



**Government of Saskatchewan**

**Public Opinion Polling  
and Market Research**

from April 1, 2001 to June 30, 2001

Omnibus  
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

Prepared for:

Saskatchewan Executive Council  
113 Legislative Building  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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- Federal issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include health care, federal taxes, jobs and unemployment and the economy.
- Provincial issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include health care, agriculture, provincial taxes and jobs and unemployment.
- The majority of residents approve of the way the provincial government is handling the policing of communities, education and the environment.
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents agree that irrigation is a wise use of water, irrigation is an important part of Saskatchewan's agricultural economy and that a significant increase in irrigation farming would diversify and expand the rural economies.
- The large majority of residents recall having recently seen or heard an awareness campaign on the risks of drinking and driving.
- One quarter of Saskatchewan residents are satisfied with the overall provincial highway system and the majority rate provincial highway repaving, accelerated twinning and rural highway rebuilding as important.
- The majority of residents feel safe when they are driving on Saskatchewan highways.
- One in five Saskatchewan residents are aware that the provincial government recently released an economic strategy entitled "Partnership for Prosperity".
- The large majority of residents agree it is important for the province's economic strategy to have measurable targets.

# METHODOLOGY

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Doug Fast & Associates was retained by the Government of Saskatchewan to conduct the June 2001 public opinion survey with a representative sample of the Saskatchewan population. The June 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;
- SaskWater;
- Saskatchewan Government Insurance;
- highways and transportation; and
- economic and co-operative development.

Questions for the survey were provided by Saskatchewan Executive Council and assembled into an interview format by Doug Fast & Associates. 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 Monday, June 18 and Monday, June 25, 2001. 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 Doug Fast & Associates' in-house public opinion interviewers using our *Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing* (CATI) call centre.

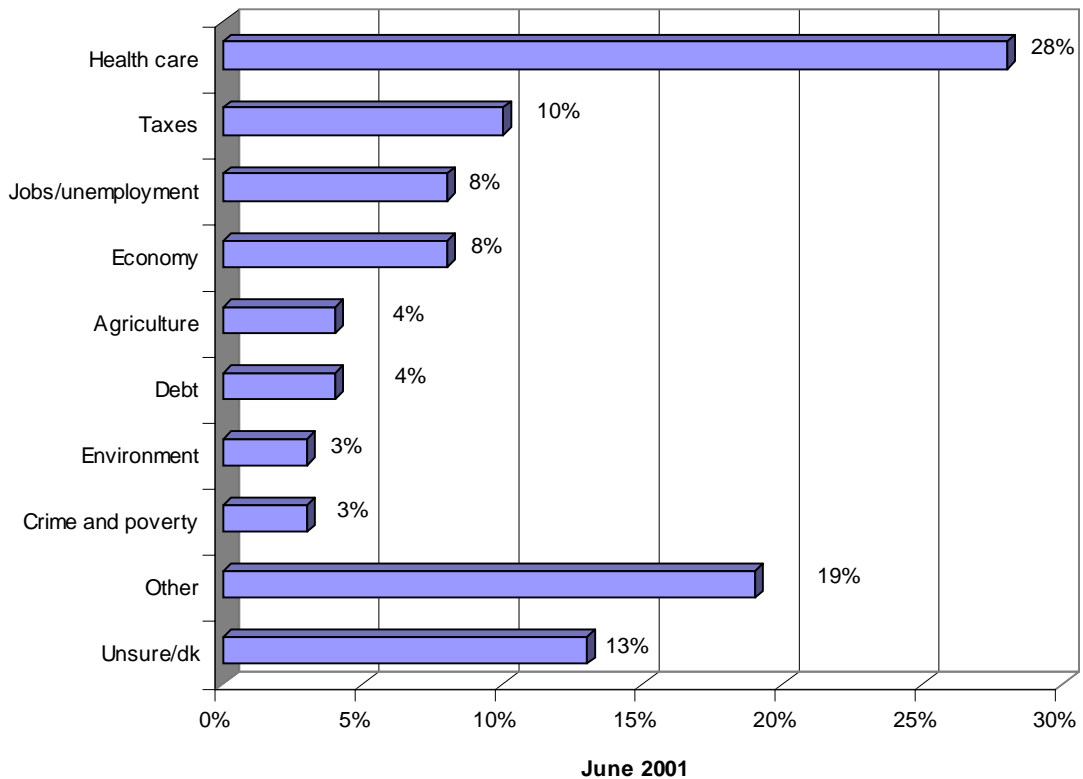
The Omnibus survey sample size of 1,000 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points: reliable results with low variability. Frequency charts for all public opinion issues are illustrated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

Doug Fast & Associates 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

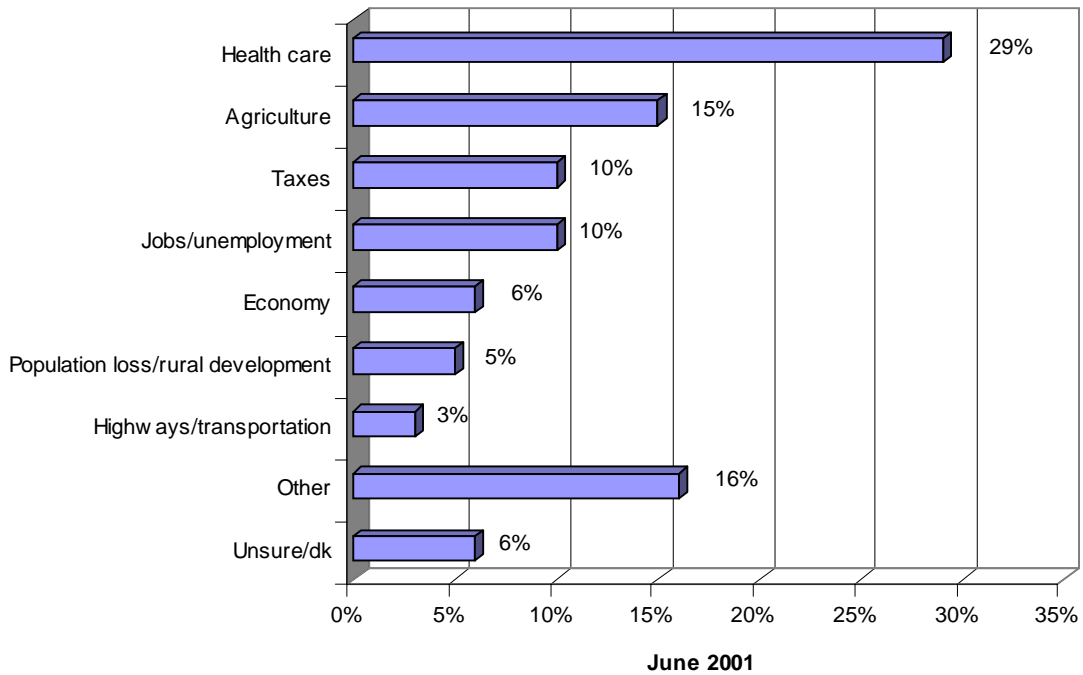
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**Question 1.** In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Canada today?



