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Alternative Development Strategies for Rural Communities: Views from the Great Plains

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Alternative Development Strategies for Rural Communities: Views from the Great Plains

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ABSTRACT. In the past, rural economic development policies have traditionally taken one of two forms: direct aid (various forms of financial incentives granted to individual firms) or the provision of infrastructure, such as buildings or roads. However, some argue that these policies have become less efficient and that new alternatives should be considered. These new alternatives include indirect aid to businesses (improved access to capital and business services) as well as active labor market policies (which seek to help match demand and supply in the labor markets). Which policies would be most successful in promoting economic development in rural areas? This paper presents findings from the 2000 Nebraska Rural Poll to address this question. A sample of approximately 7,000 rural Nebraskans were sent a mail questionnaire that asked how effective various economic development policies or strategies would be for their communities. This paper will examine which types of policies rural residents believe will be successful in their communities. It will also explore whether or not respondents’ individual characteristics or characteristics of their current community are related to their perceptions toward development.

Introduction

Traditional economic development policies have usually involved either direct aid (various forms of financial incentives granted to individual firms) or the provision of infrastructure, such as roads or water and sewage systems (Muheim and Freshwater, 1999). These incentives are offered to improve the business climate in the area in order to attract new businesses. The business or firm is seen as mobile and can choose the area whose fiscal policies best suit them (Rubin and Zorn, 1985). The incentives offered have typically included: information and advertising about the area; financial incentives that include industrial revenue bonds, direct state loans, property tax abatements, and other forms of tax relief; and nonfinancial incentives which include customized training of potential employees, provision of infrastructure for the business site and help with regulatory problems (Bartik, 1991). These incentives are believed to influence businesses’ decisions to locate or expand in an area.

Some citizens have viewed tax incentives for businesses as unjustifiable subsidies. They
don’t believe that businesses need lower taxes to be profitable (Eisinger, 1988). And citizen involvement in the decisions to offer incentives has been limited. The incentives are usually proposed, debated and granted by state legislators, city councils and urban administrators. The approval of these incentives is rarely preceded by public debate or referenda (Nunn, 1994).

Fasenfest, Ciancanelli and Reese (1997) also argue that these type of development policies fail to deliver the desired level of assistance to communities because they are structured according to the market instead of looking at community needs. With these type of policies, there is no concern about unequal distribution of power, status or economic well-being (Schneider and Ingram, 1997).

These traditional economic development policies (also known as “smokestack chasing” policies) have focused on traditional outcome measures, such as jobs created. Cernea (1991) argues that development efforts are too often focused on market efficiency rather than looking at more generalized improvement or development of community residents. Thus it is argued that the policies that work best are no longer those that merely increase the number of jobs or businesses. Instead, policies that work should foster “structural and institutional changes which promote a more equitable distribution of new jobs and income generated by growth and enhance a locality’s capacity to act and innovate” (Reese and Fasenfest, 1997: 198). Community development policies should incorporate local capacity building concerns that many feel are as important to local development as the narrowly defined economic gains (Smoke, 1997).

Thus, other alternatives have been offered to fit these new criteria. These new alternatives have been labeled as “new wave” economic development policies (Bartik, 1991). They are primarily targeted at small or existing businesses. They involve capital market programs,
information/education for small businesses, research and high technology, and export assistance. Another set of policies that fit under this label are active labor market policies. These policies include efforts such as apprenticeships, support for unemployed workers who want to start up businesses, training and job search assistance. These policies ensure a better match between demand and supply in regional labor markets (Muheim and Freshwater, 1999).

These “new wave” policies work to improve the rural quality of life by benefitting existing businesses and, in areas of high development potential, also attract new businesses. They also encourage local leaders to play a greater role in economic development. Another benefit is the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation.

The merits of each type of policy can be, and often are, debated. However, what is perhaps more important to explore is how effective rural citizens believe these policies are. Economic development policies have important consequences for the community. Thus, it is important that the community and its members be actively involved in choosing among the various alternatives (Ilvento, 2000). Therefore, this paper will examine rural Nebraskans’ perceptions of economic development strategies that could be used in their community.

**Methods**

**Sample and respondent profile**

The data used in this analysis were collected from the 2000 Nebraska Rural Poll, an annual self-administered survey sent to a random sample of residents living in the 87 non-metropolitan counties in the state during March of 2000. The respondents were asked questions about their individual well-being, their community, rural economic development, retail shopping, the future of agriculture and their general demographic characteristics. The random sample included 7,000
non-metropolitan residents. This paper is based on 4,536 completed questionnaires received out of approximately 6,700 deliverable surveys (response rate = 67%). The total design method was used in developing and administering the survey (Dillman, 1978).

The average respondent was 53 years of age. Ninety-five percent were married and 74 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. A complete demographic profile of respondents is shown in Appendix Table 1.

Variables

Respondents were given a list of 17 different development options for communities in rural Nebraska. They were asked to indicate how effective each would be in ensuring that over the long run their community has a stable or growing population, a variety of businesses and a reasonable number of high quality jobs. A five-point scale was used to indicate their responses, where 1 denoted “very ineffective,” 3 indicated “don’t know” and 5 denoted “very effective.” The respondents were also asked to pick which options they would be most willing to pay for through additional taxes, user fees, bond issues or other forms of public financing.
The responses to these questions were analyzed by the following characteristics: community size, perceptions of community change, age, household income, gender, occupation, community social attributes and satisfaction with community services and amenities. The respondents were given seven answer categories to indicate their community size: less than 100; 100 - 499; 500 - 999; 1,000 - 4,999; 5,000 - 9,999; 10,000 - 19,999; and over 20,000. These answer categories were coded so that 1 equals less than 100 and 7 equals more than 20,000. Household income and education were coded so that higher numbers represent higher levels on these variables.

Respondents were asked to indicate how their community had changed during the past year. The specific question wording was, “When you think about this past year, would you say...My community has changed for the...” The answer categories were better, same or worse. This variable was coded so that 1 indicates better and 0 denotes either same or worse.

The remaining eight variables used in this analysis were generated by applying factor analysis (principal factor extraction with varimax rotation). The first factor, community social attributes, includes respondents’ assessments of three aspects of their community. They were asked whether 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. Each scale was coded so that 7 indicated friendly, trusting and supportive.

The remaining seven variables were based on a question in which the respondents indicated their degree of satisfaction with 26 different services and amenities (taking into consideration availability, cost and quality). The respondents rated the services and amenities
using a five-point scale, on which 1 denoted “very dissatisfied” and 5 “very satisfied.” One factor includes evaluations of three environmental services: sewage disposal, water disposal and solid waste disposal. Another factor is composed of evaluations of five transportation services: airport, airline service, bus service, rail service and taxi service. The next factor consists of evaluations of two recreation services: parks and recreation and library services. Evaluations of two levels of local government (county and city/village) make up the next factor. The fifth factor includes evaluations of six human services: head start programs, day care services, senior centers, nursing home care, basic medical care and mental health services. The next factor consists of evaluations of three consumer services: retail shopping, restaurants and entertainment. The final factor is composed of evaluations of the transportation infrastructure: satisfaction with streets as well as highways and bridges.

**Results**

At least one-half of rural Nebraskans believed 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. Table 1 shows the responses to these questions.

