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**Community Development Needs
in Nebraska:
Attitude Survey Results
and
Local Action Strategies**

February 26, 1991

**Russell Smith
Robert Blair**



**Center for Public Affairs Research
University of Nebraska at Omaha**



COMMUNITY NEEDS EXPRESSED THROUGH S.T.A.R.T. COMMUNITY ATTITUDE SURVEYS

Introduction

Each S.T.A.R.T. Economic Development community administers a community attitude survey to local residents. Generally the survey serves at least two purposes. One is to collect information about the attitudes and behavior of local residents. For example, respondents are asked to rate a variety of community services, programs and organizations. The questionnaire also collects information about shopping behavior and local preferences about economic development.

A second function of the community attitude survey is to encourage participation in the S.T.A.R.T. planning process. As a result, surveys are generally mailed to all residences in a community (or larger area) rather than to a sample of households.

Over the past several years, S.T.A.R.T. Economic Development community attitude surveys have been administered in approximately 30 different areas. This report profiles what might be considered "needs" identified by local residents responding to their community's S.T.A.R.T. survey. In some cases, the percent rating an issue or service as "fair--much improvement needed" or "poor--unacceptable" is highlighted. In other cases, the proportion saying they engage in a certain type of behavior (e.g., shopping for groceries in town) is reported.

This profile summarizes information for 19 communities (see list at end of report). The communities range in size from 626 to 23,680. Data from an additional 7 communities is available, but is not reported since adjustments must be made for certain changes in the survey instrument prior to reporting.

RATINGS OF SERVICES, FACILITIES, AND PROGRAMS

Percent Rating "Fair/Poor"

1.	Housing--Supply of:	
	-houses for purchase	23.4
	-apartments/houses for rent	40.2
	-housing for elderly	25.2
	-housing for low-income	30.0
	-mobile home parks	31.4
2.	Recreation Programs for:	
	-young children	29.4
	-teenagers	49.6
	-adults	37.5
	-senior citizens	32.2
3.	Health Care Providers:	
	-hospital	15.7
	-nursing home	12.9
	-doctor	24.3
4.	Appearance of:	
	-downtown businesses	18.0
	-residential areas	15.5
	-industrial areas	22.6
	-highway commercial areas	23.3
5.	Community Services:	
	-fire protection	2.1
	-police protection	21.3
	-street maintenance	23.8
	-library facilities	9.6
	-library hours	12.5
	-ambulance	2.6
	-planning/zoning	24.7
	-garbage collection	9.6
	-animal control	39.1
6.	Responsiveness of:	
	-city government	35.2
	-chamber of commerce	19.8
	-development group	36.1

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Percent Responding "Yes"

1. **Development Priorities:**
 - attract new industry 89.0
 - attract new retail business 84.1
 - attract new service business 77.1
 - attract tourism 55.5
 - help existing business/industry 91.5

2. **Would be willing to:**
 - work as a volunteer 39.1
 - attend town hall meeting 65.7

RATING THE LOCAL ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Percent Rating "Fair/Poor"

1. **Availability of:**
 - full-time jobs 65.5
 - part-time jobs 56.9
 - jobs for high school graduates 67.2
 - jobs for college graduates 71.6
 - student summer work 59.4

2. **Overall job:**
 - availability 63.6
 - quality 65.6

Percent Responding "Yes"

3. **Respondent currently looking for work:** 27.1

4. **Would change for a better job:**
 - one member of household 34.1
 - two members of household 16.8

5. **Currently employed in household:**
 - one member 28.2
 - two members 45.8
 - three or more 8.4

SHOPPING HABITS

Percent Responding "Yes"

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. Spend "quite a bit/a lot" out of town: | 42.0 |
| 2. Check at home first: | 80.6 |

LOCAL PURCHASES (percent purchased locally)

	<u>Most Likely</u>		<u>Less Likely</u>
Groceries	70.5	Fine dining	31.1
Banking	82.6	Fast food	38.6
Repairs		Entertainment/Movies	38.8
Appliance	72.4	Clothing	
Plumbing	85.2	Mens	20.7
Heat/AC	84.0	Womens	21.4
Drugs/Pharmacy	63.4	Childrens	17.1
Hardware	73.4	Shoes	21.0
Farm Equipment	54.7	Large Appliances	47.0
Auto Parts	75.2	Furniture	34.7
Gasoline	87.1	Sporting/Rec Equip	28.6
Doctor	61.9	Automobiles	45.9
Legal/Accounting	67.1	Optometrist	42.7
Dentist	65.7		
Hair/Beauty	80.8		
Insurance	77.5		

TOWNS INCLUDED IN COMMUNITY ATTITUDE SURVEY SUMMARY (1990 population)

Alliance	9,765	Humboldt	1,003	Stuart	650
Arapahoe	1,001	Neligh	1,742	Superior	2,397
Blair	6,860	Ord	2,481	Wahoo	3,681
Cambridge	1,107	Oxford	949	Waverly	1,869
Clarkson	699	Schuyler	4,052	Wayne	5,142
Fremont	23,680	Stanton	1,549	Yutan	626
Henderson	999				

COMMUNITY ATTITUDE SURVEY FOR CITY

[Insert Survey Instructions/Overview Here]

Surveys must be returned by _____

Please mail or deliver to _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

PLEASE ANSWER EACH QUESTION BY CIRCLING ONE NUMBER
(UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE)

How do you rate the following aspects of your community? (Excellent = no improvement needed; good = very little improvement needed; satisfactory = some improvement needed; fair = much improvement needed; and poor = unacceptable.)

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Fair	Poor	Any Comments
1. The general appearance of:						
a. Downtown business areas	5	4	3	2	1	_____
b. Residential areas	5	4	3	2	1	_____
c. Industrial areas	5	4	3	2	1	_____
d. Highway commercial areas	5	4	3	2	1	_____
e. Other areas	5	4	3	2	1	_____
2. The availability of shopper parking	5	4	3	2	1	_____
3. General attitude of local merchants toward encouraging local trade	5	4	3	2	1	_____
4. General attitude of retail clerks	5	4	3	2	1	_____

CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Fair	Poor	Any Comments
11. Recreational programs in the community for:						
a. Young children	5	4	3	2	1	_____
b. Teenagers	5	4	3	2	1	_____
c. Adults	5	4	3	2	1	_____
d. Senior citizens	5	4	3	2	1	_____
12. Medical facilities and services:						
a. Hospital(s)	5	4	3	2	1	_____
b. Nursing home(s)	5	4	3	2	1	_____
c. Doctor(s).....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
13. The responsiveness of City Government and leadership to the needs of the citizens of city.....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
14. The Chamber of Commerce in city.....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
15. The Development Company of city.....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
16. Please rate the following services:						
a. Fire protection	5	4	3	2	1	_____
b. Police protection	5	4	3	2	1	_____
c. Street maintenance	5	4	3	2	1	_____
d. Library facilities	5	4	3	2	1	_____
e. Ambulance	5	4	3	2	1	_____
f. City planning and zoning.....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
g. Sewage treatment.....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
h. Garbage collection	5	4	3	2	1	_____
i. Animal control.....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
j. Natural gas	5	4	3	2	1	_____
k. Electricity	5	4	3	2	1	_____
l. Cable TV.....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
m. Telephone.....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
n. Water.....	5	4	3	2	1	_____

CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Fair	Poor	Any Comments
17. Hours of operation:						
a. Library	5	4	3	2	1	_____
b. Banks	5	4	3	2	1	_____
c. City offices	5	4	3	2	1	_____
d. County offices	5	4	3	2	1	_____
e. Local businesses	5	4	3	2	1	_____
f. Post office	5	4	3	2	1	_____
18. The availability of job opportunities:						
a. Full-time	5	4	3	2	1	_____
b. Part-time	5	4	3	2	1	_____
c. Recent high school graduates	5	4	3	2	1	_____
d. Recent college graduates	5	4	3	2	1	_____
e. Summer work for students	5	4	3	2	1	_____
f. Overall	5	4	3	2	1	_____
19. The overall quality of job opportunities	5	4	3	2	1	_____

20. Should one evening a week be set aside for businesses to remain open in city?

Yes No
1 2

21. Which night do you suggest businesses stay open in city?

Monday 1
Tuesday 2
Wednesday 3
Thursday 4
Friday 5
Saturday 6
Sunday 7

CIRCLE ONLY ONE NUMBER

22. Would you support a city sales tax if the amount collected was used to decrease your real estate taxes?

Yes No
1 2

Any comments _____

CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION

23. Overall, how much do you spend on goods and services outside of city?

- Hardly any (less than 10%) 1
- Some (10-30%) 2
- Quite a bit (30-50%) 3
- A great deal (50% or more) 4

24. Before you bought something outside of your city, did you first check to see if it was available in city?

- | | |
|-----|----|
| Yes | No |
| 1 | 2 |

25. Where do you *usually* purchase the following goods and services?

CIRCLE ONLY ONE NUMBER PER ROW		Your City	City A	City B	City C	City D	City E
a.	Groceries.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
b.	Dining at fine restaurants.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
c.	Fast food.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
d.	Entertainment/movies, etc.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
e.	Men's clothing.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
f.	Women's clothing.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
g.	Children's clothing.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
h.	Shoes.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
i.	Drugs/medicine.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
j.	Farm equipment.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
k.	Hardware.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
l.	Building materials.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
m.	Appliances, large.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
n.	Furniture.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
o.	Sporting/recreation equip.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
p.	Automobiles.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
q.	Auto parts (tires, batteries, etc.).....	1	2	3	4	5	6
r.	Gasoline.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
s.	Legal and accounting.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
t.	Doctor.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
u.	Hospital.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
v.	Optometrist.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
w.	Dentist.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
x.	Veterinarian.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
y.	Beautician/barber.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
z.	Insurance.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Fair	Poor	Any Comments
5. School facilities:						
a. Elementary (grades K-8)	5	4	3	2	1	_____
b. High school (grades 9-12).....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
6. Local school curriculum:						
a. Elementary (grades K-8)	5	4	3	2	1	_____
b. High school (grades 9-12).....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
7. The relationship between the community and the professional staff at school.....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
8. The use of school facilities for community programs, recreation, meetings, etc.	5	4	3	2	1	_____
9. Supply of suitable:						
a. Houses for purchase	5	4	3	2	1	_____
b. Apartments or houses for rent.....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
c. Housing for the elderly	5	4	3	2	1	_____
d. Housing for low income	5	4	3	2	1	_____
e. Mobile home parks	5	4	3	2	1	_____
10. Recreational facilities:						
a. City parks	5	4	3	2	1	_____
b. Shelters & picnic facilities	5	4	3	2	1	_____
c. Ball fields.....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
d. Tennis courts	5	4	3	2	1	_____
e. Swimming pool.....	5	4	3	2	1	_____
f. Other facilities	5	4	3	2	1	_____

CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION

	Your City	City A	City B	City C	City D	City E
aa. Bankers/financial services.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
bb. Appliance repair.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
cc. T.V. repair.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
dd. Plumbing repair.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
ee. Heating & air conditioning repair.....	1	2	3	4	5	6
ff. Electrical repair.....	1	2	3	4	5	6

26. Regarding the future economic growth of city, our efforts would best be spent (please indicate yes or no for each item below):

	Yes	No
a. Attracting new industry.....	1	2
b. Attracting new retail business.....	1	2
c. Attracting new service business.....	1	2
d. Attracting tourism.....	1	2
e. Supporting and expanding existing business and industry.....	1	2
f. Other (please specify).....	1	2

27. Would you be willing to work on a volunteer committee to carry out community economic development projects?

Yes	No
1	2

28. Would you attend a town hall meeting to learn the results of this survey and discuss an action plan for city?

Yes	No
1	2

29. What three specific projects do you think would be most beneficial to your community?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

CIRCLE ONE NUMBER FOR EACH QUESTION

The following questions will help us to identify and tabulate specific group attitudes.

30. What is your age? Under 19 1
 19-24 2
 25-34 3
 35-44 4
 45-64 5
 65-74 6
 75 or more..... 7
31. What is your sex? Female 1
 Male 2
32. How many persons in your household? One 1
 Two 2
 Three 3
 Four 4
 Five 5
 Six or more ... 6
33. How long have you lived in city? Less than one year 1
 1-4 years 2
 5-9 years 3
 10-19 years 4
 20 or more..... 5
34. How many members of your household 18 years or older are:
- | | None | One | Two | Three | Four
or More |
|---|------|-----|-----|-------|-----------------|
| a. retired | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| b. employed full-time or part-time | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| c. employed but would change for a better job | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| d. unemployed and looking for work | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| e. unemployed and not looking for work..... | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
35. How many wage earners reside in your household? None 0
 One 1
 Two 2
 Three or more 3
36. Are any children in your household currently attending Public School in city? Yes No
 1 2
37. Do you: Own or are buying your home 1
 Rent 2

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

SUMMARY OF LOCAL ACTION PLANS *

April 1987 to January 1991

<u>Broad Local Strategy[†]</u>	<u>Number of Communities Selecting Strategy</u>
Assist existing business and industry	20
Recruit new business and industry	18
Improve local development organization	16
Enhance community image/attitude/appearance	15
Upgrade recreational facilities and services	14
Improve community and public services	14
Develop community housing	13
Promote community and region	12
Expand development finances and resources	10
Develop human resources	10
Upgrade public infrastructure	9
Assist retail business/develop downtown area	8
Develop and promote tourism industry	6
Improve health care services	5
Facilitate area cooperation	4
Development child care services	2

* Includes 36 projects: 8 communities and 2 counties that completed a pilot strategic planning process and 23 communities and 3 counties in Nebraska that completed plans or prepared draft plans through S.T.A.R.T. (Summary may change when draft plans are completed.)

[†] Strategies are placed in categories where there is the greatest emphasis. For example, some communities include "recruit new and assist existing business" in a single strategy, but place more resources on one of the components.

List of projects included in the Summary of Local Action Plans

April 1987 to January 1991

Pilot Strategic Planning Program - April 1987 to December 1988

Dawson County	Auburn
Central City	Knox County
West Point	Schuyler
Chadron	St. Paul
Papillion-LaVista	Stromsburg

S.T.A.R.T. Economic Development - August 1989 to January 1991

Ord	Neligh
Oxford	Stanton
Arapahoe	Waverly
Cambridge	Keith County
Humboldt	Stuart
Wahoo	David City
Superior	Fremont
Wayne	Box Butte County
Henderson	Clay Center
Johnson County	Albion
Yutan	Elgin
Syracuse	Clarkson
Blair	Gordon

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES:
DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNITY EFFORTS
April 1987 to February 1991

STRATEGY: Assist Existing Business and Industry

GENERAL GOAL: Provide assistance and support to locally-owned or established private firms, keeping them competitive and helping them grow and prosper. The goal is to expand or retain local employment.

MOST COMMON LOCAL ACTIVITIES:

Bring in workshops and educational programs that will improve the business skills of owners and operators in areas like advertising, management, finance and personnel.

Form committees to visit companies to improve communication channels between community and businesses and identify problems and opportunities.

Establish development corporation, encourage participation in the chamber of commerce, and centralize efforts to generally upgrade the organizational structure of the business community to improve relationships within the community.

Develop programs and strategies to market community so that local businesses will have more customers.

Bring in new businesses that will complement existing businesses and broaden range of goods and services available in community.

Create venture capital pools, establish community foundation, and generally work to expand financial resources available to businesses.

Prepare directories of local businesses so that people can shop locally more.

Work to improve the image of the business district, or take other efforts to upgrade the community infrastructure.

Encourage local business purchasing, joint-buying by community businesses, and local subcontracting to help keep business costs down.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES:
DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNITY EFFORTS
April 1987 to February 1991

STRATEGY: Recruit New Business and Industry

GENERAL GOAL: Improve the community's competitive position as a location for new and existing industrial firms, and other basic employers. The goal is to bring new investment and employment into the community.

MOST COMMON LOCAL ACTIVITIES:

Identify the types of businesses that have the best fit in the community and target recruitment efforts to these types of firms.

Inventory available industrial sites and buildings in the area and prepare informational brochures for promotion purposes.

Renovate existing buildings for industrial use, or develop industrial property for business location or expansion.

Develop a community marketing and promotion program to inform potential businesses of local profit opportunities, and attract customers for local firms.

Visit local businesses to identify expansion possibilities, discuss needs, recognize their local contributions, etc.

Support and take part in the efforts of state and regional organizations, like DED, NPPD, etc. to attract businesses to area.

Investigate ways to enlarge financial resources available for business expansion and location.

Create an economic development facts book that contains comprehensive community information useful to businesses, or collect data to update existing book or profile.

Improve the community's ability and capacity to attract business and industry by forming an action team, revitalizing or creating a development organization, forming a business development committee, improving local image, etc.

Undertake specific business development activities, like telemarketing, wholesale distribution, back office operations, satellite manufacturing facilities, local value-added commodities, etc.

Identify sources of assistance for local industries with specific needs, like marketing new products, selling the business, etc.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES:
DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNITY EFFORTS
April 1987 to February 1991

STRATEGY: Improve Local Development Organization

GENERAL GOAL: Create or improve local organizational bodies and upgrade their horizontal or vertical organizational relationships. The goal is to increase the community's internal development capacity.

MOST COMMON LOCAL ACTIVITIES:

Expand and build citizen support for local efforts by educating the community on the importance of economic development, visiting schools, talking to local organizations, visiting with businesses, etc.

Improve communication channels to citizens by holding townhall meetings, sponsoring public forums, and using existing media so that citizens can learn about development efforts.

Solicit input on local development activities and discuss organizational goals by having open meetings, sharing development plans, having joint meetings, etc.

Study the local development organizational structure and take actions needed to create one, or reorganize and revitalize an existing one.

Prepare a written plan that contains specific development objectives to guide and coordinate local organizational efforts.

Improve local organizational relationships by developing better communication channels with other local groups, institutions and parties: creating community calendars, forming coordinating committees, creating a directory of volunteers, etc.

Investigate and pursue external and internal funding sources for local economic development organizational efforts.

Improve relationships with organizations outside the community that can assist with local economic development efforts.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES:
DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNITY EFFORTS
April 1987 to February 1991

STRATEGY: Enhance Community Image/Attitude/Appearance

GENERAL GOAL: Enhance the visual appearance of community, and improve local attitudes toward the community. The goal is to project a positive image and prepare the community for development.

MOST COMMON LOCAL ACTIVITIES:

Create an identifiable theme or symbol for the area to develop a sense of community unity, and use in promotional activities.

Recognize the contributions citizens make to the betterment of the community by highlighting outstanding volunteers, and conducting a competitive city beautification program that has individual recognition.

Address the general dilapidated areas in town by reviewing city zoning ordinances and enforcement procedures, and involving city officials in these efforts.

Initiate activities to reduce specific "eyesores," like removing former water towers, renovating city structures, developing plan to repair the homes of handicapped and elderly individuals, and improving vacant lots.

Build community awareness by installing attractive "welcome" signs at city entrances, developing city service directories for newcomers and creating welcoming committees.

Improve visual appearance by conducting general community cleanups, landscaping entrances to town, cleaning up parks and public places, and developing a unified downtown theme.

Improve community self-image by opening communication channels within town: compile a community profile, develop promotional brochures, involve youths in activities, release results of community attitude survey, etc.

Address negative local attitudes by using the media to focus on the positive, conduct a local public relations program, and build community "grass roots" support for economic development efforts.