

# Introduction

## Objective

The objective of this poll was to query a sample of Saskatchewan residents on issues identified by Saskatchewan Executive Council.

## Methodology

Interviews were conducted across Saskatchewan with respondents aged 18 or older in households selected regionally at random by computer. All fieldwork was done by telephone from Sigma's call centre between January 12 and January 19, 2004.

A total of 1007 interviews were completed. The results from a sample of this size can be expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

All the queries were supplied by Saskatchewan Executive Council and used verbatim. Some are repeats from polls that have been conducted regularly over several years, in ongoing monitoring of issues and trends.

## Cautions

Interpreting the results in this report should be done with the following cautionary considerations:

- Sample surveys provide estimates of the prevalence of the measured factors in the total population from which the sample is drawn. The estimates are statistically reliable within the ranges indicated, at the 95% level of confidence. This means that the actual prevalence of the factor could be greater or lesser than the estimate, by the amount of the margin of error. It also means that 5% of the time, the estimate can be expected to differ from reality by more than the margin of error. Results from sample surveys should therefore be treated as contributing to knowledge, but not as defining it precisely.
- While polling results for the entire sample are statistically reliable within the range indicated, results for sub-sets of the sample will have a larger margin of error because they are based on smaller numbers. They should be treated with more caution.
- Polls are "snapshot" approximations of reality. Subject to the foregoing considerations, they can be expected to reflect reality validly, within the indicated ranges, at the time they are conducted. Opinions change. It is important to bear in mind that a single poll cannot describe a trend.
- Indicators from the sample can be projected to estimate the prevalence of the measured factor in the total population from which the sample was drawn. They cannot be interpreted as describing any other population.

## Highlights

- Health care is once again the top-rated national issue.
- Within the province, the top-rated issue is economy-population, followed by agriculture. This sequence reverses a pattern common in past polls.
- Highways are rated at about the same as they were over three years ago by a four in 10 plurality. Among those indicating a change, a worsening was more commonly found than an improvement.
- Double-laning of highways is a strong choice for high priority at both the provincial and national levels.
- Safety is deemed a high priority for the highway system. More respondents indicated they feel safe on Saskatchewan highways than feel unsafe.
- Saskatchewan schools and post-secondary education all received strong ratings.
- Library services are highly rated.
- Safe drinking water is deemed to be available in Saskatchewan by large majorities. A smaller majority would be willing to pay higher prices for water to obtain required improvements.
- SaskTel enjoys the strongest profile of a set of companies in community affairs, and was deemed the most prominent company in 2003 Grey Cup events.

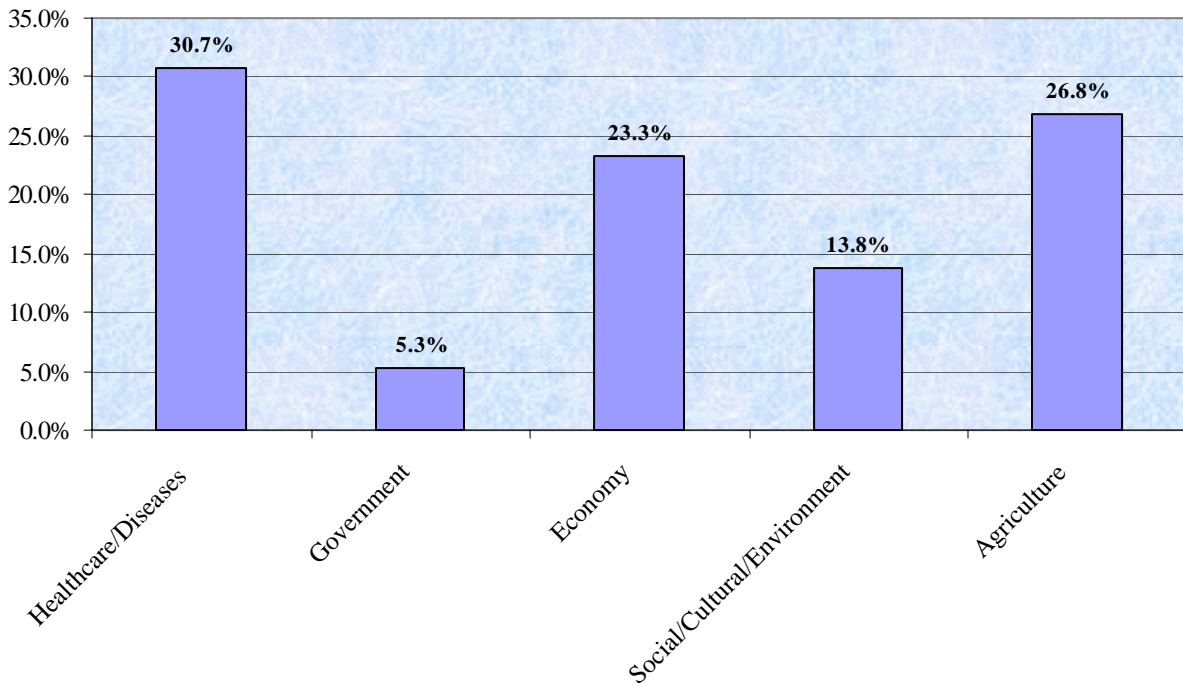
# FINDINGS

## SECTION A: Executive Council General Issues

### A1. What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?

Health care has returned to its customary first ranking as the issue most often deemed important by respondents. Agriculture and the economy follow, though agriculture has risen to second, at 26.8%, up from the 18.1% level it achieved in the September omnibus (which was the last omnibus poll conducted.)

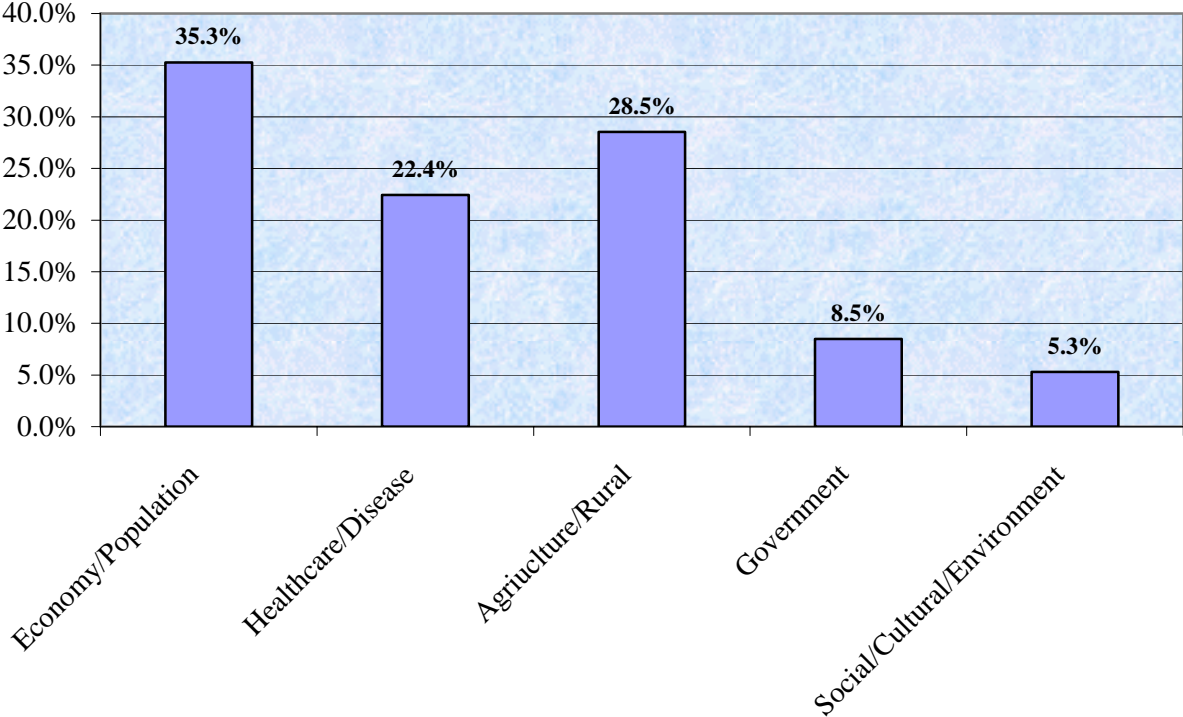
A1. What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?



## A2. What do you think is the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan today?

At marginally more than one respondent in three, the proportion of respondents choosing economy/population as the top issue for Saskatchewan remains much as it was in the September poll. The agriculture/rural category has receded from the September level of 35.5%, and healthcare/diseases has risen from 14.7%.

A2. What do you think is the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan today?