The responses to this question were analyzed by the respondents’ individual characteristics and characteristics of their current community (Appendix Table 2). Community size was related to respondents’ perceptions of the effectiveness of each economic development strategy, with the exception of three strategies. Current community size was not related to their perceptions of how effective the following strategies would be: promoting telework initiatives, enhancing the educational system (K - 12), and developing affordable housing. For most of the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Very or somewhat ineffective</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Very or somewhat effective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing the educational system (K - 12) in your community</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing affordable housing in your community</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs in your community</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing distance learning opportunities in your community</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting tourism in your community</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing training or technical assistance to small businesses and</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>entrepreneurs in your community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasizing job creation in nonagricultural industries in your community</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing retail shopping centers in your community</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing industrial parks in your community</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing funds to businesses to train their employees or upgrade their</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing tax incentives to any company that located in your community</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing tax incentives only to companies that locate in your</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>community and meet a job quality requirement (e.g., the jobs must be</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>at a specified salary level)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing job training for dislocated workers</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing your community into a retirement community</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting telework initiatives in your community (employees in your</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>community use technology to work for employers located elsewhere)</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing your community into a residential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
other strategies, persons living in larger communities were more likely than those living in smaller communities to believe that each strategy would be effective for their community. For example, 59 percent of the respondents who lived in communities with populations of 10,000 or more felt that developing retail shopping centers in their community would be effective in ensuring their community has a stable or growing population, a variety of businesses and a reasonable number of high quality jobs. In contrast, only 21 percent of those living in communities with less than 500 people shared this opinion. The exceptions to this pattern occurred when rating the effectiveness of providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs, developing the community into a residential community and developing distance learning opportunities. Persons living in towns with populations ranging from 1,000 to 4,999 were the community size group most likely to believe providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs would be an effective strategy for their community. When asked about developing their community into a residential community and developing distance learning opportunities in their community, the persons living in communities with populations from 500 to 999 were most likely to feel these strategies would work for their community.

Respondents’ perceptions of recent change in their community was also related to their
ratings of how effective these strategies would be for their community. Those who felt their community had changed for the better during the past year were the group most likely to believe each strategy would be effective for their community. Those who believed their community had changed for the worse during the past year were the ones least likely to feel these strategies would work in their community.

Household income was also related to respondents’ perceptions of the effectiveness of each development strategy. In all cases but two, the respondents with higher levels of household income were more likely than those with lower incomes to believe the strategy would be effective for their community. As an example, 61 percent of those with household incomes of $75,000 or more believed emphasizing job creation in nonagricultural industries would be an effective economic development strategy for their community, but only 24 percent of those with incomes under $20,000 felt the same. The two strategies where this pattern changed included developing the community into a retirement community and developing the community into a residential community. In each of these cases, the respondents with lower incomes were the group most likely to believe these two strategies would be effective for their community.

Respondents’ perceptions of how effective each economic development strategy would be for their community were also related to age. The younger respondents were typically more likely than the older respondents to believe each strategy would be effective for their community. However, the older respondents were more likely than the younger respondents to believe developing the community into a retirement community would be an effective strategy.

Gender also influenced the responses to these questions. Generally, females were more likely than males to believe that each strategy would be effective for their community. However,
males were more likely than females to believe the following would be effective economic development strategies for their community: emphasizing job creation in nonagricultural industries, developing industrial parks, providing tax incentives to any company that locates in the community and providing tax incentives only to companies that locate in the community and meet a job quality requirement.

For all the development strategies except one, the respondents with higher educational levels were more likely than those with less education to believe each strategy would be effective for their community. The exception to this rule was the strategy of developing the community into a residential community. In this case, the respondents whose highest level of formal education included either a high school diploma or some college (with no degree) were the groups most likely to believe this strategy would be an effective one for their community.

The final individual characteristic examined was occupation. The strategy of providing funds to businesses to train their employees or upgrade their skills was the only one where differences in perceived effectiveness did not occur by occupation. The respondents with professional occupations were generally the group most likely to believe that each strategy would be effective for their community. But, those with sales occupations were the group most likely to believe the following would be effective economic development strategies for their community: developing retail shopping centers, developing the community into a retirement community, and promoting tourism. The skilled laborers were the group most likely to believe that developing their community into a residential community would be beneficial.

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. Many respondents indicated they were unwilling to pay for any of the strategies listed. However, of those that chose at least one (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 2 shows the proportions willing to pay for each strategy.

