertainment, retail shopping, restaurants, city/village government and streets.*** Services that had the highest satisfaction ratings included library services, parks and recreation, education (K - 12) and basic medical care services.

- ***Persons living in smaller communities were more likely than those living in larger communities to report being dissatisfied with the law enforcement in their community.*** Forty percent of the persons living in communities with less than 500 people were dissatisfied with their community's law enforcement, while only 22 percent of those living in communities with populations of 5,000 or more shared this opinion.

- ***Only three percent of the respondents are planning to move from their community in the next year.*** This proportion has remained fairly stable over the past three years. Of those planning to move, 52 percent were planning to stay in Nebraska, with 15 percent planning to move to either Lincoln or Omaha and 37 percent planning to move to some other part of the state. Forty-eight percent were planning to leave the state.

- ***At least one-half of rural Nebraskans believe the following development strategies would be effective in their communities: enhancing the educational system (K - 12), developing affordable housing, providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs, and developing distance learning opportunities.*** At least one-third thought that developing retail shopping centers and developing the community into a residential community would be ineffective strategies for their community.

- ***Persons living in larger communities were more likely than those living in smaller communities to believe that most of the strategies would be effective for their community.*** However, residents of smaller communities were more likely than residents in larger communities to believe that developing their community into a residential community would be effective.

- ***Some regional differences were detected in the perceived effectiveness of most of the development strategies.*** The overall pattern did not differ dramatically by region, though. Enhancing the educational system and developing affordable housing were seen as important strategies across all five regions. However, promoting tourism ranked fairly high in terms of its effectiveness in the Panhandle, North Central and South Central regions; but was ranked much lower by those in the Northeast and Southeast regions. Also, developing industrial parks was ranked fairly high by Southeast residents but was ranked much lower by those in the Panhandle and North Central regions. Finally, the strategy of developing residential communities was viewed more positively by those in the Southeast region in comparison to those living in the other four regions.

- ***Approximately one-third of the respondents indicated they were unwilling to pay***

additional taxes for any of the strategies listed. Of those that chose at least one strategy they were willing to pay for, 61 percent reported they would pay additional taxes for enhancing the educational system (K - 12) in their community. Approximately one-third were willing to pay for developing affordable housing in their community (34%) and emphasizing job creation in nonagricultural industries (30%).

Introduction

During the past decade, many of Nebraska's nonmetropolitan counties (62%) have experienced depopulation.[1] When communities lose population, they are typically pressured to consolidate many of their services and government offices. But at the same time, improvements in transportation and telecommunications technology have presented many opportunities for rural communities to participate in the global economy. These improvements can diminish the isolation and geographical barriers rural areas have faced in the past.

In last year's Nebraska Rural Poll, the majority of rural Nebraskans indicated that in the future they would prefer to have the smallest communities continue to exist, an evenly dispersed rural population and rural communities with the traditional variety of businesses. Yet less than one-half expected these trends to occur in the future. This indicates that the future of Nebraska's rural communities is of continuing concern and interest.

Given the above, how do rural Nebraskans feel about their community? Do they think their community has changed for the better or worse during the past year? Are rural Nebraskans satisfied with the services and amenities their community provides? Which economic development strategies do they feel would be effective in their community? Which development strategies are rural citizens willing to pay additional taxes or fees for? Do respondents' ratings of their community differ by community size, region, occupation or age?

This paper provides a detailed analysis of these questions. It also examines changes over time in rural Nebraskans' perceptions of their community.

The 2000 Nebraska Rural Poll is the fifth annual effort to take the pulse of rural Nebraskans. Respondents were asked a series of questions about their community and their satisfaction with services and amenities in their community. Trends will be examined by comparing the data from the four previous polls to this year's results. In addition to these items, a new section was added this year that asked respondents to rate how effective they believe various economic development strategies would be for their communities.

Methodology and Respondent Profile

This study is based on 4,536 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 6,700 randomly selected households. Metropolitan counties not included in the sample were Cass, Dakota, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy and Washington. The 14 page questionnaire included questions pertaining to well-being, community, work, rural economic development, retail shopping and the future of agriculture. This paper reports only results from the community and rural economic development portions of the

[1] Source: "Nebraska's Pattern of Population Change in the 1990s" by William Scheideler, a UNL Bureau of Business Research Special Population Report

survey.

A 67% response rate was achieved using the total design method (Dillman, 1978). The sequence of steps used was:

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 53 years of age. Ninety-five percent were married (Appendix Table 1[2]) and seventy-four percent lived within the city limits of a town or village. On average, respondents had lived in Nebraska 45 years and had lived in their current community 30 years. Fifty percent were living in or near towns or villages with populations less than 5,000.

Forty-seven percent of the respondents reported their approximate household income from all sources, before taxes, for 1999 was below $40,000. Thirty-six percent reported incomes over $50,000. Ninety-four percent had attained at least a high school diploma.

Seventy-three percent were employed in 1999 on a full-time, part-time or seasonal basis. Nineteen percent were retired. Thirty-seven percent of those employed reported working in a professional/technical or administrative occupation. Eight percent indicated they were farmers or ranchers. When jointly considering the occupation of the respondent and their spouse/partner, 13 percent of the employed are involved in farming or ranching.

Trends in Community Ratings, 1996 - 2000

As mentioned earlier, this is the fifth annual Nebraska Rural Poll and therefore comparisons are made between the data collected this year to the four previous studies. It is important to keep in mind when viewing these comparisons that 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 following 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, same or worse.

One difference in the wording of this question has occurred over the past five 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.

During this five year period there has been a

[2] 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).

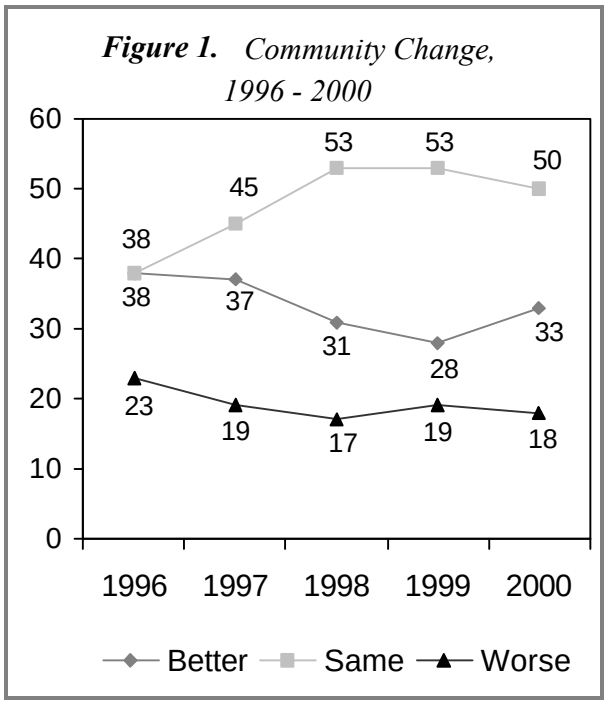


Figure 1. *Community Change, 1996 - 2000*

general upward trend in the proportion of respondents indicating their community has remained the same. Thirty-eight percent of the 1996 respondents felt their community had stayed the same, this increased to 53 percent in both 1998 and 1999 and then decreased slightly to 50 percent this year (Figure 1).

Conversely, the proportion feeling their community has changed for the worse has steadily declined over all the study periods (from 23 percent in 1996 to 18 percent in 2000). The proportion feeling their community has changed for the better has also declined over time. Thirty-eight percent of the 1996 respondents felt their community had changed for the better. This steadily decreased to 28 percent in 1999. However, it increased to 33 percent this year.

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 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 remained relatively stable between 1996 and 1999 and then decreased in 2000. Approximately 73 percent of the respondents in the first four studies felt their community was friendly.[3] This dropped to 68 percent this year.

The proportion viewing their community as trusting increased from 62 percent in 1996 to 66 percent in 1999. It then dropped to 59 percent this year. A similar pattern occurs with the proportion who rate their community as supportive. The proportion that believed their community was supportive increased from 62 percent in 1996 to 65 percent in 1999, then dropped to 60 percent in 2000.

Plans to Leave the Community

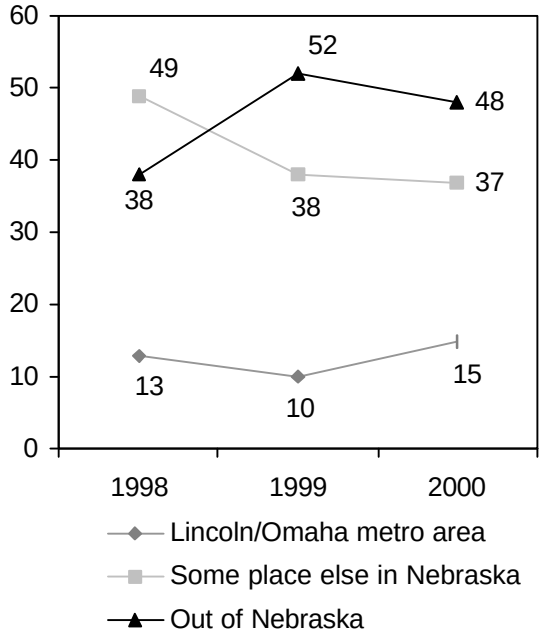
To determine rural Nebraskans' migration intentions, respondents were asked, "Do you plan to move from your community in the next year?" This question was only included

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

in the studies starting in 1998. The proportion planning to leave their community has remained relatively stable during the past three years. Approximately three percent of the respondents each year indicated they were planning to leave their community in the next year. In 1998 and 1999, approximately 88 percent stated they were not planning to move. This proportion increased to 91 percent this year. Similarly, approximately eight percent in both 1998 and 1999 were undecided, compared to six percent in 2000.

