



Government of Saskatchewan

Public Opinion Polling

from January 1, 2003 – March 31, 2003

OMNIBUS
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

January 2003

Omnibus
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

Prepared for:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In January 2003, federal issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include health care, international issues and the potential war in Iraq, the economy, jobs and unemployment and federal taxes.
- Provincial issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include agriculture, health care, population loss, jobs and unemployment, the economy and provincial taxes.
- More than three quarters of Saskatchewan residents rank improving the quality of health care and providing education and job training for young people as the most important government tasks.
- Approximately two thirds of residents also give high rankings to the government tasks of helping create job opportunities for young people, building and repairing Saskatchewan highways and protecting the province's natural environment.
- Somewhat lower on the list of priorities for Saskatchewan residents are the government tasks of lower taxes and reducing the education portion of property taxes.
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents are aware of the government's income tax reduction initiatives.
- If provincial government revenues should increase owing to expansion of the provincial economy, a plurality of Saskatchewan residents select improving social programs such as education and health care as their preference from several options presented to them.
- The majority of residents think the Saskatchewan economy is currently getting better or staying about the same.
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents think the number of people employed in Saskatchewan in recent months has been increasing or staying about the same.
- The majority of residents think the quality of service from their public library system is generally excellent or good. Most people have utilized the services of their local library during the previous twelve months.

METHODOLOGY

Fast Consulting conducted the January 2003 public opinion survey for the Government of Saskatchewan with a representative sample of the Saskatchewan population. The January 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;
- economic development; and
- learning.

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 1,047 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 electronic lists provided by ASDE Survey Sampler, 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.

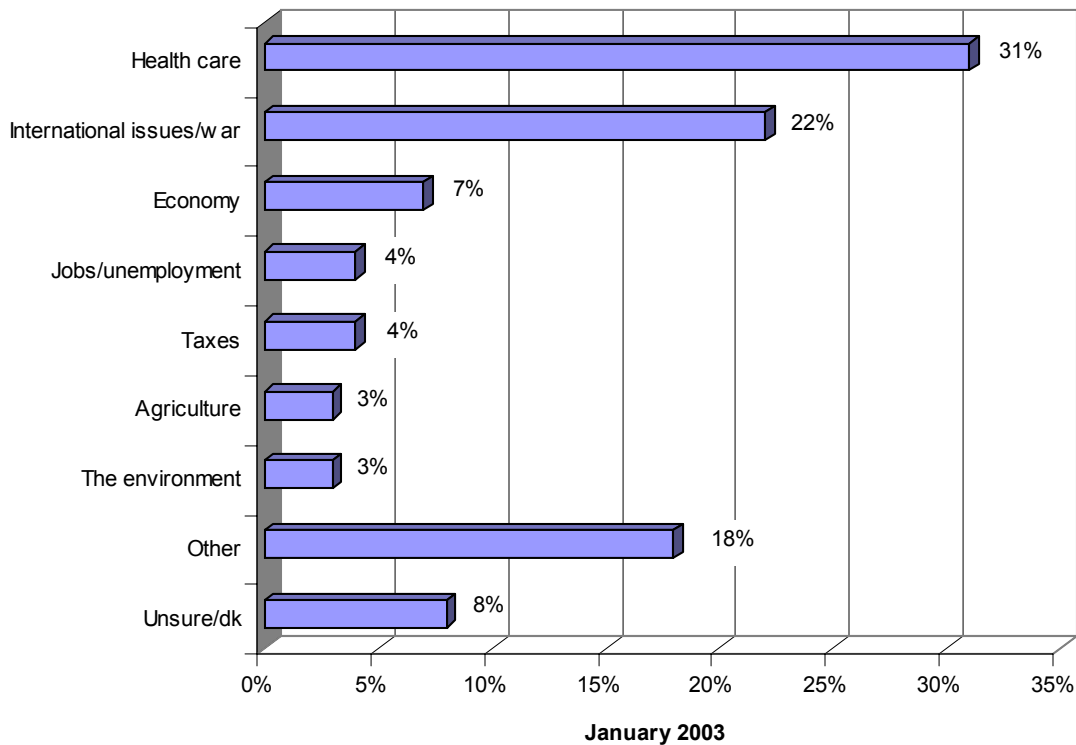
One thousand and forty seven residents of the province were interviewed between Tuesday, January 14 and Friday, January 24, 2003. Interviews were conducted by telephone at times that were appropriate and convenient for respondents - weekdays between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. and weekends between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. All interviews were conducted by Fast Consulting's in-house professional public opinion interviewers using our *Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI)* call centre.

The Omnibus survey sample size of 1,047 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error of plus or minus 3.0 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.

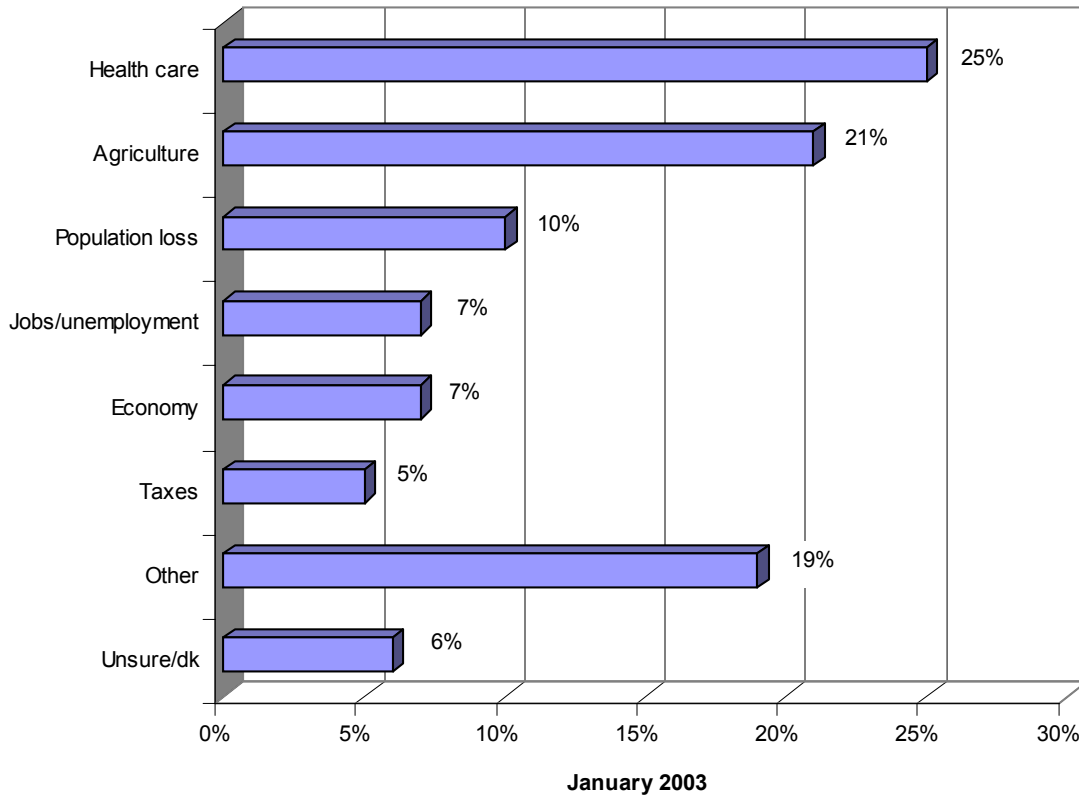
1.0 GENERAL ISSUES

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



- According to 31% of Saskatchewan residents, the most important issue facing Canada today is the health care system. Other important issues include international issues and possible war in Iraq (22%), the economy (7%), jobs and unemployment (4%), federal taxes (4%), agriculture (3%) and the environment (3%).
- Approximately 18% of residents are primarily concerned with 'other' issues such as the federal government in general (8%), social programs and welfare issues (2%), crime and poverty (2%), gun control laws (2%), Native issues (1%) and the federal debt (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 25% of Saskatchewan residents, is health care. Approximately 21% of residents are concerned primarily with agriculture, 10% with population loss, 7% with jobs and unemployment, 7% with the provincial economy and 5% with provincial taxes.
- Included among 'other' important issues identified by 19% of residents are the provincial government in general (5%), Native issues (3%), the environment (2%), the provincial debt (2%), education (1%), crime and poverty (1%) and highways and transportation (1%).

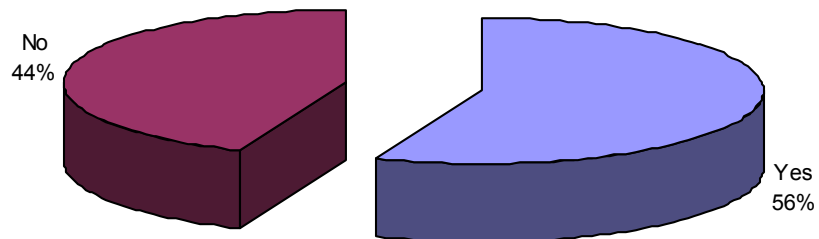
Question 3. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the most important and 1 being the least important, how important are the following government tasks?

	Valuable (rank of 4-5)
Improving the quality of health care	87%
Providing education and job training for young people	80%
Helping to create job opportunities for young people	72%
Building and repairing Saskatchewan highways	71%
Protecting our natural environment	68%
Lowering taxes	57%
Reducing the education portion of property tax	38%

- More than three quarters of Saskatchewan residents rank improving the quality of health care (87%) and providing education and job training for young people (80%) as the most important government tasks.
- Approximately two thirds of residents also give high rankings to the government tasks of helping create job opportunities for young people (72%), building and repairing Saskatchewan highways (71%) and protecting the province's natural environment (68%).
- Somewhat lower on the list of priorities for Saskatchewan residents are the government tasks of lower taxes (57%) and reducing the education portion of property taxes (38%).

The provincial government recently implemented the final phase of a three year income tax reduction program reducing personal income tax for all tax-paying residents of the province.

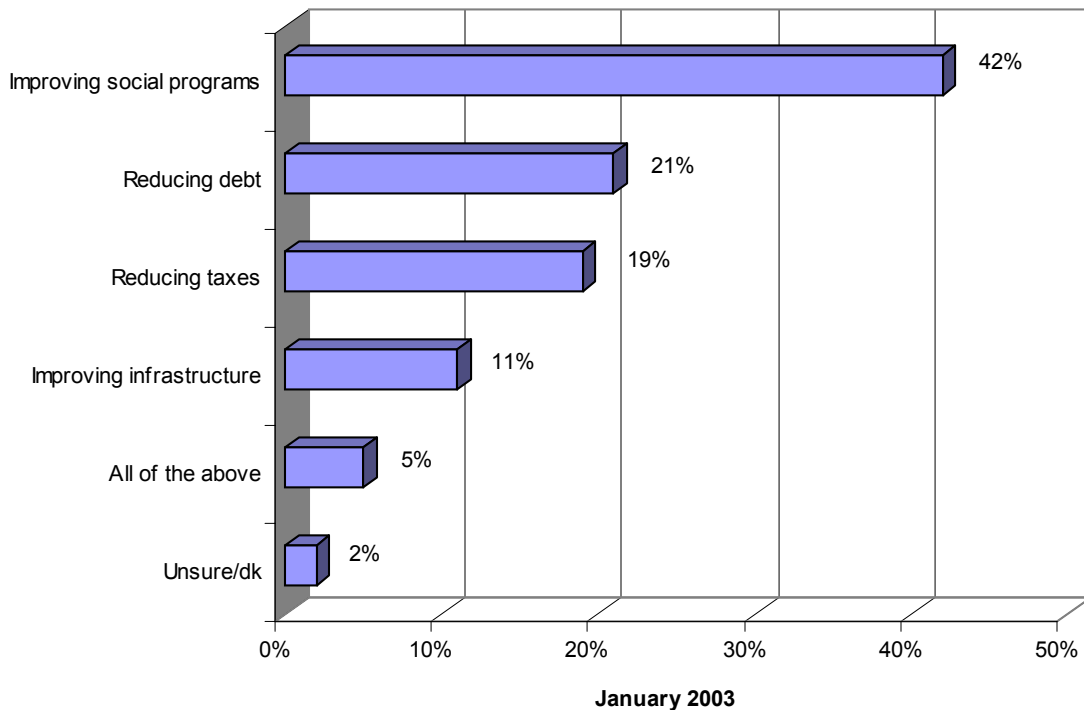
Question 4a. Are you aware of the government's income tax reduction initiatives?



- The majority (56%) of Saskatchewan residents are aware of the government's income tax reduction initiatives.

Question 4b. If provincial government revenues should increase owing to expansion of the provincial economy, which of the following government options would be your preference:

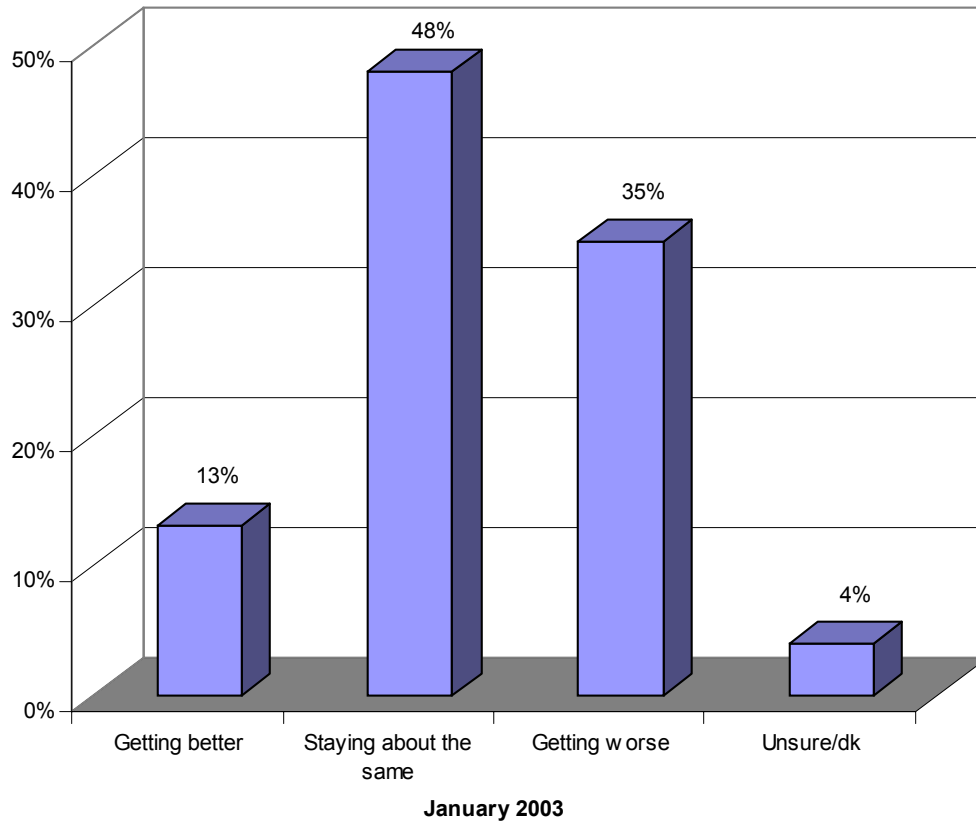
- 1) reducing taxes,
- 2) improving social programs such as education and health care,
- 3) improving infrastructure such as highways, water and sewer systems,
- 4) reducing debt and associated interest costs paid by the government



- If provincial government revenues should increase owing to expansion of the provincial economy, a plurality (42%) of residents select improving social programs such as education and health care as their preference of four options presented to them.
- Approximately 21% would prefer reduction to debt and associated interest costs paid by the government, 19% would prefer reducing taxes and 11% would prefer that improvements be made to infrastructure such as highways, water and sewer systems.

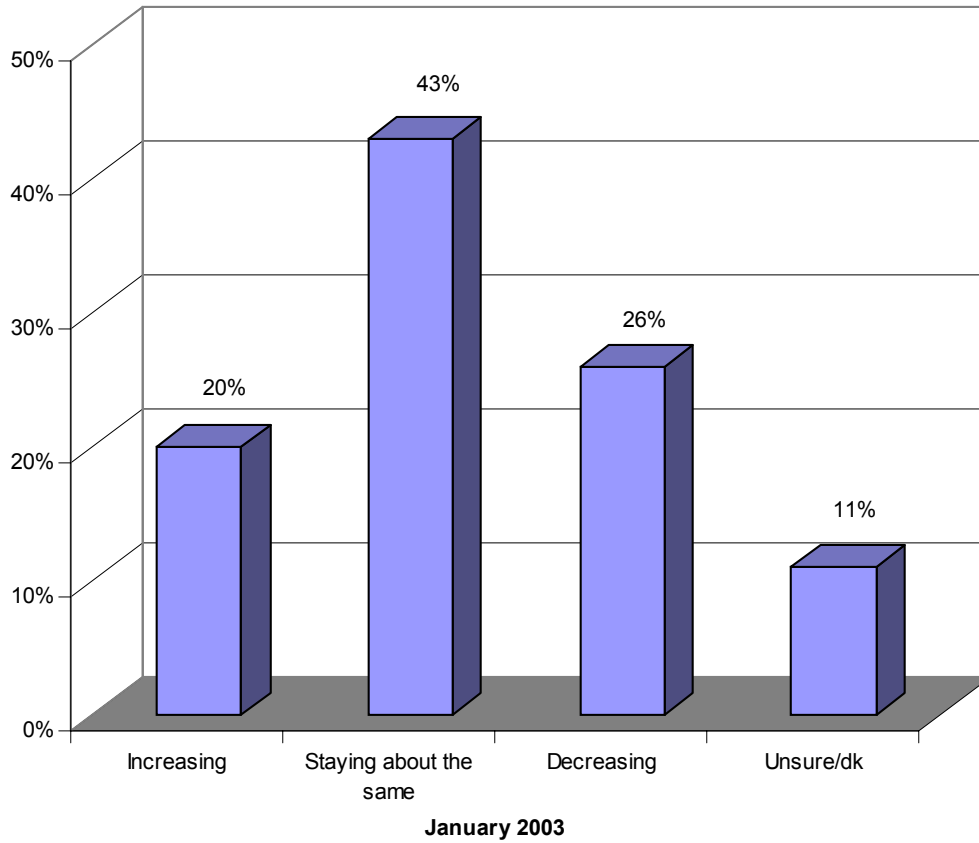
2.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Question 5. How do you feel about the Saskatchewan economy right now? In general, do you think the economy is getting better, getting worse or staying about the same?



- The majority (61%) of residents think the Saskatchewan economy is getting better or staying about the same.

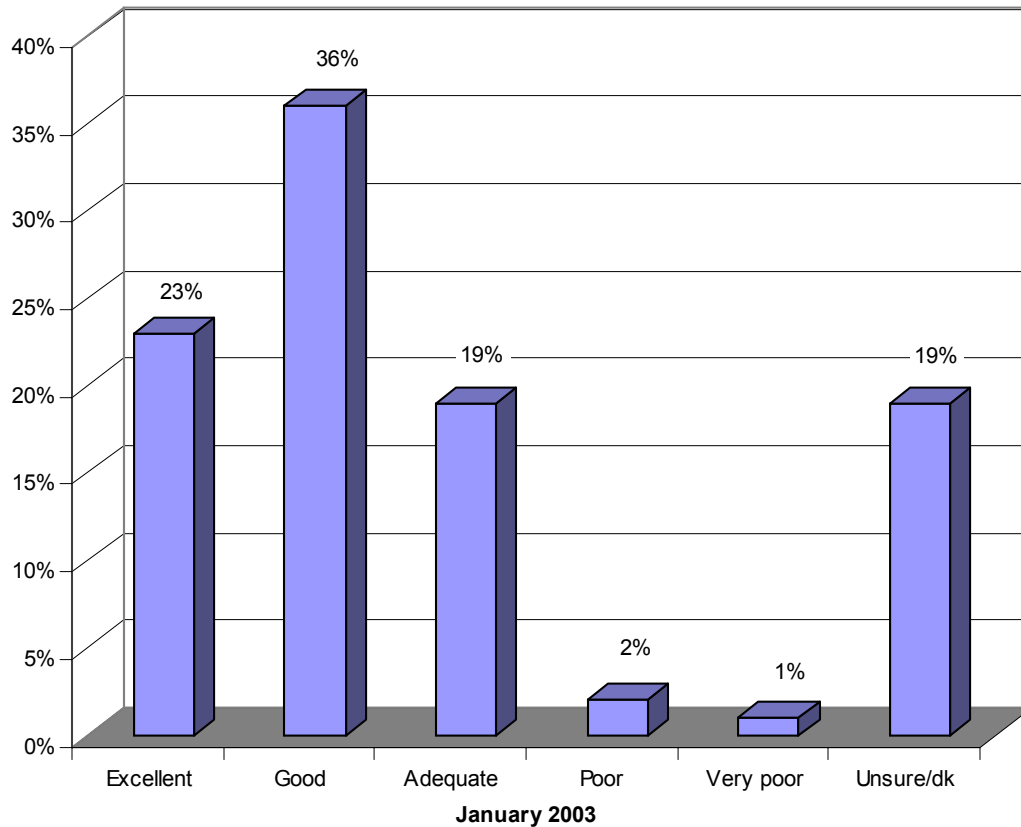
Question 6. Do you think the number of people employed in Saskatchewan during recent months has been increasing, decreasing or staying about the same?



- The majority (63%) of Saskatchewan residents think the number of people employed in Saskatchewan in recent months has been increasing or staying about the same.

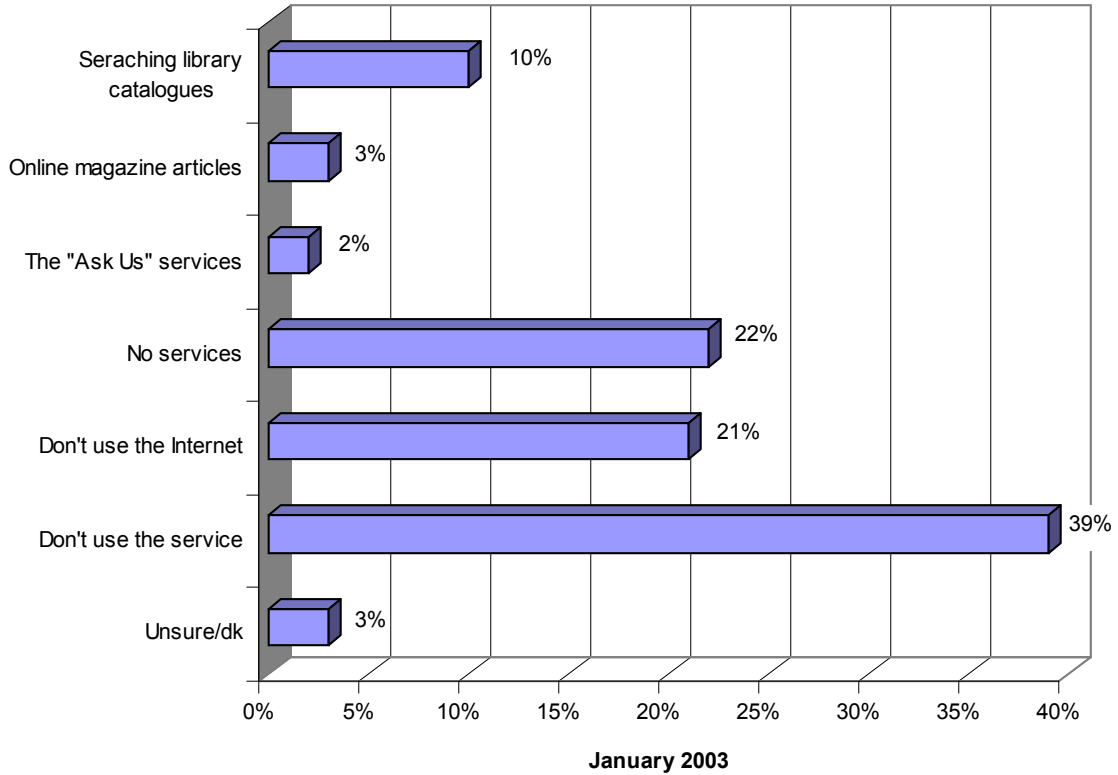
3.0 LEARNING

Question 7. Do you think the quality of service from your public library system is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



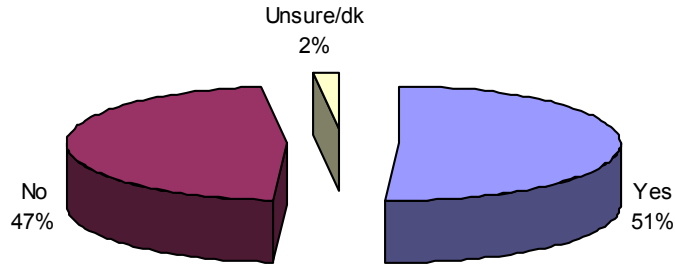
- The majority (59%) of Saskatchewan residents think the quality of service from their public library system is generally excellent or good.

Question 8. What library services have you or your family used over the Internet?



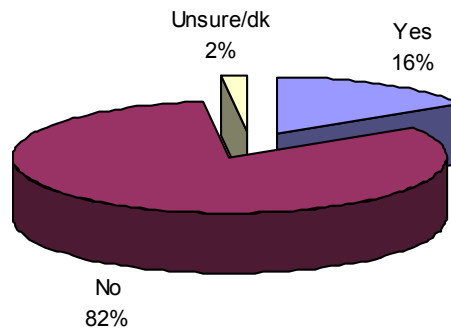
- Approximately 10% of Saskatchewan residents have searched library catalogues over the Internet.

Question 9. Over the past 12 months have you borrowed library materials from your local library?



- The majority (51%) of Saskatchewan residents have borrowed library materials from their local library in the past 12 months.

Question 10. Over the past 12 months have you borrowed library materials from a library outside your community?

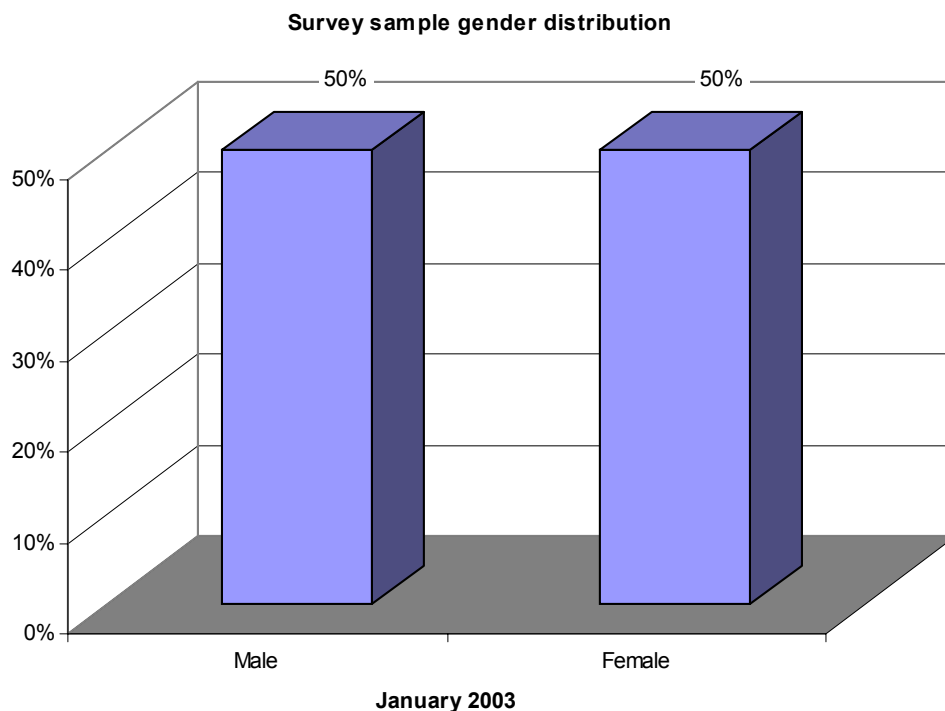


- Approximately 16% of Saskatchewan residents have borrowed library materials from a library outside their community in the past 12 months.

