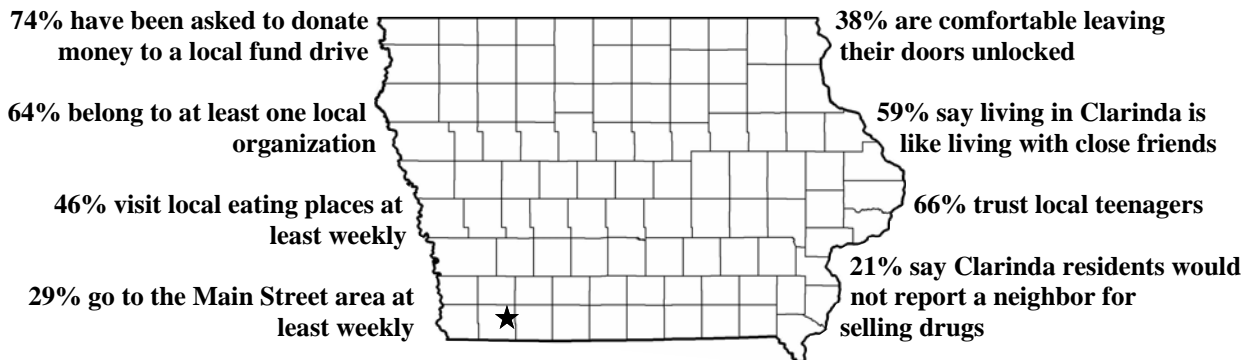


A DECADE OF CHANGE IN CLARINDA

In February 2004, the Rural Development Initiative Project at Iowa State University conducted a survey designed to look at changes in the social conditions in Iowa's rural towns. The survey was mailed to nearly 15,000 households in 99 towns, one of which was Clarinda. Ten years ago, residents of these same 99 communities were asked to complete a similar survey. The households for both surveys were selected randomly from local telephone directories (150 households per community). In 1994, 107 Clarinda residents responded to the survey, and 110 responded in 2004. This report is a summary of the results, including how the opinions of Clarinda residents have changed over the past decade.

LIFE IN CLARINDA IN 2004



LOCAL PATRONAGE PATTERNS

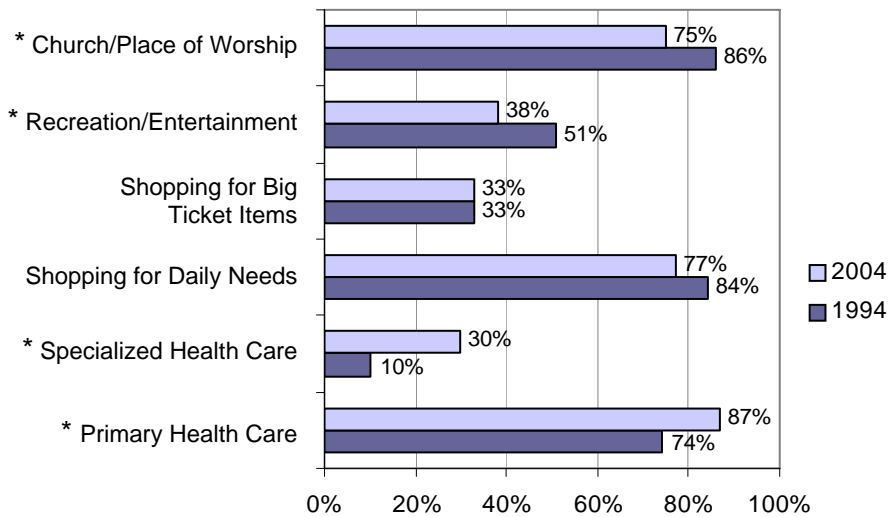


Figure 1: Percent Selecting "Local"

For a variety of reasons, many residents of Iowa's smaller towns rely on neighboring cities for services. Results from this survey suggest that Clarinda residents defied the trend for some services. Figure 1 shows the percentage of residents who reported patronizing various services in Clarinda. In 1994 and 2004, the vast majority of residents remained in town for church/place of worship, shopping for daily needs,

and primary health care. Less than half stayed in Clarinda for recreation and a third or less shopped in town for big ticket items or utilized local specialized health care. The percentages of residents who utilized local specialized health care and primary health care were significantly greater than in 1994, but patronage of local churches/places of worship and recreation declined over the decade.

A Note on Interpretation: For Clarinda, differences in percentages between 2004 and 1994 of less than 11 percent should be considered a statistical "dead-heat." That is, they fall within the margin of error range, which occurs whenever samples are used to draw conclusions about a larger group. With the modest sample sizes used in this study, the differences must be relatively large before we can be confident that they are real. Throughout the report, differences that are equal to or exceed 11 percent are statistically significant and are indicated with an asterisk ().

