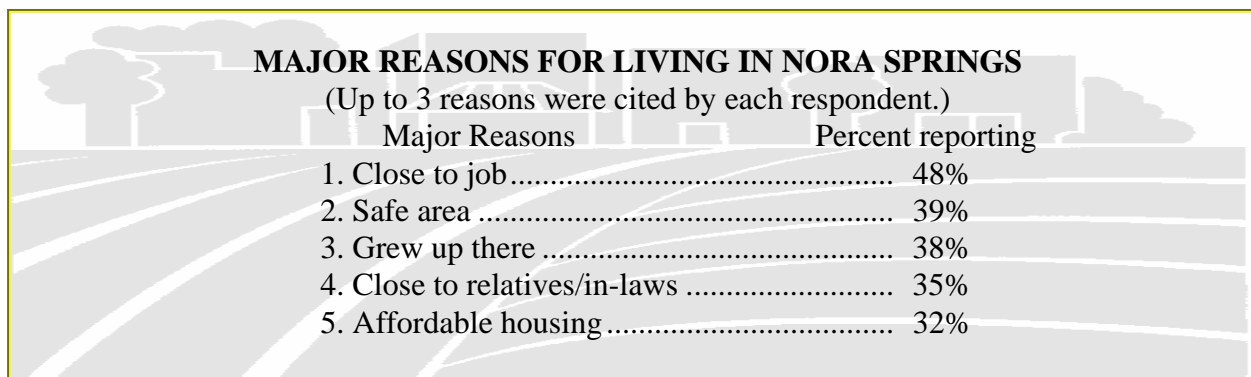


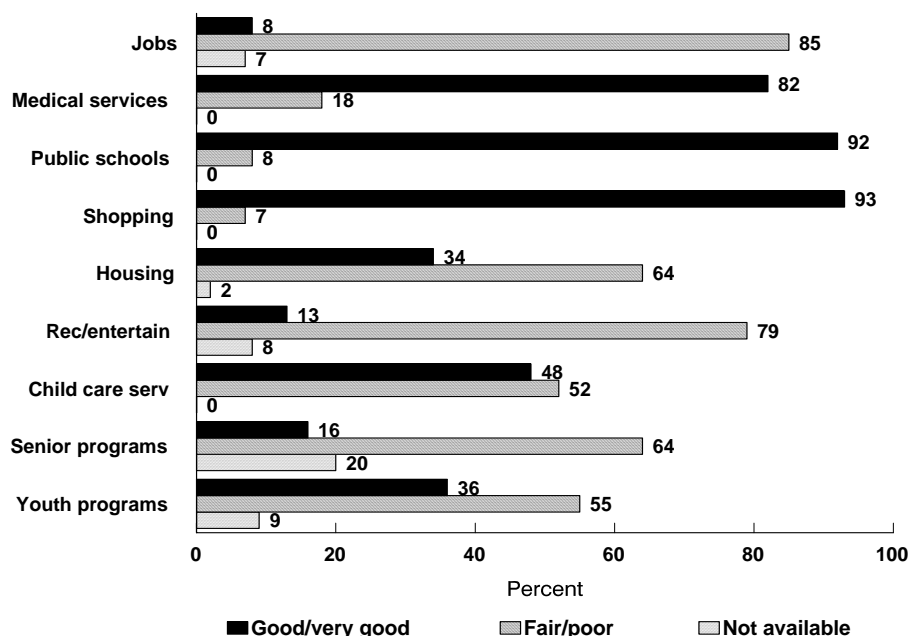
## RESIDENTS OF NORA SPRINGS SPEAK OUT

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 Nora Springs' 116 survey participants.