- According to 28% of Saskatchewan residents, the most important issue facing Canada today is the health care system. Other important issues include federal taxes (10%), jobs and unemployment (8%), the economy (8%), agriculture (4%), the national deficit and accumulated debt (4%), the environment (3%) and crime and poverty (3%).
- Approximately 19% of respondents are primarily concerned with 'other' issues such as the federal government in general (5%), national unity (2%), education (2%), fuel prices (2%) and Native issues (2%).

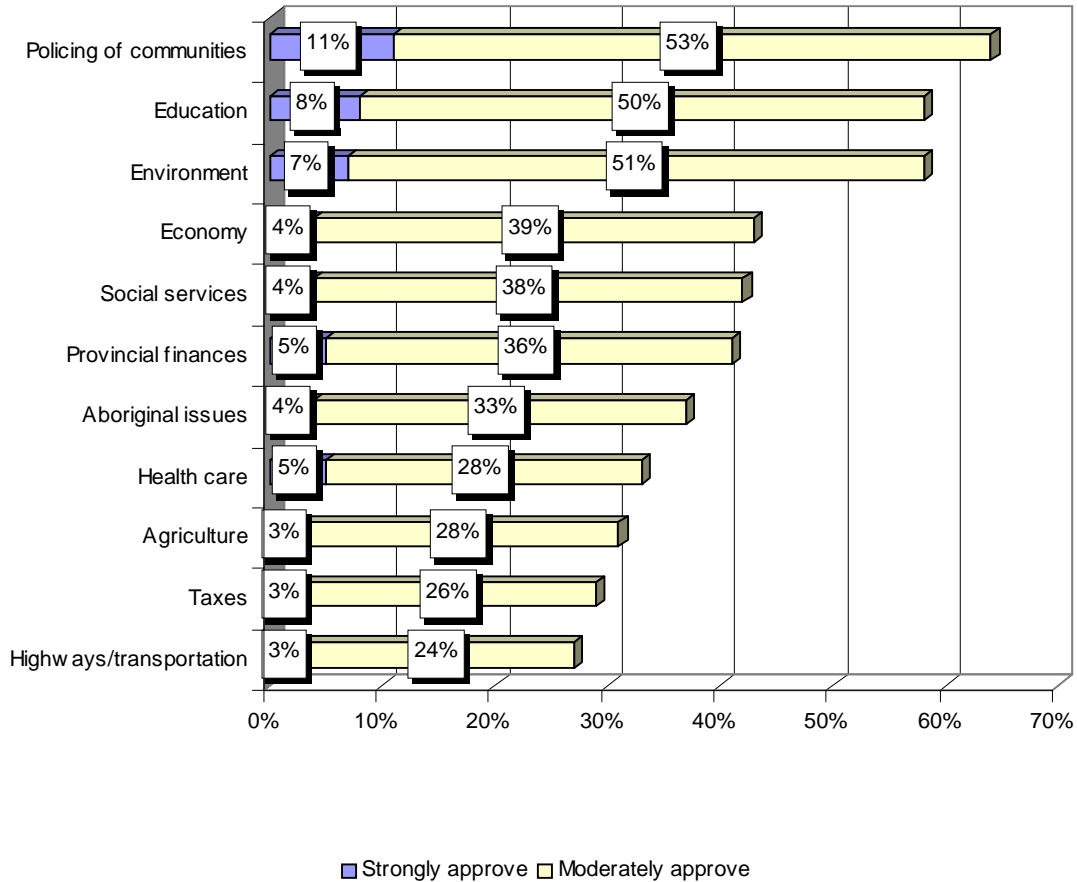
**Question 2.** What do you think is the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan today?



- The most important issue facing the province today, according to 29% of Saskatchewan residents, is health care. Approximately 15% of residents are concerned primarily with agriculture, 10% with provincial taxes, another 10% with jobs and unemployment and 6% are concerned with the provincial economy.
- Included among 'other' important issues identified by 16% of respondents are the provincial government in general (2%), the provincial debt (2%), the environment (2%) and Native issues (2%).



**Question 3.** How much do you approve of the way the provincial government is handling the following...



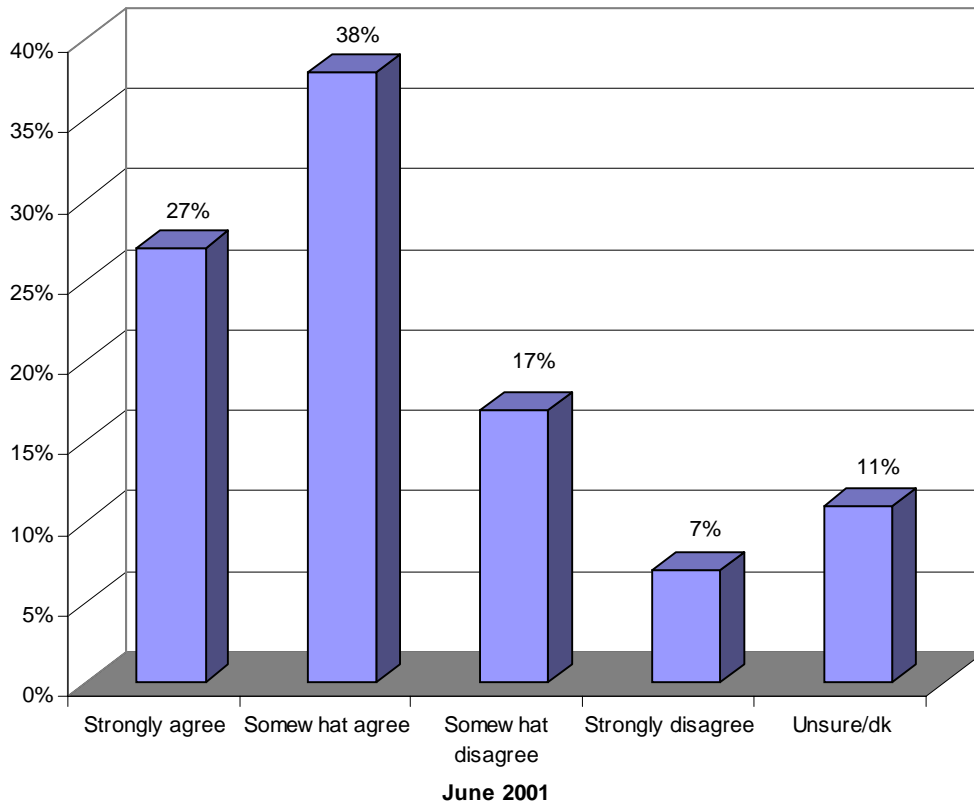
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents approve of the way the provincial government is handling the policing of communities (64%), education (58%) and the environment (58%).
- More than one third approve of the way the provincial government is handling the economy (43%), social services (42%) provincial finances (41%) Aboriginal issues (37%) and health care (33%).
- More than one quarter approve of the way the provincial government is handling agriculture (31%), taxes (29%) and highways and transportation (27%).

