RURAL PRIORITIES:

SURVEY OF RURAL ALBERTANS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A.   INTRODUCTION

The Rural Alberta Survey is part of an ongoing Rural Dialogue initiated by the federal government. The Survey was designed to collect information on rural Albertans' views of and experiences with the 11 priorities for action and related areas. The results will be used by federal departments in their program and policy decisions and by representatives of the five participating Alberta regions in their Rural Dialogue workshops.

B.   RESEARCH DESIGN

The survey instrument was developed by Rural Team Alberta in collaboration with several other federal departments and representatives from the data collection agency, C-4 Contact Centre. Telephone interviews were completed using a random sample of 407 rural Albertans from five key regions of the province, between April 5 and 28, 2001. A response rate of 28% was obtained.

C.   SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

- In this sample, 31% of respondents were from Region 1 (Mountain Corridor), 26% from Region 2 (northeastern Alberta), 18% from Region 3 (southern Alberta), 16% from Region 4 (central-eastern Alberta) and 9% from Region 5 (northwestern Alberta).
- Female respondents made up 64% of the sample. Most respondents were between the ages of 40 and 54 (37%), and 6% of respondents were of Aboriginal descent.
- Half of the respondents had some post-secondary experience, and were from households earning $50,000 or more per year. About two-thirds were currently employed.

D.   SURVEY RESULTS

Importance of Priorities Among Rural Albertans

- Rural Albertans viewed a*ccessible quality healthcare (95%)*, *strong community leadership (95%), good infrastructure (94%)* and *government–local partnerships* (93%) as the most important priorities, reporting that the priorities were either "very important" or "important."
- In order of importance, the remaining priorities are:
  - *promotion of rural areas* (87%)
  - *programs and services for rural youth* (85%)
  - *financial resources for rural business* (84%)
  - *creation of new industry* (83%)
  - *more accessible education* (81%)
  - *Internet access for business* (81%)
  - *high-tech skill development* (81%)
  - *access to government programs* (78%)
  - *high-speed Internet access* (66%)

For most priorities, responses across regions were very stable. Some exceptions include:
- 100% of respondents from Region 5 felt that *financial resources for rural business* was important compared to only 76% of Region 2 respondents
- 76% of respondents from Region 1 reported that *creation of new industry* was an important priority compared to 89% of Region 5 respondents

Women and Aboriginal respondents attached a slightly greater level of importance to most priorities.

Economic Development of Rural Alberta

Financial Resources for Rural Business

Among the respondents who had tried to start their own business (52%) many accessed funding through personal means (85% personal investment; 28% friends/family); others attempted to get loans at banks (62%) and through government organizations (15%). Some respondents who had tried to start their own business attempted to access funding through government grants and contributions (20%).

Economic Diversity

Agriculture and forestry were cited as the major industry in the community by the greatest proportion of respondents (71%), followed by mining, oil or gas extraction (46%), value-added industry related to agriculture and forestry (13%), and other consumer services (12%). Some of the most common suggestions for new industries included tourism (16%), manufacturing (14%), value-added agriculture and forestry (11%) and retail services (11%).

Internet and Computer Skills

Overall, 52% of all respondents had Internet access at home, but access varied considerably by several socio-demographic characteristics. Respondents from Region 3, those between the ages of 40 and 54, those with some post-secondary education, high income earners and non-Aboriginal people were much more likely to have Internet access than those outside these groups.

Most of the 48% respondents without Internet access at home indicated that their main reason for not having this service was not having a computer (27%). About 20% of respondents reported that the service was not affordable, that they chose not to have access or that they did not know how to use this technology. Aboriginal respondents were much more likely to cite not having a computer as their main reason for not having Internet access, while older respondents were the most likely to state that they did not know how to use the Internet.

Social Development of Rural Alberta

Youth

Slightly more than two-thirds (69%) of all respondents cited lack of employment opportunities, and just over one-quarter (27%) reported lack of educational opportunities, as the major reason why young people leave their community.

Education

Just under 80% of respondents felt that adult education and skills upgrading was important to the development of their community. Region 2 respondents, females, middle-aged and Aboriginal people were more likely to indicate that adult education was important to their community.

About 20% of respondents cited accessibility, affordability or lack of interest as the greatest challenge to providing adult education and skills upgrading in their community.

Health and Healthcare

- Most respondents reported that diet, exercise or general lifestyle behaviours were the most important contributors to people's health.
- The most commonly reported suggestions for how **government** can improve communities' health were to provide more health-related education and more health practitioners.
- The most commonly reported suggestions for how **communities** can improve their health were to provide more recreational facilities and programs, and to collaborate with other agencies.
- The most commonly reported suggestions for how **respondents** can improve their community's health were through more volunteering and community involvement.

Community Development of Rural Alberta

Community Leadership and Involvement

- Among the 37% of respondents who reported that their community had a hard time developing or retaining leaders, the most commonly reported explanations were a general lack of interest among the community, the overly adversarial nature of current leaders and processes or the out-migration of youth and other capable leadership candidates.
- Respondents attached less importance to the funding programs targeted at building leadership capacity (71%) than they did to community member involvement (92%), exacting community consensus on how to develop their community (87%), and to having community confidence and pride (90%).

Promotion of Rural Canada

- While less than half (43%) of respondents felt that it is important to attract urban Canadians to live in rural areas, a significant majority (93%) felt that it is important that Canadians understand the economic and social contributions of rural Canadians, and the fact that most rural Canadians make their livelihood through the extraction and sale of natural resources (89%).
- Female and Aboriginal respondents attached a greater level of importance to rural Canada promotional issues.

Environmental Issues

- Although environmental issues were not targeted as one of the 11 priorities, 90% of respondents reported that the environment was important to the quality of life in their communities.
- Rural Albertans expressed the greatest concern about the quality of water (94%) and air (87%) in their community. Women and particularly Aboriginal respondents attached a somewhat greater importance to environmental issues.

Access to Government Programs and Services

Importance of Access

- Three-quarters of respondents felt that it is important to be able to access the Government of Canada Web site through computers placed in public locations. Respondents from Region 4 were the most likely to view Internet access as important, while males and older respondents (+55 years of age) were the least likely to view access to the Web site as important.

Use and Access

- Considerably fewer respondents felt that it was "easy" for them to get information about government in general (26%) than it was for them to access government programs and services (41%).
- The most commonly cited difficulties experienced in accessing government programs and services included: finding the correct information or department, experiencing problems with the telephone service or a general dissatisfaction with government staff or services.

Service Canada's Single-Window Model

- 25% of respondents had used the Canada Web site or a Service Canada Access Centre, compared to only 10% who had used the 1 800 O-Canada Telephone Inquiry Centre.
- Older and less educated respondents were much less likely than on average to have used the Canada Web site.
- A majority of respondents reported that their experience with the Telephone Inquiry Centre was helpful (55%), courteous (71%) or informative (67%).
- Less than half (47%) reported that it was easy to use the Web site.

Potential Use of Government Access Modes

Respondents expressed the greatest interest in using the telephone (85%), and were equally interested in using "in-person" (63%) and Internet (61%) access. Those who had used these services were more likely to express an interest in using them again. For example, 93% of those who **had used the Internet** indicated they would be interested in using this option as a way of accessing government programs and services, compared to only 51% who had not used the Internet. Similarly, 90% of respondents **who had access to the Internet** expressed an interest in using the Internet as a way of accessing government programs and services compared to only 30% of those without access. Older, less educated and lower income-earners were the least likely to be interested in using the Internet.

Communications

Awareness of Government Programs

- 10% of respondents had heard of the Canadian Rural Partnership and only 4% had heard of the Rural Secretariat.

Information Sources on Government

- A large majority of respondents (90%) find out about what the government is doing through television. Somewhat fewer (83%) use their local newspaper or the radio, and even fewer use a national newspaper (38%) or the Internet (35%) as a source of information about government programs.

Government Commitment to Rural Canadians

- 25% of all respondents indicated that the federal government shows a commitment to the interests of rural Canadians.
- The most common suggestions for how the government could show greater commitment to the interests of rural Canadians were: the government should show more interest and understanding and the government should provide more funding and support.

INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings from a representative survey of rural Albertans. The research is part of an ongoing Rural Dialogue initiated by the federal government in its 1999 *Federal Framework for Action in Rural Canada*. Through a series of interactive communication processes, the Rural Dialogue is an initiative dedicated to learning more about rural Canadians' development concerns and is aimed at engaging this sub-population of Canadians in community development. One outcome of the Rural Dialogue has been the identification by rural Canadians of 11 priority areas of action. In brief, these 11 priorities are:

- Improve **access to federal government programs and services** for rural Canadians.
- Improve access to **financial resources for rural business** and community development.
- Provide more targeted **opportunities, programs and services for rural youth**, including Aboriginal youth.
- Strengthen rural **community capacity building, leadership and skills development**.
- Create opportunities for rural communities to maintain and develop **infrastructure** for community development.
- Connect rural Canadians to the **knowledge-based economy** and society, and help them acquire the skills to use the technology.
- Strengthen **economic diversification** in rural Canada through more targeted assistance.
- Work with provincial and territorial governments to examine and pilot test new ways to provide rural Canadians with **access to healthcare** at reasonable cost.
- Work with provincial and territorial governments to examine and pilot test new ways to provide rural Canadians with **access to education** at reasonable cost.
- Foster **strategic partnerships**, within communities, between communities and among governments to facilitate rural community development.
- **Promote rural Canada** as a place to live, work and raise a family, recognizing the value of rural Canada to the identity and well-being of the nation[1].

By conducting this survey, the Rural Team Alberta has sought to more thoroughly explore rural Albertans' views of these priorities. In addition, the report provides more detailed information on these priorities and other related areas that can be used by government departments for policy and program development. Survey findings will also be used to inform discussions at future regional workshops and dialogue events in the province of Alberta. Thus, when feasible and appropriate, results are provided for each of the five regions participating in this survey.

The core of the report, Section D, presents the results of a random survey of 407 rural Albertans. The section begins with an analysis of the importance rural Albertans place on the 11 priorities. Later subsections present a more thorough analysis of the priorities by examining the views and experiences of rural Albertans with regard to these priorities and, in some cases, the actions recommended by the respondents. Also included in the report is an examination of Albertans' views on environmental issues. The report concludes with a presentation of respondents' knowledge of government rural programs, their sources of information on government activities and their views on government commitment to rural Canadians.

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[1] Canadian Rural Partnership. *Responding to Rural Canadians: Federal Framework for Action in Rural Canada.* Government of Canada, 1999.

B.   RESEARCH DESIGN

The questionnaire used in this survey was developed by the Rural Team Alberta in collaboration with several other federal departments and representatives from the data collection agency, C-4 Contact Centre (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the survey instrument). To gain a basic understanding of the relative importance of the 11 priorities to the respondents, the researchers measured the participants' responses to the general theme of the priority rather than the specific action stipulated in the priority. For example, the priority that states: "Work with provincial and territorial governments to examine and pilot test new ways to provide rural Canadians with access to health care at a reasonable cost" was measured by asking the more general question: "How important is the provision of accessible, quality health care services to the development of your community?"[2] (see Appendix 2 for the questions used to measure each priority). In all but one case, measurement of the corresponding priority was done with a single question.[3]

The sampling frame included five major rural regions of the province, which were selected on the basis of their representation of the major industries in the province (see Appendix 3 for the communities included in each of the five regions). Respondents included adults aged 18 years or older and excluded federal government employees. A French version of the questionnaire was delivered to four respondents who indicated their preference to be addressed in French.

C-4 Contact Centre, a data collection agency located in Nelson, B.C., pre-tested the telephone questionnaire with 60 rural Albertans to ensure that the research instrument worked properly and to confirm that respondents would appropriately interpret and answer the questions. As a result of the pretest, some minor changes were made to the survey instrument.

Telephone interviews were conducted between April 5 and 28, 2001. The interviews took an average of 31 minutes to complete, with the shortest completion time of 14 minutes and the longest of 1 hour and 20 minutes. A minimum of three call-backs were made for each randomly selected, potential respondent. A total of 407 telephone interviews were completed, representing a response rate of 28%. One-third of the non-response is due to the potential respondents' refusal to participate. The remaining two-thirds of the non-response was due to the inability to contact potential respondents (e.g., number not in service, no answer, voice mail or answering machine).

Rural Albertans comprise approximately one-third of the total population of Alberta. Most of this rural population, however, is comprised of metro-adjacent areas (22%), leaving only 12% of

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[2] The priorities were generalized to generate a set of standardized results, thus permitting an assessment of the relative importance of each priority. Also, in asking more general questions, measurement of otherwise complex and multi-faceted priorities is simplified, thereby increasing respondent comprehension and survey response rates.

[3] For the priority *connecting rural Canadians to the knowledge-based economy and society, and helping them to acquire the skills to use this technology* it was necessary to ask three questions. One question addressed the issue of the importance of developing high-tech skills; one measured the importance of providing high-speed Internet service; and the final question asked about the importance of Internet access for business.

Albertans residing in non-adjacent or hinterlands.[4] With a sample size of over 400 respondents, the results presented in this report are statistically significant at the 0.5 level. This means that we can be certain that 95% of the time the results are accurate, within a range of plus or minus five percentage points. These confidence intervals, however, are not applicable for sub-sample comparisons, which contain a greater margin of error. Thus, when examining the results by region, gender or Aboriginal status, for example, the data should be viewed as general indicators rather than as statistical representations of the various sub-populations.

Total sample responses in this report are provided for all survey questions. For many questions, however, responses are also examined on the basis of respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and the region in which they reside. Inclusion of these characteristics in the tables and figures depends on the issue that is being examined and on whether or not substantive differences were found. Beyond presentation of broader observations of results, only limited interpretations of the findings are offered because it is most appropriate for the relevant government departments or region representatives to interpret the results further based on the results of this survey.

In the introduction read to participants, the federal government was identified as the group conducting the survey. However, except in one question, participants were not asked about the federal government. The Rural Team, in consultation with the survey company and the research consultant, thought that most rural citizens would not differentiate between services offered by different levels of government. The Rural Team felt that the data could be differentiated by level of government and department after the information was collected and the information could be forwarded to the appropriate departments.

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[4] *Think Rural.* Report of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources. 1997.

C. SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1 presents selected socio-demographic characteristics for the total sample and for each of the five Alberta regions participating in the survey. Of the 407 respondents, 31% were from Region 1, 26% from Region 2, 18% from Region 3, and 16% from Region 4. Region 5 represented the smallest proportion of respondents (9%).

Women made up 64% of the total sample and were most highly represented in Region 5 (70%). The greatest proportion of respondents was between the ages of 40 and 54 (37%), with Region 5 containing the highest proportion of young (18-39 years) respondents and Region 2 the highest proportion of respondents over 55 years old.

Although slightly lower than the Canadian population as a whole[5], a sizeable proportion of respondents were post-secondary institution graduates (37%). The majority (51%) of respondents, however, had at least some post-secondary education. Similarly, 51% of respondents were from households earning $50,000 or more per year. More than two-thirds (69%) of all the respondents were employed at the time of interviewing.

Respondents from Region 5 had the lowest levels of education (32% without a high school diploma) and were the least likely to be currently employed (63%). However, their household income was marginally higher than the total sample. Region 1 had the greatest proportions of post-secondary graduates (42%), higher-income earners (55% households earning $50,000 or more per year), and currently employed (72%). Respondents from Region 3, while resembling the total sample in terms of their educational attainment and employment status, were somewhat over-represented in the lowest household income category (36% earning less than $30,000 per year).

Six percent of the total sample reported that they were of Aboriginal descent compared to 4.6% among the total provincial population.[6] Region 5 had the highest proportion (16%) of Aboriginal respondents.

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[5] As of 1996, 48% of adult Canadians had a post-secondary degree (Canadian Education Statistics Council. *Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 1999.* Statistics Canada, 2000. 81-582-XPE*)*

Table 1: Selected Socio-Demographic Characteristics by Region

Percent

CHARACTERISTIC	TOTAL	Region 5	Region 2	Region 1	Region 4	Region 3
Sub-Sample Size (n)[7]	407	38	107	124	65	73
Gender						
Female	64	70	58	57	60	64
Male	36	30	42	43	40	36
Age						
18–39	30	43	26	27	40	23
40–54	37	35	37	37	31	42
55+	33	22	37	36	29	35
Education						
Less than High School	22	32	23	20	17	21
High School	27	24	32	24	29	25
Some Post-Secondary	14	6	12	14	22	15
Post-Secondary Graduate	37	38	33	42	32	39
Household Income						
<$30,000	26	21	22	22	30	36
$30,000–$49,000	23	27	29	23	22	14
$50,000+	51	52	49	55	48	50
Employment Status						
Currently Employed	69	63	66	72	71	68
Aboriginal Status						
Aboriginal	6	16	8	4	5	4
Non-Aboriginal	94	84	92	96	95	96

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[7] Please note that this row is full numbers and not percentages.

D.   SURVEY RESULTS

The analyses of survey results presented in this part of the report are divided into seven basic sections:

- Section D.1 presents the findings of 13 key questions that were asked to determine the relative importance rural Albertans place on the 11 priority areas of action.

- Section D.2 describes respondent' views on the priorities relating to the economic development of rural Alberta. Included in this section are the funding experiences among respondents who had tried to start their own business and an examination of the economic diversification of rural industry.

- Section D.3 summarizes the results of questions dealing with the social development of rural Alberta by focusing on the three priorities relating to youth, education and healthcare.

- Section D.4 presents rural Albertans' views on two priorities relating to community development: rural community leadership/involvement and the promotion of rural Canada. Added to this subsection is an examination of the importance of environmental issues.

- Section D.5 examines a series of responses to questions that further delve into the importance of having access to government programs and services and respondents' experiences with the three main avenues of accessing information on government (telephone, Internet and in-person).

- Section D.6 focuses on the communication between government and rural Albertans, including respondents' awareness of the Canadian Rural Partnership and the Rural Secretariat.

- Section D.7 examines the extent to which rural Albertans feel the federal government is committed to the interests of rural Canadians and their suggestions for how the government can demonstrate a greater commitment to their interests.

D.1   RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF PRIORITIES AMONG RURAL ALBERTANS

Thirteen questions were included in the survey to determine the relative importance rural Albertans' place on the 11 priorities previously identified by rural Canadians (see Appendix 2 for a description of the questions used to measure each priority). As noted in Section B above, the eleven priorities were measured in terms of their general area of concern, and one priority was addressed by asking three questions.

Figure 1 shows that at least two-thirds of respondents felt that the priority in question was either "important" or "very important" (those reporting 4 or 5 on a five-point scale). Although there are clearly some differences in the importance attached to each priority, a majority of respondents viewed them as important issues for their community development.

Accessible quality healthcare and *strong community leadership* were viewed as the most important priorities, with 95% responding either "very important" or "important." *Good infrastructure* and *government–local partnerships* were also viewed as important priorities by a very large majority of respondents (94 and 93%, respectively).

Slightly fewer, but still a substantial majority of rural Albertans, viewed the *promotion of rural areas* (87%), *programs and services for rural youth* (85%), *financial resources for rural business* (84%), *creation of new industry* (83%), *more accessible education* (81%), *Internet access for business* (81%), and *high-tech skill development* (81%) as important priorities for the development of their communities. Only 78% of respondents reported that *access to government programs* was important, and even fewer (66%) responded this way with respect to *high-speed Internet access*.

**Figure 1: Importance of Priorities
Among Rural Albertans[1]**

	5 – Very Important	4 – Important

Priority	5 – Very Important	4 – Important	Total
Accessible Quality Healthcare	82	13	95
Strong Community Leadership	74	21	95
Good Infrastructure	70	24	94
Government–Local Partnerships	69	24	93
Promote Rural Areas[2]	66	21	87
Programs/Services for Rural Youth	64	21	85
Financial Resources for Rural Business	61	23	84
Creation of New Industry	60	23	83
More Accessible Education	63	18	81
Internet Access for Business[3]	54	27	81
High-Tech Skill Development[3]	53	28	81
Access to Government Programs	51	27	78
High-Speed Internet Connection[3]	42	24	66

Percent (0, 20, 40, 60, 80, 100)

[1]Respondents answered on a five-point scale with 1 representing "not important" and 5 representing "very important." Scores of 4 and 5 are presented in this figure. See Appendix 2 for a description of the questions used to measure each priority.

[2] For this question only, respondents answered on a five-point scale with 1 representing "not at all" and 5 representing "to a great extent."

[3] These three items all relate to the single priority of *connecting rural Canadians to the knowledge-based economy and helping them acquire the skills to use this technology.*

Table 2 presents the percentage of respondents who indicated that the priority was important (on a five-point scale) for each region. For most priorities, responses across regions are very stable. owever, some variation can be observed in the importance attached to a few priorities. For example, 100% of respondents from Region 5 felt that *financial resources for rural business* was an important priority, but in Region 2 a much smaller proportion (76%) of respondents indicated that this priority is important. The range in importance attached to *creating new industry* and *providing Internet access for business* is slightly lower, but still noteworthy. Only 76% of respondents from Region 1 reported that *creation of new industry* was an important priority, compared to 89% of Region 5 respondents. Three-quarters of Region 5 respondents replied similarly with respect to *Internet access for business,* while 88% of Region 3 respondents felt this was an important priority.

Table 2: Importance of Priorities Among Rural Albertans[8], by Region

PRIORITY	TOTAL	Region 5	Region 2	Region 1	Region 4	Region 3
			Percent			
Accessible Quality Healthcare	**95**	97	94	94	97	97
Strong Community Leadership	**95**	97	93	94	99	96
Good Infrastructure	**94**	95	95	93	89	96
Government–Local Partnerships	**93**	97	95	93	88	92
Promotion of Rural Areas[9]	**87**	89	89	83	92	82
Programs/Services for Rural Youth	**85**	89	88	81	83	87
Financial Resources for Rural Business	**84**	100	76	83	88	85
Creation of New Industry	**83**	89	85	76	84	89
More Accessible Education	**81**	84	82	78	80	88
Internet Access for Business[10]	**81**	75	82	82	77	88
High-Tech Skill Development[10]	**81**	87	80	78	77	87
Access to Government Programs	**78**	76	76	77	78	81
High-Speed Internet Connection[10]	**66**	68	62	70	62	69

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Some differences in the importance attached to the priorities can also be observed by gender, age and Aboriginal status[11] (Table 3).

First, women attached a greater importance to all priority areas than men did. While gender differences are not large for most priorities (i.e., less than 10 percentage point difference), women were much more likely to view two priorities as more important than men: *financial resources for rural business* (89% of females compared to 76% of males) (89% of females and *more accessible education* (86% of females compared to 75% of males).

Second, again while the response patterns are stable for many priorities, some age-related differences can be observed. For example, respondents 40 years of age and older were significantly more likely to report that both *Internet access for business* and *high-speed Internet connection* were important to their community than younger respondents. This finding is somewhat surprising given the greater use of computers and Internet access among younger people (see Section D.2 C below). Thus, the results suggest that computer use does not necessarily correspond to the value attached to this technology.

Third, with one exception (*good infrastructure*), a greater proportion of Aboriginal survey respondents indicated that these priorities were important. Significant among of these are *accessible quality healthcare* and *strong community leadership* where we observe that all 26 Aboriginal survey members felt that these priority areas were either "important" or "very important." Aboriginal respondents were also significantly more likely to report that *Internet access for business* was important (92% compared to average of 81%).Table 3: Importance of Priorities Among Rural Albertans[12], by Gender, Age and Aboriginal Status

Table 3: Importance of Priorities Among Rural Albertans, by Gender, Age and Aboriginal Status

| | Percent | | | | | | Aboriginal Status | |
| | | Gender | | | Age | | | |
PRIORITY	TOTAL	Female	Male	18–39	40–54	55+	Non-Aboriginal	Aboriginal
Accessible Quality Healthcare	**95**	96	94	95	96	95	95	100
Strong Community Leadership	**95**	97	92	96	96	93	95	100
Good Infrastructure	**94**	95	91	92	95	94	94	92
Government–Local Partnerships	**93**	95	89	92	96	90	93	96
Promotion of Rural Areas[13]	**87**	89	83	85	85	90	87	89
Programs/Services for Rural Youth	**85**	88	80	84	88	83	85	89
Financial Resources for Rural Business	**84**	89	76	89	86	78	84	89
Creation of New Industry	**83**	86	79	83	86	80	83	85
More Accessible Education	**81**	86	75	81	86	78	82	85
Internet Access for Business[14]	**81**	85	77	73	84	87	81	92
High-tech Skill Development[14]	**81**	83	77	79	80	84	81	85
Access to Government Programs	**78**	79	75	78	78	77	77	81
High-Speed Internet Connection[14]	**66**	69	62	57	72	70	67	68

D.2   ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL ALBERTA

D.2A   Financial Resources for Rural Business

It has already been noted that 84% of survey respondents reported that the *availability of financial resources for business* is important to the development of their community (Figure 1).
The 52% of respondents who had tried to start a business were asked if they had ever experienced difficulties in accessing funding sources.

The majority of respondents funded their new business with their own personal investment (85%) and just over 60% attempted to get loans from banking institutions (Figure 2). Substantially fewer business starters tried to access funding from family or friends (28%), through government grants and contributions (20%), or through government organizations such as Community Future Development Corporations or the Federal Business Development Bank (15%). Less than 5% of respondents had tried to access funding through seed funding/angel investment or through public offerings.

Figure 2: Sources of Funding for New Business[1]
Respondents Starting New Business Only

Source	Percent
Personal Investment	85
Banking Institutions	62
Family/Friends	28
Government Grants and Contributions	20
Government Organizations	15
Seed Funding/Angel Investment	3
Public Offering	2

N = 149

24
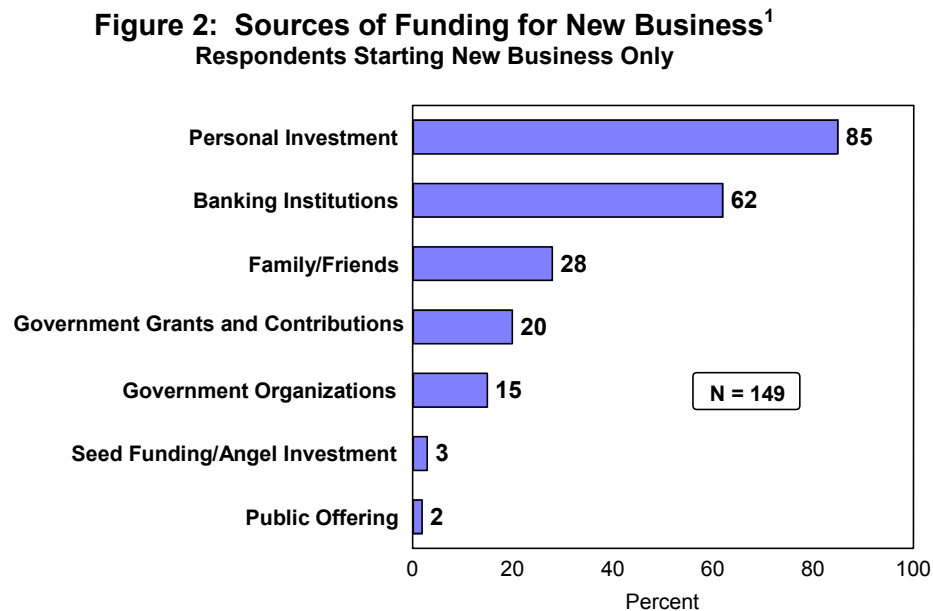
[1] Since respondents could provide more than one source of funding, the percentage calculation for each source is based on the 149 sample members (denominator) who reported that they had started their own business.

Table 4 shows some variation in funding sources by region. Region 1 and Region 4 respondents were more likely than on average to have used their own investment sources to fund their new business (91%). Respondents from Region 4 were the least likely to have tried to access government grants and contributions (14%), and relatively few of those from Region 1 attempted to fund their business through government organizations (8%).

Business starters provided a wide range of responses when asked about the kinds of difficulties they had experienced in accessing funds (results not shown). Most responses provided, however, were from respondents who had tried to get financial assistance from banks or through government grants and contributions. Many of those who had tried to secure a loan through a bank provided general statements about having the loan declined. More specific responses often revolved around what respondents viewed as "unreasonable" security requirements. As one respondent stated: "I received financial assistance, but had to sign over first born, house, etc. Only way to get money is to have it already." Other business starters mentioned the biased reactions of the bank. For example, one female stated: "Discrimination. I needed my husband to co-sign the loan although I was fully employed and would be continuing with full-time employment in conjunction with operating my business."

Those who tried to access funding through government grants and contributions cited similar problems as those who had sought funding through private banking institutions. Many responses related to an over-complicated process or biases that they had encountered. As one business starter stated: "Funding seemed to be more biased towards eastern Canada than the West." [15]

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[15] Given that female respondents were somewhat more likely to view the priority of *financial resources for rural business* as important, one might conjecture that women experience a more difficult time securing finances for their businesses. Additional analysis, however, does not support this hypothesis. Men and women in the sample were equally likely to have tried to start their own business (37% of women compared to 36% of men), and among these business starters, they were equally likely to report having experienced difficulties accessing funding (30% of women and 33% of men).

Table 4: Sources of Funding for New Business[16], by Region; Respondents Starting New Business Only

		Percent				
FUNDING SOURCE	**TOTAL**	**Region 5[17]**	**Region 2**	**Region 1**	**Region 4**	**Region 3**
Personal Investment	**85**	—	83	91	91	72
Banking Institutions	**62**	—	64	62	59	59
Family/Friends	**28**	—	33	33	18	24
Government Grants and Contributions	**20**	—	19	16	14	31
Government Organizations	**15**	—	19	8	18	21
Seed Funding/Angel Investment	**3**	—	0	4	0	7
Public Offering	**2**	—	2	2	0	3

D.2B   Economic Diversity

More than four in five (83%) respondents indicated an interest in economic diversity by responding that the "creation of new types of industry to the development of your community" was important (Figure 1). Detailed questions of this priority area asked respondents to indicate the major industries in their community and their suggestions for new industry development.

As Table 5 shows, agriculture and forestry were cited as the major industries by the greatest proportion of respondents (71%), followed by mining, oil or gas extraction (46%), valued-added industry related to agriculture and forestry (13%), and other consumer services (12%).

Less than 10% of respondents reported that their major industries were manufacturing, value-added industry related to mining, oil and gas, tourism, retail or construction. Four percent of the total sample of respondents indicated that there were no major industries in their community.

Some variation in the respondents' reports on major industries can also be observed between the five regions. The greatest differences were found in the mining, oil and gas industry—62% of Region 5 respondents reported this as being a major industry compared to only 34% of those from Region 3.

Also noteworthy are the differences in the proportion of respondents reporting that value-added agricultural or forestry was a major industry (23% for Region 3 and 4% for Region 2).

Table 5: Reported Major Industries in Community[18] by Region

		Percent				
INDUSTRY	**TOTAL**	**Region 5**	**Region 2**	**Region 1**	**Region 4**	**Region 3**
Agriculture/Forestry	**71**	87	72	65	70	73
Mining, Oil or Gas Extraction	**46**	62	36	59	44	34
Value-added: Agriculture/Forestry	**13**	11	4	20	8	23
Other Consumer Services	**12**	3	13	14	11	11
Other Manufacturing	**7**	5	9	5	8	7
Value-Added: Mining, Oil, Gas	**6**	0	8	6	9	3
Tourism	**5**	3	3	10	3	1
Retail	**4**	0	2	2	11	4
None	**4**	5	7	0	3	7
Construction	**2**	3	1	2	3	3
Other	**2**	3	5	0	2	3

The survey participants were asked to provide suggestions for new industries that could be developed in their community (Figure 3), and the most common responses were tourism (16%) and manufacturing (14%)[19]. While some respondents indicated that agriculture/forestry (8%) or mining, oil and gas (3%) were also possible industries, a greater proportion suggested that the related value-added industries could be developed in their community (11% value-added agriculture/forestry; 7% value-added mining, oil and gas). Respondents also suggested a variety of service industries: 11% indicated retail, 7% indicated recreation services and 9% indicated other service industries.

Figure 3: Suggestions for New Industry Development[1]
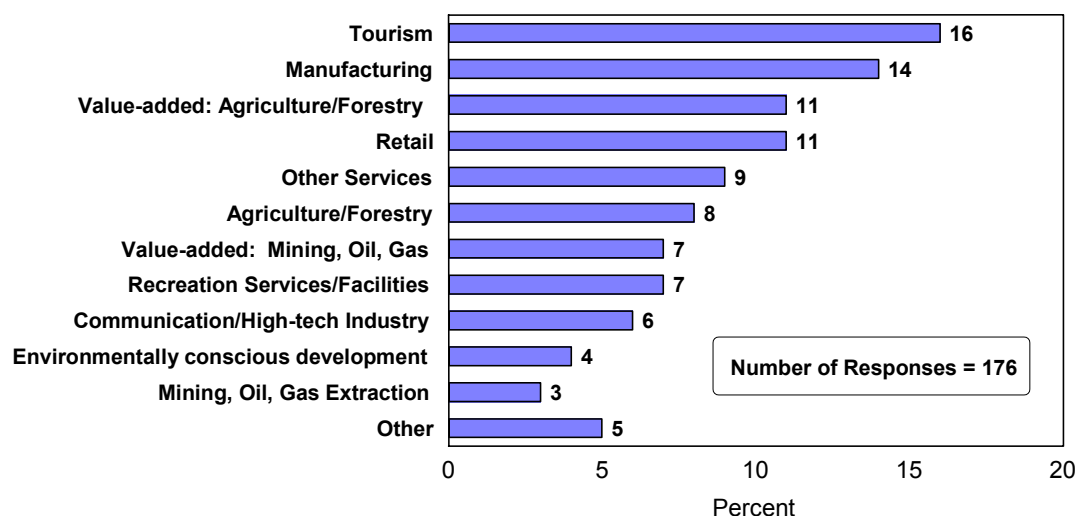
[1] Based on responses to the open-ended question: "Do you have any suggestions for industry that could be developed in your community?" The 147 sample members provided 176 responses.
Percentage calculations for each suggestion are based on the 176 responses (denominator).

D.2C   Internet Access and Computer Skills

As noted in section D.1, 81% of respondents indicated that *Internet access for business* and *developing high-tech skills* was important. Somewhat fewer respondents (66%) answered positively to *high-speed Internet connection*. Accompanying this priority were questions on whether or not respondents currently had Internet access in their home and their level of comfort with using computers.

Just over half (52%) of respondents had Internet access at home, while 44% indicated that they were comfortable with using a computer (Table 6). Internet access does not vary by gender, but we can observe a fair amount of diversity in access by region, age, education, income and Aboriginal status. Respondents from Region 3, those between the ages of 40 and 54, those with some post-secondary education, high income-earners, and non-Aboriginal people were much more likely to have Internet access than on average. Similarly, Region 3 and 4 respondents, those with post-secondary experience, higher income-earners and non-Aboriginal people were more likely to report that they were comfortable with using a computer. Younger respondents were more likely than the middle-aged respondents (who were the most likely to have Internet access), to indicate that they were comfortable with using this technology.

While no differences can be observed between females and males in terms of their Internet access, a greater percentage of females reported that they felt comfortable using computers (47% of females compared to 39% of males). Thus, while Internet access and comfort with computer use are positively correlated for most demographic groups, this is not the case when we examine these questions by gender and age.

Table 6: Internet Access and Comfort with Computer Use, by Region, Gender, Age, Education, Income and Aboriginal status

	Percent	
Characteristics	**Internet Access**[20]	**Comfort with Computer Use**[21]
TOTAL	**52**	**44**
Region		
Region 5	46	42
Region 2	46	44
Region 1	58	39
Region 4	45	51
Region 3	62	49
Gender		
Female	52	47
Male	53	39
Age		
18–39	55	57
40–54	69	47
55+	31	29
Education		
High School or Less	40	36
Post-Secondary	64	52
Household Income		
<$30,000	28	30
$30,000–$49,000	44	43
$50,000+	65	50
Aboriginal Status		
Aboriginal	23	23
Non-Aboriginal	54	45

The 48% of respondents without Internet access at home were further probed to find out the major reason why they did not have this access. Most respondents indicated that they did not have a computer (27%), but a sizeable number also mentioned that they felt it was not affordable

(20%). Others mentioned that they choose not to have access (19%) or that they did not know how to use this technology (18%) as the main reason for not having Internet access.

Figure 4: Main Reason for Not Having Internet Access[1]
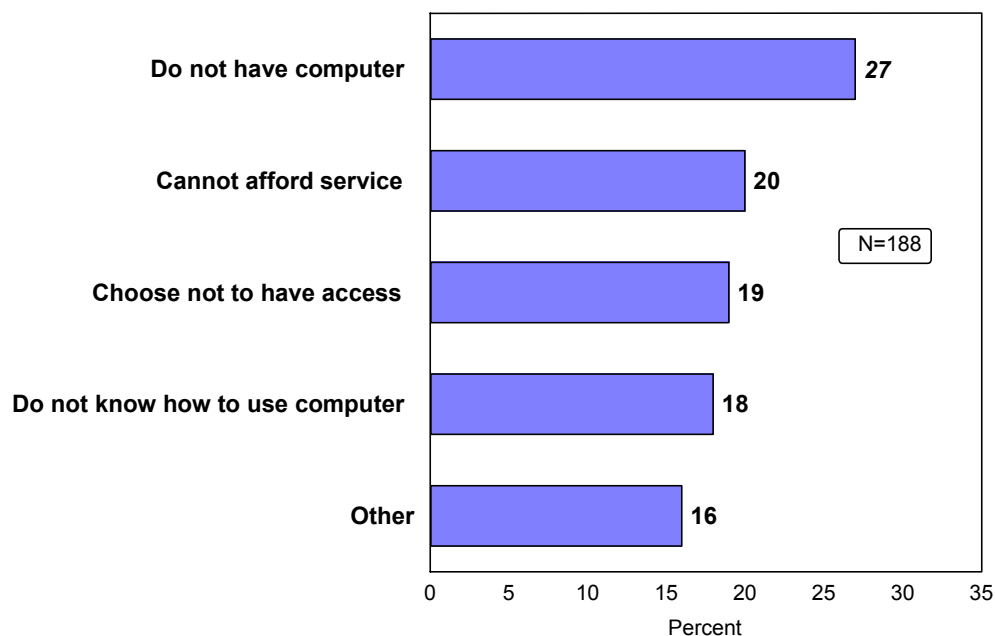
[1]Based on responses to the question: "What best describes the reason why you don't have internet access?"

For most of the reasons cited above, few or no differences were found on the basis of respondents' demographic characteristics.[22] One interesting exception, however, is that respondents aged 55 years and older were about half as likely, than on average, to cite that access was not affordable (11%), but somewhat more likely to report that they did not know how to use the Internet (25%). In addition, the 20 Aboriginal respondents providing answers to this question were more likely to report that they did not have a computer (35%) as a reason for not accessing the Internet.

D.3   SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL ALBERTA

D.3A   Youth

It has already been noted that 85% of the respondents reported that the creation of more *programs and services for young people* was important for the development of their community (Figure 1). Respondents were also asked to provide their opinions on the major reasons why young people might be leaving their communities (Figure 5). While many respondents stated that young people left because of a general lack of opportunities (15%), others were more specific. More than two-thirds (69%) of respondents reported that youth left their community because of a lack of employment opportunities and about one-quarter (27%) said that lack of educational opportunities was a reason. Only 17% of respondents felt that young people left their communities because of boredom or the lure of the big city, and even fewer (6%) reported that low wages was a major reason for leaving. Four percent of respondents indicated that the young people in their community were not leaving.

Figure 5: Major Reported Reasons Why Youth Leave Community[1]
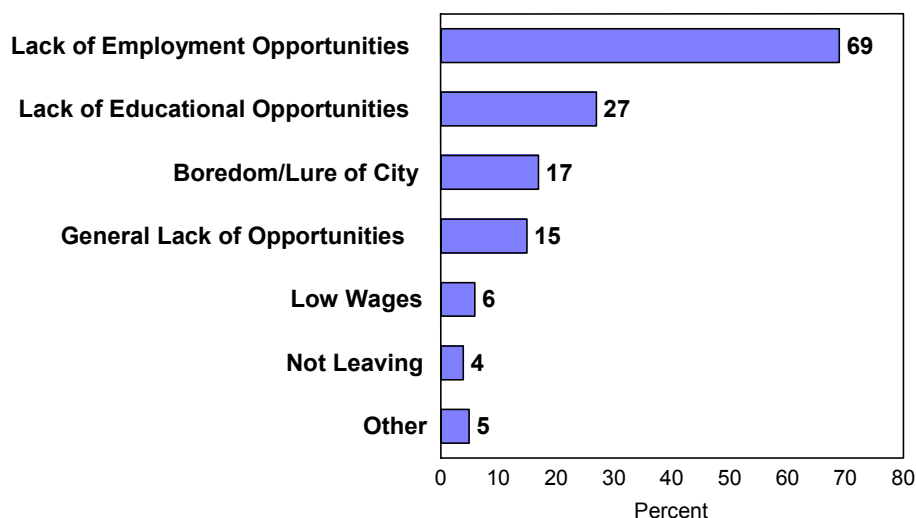
[1]Based on responses to the question: "What, in your opinion, are the major reasons why young people leave your community?" The 391 sample members provided 695 reasons. Percentage calculations for each reason are based on the 391 respondents (denominator).

D.3B   Education

As indicated in Figure 1, 81% of respondents reported that *more accessible education* was important to the development of their community. A similar proportion of respondents (79%) felt that *adult education and upgrading* was also important (Figure 6). Those from Region 2, females, middle-aged and Aboriginal respondents were more likely to indicate that adult education was important to their community. With the exception of Region 2 respondents, the same demographic categories of respondents in all other regions were also more likely to report that *more accessible education* was important (see Tables 3 and 4).

Figure 6: Importance of More Accessible Adult Education and Skills Upgrading by Region, Gender, Age and Aboriginal Status[1]

Category		Percent
	TOTAL	79
Region	Region 1	76
	Region 2	86
	Region 3	73
	Region 4	81
	Region 5	78
Gender	Females	81
	Males	75
Age	18–39	75
	40–54	89
	55+	72
Aboriginal Status	Aboriginal	84
	Non-Aboriginal	79
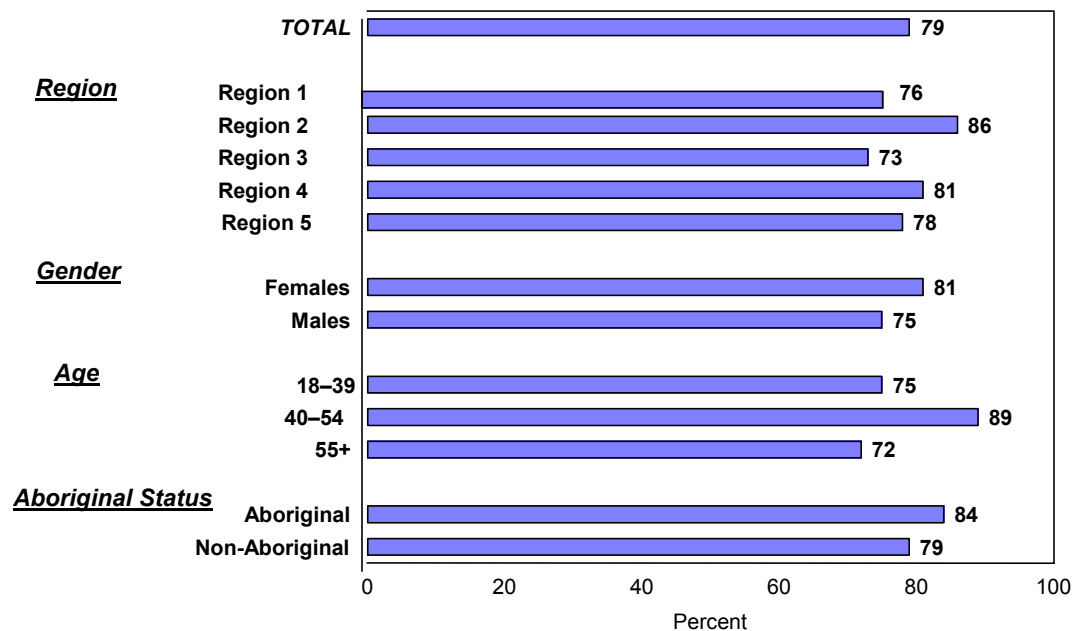
[1]Based on responses to the question: "How important is more accessible adult education and skills upgrading to the development of your community?" Respondents answered on a five-point scale with 1 representing "not important" and 5 representing "very important." Scores of 4 and 5 are combined in this figure.

When prompted to indicate the greatest challenges to providing adult education/upgrading (Table 7), the most common responses related to the lack of accessibility of educational provisions (19%); many of these specifically cited "distance" as a challenge. Similar proportions of respondents cited affordability (18%), lack of interest (17%) or lack of programs (15%) as the greatest challenges to providing adult education/skills upgrading. Other reported challenges included a lack of program funding (11%), available or qualified instructors (8%) or proper facilities (8%).

Table 7: Ten Most Commonly Reported Challenges to Providing Adult Education and Skills Upgrading in Community[23]

Challenge	N[24]	%
Total Respondents	**324**	**100**
1. Accessibility (e.g., distance)	60	19
2. Affordability	57	18
3. Lack of interest in participating in further education	53	17
4. Lack of programs provided	50	15
5. Problems with scheduling and time availability	41	13
6. Lack of funding for programs	36	11
7. Lack of available/qualified instructors	27	8
8. Lack of proper facilities	26	8
9. Population too small/insufficient enrollment to justify	21	7
10. Lack of awareness/program promotion	13	4

D.3C   Health and Healthcare

Many respondents indicated (Figure 1) that the provision of accessible quality healthcare was one the most important priorities (95% said "important" or "very important"). Sample members were further asked a related series of five open-ended questions designed to obtain their views on the most important contributors to people's health. Before discussing these results, it should be understood that the findings presented in three of the five tables below (Tables 11, 12 and 13) elicited a response rate of less than 75%. While this may appear problematic, it is felt that given the difficult nature of the three questions represented in each of these tables, these response rates are acceptable. For example, asking respondents to provide suggestions for **what they can do to improve the health of their community** (Table 11) may require many individuals to think about the health of their community in a more collective or communal way than they are accustomed to. Moreover, the 50% of respondents who did not respond to this question (e.g., they did not have any suggestions) provides an indication of the extent to which rural Albertans view themselves as being responsible for the health of other members of their community.

Table 8 presents the ten most common responses to the question asking about "the most important things that make a person healthy." A majority of respondents listed diet (57%), exercise (49%) or general lifestyle practices (32%) as major contributors to health. Slightly fewer responses addressed psychological health (16% having a healthy mind; 9% absence of stress). About one in ten responses related to having accessible or quality healthcare (10%), having a clean environment (9%) or a good job/financial security (9%). Only 5% of responses related to having "good health knowledge."

Table 8: Ten Most Commonly Reported Contributors to Health[25]

Contributors	N[26]	%
Total Respondents	**386**	**100**
1. Proper diet	221	57
2. Exercise	190	49
3. Lifestyle/commitment to health	123	32
4. Good mental stability/attitude	61	16
5. Accessible/quality healthcare	40	10
6. Clean environment	36	9
7. Absence of stress	35	9
8. Good job/financial security	33	9
9. Avoidance of drugs, alcohol, smoking	27	7
10. Good health knowledge	19	5

Although very few respondents indicated that health knowledge was an important contributor to people's health, the provision of more health-related education was the most common response to the question: what can the "**government** do to improve the health of people in your community"? (Table 9). An explanation for these seemingly contradictory responses is not readily apparent. One possibility, however, is that respondents feel that it is the government's responsibility to educate the public on such health-related issues as diet, exercise and general lifestyle behaviours (i.e., the most commonly reported contributors to people's health).

Table 9: Ten Most Commonly Reported Ways <u>Government</u> Can Improve Health of Community[27]

Ways of Improving Health	N[28]	%
Total Respondents	**315**	**100**
1. Provide more health-related education	75	24
2. Provide more health practitioners	62	20
3. Provide more healthcare facilities	41	13
4. Provide better healthcare funding/plans	36	11
5. Provide recreation facilities/programs	30	10
6. Provide more accessible healthcare	29	9
7. Address environmental problems	24	8
8. Prohibit/discourage smoking	18	6
9. Up to individual to take care of own health	13	4
10. Provide better economic programs/policies	11	3

Other common suggestions for government involvement in healthcare (Table 9) included the provision of more health practitioners (20%), healthcare facilities (13%) or more accessible healthcare in general (9%). Responses indirectly related to health included providing more recreation facilities or programs (10%), addressing environmental problems (8%) or providing better economic programs and services (3%).

Table 10 shows that somewhat similar, but fewer, responses were provided when respondents were asked what their **community** could do to improve people's health. One different response was the collaboration with health-related groups as a way of improving the healthcare system. Other respondents suggested that the government has to be more involved with the practices of regional health boards or with physicians.

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[27] Based on responses to the question: "What can the government do to improve the health of people in your community?"

[28]Because many of the 315 respondents provided multiple answers, the figures in the N column add up to a number greater than 315.

Table 10: Five Most Commonly Reported Ways <u>Community</u> Can Improve Health of Community[29]

Ways of Improving Community Health	N[30]	%
Total Respondents	**216**	**100**
1. Provide recreation facilities/programs	60	28
2. Collaborate with other agencies to improve healthcare system	49	23
3. Provide more health-related education	40	19
4. Address environmental problems	17	8
5. Discourage use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco	14	6

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[29] Based on responses to the question: ""Is there anything you can think of that your community could do to improve the health of people in your community?""

[30] Because many of the 216 respondents provided multiple answers, the figures in the N column add up to a number greater than 216.

 Table 11 presents the most commonly reported ways the **respondent** can improve the health of the community. Almost one-third (32%) of the responses suggested engaging in more volunteer work (such as providing support for seniors), while slightly fewer (22%) recommended being more community oriented and supportive of neighbors. Respondents also suggested that they were interested in encouraging (18%) or educating (16%) others to be healthier. Thirteen percent of responses suggested setting a good example for others through the respondents' own engagement in healthy behaviour.

Table 11: Five Most Commonly Reported Ways <u>Respondent</u> Can Improve Health of Community[31]

Ways of Improving Community Health	N[32]	%
Total Respondents	**202**	**100**
1. Volunteer (e.g. support for seniors)	65	32
2. More community / neighborly involvement / support	45	22
3. Encourage healthy lifestyle in others	36	18
4. Educate others on healthy lifestyle	32	16
5. Set example with healthy lifestyle	27	13

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[31] Based on responses to the question: "Is there anything you can think of that **you can do** to improve the health of people in your community?"
[32] Because many of the 202 respondents provided multiple answers, the figures in the N column add up to a number greater than 202.

Lastly, when asked what they could do to improve their own health (Table 12), we observe very similar responses to those presented in Table 9.

Table 12: Five Most Commonly Reported Ways <u>Respondent</u> Can Improve Own Health[33]

Ways of Improving Own Health	N[34]	%
Total Respondents	**290**	**100**
1. Exercise/be more active	151	52
2. Better diet/loose weight	92	32
3. Quit/limit alcohol/smoking	48	17
4. Reduce stress (e.g., more leisure time)	30	10
5. Change lifestyle in general (e.g., focus more on health)	23	8

---

[33] Based on responses to the question: "Is there anything you can think of that would help you improve **your own health**?"

[34] Because many of the 290 respondents provided multiple answers, the figures in the N column add up to a number greater than 290.

D.4   COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL ALBERTA

D.4A   Community Leadership and Involvement

Results presented in Figure 1 (above) show that *strong community leadership* is one of the most important priorities for rural Albertans. In an attempt to explore other issues related to leadership development, respondents were also asked if they thought that their community has a hard time developing or retaining leaders, and if so, why.

Thirty-seven percent of respondents felt that their community has a hard time developing and retaining leaders. Among these, the most commonly cited reason was community members' general lack of interest in getting involved (19%). Other responses dealt with the perception that current leaders or political processes were overly adversarial (16%) or that there were problems in general with the current leadership/process (6%).

Table 13: Ten Most Commonly Reported Reasons Why developing and retaining Leaders is Difficult[35]

Reasons	N[36]	%
Total Respondents	**135**	**100**
1. General lack of interest among community	26	19
2. Current leaders / process overly adversarial	21	16
3. Out-migration (e.g., of youth, 'good' people) / transient community	19	14
4. Excessive responsibility demanded of leaders (e.g., leadership burn out)	16	12
5. Leadership / process unchanging (i.e., old boys club)	13	10
7. Too much time required by leadership role	12	9
7. Lack of support / appreciation for current leaders	11	8
8. Not enough qualified people	11	8
9. Lack of remuneration for leaders	10	7
10. General problems with current leadership/process	8	6

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[35] Based on responses to the question: "What, in your opinion, is the greatest difficulty in developing or retaining leaders in your community?"

[36] Because many of the 135 respondents provided multiple answers, the figures in the N column add up to a number greater than 135.

Several responses addressed the excessive responsibilities and lack of recognition for leaders. About 10% of respondents reported that the greatest difficulties experienced in developing or retaining community leaders was excessive responsibility demanded of leaders, lack of support/appreciation or remuneration for leaders (7%), or too much time was required of leaders (9%) .