### RATING SERVICES AND FACILITIES AVAILABLE IN NORA SPRINGS

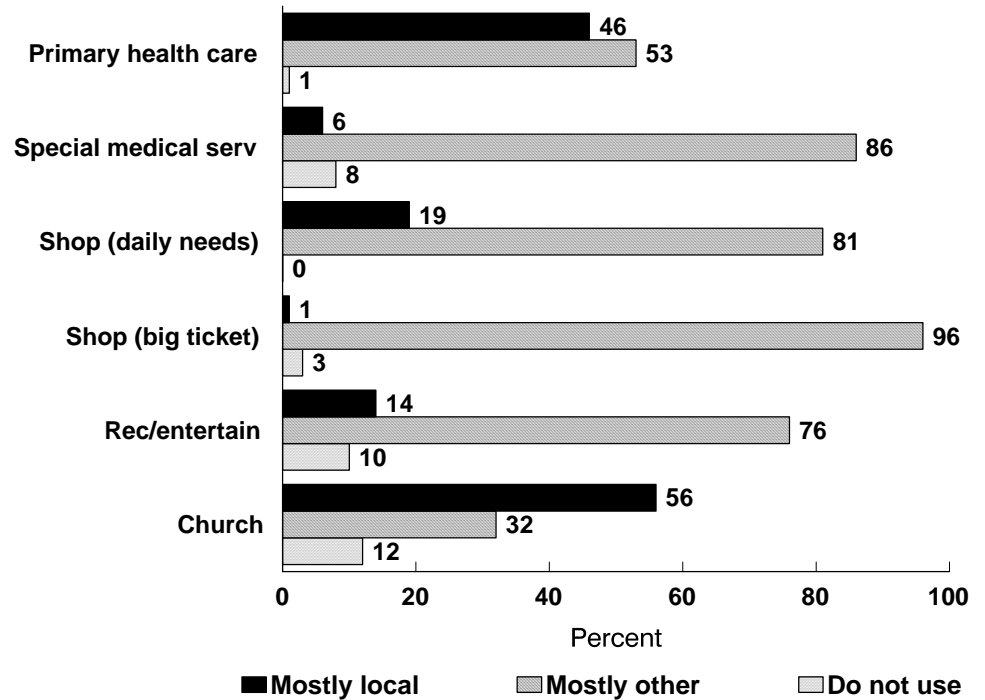
Nine local services and facilities were listed on the questionnaire along with the instructions to rate each as "very good," "good," "fair," "poor," or "not available." Of the 116 respondents from Nora Springs, half or more gave medical services, public schools, and shopping a rating of either good or very good. But jobs, housing, recreation/entertainment, child care services, and senior citizen and youth programs, were rated no better than fair by at least half of the people. All services were indicated as being available by at least half of the respondents in Nora Springs.



