

Appendix A

Otsego County Quality of Life Assessment Mail Survey Results November 2011

This survey is designed to measure the quality of life in Otsego County. Quality of life is different for each of us but in general it is an expression that summarizes our opinions about our community and 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 purpose of the survey was to obtain public opinion and perception on the quality of life in Otsego County. The survey is one of various ways to collect data for this project. The results will be widely shared in the hopes that individuals and organizations will use the information to take actions which will ensure Otsego County will be a desired place to live and work.

It is important to point out that 70% of the survey respondents are age 50 and over (survey sample was randomly drawn from individuals who voted in the 2008 election). This is a higher proportion than the 2010 census, where only 51% of those eligible to vote, were age 50 and over.

Methodology

1. A 68 question survey was designed by the Advisory Committee based on the county vision statement and 12 broad categories of attributes that contribute to our county's overall quality of life (arts & culture, community & civic engagement, economy, education & lifelong learning, faith-based & spiritual, government & politics, health & wellness, housing, infrastructure, natural resources & environment, recreation & leisure, and safety & security).
2. The draft questionnaire was pilot-tested for concise meaning of each question, clarity of instructions, easy to follow format, and length of time needed to complete the survey.
3. A scientific random sample of registered voters was conducted by Crossroads Industries. Approximately 10% (1167) of those who voted in the 2008 presidential election were selected to take part in the survey.
4. We received 571 completed, useable surveys. This is a 49% return rate which is high for a mailed survey to a broad-based population.
5. Now for some technical jargon. Even though the return rate (49%) is wonderful, it's the random sample that is statistically important. For our county's population size, 378 surveys are needed to make estimates with a sampling error of $\pm 5\%$ at a 95% confidence level. For example, 65% of the respondents are very satisfied with the availability of fresh fruit and vegetables (Q7). We can be quite confident that between 60% and 70% of the people who voted in 2008 are also very satisfied. If we think the rest of the adult population (non-voters) is like our sample, we can make similar estimates for Otsego County adults in general.

A. What is your level of satisfaction with the following attributes? Put an X in the box that describes your opinion.	Not Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Don't Know
1. Quality of our K-12 public schools No Answer (NA) =6	4%	30%	33%	32%
2. Local access to colleges and vocational training NA=7	3%	28%	54%	16%
3. Public Library service NA=3	1%	14%	78%	7%
4. Availability of high speed Internet access NA=9	26%	27%	35%	12%
5. Quality of drinking water NA=8	9%	23%	62%	6%
6. Quality of water in lakes and streams NA=7	8%	41%	43%	7%
7. Availability of fresh fruit and vegetables NA=4	5%	29%	65%	1%
8. Cultural experiences such as plays, concerts, and art events NA=8	17%	44%	27%	12%
9. Variety of retail shopping NA=6	14%	50%	36%	1%
10. Diversity of local churches to meet spiritual needs NA=7	3%	13%	75%	9%
11. Services and programs for youth NA=8	11%	32%	25%	33%
12. Services and programs for senior citizens NA=7	2%	28%	40%	30%
13. Bike paths NA=6	11%	25%	38%	27%
14. Snowmobile trails NA=15	3%	12%	46%	39%
15. Quality of health care services in Otsego County NA=5	11%	46%	40%	3%
16. Condition of local roads NA=1	35%	53%	12%	0%
17. Affordability of public transportation NA=7	8%	27%	24%	41%
18. Ability of local leaders to meet the challenges facing our Community NA=7	20%	48%	11%	20%
19. Opportunities to get involved / volunteer NA=8	2%	24%	60%	13%

B. What is your level of concern for the following issues that affect our quality of life in Otsego County? Put an X in the box that describes your opinion.	No Concern	Low Concern	Medium Concern	High Concern	Don't Know
20. Availability of affordable housing NA=8	10%	16%	34%	26%	14%
21. Access to day care for children NA=9	16%	16%	16%	13%	40%
22. Having enough money to pay my rent/mortgage NA=9	25%	14%	20%	40%	2%
23. Unemployment rate NA=7	3%	1%	13%	78%	4%
24. Jobs that pay a family-sustaining wage NA=5	1%	2%	14%	80%	4%
25. Getting enough exercise NA=10	16%	20%	35%	28%	2%
26. Access to medical care NA=7	13%	19%	28%	39%	1%
27. Access to mental health care NA=6	15%	21%	22%	23%	19%
28. Availability of services so senior citizens can continue to live in their homes NA=6	5%	13%	23%	39%	19%
29. Traffic congestion NA=7	10%	27%	36%	27%	<1%
30. Sidewalk / pedestrian safety NA=6	17%	29%	29%	22%	3%
31. Zoning enforcement NA=7	12%	29%	25%	16%	18%
32. Maintaining our small town sense of community NA=6	12%	21%	31%	33%	3%
33. Access to nature and open space NA=7	23%	19%	21%	37%	1%
34. Air pollution NA=7	18%	26%	20%	35%	2%
35. Water pollution (surface and ground water) NA=6	10%	18%	23%	47%	2%
36. Crime NA=9	5%	14%	29%	50%	1%
37. Jail overcrowding NA=5	9%	19%	30%	31%	11%
38. Youth being bullied NA=8	5%	11%	23%	49%	13%
39. Gasoline prices compared to surrounding counties NA=1	1%	1%	8%	90%	<1%
40. Preserving historic buildings NA=5	10%	28%	34%	23%	5%

C. What is your level of agreement with the following statements? Put an X in the box that describes your opinion.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
41. Otsego County is a welcoming place for “transplants” (people who have moved here from other communities) NA=13	4%	11%	60%	18%	7%
42. This is a great place to raise a family NA=8	1%	3%	56%	36%	4%
43. This is a great place to open a business NA=15	9%	30%	27%	6%	28%
44. I plan to spend my retirement years in Otsego County NA=6	8%	9%	37%	27%	20%
45. In general, I am optimistic about my future NA=13	3%	12%	50%	30%	5%
46. Casinos should be allowed in Otsego County NA=4	35%	15%	23%	19%	8%
47. I enjoy our four-season weather NA=8	3%	9%	44%	44%	0%
48. People here are friendly NA=7	2%	7%	59%	31%	1%
49. Otsego County is intergenerational We connect youth with senior citizens NA=8	2%	15%	44%	13%	26%
50. I can influence our community’s future NA=12	4%	15%	43%	11%	26%
51. Gaylord, Vanderbilt, and Johannesburg-Lewiston school systems should consolidate administrative functions NA=7	11%	18%	21%	21%	30%
52. Our local units of government (county, townships, etc.) Should consider consolidating services NA=7	7%	18%	31%	22%	23%
53. Our local festivals help generate community spirit NA=9	1%	7%	51%	36%	5%
54. I would pay a \$25 tax assessment per year for access to recycling drop off sites NA=10	21%	22%	25%	24%	7%
55. My neighborhood is safe NA=10	1%	6%	60%	32%	1%
56. My health care needs can be addressed locally NA=11	7%	22%	52%	16%	3%
57. Tourism should be an important part of Otsego County’s future NA=11	2%	6%	47%	43%	2%
58. Oil & gas should be an important part of Otsego County’s future NA=14	5%	9%	44%	32%	9%
59. The Gaylord Regional Airport provides a needed service to the county NA=7	5%	8%	47%	19%	20%
60. High school students are graduating with the skills and knowledge that meet the needs of employers NA=7	9%	21%	29%	4%	37%
61. Our downtown commercial areas are pedestrian-friendly NA=5	3%	10%	66%	19%	2%

D. A few questions about you:						
62. Where in Otsego County do you live?						
13% City of Gaylord	1% Village of Vanderbilt	19% Bagley Township				
6% Charlton Township	6% Chester Township	3% Corwith Township				
3% Dover Township	8% Elmira Township	12% Hayes Township				
13% Livingston Township	16% Otsego Lake Township	NA=1				
63. How long have you lived in Otsego County?						
10% Less than 5 years						
29% 6 – 15 years						
62% Over 15 years						
NA=3						
64. Gender: 41% Male 59% Female NA=9						
65. What is your age?						
<1% Under 21	12% 21-35	19% 36-49	37% 50-65	33% Over 65	NA=1	
66. Do you have health insurance or Medicare coverage? 91% Yes 9% No NA=11						
67. How often do you use Facebook?						
52% Never	11% less than once a week	12% weekly	26% daily	NA=3		
68. Do you have internet access at your home? 82% Yes 18% No NA=6						
69. Please use this space for additional comments regarding Quality of Life in Otsego County						
222 WRITTEN COMMENTS						

<p>Thank you for participating in this questionnaire. Please return your completed survey in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope by November 11, 2011</p>	<p>Otsego County Quality of Life Assessment</p> <p>NEMCOG P.O. Box 457 Gaylord, MI 49734</p>
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