Respondents were also asked a series of close-ended questions on the importance of several community-development issues (Table 14). Respondents attached a lower level of importance to the provision of funding programs targeted to building leadership capacity (71%) than they did to community member involvement (92%), exacting consensus on how to develop their community (87%), and to having community confidence and pride (90%). Very little variation is observed by region in response to the two questions on community member involvement and community confidence and pride. However, a much greater proportion of Region 5 (84%) and Region 2 (81%) respondents indicated that program funding was important than of Region 1 (60%) and Region 4 (66%). Respondents from Region 3 (93%) and Region 5 (92%) were also more likely than on average to view community consensus development as important.

Females tended to view these community-development issues as more important than males, particularly for program funding (75%) and community consensus (91%). Some variation can also be observed on the basis of Aboriginal status, with a greater proportion of Aboriginal respondents viewing community consensus on development as important (96% compared to 87% for non-Aboriginal people).

Table 14: Importance of Various Community Development Issues[37], by Region, Gender and Aboriginal Status

	Percent			
Characteristics	**Funding Programs for Leadership Building[38]**	**Community Member Involvement[39]**	**Community Consensus on Development[40]**	**Community Confidence and Pride[41]**
TOTAL	**71**	**92**	**87**	**90**
Region				
Region 5	84	90	92	90
Region 2	81	92	86	91
Region 1	60	89	88	90
Region 4	66	95	79	88
Region 3	73	93	93	93
Gender				
Female	75	92	91	93
Male	65	91	81	86
Aboriginal Status				
Aboriginal	77	89	96	96
Non-Aboriginal	71	92	87	90

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[37] Respondents answered all questions on a five-point scale with '1' representing ""not important"" and '5' representing ""very important.""   Scores of '4' and '5' are combined and presented in this table.

D.4B   Promotion of Rural Canada

The promotion of rural areas as viable and safe places to live, work and raise a family was cited as an important priority by 87% of respondents (Figure 1). Table 15 represents the results of additional questions associated with this priority. While less than half (43%) of respondents felt that it is important to attract urban Canadians to live in rural areas, a significant majority felt that it is important that Canadians understand the economic and social contributions of rural Canadians (93%) or that most rural Canadians make their livelihood through the extraction and sale of natural resources (89%).

Table 15: Importance of Promoting Various Rural Canada Issues, by Gender, Education and Aboriginal Status

	Percent		
Characteristics	**Attracting Urban Canadians to Rural Areas[42]**	**Understanding Economic / Social Contributions of Rural Canadaians[43]**	**Understanding How Rural Canadians Make Livelihood[44]**
Total	**43**	**93**	**89**
Gender			
Female	44	95	94
Male	42	91	83
Education			
High School or Less	49	94	95
Post-Secondary	37	93	85
Aboriginal Status			
Aboriginal	68	96	100
Non-Aboriginal	42	93	89

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[42] Based on the question: "To what extent do you feel that it is important to promote rural areas as viable and safe places to live, work and raise a family?"

[43] Based on responses to the question: "'To what extent do you feel that it is important for all Canadians to understand the economic and social contributions of rural Canadians?'"

[44] Based on responses to the question: " "To what extent do you feel that it is important that all Canadians understand that most rural Canadians make their livelihood through extraction and sale of natural resources (for example: oil, mining, forestry, farming)?'"

Again we find female and Aboriginal respondents attaching a greater level of importance to these rural Canada promotional issues. For example, Aboriginal respondents were considerably more likely to view the attraction of urban Canadians to rural areas as important (68%). In addition, however, respondents with lower levels of education viewed these promotional issues as more important than on average.

D.4C   Environmental Issues

While environmental issues have been mentioned in prior *Rural Dialogue* initiatives, they were not explicitly identified as a priority area for rural Canadians. The results of this survey, however, suggest that a large majority of Albertans view the environment as an important issue. Fully 90% of respondents reported that environmental issues were "important" or "very important" to the quality of life in their communities.

Table 16 presents the results of more detailed questions on the environment. Rural Albertans expressed the greatest concern about the quality of water (94%) and air (87%) in their community. Once again, we find that women and particularly Aboriginal respondents usually attached a somewhat greater importance to these five environmental issues. Perhaps most significant of these differences is the large majority of Aboriginal people (96%) who reported that the protection of endangered species/habitat preservation was an important issue, compared to 73% of non-Aboriginal people.

Table 16: Importance of Selected Environmental Issues[46], by Gender and Aboriginal Status

	Percent				
		Gender		**Aboriginal Status**	
Environmental Issue	**TOTAL**	**Female**	**Male**	**Aboriginal**	**Non-Aboriginal**
Air Quality	**87**	89	85	96	87
Water Quality	**94**	94	94	100	94
Addressing Climate Change	**62**	66	56	67	62
Protection of Endangered Species/ Habitat Preservation	**75**	76	73	96	73
Provision of Weather Information	**70**	73	66	77	70

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[46] Respondents answered on a five-point scale with '1' representing "not important" and '5' representing "very important." Scores of '4' and '5' are combined and presented in this table.

D.5   ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

D.5A   *Importance of Access*

Access to government programs and services was viewed as less important than most other priorities (see Figure 1). Further analysis presented in Figure 7 reveals that similar proportions of respondents (75%) feel it is important to be able to access the Government of Canada Web site through computers placed in public locations (e.g., libraries). With the exception of Region 4 residents (83% of whom felt that this type of access was important), about three-quarters of respondents in each of the four remaining regions responded similarly. Males were slightly less likely to report this access as important, and older respondents (+55) were even less likely to view access to the Web site as important (63%).

**Figure 7: Importance of Access to Government of Canada Web site
in Public Locations[1], by Region, Gender and Age**
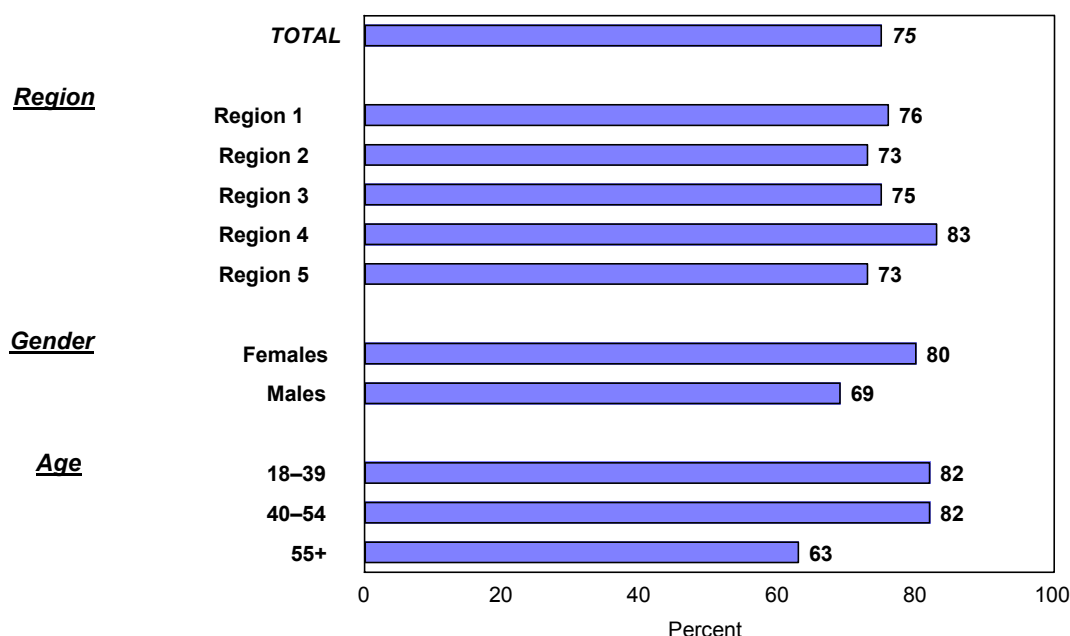
[1]Based on responses to the question: "How important is it that Internet access to the Government of Canada Web site is available through computers in publicly accessible locations?" Respondents answered on a five-point scale with 1 representing "not important" and 5 representing "very important." Scores of 4 and 5 are combined and presented in this figure.

D.5B   *Use and Access*

Additional analysis provides further insight into the experiences of rural Albertans in their attempts to find information on government services and programs. Several questions addressed respondents' experiences with getting information about government.

Figure 8 shows that getting information about government programs and services is one issue, while having access to them is something different. Considerably fewer respondents reported that they felt it was 'easy' for them to get information on government (26%) than it was for them to access their programs and services (41%).

**Figure 8: Ease of Getting Information and of
Accessing Government Programs and Services**
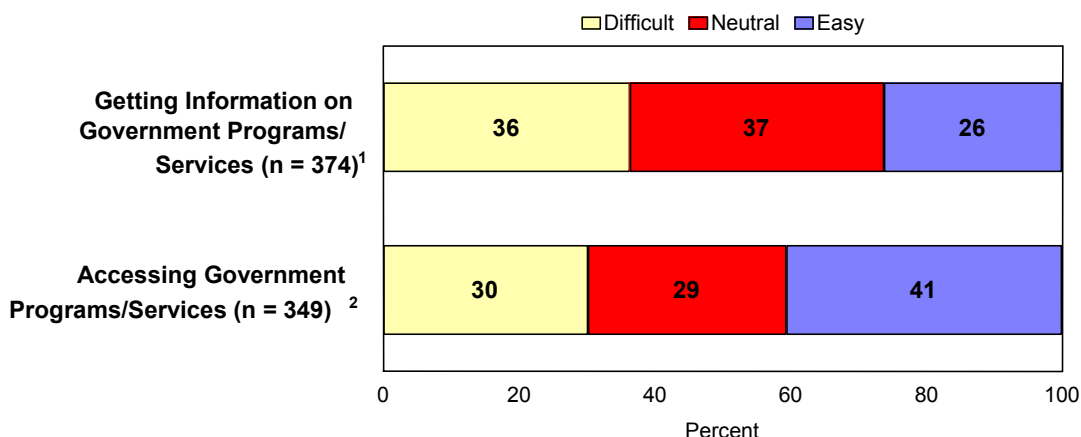
[1] Based on responses to the question: "How difficult or easy is it to get information on government programs and Services?" Respondents answered on a five-point scale with 1 representing "difficult" and 5 representing "easy." Scores of 1 and 2 (difficult) and 4 and 5 (easy) are combined and presented in this figure.
[2] Based on responses to the question: "How difficult or easy has it been for you to access government programs and services?"   Respondents answered on a five-point scale with 1 representing "difficult" and 5 representing "easy." Scores of 1 and 2 (difficult) and 4 and 5 (easy) are combined in this figure.

The 207 respondents who indicated that they had experienced difficulties or who had provided a neutral response to the question on accessing programs and services were prompted to provide information on the kinds of difficulties they had encountered. Figure 9 shows that the most common difficulty experienced in accessing government programs and services was in finding the appropriate information or department. Responses in this category included such difficulties as not being able to find information on the Web site, not knowing where to start when looking for information and receiving inaccurate information. Many respondents also indicated that they had problems with the telephone service (27%), particularly with using the automated system. Many of those who indicated having a problem with the telephone system noted that it was because the system was too time-consuming (15%). More than one-quarter (27%) also expressed dissatisfaction with the services or staff in general. Somewhat fewer (8%) indicated that they experienced access problems or that they were not aware of what programs or services were available.

Figure 9: Difficulties Experienced in Accessing Government Programs or Services
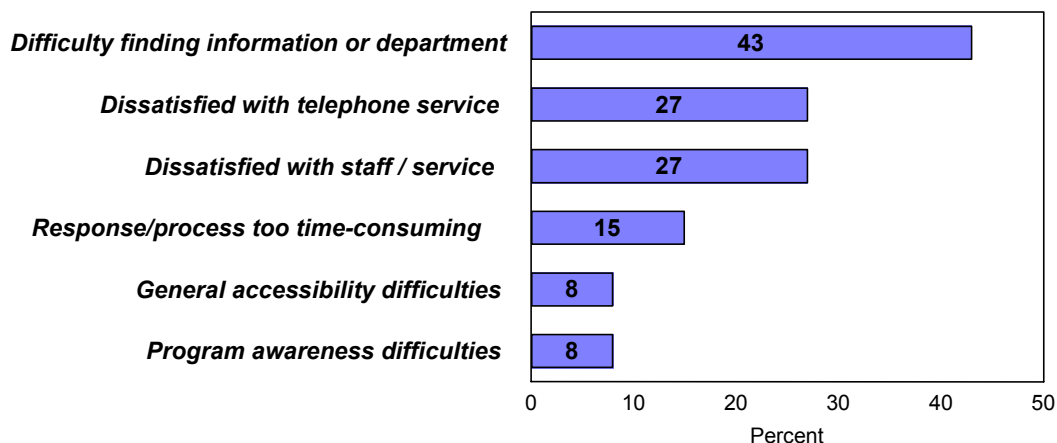
D.5C   Service Canada's Single-Window Model

Respondents were also asked a series of questions on their use of and experience with Service Canada's Single-Window Model. Included in this model are the 1 800 O-Canada Telephone Inquiry Centre, the Canada Web site and Service Canada Access Centres. Table 17 presents the percentage of respondents who had used these three access modes.

While one-quarter of respondents reported having used the Canada Web site or a Service Canada Access Centre, somewhat fewer had used the Telephone Inquiry Centre (10%). Some variation in use can be observed by gender, age and level of education. Females were more likely than males (27% compared to 20%) to go to the Access Centre, but were less likely to use the other two forms of access, particularly the Web site (23% compared to 29%). Respondents who were 55 years of age and older were considerably less likely to use the Web site (16%), as were those with a high-school education or less (17%).

