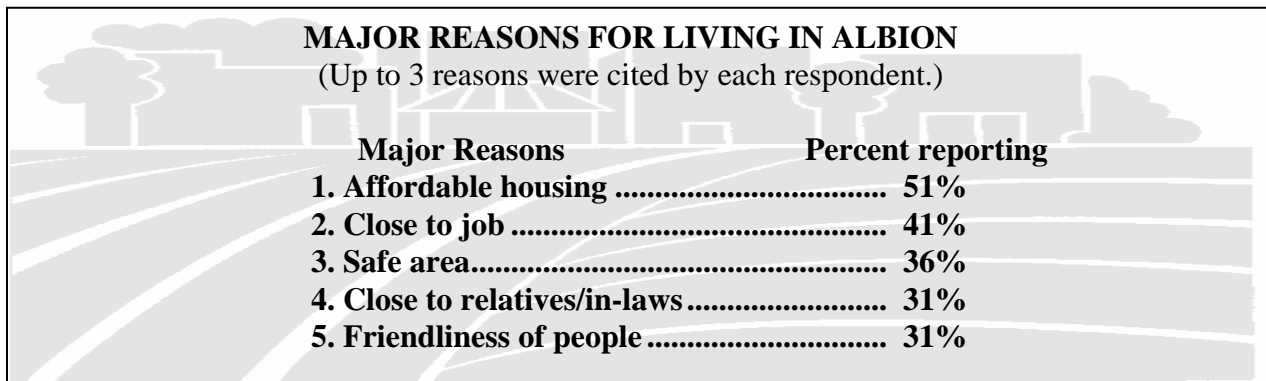


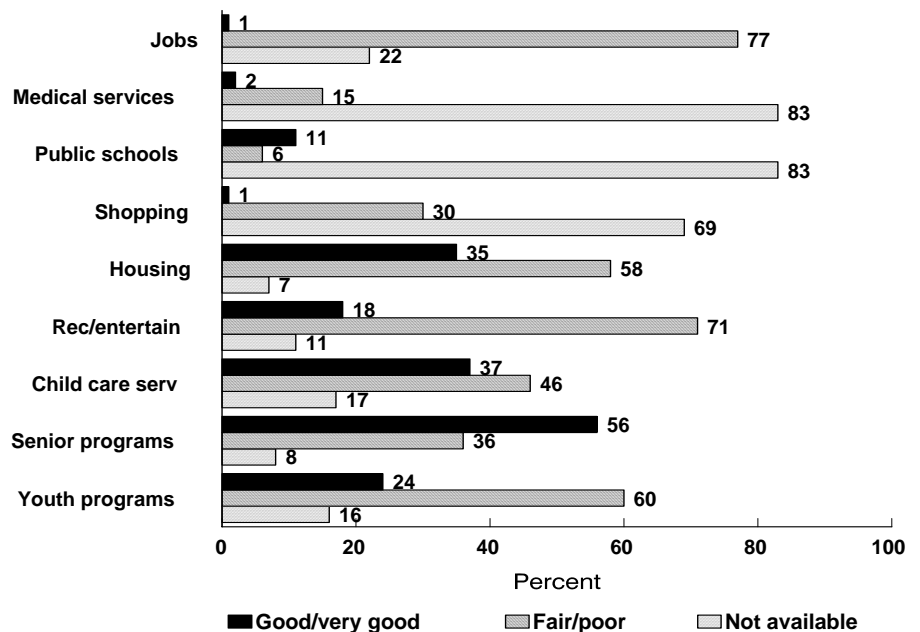
RESIDENTS OF ALBION SPEAK OUT

During July 1994, you were one of 15,000 households asked to participate in a statewide survey. The purpose of this survey was to identify the problems and opportunities facing Iowa's rural communities. The households asked to take part in the study were randomly selected from telephone directories of 100 Iowa communities (150 households per directory). Selection of communities was also random where one community with 500-10,000 residents was selected from each of Iowa's 99 counties. (Because of its geographic size, two communities were included for Pottawattamie County, one from West and another from East Pottawattamie.) Of the 15,000 questionnaires mailed out, 10,798 (or 72%) were completed and returned. Below are highlights of the results as reported by Albion's 108 survey participants.



RATING SERVICES AND FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN ALBION

Nine local services and facilities were listed on the questionnaire along with the instructions to rate each as "very good," "good," "fair," "poor," or "not available." Of the 108 respondents from Albion, half or more gave senior citizen programs a rating of either good or very good. But jobs, housing, recreation/entertainment, and youth programs were rated no better than fair



by at least half of the people. For medical services, public schools, and shopping facilities, at least half of the respondents indicated the services were not available in Albion.

