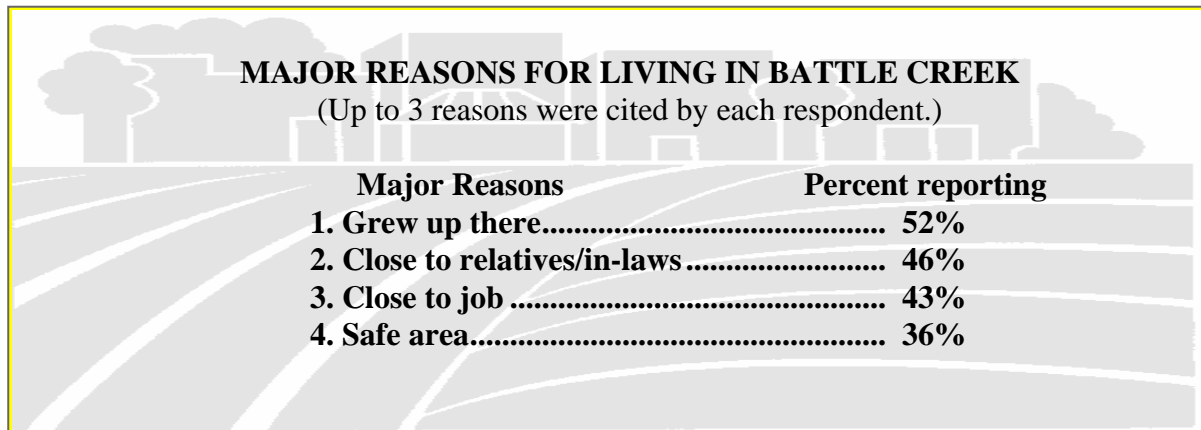


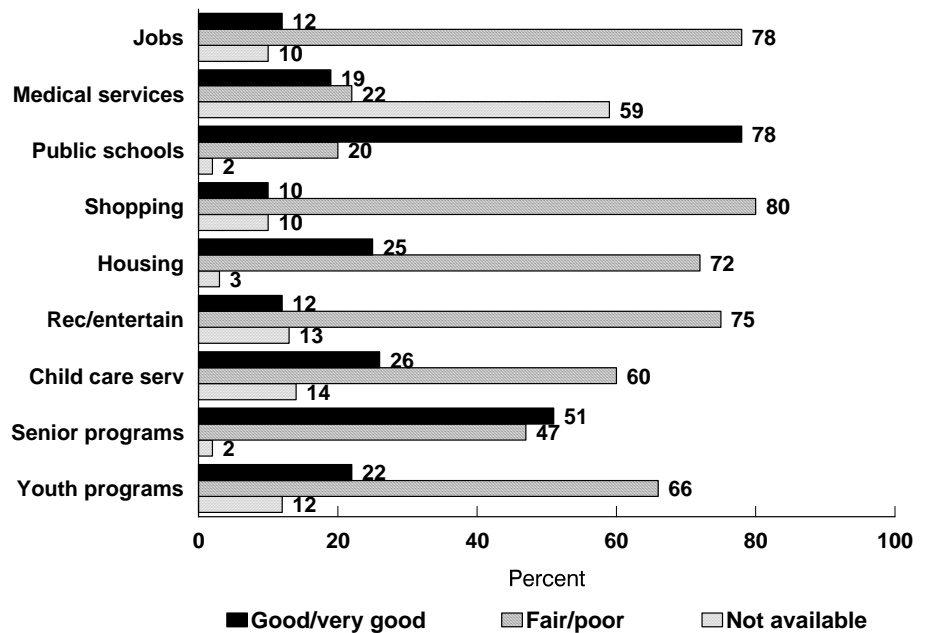
RESIDENTS OF BATTLE CREEK SPEAK OUT

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 Battle Creek's 109 survey participants.



