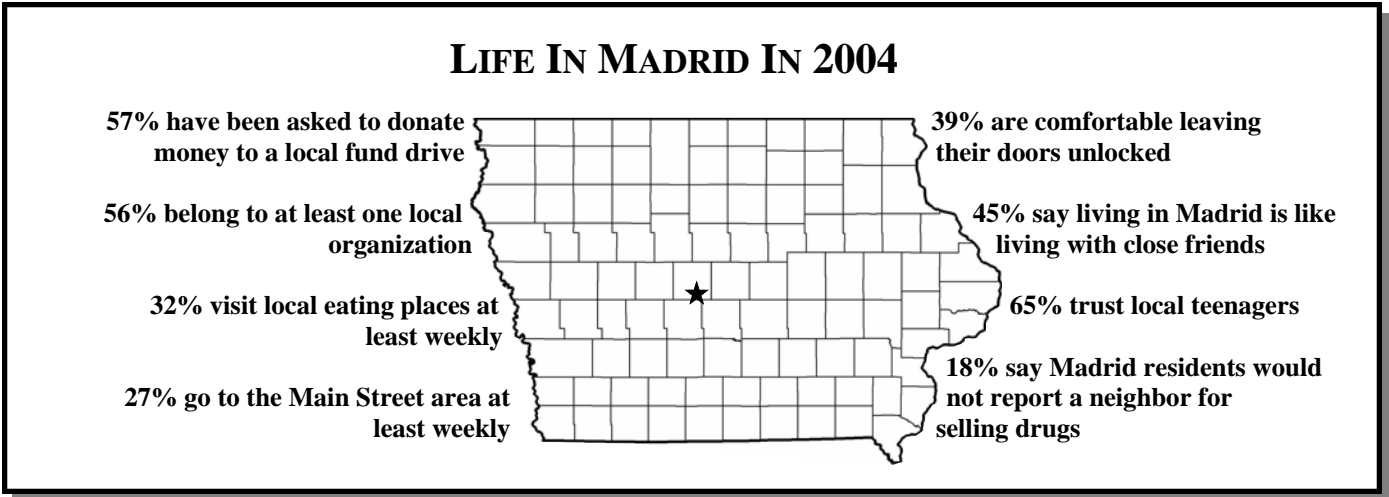
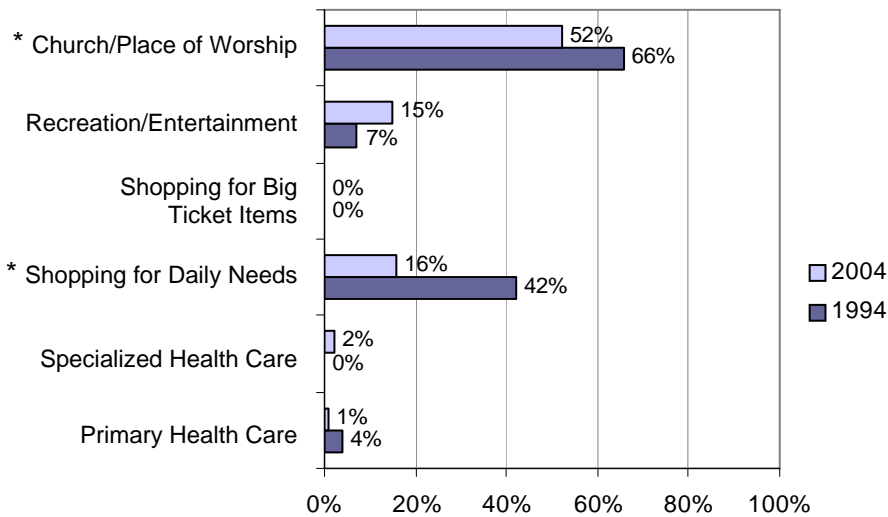


# A DECADE OF CHANGE IN MADRID

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 Madrid. 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, 97 Madrid residents responded to the survey, and 90 responded in 2004. This report is a summary of the results, including how the opinions of Madrid residents have changed over the past decade.



## 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 show that Madrid residents leave town for most services. Figure 1 shows the percentage of residents who reported patronizing various services in Madrid. Over half of residents stayed in Madrid to attend church or a place of worship, although significantly fewer are doing so today than 10 years ago.