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

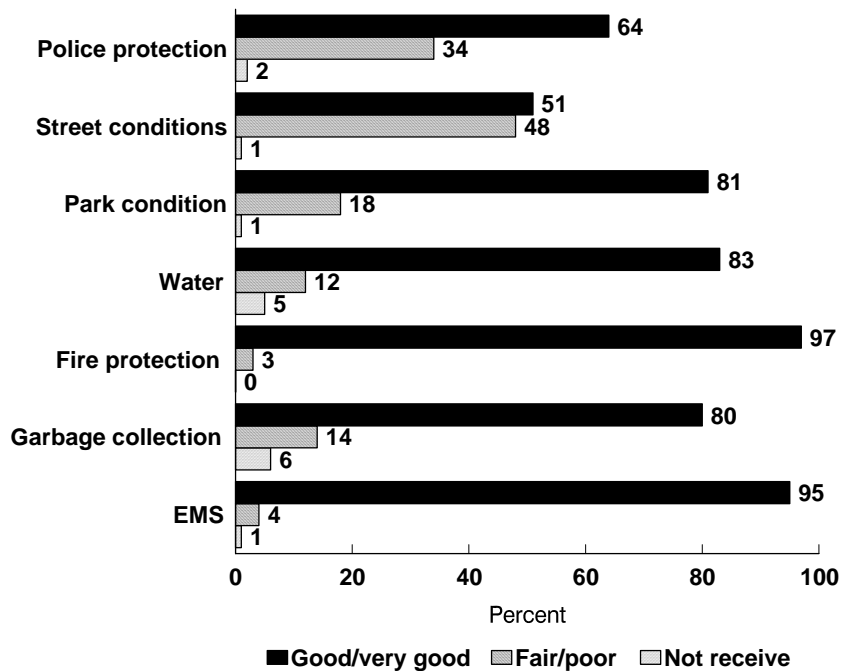
## LOCAL PURCHASING PATTERNS

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



## RATING GOVERNMENT SERVICES

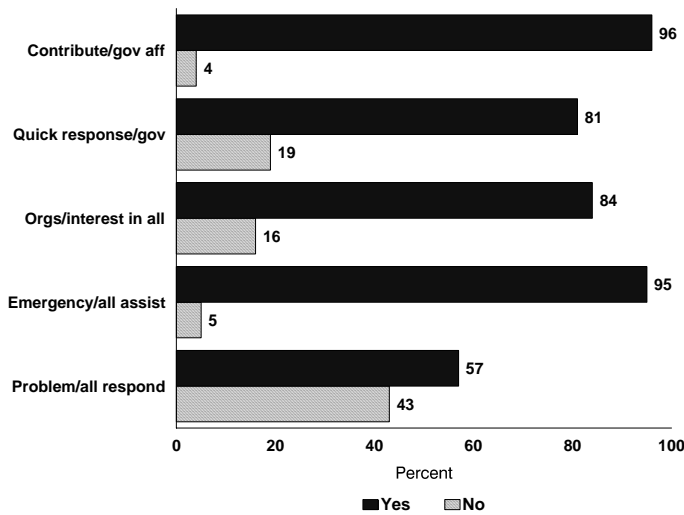
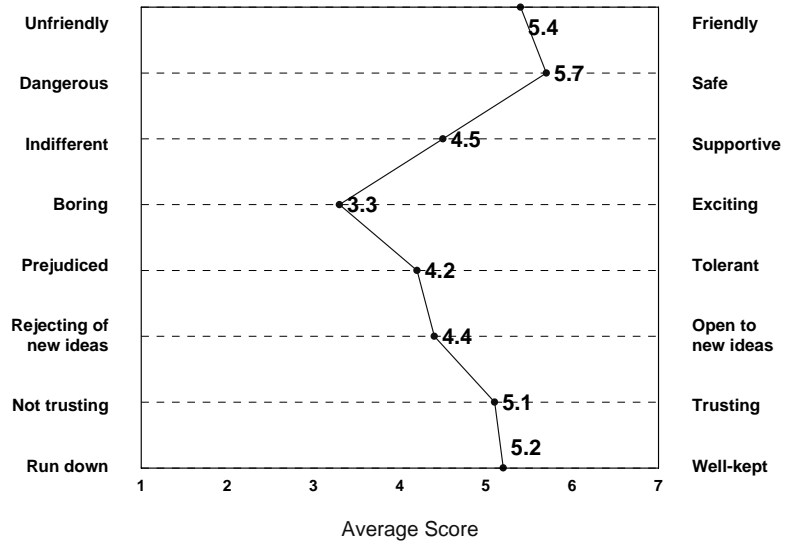
Seven services normally provided through local governments were included with the instructions to rate each as "very good," "good," "fair," or "poor." Fire protection was rated highest with 97 percent giving it a positive (very good or good) rating. Over half of the individuals also rated police protection, street and park conditions, water, garbage collection, and emergency response service (EMS) positively, while no governmental service received a lower rating (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, Nora Springs residents assigned the highest rating to the safety of Nora Springs, followed closely by the friendliness of its residents. The lowest rating was given to the amount of excitement offered.



1=lowest 7=highest

According to survey respondents, Nora Springs' responsiveness to personal and community problems is generally quite favorable. Most everyone agreed that all are allowed to contribute to local governmental affairs and that in the case of an emergency all residents would help. At least three-fourths also felt that a city office would give a quick response in regards to a complaint and that organizations are interested in what is best for all residents. If any concern was noted about how Nora

Springs responds to problems, it pertained to when something needs to get done the whole community gets behind it where 43 percent of the respondents reported dissatisfaction in this area.

