



Government of Saskatchewan

Public Opinion Polling

from April 1, 2002 – June 30, 2002

OMNIBUS
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

April 2002

Omnibus
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Federal issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include health care, jobs and unemployment, federal taxes and the economy.
- Provincial issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include agriculture, health care, jobs and unemployment and population loss and rural development.
- More than three quarters of residents are aware that the minimum wage in Saskatchewan will be increased May 1st and more than two thirds believe the increase is appropriate.
- Approximately three quarters of Saskatchewan residents are aware of the provincial government's intention to reduce the number of regional authorities from 32 to 12 and more than one third agree with the decision.
- Roughly the same number of residents think provincial income taxes have increased as those who think income taxes have decreased or stayed the same over the past two years.
- More than one third of Saskatchewan residents rely most upon television stations for information about Saskatchewan news and developments.
- More than two thirds of residents think the education system in Saskatchewan is the same or better than that of the rest of the country.
- Approximately three quarters of Saskatchewan residents think the quality of elementary and secondary education in Saskatchewan is adequate or better.
- The large majority of residents think Saskatchewan's education system is doing an adequate or better job in using new technology to enhance learning opportunities for students.
- Almost one half of residents think the number of people in Saskatchewan receiving welfare has been increasing over the past four years.
- More than one quarter of Saskatchewan residents are satisfied with the overall provincial highway system and the majority rate accelerated twinning, provincial highway repaving and rural highway rebuilding as important. Two thirds of residents feel safe when they are driving on Saskatchewan highways.
- One half of Saskatchewan residents recall promotions on how they use electricity in their homes and have heard about SaskPower's "energycheck" or "homecheck" program.

METHODOLOGY

Fast Consulting conducted the April 2002 public opinion survey for the Government of Saskatchewan with a representative sample of the Saskatchewan population. The April Omnibus Survey contains questions designed to explore public opinion in the areas of:

- federal issues of importance to Saskatchewan residents;
- provincial issues of importance to Saskatchewan residents;
- learning;
- social services;
- highways and transportation, and
- SaskPower.

Questions for the survey were provided by various departments within the Government of Saskatchewan and assembled into an interview format by Fast Consulting. The questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure that all of the questions being asked in the interview were understood by the general public and the information being gathered addressed the public opinion research objectives.

The sample frame for this public opinion research survey was constructed to obtain complete interviews from a random sample of 1,000 households throughout Saskatchewan. To ensure proportionate representation from all areas of Saskatchewan, the province was divided into nine geographic sampling districts. Interview respondents were selected randomly from Saskatchewan telephone directories in each region using standard polling practices to ensure random selection of households and respondents. The sampling frame was also constructed to ensure proportionate representation of other important demographic characteristics evident within the provincial population such as gender, age, occupation, level of education and level of household income. This ensures that the opinions of all the various types of people who reside in Saskatchewan are proportionately represented in the statistical measurements documented in this report.

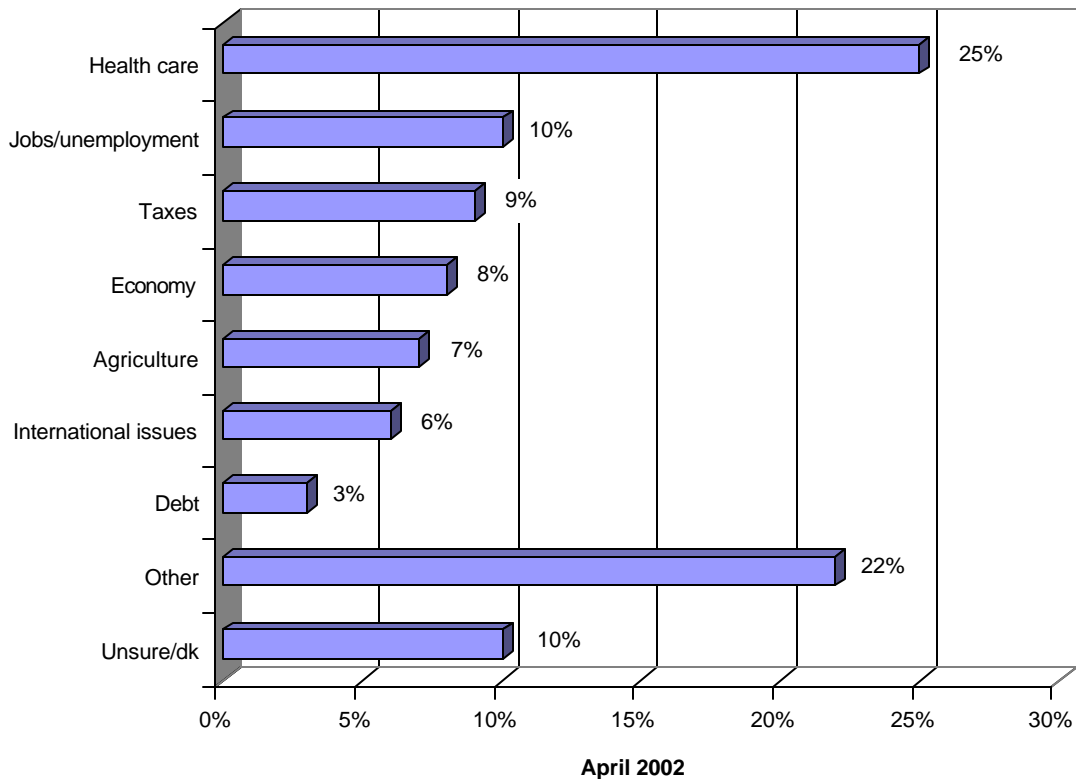
One thousand residents of the province were interviewed between Tuesday, April 23 and Monday, May 6, 2002. Interviews were conducted by telephone at times that were appropriate and convenient for respondents - weekdays between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. and weekends between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. All interviews were conducted by Fast Consulting's in-house public opinion interviewers using our *Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing* (CATI) call centre.

The Omnibus survey sample size of 1,000 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points: reliable results with low variability. Frequency charts for all public opinion issues are illustrated in this report.

Fast Consulting designed and implemented programs to facilitate the statistical analysis of data using the industry standard SPSS computer program (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Data checking procedures were utilized at all times to ensure accuracy of the data. In addition, statistical tests were conducted on the demographics to check for reliability and validity of the survey data.

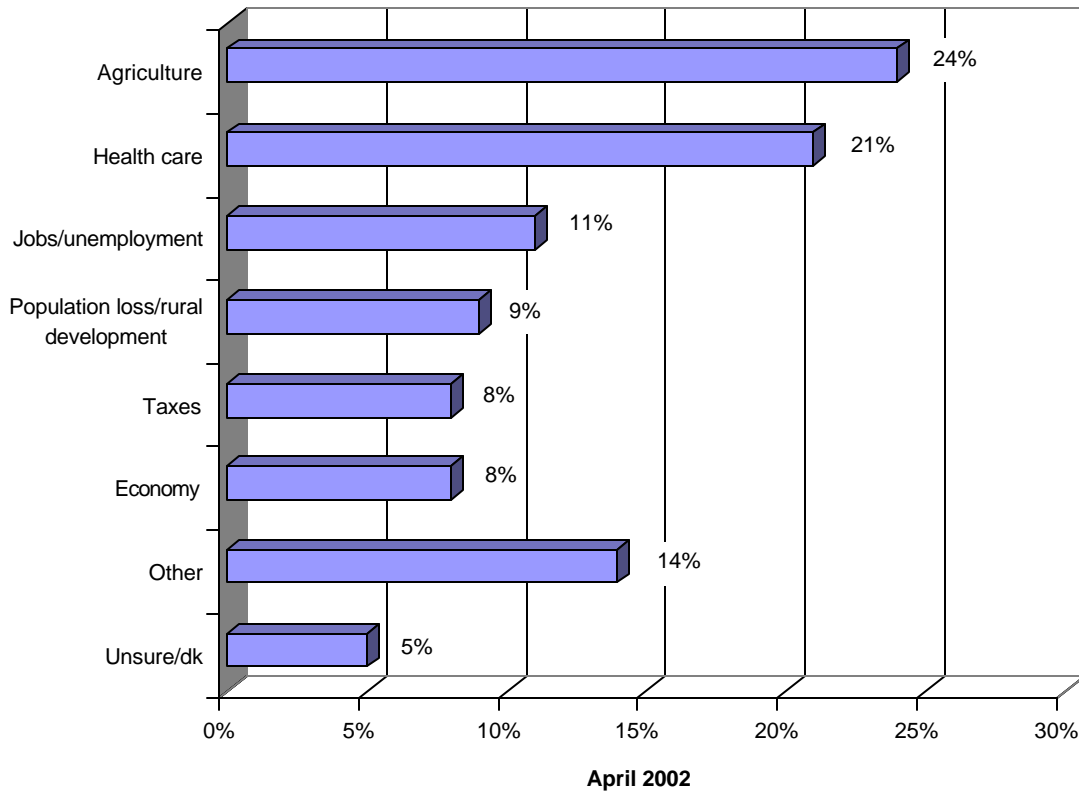
1.0 GENERAL ISSUES

Question 1. What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?



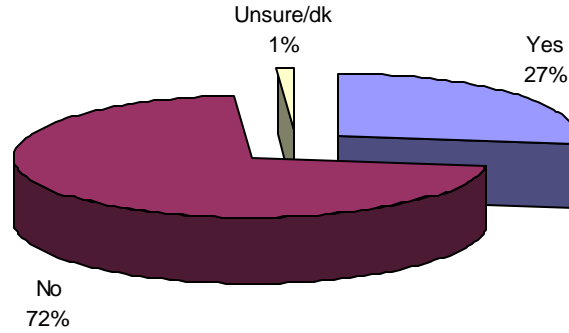
- According to 25% of Saskatchewan residents, the most important issue facing Canada today is the health care system. Other important issues include jobs and unemployment (10%), federal taxes (9%), the economy (8%), agriculture (7%), international issues (6%), and the national deficit and accumulated debt (3%).
- Approximately 22% of residents are primarily concerned with 'other' issues such as the federal government in general (5%), education (2%), crime and poverty (2%), the environment (2%), population loss and rural development (1%), government cutbacks and spending (1%), business and industry (1%) and Native issues (1%).

Question 2. What do you think is the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan today?