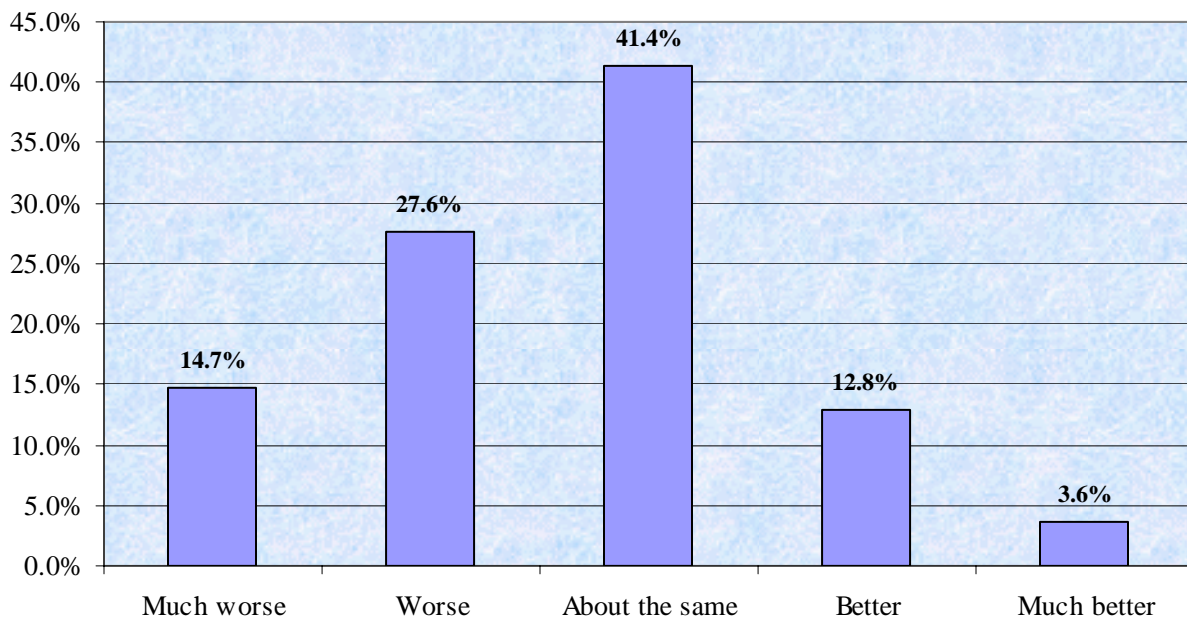
## SECTION B: Highways & Transportation

**B1. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is "much worse" and 5 is "much better", how would you rate the overall condition of the provincial highway system in the last three years?**

While a plurality of respondents indicated the provincial highway system is about the same, and a majority finds it the same or better, those who indicate it has worsened outweigh those who indicate improvement by nearly three to one. Further, those who hold views at either extreme are heavily weighted to the negative, by a ratio of five to one.

The mean level of response on the one to five scale is a sub-par 2.63.

B1. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is "much worse" and 5 is "much better", how would you rate the overall condition of the provincial highway system in the last three years?

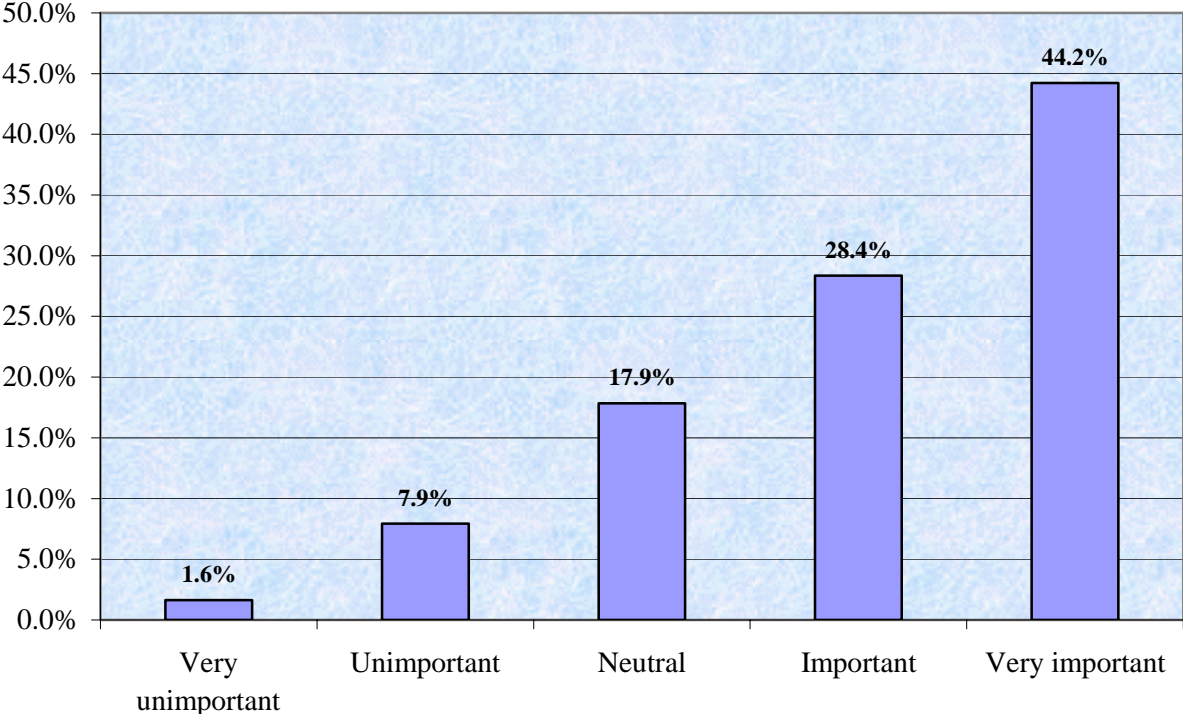


### B2a. Importance rating: Twinning / double-laning highways

Double-laning highways is deemed very important by a large plurality, the strongest importance rating given any of the highways issues tested in this poll. Over seven in ten respondents give double-laning a positive rating for importance.

The mean level of importance is exceptionally high at 4.06.

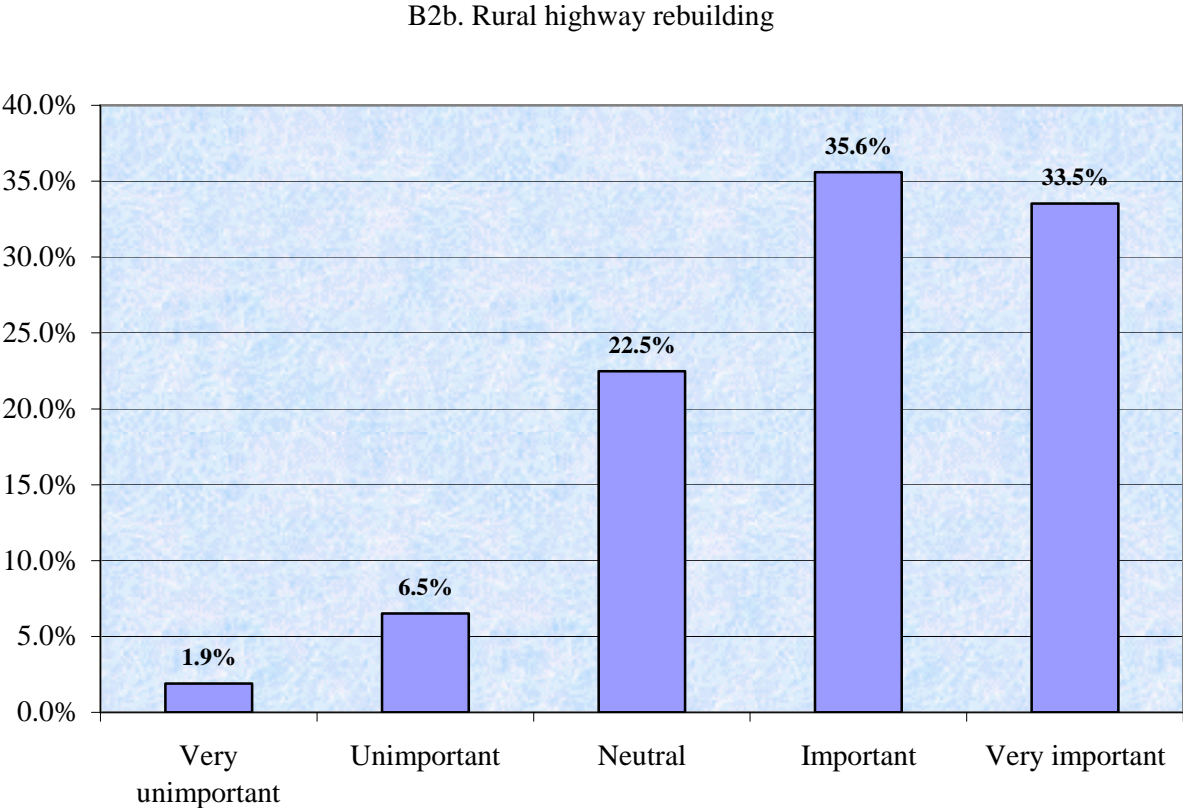
B2a. Twinning/double laning highways



### B2b. Importance rating: Rural highway rebuilding

Rebuilding rural highways is also deemed important by a large majority (69.1%), though this view is not held as strongly as it is regarding double-laning.

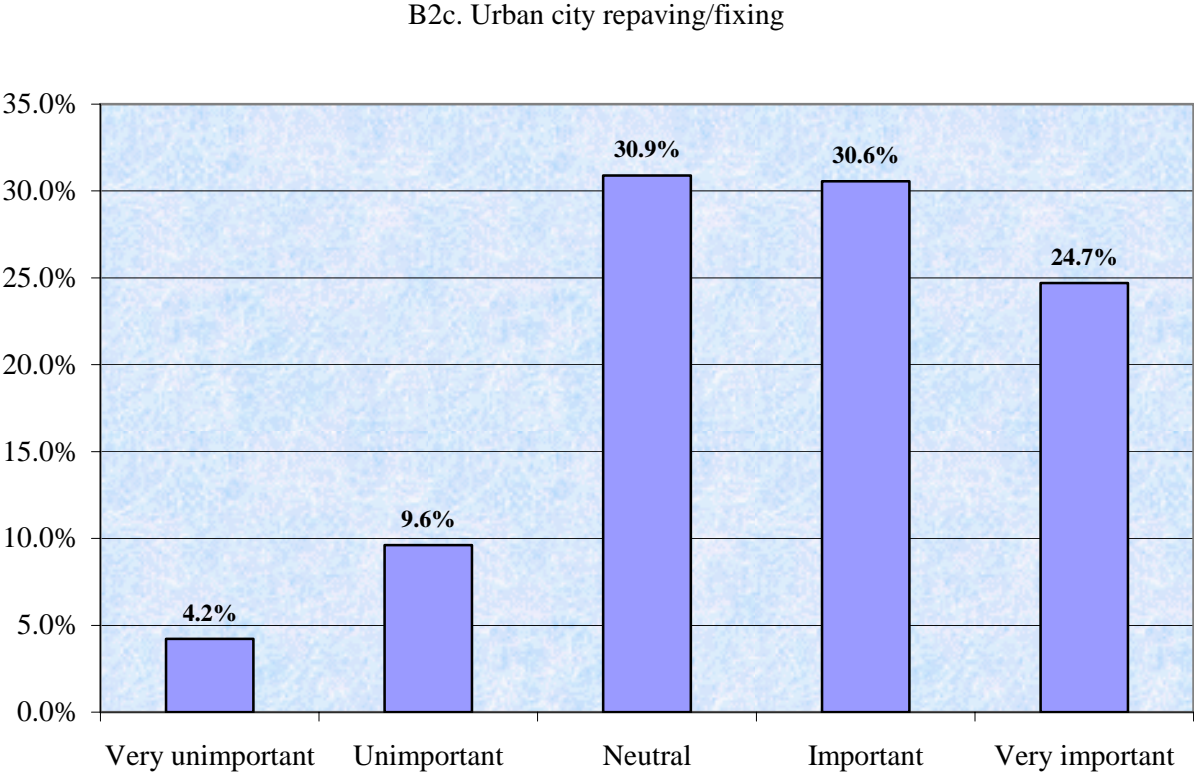
The mean level of importance is quite high at 3.92.



### B2c. Importance rating: Urban city repaving/fixing

Repaving and fixing of urban roads is deemed important by a majority of 55.3%. It also shows the largest proportion of respondents who do not feel strongly either way on this matter.

The mean level of importance is 3.62.



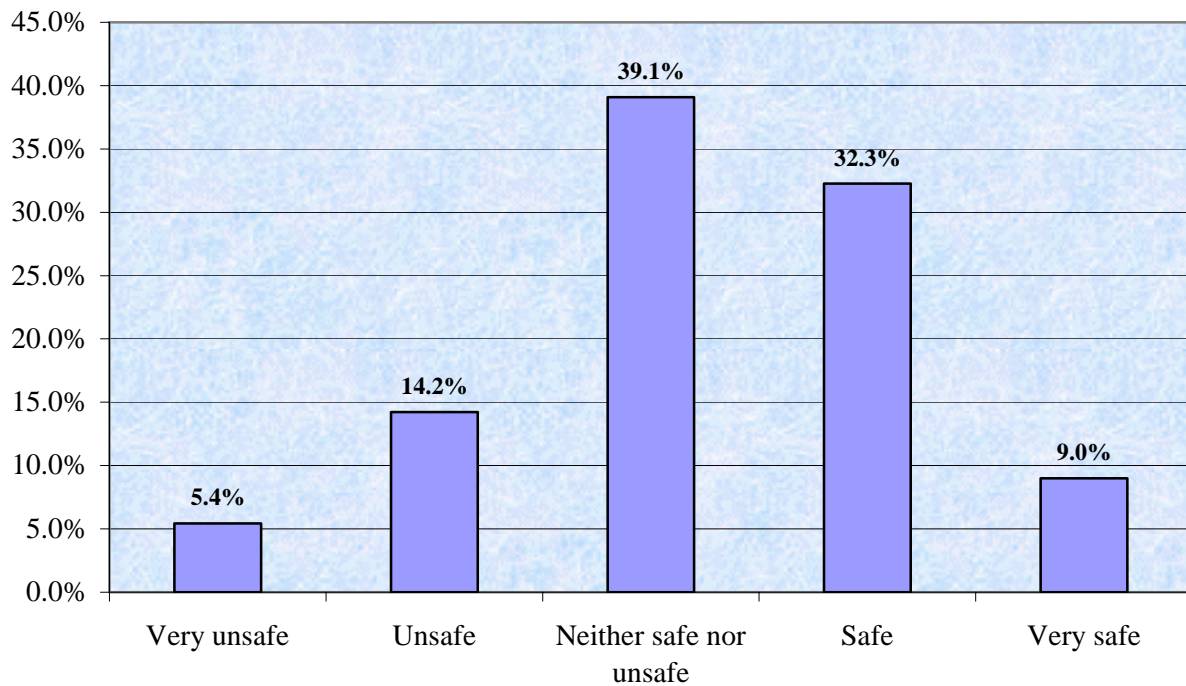


**B3. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means "very unsafe" and 5 means "very safe", how safe do you feel when driving on Saskatchewan highways?**

The largest number of respondents chose the mid-point response on this scale. Those who feel safe, at four in ten, outnumber those who feel unsafe by two to one.

The mean response level is 3.25.

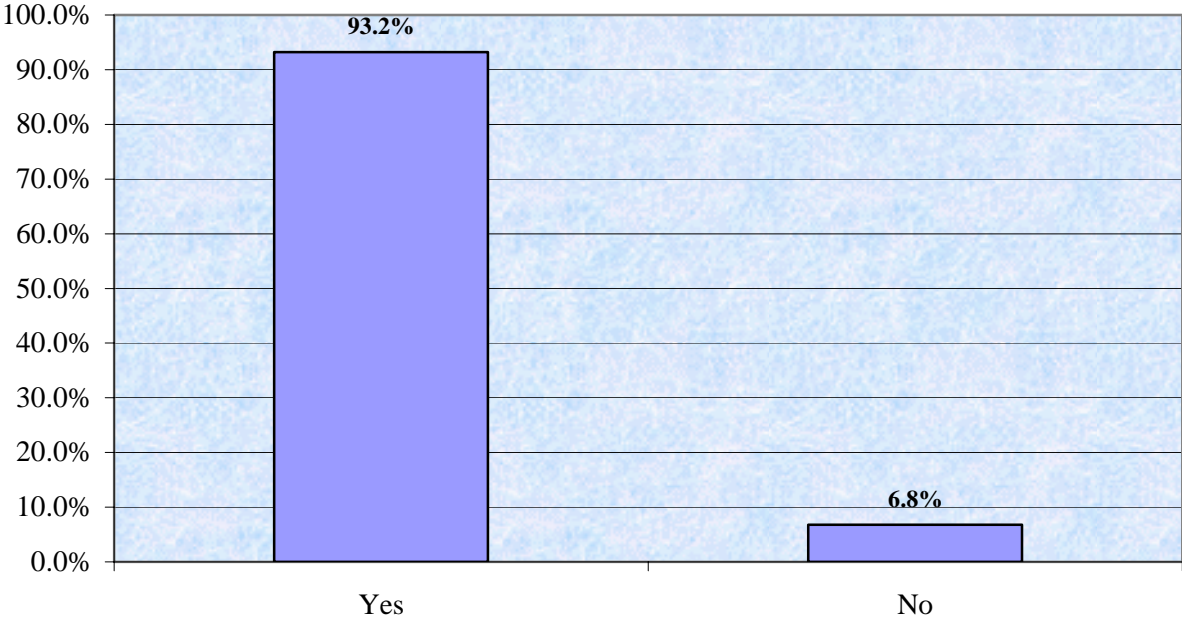
B3. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means "very unsafe" and 5 means "very safe", how safe do you feel when driving on Saskatchewan highways?



**B4. Recently the federal government has talked about twinning the national highway system from coast to coast. Do you think the federal government should pay for twinning the national highway?**

A massive majority indicated the federal government should pay for twinning the national highway.

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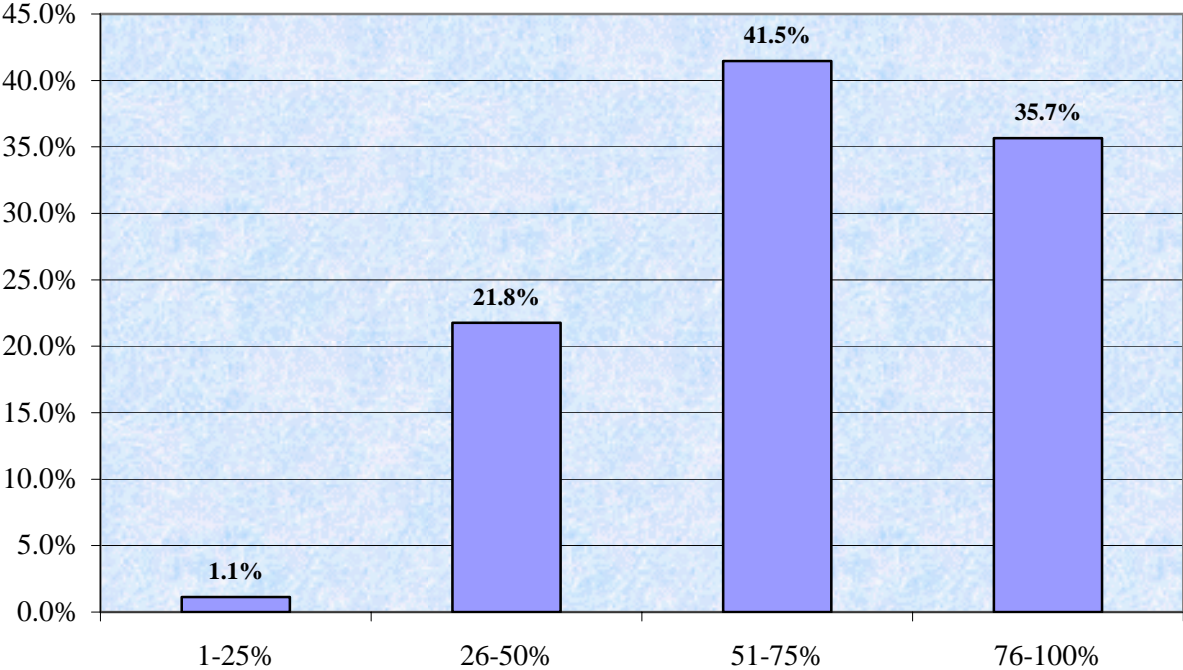


**B4a. What percentage should the federal government pay?**

The largest group of respondents indicated the federal government should pay between half and three-quarters of the cost of twinning. Another one third indicated the appropriate federal share would fall between three-quarters and full cost.

The average federal government contribution level recommended by respondents is 72.2%.

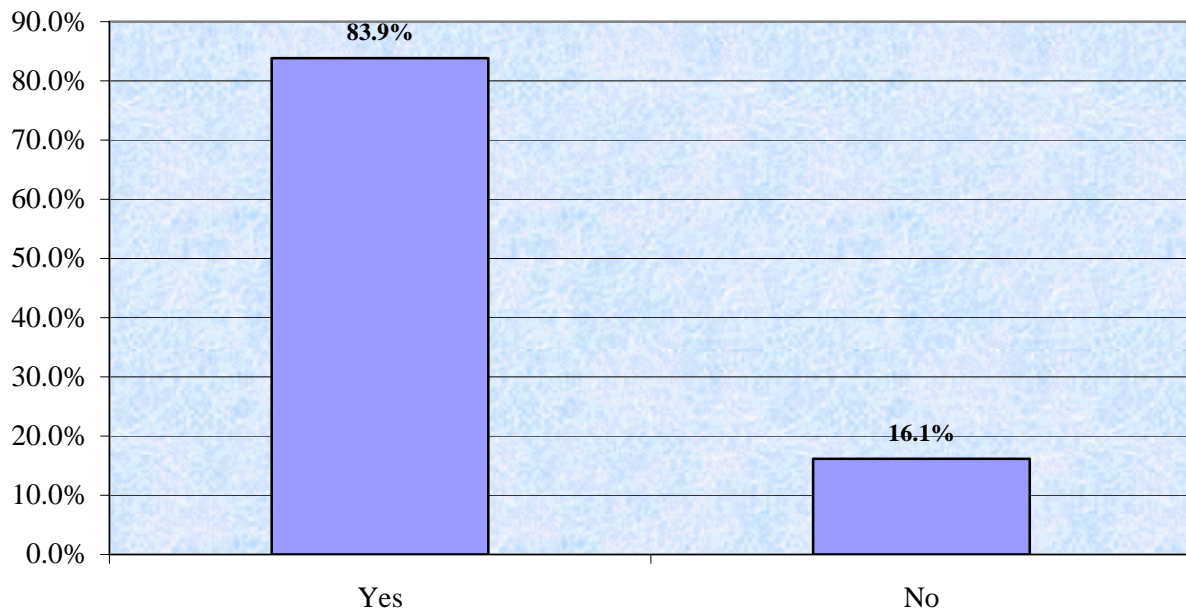
B4a. What percentage should the federal government pay?



## B5. Do you think twinning our national highway system is important to people in Saskatchewan?

A strong majority indicated a view that twinning the national highway system is important to people in the province. This proportion exceeds the proportion giving an important or very important rating to intra-province twinning (72.6%).

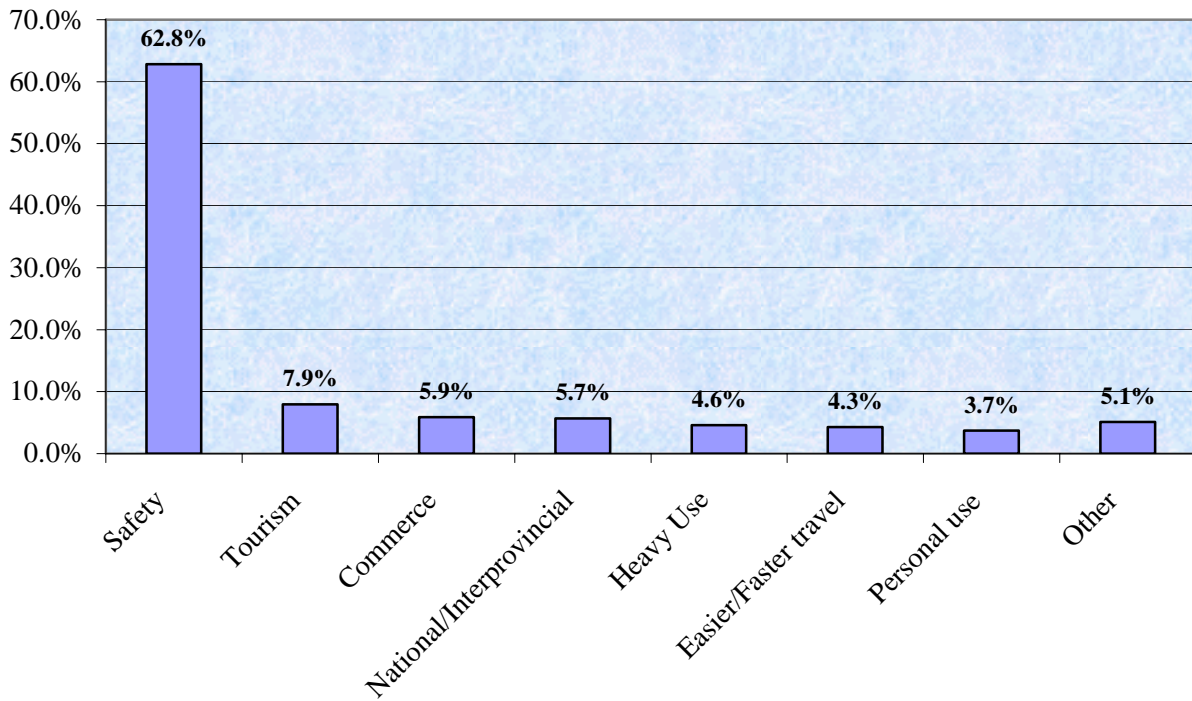
B5. Do you think twinning our national highway system is important to people in Saskatchewan?



## B5a. What is the main reason you said Yes?

Safety is far and away the dominant consideration among the 83.9% of respondents who feel twinning the national highway system is important to people in Saskatchewan.

B5a. What is the main reason you said Yes?

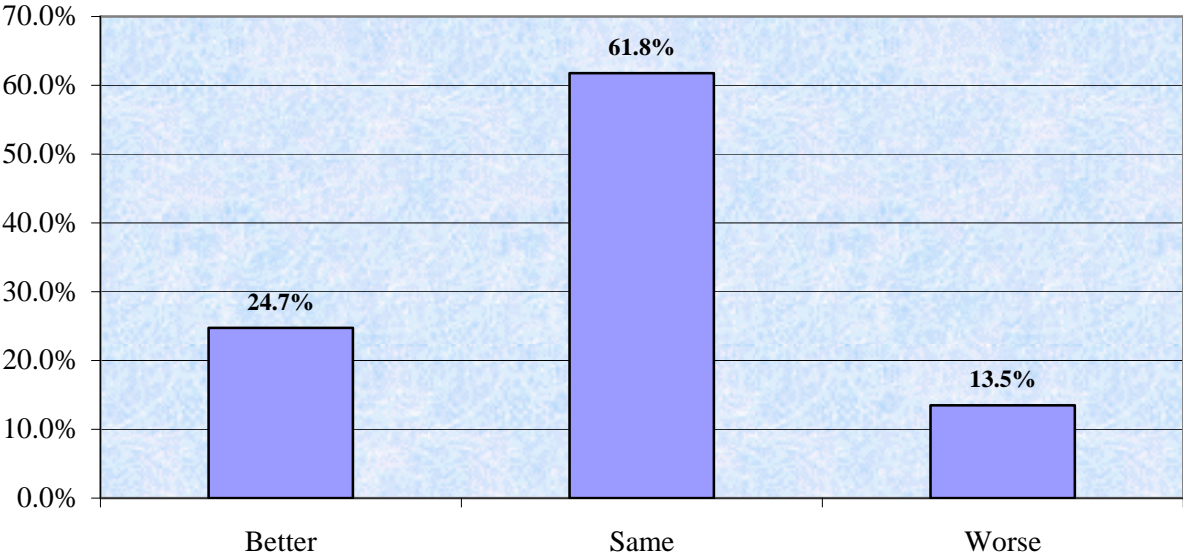


# SECTION C: Learning

## C1. Compared to the rest of the country, do you think the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system in Saskatchewan is better, the same or worse?

A large majority indicated the province’s schools are the same as those elsewhere in the country. Among the four in ten who felt Saskatchewan schools are exceptional, opinion tends to the favourable, with nearly double the number of respondents indicating Saskatchewan’s schools are better, than indicating they are worse.