Sixteen percent remained in Madrid to shop for their daily needs, down from 42 percent in 1994. No residents reported staying in town to shop for "big ticket" items. For health care, only 1 percent stayed in Madrid to obtain primary health care, while 2 percent obtained specialized health care locally. Finally, 15 percent of Madrid residents stayed in Madrid for recreation and entertainment.

\*A Note on Interpretation: For Madrid, differences in percentages between 2004 and 1994 of less than 12 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 12 percent are statistically significant and are indicated with an asterisk (\*).

## RATINGS OF LOCAL SERVICES AND FACILITIES

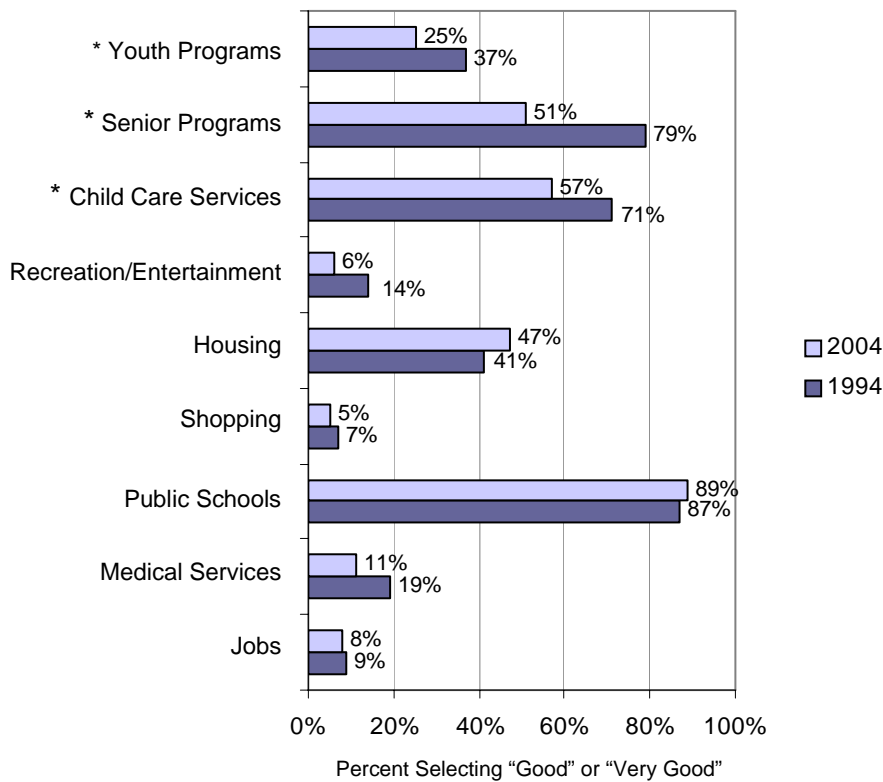


Figure 2: Ratings of Local Services and Facilities

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. In both years, most residents rated the public schools as good or very good, while over half rated senior programs and child care services positively. Nearly half gave favorable ratings to housing, while relatively few residents assigned positive ratings to recreation, shopping, medical services, and jobs. Ratings for recreation, housing, shopping, schools, medical services, and jobs did not change significantly since 1994. However, there was a significant decrease in the percentage of positive ratings assigned to programs for youth and seniors and to child care services.

## 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. Overall, Madrid residents were satisfied with their government services. In both years, at least three-fourths rated emergency response, garbage collection, fire protection, water, and the condition of the parks as good or very good, while over half gave favorable ratings to police protection. The condition of the streets received the lowest percentage of positive ratings. Since 1994, the percentage of favorable ratings declined significantly for emergency response and fire protection, while positive ratings for water services increased.