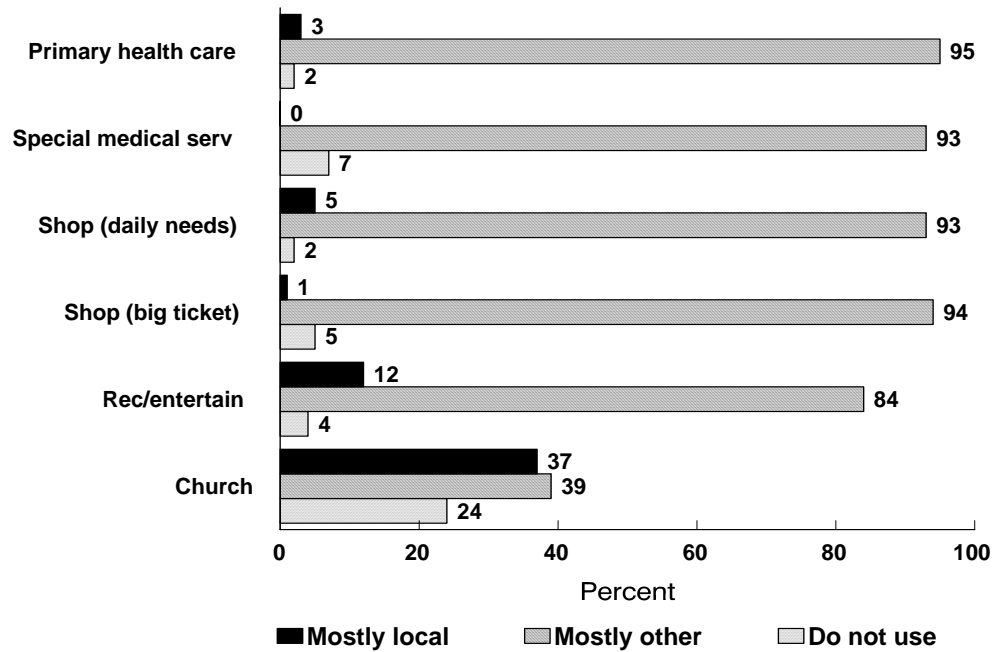


This report was prepared through the **Rural Development Initiative** Project, funded by the College of Agriculture, Iowa State University, Ames, IA.

LOCAL PURCHASING PATTERNS

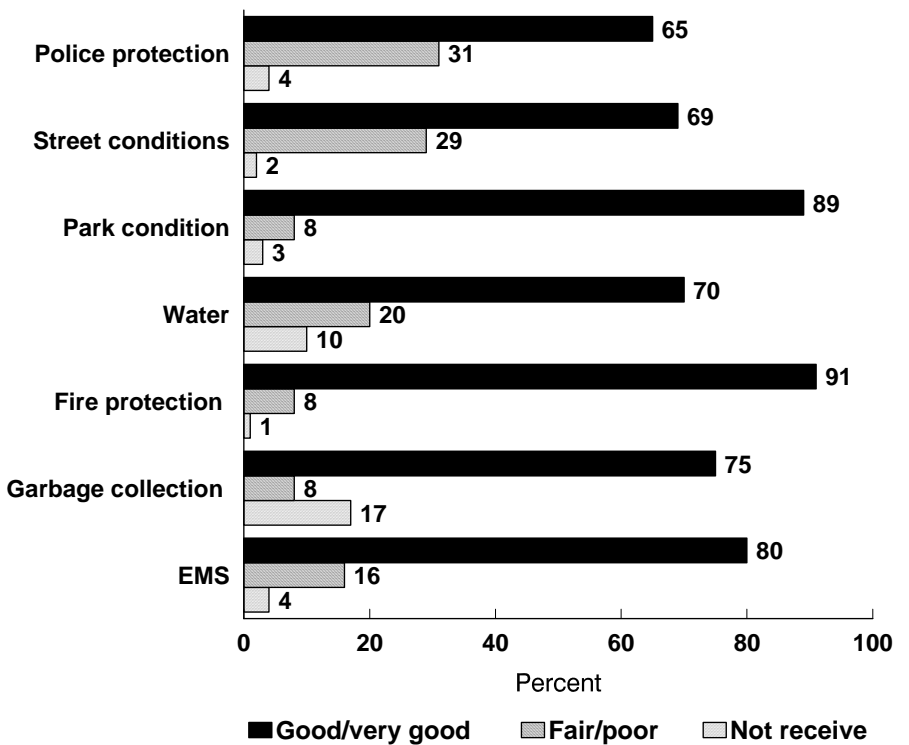
For a variety of reasons, many residents of Iowa's smaller towns rely on neighboring cities for services. Based on returned questionnaires, Albion residents follow this pattern. At least three-fourths of the people reported leaving Albion for primary and specialized health care, shopping for daily needs and "big ticket" items, and recreation/entertainment. In

fact, there were no services where at least half of the people reported remaining in Albion.