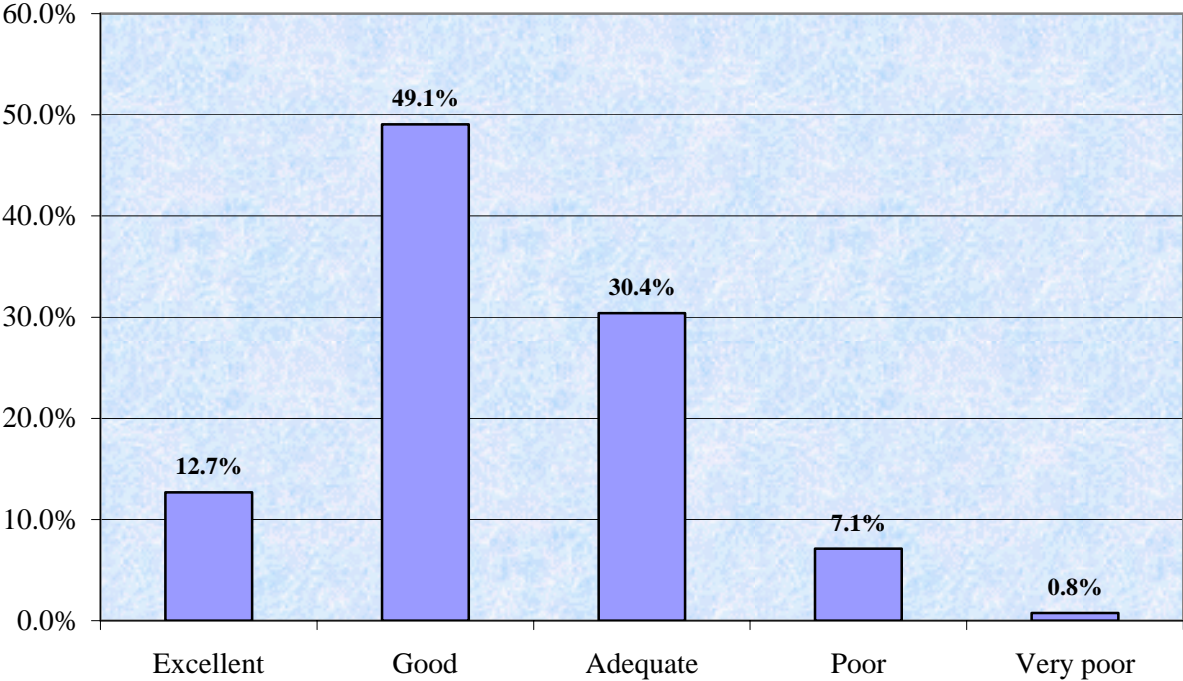
C1. Compared to the rest of the country, do you think the Kindergarten to grade 12 education system in Saskatchewan is better, the same or worse?



**C2. Do you think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?**

With respect to elementary schools, the view is strongly positive. Over six in ten indicated Saskatchewan elementary education is good or excellent, and the ratio of those choosing “excellent” is many time larger than the negligible number who find them “very poor.”

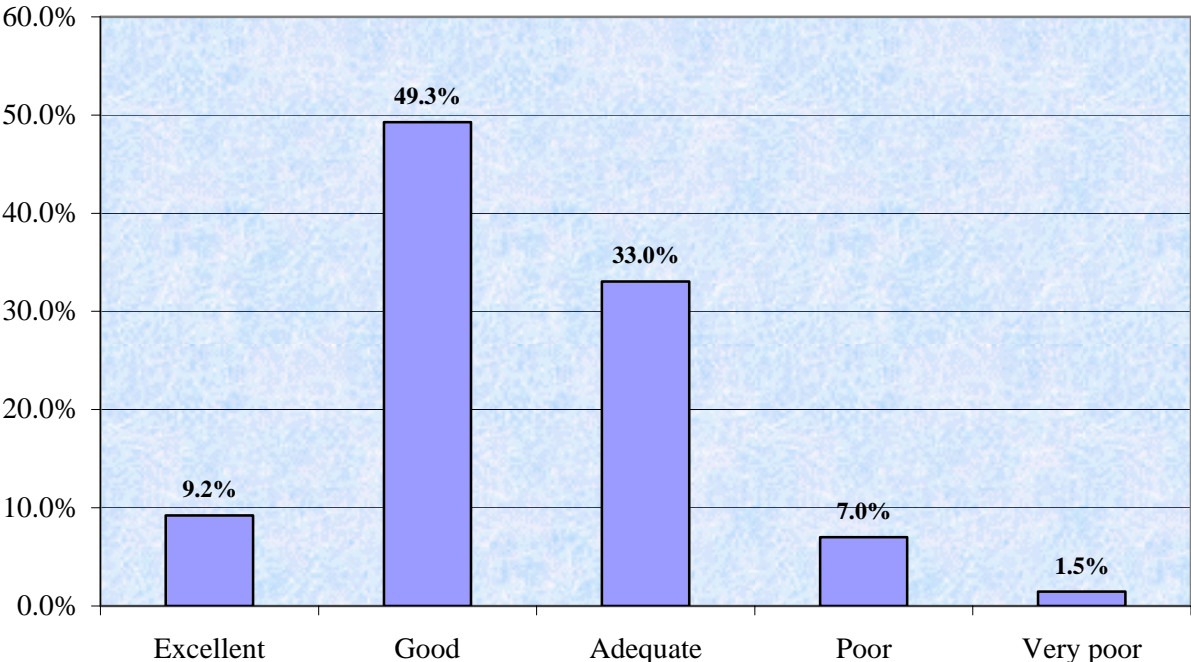
C2. Do you think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



**C3. Do you think that the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?**

The ratings given to Saskatchewan high school education are largely similar to those given to the elementary schools – strongly positive.

C3. Do you think that the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?

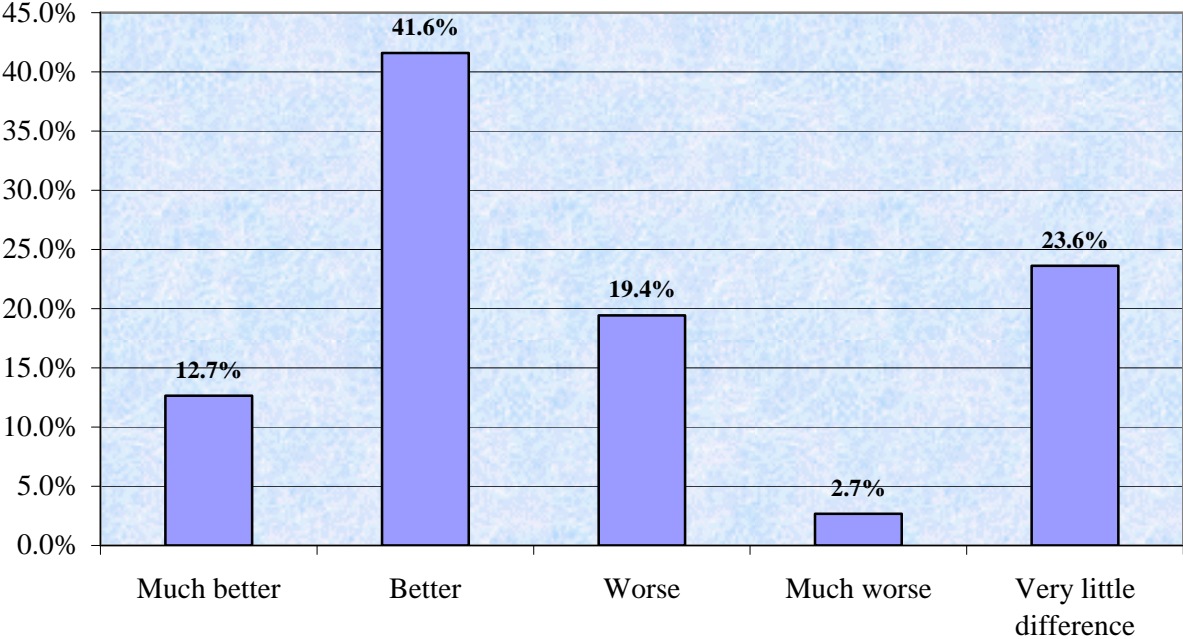




**C4. When you think of your own school education, do you believe students' education today is much better, better, worse, much worse or very little different compared to yours?**

A majority of respondents indicated today's education is an improvement over the education the respondent received in the past. The ratio of those indicating improvement to those indicating decline is 2.5 to one.

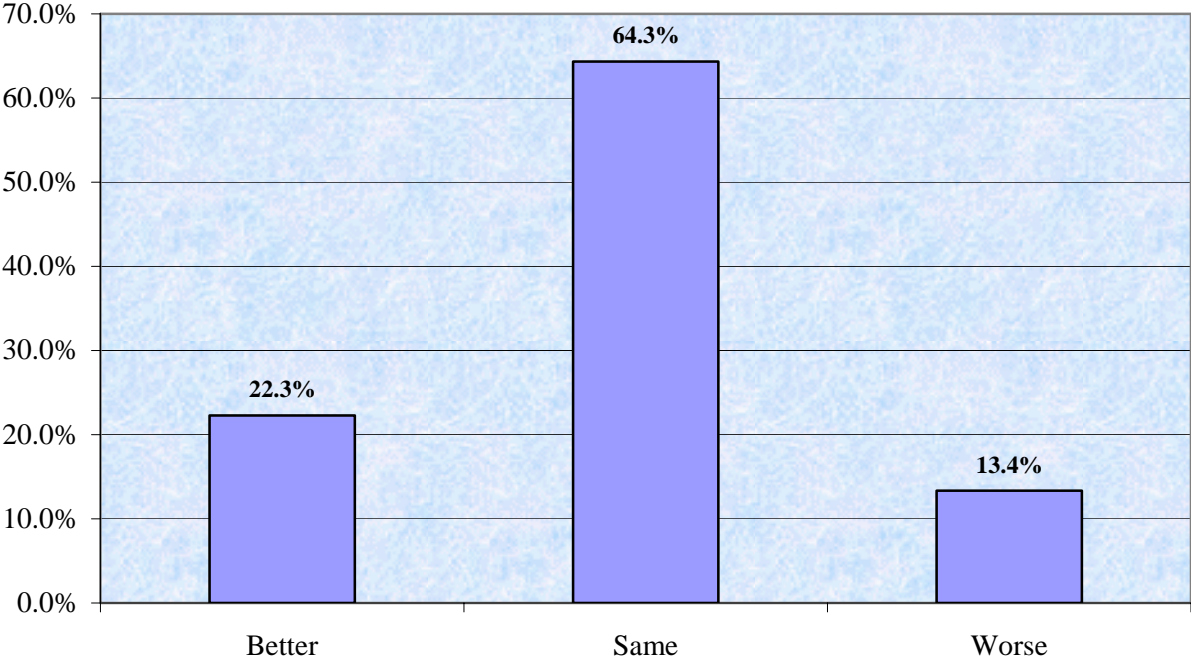
C4. When you think of your own school education, do you believe students' education today is much better, better, worse, much worse or very little different compared to yours?