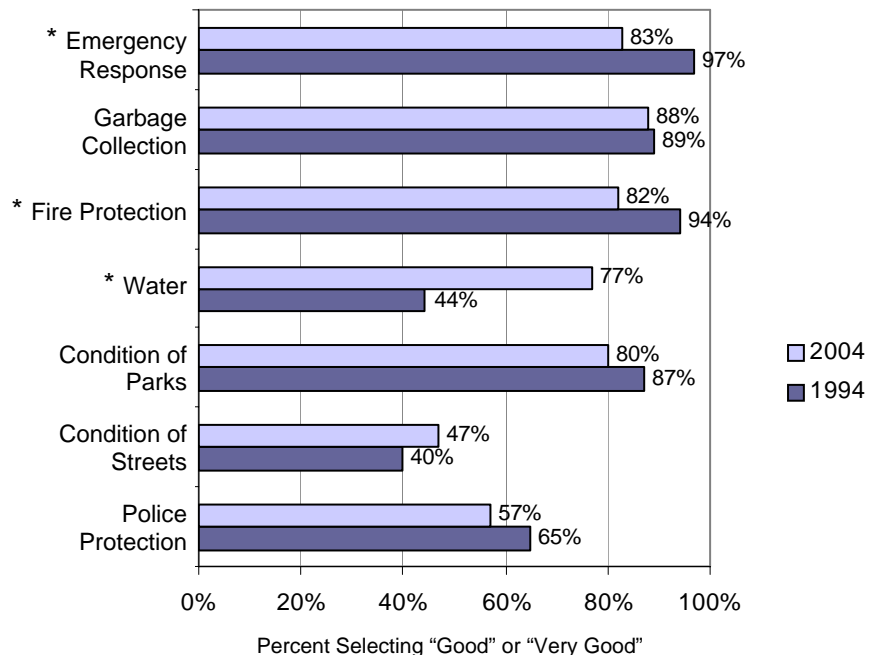
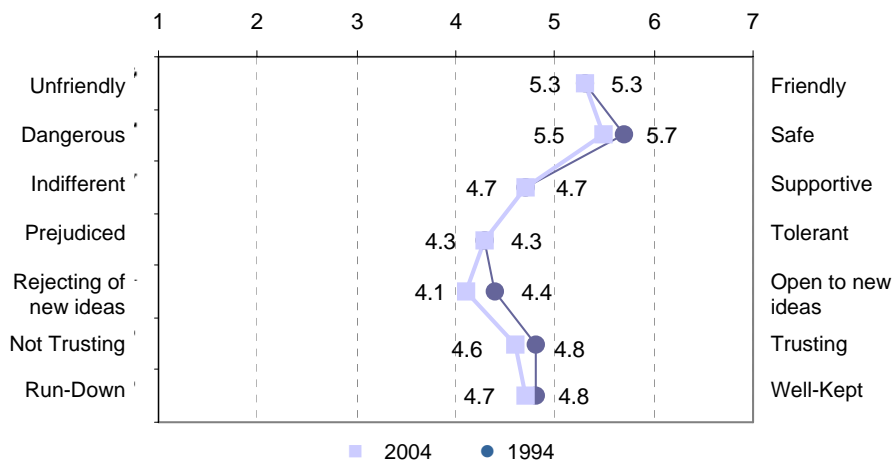


Figure 3: Ratings of Local Government Services

## MADRID'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**

\*\* 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.

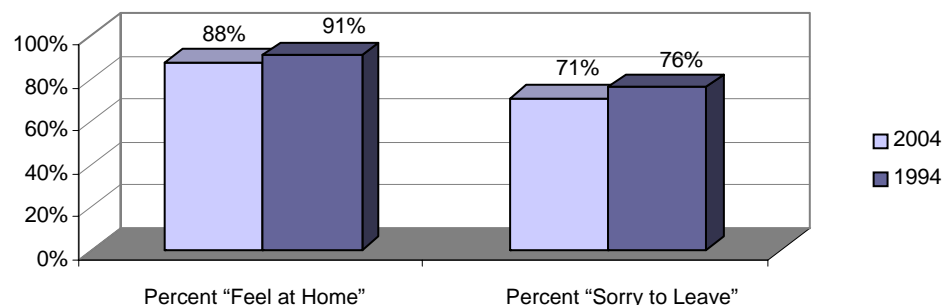
Residents were presented with a list of qualities and asked to evaluate their town on each quality using a 7-point scale. The average ratings shown in Figure 4 reveal that in 1994, residents assigned the highest ratings to the safety and friendliness of Madrid. Those two qualities also received the highest ratings in 2004. The lowest ratings in both years were given to the extent to which Madrid is tolerant and open to new ideas. No significant changes in ratings for these social qualities occurred over the past decade.