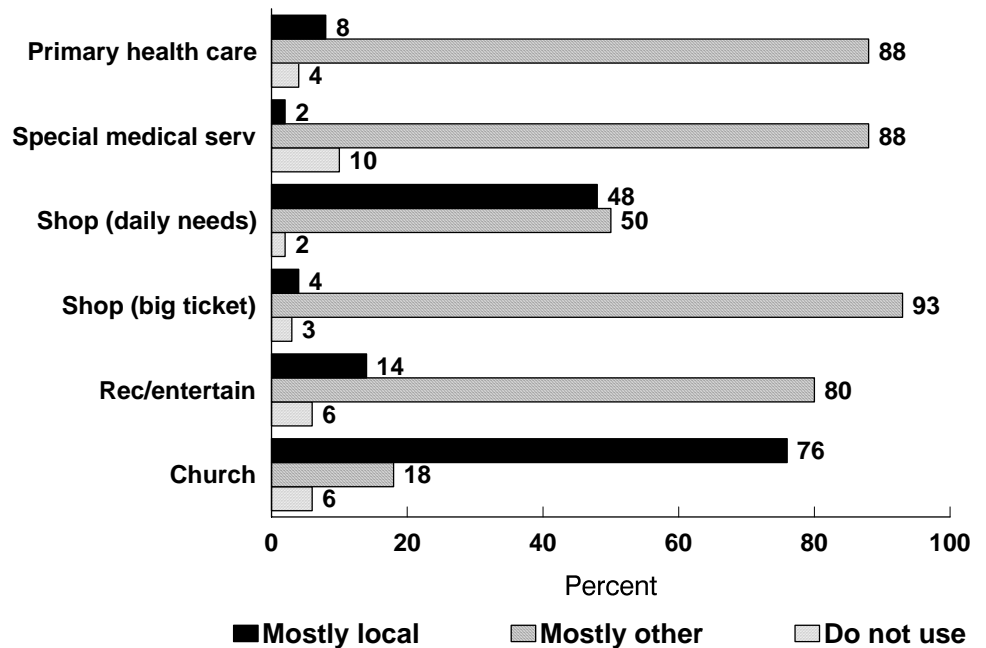
RATING SERVICES AND FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN BATTLE CREEK

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 109 respondents from Battle Creek, half or more gave public schools and senior citizen programs a rating of either good or very good. But jobs, shopping, housing, recreation/entertainment, child care, and programs for youth were rated no better than fair by at least half of the people. For medical services, at least half of the respondents indicated the service was not available in Battle Creek.



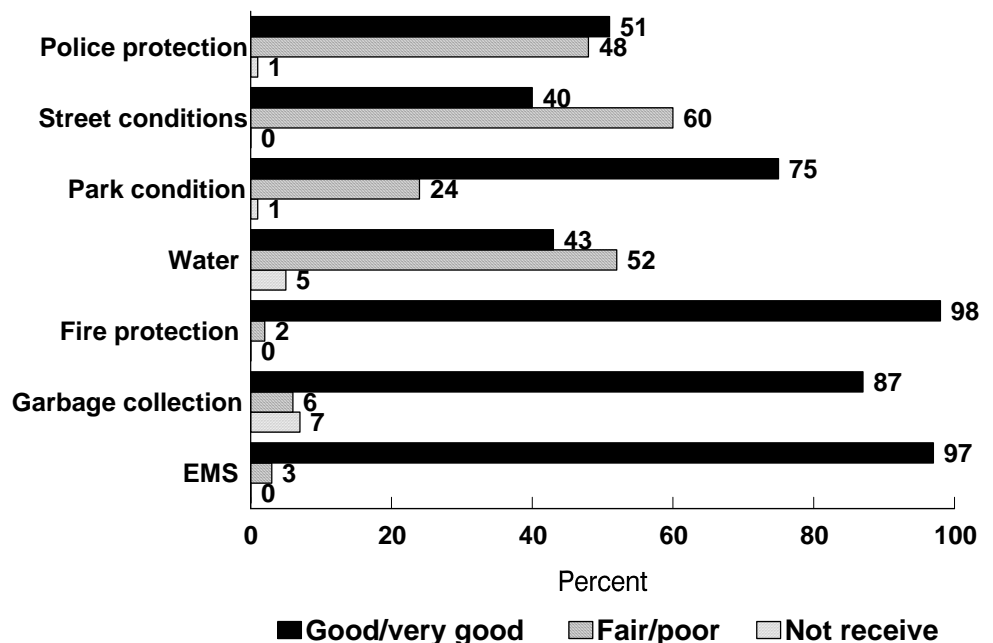
LOCAL PURCHASING PATTERNS

For a variety of reasons, many residents of Iowa's smaller towns rely on neighboring cities for services. Based on returned questionnaires, Battle Creek residents follow this pattern. At least three-fourths of the people reported leaving Battle Creek for primary and specialized health care, shopping for "big ticket" items, and for recreation/entertainment. In fact, church was the only service where at least half of the people reported remaining in Battle Creek.