In addition, a regression analysis was performed to learn more precisely the importance of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Proportions willing to pay for each strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing the educational system (K - 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing affordable housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasizing job creation in nonagricultural industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing retail shopping centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing tax incentives only to businesses that locate in your community and meet a job quality requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing distance learning opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing funds to businesses to train their employees or upgrade their skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing training or technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing job training for dislocated workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting telework initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing tax incentives to any company that locates in your community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing industrial parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing your community into a retirement community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing your community into a residential community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing information networks among communities using telecommunications technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Proportions were calculated out of those choosing at least one strategy.
each independent variable in explaining the perceived effectiveness of community capacity building development strategies. Seven of the development strategies were identified as capacity building strategies. These seven strategies include: providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs, providing training or technical assistance to small businesses and entrepreneurs, promoting telework initiatives, developing information networks among communities using telecommunications technology, developing distance learning opportunities, providing job training for dislocated workers and enhancing the educational system (K - 12). The responses to these seven strategies were summed together to create a single scale that measures the perceived effectiveness of these strategies. Most of the variables analyzed in Appendix Table 2 were included in the analysis along with the community social attributes variable and the seven variables that measure satisfaction with community services.

The results of the analysis are included in Table 3. These variables account for 12 percent of the variation in respondents’ perceptions of the effectiveness of capacity building development strategies. All of the variables were statistically significant except for three: satisfaction with environmental services, satisfaction with transportation services, and satisfaction with transportation infrastructure.

Overall, age appears to influence perceptions about these strategies more strongly than the other variables (according to the strength of the beta scores). The younger respondents had higher expectations that these types of strategies would succeed in their community as compared to the older respondents. The variable next in importance in explaining the perceived effectiveness of these strategies was satisfaction with government. The more satisfied people
Table 3. Perceived Effectiveness of Capacity Building Strategies by Community Attributes and Personal Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community Attributes:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of community change</td>
<td>.616</td>
<td>.083***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community social attributes</td>
<td>.098</td>
<td>.075***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with environmental services</td>
<td>-.030</td>
<td>-.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with transportation services</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with recreation services</td>
<td>.114</td>
<td>.040*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with local government</td>
<td>.273</td>
<td>.108***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with human services</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>.073***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with consumer services</td>
<td>.070</td>
<td>.043*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with transportation infrastructure</td>
<td>-.010</td>
<td>-.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community size</td>
<td>.116</td>
<td>.039*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Characteristics:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>-.138***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household income</td>
<td>.178</td>
<td>.064***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.318</td>
<td>.089***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance explained (percentage)</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>38.305***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of observations</td>
<td>3,601</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

were with their local government, the higher their expectations were for these strategies. The respondents’ education level and their perceptions of community change were next in importance in influencing their perceptions of the effectiveness of these strategies. Those with higher educational levels and those believing their community has changed for the better during the past year had higher scores on the perceived effectiveness scale.

**Conclusion**

Rural Nebraskans appear to believe many of the “new wave” economic development policies would be effective in their community. 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. Most of these strategies involve building capacity among community residents. The traditional economic development policies that involve providing tax incentives to companies or developing more industry in the community were not viewed as effective as the others for rural Nebraskan communities.

Different groups of rural Nebraskans were more likely than others to view the strategies as effective. For the most part, persons living in larger communities were more likely than those living in smaller communities to believe most of these strategies would be effective ones for their community. However, persons living in towns with populations ranging from 1,000 to 4,999 were more likely to think that providing loans to small businesses or entrepreneurs would be effective in their community. And, persons living in towns of at least 500 people but less than 1,000 were more likely to view developing their community into a residential community and developing distance learning opportunities as effective strategies. These results suggest that these strategies should not be viewed as “one-size-fits-all.” Communities of different sizes have different beliefs about what would work for them.

In addition, people’s perceptions about their community influenced how effective they thought each strategy would be for their community. Those who believed their community had changed for the better during the past year were more likely than those who believed their community had either stayed the same or changed for the worse to believe each strategy would be effective for their community. This suggests that those with a positive view of their community also feel positively about its future prospects. Those with a negative view of their community were not as optimistic that any of the strategies could help their town.

The individual characteristics of the respondents also influenced their perceptions of the
effectiveness of the development strategies. Generally, those with higher incomes, the younger respondents, females, those with higher educational levels and persons with professional occupations were the groups most likely to view each strategy as effective in ensuring that over the long run their community has a stable or growing population, a variety of businesses and a reasonable number of high quality jobs.

