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### Perceptions of Well-Being Among Rural Nebraskans

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# CENTER FOR APPLIED RURAL INNOVATION

## A Research Report\*

Perceptions of Well-Being Among Rural Nebraskans

2006 Nebraska Rural Poll Results

Rebecca J. Vogt Randolph L. Cantrell Bruce B. Johnson Alan J. Tomkins





Center Research Report 06-4, October 2006.

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All of the Center's research reports detailing Nebraska Rural Poll results are located on the Center's World Wide Web page at http://cari.unl.edu/ruralpoll/

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#### **Executive Summary**

Nebraska's economy has been relatively stable during the past year. However, some rural areas continue to be economically challenged. How do rural Nebraskans perceive their quality of life? Do their perceptions differ by community size, the region in which they live, or their occupation?

This report details 2,482 responses to the 2006 Nebraska Rural Poll, the eleventh annual effort to understand rural Nebraskans' perceptions. Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding their individual well-being. Trends for these questions are examined by comparing data from the ten previous polls to this year's results. In addition, comparisons are made among different respondent subgroups, that is, comparisons by age, occupation, region, etc. Based on these analyses, some key findings emerged:

- *More rural Nebraskans report being satisfied with their job opportunities this year as compared to previous years.* After reaching a low of 34 percent in 2004, the proportion satisfied with their job opportunities increased to 42 percent this year (the highest proportion in all 11 years). (page 5)
- Persons with the highest household incomes are more likely than persons with lower incomes to feel they are better off compared to five years ago, are better off compared to their parents when they were their age, and will be better off ten years from now. For example, 52 percent of respondents with household incomes of \$60,000 or more think they will be better off ten years from now. However, only 22 percent of respondents with household incomes under \$20,000 believe they will be better off ten years from now. (page 6)
- *More rural Nebraskans believe people are powerless to control their own lives this year as compared to past years.* The proportion that either strongly agree or agree with the statement that people are powerless to control their own lives each year has averaged about 34 percent. The proportion agreeing with the statement increased slightly, to 38 percent this year, which matches the highest proportion in the 11 years of the Poll (1997 and 1999 were the other two years). (page 4)
- Persons with lower education levels are more likely than persons with more education to believe that people are powerless to control their own lives. Forty-six percent of persons with a high school diploma or less education agree that people are powerless to control their own lives. However, only 25 percent of persons with a four-year college degree share this opinion. (page 9)
- *Rural Nebraskans continue to be generally positive about their current situation.* Except in 2003, each year the proportion of rural Nebraskans that say they are better off than they were five years ago has been greater than the proportion saying they are worse off than they were five years ago. Approximately 36 percent each year have reported that

they were better off than they were five years ago. This year, 35 percent believe they are better off then they were five years ago and 21 percent think they are worse off. (page 2)

- *Similarly, rural Nebraskans continue to be generally positive about their future.* The proportion that say they will be better off ten years from now has always been greater than the proportion saying they will be worse off ten years from now (although the two were virtually identical in 1996). The proportion stating they will be better off ten years from now has generally remained about 36 percent. This year, the proportion was 34 percent. Twenty-one percent believe they will be worse off ten years from now. (page 3)
- Following trends in previous years, rural Nebraskans are most satisfied with their marriage, family, friends, religion/spirituality and the outdoors. They continue to be less satisfied with job opportunities, current income level and financial security during retirement. (page 5)

#### Introduction

Nebraska has experienced relatively stable economic conditions during the past year. However, due to the ongoing drought and other factors, some rural areas continue to be economically challenged.

Given these conditions, how do rural Nebraskans believe they are doing and how do they view their future? Have these views changed over the past ten years? How satisfied are they with various items that influence their well-being? This report addresses these questions.

The 2006 Nebraska Rural Poll is the eleventh annual effort to understand rural Nebraskans' perceptions. Respondents were asked a series of questions about their general well-being. Trends for these questions will be examined by comparing the data from the ten previous polls to this year's results.

#### Methodology and Respondent Profile

This study is based on 2,482 responses from Nebraskans living in the 84 nonmetropolitan counties in the state. A selfadministered questionnaire was mailed in February and March to approximately 6,200 randomly selected households. Metropolitan counties not included in the sample were Cass, Dakota, Dixon, Douglas, Lancaster, Sarpy, Saunders, Seward and Washington. The 14-page questionnaire included questions pertaining to well-being, community, work, new residents, immigration, and making a living. This paper reports only results from the wellbeing portion of the survey. A 40% response rate was achieved using the total design method (Dillman, 1978). The sequence of steps used follow:

- 1. A pre-notification letter was sent requesting participation in the study.
- 2. The questionnaire was mailed with an informal letter signed by the project director approximately seven days later.
- 3. A reminder postcard was sent to the entire sample approximately seven days after the questionnaire had been sent.
- 4. Those who had not yet responded within approximately 14 days of the original mailing were sent a replacement questionnaire.

Appendix Table 1 shows demographic data from this year's study and previous rural polls, as well as similar data based on the entire non-metropolitan population of Nebraska (using 2000 U.S. Census data). As can be seen from the table, there are some marked differences between some of the demographic variables in our sample compared to the Census data. Certainly some variance from 2000 Census data is to be expected as a result of changes that have occurred in the intervening six years. Nonetheless, we suggest the reader use caution in generalizing our data to all rural Nebraska. However, given the random sampling frame used for this survey, the acceptable percentage of responses, and the large number of respondents, we feel the data provide useful insights into opinions of rural Nebraskans on the various issues presented in this report.

The average age of respondents is 56 years. Sixty-nine percent are married (Appendix Table 1) and 71 percent live within the city limits of a town or village. On average, respondents have lived in Nebraska 48 years and have lived in their current community 32 years. Fifty-two percent are living in or near towns or villages with populations less than 5,000. Ninety-two percent have attained at least a high school diploma.

Twenty percent of the respondents report their 2005 approximate household income from all sources, before taxes, as below \$20,000. Thirty-six percent report incomes over \$50,000.

Seventy-two percent were employed in 2005 on a full-time, part-time, or seasonal basis. Twenty-five percent are retired. Thirty-five percent of those employed reported working in a professional, technical or administrative occupation. Fourteen percent indicated they were farmers or ranchers. The employed respondents who do not work in their home or their nearest community reported having to drive an average of 31 miles, one way, to their primary job.

#### Trends in Well-Being (1996 - 2006)

Comparisons are made between the wellbeing data collected this year to the ten previous studies. These comparisons show a clearer picture of the trends in the wellbeing of rural Nebraskans. However, it is important to keep in mind when viewing these comparisons that these were independent samples (the same people were not surveyed each year).