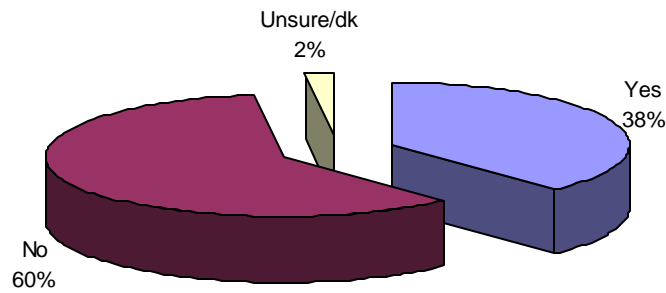
- The most important issue facing the province today, according to 24% of Saskatchewan residents, is agriculture. Approximately 21% of residents are concerned primarily with health care, 11% with jobs and unemployment, 9% with population loss and rural development, 8% with provincial taxes and another 8% are concerned with the provincial economy.
- Included among 'other' important issues identified by 14% of residents are the provincial government in general (4%), Native issues (2%), education (1%), the environment (1%), highways and transportation (1%), the provincial debt (1%) and business and industry (1%).

Question 3. Are you aware of the Saskatchewan Government's Centennial Student Employment Program?



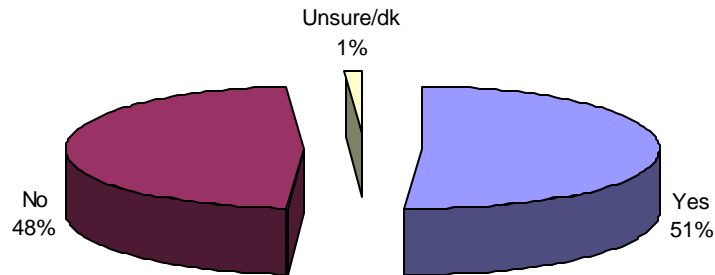
- More than one quarter (27%) of Saskatchewan residents are aware of the Saskatchewan government's Centennial Student Employment Program.

Question 4. Are you aware of Saskatchewan's "Community Schools" Program?



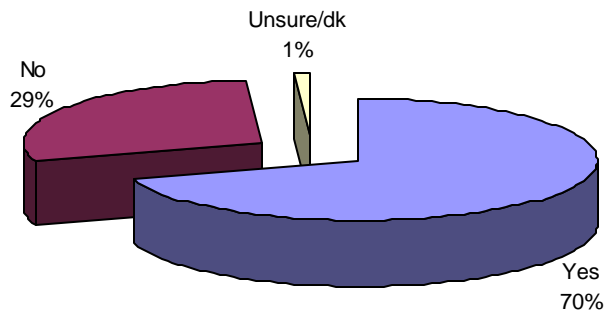
- More than one third (38%) of residents are aware of Saskatchewan's "Community Schools" Program.

Question 5. Are you aware of the CommunityNet program to extend high speed Internet service to schools and public agencies in smaller Saskatchewan communities?



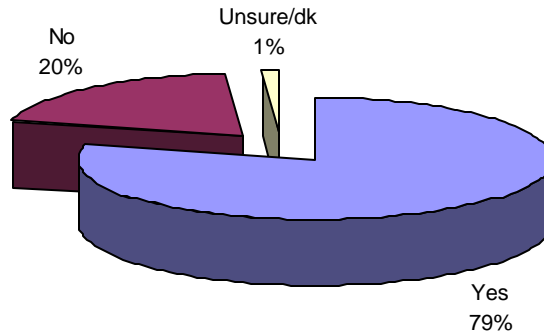
- The majority (51%) of Saskatchewan residents are aware of the CommunityNet program to extend high speed Internet service to schools and public agencies in smaller Saskatchewan communities.

Question 6. Are you aware of the provincial government's Long-Term Safe Drinking Water Strategy, announced in response to the North Battleford Water Inquiry?



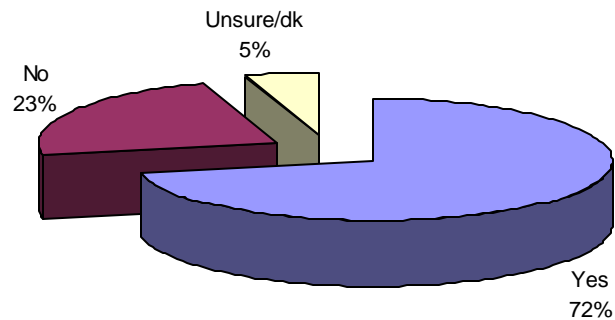
- More than two thirds (70%) of residents are aware of the provincial government's Long-Term Safe Drinking Water Strategy.

Question 7. Are you aware that the minimum wage in Saskatchewan will be increased May 1st?



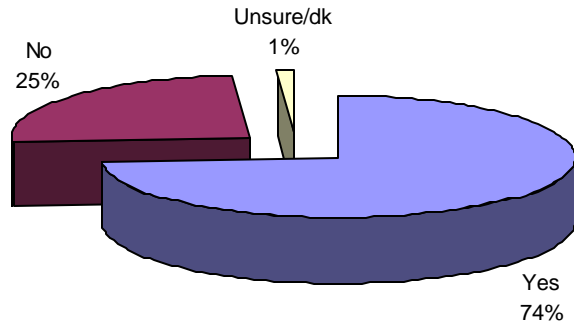
- More than three quarters (79%) of residents are aware that the minimum wage in Saskatchewan will be increased May 1st.

Question 8. The minimum wage will rise from \$6.00 to \$6.35 on May 1st of this year. Do you believe the increase is appropriate?



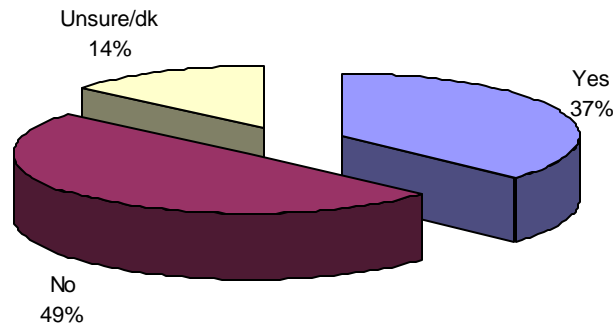
- More than two thirds (72%) of residents believe the minimum wage increase from \$6.00 to \$6.35 is appropriate.

Question 9. Are you aware of the provincial government's intention to reduce the number of regional health authorities (currently health districts) from 32 to 12?



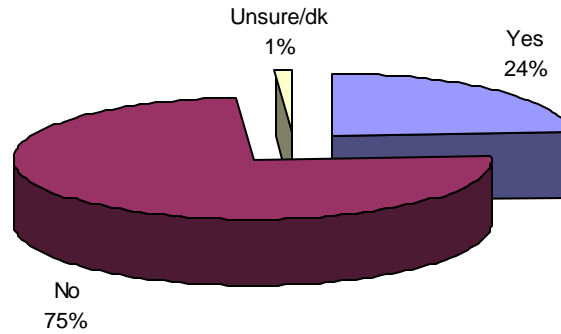
- Approximately three quarters (74%) of Saskatchewan residents are aware of the provincial government's intention to reduce the number of regional health authorities from 32 to 12.

Question 10. Do you agree with the decision to consolidate 32 health districts into 12 regional health authorities?



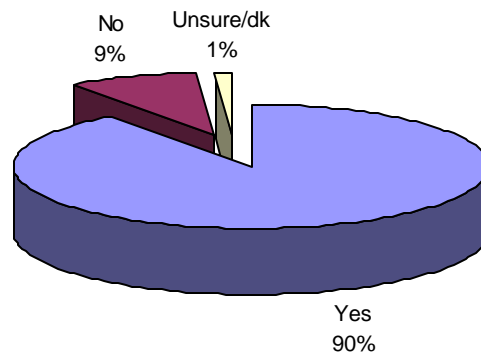
- More than one third (37%) of residents agree with the decision to consolidate 32 health districts into 12 regional health authorities.

Question 11. If you have access to the Internet, have you visited the web site of the Saskatchewan government or any provincial government department or agency?



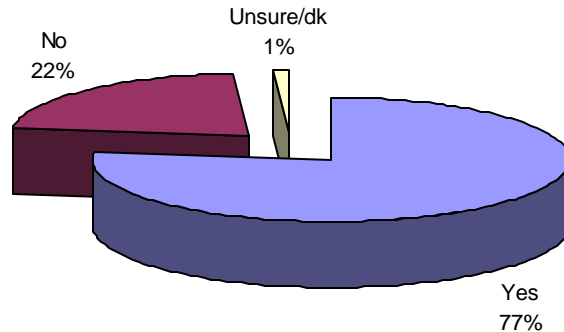
- Approximately one quarter (24%) of residents have visited the web site of the Saskatchewan government or a provincial government department or agency.

Question 12. Have you heard about ethanol, an alternative fuel that can be blended with gasoline?



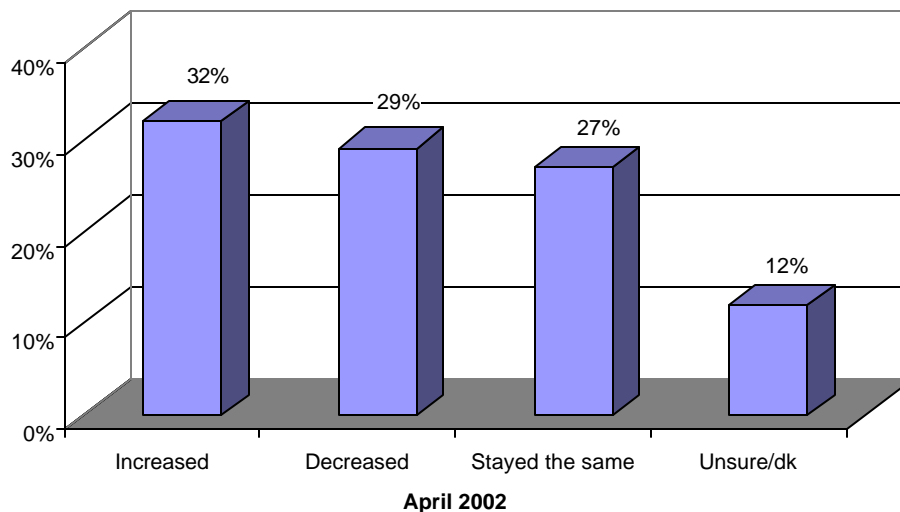
- The large majority (90%) of Saskatchewan residents have heard about ethanol, an alternative fuel that can be blended with gasoline.

Question 12b. Have you heard about the provincial government's plans to support development of an ethanol industry in Saskatchewan?



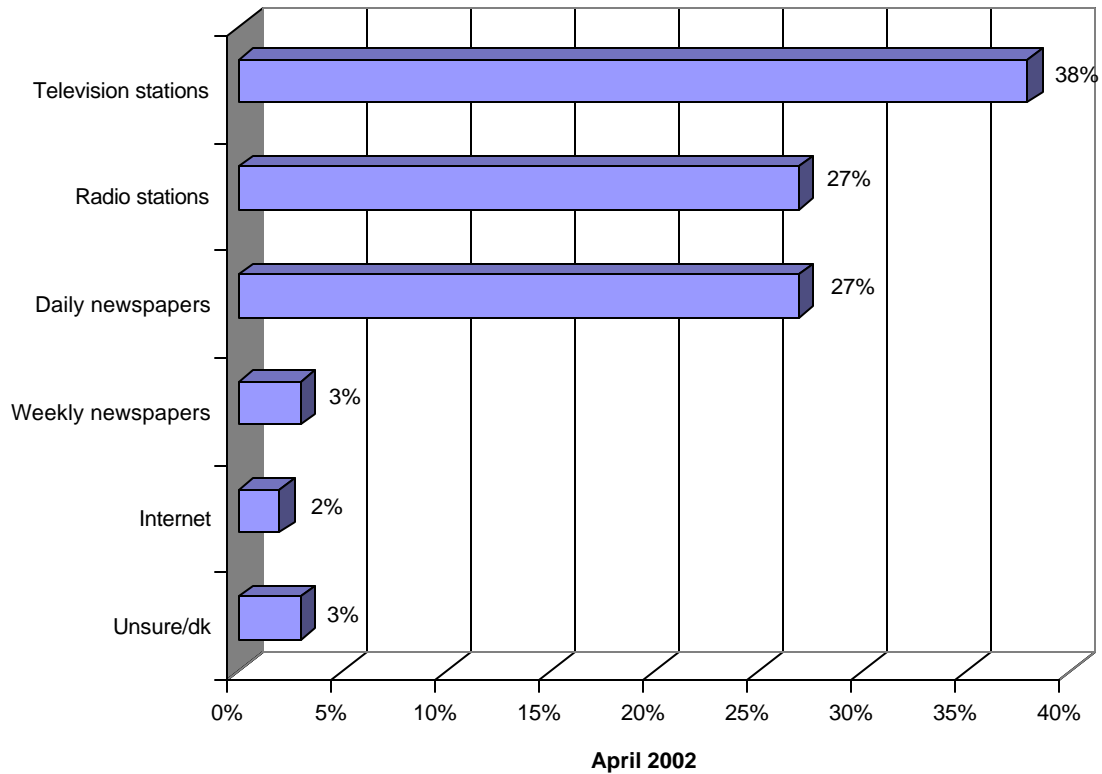
- More than three quarters (77%) of those residents who have heard of ethanol have heard about the provincial government's plans to support development of an ethanol industry in Saskatchewan (70% of all respondents).

Question 13. During the past two years, do you believe provincial income taxes in Saskatchewan have increased, decreased or stayed the same?



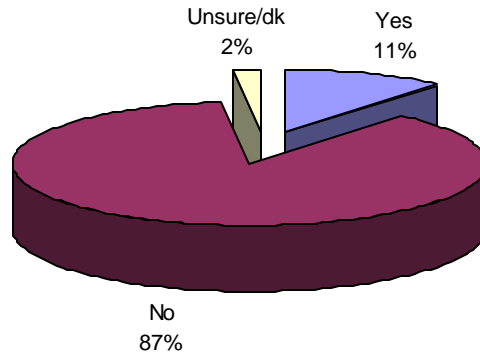
- Approximately one third (32%) of Saskatchewan residents think provincial income taxes have increased, 29% think they have decreased and 27% believe provincial income taxes have stayed the same during the past two years.

Question 14. On which of the following types of media do you rely upon most for information about Saskatchewan news and developments?



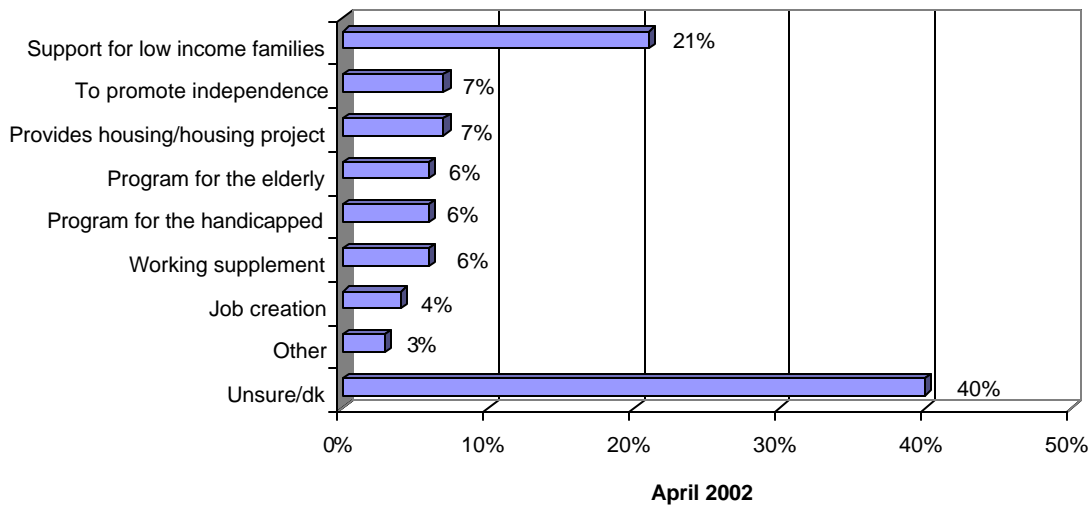
- More than one third (38%) of residents rely most upon television stations for information about Saskatchewan news and developments, 27% rely on radio stations and another 27% rely on daily newspapers.

Question 15. Have you heard about the government program called “Building Independence”?



- Approximately one in ten (11%) Saskatchewan residents have heard about the provincial government program called “Building Independence”.

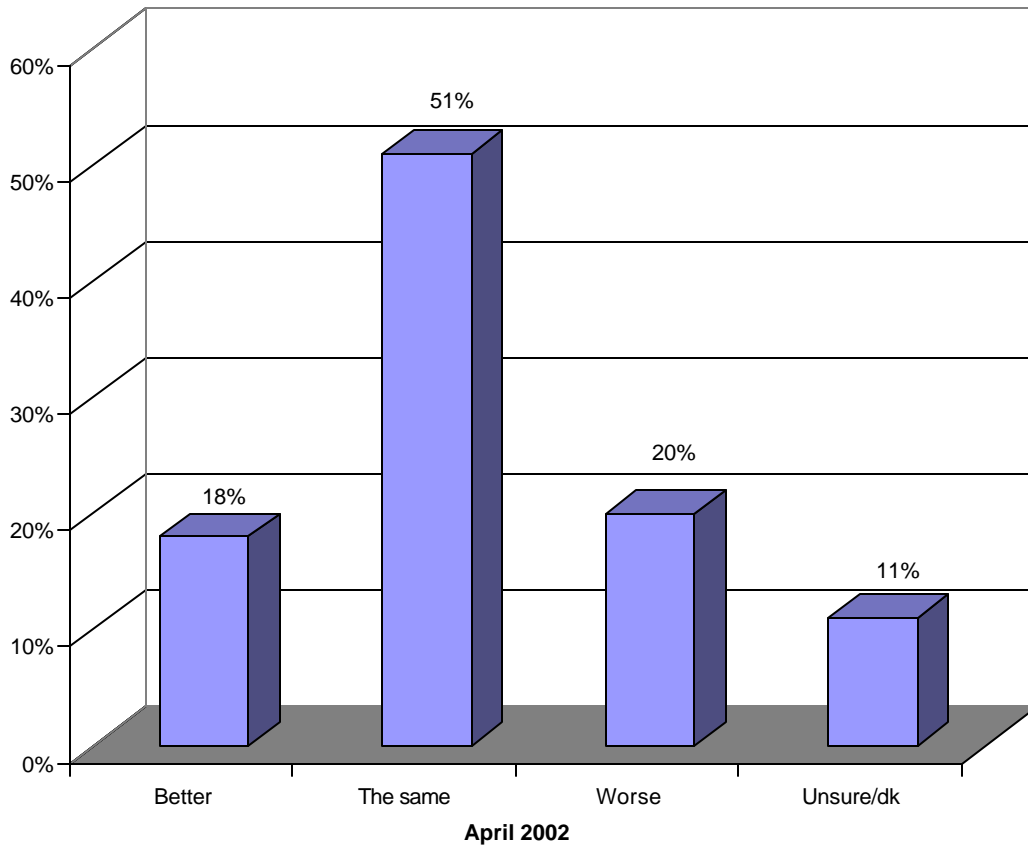
Question 15a. What kind of program is it?



- Approximately 21% of those residents who have heard of the government program “Building Independence” think the program is designed to help support low income families (2% of all respondents).

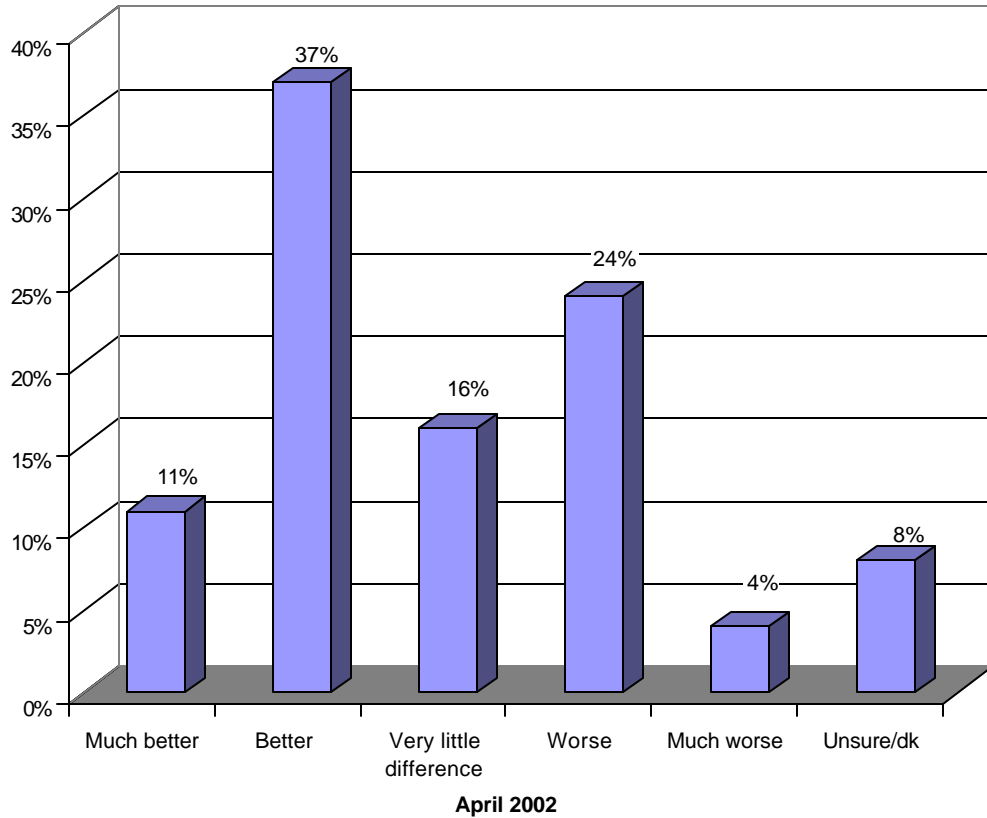
2.0 LEARNING

Question 16. Compared to the rest of the country, do you think the education system in Saskatchewan is better, the same or worse?



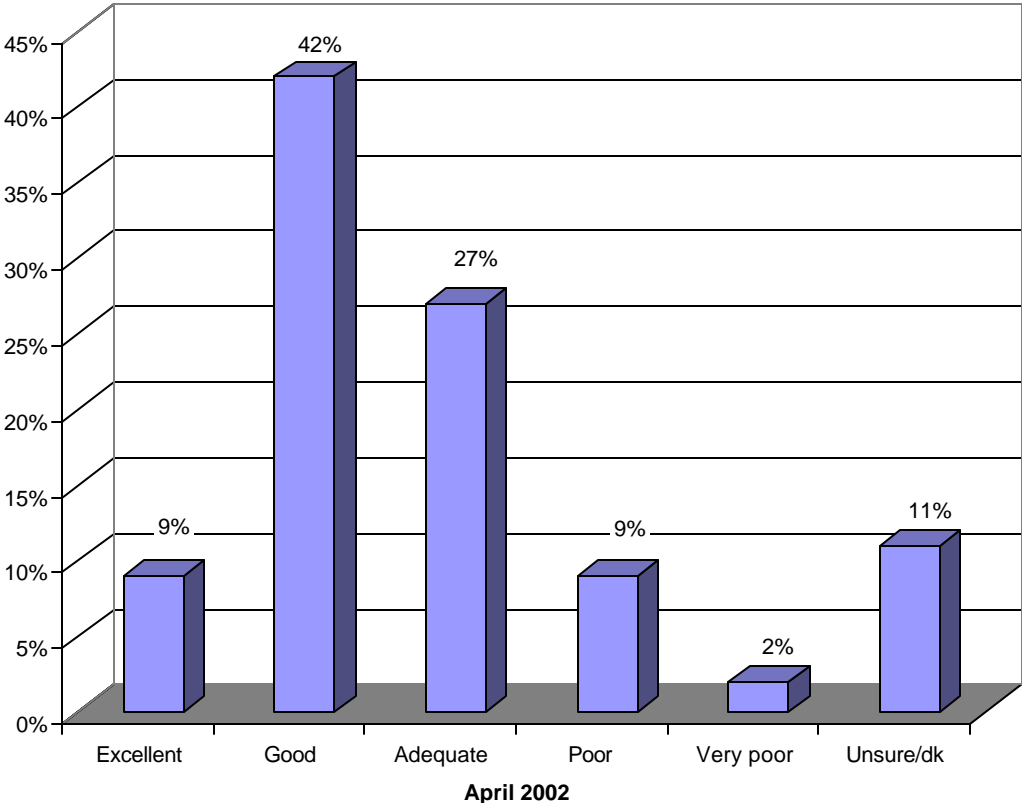
- More than two thirds (69%) of residents think the education system in Saskatchewan is the same or better than that of the rest of the country.

Question 17. When you think of your own school education, do you believe students' education today is much better, better, worse, much worse or very little difference compared to yours?



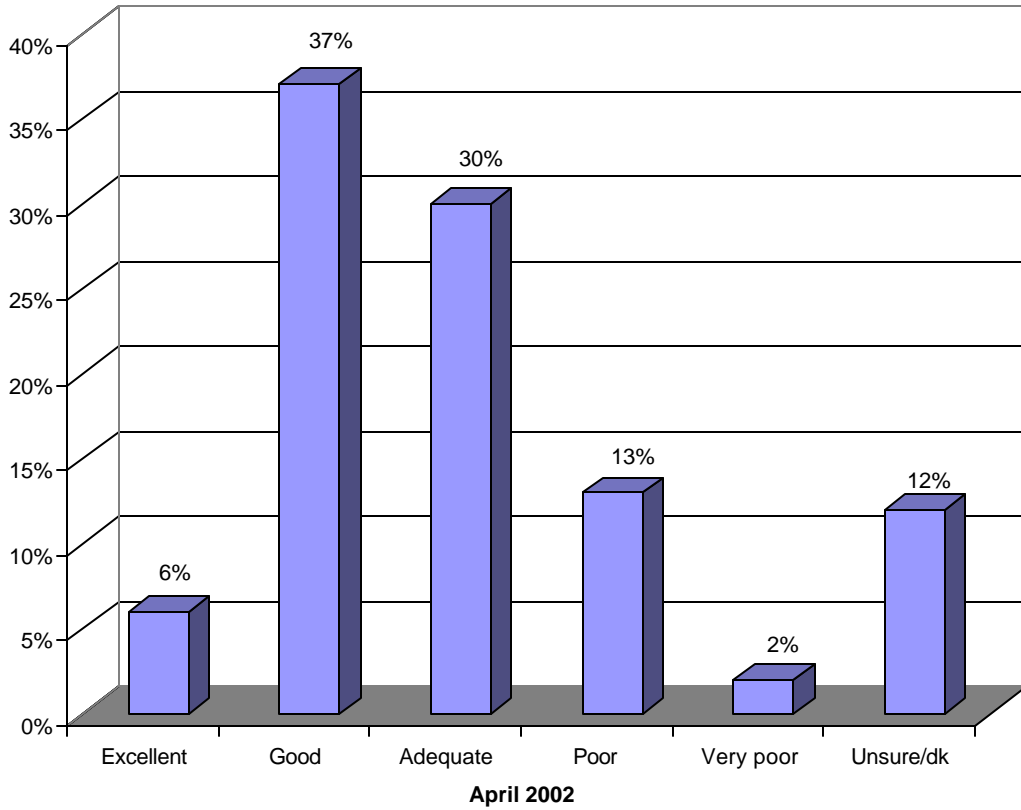
- Approximately one half (48%) of Saskatchewan residents believe students' education today is better than the education they received; 16% believe there is very little difference.

Question 18. Do you think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



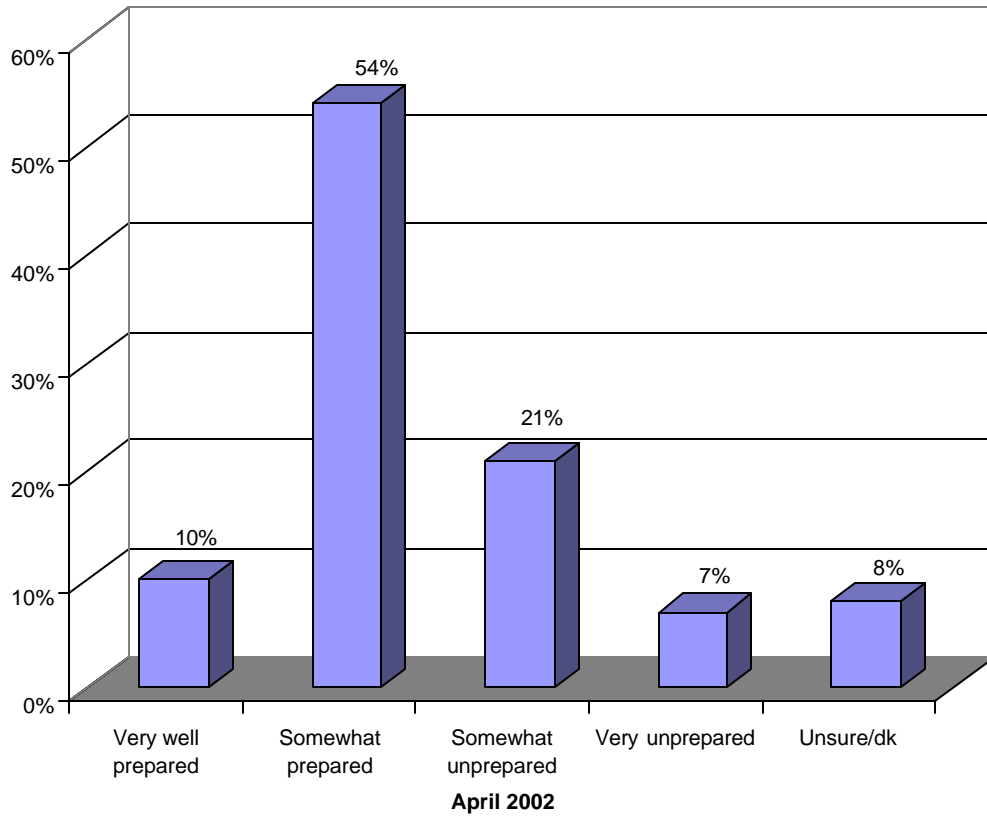
- More than three quarters (78%) of Saskatchewan residents think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is adequate or better.

Question 19. Do you think the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



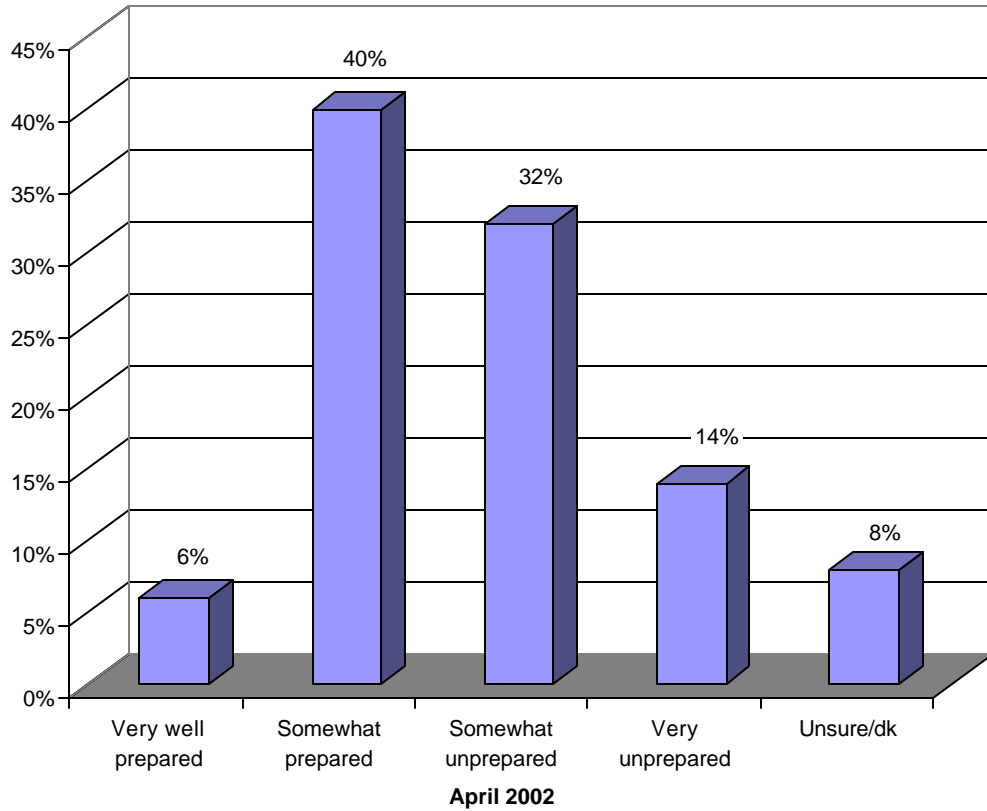
- More than two thirds (73%) of residents think the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is adequate or better.

Question 20. Which best describes how well prepared you think Saskatchewan high school students are for entering post-secondary institutions like colleges or universities? Do you think they are very well prepared, only somewhat prepared, somewhat unprepared or very unprepared?



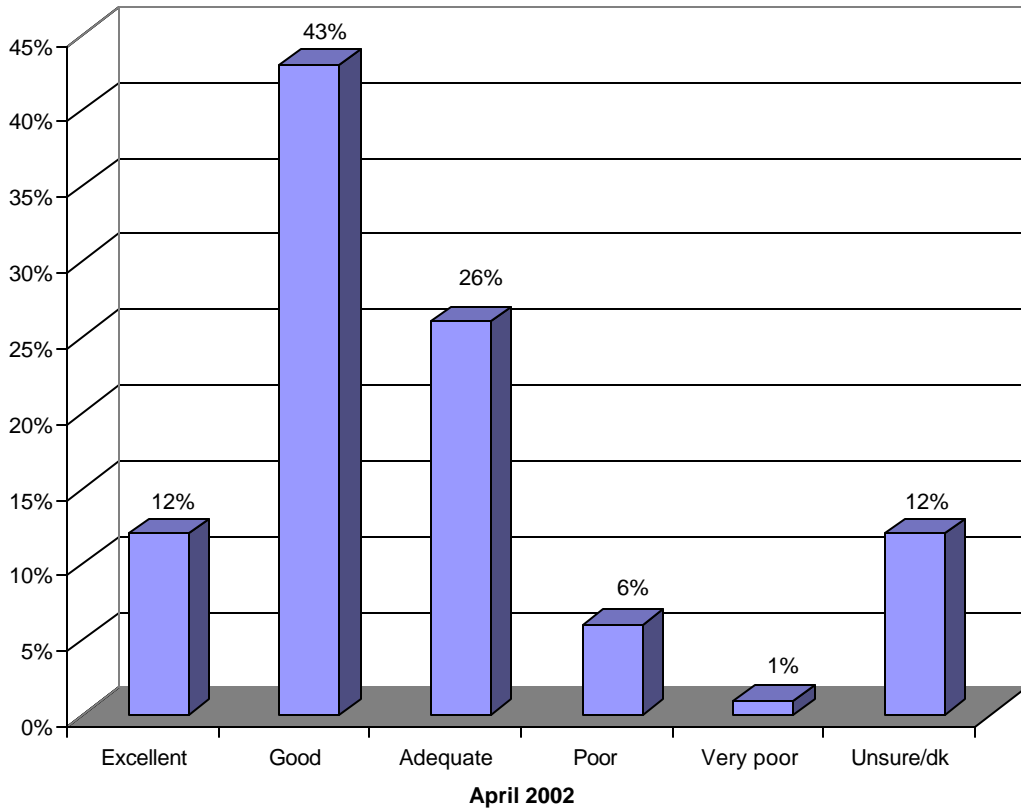
- The majority (64%) of residents think Saskatchewan high school students are prepared for entering post-secondary institutions like colleges or universities.

Question 21. How well prepared to you think high school students are for entering the workforce? Do you think they are very well prepared, only somewhat prepared, somewhat unprepared or very unprepared?



- Approximately 46% of residents think Saskatchewan high school students are prepared for entering the workforce.

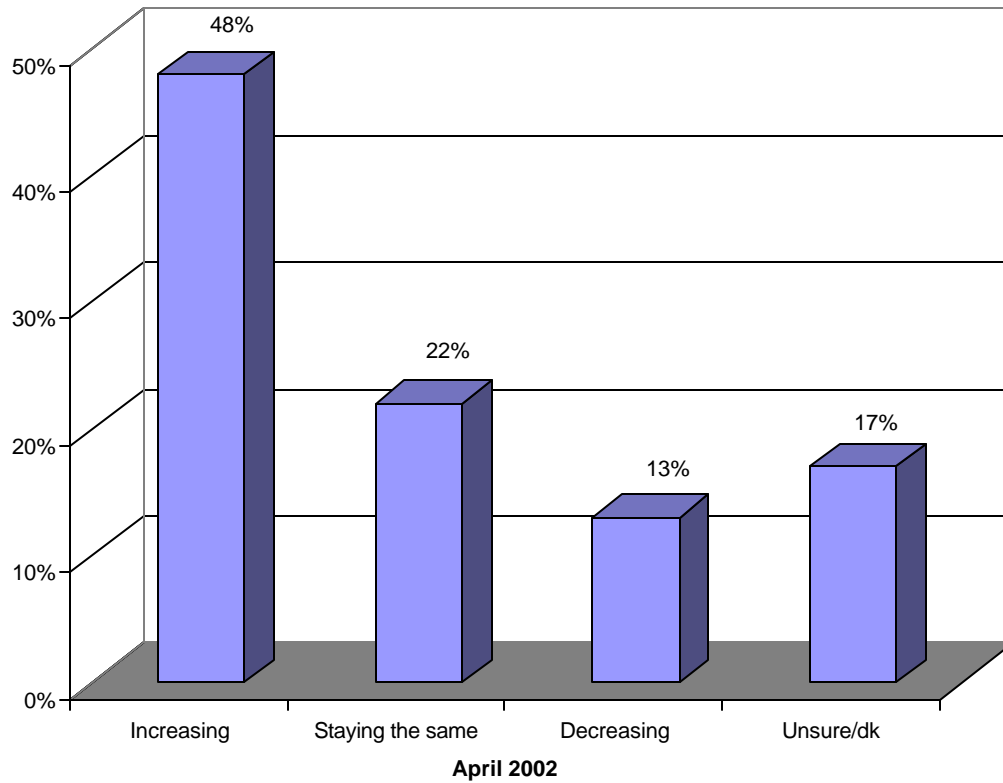
Question 22. How well do you believe Saskatchewan's education system is doing in using new technology like computers and the Internet to enhance learning opportunities for students? Do you think it is excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



- The large majority (81%) of residents believe Saskatchewan's education system is doing an adequate or better job in using new technology like computers and the Internet to enhance learning opportunities for students.

3.0 SOCIAL SERVICES

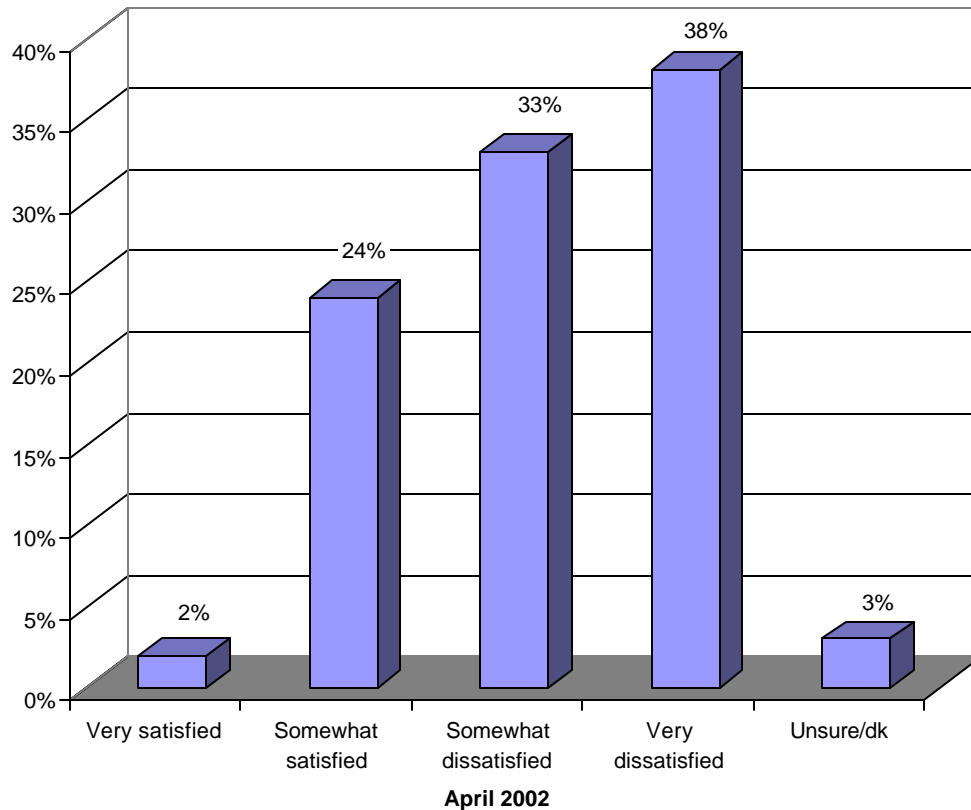
Question 23. On the whole, would you say the number of people in Saskatchewan receiving welfare has been increasing, decreasing or staying about the same over the past four years?