The expected destination for those planning to move has changed over time (Figure 2). In 1998, 62 percent of those planning to move intended to stay in Nebraska, with 13 percent planning to move to either Lincoln or Omaha and 49 percent planning to move to another part of the state. In 1999, only 48 percent of the movers planned to stay in the state; 10 percent were planning to move to the metropolitan area of the state and 38 percent were heading to another part of the state. Fifty-two percent planned to move out of Nebraska. This year, 52 percent of the movers planned to stay in the state. Fifteen percent were planning to move to either Lincoln or Omaha and 37 percent were considering another area of the state. Forty-eight percent planned to move from the state.

Figure 2. *Expected Destination of Those Planning to Move: 1998 - 2000*



Satisfaction with Community Services and Amenities

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with various community services and amenities in all five studies. However, the respondents in 1996 were also asked about the availability of these services. Therefore, comparisons will only be made between the last four studies conducted, 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 satisfied with the service each year. The rank ordering of these items has remained relatively stable over the four years. In addition, many of the proportions remained fairly consistent between the years.

The Community and Its Attributes in 2000

In this section, the 2000 data on respondents' evaluations of their communities and its attributes are first summarized and then examined in terms of

Table 1. *Proportions of Respondents "Very Satisfied" with Each Service, 1997 - 2000*

Service/Amenity	*2000*	*1999*	*1998*	*1997*
Library services	43	40	41	44
Education (K - 12)	32	36	33	35
Parks and recreation	31	30	29	34
Sewage disposal	26	28	23	31
Basic medical care services	26	27	27	31
Senior centers	25	27	25	31
Water disposal	24	26	21	29
Solid waste disposal	22	24	19	25
Nursing home care	20	25	24	27
Law enforcement	19	19	17	22
Housing	16	19	14	17
Highways and bridges	16	18	15	NA
Restaurants	14	17	16	19
Day care services	13	16	15	17
Streets	12	16	12	NA
Head start programs	12	13	12	16
Retail shopping	11	12	10	14
Airport	11	NA	NA	NA
Mental health services	9	9	8	11
City/village government	8	11	7	10
County government	7	10	6	9
Entertainment	5	6	6	8
Airline service	4	NA	NA	NA
Rail service	3	3	3	5
Taxi service	3	2	2	3
Bus service	2	3	2	4
Air service	NA	5	5	6
Streets and highways	NA	NA	NA	1

NA = Not asked that particular year

any differences that may exist depending upon the size of the respondent's community, region, income, age, gender, marital status, education and occupation.

Community Change

One-half (50%) of the respondents felt their community had stayed the same during the past year, 33 percent said their community had changed for the better and 18 percent believed it had changed for the worse (see Figure 1).

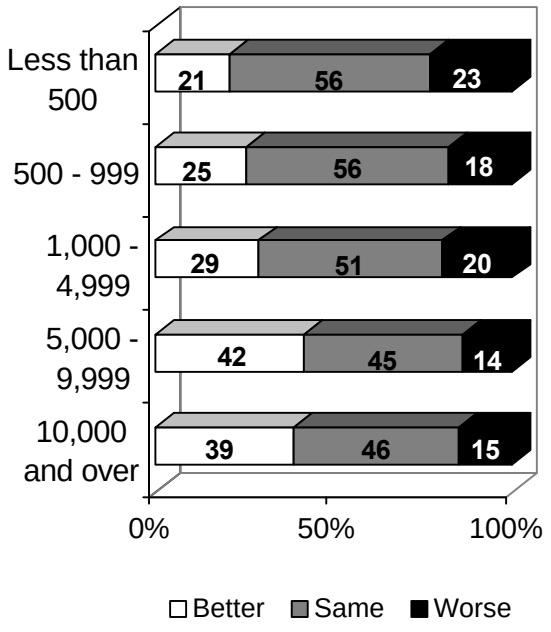
When examining the responses by various demographic subgroups, many differences

were detected in respondents' perceptions of the change in their community. Differences were detected by community size, region, household income, age, education and occupation (Appendix Table 2).

Respondents living in larger communities were more likely than those living in smaller communities to believe their community had changed for the better during the past year. Approximately 40 percent of those living in communities with populations of at least 5,000 felt their community had improved during the year, while only 21 percent of those living in communities with less than 500 people shared this opinion (Figure 3).

When examining the responses given by different income groups, those with higher incomes were more likely than those with lower incomes to say their community had changed for the better. Forty-six percent of those with household incomes of $75,000 or more felt their community had changed for the better during the past year, while only 26 percent of those with incomes under $20,000 felt the same.

Figure 3. *Perceptions of Community Change by Community Size*



Regional differences were also detected. Persons living in the Panhandle were more likely than those living in other regions of the state to feel their community had improved during the past year. Forty-one percent of those living in this region said their community had changed for the better, compared to only 26 percent of those living in the North Central region of the state (see Appendix Figure 1 for the counties included in each region).

Of the occupation groups, those with service occupations were the group most likely to believe their community had changed for the better during the past year. Thirty-eight percent of those with this type of occupation believed their community had improved during the past year, compared to only 21 percent of the farmers and ranchers.

With respect to age and education, the youngest respondents and those with college degrees were the groups most likely to believe their community had changed for the better during the past year.

Community Social Dimensions

In addition to asking about the changes they saw occurring in their community, respondents were also asked to rate the social dimensions of their community. They were

asked if they would describe their communities as friendly or unfriendly, trusting or distrusting, and supportive or hostile. Overall, respondents rated their community as friendly (68%), trusting (59%) and supportive (60%).

Respondents' ratings of their community on these dimensions differed by some of the demographic and community characteristics (Appendix Table 3). Respondents with sales occupations as well as farmers/ranchers were more likely than those with other occupations to view their community as friendly. Seventy-two percent of the respondents with these types of occupations rated their communities as friendly, compared to only 54 percent of those who classified their occupations as "other."

The other groups most likely to view their community as being friendly include: those living in the North Central region of the state, persons with higher incomes and those

Table 2. *Summary of Groups Most Likely to View Their Community Positively*

	Groups More Likely to Agree	Groups Less Likely to Agree
Town has changed for the better	Larger communities	Smaller communities
	Higher incomes	Lower incomes
	Panhandle residents	North Central residents
	Service occupations	Farmers/ranchers
	Younger respondents	Older respondents
	Those with college degrees	Those with H.S. diploma
Community is friendly	North Central residents	Northeast residents
	Higher incomes	Lower incomes
	Those with college degree	Those with no H.S. diploma
	Farmers/ranchers & sales	Other occupations
Community is trusting	Smaller communities	Larger communities
	North Central residents	South Central residents
	Older respondents	Younger respondents
	Males	Females
	Those with more education	Those with less education
	Farmers/ranchers	Other occupations
Community is supportive	Smaller communities	Larger communities
	Older respondents	Those age 40 - 64
	Those not married	Married respondents
	Those with more education	Those with less education
	Professional occupations	Other occupations

with higher educational levels.

Farmers and ranchers were the occupational group most likely to view their community as being trusting. Sixty-four percent of the farmers and ranchers rated their community as trusting, compared to only 42 percent of those who classified their occupations as "other."

Respondents living in smaller communities were more likely than those living in larger communities to view their community as trusting. Sixty-eight percent of those living in communities with populations ranging from 500 to 999 said their community was trusting, compared to 54 percent of the respondents living in communities with populations of 10,000 or more.

Other groups most likely to view their community as trusting include: those living in the North Central region, older respondents, males, and those with higher educational levels.

Respondents with professional occupations were more likely than those with different occupations to view their community as being supportive. Sixty-two percent of those with professional occupations said their community was supportive, compared to 45 percent of those who classified their occupation as "other." Other groups most likely to view their community as supportive include: those living in communities with populations ranging from 500 to 999, the older respondents, those who are not married, and those with higher educational levels.