#### General Well-Being

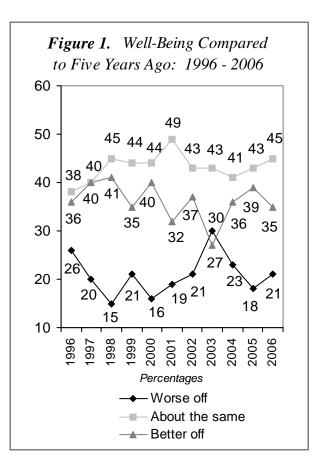
To examine perceptions of general wellbeing, respondents were asked four questions.

1. "All things considered, do you think you are better or worse off than you were

Research Report 06-4 of the Center for Applied Rural Innovation Page 2 five years ago?" (Answer categories were worse off, about the same, or better off).

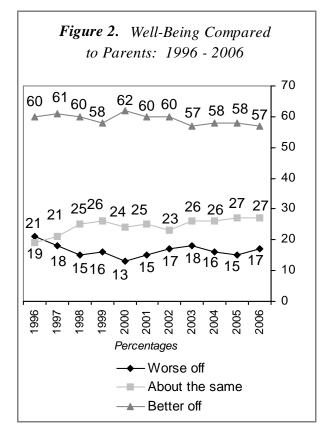
- 2. "All things considered, do you think you are better or worse off than your parents when they were your age?"
- 3. "All things considered, do you think you will be better or worse off ten years from now than you are today?"
- 4. "Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Life has changed so much in our modern world that most people are powerless to control their own lives."

When examining the trends over the past eleven years, rural Nebraskans have generally given positive reviews about their current situation (Figure 1). Except in 2003,



each year the proportion of rural Nebraskans that say they are better off than they were five years ago has been greater than the proportion saying they are worse off than they were five years ago. Approximately 36 percent each year have reported that they were better off than they were five years ago. However, in 2003, that proportion was 27 percent. The proportion stating they are worse off than five years ago has averaged 21 percent. The most noticeable exception to this pattern occurred in 2003 when the proportion saying they were worse off than they were five years ago hit 30 percent. The proportion believing they are about the same has generally remained fairly steady around 44 percent since 1998. It did increase to 49 percent, though, in 2001.

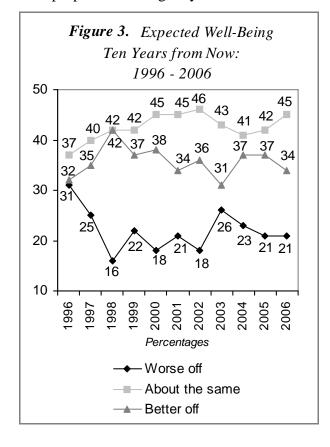
When asked to compare themselves to their



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parents when they were their age, the responses have been very stable over time (Figure 2). The proportion stating they are better off has averaged 59 percent over the eleven year period. Similarly, the proportion feeling they are worse off than their parents has remained steady at approximately 16 percent during this period.

When looking to the future, respondents' views have had some variation over the eleven year period (Figure 3). The proportion that say they will be better off ten years from now has always been greater than the proportion saying they will be worse off ten years from now (although the two were virtually identical in 1996). The gap between the two proportions was widest in 1998 and narrowed considerably in 2003.



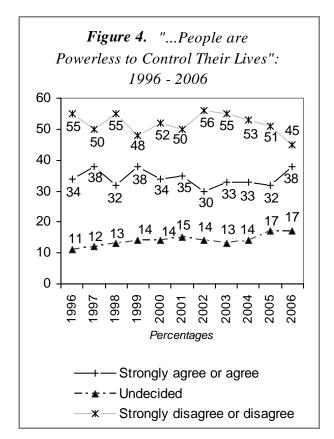
The proportion stating they will be better off

ten years from now has generally remained about 36 percent. One exception to this general pattern occurred in 1998 when 42 percent of the respondents felt they would be better off in the future. And, in 2003 the proportion fell to 31 percent, the lowest of all 11 years. The proportion of respondents stating they will be worse off ten years from now decreased from 31 percent in 1996 to 16 percent in 1998. This proportion then remained around 20 percent from 1999 to 2002. It then increased to 26 percent in 2003 and has steadily declined to 21 percent this year.

In addition to asking about general wellbeing, rural Nebraskans were asked about the amount of control they feel they have over their lives. To measure this, respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statement:

"Life has changed so much in our modern world that most people are powerless to control their own lives."

Responses to this question have remained fairly consistent over all eleven years (Figure 4). The proportion who either strongly disagree or disagree with the statement has remained approximately 52 percent each year, with slight deviations from this average. However, the proportion disagreeing with the statement dropped to 45 percent this year, the lowest of the 11year period. Similarly, the proportion that either strongly agree or agree with the statement each year has averaged about 34 percent. The proportion agreeing with the statement increased to 38 percent this year from 32 percent last year. This matches the highest proportion in all 11 years of the study, also occurring in 1997 and 1999. The



proportion of those who were undecided each year has remained fairly constant, averaging 14 percent.

#### Satisfaction with Specific Aspects of Life

Each year, respondents were also given a list of items that can affect their well-being and were asked to indicate how satisfied they were with each using a five-point scale (1 =very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied). They were also given the option of checking a box to denote "does not apply."

This same question was asked in the ten previous polls, but the list of items was not identical each year. Table 1 shows the proportions very or somewhat satisfied with each item for each study period.

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Item	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Your											
marriage	NA	NA	91	92	92	92	93	92	93	91	94
Your family	90	92	91	89	92	88	89	89	89	88	90
Your friends	83	86	86	83	87	85	85	85	86	83	85
Greenery and											
open space	NA	NA	90	88	86	86	88	83	82	83	85
Clean air	NA	NA	NA	NA	80	81	82	80	78	79	80
Your housing	NA	77	81	80	81	79	81	81	79	80	78
Your religion/											
spirituality	80	80	81	78	83	80	80	79	79	77	76
Clean water	NA	NA	NA	NA	74	76	78	77	74	73	75
Your											
education	73	73	74	74	75	72	75	74	73	71	73
Your health	76	80	77	74	76	71	72	74	71	69	71
Your spare											
time**	56	NA	71	67	72	68	70	70	68	67	70
Your job											
satisfaction	67	68	68	66	70	69	71	68	72	71	69
Your job											
security	62	63	62	59	67	65	64	62	65	64	64
Your											
community	67	65	69	68	69	68	64	63	65	66	63
Your current											
income level	54	58	52	46	51	48	48	47	49	48	50
Job											
opportunities	38	40	37	36	35	36	36	35	34	37	42
Financial											
security											
during	45	49	41	39	43	39	40	31	37	40	41
retirement											

*Table 1.* Proportions of Respondents Very or Somewhat Satisfied with Each Factor, 1996 - 2006.\*

Note: The list of items was not identical in each study. "NA" means that item was not asked that particular year. \* The proportions were calculated out of those answering the question. The respondents checking "does not apply" were not included in the calculations.

\*\* Worded as "time to relax during the week" in 1996 study.

The rank ordering of the items has remained relatively stable over the years. In addition, the proportion of respondents stating they were very or somewhat satisfied with each item also has been fairly consistent over the years. A few items have had some noticeable variation over time, however. The proportion of rural Nebraskans satisfied with their financial security during retirement has averaged approximately 40 percent over the 11 year period. This proportion reached a high of 49 percent in 1997 and a low of 31 percent in 2003. The proportion of rural Nebraskans satisfied with their job opportunities has increased over the past few years. After reaching a low of 34 percent in 2004, the proportion increased to 42 percent this year (the highest proportion in all 11 years).

Items generally fall into three levels of satisfaction ratings. Family, friends, the outdoors, housing and spirituality continue to be items given high satisfaction ratings by respondents. Items in the middle category include job satisfaction, job security and their community. On the other hand, respondents continue to be less satisfied with job opportunities, their current income level, and financial security during retirement.

#### General Well-Being by Subgroups

In this section, 2006 data on the four general measures of well-being are analyzed and reported for the region in which the respondent lives, by the size of their community, and for various individual characteristics (Appendix Table 2).

Younger persons are more likely than older persons to believe they are better off compared to five years ago and will be better off ten years from now. Sixty-four percent of persons age 19 to 29 feel they are better off than they were five years ago. However, only 19 percent of persons age 65 and older share this opinion. Both the oldest respondents and the youngest respondents are the groups most likely to believe they are better off compared to their parents when they were their age.

Persons with the highest household incomes are more likely than persons with lower incomes to feel they are better off compared to five years ago, are better off compared to their parents when they were their age, and will be better off ten years from now. For example, 52 percent of respondents with household incomes of \$60,000 or more think they will be better off ten years from now. However, only 22 percent of respondents with household incomes under \$20,000 believe they will be better off ten years from now.

Persons with higher educational levels are more likely than persons with less education to think they are better off compared to five years ago, are better off compared to their parents when they were their age, and will be better off ten years from now. Forty-eight percent of respondents with at least a fouryear college degree believe they are better off than they were five years ago. Only 28 percent of persons with a high school diploma or less education share this optimism.

Males are more likely than females to think they are better off compared to five years ago and will be better off ten years from now. Females are more likely than males to answer "about the same" to those two questions.

When comparing the marital groups, respondents who have never married are the group most likely to believe they are better off than five years ago and will be better off ten years from now. Both the widowed respondents and married respondents are the groups most likely to believe they are better off compared to their parents when they were

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Respondents with professional occupations are more likely than persons with other types of occupations to believe they are better off compared to five years ago and will be better off ten years from now. Fifty percent of persons with professional occupations believe they will be better off ten years from now, compared to only 29 percent of persons with administrative support positions (Figure 5). Persons with sales occupations are the group most likely to believe they are better off compared to their parents when they were their age.

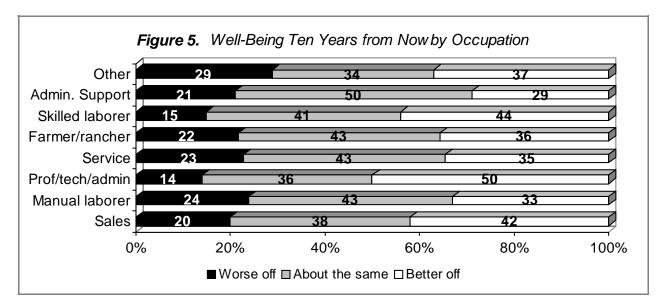
The respondents were also asked if they believe people are powerless to control their own lives. Thirty-eight percent either strongly agree or agree that people are powerless to control their own lives (see Figure 4). Seventeen percent are undecided and 45 percent either strongly disagree or disagree.

When analyzing the responses by region, community size, and various individual

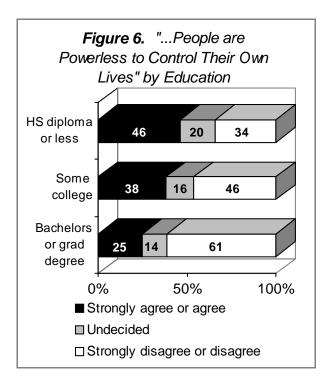
attributes, many differences emerge (Appendix Table 3). Persons with lower educational levels are more likely than persons with more education to believe that people are powerless to control their own lives. Forty-six percent of persons with a high school diploma or less education agree that people are powerless to control their own lives (Figure 6). However, only 25 percent of persons with a four-year college degree share this opinion.

Older persons are more likely than younger persons to believe people are powerless to control their own lives. Forty-six percent of persons age 65 and older agree with this statement. However, only 19 percent of persons age 19 to 29 think people are powerless to control their own lives.

Persons with lower household incomes are more likely than persons with higher incomes to agree with the statement. Approximately 43 percent of persons with household incomes under \$40,000 believe people are powerless to control their own lives, compared to 25 percent of persons with



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household incomes of \$60,000 or more.

Persons living in or near the smallest communities are more likely than persons living in or near larger communities to agree that people are powerless to control their own lives. Forty-seven percent of persons living in or near communities with populations less than 500 agree with this statement, compared to approximately 36 percent of persons living in towns with more than 500 people.

When comparing responses by region, persons living in both the North Central and Northeast regions are the groups most likely to believe this statement. Approximately 41 percent of persons living in either of these regions agree with this statement, compared to 30 percent of persons living in the Panhandle.

The marital status groups most likely to

believe people are powerless are both widowed respondents and respondents who are divorced/separated. When comparing responses by occupation, manual laborers are the group most likely to agree with this statement.

#### Specific Aspects of Well-Being by Subgroups

The respondents were given a list of items that may influence their well-being and were asked to rate their satisfaction with each. The complete ratings for each item are listed in Appendix Table 4. At least one-third of respondents are very satisfied with their family (54%), their marriage (48%), greenery and open space (46%), their religion/ spirituality (43%), their friends (43%), clean air (38%) clean water (37%) and their housing (33%). Items receiving the highest proportion of very dissatisfied responses include: financial security during retirement (20%), current income level (15%), and job opportunities for you (11%).

The top ten items people are dissatisfied with (determined by the largest proportions of "very dissatisfied" and "dissatisfied" responses) will now be examined in more detail by looking at how the different demographic subgroups view each item. These comparisons are shown in Appendix Table 5.