RATINGS OF LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

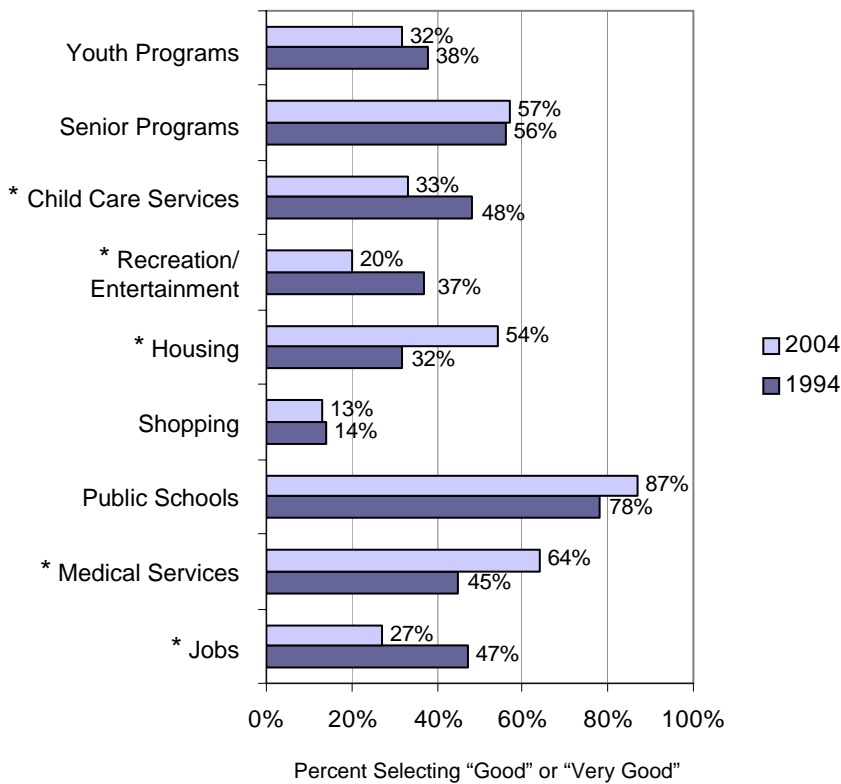


Figure 2: Ratings of Local Services and Facilities

Nine local services were listed on the questionnaire along with instructions to rate each as “very good,” “good,” “fair,” “poor,” or “not available.” Figure 2 shows the percent of residents who rated each service as “good” or “very good” in 1994 and 2004. More than three fourths of residents rated the public schools positively and more than half rated senior programs, medical services, and housing favorably in 2004. Public schools and senior programs received the highest ratings in 1994. Shopping and recreation received the lowest approval ratings in both periods. Residents assessed housing and medical services more positively in 2004 than in 1994. However, child care services, recreation, and jobs received lower ratings in 2004 than they did in 1994. The evaluations of other services were stable.

RATINGS OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Respondents were asked to provide ratings for seven services normally provided by local governments. Figure 3 shows the percentage of residents rating each service as “good” or “very good” for 2004 and 1994. Generally, Clarinda residents reported being satisfied with local government services. More than seven in ten rated emergency response, garbage collection, fire protection, and parks favorably in both times. More than half indicated that water, the condition of the streets, and police protection were good or very good in 2004. A greater proportion of residents evaluated the streets and police protection positively in 2004 than did so in 1994, while water received a less favorable rating over that period.