**C5. Compared to the rest of the country, do you think the post-secondary education and training system in Saskatchewan is better, the same or worse?**

A large majority finds Saskatchewan post-secondary education roughly comparable to elsewhere, with two in three giving it a mid-point rating. By a ratio of 2:1, it is deemed better more often than worse by respondents who find it exceptional.

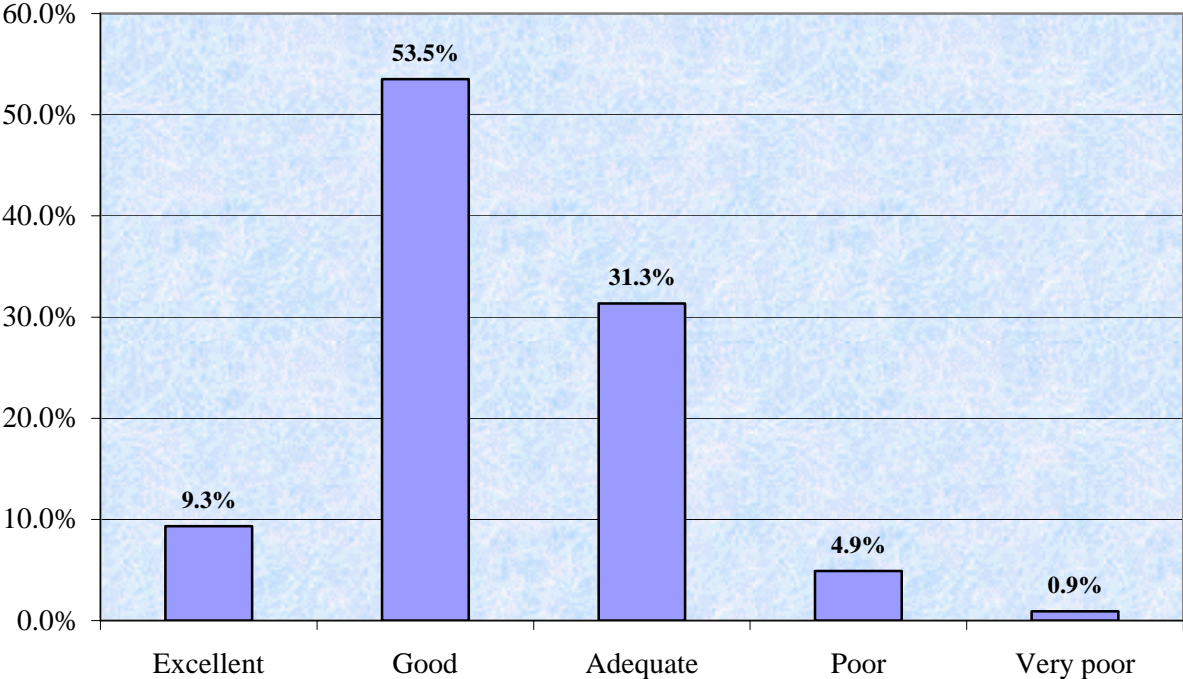
C5. Compared to the rest of the country, do you think the post-secondary education and training system in Saskatchewan is better, the same or worse?



**C6. Do you think the quality of Saskatchewan's post-secondary education and training system is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?**

In absolute terms, Saskatchewan post-secondary education receives favourable ratings, with over six in 10 finding it good to excellent, compared to only one in twenty who indicated it is poor to very poor.

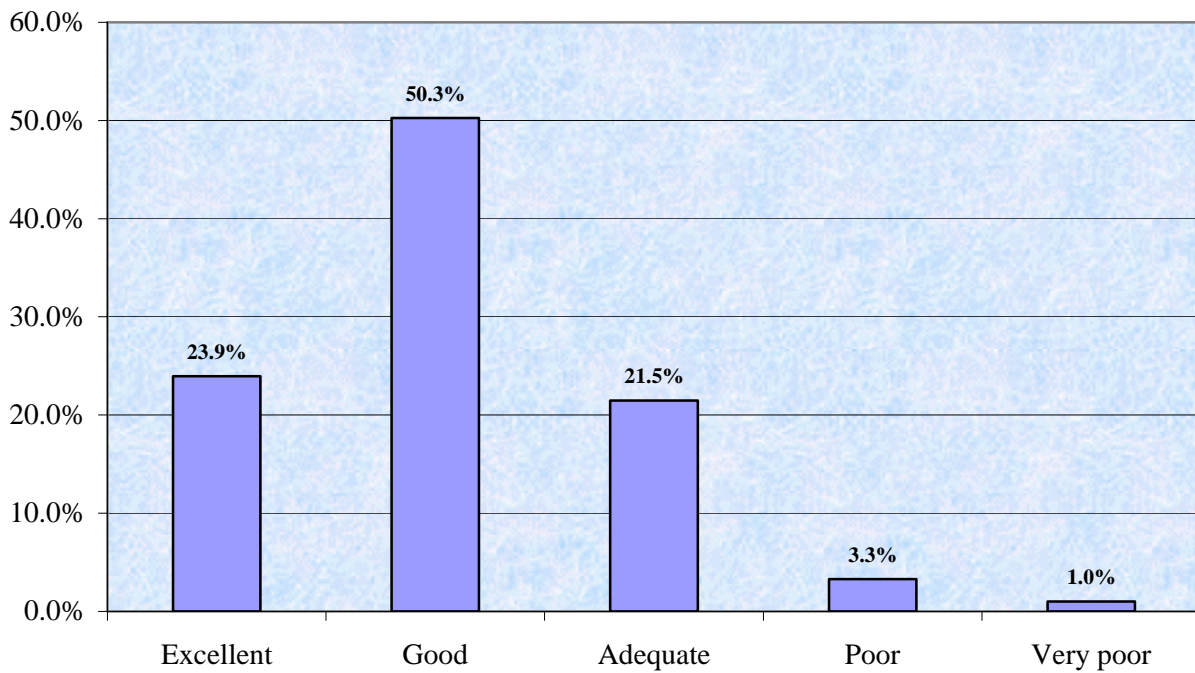
C6. Do you think the quality of Saskatchewan's post-secondary education and training system is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



**C7. Do you think the quality of services from your public library system is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?**

Library services are given strong positive ratings, with three in four finding them good to excellent, and fewer than one in twenty finding them poor or very poor.

C7. Do you think the quality of services from your public library system is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



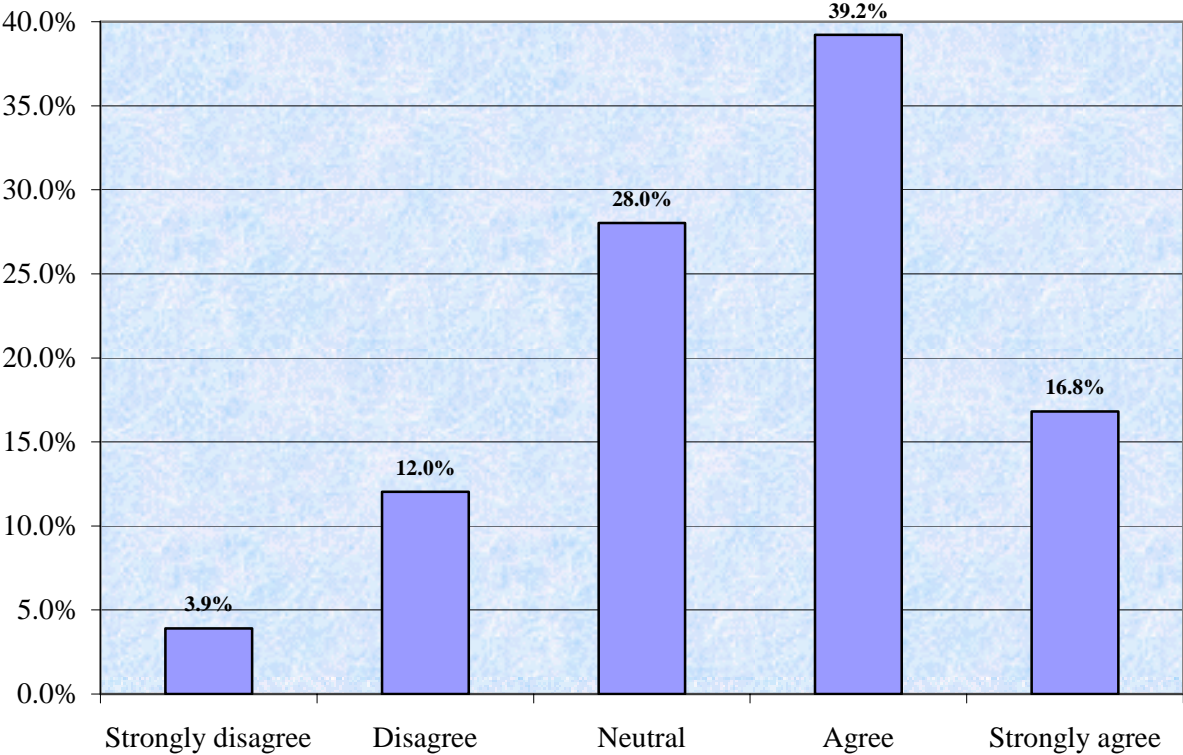
# SECTION D: Environment

## D1a. Agree-Disagree: Saskatchewan residents have safe drinking water

A strong plurality of four in ten respondents agreed Saskatchewan residents generally have safe drinking water. A further 16.6% agreed strongly, so that the total of positive responses outweighed the negatives by ratio of well over three to one.

The mean response level is 3.53.

D1a. Saskatchewan residents have safe drinking water:

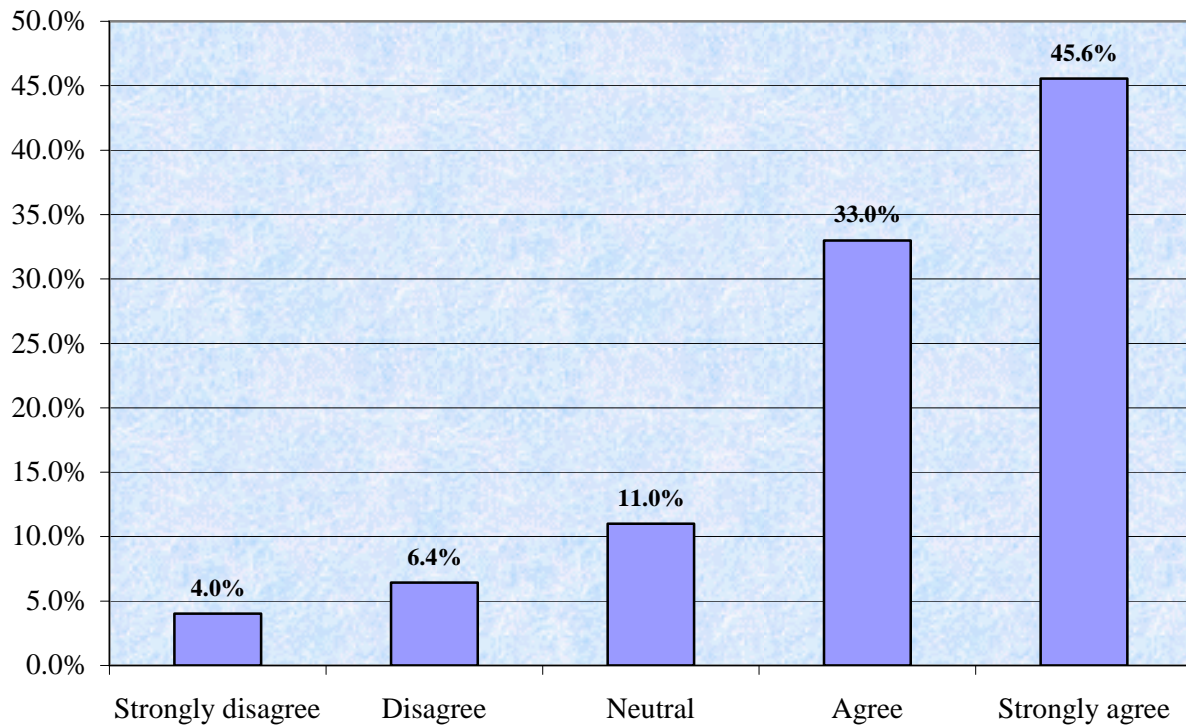


## D1b. Agree-Disagree: I am confident that my drinking water is safe

By much larger margins than are evident in the previous query, respondents are confident in the safety of the water they themselves drink. The ratio of positive to negative approaches eight to one.

The mean response level is exceptionally high at 4.10.

D1b. I am confident that my drinking water is safe:

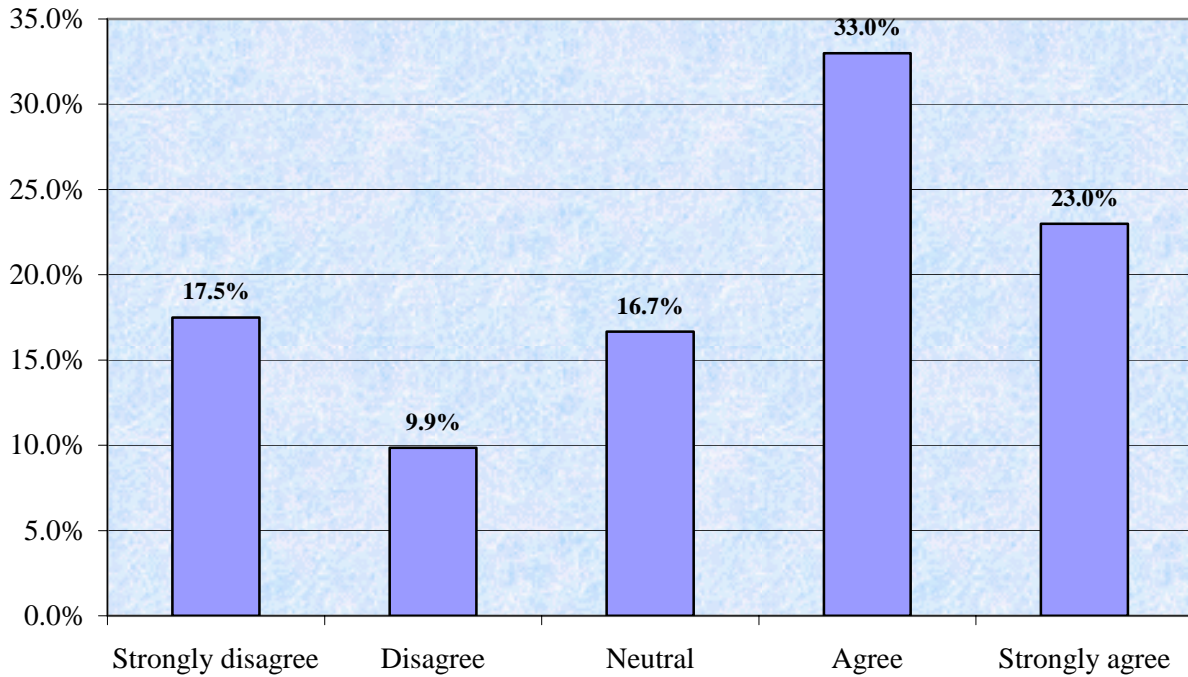


**D1c. If improvements are required to make my drinking water safe or to generally improve the drinking water quality, I would be willing to pay higher water rates.**

A majority indicated agreement, or better, with paying higher prices for water to fund required improvements to quality. The ratio of positive to negative is approximately two to one.

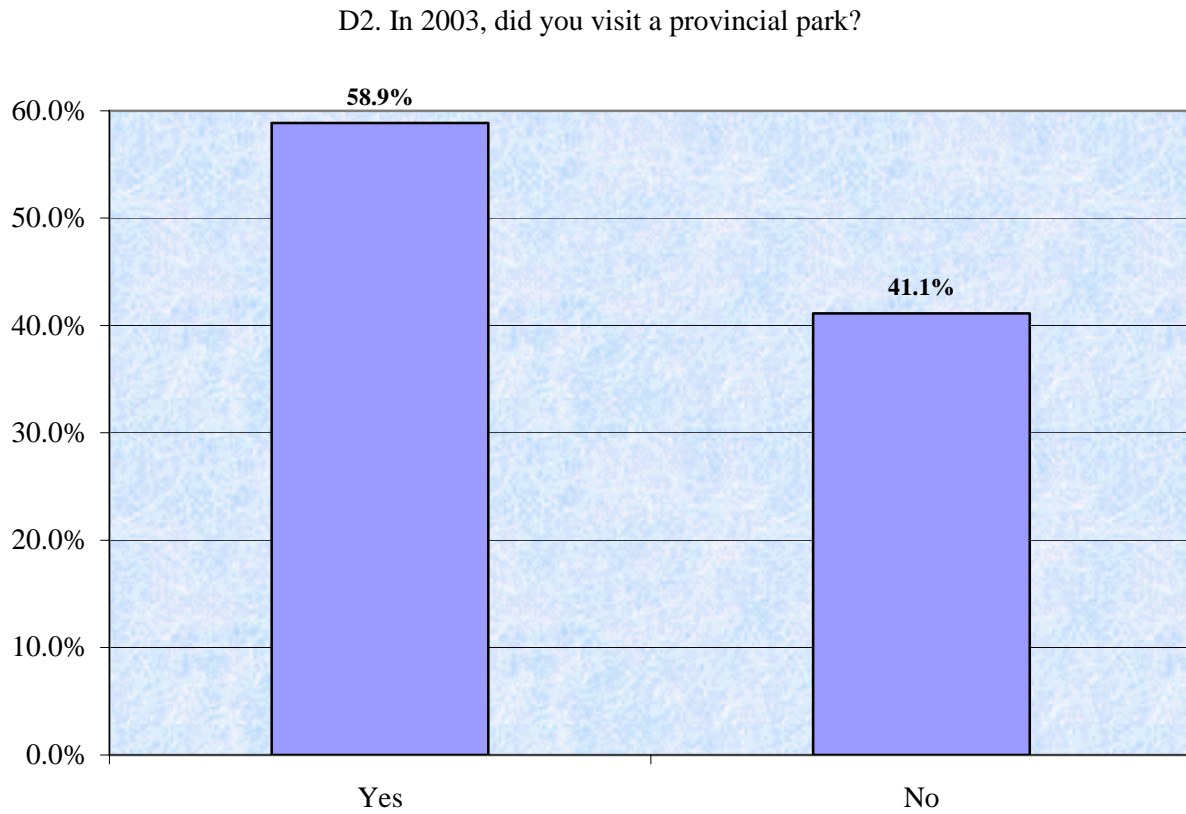
The mean response level is 3.34.