RATING GOVERNMENT SERVICES

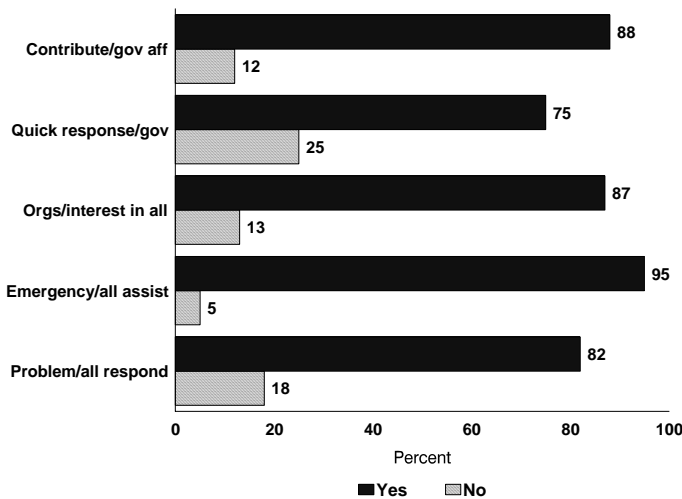
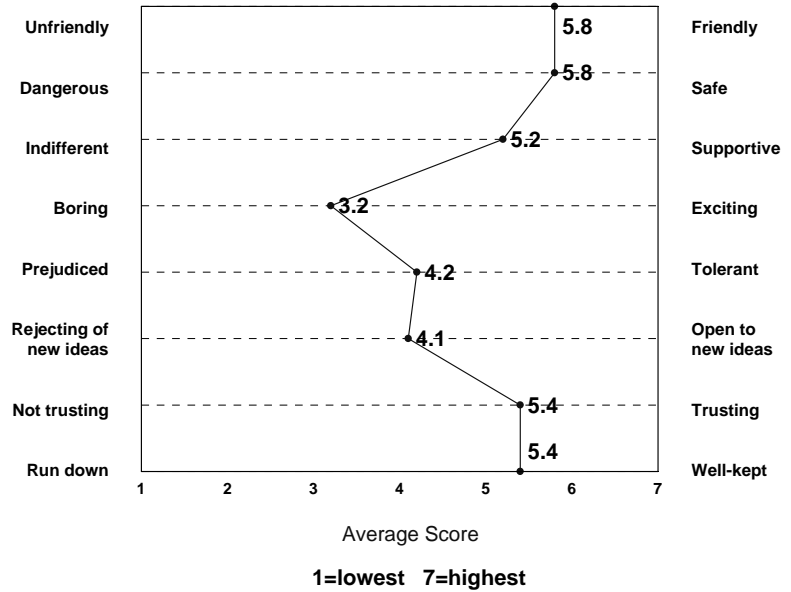
Seven services normally provided through local governments were included with the instructions to rate each as "very good," "good," "fair," or "poor." Fire protection was rated highest with 98 percent giving it a positive (very good or good) rating. Over half of the individuals also rated police protection, park conditions, garbage collection, and emergency response service (EMS) positively, while street conditions and water 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, Battle Creek residents assigned the highest rating to the friendliness of its residents and the safety of Battle Creek, followed closely by how trusting the residents are and how well-kept the community is. The lowest rating was given to the amount of excitement offered.



According to survey respondents, Battle Creek'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 all are allowed to contribute to local governmental affairs, that a city office would give a quick response in regards to a complaint, that organizations are interested in what is best for all residents, and that when something needs to get done the whole community gets behind it.