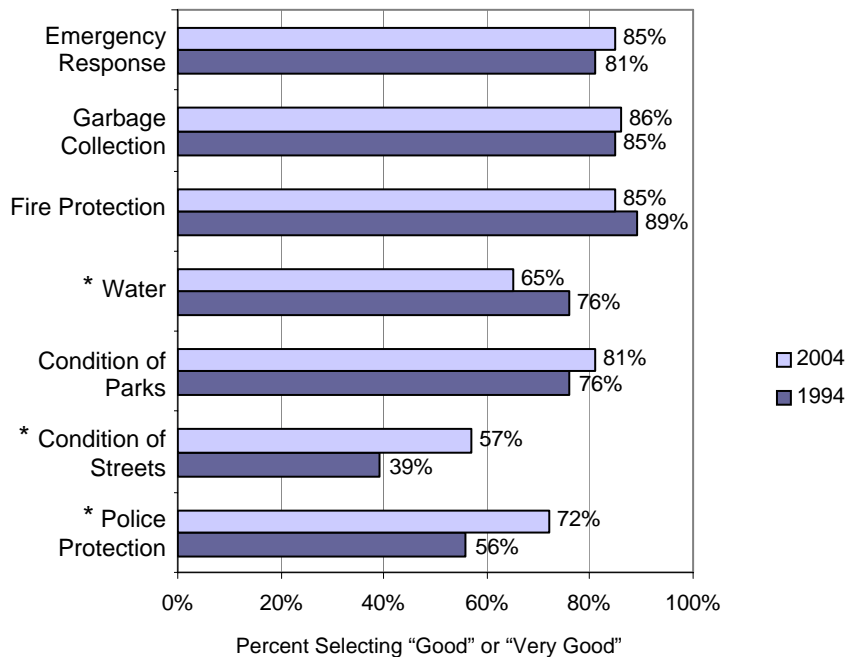


Figure 3: Ratings of Local Government Services

CLARINDA'S SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

In spite of the frequently publicized economic challenges faced by many of Iowa's small towns, they are regularly praised for having favorable social climates. A main goal of this project has been to determine the extent to which Iowa's rural towns possess favorable social environments. Accordingly, a variety of questions were included on the survey asking residents to evaluate various social attributes of their communities.

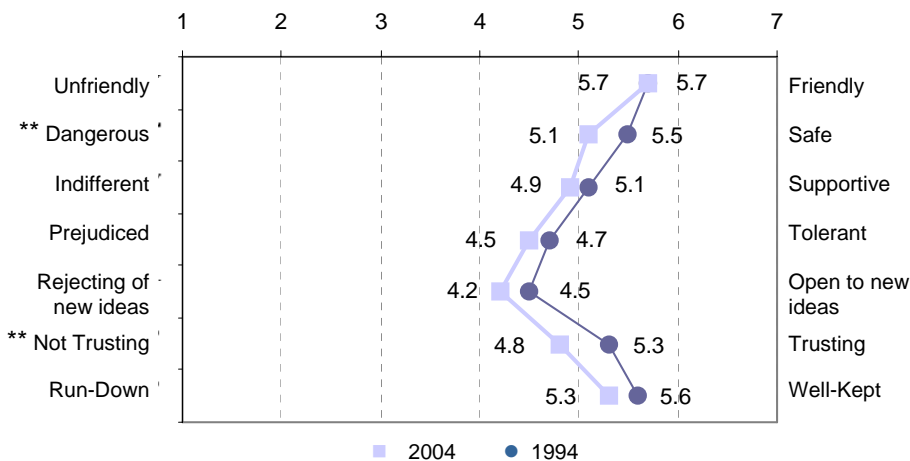


Figure 4: Average Rating of Social Qualities on a 1 to 7 Scale

Residents were presented with a list of qualities and asked to evaluate their town on each quality using a 7-point scale. The average ratings shown in Figure 4 reveal that in 1994, safety, appearance, and friendliness had the highest evaluations. In 2004, there was a significant decline in residents' assessments of safety and trust. Even so, safety, friendliness, and appearance still received the highest ratings. Openness to new ideas and tolerance received the lowest ratings in both 1994 and 2004. Changes in ratings for other qualities were within the margin of error.

** The margin of error is calculated differently for averages, and will sometimes vary from question to question within the survey depending on how many people answered each question. Thus, changes of the same size may exceed the margin of error for some items in Figure 4, but not for others. Only those items designated by double asterisks (**) have differences large enough to fall outside of the statistical margin of error and can thus be considered to have changed since 1994.

SOCIAL TIES

“Everybody knows everybody” is often cited as a feature of small towns. The extent to which people know and interact with each other influences commitment to the community and interest in its well-being. Therefore, questions were included about local social ties. In 2004, 36 percent of residents reported knowing the names of half or more of the people in Clarinda, compared to 42 percent in 1994. Similarly, 65 percent indicated that half or more of their friends live in Clarinda, compared to 71 percent in 1994. Twenty-nine percent of residents in 2004 and 38 percent in 1994 said that half or more of their adult relatives and in-laws live in Clarinda. (Note: These differences are not greater than the margin of error.)

COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

How attached are Clarinda residents to their community? Almost everyone reported that they feel at home in Clarinda in both 1994 and 2004 (see Figure 5). Furthermore, more than seven of ten in both 1994 and 2004 indicated that they would be sorry to leave if they had to move away. Feelings of attachment to Clarinda have not changed significantly.

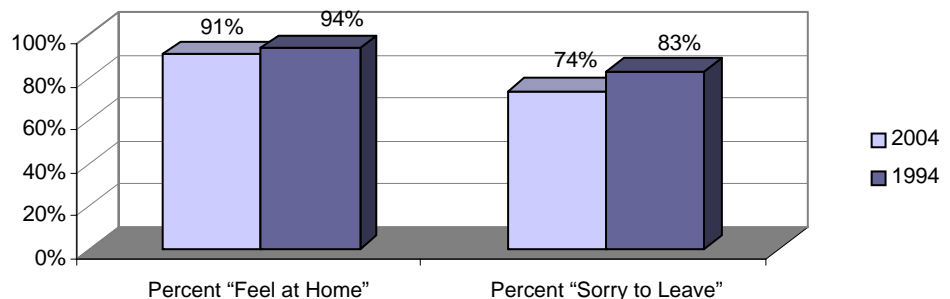


Figure 5: Community Attachment

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Citizens working together to accomplish local goals is an important feature of small towns. For Clarinda, 73 percent of residents indicated in 2004 that the spirit of community participation is “good” or “very good.” Fifty-four percent reported participating in a local improvement project during the year prior to the survey and about one in three described themselves as “somewhat or “very” active in local community activities and events (see Figure 6). This level of involvement is not significantly different from 1994 when 58 percent reported participating in a project and 43 percent rated themselves as active in the community.

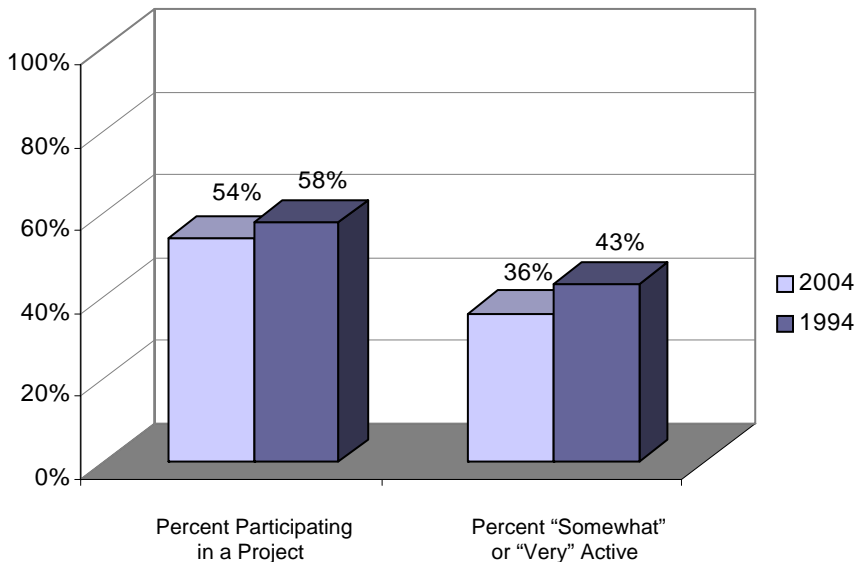


Figure 6: Community Involvement

When asked to consider a variety of factors that limit their involvement in community improvement projects, the top three factors mentioned by residents were lack of time (60%), not being asked to volunteer (41%), and not knowing how to get involved (33%).

SUMMARY

A major goal of this project is to examine changes in the social conditions in rural Iowa over the past decade. As previously discussed, the differences between 2004 and 1994 shown in this report must be interpreted to account for the margin of error—that is, we cannot say with confidence that a change has occurred unless the difference is equal to or greater than 11 percentage points. Using this standard, what has changed in Clarinda over the past decade? Clarinda residents were more likely to utilize local health care in 2004 than in 1994, but fewer remained in town for church/place of worship and recreation/entertainment. A greater percentage approved of the quality of medical services, housing, streets, and police protection. However, the quality of child care services, recreation/entertainment, jobs, and water received lower ratings in 2004 compared to 1994.

The social environment has changed somewhat. Residents still described Clarinda as a safe, well-kept, and friendly community, but viewed it as less safe and less trusting compared to 1994. They remained strongly attached to Clarinda. In addition, more than seven in ten reported that the spirit of community participation is good or very good overall and levels of community involvement remained unchanged from 1994 to 2004. It is interesting to note that two of the top three reasons people gave for not being involved in community projects were that no one asked them and they don’t know how to become involved. This suggests possible strategies to increase community participation in the future.

The past decade has been challenging for Iowa’s small towns. We hope this information will prove useful in planning for Clarinda’s future. **We wish to thank the Clarinda residents who participated in the 1994 and 2004 studies for providing the information that made this report possible.**

RDI	Prepared by: Terry Besser, Kerry Agnitsch, Laura Forster, Jean Friestad, Tom Rice, Vern Ryan, and Nick Recker, Department of Sociology, Iowa State University. For further information, contact Terry Besser, 515-294-6508, tbesser@iastate.edu or Kerry Agnitsch, 515-294-4095, kagnitsc@iastate.edu.
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