## 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. As such, questions were included to assess local social ties. In 2004, 28 percent of residents reported knowing the names of half or more of the people in Madrid, compared to 38 percent in 1994. Forty-four percent indicated that half or more of their friends live in town, compared to 46 percent in 1994. As for relatives, 28 percent of residents in 2004 and 30 percent in 1994 said that half or more of their adult relatives and in-laws live in Madrid. (Note: These differences are not larger than the margin of error.)

## COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

Do Madrid residents feel at home in their community? When asked this question in 2004, most residents said that they did (see Figure 5). Furthermore, 71 percent indicated that they would be sorry to leave if they had to move away from Madrid. These responses are similar to those reported in 1994, and indicate that most Madrid residents feel attached to their community.



**Figure 5: Community Attachment**

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Citizens working together to accomplish local goals is an important feature of small towns. For Madrid, 78 percent of residents reported in 2004 that the spirit of community participation in

Madrid is “good” or “very good.”

At the same time, 44 percent of residents said they participated in a project during the year prior to the survey, and fewer than one-third considered themselves to be “somewhat” or “very” active in community activities and events (see Figure 6). These patterns of community involvement have not changed significantly since 1994. When asked to consider a variety of factors that limit their involvement in the community, the top three selected by Madrid residents were lack of time (60%), not being asked by others to volunteer (39%), and not knowing how to get involved (30%).

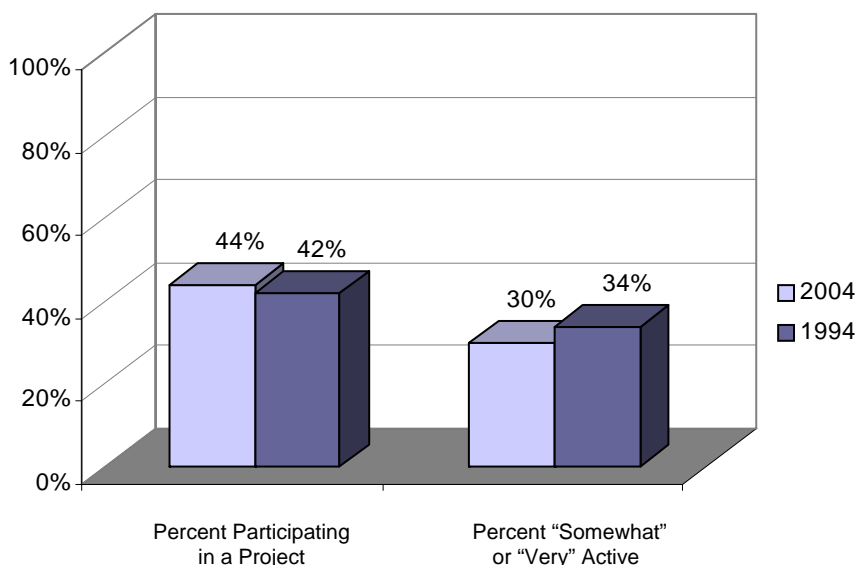


Figure 6: Community Involvement

## 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 12 percentage points. Using this standard, what has changed in Madrid over the past decade? Madrid residents are attending church and shopping for their daily needs in the community less now than ten years ago. The evaluations of the quality of youth programs, senior programs, and child care services have declined significantly, while ratings for other local services remain unchanged. The evaluations of the quality of local government services remain high, but some changes occurred. Evaluations declined for emergency response and fire protection, and increased for water services.

The social environment has changed very little. Ratings for the friendliness, safety, supportiveness, tolerance, openness to new ideas, trusting nature, and appearance are the same as they were in 1994. The extent to which people know each other in Madrid remains unchanged as well. Madrid residents remain attached to their community—that is, most feel at home in Madrid and would be sorry to leave. Finally, levels of community involvement are about the same as they were ten years ago. It is interesting to note that almost one-third of residents reported not knowing how to become involved in the community.

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

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