Respondents' satisfaction level with both their financial security during retirement and their current income level differ by most of the individual characteristics examined. Persons with lower household incomes are more likely than persons with higher incomes to be dissatisfied with both of these items. Fifty-three percent of persons with household

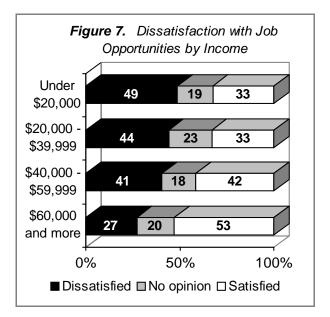
Research Report 06-4 of the Center for Applied Rural Innovation Page 8 incomes under \$20,000 report being dissatisfied with their current income level, compared to 19 percent of persons with household incomes of \$60,000 or more.

Respondents who are divorced or separated are the marital group most likely to be dissatisfied with their financial security during retirement. Sixty-one percent of divorced/ separated respondents are dissatisfied with their financial security during retirement, compared to 27 percent of widowed respondents. Persons who have never married join them as the marital groups most likely to be dissatisfied with their current income level (51%).

When comparing responses by education level, persons with some college education are the group most likely to report being dissatisfied with these two items. Persons with occupations classified as "other" are the occupation group most likely to be dissatisfied with these two items.

When comparing the age groups, persons between the ages of 30 and 64 are the groups most likely to be dissatisfied with their financial security during retirement. The youngest persons (age 19 to 29) are the group most likely to express dissatisfaction with their current income level. One-half (50%) of persons age 19 to 29 are dissatisfied with their current income level.

Persons with lower household incomes are more likely than persons with higher incomes to be dissatisfied with their job, their job security and their job opportunities. Forty-nine percent of persons with household incomes under \$20,000 are dissatisfied with their job opportunities, compared to 27 percent of persons with



household incomes of \$60,000 or more (Figure 7).

Persons who are divorced/separated are the marital group most likely to express dissatisfaction with these three job-related items (job satisfaction, job security and job opportunities). As an example, 29 percent of divorced/separated persons are dissatisfied with their job, compared to 9 percent of widowed respondents.

Persons with some college education are more likely than the other education level groups to be dissatisfied with these three job factors. When comparing responses by occupation, both persons with occupations classified as "other" and manual laborers are the groups most likely to express dissatisfaction with these three job-related items. Approximately 52 percent of these two groups are dissatisfied with their job opportunities, compared to 30 percent of farmers and ranchers.

When comparing responses by age, persons

Research Report 06-4 of the Center for Applied Rural Innovation Page 9 between the ages of 30 and 49 are the group most likely to be dissatisfied with their job opportunities. Persons between the ages of 30 and 64 are the groups most likely to express dissatisfaction with their job security and the youngest persons (age 19 to 39) are the groups most likely to be dissatisfied with their job.

Females are more likely than males to report dissatisfaction with their job opportunities. Forty-three percent of females are dissatisfied with the job opportunities for them, compared to 36 percent of males.

Persons living in or near the smallest communities are more likely than persons living in or near larger communities to express dissatisfaction with their job security.

The groups most likely to report being dissatisfied with their community include: persons living in or near the largest communities, persons under the age of 65, and persons who are divorced or separated.

The groups most likely to express dissatisfaction with their health include: persons living in or near the smallest communities, persons with the lowest household incomes, older persons and respondents who are divorced/separated.

Persons who are divorced/separated are more likely than other marital groups to be dissatisfied with their spare time. Twentyfour percent of the divorced/separated respondents are dissatisfied with their spare time, compared to five percent of widowed persons.

Other groups most likely to be dissatisfied

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with their spare time include: persons with higher household incomes, persons between the ages of 40 and 49, and respondents with some college education.

Persons living in or near communities with populations ranging from 5,000 to 9,999 are more likely than persons living in communities of different sizes to express dissatisfaction with clean water. Twenty percent of persons living in or near communities of this size are dissatisfied with clean water. Only 12 percent of persons living in or near communities with populations ranging from 500 to 999 share this opinion.

Persons living in the Panhandle are more likely than persons living in other regions of the state to express dissatisfaction with clean water. Twenty-two percent of Panhandle residents are dissatisfied with clean water, compared to 12 percent of persons in the North Central region.

Other groups most likely to express dissatisfaction with clean water include: younger persons, persons who are divorced or separated and persons with occupations classified as "other".

The groups most likely to be dissatisfied with their housing are: persons with lower household incomes, younger respondents, both divorced/separated respondents and persons who have never married and persons with administrative support positions.

#### Conclusion

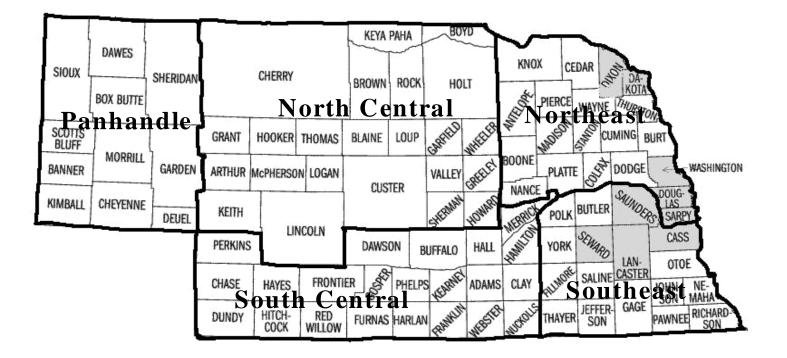
Rural Nebraskans have generally positive views about their current and future situation. Just over one-third of rural Nebraskans think they are better off than they were five years ago and will be better off ten years from now. Twenty-one percent think they are worse off than they were five years ago and the same proportion (21%) think they will be worse off ten years from now.

Certain groups remain pessimistic about their situation. Persons with lower household incomes, older persons, persons with lower educational levels and persons who are divorced or separated are the groups most likely to be more pessimistic about the present and the future.

When asked if they believe people are powerless to control their own lives, 38 percent of this year's respondents agreed, up from 32 percent last year. Widowed persons, persons who are divorced/separated, persons with lower educational levels, older persons, persons with lower household incomes and manual laborers are the groups most likely to agree that people are powerless to control their own lives.

Rural Nebraskans continue to be most satisfied with family, spirituality, friends, and the outdoors. On the other hand, they continue to be less satisfied with job opportunities, their current income level, and financial security during retirement. A positive finding is that more rural Nebraskans report being satisfied with their job opportunities this year as compared to past responses.