Among the 41 respondents who had used the Telephone Inquiry Centre, 55% reported that they found the service helpful, 71% found the service courteous and 67% reported that the service was informative (results not shown). Web site users (n=102) were somewhat less positive about their experiences, with 47% reporting that it was "easy" to use the Web site. This later group of Web site users were prompted to provide suggestions for how to improve the Web site. Among the 38 respondents who answered, some of the most common responses included improving the search engine/keyword usage (9), improving navigation (8) and generally making the Web site more user friendly (6). Some respondents also reported that they found it difficult to locate information on some of the specific department Web sites (7).

Table 17: Percent Using Service Canada Single-Window Model, by Gender, Age and Education

| | Percent reporting "yes" | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

SERVICE CANADA MODE OF ACCESS		Gender		Age			Education	
	TOTAL	Female	Male	18–39	40–54	55+	H.S. or Less	Post-Secondary
1 800 O-Canada Telephone Inquiry Centre	**10**	9	12	5	12	12	12	8
Canada Web site (www.canada.gc.ca)	**25**	23	29	30	31	16	17	33
Service Canada Access Centre	**25**	27	20	23	25	24	20	28

D.5D   Potential Use of Government Access Modes

Respondents were asked whether they would be interested in using the Internet, telephone, or 'in-person' enquiry as a way of getting information on government programs and services. Respondents expressed the greatest interest in using the telephone (85%), and were equally interested in using 'in-person' (63%) and Internet (61%) access (results not shown).

Use of these services and interest in using them appear to be somewhat related. Respondents who had used the 1 800 O-Canada line were slightly more likely to state that they would use the telephone to get information on government programs and services (93% compared to 85%). Those who had used a Service Canada Access Centre were also more likely to state that they would go in person to get information on government programs and services (70% compared to 61%).

Results presented in Figure 10 show a much stronger relationship between prior Internet use and interest in using this option as a way of accessing government programs and services. Only half (51%) of respondents who had not previously used the Internet indicated that they would be interested in this option compared to 93% of those who had used the Internet.[9]

Figure 10 also presents the proportion responding "yes" to the Internet option for those who

Figure 10: Interest in Using the Internet to get Information on Government Programs and Services, by Web Site Use, Internet Access, Age, Education and Income[1]
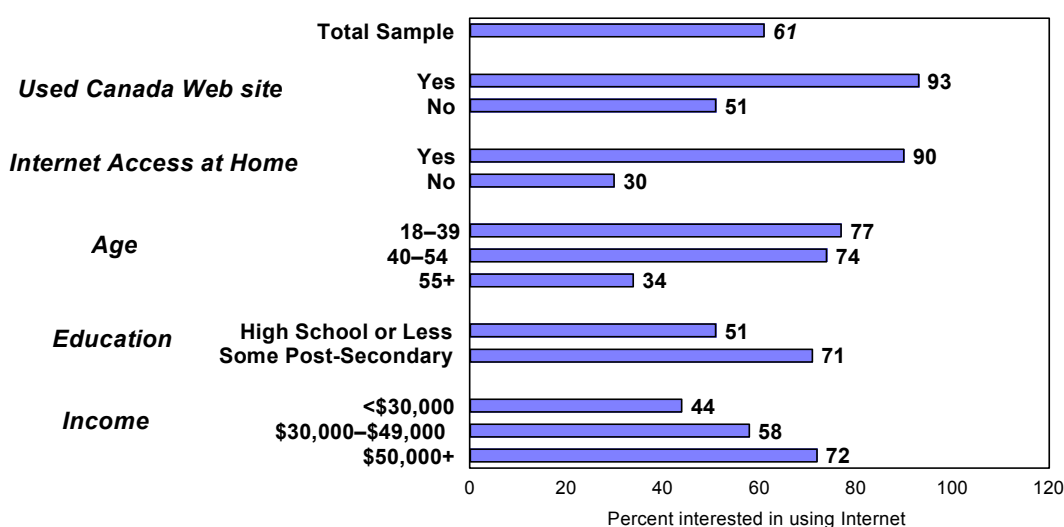
[1] Respondents were asked to indicate (yes or no) whether they would be interested in using the Internet to get information on government programs and services.

currently have and do not have Internet access in their home as well as for three demographic characteristics. As we might have expected, having home access to the Internet and interest in using the Internet are highly related: 90% of respondents who have access expressed interest compared to only 30% of those without access.

Since we know that Internet access varies by age, education and income (see Table 6), it is not surprising that interest in using the Internet to get information on government services and programs also varies in the same direction by age, education and income (Figure 10). Older respondents (55 years and over) were much less likely to report having Internet access than on average (31% compared to 55%), and as Figure 10 shows, they were much less likely to express an interest in using the Internet (34% compared to average of 61%). Similar response patterns can be observed on the basis of education and income. One interesting exception to this trend,

however, is Aboriginal respondents who were much less likely to have Internet access (23% among Aboriginal people compared to 54% of non-Aboriginal people), yet they were equally likely to report that they would be interested in using the Internet (58% of Aboriginal people compared to 61% of non-Aboriginal people).

D.6   COMMUNICATIONS

D.6A   Awareness of Government Programs

Only one in ten respondents had heard of the Canadian Rural Partnership. Among these 42 respondents, only two had known of any projects funded by the Canadian Rural Partnership. Four percent of the sample reported that they had heard of the Rural Secretariat.

D.6B   Information Sources on Government

The sample of rural Albertans were asked to indicate the major sources of information they used to find out what the government is doing (Table 18). A large majority (90%) of respondents find out about the government through television, although younger respondents were slightly less likely (84%) to report televisiont as a source of information. Respondents were equally likely to report using their local newspaper and the radio as information sources (83% for both). Somewhat fewer respondents used a national newspaper or the Internet to acquire information on the government (38% and 35%, respectively). Given the previously discussed findings on the use and interest in the Internet among older and Aboriginal respondents (Table 6 and Figure 10), it is not surprising that these two groups are also the least likely to use the Internet as a way of finding out what the government is doing.

About one-quarter of the sample indicated that they used bulletins in the post office to access information. Ten percent or fewer used word of mouth, mail/newsletters/flyers, government representatives/staff, magazine/periodicals/other newspapers as a way of finding out the activities of the government.

Table 18. Major Sources of Information on Government Activities[10], by Gender, Age, Education and Aboriginal Status

						Percent				
		Gender			Age		Education		Aboriginal Status	
Source(s) of Information	Total	Female	Male	18-39	40-54	55+	H.S. or Less	Post-Sec.	Aboriginal	Non-Aboriginal
Television	**90**	91	90	84	93	93	92	89	96	90
Local Newspaper	**83**	85	80	86	82	82	85	82	89	83
Radio	**83**	84	80	82	84	83	79	86	87	83
National Newspaper	**38**	34	44	38	38	38	35	42	27	39
Internet	**35**	35	33	41	39	24	31	39	10	36
Bulletins in Post Office	**24**	28	19	21	26	26	31	18	35	24
Word of Mouth	**10**	9	11	14	12	4	10	10	12	10
Mail/Newsletters/Flyers	**7**	10	4	7	7	9	7	8	4	8
Government Representative/Staff	**6**	7	6	4	5	10	8	4	8	6
Magazines/Periodicals/ Other Newspapers	**6**	6	6	3	8	7	5	7	12	6

---

[10] Respondents were asked to indicate their "major sources of information that you use to find out what the government is doing." Response categories of local newspaper, national newspaper, radio, television, bulletins in post office, Internet and other were read to respondents. The remaining four sources of information listed at the bottom of this table are a summary of 'other' responses.

D.7   GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO RURAL CANADIANS

One of the last questions in the survey asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they felt the federal government demonstrates a commitment to the interests of rural Canadians. Only one-quarter of the sample responded positively to this question by indicating 4 or 5 on a five-point scale (Figure 11). Female and Aboriginal respondents were slightly more likely to report that the federal government demonstrates a commitment to the interests of rural Canadians.

Figure 11: Government Commitment to Rural Canadians[1], by gender and Aboriginal Status
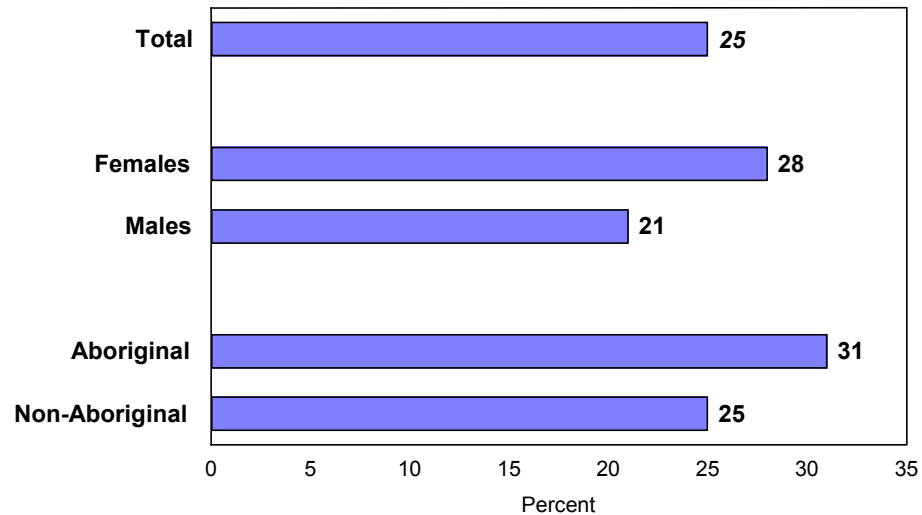
[1]Based on responses to the question: "To what extent do you feel that the federal government demonstrates a commitment to the interests of rural Canadians?" Respondents answered on a 5-point scale with 1 representing "not at all" and 5 representing "to a great extent." Scores of 4 and 5 are combined and presented in this figure.

The 297 respondents indicating that the government does not demonstrate an interest in rural Canadians (scores of 1 or 2) or who reported a neutral response (score of 3) were further asked to provide suggestions on "what the government could do to demonstrate a

greater commitment to the interests of rural Canadians." The 244 respondents who answered this question provided a wide variety of suggestions (Figure 12). Among the responses that deal with *Recognizing Rural Albertans*, the most common suggestions asked the government to show more interest or understanding (33%), or to listen more carefully (15%). Other respondents suggested that the government recognize and promote the contributions of rural Canadians (7%). The same percentage of respondents suggested that the government needs to pay more attention to western Canada. Under *Addressing Economic Issues*, one-quarter of the sample of rural Albertans made suggestions revolving around the provision of more funding or support, and 7% indicated that Wheat Board or pricing issues needed to be dealt with. Less than 5% of respondents suggested that promotion of new industry or addressing trade issues were good ways for the government to demonstrate a greater commitment.

Other suggestions included the general improvement of government services (12%), providing more or better information (4%), addressing environment issues (3%) and changing the voting process (3%).

**Figure 12: Suggested Government Actions to Demonstrate
Greater Commitment to Interests of Rural Canadians[1]**

Recognize Rural Albertans

Show More Interest/Understanding	33
Listen More Carefullly	15
Recognize/Promote Rural Contributions	7
Pay More Attention to West	7

Address Economic Issues

Provide More Funding/Support	25
Address Wheat Board/Pricing Issues	7
Promote New Industry/Business	3
Address Trade Issues	2

Other Suggestions

Improve Government Services	12
Provide More/Better Information	4
Address Environmental Issues	3
Change Voting Process	3

Percent

[1]Based on responses to the question: "What could the government do to demonstrate a greater commitment to the interests of rural Canadians?" The 244 sample members responding to this question provided 335 responses. Percentage calculations are based on the 244 respondents (denominator).

E.   CONCLUSIONS

The survey results that address the priorities (Section D.1) provide fairly strong evidence that the majority of rural Albertans view the 11 priorities as important to the development of their communities. Thus, the results support the prior findings from the *Rural Dialogue* initiative. The results also provide an indication of the relative importance rural Albertans attach to the priorities. In addition, responses to questions about the environment suggest that a vast majority of rural Albertans view environmental issues (which had not previously been identified as a priority) as important to their community's quality of life.

Given the highly diverse areas of exploration presented in the remaining sections of this report (Sections D.2 to D.7), additional overall conclusions are difficult to draw. In addition, as mentioned in the introduction, the Rural Team in consultation with the survey company and the research consultant believe that the various government departments representing each of these areas of study and the people and groups representing each of the five regions examined in this report are in the best position to interpret these preliminary findings and use them with other information to make policy decisions.

A wide variety of response patterns were found on the basis of region. More consistent patterns, however, were observed for gender and Aboriginal status: women and Aboriginal respondents tended to attribute greater importance to most of the priorities than did other respondents. These two demographic groups also attached greater importance to the more specific questions related to providing more accessible adult education and skills upgrading, stipulating funding programs for leadership building, establishing community consensus on development, addressing the questions related to environment, Canadians' understanding of how rural and remote citizens make their living. Women and Aboriginal people were also slightly more likely to report that the federal government demonstrates a commitment to the interests of rural Canadians. While a fair amount of confidence can be attached to these conclusions for female respondents, much greater care should be used when interpreting the differences in responses provided by the relatively small sample of Aboriginal respondents (n=24).

APPENDIX 1
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

ID #

Q1. Hello, my name is _____and I'm calling on behalf of the Government of Canada to seek your opinion on some issues of concern for rural Albertans. Your participation in this questionnaire will be very helpful to government departments as they develop new programs to address the most important priorities of rural Albertans.

May I please speak to someone in the household who is 18 years of age or over?