## 2.0 SASKWATER

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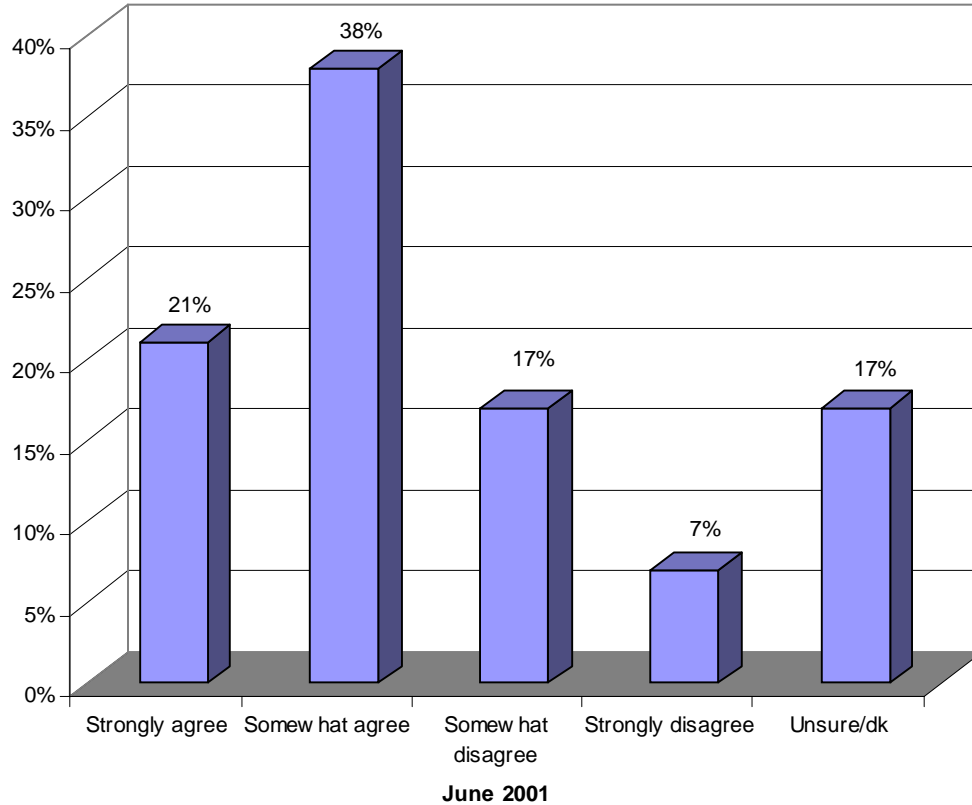
Would you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements.

**Question 4.** Irrigation is an important part of Saskatchewan's agriculture economy?



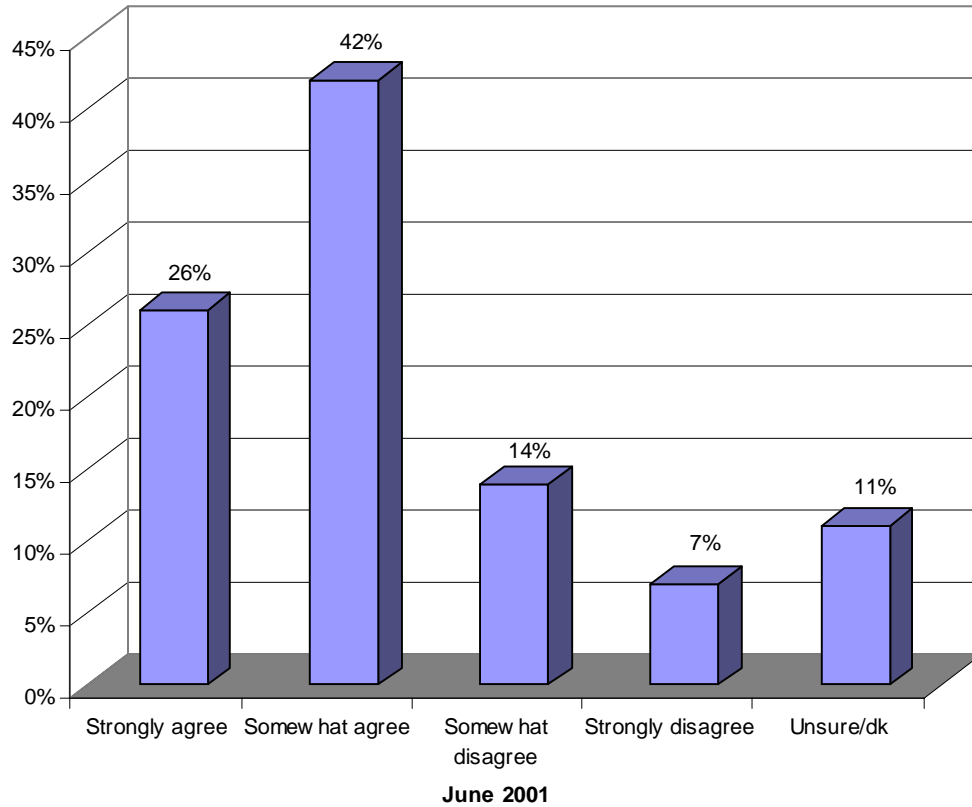
- The majority (65%) of residents agree that irrigation is an important part of Saskatchewan's agriculture economy.

**Question 5.** A significant increase in irrigation farming would diversify and expand the rural economies?



- The majority (59%) of Saskatchewan residents agree that a significant increase in irrigation farming would diversify and expand the rural economies.