## **Appendix Figure 1. Regions of Nebraska**



Metropolitan counties (not surveyed)

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	2006 Poll	2005 Poll	2004 Poll	2003 Poll	2002 Poll	2001 Poll	2000 Census
Age: <sup>1</sup>							
20 - 39	16%	15%	18%	18%	16%	17%	33%
40 - 64	52%	51%	49%	51%	51%	49%	42%
65 and over	32%	34%	32%	32%	32%	33%	24%
Gender: <sup>2</sup>							
Female	31%	32%	32%	51%	36%	37%	51%
Male	70%	69%	68%	49%	64%	63%	49%
Education: <sup>3</sup>							
Less than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade	3%	3%	3%	2%	3%	4%	7%
9 <sup>th</sup> to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade (no diploma)	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	5%	10%
High school diploma (or							
equivalent)	32%	33%	34%	34%	32%	35%	35%
Some college, no degree	25%	24%	24%	23%	25%	26%	25%
Associate degree	12%	13%	12%	11%	10%	8%	7%
Bachelors degree	15%	14%	15%	16%	16%	13%	11%
Graduate or professional degree	9%	10%	8%	9%	10%	8%	4%
Household income: <sup>4</sup>							
Less than \$10,000	7%	8%	9%	8%	8%	9%	10%
\$10,000 - \$19,999	13%	14%	15%	14%	15%	16%	16%
\$20,000 - \$29,999	14%	16%	16%	16%	17%	20%	17%
\$30,000 - \$39,999	15%	16%	16%	16%	17%	16%	15%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	15%	14%	13%	13%	14%	14%	12%
\$50,000 - \$59,999	11%	10%	11%	11%	11%	9%	10%
\$60,000 - \$74,999	11%	10%	10%	11%	9%	8%	9%
\$75,000 or more	14%	13%	11%	11%	10%	8%	11%
Marital Status: <sup>5</sup>							
Married	69%	71%	69%	73%	73%	70%	61%
Never married	8%	7%	9%	7%	6%	7%	22%
Divorced/separated	10%	11%	10%	9%	9%	10%	9%
Widowed/widower	13%	11%	12%	11%	12%	14%	8%

Appendix Table 1. Demographic Profile of Rural Poll Respondents Compared to 2000 Census

<sup>1</sup> 2000 Census universe is non-metro population 20 years of age and over.

<sup>2</sup> 2000 Census universe is total non-metro population.

<sup>3</sup> 2000 Census universe is non-metro population 18 years of age and over.

<sup>4</sup> 2000 Census universe is all non-metro households.

<sup>5</sup> 2000 Census universe is non-metro population 15 years of age and over.

	C	ompared	to Five Y	Years Ago		Compared to Parents			Ten Years from Now			
	Worse		Better		Worse		Better		Worse		Better	
	<u> Off</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u> </u>	<u>Significance</u>	<u> Off</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Off</u>	<u>Significance</u>	<u>Off</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Off</u>	<u>Significance</u>
					I	Percentage	S					
<u>Community Size</u>	(	(n = 2338)	·			(n = 2343)	)		(	(n = 2323)		
Less than 500	24	44	32		20	30	51		25	43	32	
500 - 999	18	46	37		15	27	59		17	49	35	
1,000 - 4,999	21	46	33		18	28	54		21	46	33	
5,000 - 9,999	19	44	37	$\chi^2 = 6.12$	16	29	56	$\chi^2 = 15.41$	18	49	33	$\chi^2 = 10.02$
10,000 and up	21	43	36	(.634)	15	24	61	(.052)	22	43	35	(.264)
Region	(	n = 2371	)			(n = 2377)	1		(	n = 2350		
Panhandle	22	44	34		15	30	55		24	45	31	
North Central	19	45	37		16	26	58		22	44	34	
South Central	21	43	36		16	26	58		19	43	38	
Northeast	22	46	32	$\chi^2 = 3.96$	18	25	57	$\chi^2 = 7.62$	23	46	32	$\chi^2 = 12.08$
Southeast	22	44	34	(.861)	17	30	53	(.471)	21	49	30	(.148)
<u>Individual</u>												
Attributes:												
Household Income	(	n = 2114	.)			(n = 2119)	)		(	n = 2102)		
Under \$20,000	31	50	18		26	29	45		29	49	22	
\$20,000 - \$39,999	21	49	30		17	30	53		23	51	26	
\$40,000 - \$59,999	20	43	37	$\chi^2 = 164.02*$	16	26	58	$\chi^2 = 76.73^*$	20	43	38	$\chi^2 = 128.77*$
\$60,000 and over	13	31	56	(.000)	11	19	70	(.000)	14	34	52	(.000)
Age	(	n = 2330	))			(n = 2336)	)		(	n = 2310)		
19 - 29	7	29	64		11	26	63		4	18	78	
30 - 39	13	36	51		17	28	55		6	31	63	
40 - 49	21	37	42		20	31	49		11	37	52	
50 - 64	27	38	35	$\chi^2 = 212.97*$	22	26	52	$\chi^2 = 68.27*$	27	45	29	$\chi^2 = 498.46^*$
65 and older	20	61	19	(.000)	9	26	65	(.000)	29	62	9	(.000)

#### Appendix Table 2. Measures of Individual Well-Being in Relation to Community Size, Region and Individual Attributes.

#### Appendix Table 2 Continued.

		1	te Eluc X			C				T V.	<b>C</b>	
	Ca	mpared	to Five Y	ears Ago		Compared to Parents				Ten Ye	ars from	Now
	Worse		Better		Worse		Better		Worse		Better	
	<u>Off</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Off</u>	<u>Significance</u>	<u>Off</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Off</u>	<u>Significance</u>	<u>Off</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u> Off</u>	<u>Significance</u>
Gender	(	n = 2302	.)			(n = 2308)	)		(	(n = 2282)		
Male	22	41	37	$\chi^2 = 24.82^*$	16	26	58	$\chi^2 = 2.06$	22	43	35	$\chi^2 = 10.49^*$
Female	20	52	29	(.000)	17	28	55	(.357)	20	50	30	(.005)
Education	(	n = 2295	)			(n = 2301)	)		(	(n = 2275)		
H. S. diploma or less	22	50	28		14	29	57		24	53	23	
Some college Bachelors or	24	43	33	$\chi^2 = 72.30^*$	22	26	52	$\chi^2 = 29.92*$	22	42	36	$\chi^2 = 89.04*$
graduate degree	14	38	48	(.000)	13	25	62	(.000)	16	38	46	(.000)
Marital Status	(	n = 2314	.)			(n = 2320)	)		(	(n = 2294)		
Married	20	42	38		15	26	60		20	43	36	
Never married	21	39	41		19	34	47		15	35	50	
Divorced/separated	29	37	34	$\chi^2 = 93.40*$	29	31	41	$\chi^2 = 48.93*$	26	43	31	$\chi^2 = 105.74*$
Widowed	20	67	13	(.000)	13	26	61	(.000)	27	64	10	(.000)
Occupation	(	n = 1562	,)			(n = 1567)	)		(	(n = 1563)		
Sales	25	33	42		15	22	63		20	38	42	
Manual laborer	24	47	30		21	40	39		24	43	33	
Prof/tech/admin	17	35	48		16	25	60		14	36	50	
Service	27	36	38		25	29	47		23	43	35	
Farming/ranching	26	35	38		20	27	52		22	43	36	
Skilled laborer	18	40	43		18	27	56		15	41	44	
Admin. support	23	38	39	$\chi^2 = 32.79^*$	20	23	57	$\chi^2 = 35.83^*$	21	50	29	$\chi^2 = 36.80^*$
Other	26	43	31	(.003)	23	29	49	(.001)	29	34	37	(.001)

\* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	Agree	<u>Significance</u>
		Percentages		
<u>Community Size</u>		(n = 2343)		
Less than 500	39	14	47	
500 - 999	47	18	35	
1,000 - 4,999	44	19	38	
5,000 - 9,999	46	19	36	$\chi^2 = 21.23^*$
10,000 and up	49	16	35	(.007)
<u>Region</u>		(n = 2377)		
Panhandle	51	19	30	
North Central	44	15	41	
South Central	49	17	35	
Northeast	40	19	42	$\chi^2 = 21.12*$
Southeast	45	16	39	(.007)
Individual Attributes:				
Household Income Level		(n = 2122)		
Under \$20,000	34	22	43	
\$20,000 - \$39,999	38	18	44	
\$40,000 - \$59,999	50	13	37	$\chi^2 = 118.06$ *
\$60,000 and over	64	11	25	(.000)
Age		(n = 2337)		
19 - 29	63	18	19	
30 - 39	53	14	34	
40 - 49	56	15	29	
50 - 64	46	15	40	$\chi^2 = 102.82^*$
65 and older	32	22	46	(.000)
Gender		(n = 2310)		_
Male	47	15	38	$\chi^2 = 11.15^*$
Female	41	21	38	(.004)
Education		(n = 2303)		
H.S. diploma or less	34	20	46	
Some college	46	16	38	$\chi^2 = 107.12$ *
Bachelors or grad degree	61	14	25	(.000)
Marital Status		(n = 2322)		
Married	48	16	37	
Never married	51	17	33	
Divorced/separated	42	15	44	$\chi^2 = 31.90*$
Widowed	32	24	44	(.000)

Appendix Table 3.	Life Has Changed So Much in Our Modern World that Most People Are Powerless to Control Their
Own Lives.	

Appendix Table 3 Continued.

	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	Agree	<u>Significance</u>
Occupation		(n = 1567)		
Sales	55	11	33	
Manual laborer	35	18	47	
Prof/technical/admin.	60	12	28	
Service	43	20	38	
Farming/ranching	52	15	33	
Skilled laborer	48	16	36	
Admin. support	39	21	39	$\chi^2 = 49.41^*$
Other	49	11	40	(.000)

\* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

_	Does Not	Very	Somewhat	No	Somewhat	Very
Item	Apply	Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Opinion	Satisfied	Satisfied
Your family	2%	1%	3%	6%	35%	54%
Your marriage	33	1	1	3	15	48
Greenery and open space	0	1	3	10	40	46
Your religion/spirituality	3	1	3	19	32	43
Your friends	1	1	4	11	41	43
Clean air	0	3	7	11	42	38
Clean water	0	5	10	10	39	37
Your housing	0	3	8	11	44	33
Your spare time	2	5	12	13	40	30
Your education	0	2	9	16	46	28
Your health	0	6	12	12	47	24
Your community	0	5	14	18	45	18
Your job satisfaction	31	4	9	8	31	17
Your job security	32	5	9	11	27	17
Current income level	0	15	22	14	39	12
Financial security during						
retirement	0	20	25	15	31	10
Job opportunities for you	29	11	16	15	20	10

Appendix Table 4. Satisfaction with Items Affecting Well-Being, 2006.

	Finan	cial security retirement No	during	<b>Job opportunities for you</b> No				
	Dissatisf	ied opinion	Satisfied	Significance	Dissatisfied		Satisfied	Significance
			~	Percen			~~~~,/~~	~~~~~
<u>Community Size</u>		(n = 2074)			0	n = 1641)		
Less than 500	49	13	38		41	21	38	
500 - 999	39	18	43		34	29	37	
1,000 - 4,999	50	14	36		42	17	40	
5,000 - 9,999	37	19	44	$\chi^2 = 21.89*$	39	24	38	$\chi^2 = 23.09*$
10,000 and up	43	14	43	(.005)	33	19	47	(.003)
Region		(n = 2159)			(	n = 1687)		
Panhandle	44	14	42		38	16	46	
North Central	45	15	40		42	17	41	
South Central	44	15	41		34	23	44	
Northeast	45	16	40	$\chi^2 = 1.20$	38	21	41	$\chi^2 = 11.90$
Southeast	42	15	43	(.997)	41	22	37	(.156)
Individual Attributes:				~ /				· · · ·
Household Income Level		(n = 1957)			(	n = 1563)		
Under \$20,000	51	20	29		49	19	33	
\$20,000 - \$39,999	52	14	34		44	23	33	
\$40,000 - \$59,999	46	12	42	$\chi^2 = 84.01*$	41	18	42	$\chi^2 = 54.38*$
\$60,000 and over	32	13	55	(.000)	27	20	53	(.000)
Age		(n = 2129)		()		n = 1659)		()
19 - 29	45	26	29		39	14	47	
30 - 39	51	16	33		43	14	43	
40 - 49	54	13	33		44	17	40	
50 - 64	52	13	35	$\chi^2 = 149.72^*$	36	23	40	$\chi^2 = 42.97*$
65 and older	26	16	58	(.000)	22	30	48	(.000)
Gender	20	(n = 2108)	50	(.000)		n = 1640)	-10	(.000)
Male	44	15	42	$\chi^2 = 0.92$	36	20	44	$\chi^2 = 6.95^*$
Female	44	15	40	(.631)	43	20	37	(.031)
Education		(n = 2103)	40	(.051)		n = 1638)	51	(.031)
High school diploma or		(II = 2103)			(	n – 1050)		
less	42	18	40		38	24	39	
Some college	50	10	36	$\chi^2 = 40.00^*$	41	24	39	$\chi^2 = 19.48*$
Bachelors or grad degree	38	14	51	(.000)	34	16	50	(.001)
Marital Status	50	(n = 2120)	51	(.000)		n = 1649)	50	(.001)
Married	44	(II = 2120) 14	42		37	11 = 1047	44	
Never married	46	22	33		40	18	42	
Divorced/separated	40 61	12	27	$\chi^2 = 65.88^*$	40 46	21	33	$\chi^2 = 20.65*$
Widowed	27	12	54	(.000)	28	36	36	$\chi = 20.05$ (.002)
Occupation	21	(n = 1442)	54	(.000)		n = 1465)	50	(.002)
Sales	47	(n - 1442) 10	43		30	11 = 1403) 17	53	
Manual laborer	56	10	43 29		50 52	18	30	
Prof./technical/admin	50 46	13	41		34	18	30 47	
Service	40 58	14	41 27		34 46	19	37	
Farming/ranching	38 46	13	41		40 30	17 29	57 41	
Skilled laborer	46 48	13 20	41 32		30 34	29 22	41 44	
		20 10	32 42	$\chi^2 = 30.41^*$	54 44	22 27	44 29	$\chi^2 = 49.37*$
Admin. support				$\chi = 30.41^{*}$ (.007)				
Other	64	15	21	(.007)	53	21	27	(.000)