D1c. If improvements are required to make my drinking water safe or to generally improve the drinking water quality, I would be willing to pay higher water rates.



## D2. In 2003, did you visit a provincial park?

A substantial majority of Saskatchewan residents visited a provincial park in 2003.



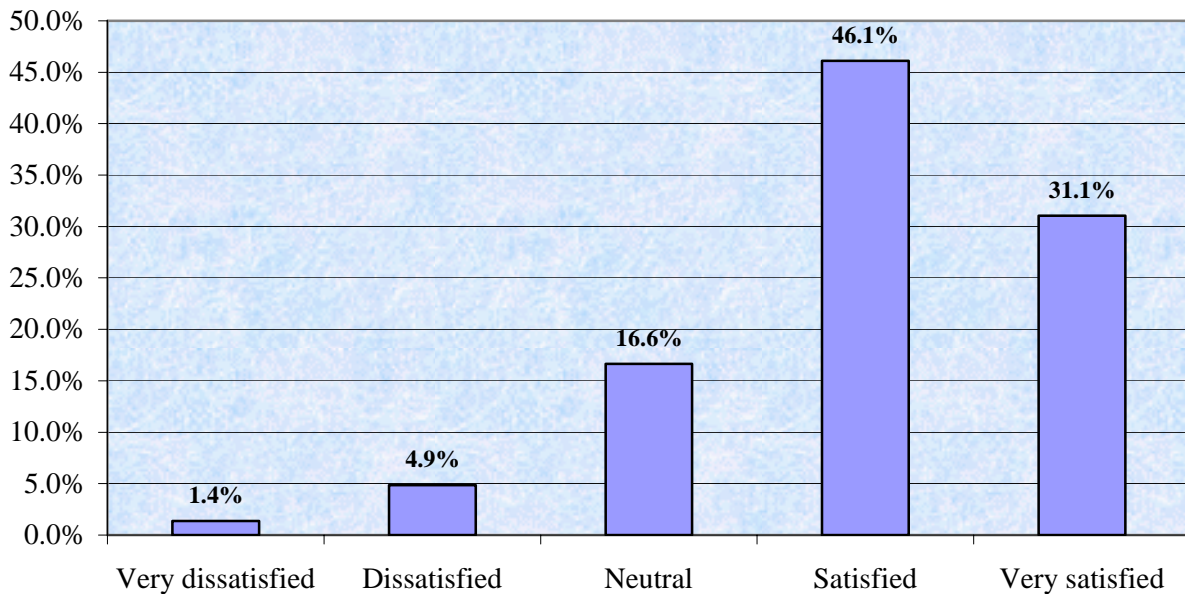


**D2a. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means "very dissatisfied" and 5 means "very satisfied", how satisfied were you with your overall experience with the parks system?**

Satisfaction with the parks system is very high among Saskatchewan residents. More than three-quarters of respondents identified a positive experience, compared to a small percentage that expressed a negative experience.

This corresponds to a very high mean response level of 4.01.

D2a. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means "very dissatisfied" and 5 means "very satisfied", how satisfied were you with your overall experience with the parks system?

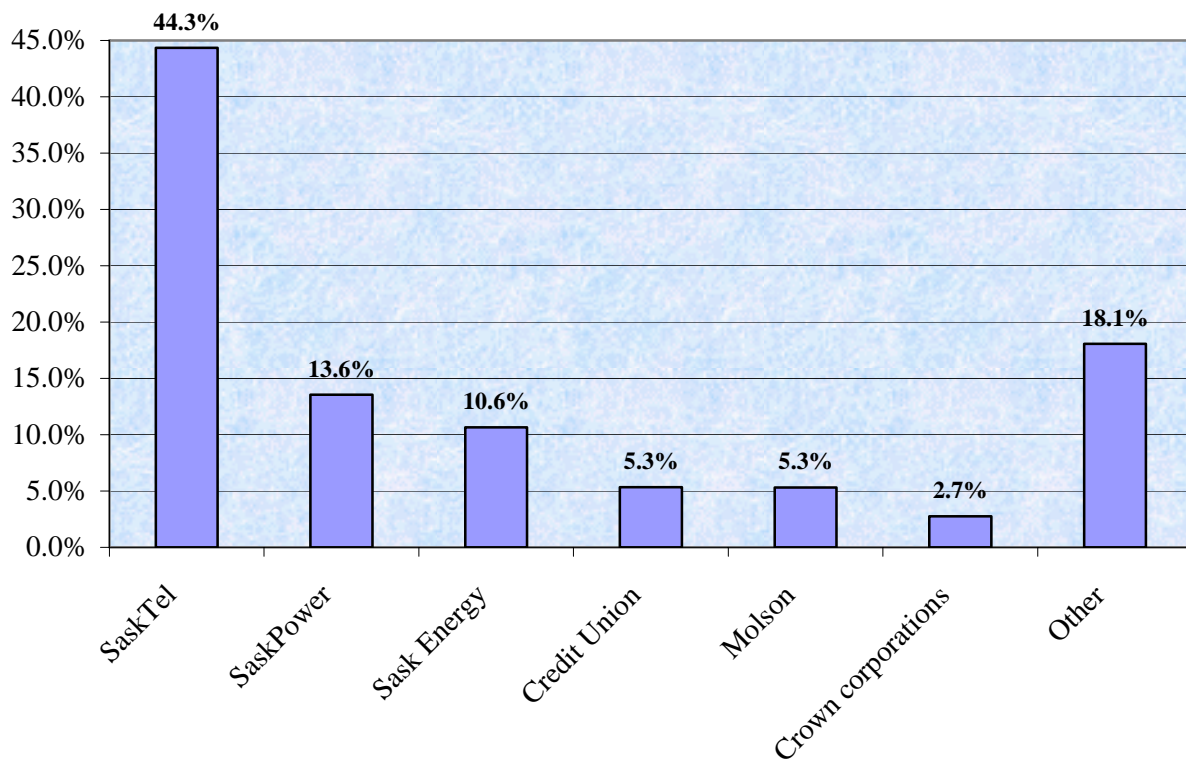


## SECTION E: SaskEnergy

### E1. Which Saskatchewan company was MOST INVOLVED in supporting Grey Cup 2003?

SaskTel received more mentions than all others combined as the company most involved in last year's Grey Cup.

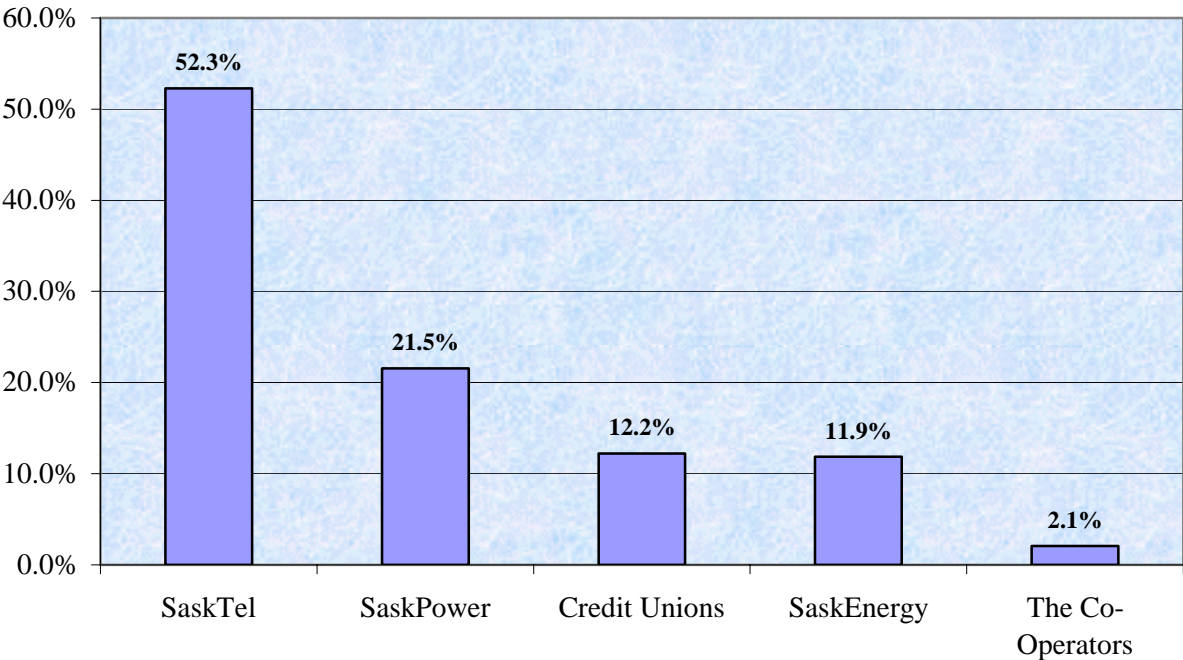
E1. Which Saskatchewan company was MOST INVOLVED in supporting Grey Cup 2003?



**E2. Of the following companies, which one was the most visible sponsor at Grey Cup 2003?**

SaskTel achieved an even larger margin of mentions as the sponsor with the greatest visibility at Grey Cup.

E2. Of the following companies, which one was the most visible sponsor at Grey Cup 2003?



### E3. Which Saskatchewan Crown Corporation do you most associate with community involvement in the province?

SaskTel dominates as the crown most associated with community involvement, with over half the mentions. SaskPower, at roughly half the SaskTel rate, also reached well into the double-digit level.

E3. Which Saskatchewan Crown Corporation do you most associate with community involvement in the province?