Satisfaction with Community Services and Amenities

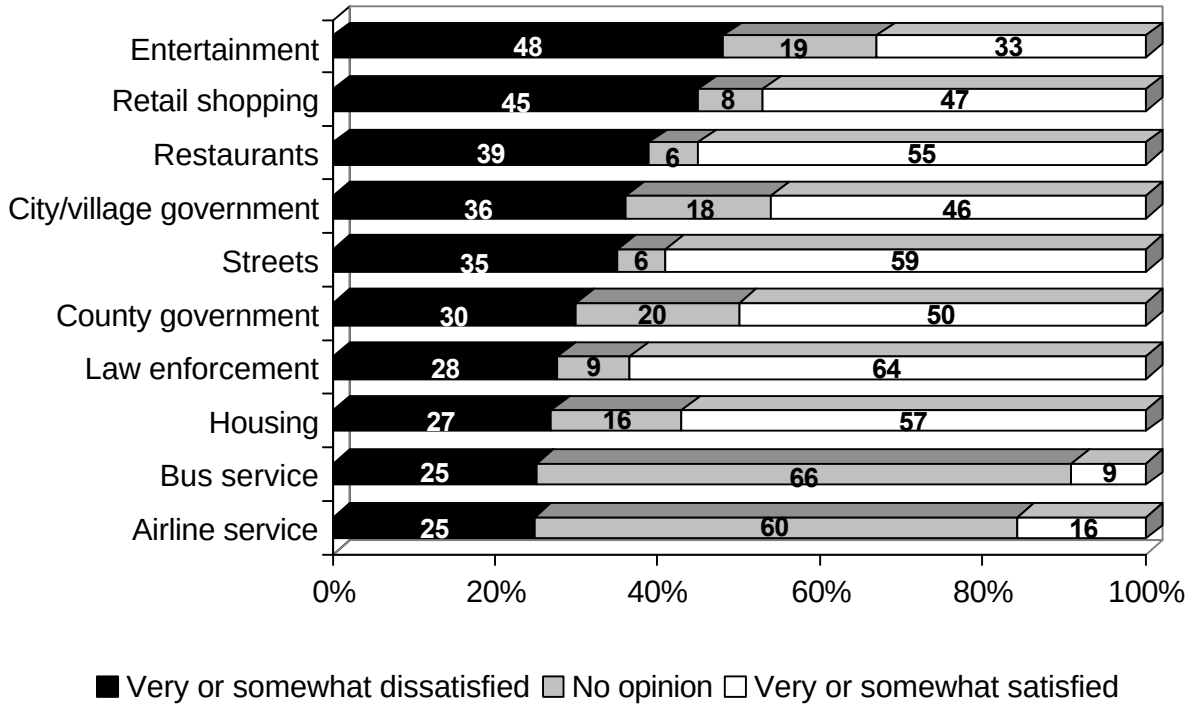
Satisfaction with community services and amenities can be an important determinant of a person's satisfaction with their community as a whole. To gauge rural residents' satisfaction levels with services and amenities, they were asked to rate how satisfied they were with 26 services and amenities, taking into consideration availability, cost and quality.

The ten services/amenities with the highest combined percentage of "very dissatisfied" or "somewhat dissatisfied" responses are shown in Figure 4. Respondents were most dissatisfied with entertainment (48%), retail shopping (45%), restaurants (39%), city/village government (36%) and streets (35%). The four services/amenities respondents were most satisfied with (based on the combined percentage of "very satisfied" and "somewhat satisfied" responses) were library services (79%), parks and recreation (77%), education (K - 12) (73%) and basic medical care services (72%) (Appendix Table 4).

The ten services with the greatest dissatisfaction (those shown in Figure 4) were analyzed by community size, region and various individual attributes (Appendix Table 5). Dissatisfaction with entertainment differed by all the characteristics included in the table.

Younger respondents were more likely than older respondents to be dissatisfied with entertainment. Fifty-nine percent of those

Figure 4. *Ten Services and Amenities with Greatest Dissatisfaction*



age 19 to 29 were dissatisfied with entertainment in their community. Only 30 percent of those age 65 and older felt the same.

Those with higher incomes were more likely than those with lower incomes to express dissatisfaction with entertainment. Approximately 54 percent of those with incomes of $40,000 or more were dissatisfied with entertainment, compared to only 35 percent of those with incomes under $20,000.

Other groups more likely to be dissatisfied with entertainment include: persons living in communities with populations ranging from 500 to 4,999, those living in the North Central region, females, those who are married, persons with higher educational levels and persons with professional occupations.

These same groups were also most likely to be dissatisfied with both retail shopping and restaurants. However, the regional group most likely to express dissatisfaction with the restaurants in their community were those living in the Southeast part of the state. Also, the marital groups did not exhibit statistically significant differences in their dissatisfaction with either retail shopping or restaurants.

Dissatisfaction with their city/village government differed by all the characteristics except gender and marital status. Persons living in larger communities were more likely

than those living in smaller communities to be dissatisfied with their city/village government. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents living in communities with populations of 5,000 or more were dissatisfied with their city/village government, compared to 28 percent of those living in communities with less than 500 people.

Persons living in the Panhandle were more likely than those living elsewhere to express dissatisfaction with their city/village government. Forty percent of those living in this region were dissatisfied, compared to 29 percent of those living in the Southeast region of the state.

Other groups most likely to be dissatisfied with city/village government include: those with higher incomes, persons between the ages of 40 and 64, those with less education and the laborers.

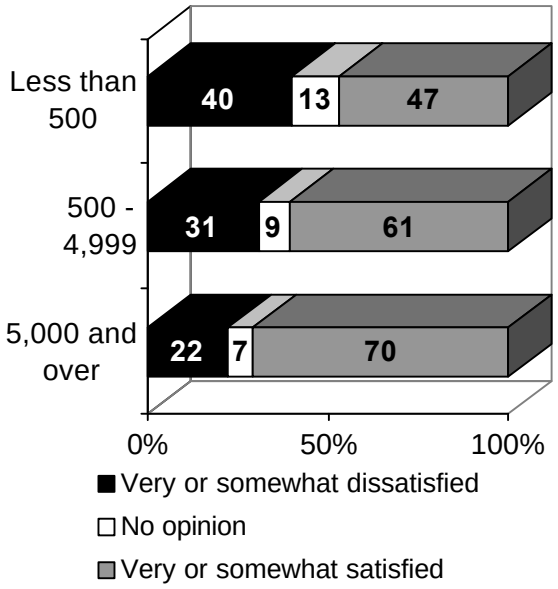
The groups most likely to be dissatisfied with streets in their community include: those living in larger communities, persons living in both the South Central and the Northeast regions of the state, younger respondents, females, persons with some college education and laborers.

Persons living in the Panhandle were more likely than persons living elsewhere to be dissatisfied with their county government. Thirty-five percent of the respondents from this region stated they were dissatisfied with their county government, compared to 25 percent of those living in the Southeast region of the state. Other groups most likely to be dissatisfied with county government include: persons between the ages of 40 to 64, males and persons with some college education (but no degree).

Persons living in smaller communities were more likely than those living in larger communities to be dissatisfied with law enforcement (Figure 5). Forty percent of the people living in communities with less than 500 people reported being dissatisfied with their community's law enforcement, compared to only 22 percent of those living in communities with populations of 5,000 or more. Other groups most likely to be dissatisfied with their community's law enforcement include: the younger respondents, females and those with less education. When comparing occupation groups, those with professional occupations were the group *least* likely to be dissatisfied with law enforcement.

Younger respondents were more likely than

Figure 5. *Satisfaction with Law Enforcement by Community Size*



older respondents to be dissatisfied with housing. Thirty-four percent of the persons between the ages of 19 and 39 were dissatisfied with the housing in their community. Only 18 percent of the persons age 65 and over reported being dissatisfied with housing.

The other groups most likely to be dissatisfied with housing include: persons living in smaller communities, those in the Panhandle region, persons with higher incomes, females, those with some college education (with no degree) and persons who classified their occupation as "other."

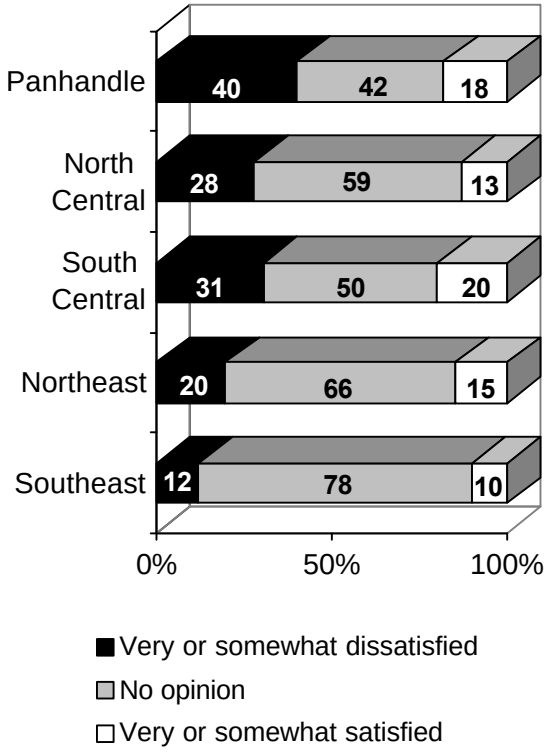
Older persons were more likely than younger respondents to be dissatisfied with the bus service in their community. One-third (33%) of those age 65 and older reported being dissatisfied with bus service, compared to only 12 percent of those between the ages of 19 and 39.

Other groups most likely to report being dissatisfied with their community's bus service include: those living in the larger communities, persons living in the Panhandle, those with lower household incomes, males and persons with some college education (no degree).

Persons living in the Panhandle were more likely than those living in other regions of the state to be dissatisfied with their community's airline service (Figure 6). Forty percent of those living in this region were dissatisfied with the airline service in their community, compared to 12 percent of those living in the Southeast region of the state.

Other groups most likely to be dissatisfied with airline service in their community include: those living in larger communities, persons with higher income levels, older respondents, males, those with a college degree and persons with professional occupations.

Figure 6. *Satisfaction with Airline Service by Region*



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. Answer categories were:

Lincoln/Omaha metro areas, some place in Nebraska outside the Lincoln/Omaha metro areas, or some place other than Nebraska.

Only three percent indicated they were planning to move from their community in the next year, six percent were uncertain and 91 percent had no plans to move in the next year. Of those who were planning to move, 52 percent were planning to remain in Nebraska, with 15 percent planning to move to either Lincoln or Omaha and 37 percent planning to move to another part of the state. Forty-eight percent were planning to leave the state.

Intentions to move from the community differed by region, income, age, gender and occupation (Appendix Table 6). Younger respondents were more likely than older respondents to be planning to move from their community in the next year. Ten percent of those between the ages of 19 and 29 indicated they were planning to move in the next year, compared to only two percent of those age 65 and older.

When comparing regional groups, the respondents living in the Northeast region of the state were the *least* likely to be planning to move from their community in the next year. Ninety-three percent of those living in this region indicated they were not planning to move from their community in the next year, compared to 87 percent of those in the North Central region of the state.

Males were more likely than females to be uncertain about their migration plans. When comparing the income and occupation groups, those with incomes ranging from $30,000 to $39,999 and the skilled laborers were the groups most likely to be either planning to move or uncertain about their plans.

Rural Economic Development

In the 1999 Nebraska Rural Poll, rural Nebraskans were asked their preferences for the communities in rural Nebraska 20 years from now. The majority of the respondents indicated they would like to see the smallest communities (those with less than 500 people) continue to exist, the rural population evenly dispersed throughout the state and rural communities with the traditional variety of businesses. A new section was added to the survey this year to find out how these preferences can become reality.

Respondents were given a number of development options for communities in rural Nebraska. They were asked, "Within <u>your</u> community, how effective do you think each would be in ensuring that over the long run your community has a stable or growing population, a variety of businesses and a reasonable number of high quality jobs?" For each development option, they were given a five-point scale on which to indicate how effective they felt each would be, where 1 denoted "very ineffective" and 5 indicated "very effective."

A follow-up question was then asked to measure their willingness to pay for these development strategies. The specific question asked was as follows, "Of the development options in Q11 you viewed as effective, which would you be <u>most willing</u> to pay for through additional taxes, user fees,

bond issues or other forms of public financing?" They were allowed to write in up to four strategies.

At least one-half of rural Nebraskans believe the following development options would be effective in their communities: enhancing the educational system (K - 12), developing affordable housing, providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs, and developing distance learning opportunities (Figure 7).

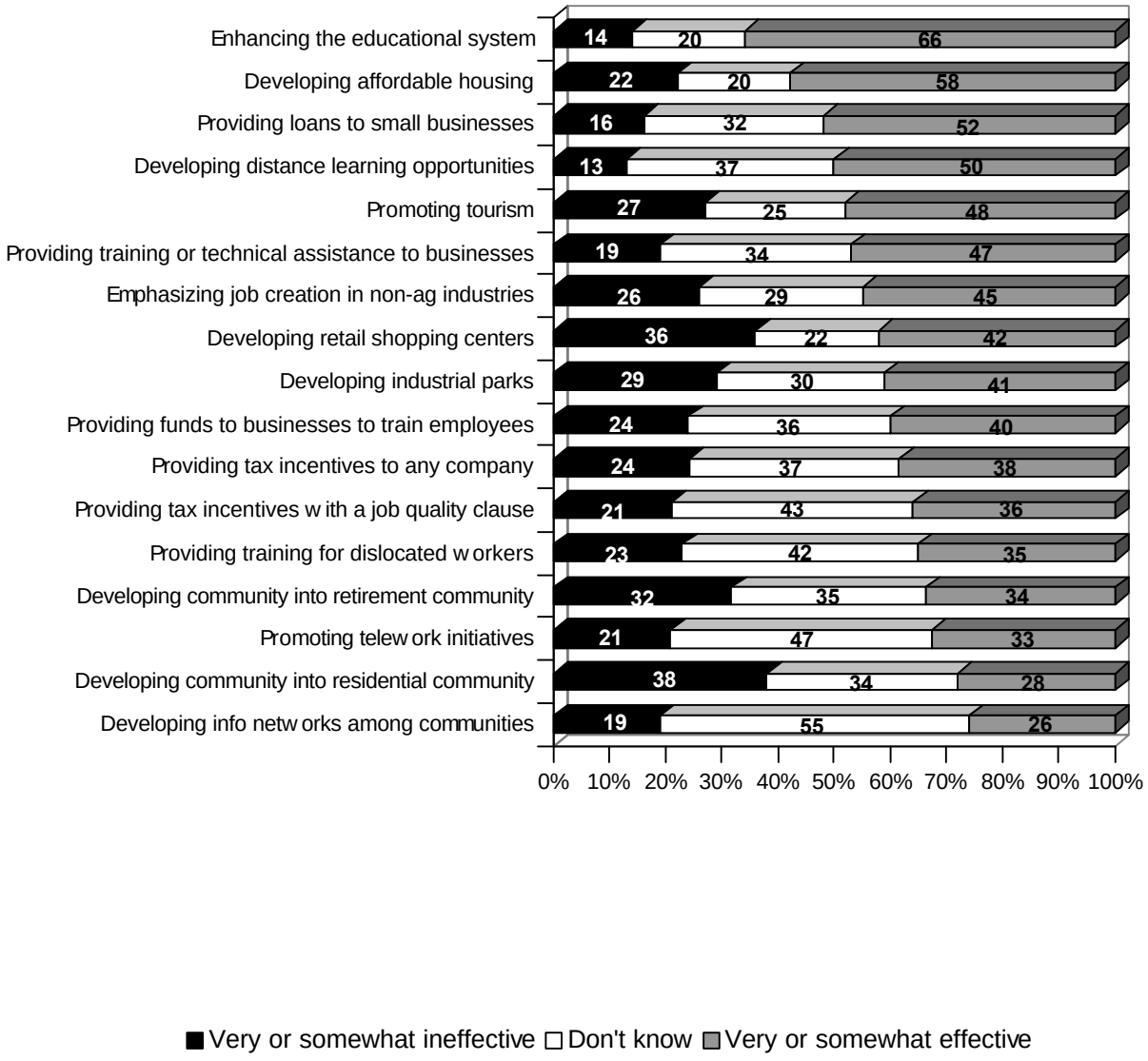
The responses to this question were analyzed by both community size and region (Appendix Table 7). When examining responses by community size, several interesting findings emerged. First, enhancing the educational system was viewed as the most important rural development strategy regardless of community size. Second, the proportion of respondents perceiving the various strategies to be effective generally increased as the size of the community increased. In other words, most of the 17 strategies were viewed as being more effective as the size of the community in which the respondent lived increased.

However, there were exceptions to this trend. The proportion of respondents who viewed the following four strategies as being effective was quite similar regardless of community size: enhancing the educational system; providing loans to small businesses; developing distance learning opportunities; and promoting telework initiatives. Additionally, there was one case in which the proportion of respondents viewing a strategy as being effective decreased as the size of community increased. This was the case for the strategy that focused on developing the community into a residential community.

Third, the relative ranking of several of the strategies varied considerably across the five different sizes of communities. The most dramatic case involved the strategy of developing retail shopping centers. This was ranked as the second most effective strategy by those respondents living in the largest communities but the second least effective strategy by those living in the smallest communities. Similarly, developing industrial parks was seen as a relatively effective strategy by those living in the largest communities but relatively ineffective by those living in smaller communities. Conversely, developing the community into a residential community and promoting telework initiatives was ranked higher among the 17 alternative strategies by those living in smaller communities than by those living in larger communities.

When the 17 strategies were analyzed by region the overall pattern did not differ dramatically. For example, enhancing the educational effectiveness was seen as the most effective strategy in each of the five regions and developing affordable housing was also seen as quite important across all five regions. However, there were three instances in which the ranking did vary quite dramatically across regions. Promoting tourism ranked fairly high in terms of its effectiveness by those living in the Panhandle, South Central and North Central regions; but was ranked much lower by those living in the Northeast and Southeast regions. Developing industrial parks ranked fairly high by those living in the Southeast

Figure 7. *Perceived Effectiveness of Different Community Development Strategies*



region but was ranked fairly low by those living in the Panhandle and North Central regions. Finally, the strategy of developing residential communities was viewed more positively by those living in the Southeast region in comparison to those living in any of the other four regions.

The data were also analyzed by size of community for each of the five regions. The variations among the five different sizes of communities closely paralleled that found when the responses were analyzed by community size for the entire sample (see earlier discussion). However, there were three significant exceptions to the statewide pattern. In the statewide data, the largest communities (those with populations of 10,000 or more) ranked developing industrial parks fairly high in terms of its effectiveness. However, the community of this size in the Panhandle (Scottsbluff) ranked this strategy fairly low. Similarly, the largest community in the Northeast region (Norfolk) ranked promoting tourism fairly low in terms of its effectiveness but this strategy was ranked fairly high by all other communities of this size across the state.

The strategy of developing the community into a residential community was ranked fairly high by Southeast residents living in communities with populations ranging from 1,000 to 4,999. However, when all the regions are combined, this strategy was ranked fairly low by communities of this size.

Table 3. *Proportions Willing to Pay for Each Strategy*

Strategy	Proportion*
Enhancing the educational system (K - 12)	61
Developing affordable housing	34
Emphasizing job creation in nonagricultural industries	30
Providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs	24
Developing retail shopping centers	23
Providing tax incentives only to businesses that meet a job quality requirement	20
Developing distance learning opportunities	19
Providing funds to businesses to train their employees or upgrade their skills	18
Providing training or technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs	17
Providing job training for dislocated workers	16
Promoting telework initiatives	14
Providing tax incentives to any company that locates in your community	14
Promoting tourism	14
Developing industrial parks	13
Developing your community into a retirement community	9
Developing your community into a residential community	7
Developing information networks among communities	6

***** Proportions were calculated out of those choosing at least one strategy (65% of the total sample).

The respondents were then asked which of the development options they would be most willing to pay for through additional taxes, user fees, bond issues or other forms of public financing. They were allowed to choose up to four strategies. Approximately one-third (35%) of the respondents indicated they were unwilling to pay for any of the strategies listed. Many of these people wrote comments on the survey indicating they felt they already paid enough in taxes or they felt their tax money was not being used wisely now. However, of those that chose at least one strategy (65 percent of the total respondents), 61 percent were willing to pay additional taxes or user fees for enhancing the educational system (K - 12). This was the only strategy that at least one-half of those answering the question were willing to pay additional monies to implement (Table 3).

Conclusion

Rural Nebraskans have very favorable views of their communities. The majority of respondents felt their community had either stayed the same or changed for the better during the past year. In addition, the majority also characterize their communities as friendly, trusting and supportive.

Respondents living in larger communities were more likely than those living in smaller communities to say their community had changed for the better during the past year. But respondents living in smaller communities were more likely to view their community as trusting and supportive. Those living in the smaller communities were also more likely than those living in larger communities to be satisfied with their city/village government.

Overall, when examining satisfaction levels with various services and amenities, rural Nebraskans were most dissatisfied with entertainment, retail shopping, restaurants and city/village government. The services they were most satisfied with included library services, parks and recreation, education (K - 12) and basic medical care services.

Most rural Nebraskans are planning to stay in their current community. Only three percent said they were planning to move from their community in the next year. This proportion has remained stable during the past three years. Just under one-half (48%) of those planning to move said they were going to leave the state.

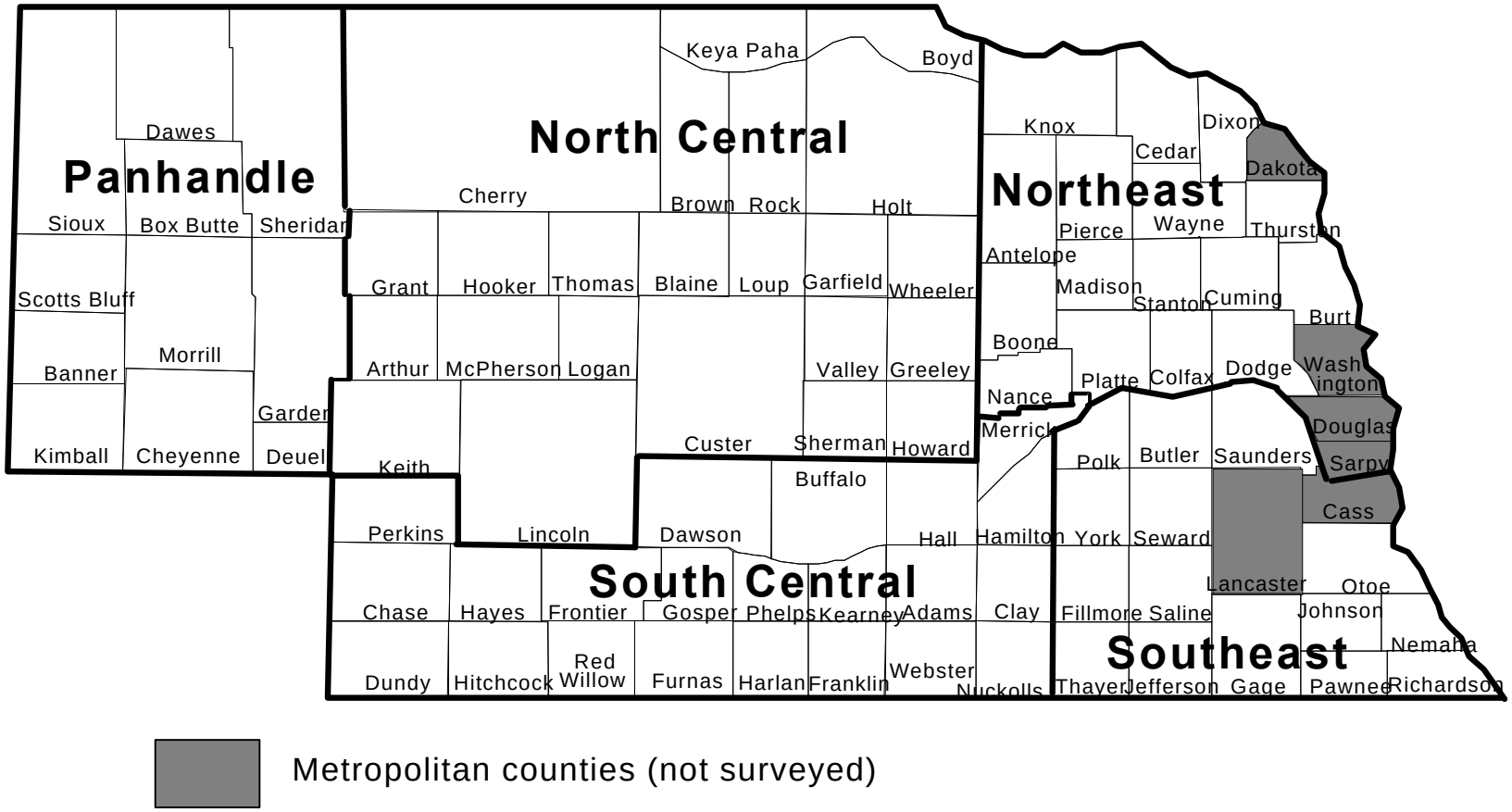
When asked what economic development strategies their communities could use to ensure that over the long run it has a stable or growing population, a variety of businesses and a reasonable number of high quality jobs, most rural Nebraskans believed that strategies that would build capacity among community residents would be the most effective. The strategies they felt would be most effective in their community include enhancing the educational system, developing affordable housing, providing loans to small businesses or entrepreneurs, and developing distance learning opportunities.

When comparing respondents' perceived effectiveness of these development strategies by region and community size, many differences emerged. This suggests that these strategies should not be viewed as

"one-size-fits-all." Communities of various sizes and the five regions of the state differ in what they believe would work best for them.

Overall, these findings support scale appropriate development strategies for rural communities. One caution is that many of the rural residents studied were basically unwilling to invest additional tax dollars for local development. The only strategy that a majority of those responding were willing to pay additional taxes for was enhancing the educational system in their community.

Appendix Figure 1. Regions of Nebraska



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

	2000 Poll	***1999 Poll***	***1998 Poll***	***1997 Poll***	***1990 Census***
Age : [1]					
20 - 39	20%	21%	25%	24%	38%
40 - 64	54%	52%	55%	48%	36%
65 and over	26%	28%	20%	28%	26%
Gender: [2]					
Female	57%	31%	58%	28%	49%
Male	43%	69%	42%	72%	51%
Education: [3]					
Less than 9th grade	2%	3%	2%	5%	10%
9th to 12th grade (no diploma)	4%	5%	3%	5%	12%
High school diploma (or equivalent)	34%	36%	33%	34%	38%
Some college, no degree	28%	25%	27%	25%	21%
Associate degree	9%	9%	10%	8%	7%
Bachelors degree	15%	15%	16%	14%	9%
Graduate or professional degree	9%	8%	9%	9%	3%
Household income: [4]					
Less than $10,000	3%	8%	3%	7%	19%
$10,000 - $19,999	10%	15%	10%	16%	25%
$20,000 - $29,999	15%	18%	17%	19%	21%
$30,000 - $39,999	19%	18%	20%	18%	15%
$40,000 - $49,999	17%	15%	18%	14%	9%
$50,000 - $59,999	15%	9%	12%	10%	5%
$60,000 - $74,999	11%	8%	10%	7%	3%
$75,000 or more	11%	10%	10%	8%	3%
Marital Status: [5]					
Married	95%	76%	95%	73%	64%
Never married	0.2%	7%	0.4%	8%	20%
Divorced/separated	2%	8%	1%	9%	7%
Widowed/widower	4%	10%	3%	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 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			
	Better	*Same*	*Worse*	*Significance*
		Percentages		
Community Size		(n = 4319)		
Less than 500	21	56	23	
500 - 999	25	56	18	
1,000 - 4,999	29	51	20	χ^2 = 101.48
5,000 - 9,999	42	45	14	(.000)
10,000 and up	39	46	15	
Region		(n = 4340)		
Panhandle	41	46	14	
North Central	26	54	20	
South Central	33	48	19	χ^2 = 45.42
Northeast	31	50	19	(.000)
Southeast	36	51	13	
Individual Attributes:				
Income Level		(n = 3975)		
Under $20,000	26	51	23	
$20,000 - $29,999	29	50	21	
$30,000 - $39,999	32	52	16	
$40,000 - $49,999	33	49	18	
$50,000 - $59,999	33	51	16	χ^2 = 63.57
$60,000 - $74,999	37	48	15	(.000)
$75,000 and over	46	40	14	
Age		(n = 4335)		
19 - 29	36	51	12	
30 - 39	34	55	12	
40 - 49	31	48	22	χ^2 = 38.72
50 - 64	33	48	19	(.000)
65 and older	34	50	16	
Gender		(n = 4352)		
Male	33	50	17	χ^2 = 0.32
Female	33	49	18	(.852)
Marital Status		(n = 4359)		
Married	33	50	18	χ^2 = 0.08
Not married	32	50	18	(.961)

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			
	Better	*Same*	*Worse*	*Significance*
Education		(n = 4336)		
No H.S. diploma	31	51	18	
H.S. diploma	29	53	19	
Some college	33	47	20	
Associate degree	31	53	16	$\chi^2 = 40.25$
Bachelors degree	40	46	14	(.000)
Grad/prof degree	39	47	14	
Occupation		(n = 3050)		
Professional/tech/admin.	37	47	16	
Admin. support	32	49	19	
Sales	36	49	15	
Service	38	46	16	
Farming/ranching	21	54	25	
Skilled laborer	29	55	16	$\chi^2 = 49.72$
Manual laborer	23	59	18	(.000)
Other	36	52	12	

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...***			
	Friendly	*No opinion*	*Unfriendly*	*Chi-square (sig.)*	*Trusting*	*No opinion*	*Distrusting*	*Chi-square (sig.)*	*Supportive*	*No opinion*	*Hostile*	*Chi-square (sig.)*
						Percentages						
Community Size		(n = 4301)				(n = 4214)				(n = 4224)		
Less than 500	69	17	14		61	22	17		62	22	16	
500 - 999	72	16	12		68	19	13		69	19	12	
1,000 - 4,999	68	20	12	χ^2 =	61	24	15	χ^2 =	58	27	15	χ^2 =
5,000 - 9,999	70	17	13	13.27	60	22	18	36.59	60	24	15	22.04
10,000 and up	66	22	12	(.103)	54	26	20	(.000)	57	27	16	(.005)
Region		(n = 4317)				(n = 4230)				(n = 4238)		
Panhandle	68	17	15		60	24	17		58	27	16	
North Central	72	17	11		62	22	16		61	23	16	
South Central	69	20	12	χ^2 =	57	24	20	χ^2 =	59	25	17	χ^2 =
Northeast	65	22	13	16.18	58	25	18	15.90	60	26	15	10.69
Southeast	69	20	12	(.040)	61	25	14	(.044)	62	26	12	(.220)
Individual Attributes:												
Income Level		(n = 3970)				(n = 3903)				(n = 3910)		
Under $20,000	65	18	17		59	20	22		58	23	19	
$20,000 - $29,999	66	23	11		59	25	17		58	28	14	
$30,000 - $39,999	65	21	14		58	24	17		58	25	17	
$40,000 - $49,999	69	19	12		58	25	17		61	24	15	
$50,000 - $59,999	70	20	10	χ^2 =	60	24	16	χ^2 =	60	28	12	χ^2 =
$60,000 - $74,999	74	16	10	30.80	61	24	16	11.39	59	28	13	19.42
$75,000 and over	72	17	11	(.002)	57	26	17	(.496)	62	23	15	(.079)
Age		(n = 4316)				(n = 4230)				(n = 4240)		
19 - 29	71	20	9		57	29	15		59	25	16	
30 - 39	70	19	11		58	25	17		61	26	13	
40 - 49	65	22	13	χ^2 =	54	27	19	χ^2 =	55	28	17	χ^2 =
50 - 64	68	19	13	12.46	57	25	18	48.51	57	28	16	46.32
65 and older	70	17	12	(.132)	68	17	15	(.000)	68	19	14	(.000)

Appendix Table 3 continued.

	My community is...				***My community is...***				***My community is...***			
	Friendly	*No opinion*	*Unfriendly*	*Chi-square (sig.)*	*Trusting*	*No opinion*	*Distrusting*	*Chi-square (sig.)*	*Supportive*	*No opinion*	*Hostile*	*Chi-square (sig.)*
Gender		(n = 4329)				(n = 4242)				(n = 4252)		
Male	70	18	12	3.66	61	24	16	7.10	60	25	16	1.29
Female	67	20	13	(.160)	58	24	19	(.029)	60	26	15	(.526)
Marital Status		(n = 4338)		χ^2 =		(n = 4250)		χ^2 =		(n = 4260)		χ^2 =
Married	68	19	12	1.15	59	24	17	1.73	59	26	15	7.91
Not married	66	20	15	(.562)	57	23	21	(.422)	65	17	18	(.019)
Education		(n = 4316)				(n = 4232)				(n = 4241)		
No H.S. diploma	59	23	17		54	25	21		59	24	16	
H.S. diploma	65	21	14		57	24	19		58	24	17	
Some college	67	21	12		60	23	18		59	25	17	
Associate degree	70	20	11	χ^2 =	56	27	17	χ^2 =	58	28	14	χ^2 =
Bachelors degree	75	15	10	39.24	64	23	13	21.13	63	27	10	27.85
Grad/prof degree	74	15	11	(.000)	61	23	16	(.020)	64	24	12	(.002)
Occupation		(n = 3070)				(n = 3041)				(n = 3041)		
Prof/tech/admin.	71	18	12		58	26	17		62	26	13	
Admin. support	66	24	11		56	28	16		56	30	14	
Sales	72	17	11		61	23	17		59	26	16	
Service	69	21	10		60	23	17		59	27	14	
Farming/ranching	72	19	9		64	22	14		59	24	17	
Skilled laborer	63	23	15	χ^2 =	53	27	20	χ^2 =	52	28	20	χ^2 =
Manual laborer	61	23	16	35.63	51	28	21	25.88	56	25	20	33.99
Other	54	33	14	(.001)	42	36	22	(.027)	45	42	13	(.002)

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

Service/Amenity	***Dissatisfied****	***No opinion***	***Satisfied****
		Percentages	
Entertainment	48	19	33
Retail shopping	45	8	47
Restaurants	39	6	55
City/village government	36	18	46
Streets	35	6	59
County government	30	20	50
Law enforcement	28	9	64
Housing	27	16	57
Bus service	25	66	9
Airline service	25	60	16
Rail service	24	66	10
Highways and bridges	22	11	68
Taxi service	19	72	9
Basic medical care services	19	8	72
Airport	18	51	31
Solid waste disposal	17	23	60
Education (K - 12)	16	11	73
Mental health services	15	54	31
Parks and recreation	15	8	77
Day care services	14	41	46
Nursing home care	13	28	59
Sewage disposal	11	25	64
Water disposal	11	27	62
Library services	9	12	79
Senior centers	8	30	62
Head start programs	7	52	40

* 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***			***Restaurants***			***City/village government***		
	Satisfied	*No opinion*	*Dissatisfied*	*Satisfied*	*No opinion*	*Dissatisfied*	*Satisfied*	*No opinion*	*Dissatisfied*	*Satisfied*	*No opinion*	*Dissatisfie*
						Percentages						
Community Size		(n = 4324)			(n = 4339)			(n = 4373)			(n = 4396)	
Less than 500	27	29	43	38	21	42	52	12	36	49	22	28
500 - 4,999	27	20	53	41	9	50	52	7	41	47	19	35
5,000 and over	39	15	46	53	4	42	58	4	37	45	17	39
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 109.44 (.000)			χ^2 = 198.51 (.000)			χ^2 = 55.15 (.000)			χ^2 = 25.69 (.000)	
Region		(n = 4346)			(n = 4359)			(n = 4397)			(n = 4418)	
Panhandle	33	18	49	53	5	41	53	5	42	42	18	40
North Central	33	16	51	37	9	54	59	6	35	44	19	37
South Central	37	17	46	54	8	38	58	6	37	46	16	39
Northeast	33	19	49	43	8	50	57	6	37	47	18	35
Southeast	28	23	49	46	11	43	47	8	45	49	22	29
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 29.35 (.000)			χ^2 = 86.07 (.000)			χ^2 = 35.73 (.000)			χ^2 = 32.99 (.000)	
Income Level		(n = 3994)			(n = 4000)			(n = 4029)			(n = 4050)	
Under $20,000	35	30	35	47	16	38	60	12	29	43	25	32
$20,000 - $39,999	34	20	47	48	7	44	57	6	38	45	18	37
$40,000 - $59,999	31	15	55	44	8	48	51	6	43	46	18	37
$60,000 and over	32	14	54	48	5	47	53	4	43	49	14	38
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 93.63 (.000)			χ^2 = 55.03 (.000)			χ^2 = 60.61 (.000)			χ^2 = 29.08 (.000)	
Age		(n = 4341)			(n = 4355)			(n = 4391)			(n = 4412)	
19 - 39	28	13	59	42	9	49	51	6	43	41	24	35
40 - 64	31	16	53	45	8	48	52	6	42	44	17	39
65 and over	43	28	30	56	9	35	65	7	28	54	16	30
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 221.02 (.000)			χ^2 = 58.98 (.000)			χ^2 = 68.01 (.000)			χ^2 = 55.37 (.000)	
Gender		(n = 4358)			(n = 4371)			(n = 4408)			(n = 4428)	
Male	33	21	46	51	9	40	57	7	36	46	17	37
Female	33	17	50	44	8	48	54	6	41	46	19	35
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 16.54 (.000)			χ^2 = 31.42 (.000)			χ^2 = 16.34 (.000)			χ^2 = 5.36 (.069)	
Marital Status		(n = 4367)			(n = 4381)			(n = 4417)			(n = 4439)	
Married	33	18	49	47	8	45	55	6	39	46	18	36
Not married	39	22	40	50	11	39	59	9	32	51	20	29
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 7.31 (.026)			χ^2 = 3.61 (.164)			χ^2 = 5.05 (.080)			χ^2 = 4.43 (.109)	
Education		(n = 4343)			(n = 4354)			(n = 4390)			(n = 4411)	
High school or less	32	25	44	48	10	42	58	7	35	44	20	36
Some college	33	15	51	46	7	47	54	6	40	43	17	40
College grad	36	13	51	48	7	45	52	5	43	54	17	30
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 76.31 (.000)			χ^2 = 15.50 (.004)			χ^2 = 22.42 (.000)			χ^2 = 38.87 (.000)	
Occupation		(n = 3069)			(n = 3080)			(n = 3096)			(n = 3114)	
Prof/tech/admin.	34	11	56	45	7	48	51	4	45	47	16	37
Farming/ranching	33	23	44	45	13	42	61	8	31	41	28	31
Laborer	26	21	53	47	9	44	53	8	39	39	18	44
Other	32	16	53	45	7	48	53	6	41	45	19	36
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 44.49 (.000)			χ^2 = 15.13 (.019)			χ^2 = 25.15 (.000)			χ^2 = 31.31 (.000)	

* Only the ten services with the highest combined percentage of very or somewhat dissatisfied are included in this table.

Appendix Table 5 continued.

	Streets			County government			Law enforcement			Housing		
	Satisfied	*No opinion*	*Dissatisfied*	*Satisfied*	*No opinion*	*Dissatisfied*	*Satisfied*	*No opinion*	*Dissatisfied*	*Satisfied*	*No opinion*	*Dissatisfie*
						Percentages						
Community Size		(n = 4358)			(n = 4370)			(n = 4362)			(n = 4369)	
Less than 500	55	9	36	52	20	28	47	13	40	45	24	31
500 - 4,999	63	6	31	52	19	29	61	9	31	57	17	26
5,000 and over	58	5	38	49	21	31	70	7	22	60	13	27
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 27.14 (.000)			χ^2 = 4.88 (.300)			χ^2 = 110.30 (.000)			χ^2 = 57.75 (.000)	
Region		(n = 4381)			(n = 4393)			(n = 4385)			(n = 4390)	
Panhandle	60	4	36	47	19	35	63	9	28	51	17	32
North Central	59	7	34	52	18	31	62	9	29	54	17	28
South Central	56	6	38	50	20	30	65	7	28	59	15	25
Northeast	57	5	38	49	21	30	64	9	27	61	14	26
Southeast	67	6	27	52	22	25	63	10	27	55	18	27
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 39.19 (.000)			χ^2 = 17.50 (.025)			χ^2 = 7.66 (.467)			χ^2 = 22.03 (.005)	
Income Level		(n = 4014)			(n = 4024)			(n = 4016)			(n = 4025)	
Under $20,000	56	8	35	50	23	27	60	11	29	53	22	25
$20,000 - $39,999	61	6	33	49	20	31	64	8	28	57	15	28
$40,000 - $59,999	58	6	36	50	19	31	63	9	29	57	17	27
$60,000 and over	61	4	35	51	19	31	68	8	25	61	11	28
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 13.19 (.040)			χ^2 = 6.69 (.350)			χ^2 = 11.84 (.066)			χ^2 = 32.25 (.000)	
Age		(n = 4374)			(n = 4387)			(n = 4379)			(n = 4384)	
19 - 39	57	6	37	43	29	28	62	10	28	50	16	34
40 - 64	58	5	37	48	19	34	62	8	29	56	16	28
65 and over	64	6	30	61	16	23	68	9	24	65	17	18
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 20.50 (.000)			χ^2 = 112.94 (.000)			χ^2 = 15.13 (.004)			χ^2 = 70.70 (.000)	
Gender		(n = 4391)			(n = 4404)			(n = 4396)			(n = 4401)	
Male	60	7	33	49	18	32	64	11	25	60	16	24
Female	59	5	36	51	21	28	63	7	29	55	16	30
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 9.36 (.009)			χ^2 = 11.36 (.003)			χ^2 = 22.07 (.000)			χ^2 = 20.62 (.000)	
Marital Status		(n = 4401)			(n = 4414)			(n = 4406)			(n = 4411)	
Married	59	6	35	50	20	30	64	9	28	57	16	27
Not married	61	6	34	55	20	25	63	7	31	56	16	28
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 0.19 (.910)			χ^2 = 2.44 (.296)			χ^2 = 1.94 (.380)			χ^2 = 0.23 (.890)	
Education		(n = 4376)			(n = 4388)			(n = 4379)			(n = 4386)	
High school or less	59	7	34	49	22	29	62	9	30	56	19	25
Some college	56	5	39	48	19	34	62	9	29	56	15	29
College grad	65	4	31	56	19	25	70	8	23	61	12	27
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 30.60 (.000)			χ^2 = 29.00 (.000)			χ^2 = 21.62 (.000)			χ^2 = 32.41 (.000)	
Occupation		(n = 3082)			(n = 3100)			(n = 3084)			(n = 3093)	
Prof/tech/admin.	59	4	37	48	20	32	66	8	25	59	12	29
Farming/ranching	59	13	28	50	16	34	60	9	31	51	29	21
Laborer	55	6	39	43	24	34	58	11	31	55	18	27
Other	59	6	35	49	22	29	62	8	30	55	14	31
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 30.90 (.000)			χ^2 = 12.10 (.060)			χ^2 = 15.02 (.020)			χ^2 = 49.77 (.000)	

* Only the ten services with the highest combined percentage of very or somewhat dissatisfied are included in this table.

Appendix Table 5 continued.

	Bus service			Airline service		
	Satisfied	*No opinion*	*Dissatisfied*	*Satisfied*	*No opinion*	*Dissatisfied*
			Percentages			
Community Size		(n = 4085)			(n = 4111)	
Less than 500	7	72	22	9	73	18
500 - 4,999	7	71	22	10	73	17
5,000 and over	12	62	27	21	47	32
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 50.96 (.000)			χ^2 = 298.90 (.000)	
Region		(n = 4103)			(n = 4130)	
Panhandle	12	52	36	18	42	40
North Central	9	62	29	13	59	28
South Central	9	66	25	20	50	31
Northeast	11	70	19	15	66	20
Southeast	5	74	21	10	78	12
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 96.20 (.000)			χ^2 = 246.98 (.000)	
Income Level		(n = 3783)			(n = 3807)	
Under $20,000	12	59	29	17	63	20
$20,000 - $39,999	9	65	25	15	64	21
$40,000 - $59,999	9	68	23	15	59	26
$60,000 and over	8	68	24	16	50	33
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 15.53 (.016)			χ^2 = 55.68 (.000)	
Age		(n = 4100)			(n = 4124)	
19 - 39	8	80	12	13	70	17
40 - 64	9	66	26	14	58	28
65 and over	13	55	33	21	54	25
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 139.81 (.000)			χ^2 = 76.65 (.000)	
Gender		(n = 4111)			(n = 4139)	
Male	10	63	27	16	56	28
Female	9	69	23	15	62	23
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 14.02 (.001)			χ^2 = 18.49 (.000)	
Marital Status		(n = 4122)			(n = 4150)	
Married	9	66	25	15	60	25
Not married	13	62	25	22	52	27
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 3.81 (.149)			χ^2 = 8.28 (.016)	
Education		(n = 4100)			(n = 4125)	
High school or less	11	65	24	17	63	20
Some college	8	66	26	14	59	27
College grad	8	68	23	17	54	29
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 11.31 (.023)			χ^2 = 37.29 (.000)	
Occupation		(n = 2942)			(n = 2958)	
Prof/tech/admin.	8	69	23	15	57	28
Farming/ranching	9	70	21	15	66	19
Laborer	8	70	21	14	66	20
Other	9	68	23	14	61	26
Chi-square (sig.)		χ^2 = 2.51 (.867)			χ^2 = 18.87 (.004)	

* Only the ten services with the highest combined percentage of very or somewhat dissatisfied are included in this table.

Appendix Table 6. *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 = 4381)				(n = 134)		
Less than 500	3	90	7		21	36	43	
500 - 999	3	93	5		0*	78*	22*	
1,000 - 4,999	3	90	7		13	37	50	
5,000 - 9,999	4	91	5	$\chi^2 = 9.12$	11	36	54	$\chi^2 = 9.05$
10,000 and up	4	90	6	(.333)	19	30	51	(.338)
Region		(n = 4402)				(n = 134)		
Panhandle	4	91	6		12	24	65	
North Central	4	87	8		8	50	42	
South Central	4	90	7		16	33	51	
Northeast	3	93	5	$\chi^2 = 17.45$	14	39	46	$\chi^2 = 6.90$
Southeast	2	91	6	(.026)	28	33	39	(.547)
Individual Attributes:								
Income Level		(n = 4033)				(n = 123)		
Under $20,000	2	91	7		20	30	50	
$20,000 - $29,999	2	94	4		0	42	58	
$30,000 - $39,999	4	88	8		16	36	48	
$40,000 - $49,999	3	89	7		27	32	41	
$50,000 - $59,999	4	92	4		14	46	41	
$60,000 - $74,999	3	90	7	$\chi^2 = 22.74$	0	25	75	$\chi^2 = 10.07$
$75,000 and over	4	90	7	(.030)	21	36	43	(.610)
Age		(n = 4398)				(n = 133)		
19 - 29	10	80	10		25	44	31	
30 - 39	5	86	8		8	49	43	
40 - 49	3	90	7		16	32	52	
50 - 64	3	92	6	$\chi^2 = 66.21$	12	24	64	$\chi^2 = 9.95$
65 and older	2	94	4	(.000)	25	38	38	(.269)
Gender		(n = 4414)				(n = 133)		
Male	3	89	8	$\chi^2 = 10.92$	21	36	44	$\chi^2 = 3.28$
Female	3	92	5	(.004)	10	38	52	(.194)
Marital Status		(n = 4422)				(n = 134)		
Married	3	91	6	$\chi^2 = 5.67$	15	37	49	$\chi^2 = 0.43$
Not married	2	89	10	(.059)	25*	25*	50*	(.805)

Appendix Table 6 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.)*
					Percentages			
Education		(n = 4398)				(n = 134)		
No H.S. diploma	3	92	5		17*	17*	67*	
H.S. diploma	2	92	6		15	39	46	
Some college	3	91	6		17	31	51	
Associate degree	5	88	7		16	37	47	
Bachelors degree	4	89	7	$\chi^2 = 15.01$	9	39	52	$\chi^2 = 3.04$
Grad/prof degree	5	88	7	(.132)	17	44	39	(.980)
Occupation		(n = 3096)				(n = 106)		
Prof/tech/admin.	5	89	7		13	34	53	
Admin. support	3	93	4		18	36	46	
Sales	5	91	3		0	50	50	
Service	2	92	6		33*	33*	33*	
Farming/ranching	2	92	6		20*	40*	40*	
Skilled laborer	3	87	10		36	27	36	
Manual laborer	3	88	9	$\chi^2 = 27.78$	17*	50*	33*	$\chi^2 = 10.32$
Other	4	88	8	(.015)	25*	50*	25*	(.738)

Appendix Table 7. *Perceived Effectiveness of Economic Development Strategies in Relation to Community Size and Region*

	Statewide					
	Less than 500	500 - 999	1,000 - 4,999	5,000 - 9,999	10,000 & over	Total
	Percent Rating Each Strategy as "Somewhat Effective" or "Effective"					
Enhancing the educational system (K - 12)	65	67	69	65	66	66
Developing affordable housing	52	56	59	61	58	58
Providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs	51	52	56	50	52	52
Developing distance learning opportunities	48	55	48	52	51	50
Promoting tourism	30	34	48	54	56	48
Providing training or technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs	43	43	45	47	52	47
Emphasizing job creation in nonagricultural industries	28	33	44	53	52	45
Developing retail shopping centers	21	24	35	46	59	42
Developing industrial parks	19	24	37	46	53	41
Providing funds to businesses to train their employees or upgrade their skills	36	35	38	39	45	40
Providing tax incentives to any company that locates in the community	28	32	39	42	42	38
Providing tax incentives only to companies that locate in the community and meet a job quality requirement	28	28	36	38	39	36
Providing job training for dislocated workers	28	30	31	36	43	35
Developing community into a retirement community	26	30	36	36	35	34
Promoting telework initiatives	32	35	34	32	32	33
Developing community into a residential community	41	49	33	24	17	28
Developing information networks among communities	22	26	25	26	28	26

Appendix Table 7 continued

	Panhandle					
	Less than 500	500 - 999	1,000 - 4,999	5,000 - 9,999	10,000 & over	Total
	Percent Rating Each Strategy as "Somewhat Effective" or "Effective"					
Enhancing the educational system (K - 12)	62	50	72	64	58	63
Promoting tourism	35	40	60	68	64	61
Developing affordable housing	49	56	61	64	56	60
Developing distance learning opportunities	44	50	50	58	58	55
Providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs	47	56	60	48	50	51
Providing training or technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs	49	44	49	52	51	50
Emphasizing job creation in nonagricultural industries	24	29	52	58	45	49
Developing retail shopping centers	32	24	35	54	59	49
Providing tax incentives to any company that locates in the community	35	36	49	48	38	44
Providing funds to businesses to train their employees or upgrade their skills	39	25	44	42	48	43
Developing community into a retirement community	39	40	48	41	42	42
Providing job training for dislocated workers	42	32	40	37	44	40
Providing tax incentives only to companies that locate in the community and meet a job quality requirement	27	42	39	43	39	39
Promoting telework initiatives	32	40	41	34	34	35
Developing industrial parks	27	20	34	37	35	34
Developing information networks among communities	24	32	31	31	33	31
Developing community into a residential community	35	40	33	15	11	20

Appendix Table 7 continued

	North Central					
	Less than 500	500 - 999	1,000 - 4,999	5,000 - 9,999	10,000 & over	Total
	Percent Rating Each Strategy as "Somewhat Effective" or "Effective"					
Enhancing the educational system (K - 12)	66	65	63	46	62	62
Developing distance learning opportunities	53	61	55	59	61	56
Promoting tourism	39	52	55	71	71	55
Developing affordable housing	47	57	55	39	51	52
Providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs	55	49	52	43	45	51
Providing training or technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs	43	39	44	32	51	44
Emphasizing job creation in nonagricultural industries	23	28	44	39	45	37
Developing retail shopping centers	17	21	38	34	56	35
Promoting telework initiatives	32	42	35	37	32	35
Providing funds to businesses to train their employees or upgrade their skills	35	32	35	27	41	35
Developing community into a retirement community	22	35	36	29	39	33
Providing tax incentives to any company that locates in the community	20	23	35	27	39	31
Providing tax incentives only to companies that locate in the community and meet a job quality requirement	25	23	33	34	35	31
Providing job training for dislocated workers	27	30	28	25	43	31
Developing information networks among communities	23	30	26	27	31	27
Developing industrial parks	13	19	25	24	46	26
Developing community into a residential community	28	45	14	12	14	20

Appendix Table 7 continued

	South Central					
	Less than 500	500 - 999	1,000 - 4,999	5,000 - 9,999	10,000 & over	Total
	Percent Rating Each Strategy as "Somewhat Effective" or "Effective"					
Enhancing the educational system (K - 12)	64	70	71	71	69	69
Developing affordable housing	54	55	61	62	59	59
Promoting tourism	27	27	52	51	63	53
Providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs	47	54	59	56	51	53
Developing distance learning opportunities	51	54	51	55	48	50
Providing training or technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs	43	42	47	52	51	49
Emphasizing job creation in nonagricultural industries	30	31	45	58	51	47
Developing industrial parks	16	24	48	52	56	47
Developing retail shopping centers	15	23	33	49	59	45
Providing tax incentives to any company that locates in the community	30	33	45	46	42	41
Providing funds to businesses to train their employees or upgrade their skills	32	32	41	42	44	41
Providing job training for dislocated workers	24	26	35	40	42	38
Providing tax incentives only to companies that locate in the community and meet a job quality requirement	28	29	36	38	40	37
Developing community into a retirement community	23	29	39	42	36	36
Promoting telework initiatives	33	30	34	30	34	33
Developing community into a residential community	53	48	36	18	16	27
Developing information networks among communities	22	22	25	29	27	26

Appendix Table 7 continued

	Northeast					
	Less than 500	500 - 999	1,000 - 4,999	5,000 - 9,999	10,000 & over	Total
	Percent Rating Each Strategy as "Somewhat Effective" or "Effective"					
Enhancing the educational system (K - 12)	66	74	69	57	66	67
Developing affordable housing	62	57	57	63	59	59
Providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs	45	57	54	56	56	54
Developing distance learning opportunities	48	62	47	55	51	51
Providing training or technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs	44	50	46	44	55	50
Emphasizing job creation in nonagricultural industries	28	39	40	56	55	47
Developing retail shopping centers	28	26	30	25	58	43
Providing funds to businesses to train their employees or upgrade their skills	40	38	39	37	48	43
Promoting tourism	35	39	46	48	42	42
Developing industrial parks	18	26	32	58	52	41
Providing tax incentives to any company that locates in the community	31	37	34	39	43	39
Providing tax incentives only to companies that locate in the community and meet a job quality requirement	35	27	33	32	42	37
Providing job training for dislocated workers	30	34	28	27	45	37
Promoting telework initiatives	32	41	33	36	31	33
Developing community into a residential community	48	51	36	18	21	30
Developing community into a retirement community	30	32	30	29	28	29
Developing information networks among communities	22	27	24	20	30	27

Appendix Table 7 continued

	Southeast					
	Less than 500	500 - 999	1,000 - 4,999	5,000 - 9,999	10,000 & over	Total
	Percent Rating Each Strategy as "Somewhat Effective" or "Effective"					
Enhancing the educational system (K - 12)	66	58	71	67	73	68
Developing affordable housing	51	54	60	62	59	59
Providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs	55	46	57	48	51	53
Emphasizing job creation in nonagricultural industries	33	33	47	49	62	46
Developing industrial parks	25	27	42	51	83	44
Providing training or technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs	44	35	43	43	46	43
Developing distance learning opportunities	43	43	41	43	46	42
Developing retail shopping centers	22	22	40	45	72	40
Developing community into a residential community	38	52	43	40	23	40
Providing tax incentives to any company that locates in the community	33	30	38	40	57	39
Providing funds to businesses to train their employees or upgrade their skills	40	39	37	38	46	39
Promoting tourism	20	22	41	43	56	38
Providing tax incentives only to companies that locate in the community and meet a job quality requirement	29	28	40	36	33	35
Developing community into a retirement community	28	21	36	30	38	32
Providing job training for dislocated workers	30	27	31	36	37	32
Promoting telework initiatives	32	25	31	32	23	30
Developing information networks among communities	23	21	22	21	19	21

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