	<b>Current income level</b> No				Jo	<b>b security</b> No	,	
	Dissatisfied		Satisfied	Significance			Satisfied	<u>Significance</u>
<b>Community Size</b>		n = 2121		Percen	-	n = 1589)		
Less than 500	39	n = 2121) 15	46		25	1 = 1389) 14	60	
500 - 999	39 34		40 50		23 17	14 21	60 62	
1,000 - 4,999	34 40	16 14	30 46				62 65	
5,000 - 9,999	40 33	14 17	40 50	$\chi^2 = 18.49^*$	19 16	16 23		$x^2 - 21.29*$
, ,	35 35	17 10			16	23 13	61 67	$\chi^2 = 21.38^*$
10,000 and up			54	(.018)	20		67	(.006)
Region Donhondla		n = 2204)	50			n = 1627)	61	
Panhandle North Control	35	13	52 50		21	15	64 (5	
North Central	38	13	50		18	16 15	65	
South Central	36	13	52	2 5 60	21	15	64 62	2 1 5 4
Northeast		16	47	$\chi^2 = 5.68$	21	16	63	$\chi^2 = 1.54$
Southeast	37	13	50	(.683)	19	17	64	(.992)
Individual Attributes:		2005			,	1500		
Household Income Level		n = 2005)	27			n = 1506)		
Under \$20,000	53	20	27		31	24	45	
\$20,000 - \$39,999	46	16	39		24	19	58	2 00.1
\$40,000 - \$59,999	36	9	55	$\chi^2 = 236.79*$	21	13	66	$\chi^2 = 57.00*$
\$60,000 and over	19	7	74	(.000)	15	11	74	(.000)
Age		n = 2172)				n = 1599)		
19 - 29	50	4	46		14	12	74	
30 - 39	41	8	52		21	12	67	
40 - 49	41	10	49		19	18	63	
50 - 64	41	11	48	$\chi^2 = 109.32*$	23	14	63	$\chi^2 = 21.25*$
65 and older	22	22	56	(.000)	16	24	60	(.007)
Gender		n = 2147)				n = 1579)		
Male	35	13	52	$\chi^2 = 6.60*$	20	16	64	$\chi^2 = 0.67$
Female	40	14	46	(.037)	21	15	64	(.717)
Education	(	n = 2142)			(r	n = 1578)		
High school diploma or								
less	35	19	47		20	18	62	
Some college	44	12	45	$\chi^2 = 81.72*$	23	15	62	$\chi^2 = 10.40*$
Bachelors or grad								
degree	29	8	64	(.000)	18	13	69	(.034)
Marital Status		n = 2159)				n = 1588)		
Married	35	13	53		19	15	66	
Never married	51	10	40		23	15	61	
Divorced/separated	51	11	39	$\chi^2 = 73.27*$	26	14	60	$\chi^2 = 12.88*$
Widowed	24	24	52	(.000)	23	26	52	(.045)
Occupation	(	n = 1515)			(r	n = 1477)		
Sales	35	11	55		19	16	65	
Manual laborer	44	18	38		28	18	54	
Prof./technical/admin	32	8	60		18	11	71	
Service	53	9	37		23	16	62	
Farming/ranching	42	12	47		15	24	62	
Skilled laborer	41	12	47		22	15	62	
Admin. support		13	43	$\chi^2 = 61.82*$	24	14	63	$\chi^2 = 33.36^*$
Other		6	36	(.000)	29	20	51	(.003)
		v			_/		~ -	()

Appendix Table 5 Continued.

Appendix	Table 5	Continued.
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	<b>Your community</b> No				<b>Your job</b> No			
	Dissatisf	ied opinion	Satisfied	Significance Percen		opinion	Satisfied	<u>Significance</u>
<b>Community Size</b>		(n = 2189)		Tercen		n = 1598)		
Less than 500	18	(1 - 210)) 21	62		17	12	72	
500 - 999		14	72		15	12	67	
1,000 - 4,999		17	65		20	10	71	
5,000 - 9,999		27	50	$\chi^2 = 38.47*$	19	16	65	$\chi^2 = 15.06$
10,000 and up		15	64	χ = 30.47 (.000)	19	10	71	(.058)
Region	21	(n = 2278)	04	(.000)		n = 1637)	/1	(.050)
Panhandle	20	(n = 2270) 21	60		19	12	69	
North Central		20	61		13	12	74	
South Central		15	66		19	13	74	
Northeast		18	65	$\chi^2 = 8.94$	22	12	66	$\chi^2 = 10.52$
Southeast		20	61	(.347)	18	15	67	(.230)
Individual Attributes:	1)	20	01	(.547)	10	15	07	(.250)
Household Income Level		(n = 2063)			(1	n = 1515)		
Under \$20,000		(1 - 2003) 23	57		28	14	58	
\$20,000 - \$39,999		18	63		19	14	65	
\$40,000 - \$59,999		16	64	$\chi^2 = 11.37$	20	10	69	$\chi^2 = 40.20^*$
\$60,000 and over		10	66	(.078)	13	9	79	$\chi = 40.20$ (.000)
Age	17	(n = 2245)	00	(.070)		n = 1608)	1)	(.000)
19 - 29	22	(1 - 22 + 3) 16	62		24	6	70	
30 - 39		10	58		24	11	68	
40 - 49		19	58		19	13	68	
40 - 49 50 - 64		19	58 59	$\chi^2 = 53.05^*$	19	13	70	$\chi^2 = 19.16^*$
65 and older		15	74	$\chi = 55.05$ (.000)	9	12	70	$\chi = 17.10$ (.014)
Gender	11	(n = 2223)	/ 4	(.000)		n = 1589)	15	(.014)
Male	19	(n - 2223) 18	62	$\chi^2 = 1.85$	17	13	69	$\chi^2 = 7.47*$
Female		10	65	(.397)	21	9	70	(.024)
Education	10	(n = 2218)	05	(.377)		n = 1588)	70	(.024)
High school diploma or		(II = 2210)			(1	1 – 1500)		
less		19	64		17	15	68	
Some college		20	58	$\chi^2 = 23.97*$	23	13	65	$\chi^2 = 27.46^*$
Bachelors or grad		20	50	$\chi = 23.97$	25	14	05	$\chi = 27.40$
degree		13	69	(.000)	14	8	78	(.000)
Marital Status	10	(n = 2234)	07	(.000)		n = 1598)	10	(.000)
Married	19	(n = 225 t) 17	64		17	12	71	
Never married		21	57		24	11	66	
Divorced/separated		21	50	$\chi^2 = 37.88^*$	29	11	61	$\chi^2 = 24.99*$
Widowed		16	73	χ = 57.86 (.000)	9	21	70	(.000)
Occupation	10	(n = 1533)	15	(.000)		n = 1485)	70	(.000)
Sales	22	(1 = 1555)	63		14	9	78	
Manual laborer		21	57		30	12	58	
Prof./technical/admin		18	61		17	9	58 74	
Service		20	61		23	11	66	
Farming/ranching		20 15	69		23 9	11	73	
Skilled laborer		13 22	57		17	19	67	
Admin. support		15	64	$\chi^2 = 18.09$	29	8	63	$\chi^2 = 57.39^*$
Other		31	40	$\chi = 10.09$ (.203)	31	11	57	$\chi = 57.57$ (.000)
	47	51	τv	(.203)	51	11	51	(.000)