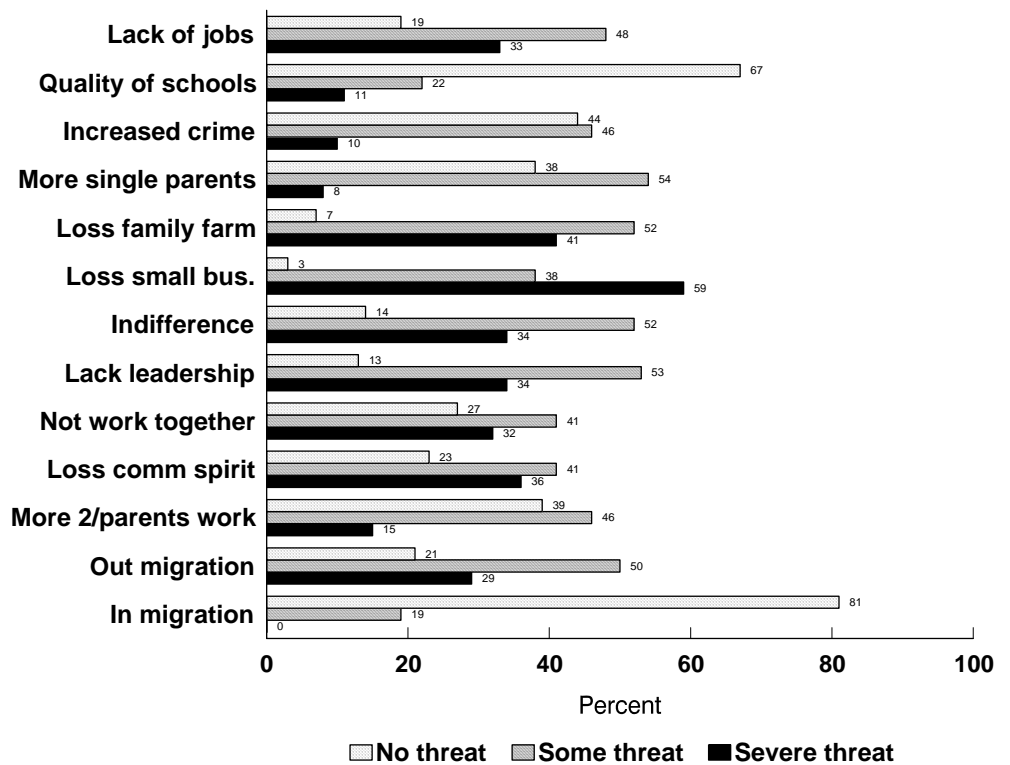
## INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION IN NORA SPRINGS ACTIVITIES

Over three-fourths of Nora Springs residents are interested in being informed of community activities. Yet only about 48 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 40 percent indicated being very or somewhat active.

Ties with other local residents often are an indication of their commitment to the community. In Nora Springs' case, 48 percent of the respondents indicated knowing the name of half or more of the adult residents. Also, 54 percent indicated that half or more of their close personal friends live in Nora Springs. As for their adult relatives and in-laws, 13 percent indicated that half or more of them live in Nora Springs.

### 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 Nora Springs, at least half of the residents see loss of small businesses as a condition that poses a serious threat to the future of the community. Lack of jobs, loss of family farms, indifference about the community, lack of leadership, and loss of community spirit were considered serious threats by at least one-third of Nora Springs residents. Minimal concern was expressed with quality of schools and people moving into the community.



### OVERALL COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

How important is it for Nora Springs residents to feel a part of this community? When asked this question, 89 percent responded that it was important for them to feel a part of the community. When asked whether they feel "at home" in Nora Springs, 95 percent said that they did. Furthermore 81 percent indicated they would be sorry to move away from Nora Springs. In spite of the community concerns as indicated in the previous charts, the majority of residents see Nora Springs as their home and are reluctant to move away from the community.

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