- Almost one half 48% of residents think the number of people in Saskatchewan receiving welfare has been increasing over the past four years.

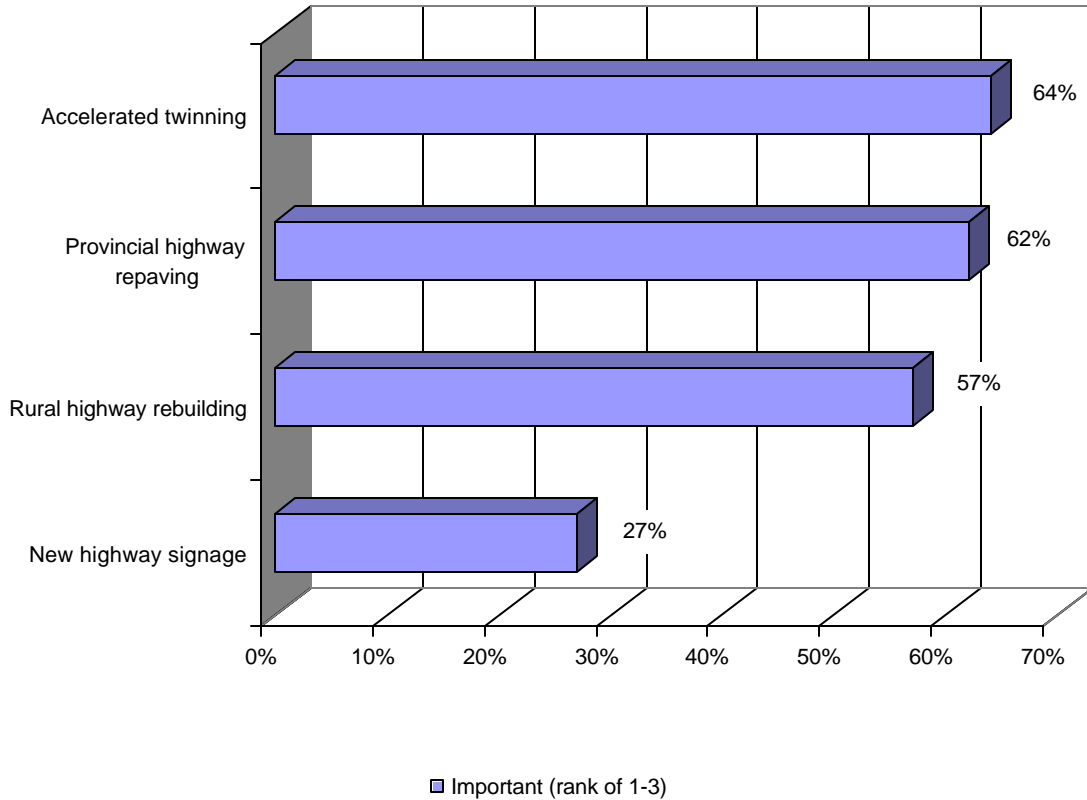
4.0 HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

Question 24. When you think of the overall provincial highway system, are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the system?



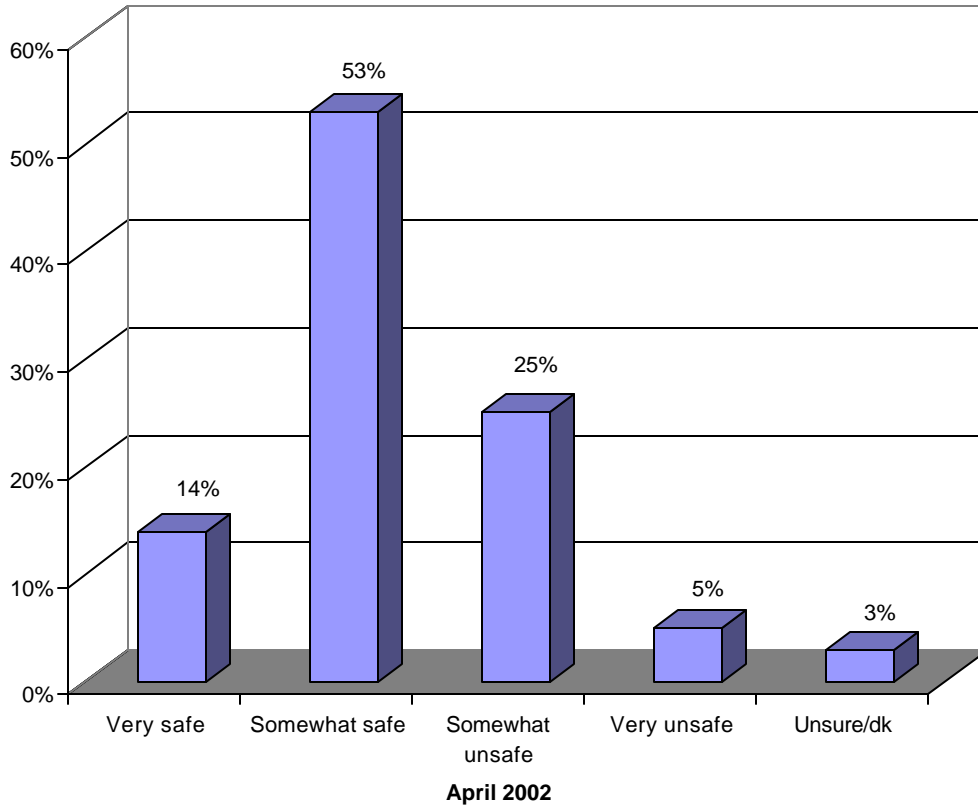
- More than one quarter (26%) of Saskatchewan residents are satisfied with the overall provincial highway system; 71% are dissatisfied.

Question 25. Out of a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important, how important do you rate each of the following:



- The majority of Saskatchewan residents rate accelerated twinning (64%), provincial highway repaving (62%) and rural highway rebuilding (57%) as important (rank of 1 to 3).

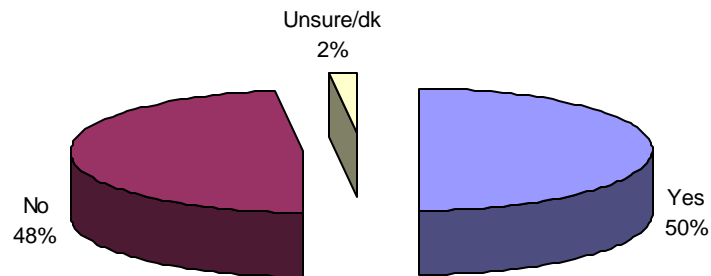
Question 26. Overall when driving on Saskatchewan's highways do you personally feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe or very unsafe?



- Two thirds (67%) of residents feel safe when they are driving on Saskatchewan highways.

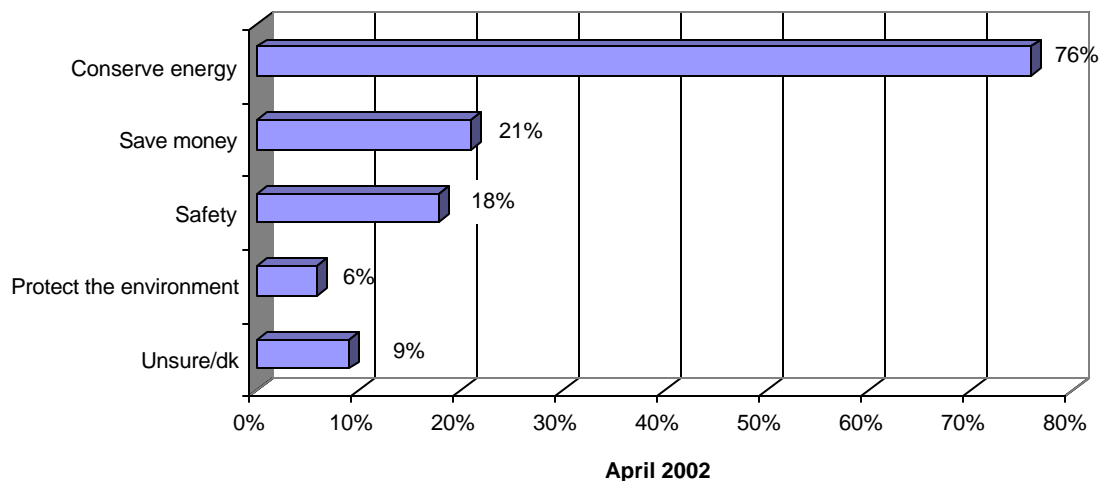
5.0 SASKPOWER

Question 27. In the last year, have you seen or heard anything promoting how you use electricity in your home?



- One half (50%) of Saskatchewan residents have seen or heard promotions on how they use electricity in their home.

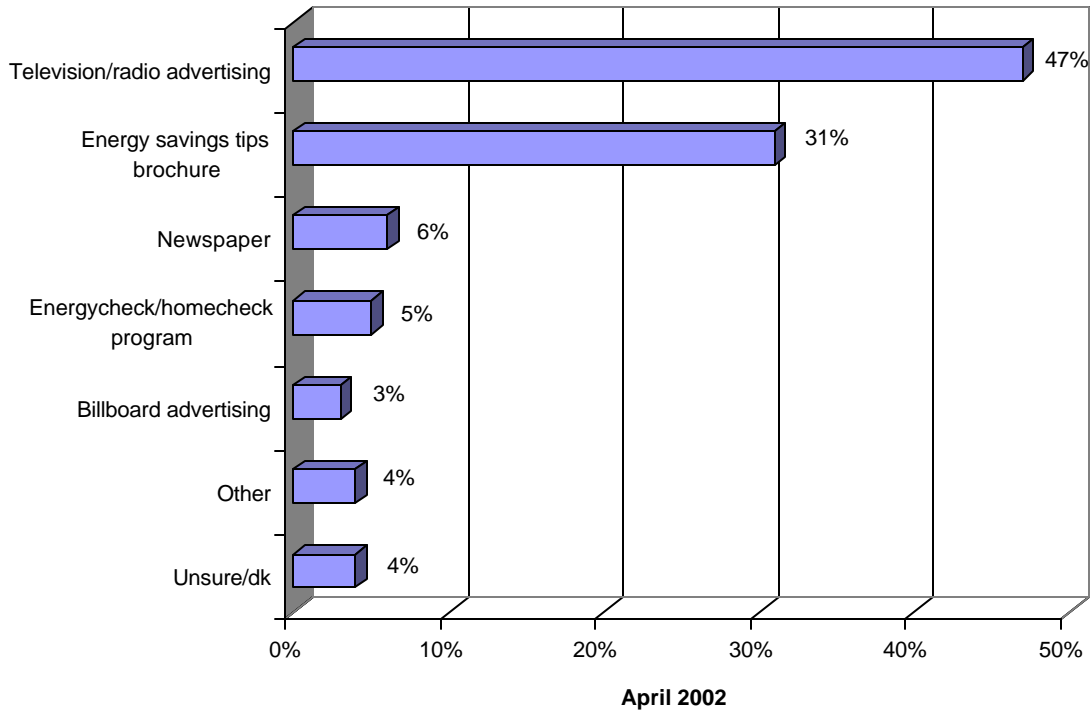
Question 28. In a couple of words, please sum up the main message that you heard or saw?



Note: multiple responses are allowed; therefore the above chart sum is greater than 100%.

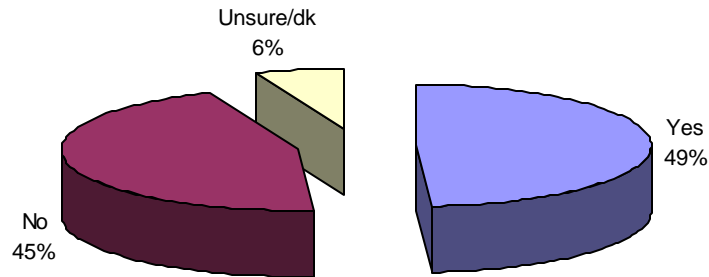
- More than three quarters (76%) of those residents who recall promotions on how they use electricity in their home indicate the main message they heard or saw was about conserving energy (38% of all respondents).

Question 29. In a couple of words, please describe the information source that you got the information from.



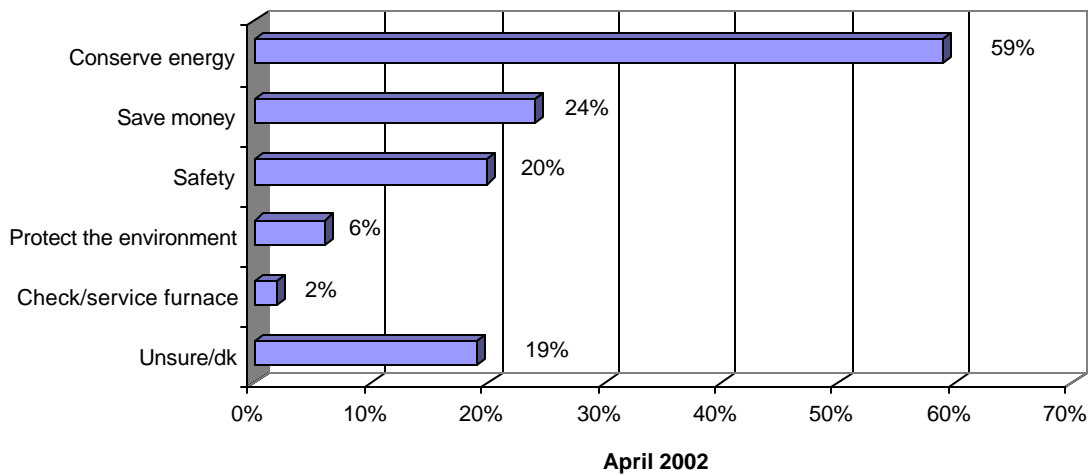
- Approximately one half (47%) of those residents who recall promotions on how they use electricity in their home indicate they heard the message through television and radio advertising (24% of all respondents) and 31% saw the message in an energy savings tips brochure (16% of all respondents).

Question 30. Have you heard about SaskPower’s “energycheck” or “homecheck” program?



- Approximately one half (49%) of Saskatchewan residents have heard about SaskPower’s “energycheck” or “homecheck” program.

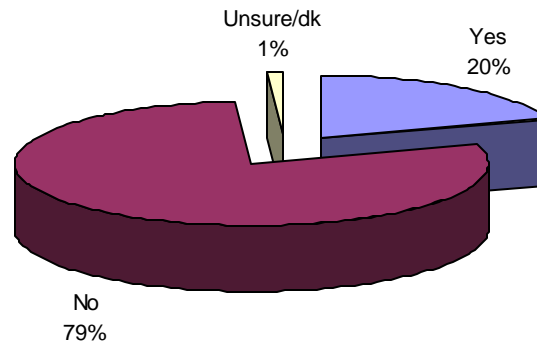
Question 31. What do you think the main message of the program is?



Note: multiple responses are allowed; therefore the above chart sum is greater than 100%.

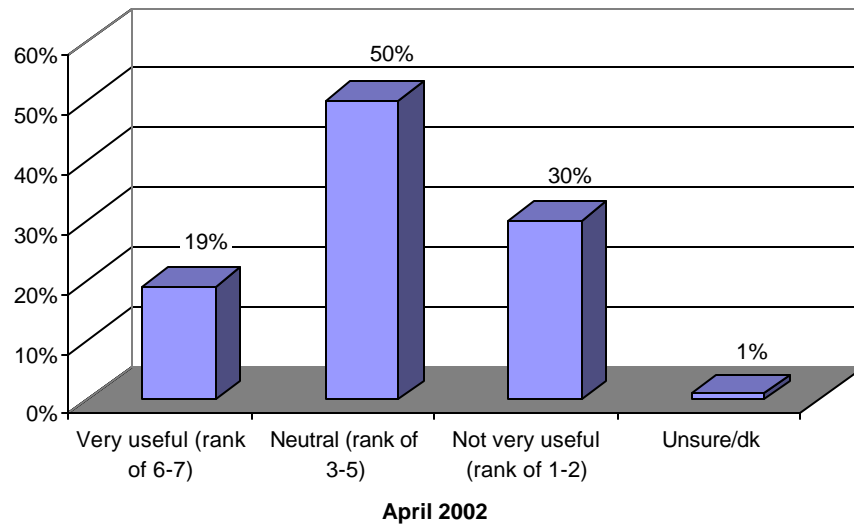
- The majority (59%) of those residents who have heard about SaskPower’s “energycheck” or “homecheck” program think the main message of the program is to conserve energy (29% of all respondents).

Question 32. Did you use the “energycheck” or “homecheck” program?



- One in five (20%) of those residents who have heard about SaskPower’s “energycheck” or “homecheck” program used the program (11% of all respondents).

Question 33. On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means you did not at all find it useful and 7 means you found it to be very useful, how useful did you find the “energycheck” program for changing the way you use electricity in your home?

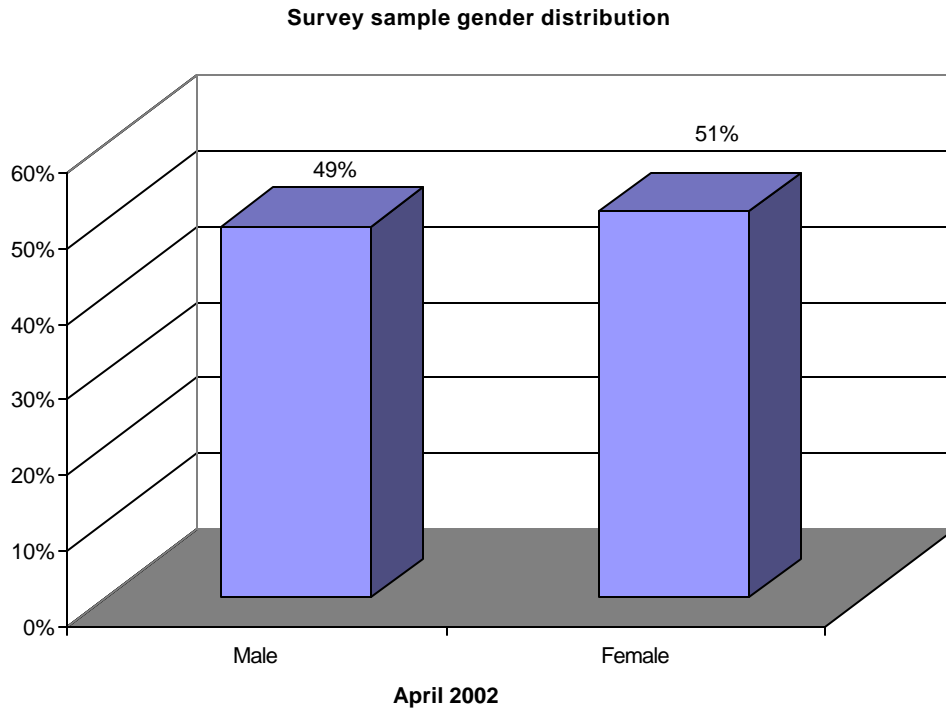


- Approximately 19% of those residents who used the “energycheck” or “homecheck” program found the program to be very useful (2% of all respondents).