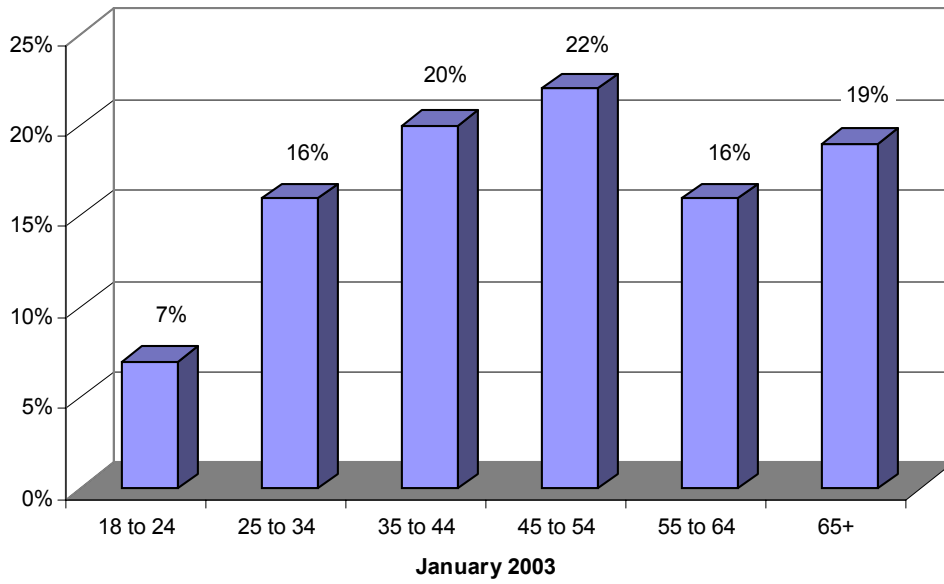
APPENDIX II SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

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.

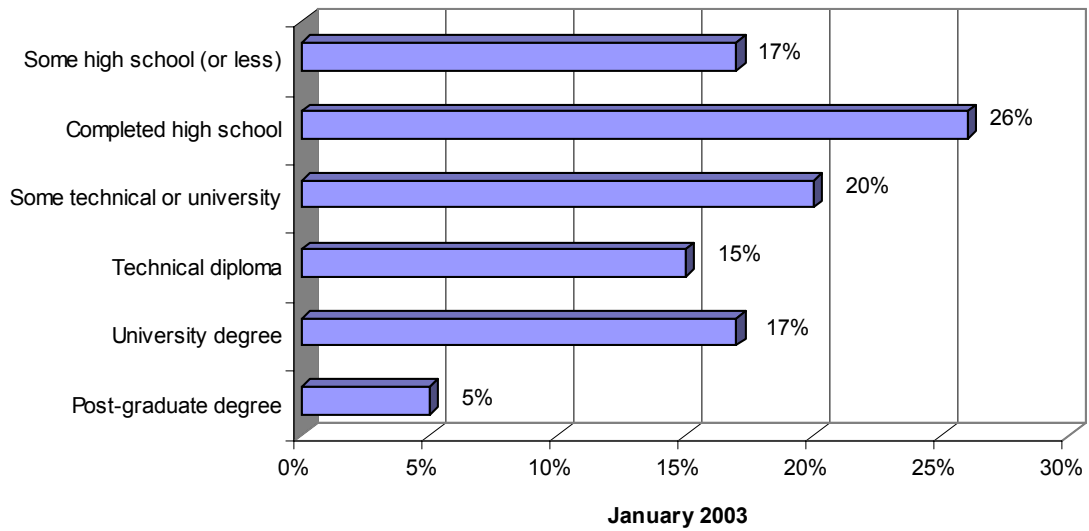
The omnibus survey sample size of 1,047 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error for the point estimates contained in this report of plus or minus 3.0 percentage points.



