



## Quality of Life

Quality of life is different for each of us but, in general, it is an expression that summarizes opinions about our community. It includes attributes like friendliness, health care, safety, recreation, natural resources, educational and employment opportunities which together determine whether our county is a desirable place to live and work.

The aim of this community assessment was to gain a better understanding of the quality of life in Otsego County. What makes our county a desirable place to pursue a career, raise a family, and retire in comfort? To find the answers to these and other concerns we embarked on a comprehensive approach that included the following activities:

- Collected and posted to our web site existing reports, statistics, and other data related to the quality of life in Otsego County.
- Conducted a public opinion survey in November 2011 and received a return rate of nearly 50% from the random sample of 1167 registered voters. See Appendix A for survey results.
- Conducted an on-line survey in early 2012 as a follow up to gain additional input related to the original public opinion survey. Survey questions with responses are included in Appendix B.
- Convened a youth input session during Spring Break 2012 to provide area high school students an opportunity to express their ideas and opinions. See Appendix C for details.
- Held Community Conversations in Elmira, Waters, Vanderbilt, Johannesburg, and Gaylord in May 2012. See Appendix D for the summary of the input from the nearly 50 participants.
- Hosted a Community Assessment Team (CAT) in September 2012 to gain the perspective of outside experts. The Team's report is available in Appendix E.

More information is a click away  
[www.otsego.org/qol](http://www.otsego.org/qol)



# Quality of Life Indicators - 2012 Report Card

Indicators provide a snapshot of measureable variables that can be tracked over time to show the change or direction of our county's progress. Sources of indicators use the same methodology from year to year in collecting and reporting the data so we can compare apples to apples.















Progress	Indicator	Prior	Current
<b>Arts &amp; Culture</b>			
↑	Attendance at the Otsego County Historical Museum	2011 1593	2012 2044
↑	Number of artists in the Gaylord Area Council of Arts (GACA) Juried Fine Arts Exhibit	2011 9	2012 17
↑	Number of musical concerts presented by the Gaylord Community Band plus those sponsored by GACA	2011 10	2012 12
<b>Community &amp; Civic Engagement</b>			
↑	Number of volunteer hours by RSVP and the Volunteer Center of Otsego County combined	2010 48,319	2011 50,918
↑	Total amount awarded in grants by the Otsego County Community Foundation	2010 \$36,612	2011 \$53,466
Baseline	Percent of survey respondents who agree or strongly agree that our festivals help generate community spirit		2011 87%
<b>Economy</b>			
↑	Unemployment rate	2010 14.9%	2011 12.4%
↑	Median household income	2010 \$43,601	2011 \$44,129
↓	Percent of population living in poverty	2010 12.8%	2011 13.6%
↓	Number of business establishments	2009 818	2010 797
<b>Education &amp; Lifelong Learning</b>			
↑	Number of visits to the Otsego County Library in Gaylord, Johannesburg, and Vanderbilt	2010 124,190	2011 124,776
↑	High school graduation rate (on time)	2010 79.7%	2011 85.9%
↓	Percent of students who achieved reading proficiency in 3rd grade	2010 69.7%	2011 67.1%
Baseline	Enrollment at the University Center Gaylord and Kirtland Gaylord M-TEC combined		2012 1053
<b>Faith-Based &amp; Spirituality</b>			
↓	Number of individuals served by the Otsego County Food Pantry which is managed by local churches	2010 5615	2011 6092
Baseline	Percent of survey respondents satisfied with the diversity of local churches to meet spiritual needs		2011 88%

↑ = Progress improved

↓ = Progress decreased


↔ = No change in progress

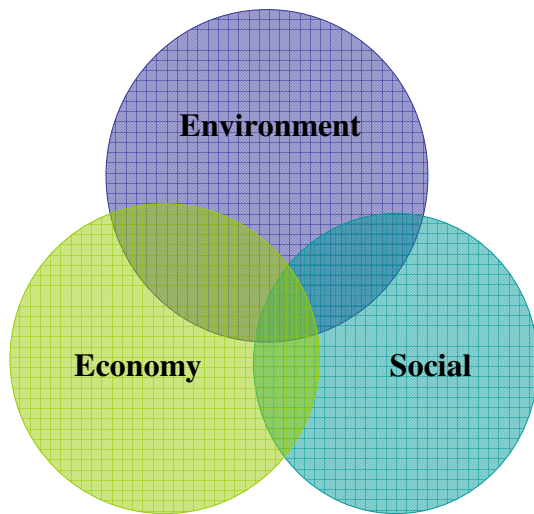
## Quality of Life Indicators - 2012 Report Card

Progress	Indicator	Prior	Current
<b>Government &amp; Politics</b>			
	Percent of voter turnout in a Presidential election	2008 65%	2012 60%
Baseline	Percent of survey respondents satisfied with the ability of local leaders to meet the community's challenges		2011 59%
<b>Health &amp; Wellness</b>			
	Percent of adults with health insurance (includes Medicare and Medicaid)	2011 85%	2012 87%
	Percent of adults who are obese	2011 30%	2012 31%
	Number of home delivered meals served by the Otsego County Commission on Aging	2010 45,397	2011 45,200
<b>Housing</b>			
	Percent of families paying more than 30% of their income for rent	2010 50%	2011 50%
	Number of Otsego County homeless people staying at the Friendship Housing Center	2010 125	2011 200
	Average price of residential / home sales	2010 \$96,029	2011 \$94,897
<b>Infrastructure</b>			
	Number of rides provided by the Otsego County Bus System	2010 105,344	2011 101,141
	Miles of county roads improved by the Otsego County Road Commission	2011 25	2012 31
	Number of flights from Gaylord Regional Airport	2011 2542	2012 3251
<b>Natural Resources &amp; Environment</b>			
	Number of stream miles enhanced through fish passage projects and in stream habitat improvement	2011 14	2012 21
	Number of seedlings sold at the Otsego Conservation District's tree sale	2011 45,500	2012 37,840
	Annual inches of snowfall at the National Weather Service - Gaylord Station	2010 68.2"	2011 112.0"
<b>Recreation &amp; Leisure</b>			
	Number of youth enrolled at the Otsego County Sportsplex Summer Day Camp	2011 90	2012 100
	Total number of rounds of golf played at area courses	2010 205,227	2011 233,115
<b>Safety &amp; Security</b>			
Baseline	Percent of survey respondents who feel their neighborhood is safe		2011 91%
	Number of felony arrests	2009 284	2010 256

 = Progress improved

 = Progress decreased

 = No change in progress



**Our quality of life assessment focuses on the interrelationship of the local economy, environment, and social well-being.**

### **Intended Outcomes:**

- Identify community assets and needs
- Discover the perceptions that residents have about their quality of life
- Create a baseline for future comparisons and measure change over time
- Identify gaps and reduce overlap in services and program delivery
- Provide information and justification for grant applications
- Help local units of government, businesses, and nonprofit organizations make informed decisions based on public opinion and published studies
- Enhance on-going community development efforts such as Communities For A Lifetime, Otsego County Master Plan, Michigan Main Street Program, and Mobilizing for Action through Planning & Partnerships (MAPP)

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Sponsored by:

Otsego County Board of Commissioners  
Otsego County Community Foundation  
Otsego County Township Officers Association  
Otsego County United Way

The Otsego County Quality of Life Assessment operates under the umbrella of our regional planning agency Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG)