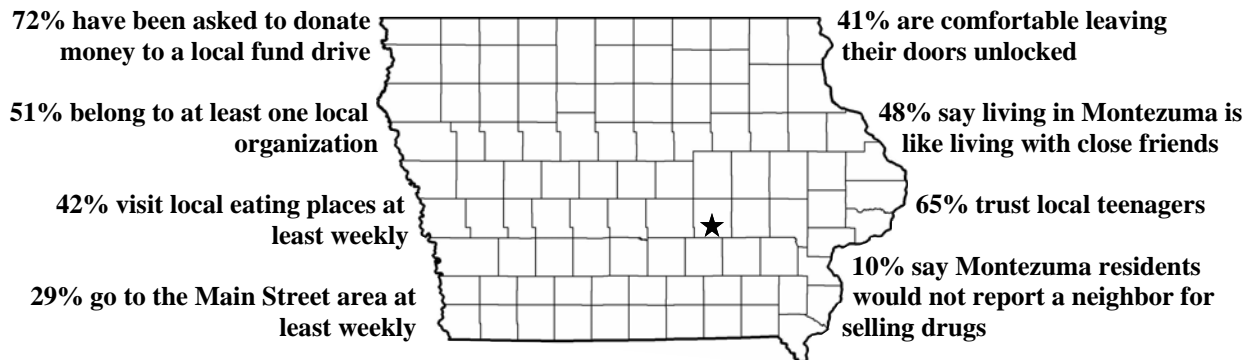


A DECADE OF CHANGE IN MONTEZUMA

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 Montezuma. 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, 101 Montezuma residents responded to the survey, and 97 responded in 2004. This report is a summary of the results, including how the opinions of Montezuma residents have changed over the past decade.

LIFE IN MONTEZUMA IN 2004



LOCAL PATRONAGE PATTERNS

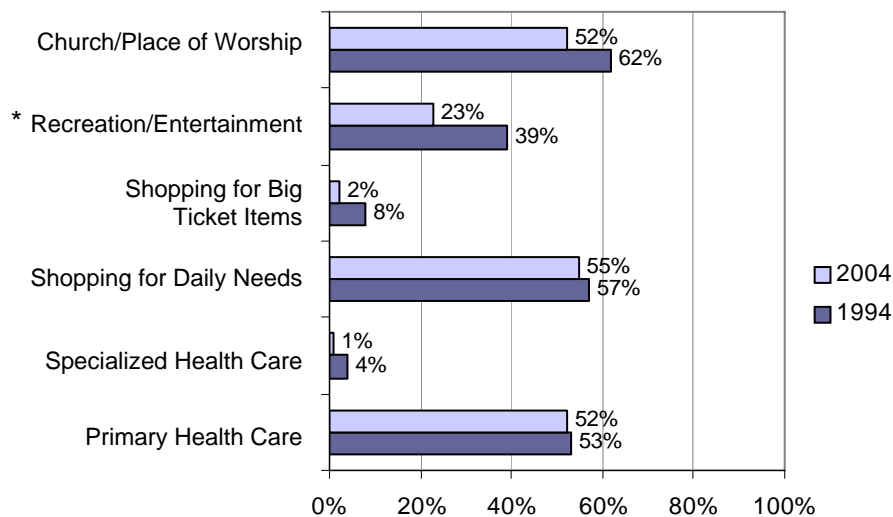


Figure 1: Percent Selecting "Local"

For a variety of reasons, many residents of Iowa's smaller towns rely on neighboring cities for services. Results from this survey reveal that Montezuma residents stay in town for some services and travel for others. Figure 1 shows the percentage of residents who reported patronizing various services in Montezuma. Over half of residents reported that they stay in town to attend church/place of worship. Fifty-five percent

indicated that they patronize local merchants for their daily needs, but only 2 percent stayed to shop for "big ticket" items. Similarly, 52 percent obtained primary health care in Montezuma, whereas only 1 percent stayed for specialized health care. The percentage of those staying for recreation/entertainment declined from 39 percent in 1994 to 23 percent in 2004.