RATING GOVERNMENT SERVICES

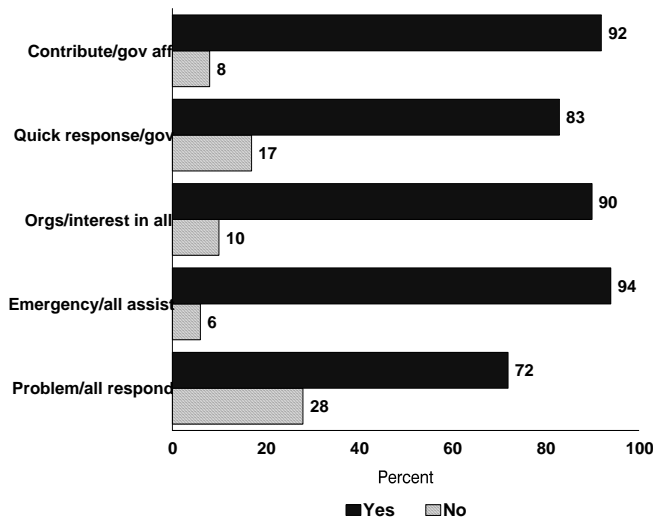
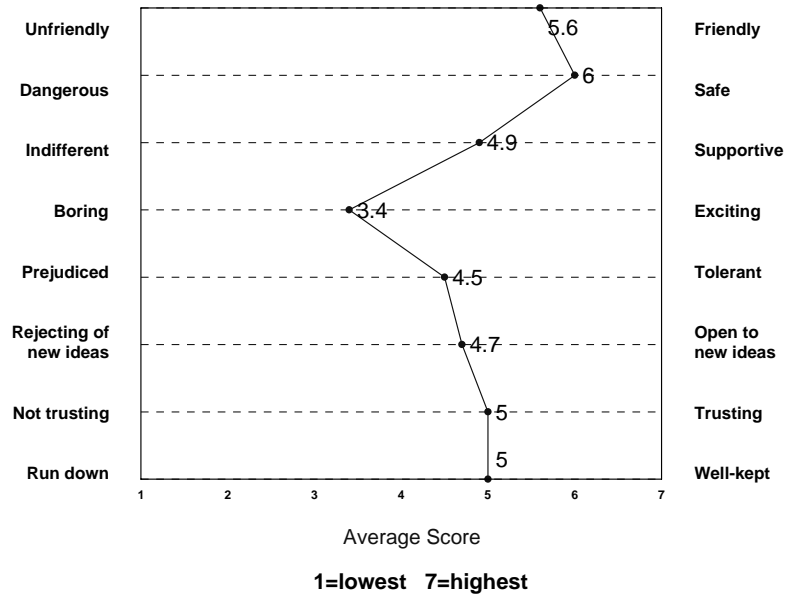
Seven services normally provided through local governments were included with the instructions to rate each as "very good," "good," "fair," or "poor." Fire protection was rated highest with 91 percent giving it a positive (very good or good) rating. Over half of the individuals also rated police protection, street and park conditions, water, garbage collection, and emergency response service (EMS) positively, while no governmental services received lower ratings (fair or poor) by a majority of the respondents.



FRIENDLINESS AND EVIDENCE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT

In spite of the frequently publicized economic problems recently experienced by many of Iowa's smaller communities, reference often is made of their favorable social climates. However, no information to date has been available to determine the extent to which Iowa's rural communities do in fact possess favorable social environments. Accordingly, questions were included in the survey asking residents to evaluate various social attributes of their communities.

Of the eight attributes evaluated on a 7-point scale, Albion residents assigned the highest rating to the safety of Albion, followed closely by the friendliness of its residents. The lowest rating was given to the amount of excitement offered to Albion residents.



According to survey respondents, Albion's responsiveness to personal and community problems is generally quite favorable. Most everyone agreed that in the case of an emergency all residents would help. At least three-fourths also felt that everyone is allowed to contribute to local governmental affairs, that there would be a quick response from a city office in regards to a complaint, and that organizations are interested in what is best for all residents.