❑ Speaking   **Continue**

❑ No one over 18   **GO TO Disqualified**

❑ Refused   **Record reason if volunteered _____**
                      GO TO Thank You
                      Note: if reason is "no time" GO TO Call Back

Q2. Would you prefer to be addressed in English or Francais?

❑ Francais   **GO TO French Questionnaire**

❑ English   **Continue**

Q3. Participation in this questionnaire is voluntary. Would you be willing to answer some questions? The questionnaire will take about 25 minutes to complete.

❑ Yes   **Continue**

❑ Refused   **Record reason if volunteered _____**
                      GO TO Thank You
                      Note: if reason is "no time" GO TO CALL BACK

Q4. Do you or does anyone in your household work for the federal government?

☐ Yes					**GO TO Disqualified**

☐ No					**GO TO Intro**

CALL BACK

Is there a better time for me to call you back?

☐ Yes

Whom shall I ask for when calling back. Thank you for your time today. I will call you back on

DATE: _____ at **TIME:** _____ **END**

☐ Refused				**Record reason if volunteered** _____

GO TO Thank You

THANK YOU

I appreciate your time. Have a nice evening. **END**

DISQUALIFIED

I'm sorry but this disqualifies you from participating in our questionnaire. Thank you for your time. **END**

FRENCH QUESTIONNAIRE

May I schedule a time for a French interviewer to call you back?

DATE: _____ at **TIME:** _____

GO TO Thank You

Intro:

Before we start, I'd like to assure you that any information you give us will be kept completely confidential. When we summarize the results, only group averages will be calculated, and no individuals will be identified. Your personal information is protected by the Privacy Act.

In 1998, the Government of Canada heard from rural Albertans through a series of workshops and written communications. These exchanges helped to identify eleven issues that rural Canadians want the federal government to work on. The Government of Canada is interested in finding out more of what rural Albertans have to say on these priorities. The results of this questionnaire will be used by government departments to help shape their actions.

A. (DO NOT READ) Access to GOVERNMENT Programs and Services

Q5. The first area I would like to ask you about deals with your experience on getting information on government programs and services. Using a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 representing "Not important" and 5 "Very important,", how important is it that you can easily get information about government programs and services? Some of these programs and services include: employment insurance, old age pension, Aboriginal programs, weather services.

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q6. Using a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 representing "Difficult" and 5 "Easy," how difficult or easy is it to get information on government programs and services?

DIFFICULT	→	NEUTRAL	→	EASY	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q7. I am going to read a list of options for getting information on government programs and services. Please tell me by using yes or no for each service, if you would be interested in using that option to get information: **(Read each one)**

   a. Telephone   ❏Yes ❏No

   b. Internet   ❏Yes ❏No

   c. In person   ❏Yes ❏No

   Do not read – volunteered

    d. Other Mechanism (please specify) _____

    e. Don't know/No response   ❑

Q8.   In the past year, the Government of Canada has been testing a new model of service delivery. This model helps Canadians get the information they need quickly, easily and conveniently, whether by telephone, in person, or electronically. Have you tried to get information using the new toll- free   1 -800 O-Canada telephone enquiry centre?

❑ Yes   **Continue**

❑ No   **GO TO Q10**

❑ **Don't know/No response**

Q9.   For each of the following three questions, using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing "Not at all" and 5 "To a great extent," please tell me how you found the service on the 1 800 O-Canada line:

    a. To what extent was the service **helpful**?

NOT AT ALL	→	NEUTRAL	→	TO A GREAT EXTENT	(don't read) NO OPINION
1	2	3	4	5	0

b. To what extent was the service **courteous**?

NOT AT ALL	→	NEUTRAL	→	TO A GREAT EXTENT	(don't read) NO OPINION
1	2	3	4	5	0

c. To what extent was the service **informative**?

NOT AT ALL	→	NEUTRAL	→	TO A GREAT EXTENT	(don't read) NO OPINION
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q10.   Have you ever tried to get information through the Canada Web site at www.canada.gc.ca?

❑ Yes   **Continue**

❑ No   **GO TO Q13**

❑ Don't know/No response

Q11. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing "Not at all" and 5 "To a great extent," please tell me how easy was it to use the Canada Web site?

NOT AT ALL	→	NEUTRAL	→	TO A GREAT EXTENT	(don't read) NO OPINION
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q12. Do you have any suggestions for improving the Web site?

❑   Specify _____

❑ No

❑ Don't know/No response

Q13. Have you ever tried to get government information in person at a Service Canada Access Centre?

❑ Yes

❑ No

❑ Don't know/No response

Q14. Using the scale of 1 to 5 with 1 representing "Not Important" and 5 "Very Iimportant,", how important is it that Internet access to the Government of Canada Web site is available through computers in publicly accessible locations (for example, government offices, libraries, post offices)?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q15. Using a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 representing "Difficult" and 5 "Easy," how difficult or easy has it been for you to access government programs and services?

DIFFICULT	→	NEUTRAL	→	EASY	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

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If 3 or less continue; 4 or greater proceed to section B.

Q16. What kinds of difficulties have you experienced accessing these programs and services?

❑ Specify _____

If multiple difficulties Continue; otherwise skip to section B.

Q17. Of those difficulties you mentioned, which is most significant?

_____

B. (DO NOT READ) Economic Development

Q18. Now I would like to ask you some questions on economic development. The first set of questions deals with the accessibility of financial resources for business development. For the first question, we will use the scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing "Not Important" and 5 "Very Important." To the best of your knowledge, how important is it to the development of your community that financial resources are available for rural businesses (for example: financial aid/venture capital to start new businesses or to ensure the survival of existing businesses)?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q19. Have you ever tried to start a new business?

❑ Yes **Continue**

❑ No **GO TO Q22**

❑ Don't know/No response

Q20. Using yes or no for each of the following please tell me which types of financial resources you tried to access to finance this business?

a. Family/Friends ❑Yes ❑No **DO NOT PROBE ABOUT a. or b.**

b. Personal Investment ❑Yes ❑No

    c.   Banking Institutions   ❑Yes   ❑No

    d.   Community Future Development Corporations   ❑Yes ❑No

    e.   Government Grants and Contributions ❑Yes   ❑No

    f.   Seed funding /Angel Investment   ❑Yes   ❑No

    g.   Public Offering   ❑Yes   ❑No

    h.   Other (Please specify)   ❑Yes   ❑No

    i.   Don't know/No response   ❑

Q21.   Did you experience any difficulties in accessing _____ **(or)** these funds? If so, what were they?

List the resource with the difficulty (for example, banking institutions, hard to get an appointment)

Note item letter from above: _____

_____

_____

Q22.   Now I would like to ask you some questions on diversification of the economy in your community. Using a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 representing "Not Important" and 5 "Very limportant,", how important is the creation of new types of industry to the development of your community?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q23.   What are the major industries in your community?

_____

_____

_____ ☐ No response

Q24.   Do you have any suggestions for new industries that could be developed in your community (e.g. new industries or related to existing industries)?

_____

_____

_____ ☐ No response

C. (DO NOT READ) Social Development

Q25.   I am now going to ask you some questions that deal with the social development of your community. We will begin with questions on **young people**.
Using the scale of 1 to 5 with 1 representing "Not Important" and 5 "Very important," how important is the creation of more programs and services for young people to the development of your community (i.e. employment programs).

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q26.   What, in your opinion, are the major reasons why young people leave your community?

_____

_____

_____ ☐ No response

Q27. Now, I will ask some questions about the access to and the provision of quality education and training. For the next three questions, we will use the five-point scale with 1 representing "Not Important" and 5 "Very important."
How important is more accessible education to the development of your community (e.g. public schools and post secondary)?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q28. Again using 1 to 5, how important is it to develop high-tech skills among people in your community to the development of your community (e.g. computer-related skills, engineering)?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q29. On the five-point scale, how important is more accessible adult education and skills upgrading to the development of your community?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q30. In your opinion, what is the greatest challenge to providing adult education and skills upgrading in your community?

_____

_____

_____ ☐ No response

Q31. The government is proposing to provide all Canadians with access to high-speed Internet connections. On the five-point scale with 1 representing "Not Important" and 5 "Very important," how important is high-speed Internet to the development of your community?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q32. On the same five-point scale, to the best of your knowledge, how important is Internet access to businesses in your community?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q33.   Do you have Internet access at home?

❑   Yes   **GO TO Q35**

❑   No

❑   Don't know/No response

Q34.   What *best* describes the reason you don't have Internet access at home?

❑   Choose not to

❑   Restricting children's access

❑   Not affordable

❑   Too slow

❑   Not available

❑   Don't know how to use it

❑   Don't have an appropriate computer

❑   Other (please specify)_____

❑   Don't know/No response

Q35.   On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 representing "Not comfortable" and 5 "Very comfortable," how comfortable are you with using a computer?

NOT COMFORTABLE	→	COMFORTABLE	→	VERY COMFORTABLE	(don't read) NO OPINION
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q36.   The next questions relating to social development are on the accessibility of health care.
On the five-point scale once again with 1 representing "Not Important" and 5 "Very important," how important is the provision of accessible quality health care services to the development of your community?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q37.   What, in your view, are the most important things that make a person healthy?

_____
_____
_____ □ No response

Q38.   What can the government do to improve the health of people in your community?

_____
_____ □ No response

Q39.   Is there anything that you can think of that your community could do to improve the health of people in your community?

_____
_____
_____ □ No response

Q40.   Is there anything that you can think of that you can do to improve the health of people in your community?

_____
_____ □ No response

Q41.   Is there anything that you can think of that would help you improve your own health?

_____
_____
_____ □ No response

C. (DO NOT READ) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Q42. This section deals with several issues related to community development. The next four questions will use the five-point scale with 1 representing "Not Important" and 5 "Very important." The first question is on community infrastructure.
How important is good infrastructure to the development of your community (e.g. transportation, telecommunication, water supply, sewage systems or recreational facilities)?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q43. The next questions are about community leadership. Using the scale, please tell me how important it is to the success of your community that community members are involved in its development?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q44. Using the scale, please tell me how important is it that people agree on how to develop their community?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q45. Please respond using the same five-point scale on how important is strong community leadership to the development of your community (e.g. people volunteering in the community)?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q46. Please answer yes or no to the following question. Do you think your community has a hard time developing or retaining leaders?

- ❑ Yes   **Continue**
- ❑ No   **GO TO Q48**
- ❑ Don't know/No response

Q47. What, in your opinion, is the greatest difficulty in developing or retaining leaders in your community?

_____

_____

_____ ☐ No response

Q48. For the next three questions, we will use the five- point scale with 1 representing "Not Important" and 5 "Very important." How important is community confidence and pride to the development of your community?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q49. How important would funding programs targeted to building leadership capacity be to your community's development?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q50. How important is it that different levels of government and local groups work together to develop your community?

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q51. I am now going to ask you a set of questions on the **environment** as it relates to your community. On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "Not important" and 5 "Very important," how important are environmental issues to the quality of life in your community? Environmental issues would be things such as air quality, water quality and the protection of endangered species.

NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q52. On a five-point scale with 1 being "Not at all important" and 5 "Very important", to what extent are each of the following environmental issues important to your community? (**Rotate list)**

	NOT IMPORTANT	→	IMPORTANT	→	VERY IMPORTANT	(don't

						read) DON'T KNOW
a. air quality	1	2	3	4	5	0
b. water quality	1	2	3	4	5	0
c. addressing climate change	1	2	3	4	5	0
d. provision of weather information	1	2	3	4	5	0
e. protection of endangered species and habitat preservation	1	2	3	4	5	0

Q53. The following questions relate to the promotion of your community as a viable and safe place to live, work and raise a family. Please answer the following five questions on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 represents "Not at all" and 5 "To a great extent."
To what extent do you feel that it is important to promote rural areas as viable and safe places to live, work and raise a family?

NOT AT ALL	→	NEUTRAL	→	TO A GREAT EXTENT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q54. To what extent do you feel that it is important for all Canadians to understand the economic and social contributions of rural Canadians?

NOT AT ALL	→	NEUTRAL	→	TO A GREAT EXTENT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q55. To what extent do you feel that it is important that all Canadians understand that most rural Canadians make their livelihood through extraction and sale of natural resources (For example, oil, mining, forestry, farming)?

NOT AT ALL	→	NEUTRAL	→	TO A GREAT EXTENT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q56. To what extent do you feel that it is important to attract urban Canadians to live in rural communities?

NOT AT ALL	→	NEUTRAL	→	TO A GREAT EXTENT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Q57. To what extent do you feel that the federal government demonstrates a commitment to the interests of rural Canadians.

NOT AT ALL	→	NEUTRAL	→	TO A GREAT EXTENT	(don't read) DON'T KNOW
1	2	3	4	5	0

Response of 4 or greater proceed to Q59

Q58. What could the government do to demonstrate a greater commitment to the interests of rural Canadians?

_____

_____

_____ ☐ No response

D.   (DO NOT READ) Communications

Q59. I am now going to ask you a set of questions on government initiatives for rural areas. Have you ever heard of the federal rural initiative called the Canadian Rural Partnership?

☐ Yes   **Continue**

☐ No   **GO TO Q61**

☐ Don't know/No response

Q60. Do you know of any projects in your community that have been funded by the Canadian Rural Partnership?

☐   Yes

☐   No

❏   Don't know/No response

Q61.   Have you ever heard of the Rural Secretariat?