The regression analysis results show that age and satisfaction with local government are important influences on their perceptions of how effective capacity building development strategies would be for their community. Younger respondents were more likely to believe these types of strategies would be effective in their community. Also, those reporting higher levels of satisfaction with local government were also more likely to believe these strategies would work for their community. This finding suggests that satisfaction with local government is related to the types of development strategies they employ in their community. Those who are dissatisfied with their local government may disagree with the development strategies used by local officials. Therefore, the quality of local officials does seem to impact the perception of the potential success of economic development strategies.

These findings illustrate the continued need for capacity building at the local community level. As the data presented show, those individuals who perceive their community as becoming better over the last year are more likely to be optimistic about alternative development strategies for their community. The diverse opinions held by alternative segments of the population about effective options provides another example as to why it is important to have a diverse cross-section of the community engaged in development activities and in planning processes that identify strategic directions for the community.
Overall, these findings support scale appropriate development strategies for rural communities. One caution is that the rural residents studied were basically unwilling to invest additional tax dollars for local development. The creation of local foundations focused on local development may be one option to overcome this barrier.

Additional research is needed to more clearly understand how local capacity influences the perceptions of community residents toward development efforts and how these perceptions influence action at a local level.
References


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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 39</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 64</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and over</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 9th grade</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th to 12th grade (no diploma)</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma (or equivalent)</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some college, no degree</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelors degree</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or professional degree</td>
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<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<td><strong>Household income:</strong></td>
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<td>19%</td>
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<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>$75,000 or more</td>
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<td>76%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>64%</td>
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<td>Never married</td>
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<td>20%</td>
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<td>Widowed/widower</td>
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<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</table>

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.** Perceived Effectiveness of Economic Development Strategies in Relation to Community and Individual Attributes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Attributes:</th>
<th>Emphasizing job creation in nonagricultural industries</th>
<th>Developing industrial parks</th>
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<tr>
<td>500 - 999</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000 - 4,999</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000 - 9,999</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 and up</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Change</td>
<td>(n = 4195)</td>
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<td>Better</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worse</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Attributes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income Level</td>
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<tr>
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<td>33</td>
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<td>$30,000 - $39,999</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>(n = 4302)</td>
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<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 39</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 64</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and older</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
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<td>Bachelors degree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate/prof. degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
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<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service</td>
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<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming/ranching</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled laborer</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual laborer</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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### Community Attributes:

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<th>Significance</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(n = 4278)</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>45</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 - 999</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1,000 - 4,999</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>5,000 - 9,999</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 50.78 )</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<td>41</td>
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<table>
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<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<td>(n = 4189)</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>44</td>
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### Individual Attributes:

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<th>Significance</th>
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<td>37</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>41</td>
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<th>Significance</th>
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<td>40 - 49</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<td>42</td>
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<td>50 - 64</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<td>( \chi^2 = 104.08 )</td>
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<td>( \chi^2 = 24.88 )</td>
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<td>Bachelors degree</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 104.08 )</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate/prof. degree</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41</td>
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<td>( \chi^2 = 104.08 )</td>
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<th>Significance</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Farming/ranching</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled laborer</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<td>Manual laborer</td>
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<td>41</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>36</td>
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<td>( \chi^2 = 25.41 )</td>
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Appendix Table 2 Continued

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<th>Community Attributes:</th>
<th>Providing loans to small businesses and entrepreneurs</th>
<th>Providing training or technical assistance to small businesses</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentages</td>
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<td>(n = 4282)</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>1,000 - 4,999</td>
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<td>5,000 - 9,999</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<tr>
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χ² values for significant results.
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\( \chi^2 \) values for significance testing are provided where applicable.

### Percentages

- Don’t know percentages are compared between the two groups for each attribute.
- Significance values are based on chi-squared tests, indicating statistical significance.

Note: Values in parentheses indicate sample sizes for each category.
## Community Attributes:

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### Community Change

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## Individual Attributes:

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