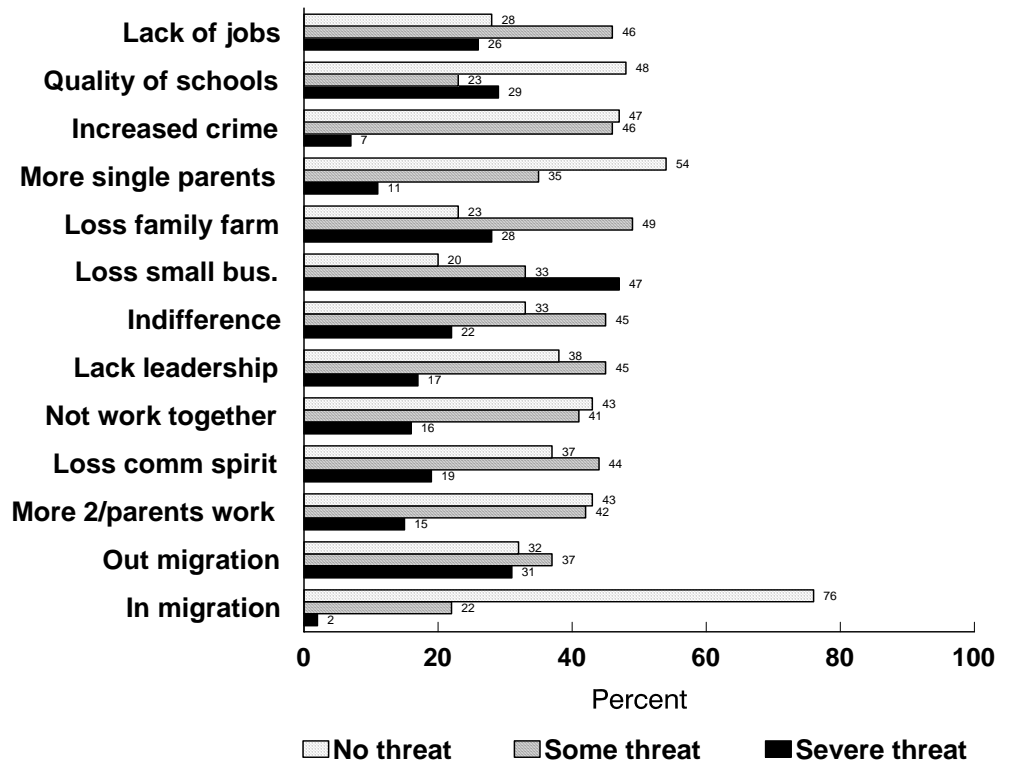
INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION IN ALBION ACTIVITIES

Over three-fourths of Albion residents are interested in being informed of community activities. Yet only about 41 percent reported having participated over the past year in any community improvement project. When asked to describe their level of involvement in local community improvement activities and events, 33 percent indicated being very or somewhat active.

Ties with other local residents often are an indication of their commitment to the community. In Albion’s case, 42 percent of the respondents indicated knowing the name of half or more of the adult residents. Also, 39 percent indicated that half or more of their close personal friends live in Albion. As for their adult relatives and in-laws, 7 percent indicated that half or more of them live in Albion.

PERCEIVED COMMUNITY THREATS

The future of Iowa’s rural communities will probably depend on whether or not important trends will continue over the course of the next few years. The loss of small businesses was considered a serious threat to the future of the community by almost one-third of Albion residents. Minimal concern was expressed with the increase in single parent families and people moving into the community.



OVERALL COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

How important is it for Albion residents to feel a part of this community? When asked this question, 82 percent responded that it was important for them to feel a part of the community. When asked whether they feel “at home” in Albion, 93 percent said that they did. Furthermore 77 percent indicated they would be sorry to move away from Albion. In spite of the community concerns as indicated in the previous charts, the majority of residents see Albion as their home and are reluctant to move away from the community.

Prepared by Terry Besser, Jan Flora, Paul Lasley, and Vern Ryan, Department of Sociology, Iowa State University. For further information about this report, contact Norm Riggs, Polk County Extension Office, 5035 NE 14th Street, Des Moines, IA 50313; Tele (515) 263-2660; Fax (515) 263 2704; x1riggs@exnet.iastate.edu. For information on other reports in the RDI series, contact Terry Besser, 303 East Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; Tele (515) 294-6508; Fax (515) 294-2303; x1tbesse@exnet.iastate.edu.