**Question 6.** Irrigation is a wise use of water?

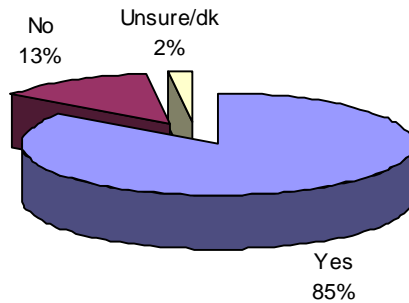


- Two thirds (68%) of Saskatchewan residents agree that irrigation is a wise use of water.

### 3.0 SASKATCHEWAN GOVERNMENT INSURANCE

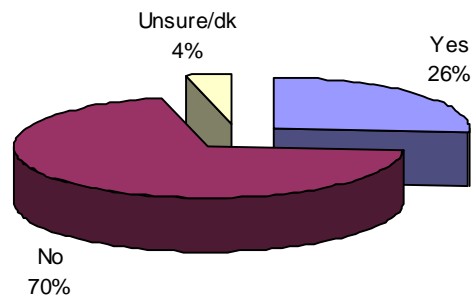
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Question 7. **Have you recently seen or heard an awareness campaign on the risks of drinking and driving. The message of the campaign is to always plan a safe ride home.**



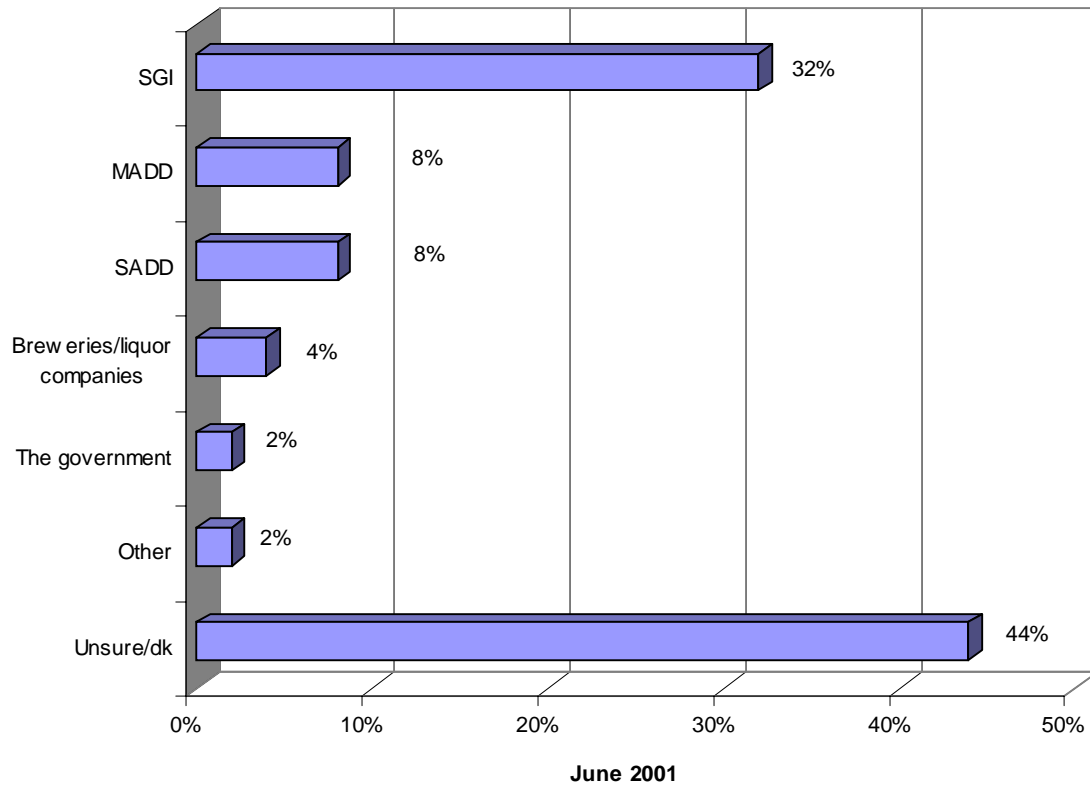
- The large majority (85%) of Saskatchewan residents recall having recently seen or heard an awareness campaign on the risks of drinking and driving.

Question 8. **The awareness campaign consists of television and radio commercials and outdoor billboards that show the importance of planning a safe ride home when out having a drink. One of the TV commercials features a son driving his parents home from a party; another one shows a woman meeting her husband and his buddies in a bar in order to give him a ride home. Have you recently seen or heard this awareness campaign on the risks of drinking and driving?**



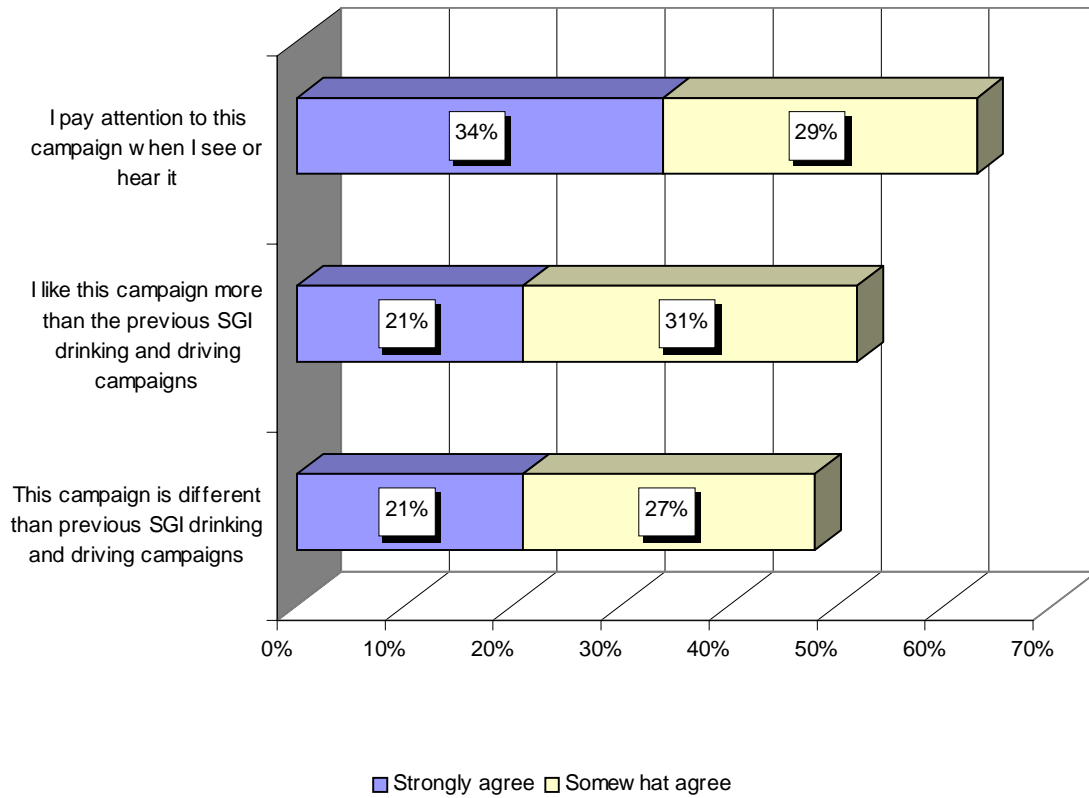
- An additional one quarter (26%) of those residents who did not exhibit unaided recall of the awareness campaign on the risks of drinking and driving are able to recall the campaign after hearing a brief description of it (4% of all residents). This brings the awareness level of SGI's campaign on the risks of drinking and driving to 89%.

**Question 9.** As far as you know, who was the company that sponsored this campaign?



- About one third (32%) of those respondents who are able to recall the awareness campaign think SGI sponsored the campaign (29% of all residents).

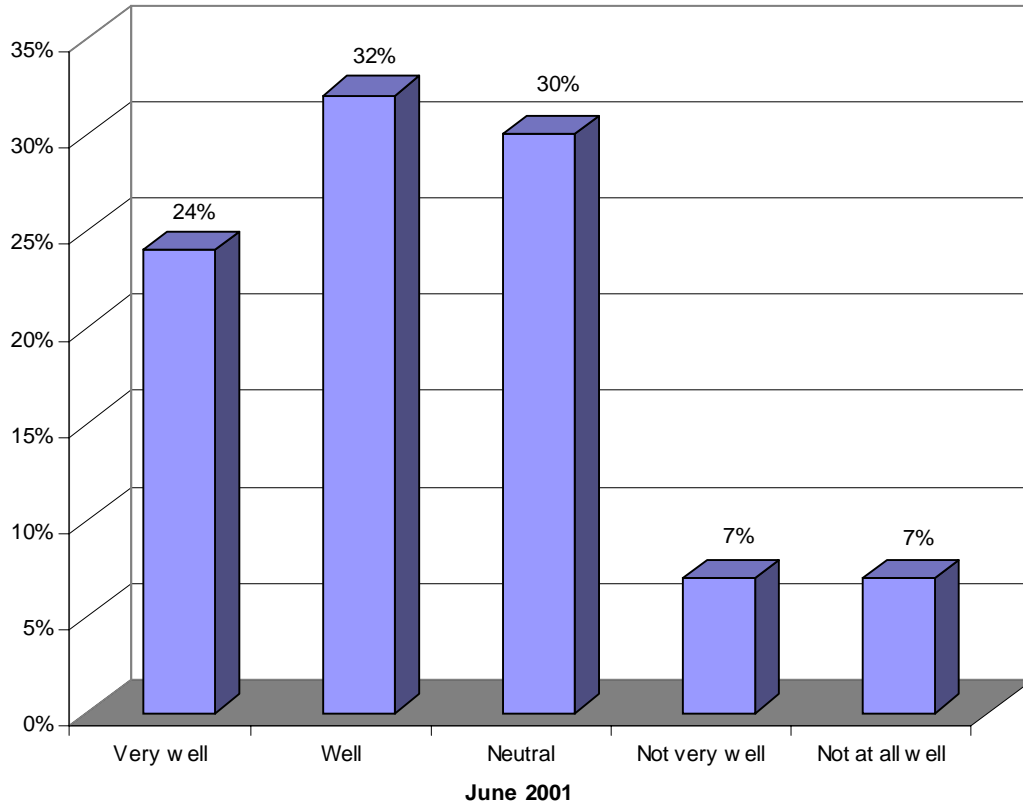
**Question 10.** I'm going to read 3 short statements. I'd like you to tell me the extent to which you agree or disagree with each one, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.



- The majority of those residents who recall the recent awareness campaign about drinking and driving agree they pay attention to this campaign when they see or hear it (63%, or 57% of all residents) and they like this campaign more than previous SGI drinking and driving campaigns (52%, or 46% of all residents).
- Almost one half (48%) agree this campaign is different than previous SGI drinking and driving campaigns (43% of all residents).



Question 11. **In your view, how well does this campaign raise awareness about the risks of drinking and driving? Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very well and 5 being not at all well.**

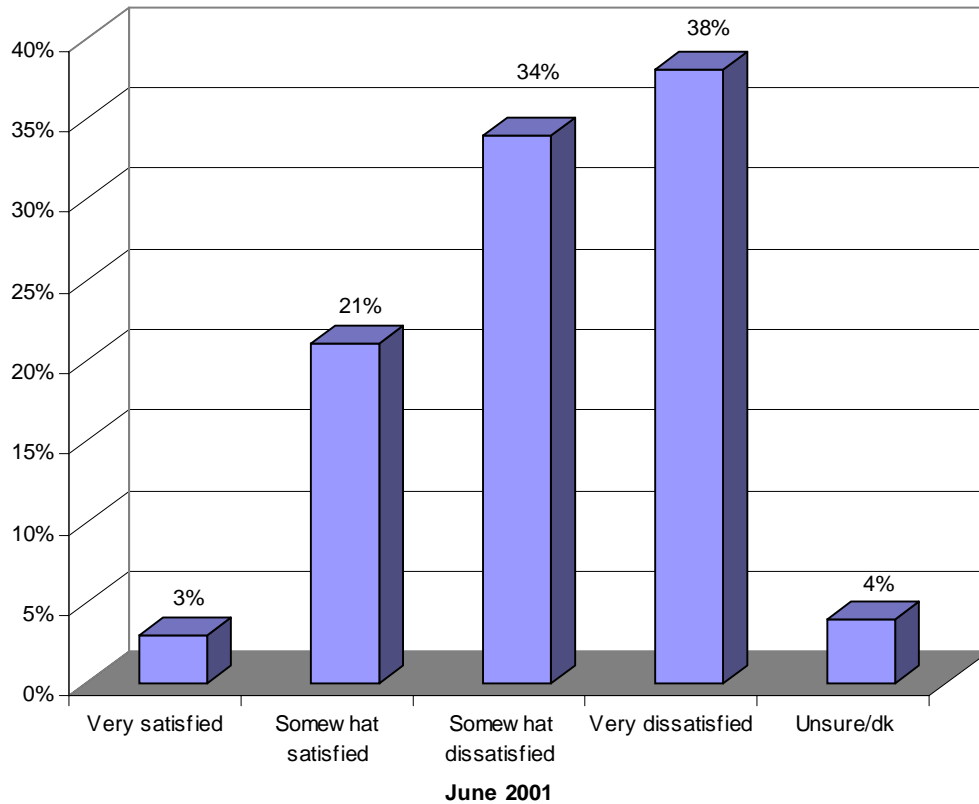


- The majority (56%) of those respondents who recall the drinking and driving awareness campaign give it a high rating of 1 or 2 (very well or well) in terms of how they think this campaign does in raising awareness about the risks of drinking and driving (50% of all residents).

## 4.0 HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

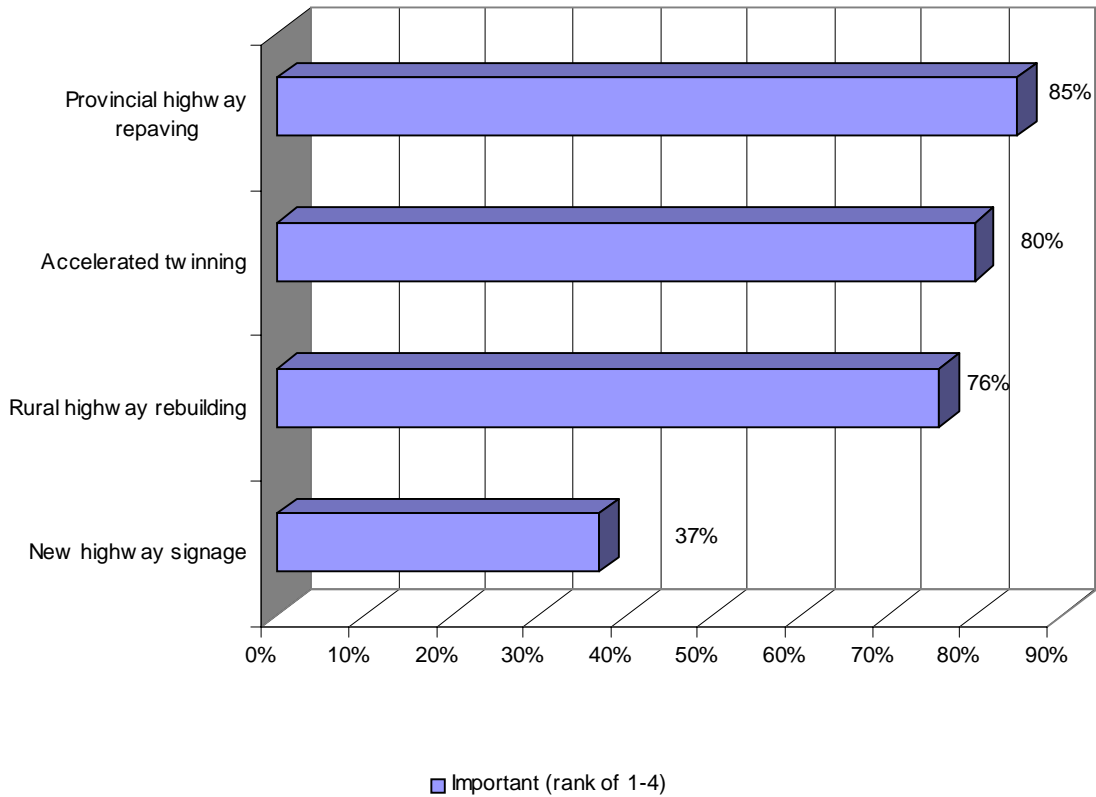
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**Question 12.** When you think of the overall provincial highway system, are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the system?



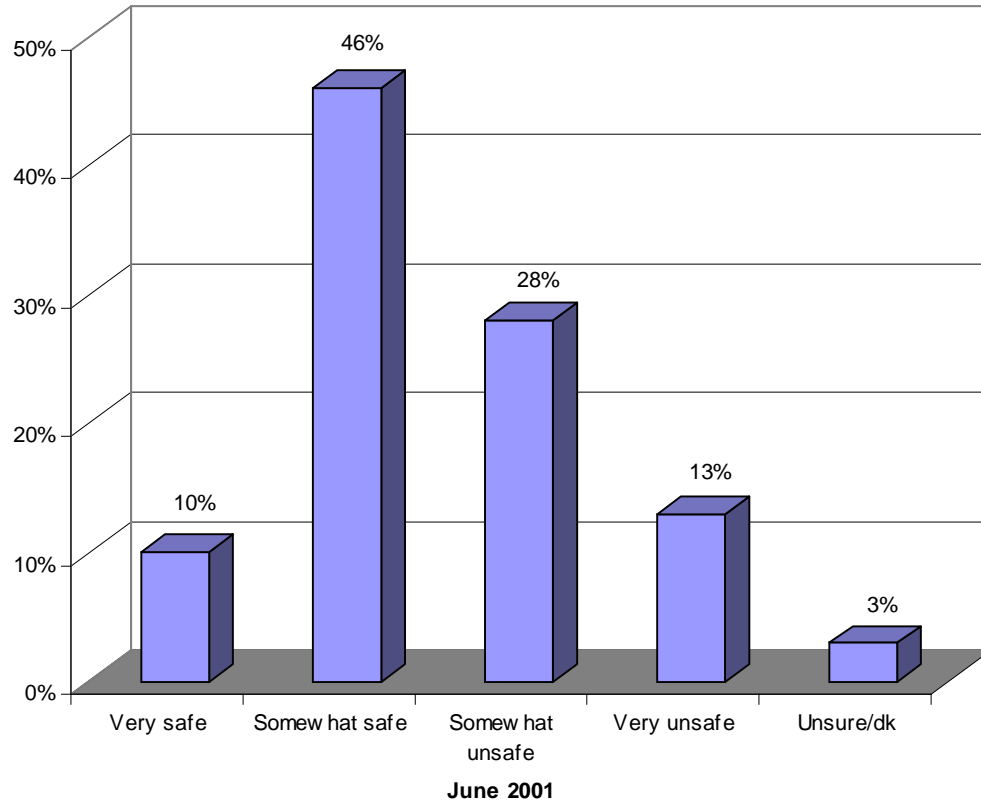
- Approximately 24% of Saskatchewan residents are satisfied with the overall provincial highway system; the majority (72%) are dissatisfied.

**Question 13.** Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being very important and 10 being very unimportant; how important do you rate each of the following:



- The large majority of Saskatchewan residents rate provincial highway repaving (85%), accelerated twinning (80%) and rural highway rebuilding (76%) as important (rank of 1 to 4).

**Question 14.** Overall when driving on Saskatchewan's highways do you personally feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe?

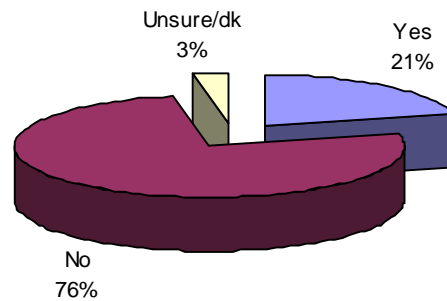


- The majority (56%) of residents feel safe when they are driving on Saskatchewan highways.

## 5.0 ECONOMIC & CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

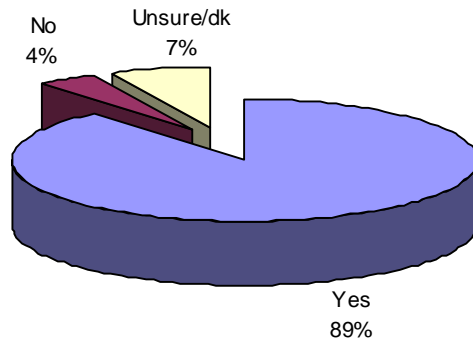
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**Question 15.** Are you aware that the provincial government has recently released an economic strategy, entitled “Partnership for Prosperity”?



- Approximately one in five (21%) Saskatchewan residents are aware that the provincial government has recently released an economic strategy entitled “Partnership for Prosperity”.

**Question16.** Is it important for an economic strategy to have measurable targets?



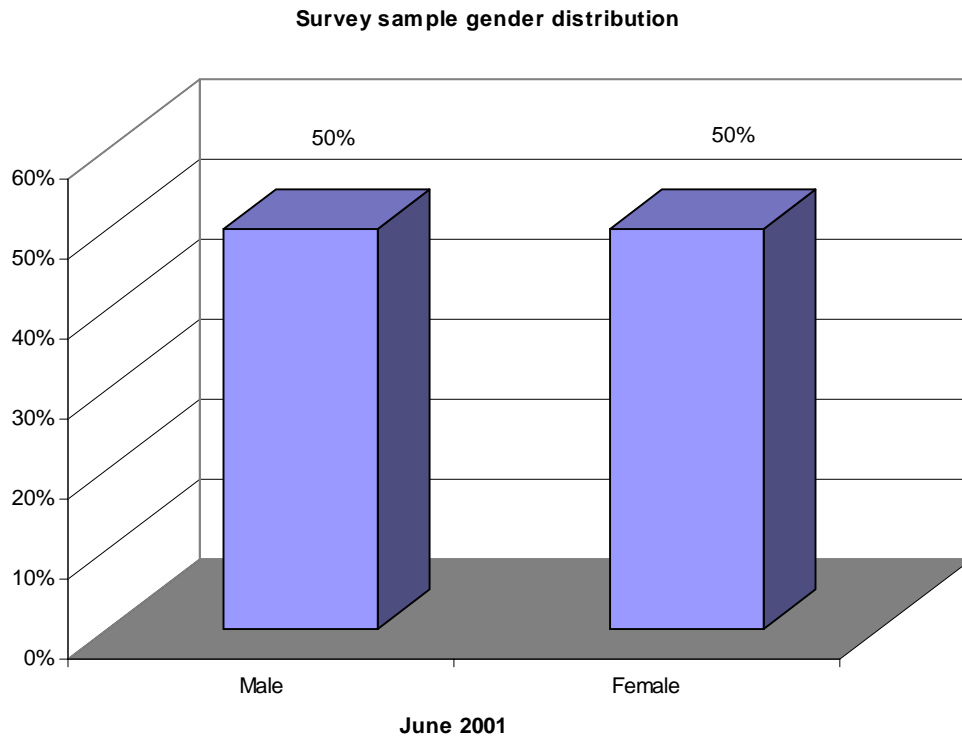
- The large majority (89%) of residents agree it is important for an economic strategy to have measurable targets.

## APPENDIX II SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

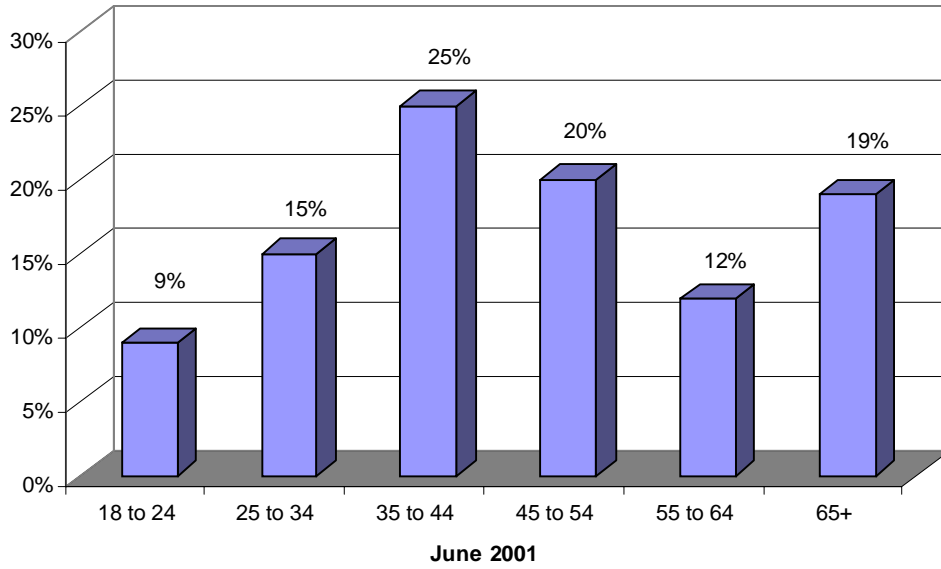
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The omnibus public opinion sample frame is constructed to facilitate proportionate representation of various demographic characteristics evident within the province of Saskatchewan. This ensures that opinions of all the various types of residents in 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.

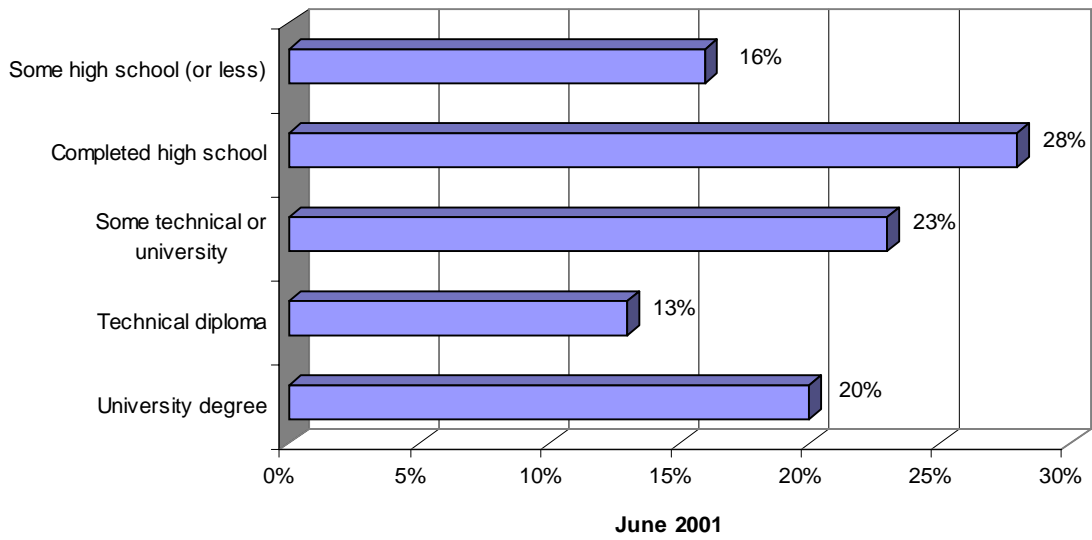
The omnibus survey sample size of 1,000 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error for the point estimates contained in this report of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.



**Survey sample age distribution**

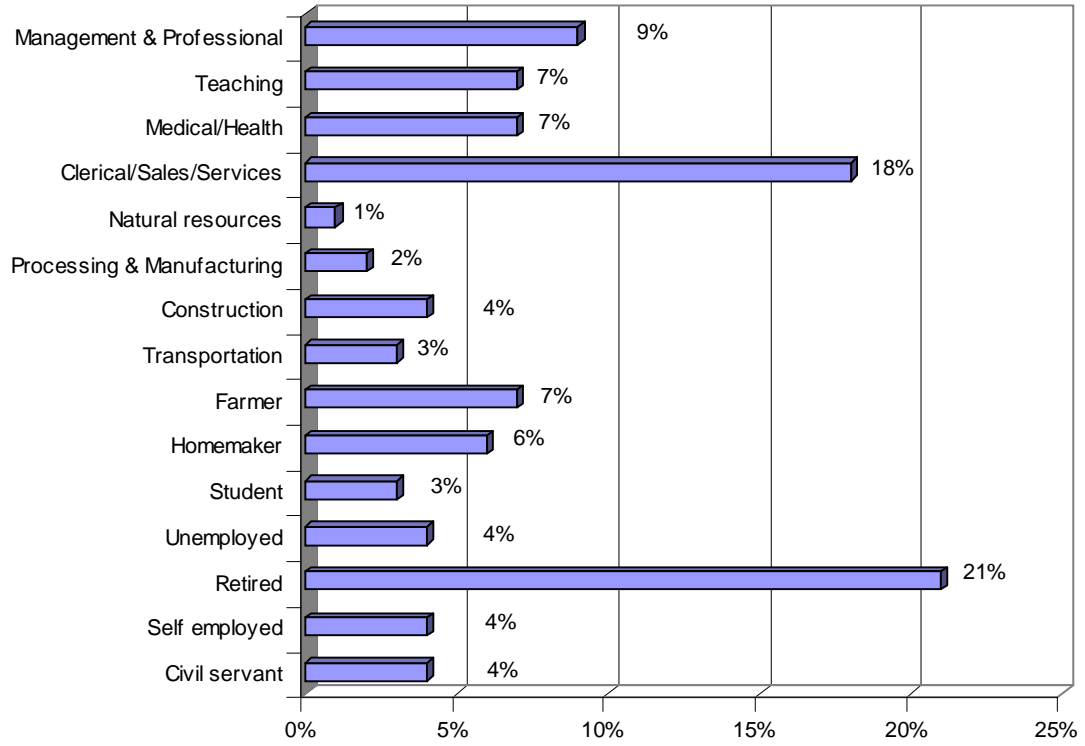


**Survey sample education distribution**



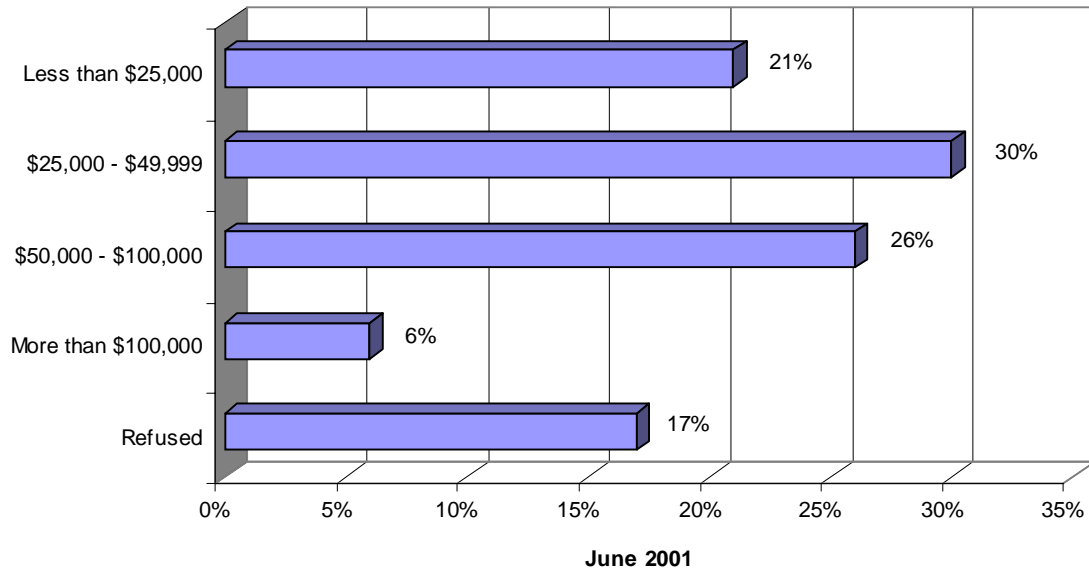


**Survey sample occupation distribution**



**June 2001**

**Survey sample income distribution**



**Survey sample regional distribution**