A Note on Interpretation: For Montezuma, 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

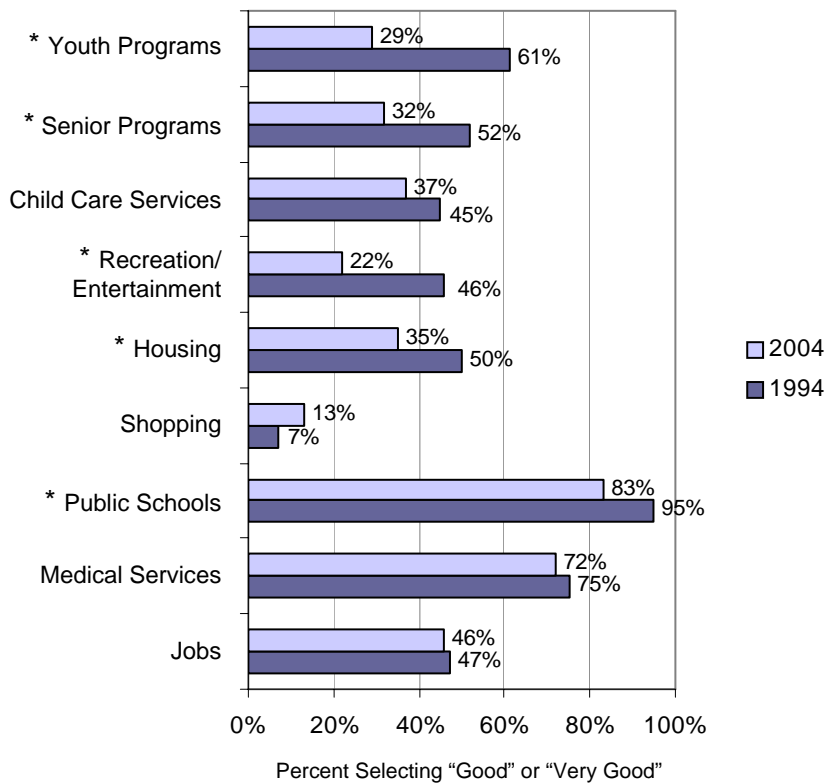


Figure 2: Ratings of Local Services and Facilities

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. Most residents rated the public schools as good or very good, but the percentage of those doing so declined significantly compared to 1994. Similarly, the percentage of positive ratings declined for youth programs, senior programs, recreation, and housing. Ratings for the other services did not change significantly. Nearly three-fourths of residents assigned positive ratings to medical services, almost half to jobs, around one-third to child care services, and 13 percent to shopping in Montezuma in 2004.

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, most residents were satisfied with their government services. A large majority rated emergency response, garbage collection, fire protection, and the condition of the parks as good or very good in both years. In 2004, police protection received favorable ratings from 63 percent of residents, water from 44 percent, and the condition of the streets from 36 percent. The percentage of positive ratings declined significantly for water services. Assessments of other services did not change significantly.

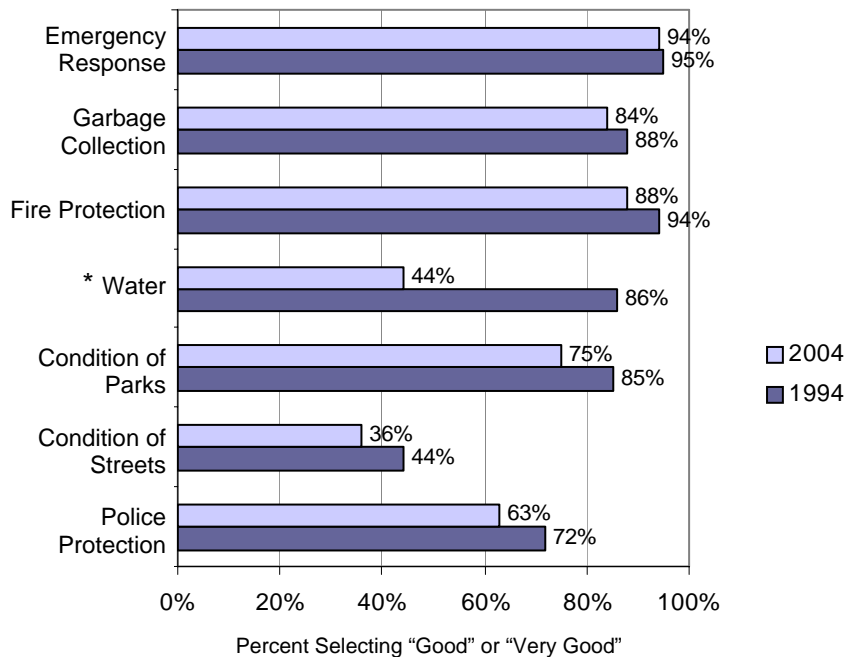


Figure 3: Ratings of Local Government Services

MONTEZUMA'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.

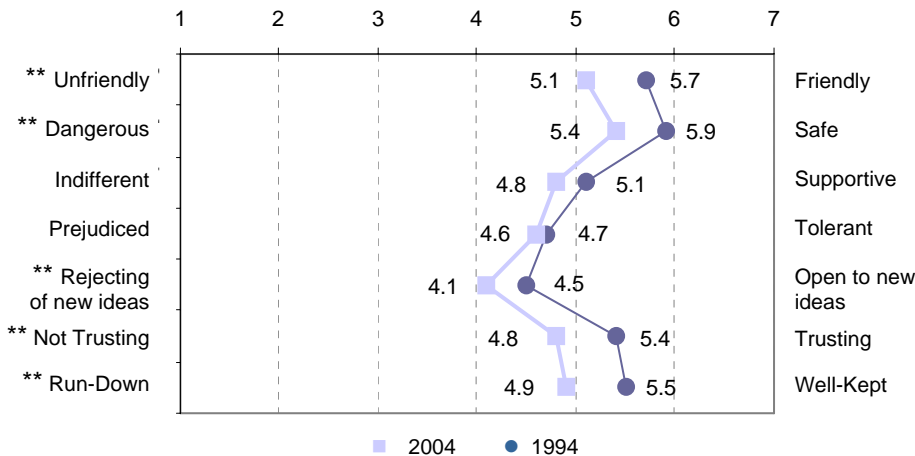


Figure 4: Average Rating of Social Qualities on a 1 to 7 Scale

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 both years, residents assigned the highest ratings to the safety and friendliness of Montezuma. The lowest ratings in both years went to the extent to which Montezuma is tolerant and open to new ideas. Significant changes over the past decade are that residents view Montezuma as less friendly, less safe, less open to new ideas, less trusting, and less well-kept than it was ten years ago.

** 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. As such, questions were included to assess local social ties. In 2004, 43 percent of residents reported knowing the names of half or more of the people in Montezuma compared to 52 percent in 1994. The percentage of residents who said that half or more of their friends live in town declined significantly over the past decade, from 60 percent in 1994 to 46 percent in 2004. As for relatives, 17 percent in 2004 and 21 percent in 1994 said that half or more of their adult relatives and in-laws lived in town.

COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

Do Montezuma residents feel at home in their community? When asked this question, most residents said that they did in both 1994 and 2004 (see Figure 5). Furthermore, 64 percent of residents said that they would be sorry to leave if they had to move away from Montezuma, a significant decrease from the 80 percent who expressed this sentiment in 1994.

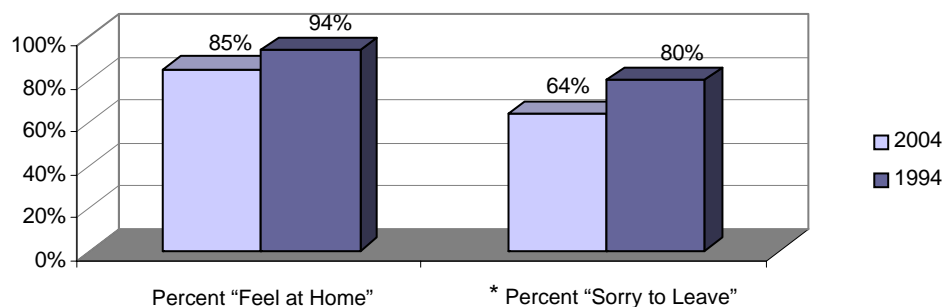


Figure 5: Community Attachment

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Citizens working together to accomplish local goals is an important feature of small towns. For Montezuma, 74 percent of residents indicated in 2004 that the spirit of community participation is “good” or “very good.” At the same time, less than half of residents reported participating in a community improvement project during the year prior to each survey, and only 20 percent described themselves as “somewhat” or “very” active in community activities and events (see Figure 6). While the percentage of residents participating in a project did not change, those who describe themselves as active in the community decreased significantly since 1994. When asked to consider a variety of factors that limit their involvement in community activities, the top three factors selected were lack of time (61%), not being asked by others to volunteer (49%), and not knowing how to get involved (37%).

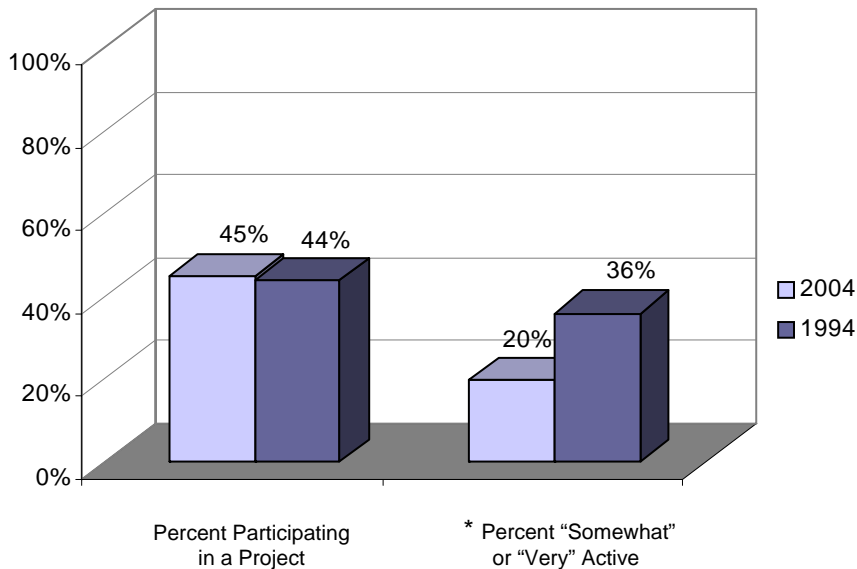


Figure 6: Community Involvement

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 Montezuma over the past decade? Residents are leaving Montezuma for recreation and entertainment more now than ten years ago. Other patronage patterns remain unchanged. Evaluations of the quality of youth programs, senior programs, recreation, housing, and public schools declined. Even so, ratings for government services remained high. The only change is a decrease in the ratings for the quality of water services.

The social environment has changed somewhat. Montezuma residents view their town as less friendly, less safe, less open to new ideas, less trusting, and less well-kept now compared to ten years ago. They report that fewer of their friends live in the community. Even so, Montezuma residents remain attached to their community—that is, most feel at home in Montezuma and would be sorry to leave, but the percentage of those who would be sorry to leave decreased significantly. Finally, residents’ reports about their participation in community projects has not changed, but the percentage who consider themselves to be active in the community declined significantly.

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

RDI

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