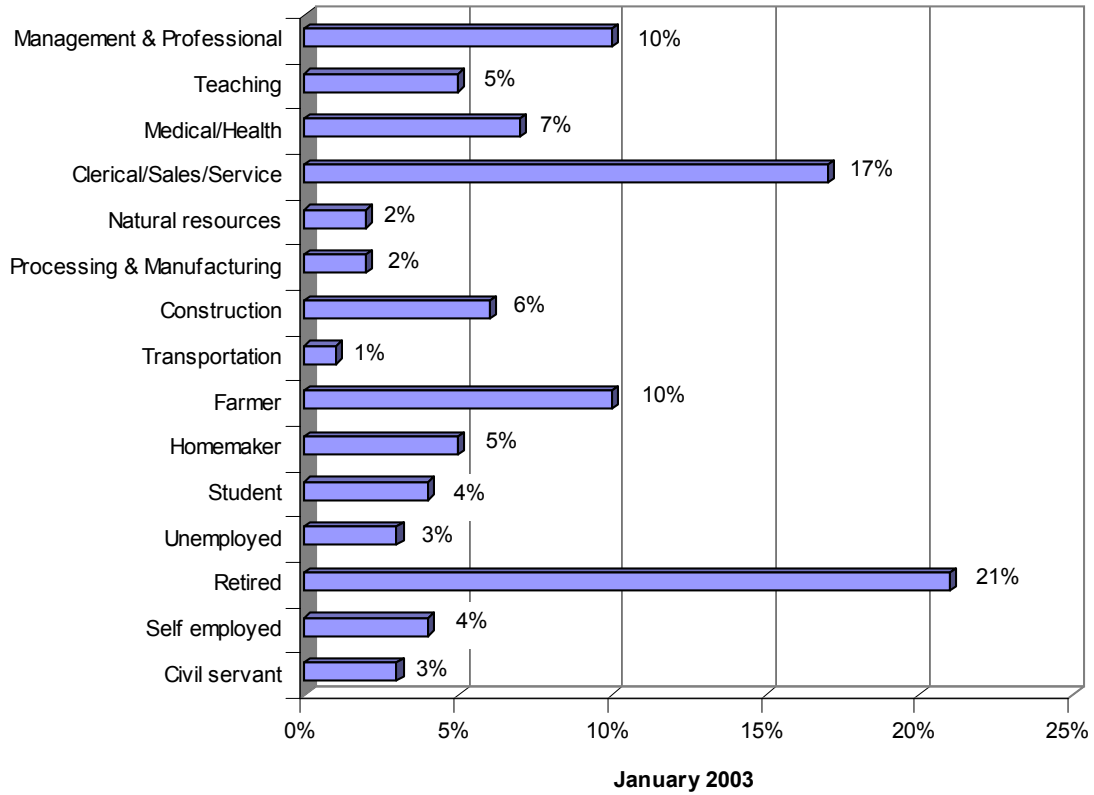
Survey sample age distribution



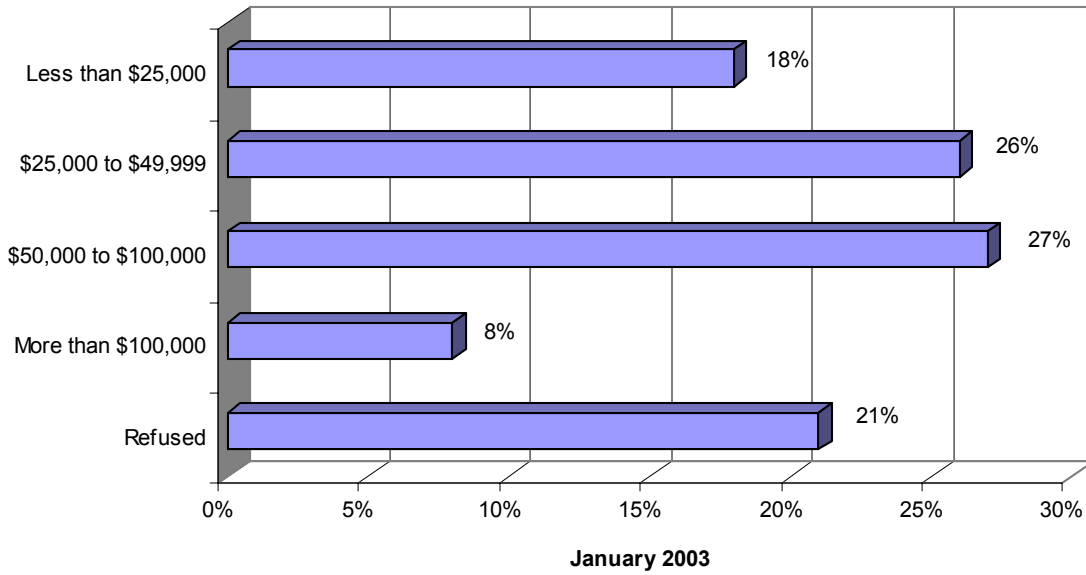
Survey sample education distribution



Survey sample occupation distribution



Survey sample income distribution



Survey sample regional distribution