❏   Yes

❏   No

❏   Don't know/No response

Q62. I am going to read you a list of sources of information, please indicate which are the major sources of information that you use to find out what the government is doing. **(Respondent can select more than one)**

❑ Local Newspaper

❑ National Newspaper

❑ Radio

❑ TV

❑ Bulletins in the Post Office

❑ Internet

❑ Other (please specify) _____

❑ Don't know/No response

Q63. Before we finish, we would like to gather some statistical information for classification purposes. These questions are asked to ensure that our questionnaire has reached a good cross-section of rural citizens. Answering each question is *voluntary* and will not affect whether your feedback is accepted.

What is your year of birth? _____

Q64. Are you of Aboriginal descent?

❑ Yes

❑ No

❑ Refused

Q65. What is your highest level of education? **(do not read)**

❑ less than grade 12

❑ high school graduate

- ❑ some university or college
- ❑ college/technical diploma or certificate
- ❑ university degree
- ❑ Refused

Q66. Are you presently employed, including self-employment?

- ❑ Yes　　　　　　**Continue**
- ❑ No　　　　　　**GO TO Q68**
- ❑ Refused　　　　**Continue**

Q67. What kind of work do you do? That is, what is your job title?
(If respondent holds more than one job, ask them to choose the one with the most hours.)

_____

- ❑ Refused

Q68. Which of the following categories represents your total annual income for all members of your household before taxes in 2000 (i.e., your gross household income).

- ❑ Under $15,000
- ❑ $15,000 TO $30,000
- ❑ $30,000 TO $50,000
- ❑ $50,000 TO $75,000
- ❑ $75,000 TO $100,000
- ❑ $100,000 OR MORE
- ❑ DON'T know/No response

Q69.　DON'T READ (Record Observation)

- ❑ Male
- ❑ Female

❑

❑

Q70.   DON'T READ (Record Observation from language preference for questionnaire)
- ❑   Anglophone
- ❑   Francophone

Q71.   The Rural Secretariat periodically sends out information on issues affecting rural Canadians (e.g. Rural Times Newsletter) and sets up meetings to seek the input of rural Canadians so the federal government can understand local and regional issues (e.g., Rural Dialogue Conferences). Would you like to be placed on the mailing list to receive rural publications or be invited to rural events? I would like to inform you that your name and address will not be correlated to the answers you gave on the questionnaire

- ❑ No
- ❑ Yes **(flag name for the Rural Dialogue Mailing List)**

Q72.   Are you interested in receiving the results from this questionnaire?
- ❑ No (go to Closing)
- ❑ Yes

Q73.   Your name and address will be protected under the provisions of the Privacy Act and will be stored in Personal Information Banks AAFC/PPU-301, 302 and 303. Some information may be accessible or protected as required under the provisions of the **Access to Information Act**. To what name and address would you like this information sent?

Name: _____ _____

Address:_____ _____

Town:_____

Province: Alberta   Postal Code: _____ _____

CLOSING

That concludes our questionnaire. If you are interested in knowing more about what the Government of Canada is doing in rural communities, please visit our Web site at www.rural.gc.ca. Thank you very much for participating. We appreciate your time and thank you for your interest.

APPENDIX 2

PRIORITY MEASUREMENT

Below are listed the priorities identified in the federal Framework for Action in Rural Canada with the questions that were asked to judge their relative importance in Alberta.

1. Improve **access to federal government programs and services** for rural Canadians.

   - Q5: How important is it that you can easily get information about government programs and services?

2. Improve access to **financial resources for rural business** and community development.

   - Q18: How important is it to the development of your community that financial resources are available for rural businesses?

3. Provide more targeted **opportunities, programs and services for rural youth**, including Aboriginal youth.

   - Q25: How important is the creation of more programs and services for young people to the development of your community?

4. Strengthen rural **community capacity building, leadership and skills development**.

   - Q45: How important is strong community leadership to the development of your community?

5. Create opportunities for rural communities to maintain and develop **infrastructure** for community development.

   - Q42: How important is good infrastructure to the development of your community?

6. Connect rural Canadians to the **knowledge-based economy** and society and help them acquire the skills to use the technology.

   - Q31: The government is proposing to provide all Canadians with access to high-speed connections. How important is high-speed Internet to the development of your community?
   - Q32: To the best of your knowledge, how important is Internet access to businesses in your community?

- Q28: How important is it to develop high-tech skills among people in your community to the development of your community?

7. Strengthen **economic diversification** in rural Canada through more targeted assistance.

- Q22: How important is the creation of new types of industry to the development of your community?

8. Work with provincial and territorial governments to examine and pilot test new ways to provide rural Canadians with **access to healthcare** at reasonable cost.

- Q36: How important is the provision of accessible quality health care services to the development of our community?

9. Work with provincial and territorial governments to examine and pilot test new ways to provide rural Canadians with **access to education** at reasonable cost.

- Q27: How important is more accessible education to the development of your community?

10. Foster **strategic partnerships**, within communities, between communities, and among governments to facilitate rural community development.

- Q50: How important is it that different levels of government and local groups work together to develop your community?

11. **Promote rural Canada** as a place to live, work, and raise a family by recognizing the value of rural Canada to the identity and well-being of the nation.

- Q53: To what extent do you feel it is important to promote rural areas as viable and safe places to live, work and raise a family?

APPENDIX 3
SAMPLE REGION COMMUNITIES

Region 1
Acheson
Alder Flats
Alhambra
Andrew
Ardrossan
Argentia Beach
Banff
Bashaw
Benalto
Bentley
Betula Beach
Birchcliff
Bittern Lake
Blackfalds
Blue Ridge
Bluffton
Bowden
Breton
Brule
Buck Creek
Buford
Burnstick Lake
Cadomin
Calahoo
Calmar
Canmore
Caroline
Carstairs
Cherhill
Chipman
Clyde
Cochrane
College Heights
Cremona
Crossfield
Crystal Springs
Cynthia
Daysland
Dead Man's Flats
Devon
Dickson
Didsbury

Drayton Valley
Eckville
Edson
Enoch
Entwistle
Evansburg
Exshaw
Fallis
Gainford
Golden Days
Gull Lake
Harvey Heights
Harvie Heights
Hinton
Hobbema
Innisfail
Jasper
Jasper East
Josephburg
Kananaskis
Keephills
Lac Des Arcs
Lacombe
Lake Louise
Leslieville
Lodgepole
Ma-me-o Beach
Marlboro
Mayerthorpe
Morley
Mulhurst
Niton Junction
Nordegg
Norglenwold
Norris Beach
Olds
Peers
Pelican Narrows
Penhold
Ponoka
Poplar Bay
Red Deer County
Rimbey

Robb
Rochfort Bridge
Rocky Mountain
House
Rocky Mt House
Rocky Mtn House
Rocky Rapids
Sangudo
Seba Beach
Seebe
Silver Beach
Springbrook
Spruceview
Stoney Ir 142-144
Sunbreaker Cove
Sunchild O'chiese
Sundance Beach
Sundre
Sunnybrook
Sylvan Lake
Tees
Thorsby
Tomahawk
Wabamun
Warburg
Water Valley
Waterton Park
West Cove
Westerose
Whitecourt
Wildwood
Winfield

Region 2
4 Wing Cold Lake
Abee
Alberta Beach
Anzac
Arm Lake
Ashmont
Athabasca
Baptiste Lake
Barrhead

Beaver Lake
Beaver Lake Ir
131
Bellevue
Bellis
Blackfoot
Bon Accord
Bonnyville
Bonnyville Beach
Boyle
Breynat
Bruderheim
Busby
Calling Lake
Cardiff
Caslan
Chauvin
Cold Lake
Cold Lake Ir 149
Cold Lake Ir 149b
Colinton
Conklin
Cranes Lake
Dewberry
Elk Point
Fabyan
Fawcett
Flatbush
Fort Assiniboine
Fort Mackay
Fort
Saskatchewan
Gibbons
Glendon
Goodfish Lake
Grand Centre
Grandview
Grassland
Gunn
Gwynne
Hairy Hill
Hay Lakes
Heinsburg

Hondo
Innisfree
Irma
Island Lake
Island Lake South
Islay
Jarvie
Kavanagh
Kikino Ms
Kitscoty
Lac La Biche
Lamont
Leduc
Legal
Lindbrook
Long Island Lake
Long Lake
Mallaig
Mannville
Marwayne
Mewatha Beach
Millet
Moose Lake
Morinville
Mundare
Muriel Lake
Myrnam
Namao
Neerlandia
New Sarepta
Newbrook
Nisku
North Cooking
Lake
Onoway
Pickardville
Plamondon
Radway
Ranfurly
Redwater
Rochester
Rolly View
Ross Haven
Round Hill
Ryley
Saddle Lake

Sandy Beach
Saprae Creek
Smith
Smoky Lake
South Baptiste
South Cooking
Lake
South View
Spruce Grove
Sputinow
St Michael
St Paul
St Paul
Stony Plain
Stony Plain Ir 135
Sunrise Beach
Sunset Point
Swan Hills
Tawatinaw
Therien
Thorhild
Thunder Lake
Tofield
Two Hills
Unipouheos Ir 121
Val Quentin
Vega
Vegreville
Vermilion
Villeneuve
Vimy
Wagner
Wainwright
Wandering River
Warspite
Waskatenau
West Baptiste
Westlock
Wetaskiwin
Whispering Hills
White Gull
Willingdon

Region 3
Aetna
Arrowwood

Barnwell
Barons
Bassano
Beaver Mines
Black Diamond
Blackie
Blairmore
Bow Island
Bragg Creek
Brocket
Brooks
Burdett
Cardston
Carmangay
Cayley
Champion
Chestermere
Claresholm
Clear Lake
Clive
Cluny
Coaldale
Coalhurst
Coleman
Coutts
Cowley
Crowsnest Pass
De Winton
Del Bonita
Delburne
Diamond City
Dunmore
Eden Valley Ir
216
Elkwater
Enchant
Etzikom
Foremost
Fort Macleod
Frank
Gleichen
Glenwood
Grande Cache
Granum
Grassy Lake
Hays

High River
Hill Spring
Hillcrest Mines
Iron Springs
Irvine
Jenner
Joffre
Langdon
Lomond
Longview
Lundbreck
Magrath
Manyberries
Milk River
Milo
Moon River
Estates
Nanton
New Dayton
Nobleford
Okotoks
Parkland Beach
Peigan Ir 147
Picture Butte
Pincher Creek
Priddis
Rainier
Ralston
Raymond
Redcliff
Redwood
Meadows
Rolling Hills
Rosemary
Sarcee Ir 145
Scandia
Seven Persons
Shaughnessy
Shepard
Silver Sands
Stand Off
Standoff
Stavely
Stirling
Suffield

Swan River Ir
150e
Taber
Tilley
Turin
Turner Valley
Vauxhall
Vulcan
Walsh
Warner
Wrentham

Region 4
Acadia Valley
Acme
Airdrie
Alix
Alliance
Altario
Amisk
Bawlf
Beaumont
Beiseker
Big Valley
Bindloss
Botha
Bruce
Buffalo
Byemoor
Cadogan
Cambria
Camrose
Carbon
Carseland
Castor
Cereal
Cessford
Cfb Suffield
Consort
Coronation
Craigmyle
Czar
Delia
Derwent
Donalda
Drumheller

Duchess
Duhamel
East Coulee
Edberg
Edgerton
Elnora
Empress
Endiang
Erskine
Esther
Ferintosh
Fleet
Forestburg
Gadsby
Galahad
Halkirk
Hanna
Hardisty
Heisler
Hilda
Holden
Hughenden
Hussar
Irricana
Kelsey
Keoma
Killam
Lavoy
Lfwa Trng Ctr
Wnwr
Linden
Lougheed
Lousana
Mclaughlin
Meeting Creek
Minburn
Mirror
Monitor
Morrin
Munson
Nacmine
New Brigden
New Norway
Oyen
Paradise Valley
Pine Lake

Provost
Richdale
Rockyford
Rosalind
Rosebud
Rosedale
Rosedale Valley
Rumsey
Schuler
Sedalia
Sedgewick
Sibbald
Siksika Ir 146
Standard
Stettler
Strathmore
Strome
Swalwell
Three Hills
Torrington
Trochu
Veteran
Viking
Vilna
White Sands
Youngstown

Region 5
Allison Bay Ir 219
Assumption
Atikameg
Bear Canyon
Beaverlodge
Berwyn
Bezanson
Bluesky
Bonanza
Brownvale
Canyon Creek
Clairmont
Debolt
Desmarais
Dixonville
Donnelly
Eaglesham
Fairview

Falher
Faust
Fort Chipewyan
Fort Vermilion
Fox Creek
Ft Vermln Ir 173b
Fox Lake
Garden River
Gift Lake
Girouxville
Grimshaw
Grouard
Grovedale
High Level
High Prairie
Hines Creek
Horse Lks Ir 152b
Hythe
Jean D'or Prairie
Joussard
Keg River
Kinuso
La Crete
Little Buffalo
Lake
Little Buffalo Lk
Loon Lake
Manning
Marie Reine
Mclennan
Meander River
Nampa
North Star
Paddle Prairie
Peace River
Peerless Lake
Rainbow Lake
Red Earth
Red Earth Creek
Rycroft
Sexsmith
Silver Valley
Slave Lake
Spirit River
St Isidore

Sturgen Lk Ir
154a
Sturgeon Lake Ir
Sturgeon Lk Ir
154a
Sucker Crk Ir
150a
Tall Cree Ir 173
Tall Cree Ir 173a
Tangent
Trout Lake
Valleyview
Wabasca
Wabasca Ir 166b
Wabasca Ir 166d
Wanham
Wdland Cree Ir
226
Wembley
Whitelaw
Widewater
Woking
Worsley
Zama
Zama City

Unknown
Location
Yellowstone