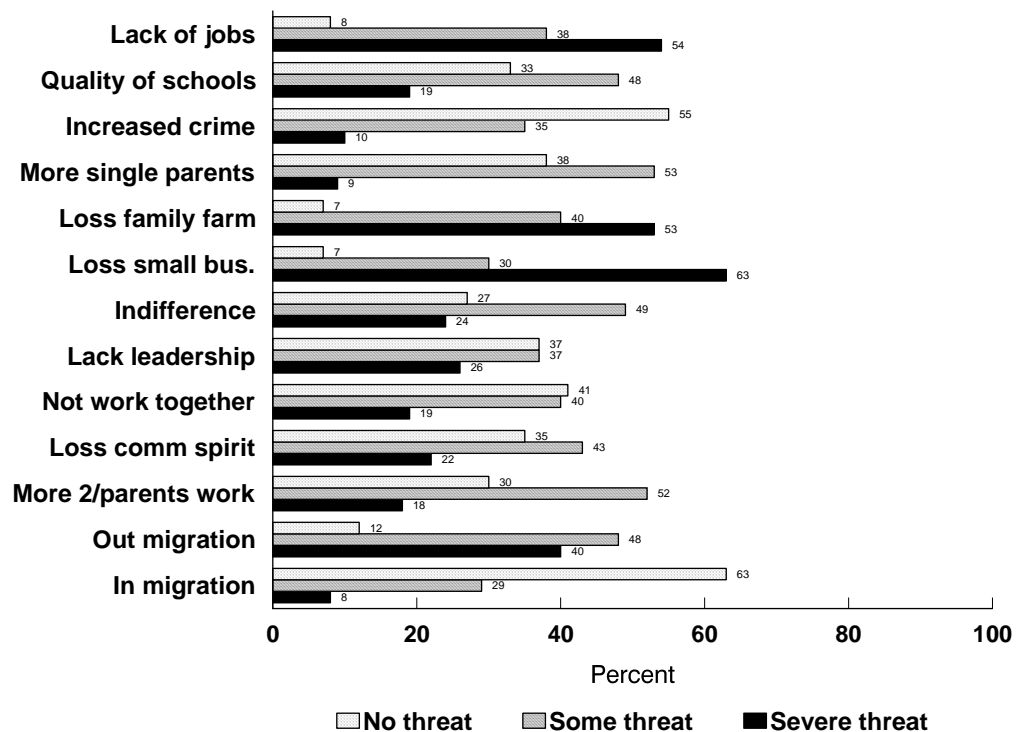
INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION IN BATTLE CREEK ACTIVITIES

Over three-fourths of Battle Creek residents are interested in being informed of community activities. Yet only about 55 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, 41 percent indicated being very or somewhat active.

Ties with other local residents often are an indication of their commitment to the community. In Battle Creek’s case, 75 percent of the respondents indicated knowing the name of half or more of the adult residents. Also, 67 percent indicated that half or more of their close personal friends live in Battle Creek. As for their adult relatives and in-laws, 26 percent indicated that half or more of them live in Battle Creek.

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. In the case of Battle Creek, at least half of the residents see lack of jobs, loss of family farms, and loss of small businesses as conditions that pose serious threats to the future of the community. People moving out of the community was considered a serious threat by at least one-third of Battle Creek residents. Minimal concern was expressed with increase in crime and people moving into the community.



OVERALL COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

How important is it for Battle Creek residents to feel a part of this community? When asked this question, 91 percent responded that it was important for them to feel a part of the community. When asked whether they feel “at home” in Battle Creek, 93 percent said that they did. Furthermore 80 percent indicated they would be sorry to move away from Battle Creek. In spite of the community concerns as indicated in the previous charts, the majority of residents see Battle Creek as their home and are reluctant to move away from the community.

Prepared by Jan Flora, Terry Besser, Paul Lasley, and Vern Ryan, Department of Sociology, Iowa State University. For further information about this report, contact Alan Vandehaar, Woodbury County Extension Office, 4301 Sergeant Road, Suite 213, Sioux City, IA 51106; Tele (712) 276-2157; Fax (712) 276-6211; x1vandeh@exnet.iastate.edu. For information on other reports in the RDI series, contact Jan Flora, 315 East Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; Tele (515) 294-4295; Fax (515) 294-2303; x1floraj@exnet.iastate.edu.