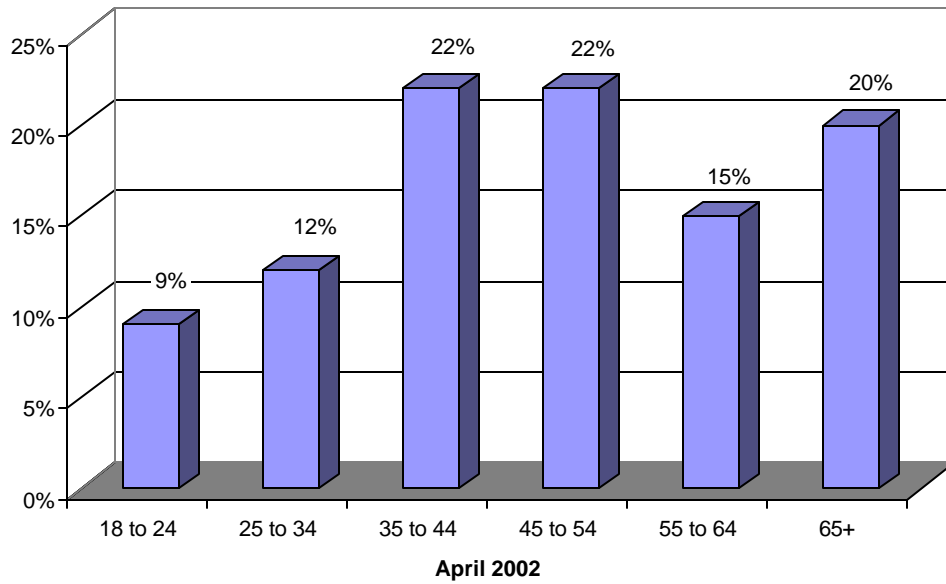
APPENDIX II SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

The omnibus public opinion sample frame is constructed to facilitate proportionate representation of various demographic characteristics evident within the province of Saskatchewan. This ensures that opinions of all the various types of residents in Saskatchewan are proportionately represented in the statistical measurements documented in this report. The demographic distributions from the survey sample generally parallel the province's actual population distributions, as measured by Statistics Canada census data.

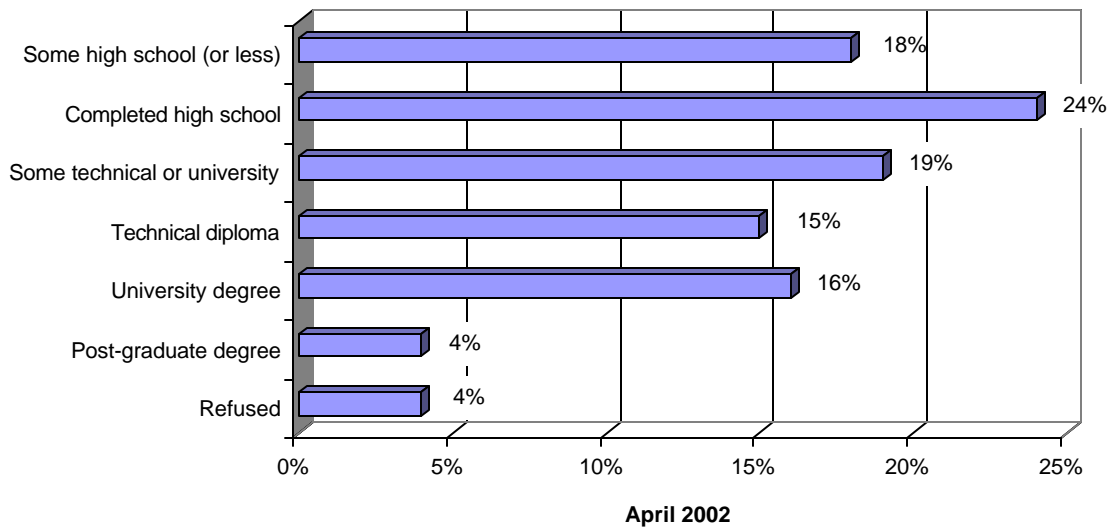
The omnibus survey sample size of 1,000 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error for the point estimates contained in this report of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.



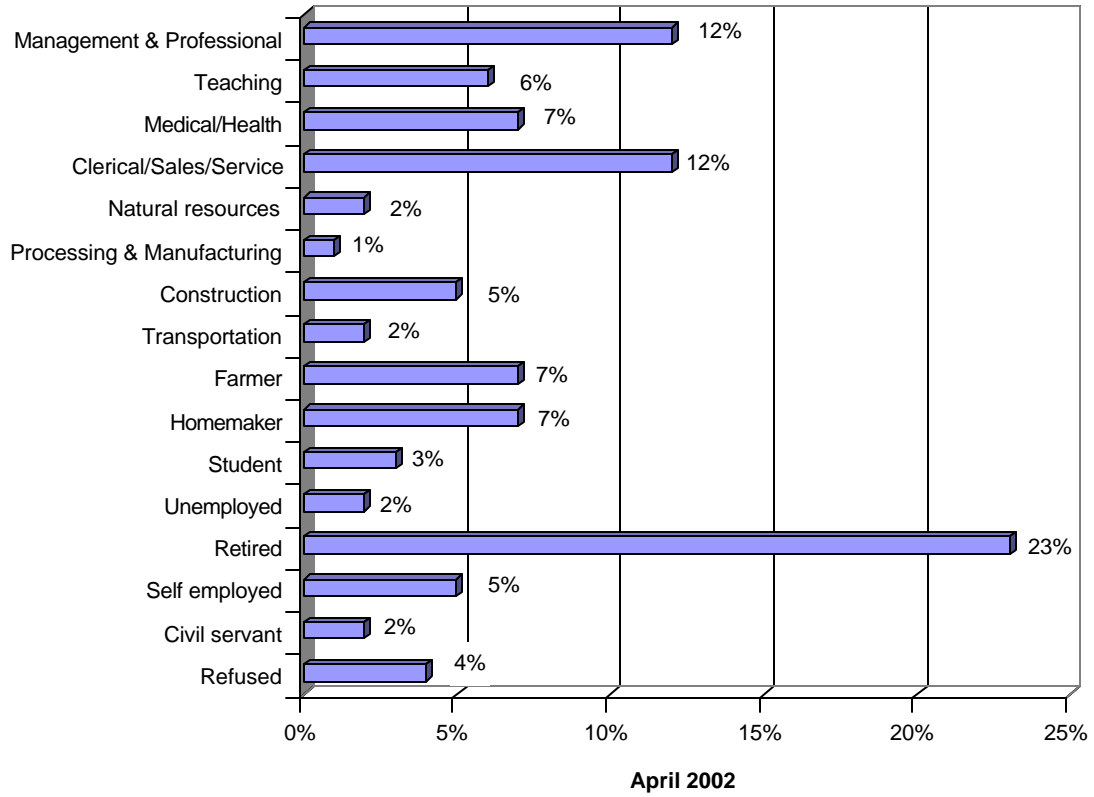
Survey sample age distribution



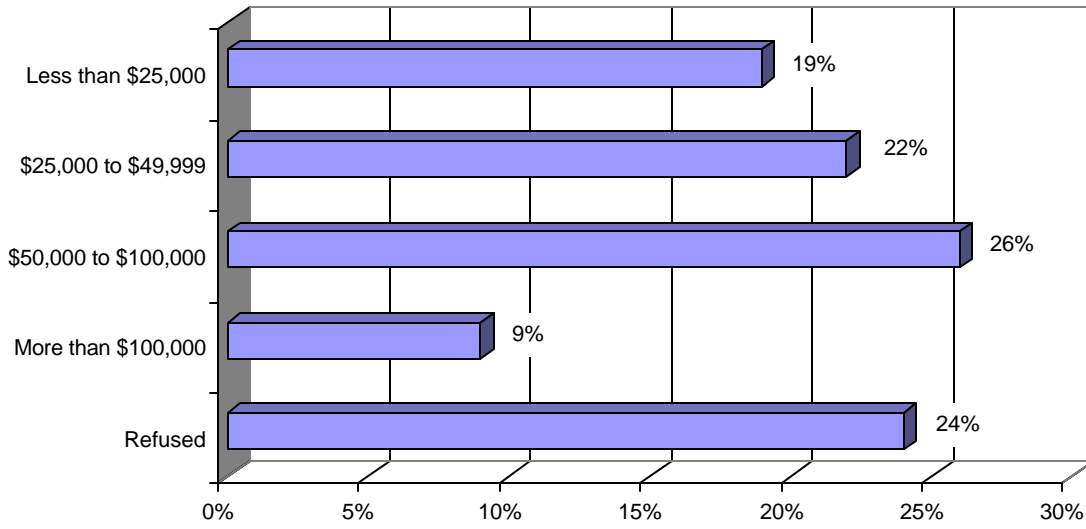
Survey sample education distribution



Survey sample occupation distribution

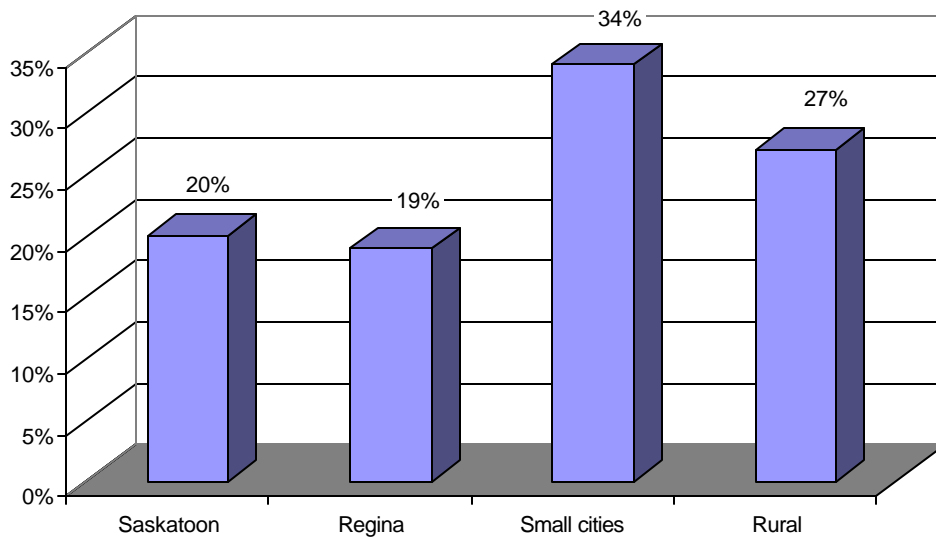


Survey sample income distribution



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Survey sample regional distribution



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