#### Your health Your spare time No No Dissatisfied <u>opinion Satisfied Significance</u> Dissatisfied opinion Satisfied Significance Percentages **Community Size** (n = 2185)(n = 2176)Less than 500 500 - 999 1,000 - 4,999 5,000 - 9,999 $\chi^2 = 19.56^*$ $\chi^2 = 15.08$ (.012)(.058)10,000 and up Region (n = 2281)(n = 2268)Panhandle North Central South Central $\chi^2 = 6.88$ Northeast $\chi^2 = 10.30$ Southeast (.549)(.245)**Individual Attributes:** Household Income Level (n = 2063)(n = 2050)Under \$20.000 \$20,000 - \$39,999 $\chi^2 = 84.02*$ \$40,000 - \$59,999 $\chi^2 = 44.11^*$ \$60.000 and over (.000)(.000)(n = 2235)Age (n = 2247)19 - 29 30 - 39 40 - 49 50 - 64 $\chi^2 = 29.14^*$ $\chi^2 = 165.8*$ 65 and older (.000)(.000)(n = 2224)(n = 2211)Gender $\chi^2 = 7.21^*$ $\chi^2 = 1.94$ Male Female (.027)(.379) (n = 2218)(n = 2205)Education High school diploma or less Some college $\chi^2 = 21.22^*$ $\chi^2 = 14.87*$ Bachelors or grad degree (.000)(.005)Marital Status (n = 2236)(n = 2222)Married Never married $\chi^2 = 23.91^*$ $\chi^2 = 67.27*$ Divorced/separated Widowed (.001)(.000)**Occupation** (n = 1529)(n = 1528)Sales Manual laborer Prof./technical/admin Service Farming/ranching Skilled laborer $\chi^2 = 16.77$ $\chi^2 = 16.14$ Admin. support Other (.269)(.305)

\* Chi-square values are statistically significant at the .05 level.

Appendix Table 5 Continued.

\*\* Only the ten items with the highest combined proportion of very and somewhat dissatisfied responses are included.

	Clean water No			Your housing No				
	Dissatisfied	d opinion	Satisfied	Significance		opinion	Satisfied	Significance
C		(		Percen	-	0171)		
<u>Community Size</u>		(n = 2202)	70			n = 2171)	75	
Less than 500		8	78		14	11	75	
500 - 999	12	9	80 70		9	9	81	
1,000 - 4,999	14	7	79	2 02 00*	13	10	77	2 11 27
5,000 - 9,999	20	12	68	$\chi^2 = 23.92*$	11	11	78 78	$\chi^2 = 11.37$
10,000 and up		12	73	(.002)	9	13	78	(.181)
<u>Region</u>		(n = 2296)	=0			n = 2256)	-	
Panhandle	22	5	73		13	10	78 76	
North Central	12	9	79		14	10	76	
South Central	15	10	75	2	10	11	79	2 - 40
Northeast		10	75	$\chi^2 = 17.55^*$	10	12	78	$\chi^2 = 7.49$
Southeast	14	10	76	(.025)	11	13	76	(.485)
Individual Attributes:								
Household Income Level		(n = 2071)				n = 2044)		
Under \$20,000		13	70		15	12	73	
\$20,000 - \$39,999	14	10	77	2	13	13	75	2
\$40,000 - \$59,999	16	9	76	$\chi^2 = 13.09*$	11	11	78	$\chi^2 = 17.38*$
\$60,000 and over		8	79	(.042)	8	9	83	(.008)
Age		(n = 2261)				n = 2223)		
19 - 29	21	12	67		21	10	70	
30 - 39	19	10	71		15	15	71	
40 - 49	16	10	73		15	13	72	
50 - 64	16	9	75	$\chi^2 = 25.61*$	10	13	77	$\chi^2 = 55.75^*$
65 and older		8	82	(.001)	7	7	86	(.000)
Gender		(n = 2238)			(r	n = 2201)		
Male	14	10	76	$\chi^2 = 3.26$	10	12	79	$\chi^2 = 7.46*$
Female	17	10	73	(.196)	14	11	76	(.024)
Education		(n = 2232)			(r	n = 2196)		
High school diploma or								
less	15	10	75		11	12	77	
Some college	15	11	74	$\chi^2 = 11.00*$	13	11	76	$\chi^2 = 6.65$
Bachelors or grad								
degree	15	6	79	(.027)	9	10	81	(.156)
Marital Status		(n = 2249)			(r	n = 2211)		
Married	14	8	77		10	11	80	
Never married	18	12	69		21	15	64	
Divorced/separated	20	12	68	$\chi^2 = 16.58*$	21	14	65	$\chi^2 = 63.89^*$
Widowed	12	11	77	(.011)	6	10	85	(.000)
Occupation		(n = 1535)			(r	n = 1525)		~ /
Sales	14	<b>9</b>	76		9	8	84	
Manual laborer		14	69		15	14	71	
Prof./technical/admin	15	9	76		10	12	78	
Service	15	14	71		19	10	71	
Farming/ranching	9	6	85		7	10	83	
Skilled laborer		12	68		9	18	73	
Admin. support		7	76	$\chi^2 = 35.55^*$	22	9	69	$\chi^2 = 39.57^*$
Other		17	51	$\chi = 55.55$ (.001)	18	18	65	$\chi = 39.37$ (.000)
	J 1	1/	51	(.001)	10	10	05	(.000)

#### Appendix Table 5 Continued.

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It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln not to discriminate on the basis of sex, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran's status, national or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation.