



## **Government of Saskatchewan**

# **Public Opinion Polling**

from October 1, 2002 – December 31, 2002

**OMNIBUS**  
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

October 2002

Omnibus  
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

Prepared for:

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October 2002

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- In October 2002, federal issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include health care, international issues, the economy, agriculture, and jobs and unemployment.
- Provincial issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include health care, agriculture, jobs and unemployment, population loss, the economy and provincial taxes.
- One third of residents think the number of non-agricultural jobs in Saskatchewan has decreased (by almost 5,000), almost one half think the number of jobs has increased.
- More Saskatchewan residents are under the impression that provincial income taxes have increased over the past three years than those who think it has decreased.
- 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.
- More than three quarters of Saskatchewan residents think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is adequate or better; the majority believe the quality is good or excellent.
- More than three quarters of Saskatchewan residents think the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is adequate or better.
- Approximately two thirds of residents think Saskatchewan high school students are prepared for entering post-secondary institutions like colleges or universities. Almost one half of residents think Saskatchewan high school students are prepared for entering the workforce.
- Approximately one third of Saskatchewan residents are satisfied with the overall provincial highway system; the majority are at least somewhat dissatisfied. Residents generally feel safe when they are driving on Saskatchewan highways. Almost all residents think the federal government should pay a portion of the cost for twinning the province's national highways in Saskatchewan.

# METHODOLOGY

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Fast Consulting conducted the October 2002 public opinion survey for the Government of Saskatchewan with a representative sample of the Saskatchewan population. The October 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, and
- highways and transportation.

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, October 15 and Wednesday, October 23, 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 professional public opinion interviewers using our *Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI)* call centre.

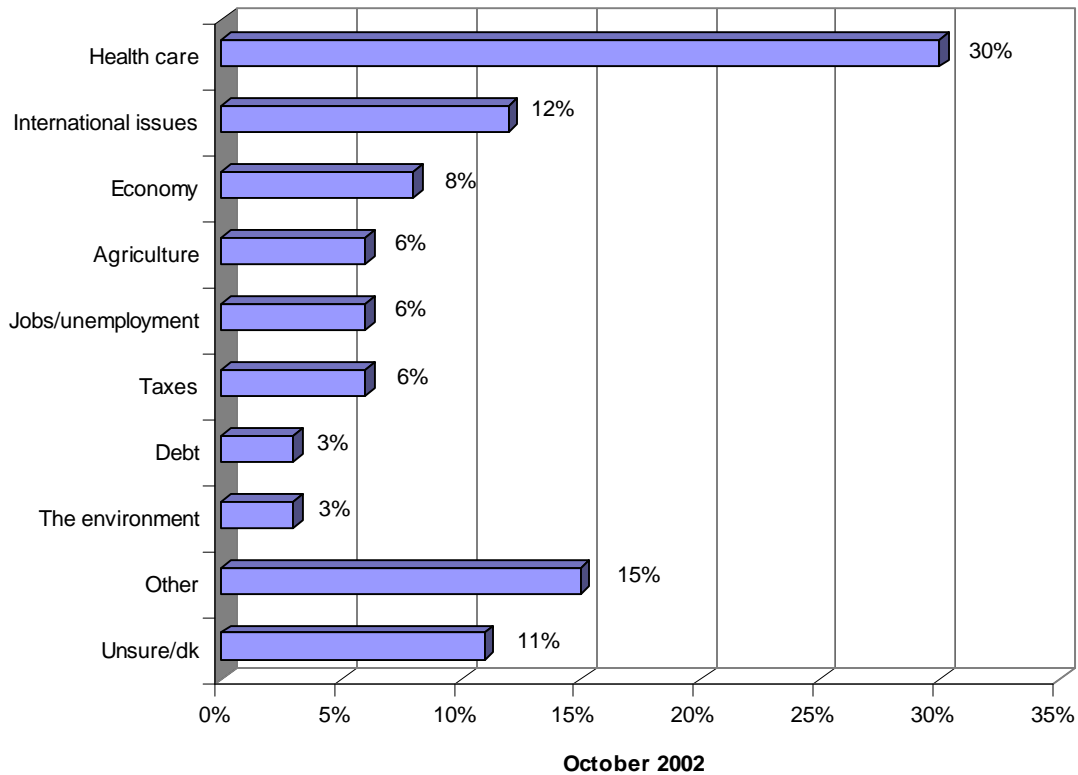
The Omnibus survey sample size of 1,000 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points: reliable results with low variability. Frequency charts for all public opinion issues are illustrated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

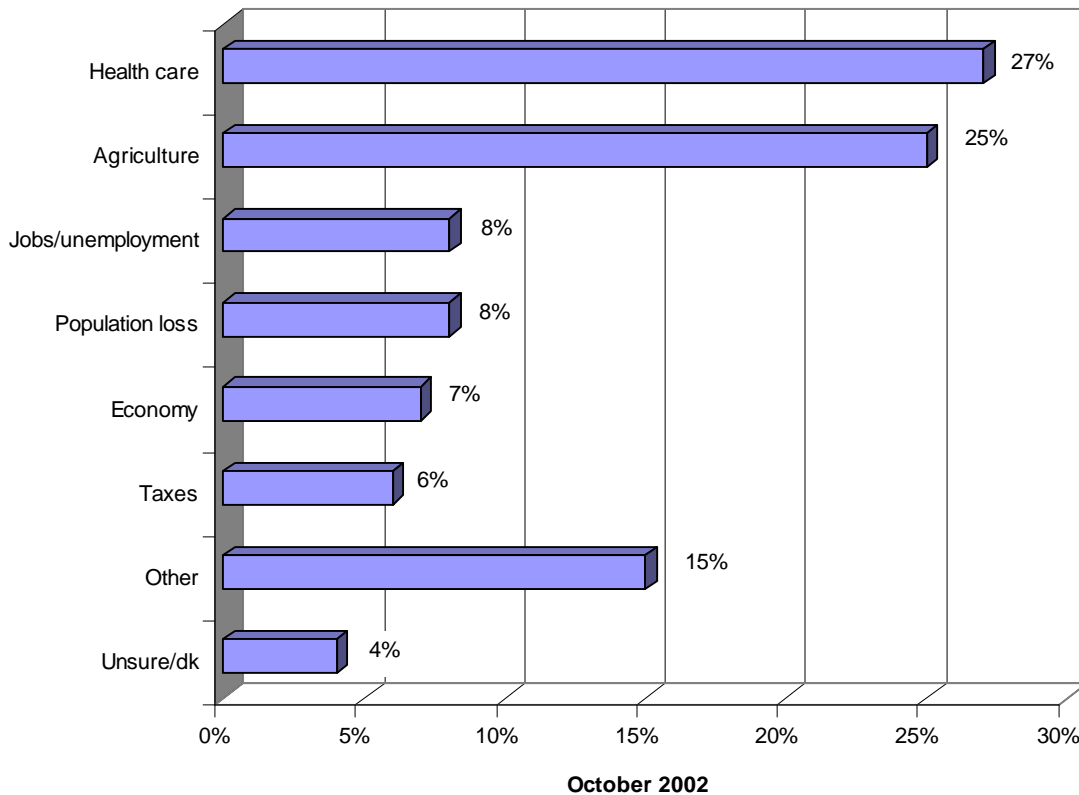
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**Question 1.** What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?



- According to 30% of Saskatchewan residents, the most important issue facing Canada today is the health care system. Other important issues include international issues (12%), the economy (8%), agriculture (6%), jobs and unemployment (6%), federal taxes (6%), the national deficit and accumulated debt (3%) and the environment (3%).
- Approximately 15% of residents are primarily concerned with 'other' issues such as the federal government in general (5%), crime and poverty (2%), social programs and welfare (2%), Native issues (1%), education (1%) and moral, social and religious issues (1%).

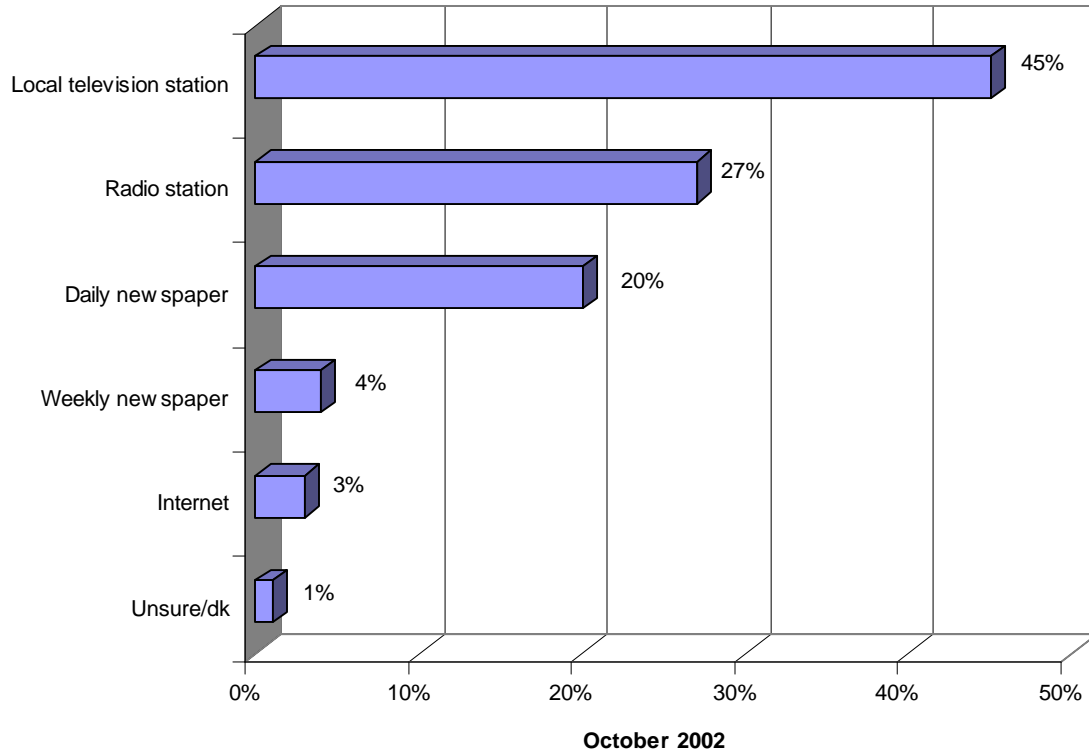
**Question 2.** What do you think is the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan today?



- The most important issue facing the province today, according to 27% of Saskatchewan residents, is health care. Approximately 25% of residents are concerned primarily with agriculture, 8% with jobs and unemployment, another 8% with population loss, 7% with the provincial economy and 6% with provincial taxes.
- Included among 'other' important issues identified by 15% of residents are the provincial government in general (3%), Native issues (2%), crime and poverty (1%), highways and transportation (1%) and social programs and welfare (1%).



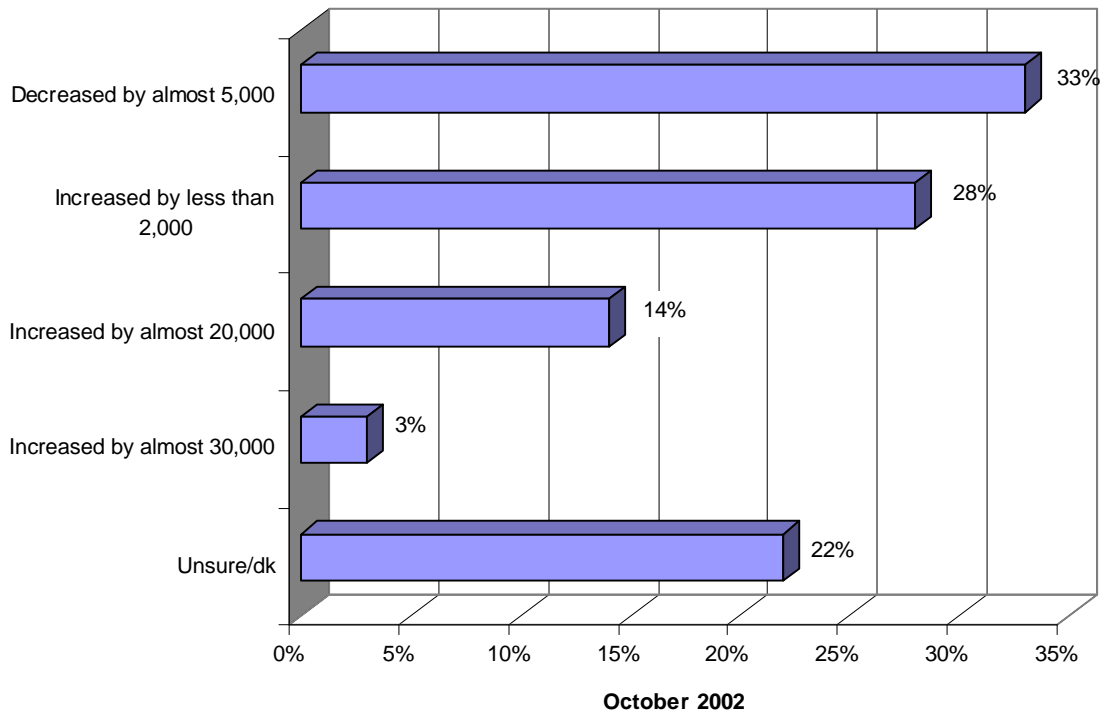
**Question 3.** Which of the following types of media do you rely on most for information about local and regional news in your area of the province?



- Approximately 45% of Saskatchewan residents rely on a local television station for information about local and regional news in their area of the province, 27% rely on radio and 20% rely on a daily newspaper the most.

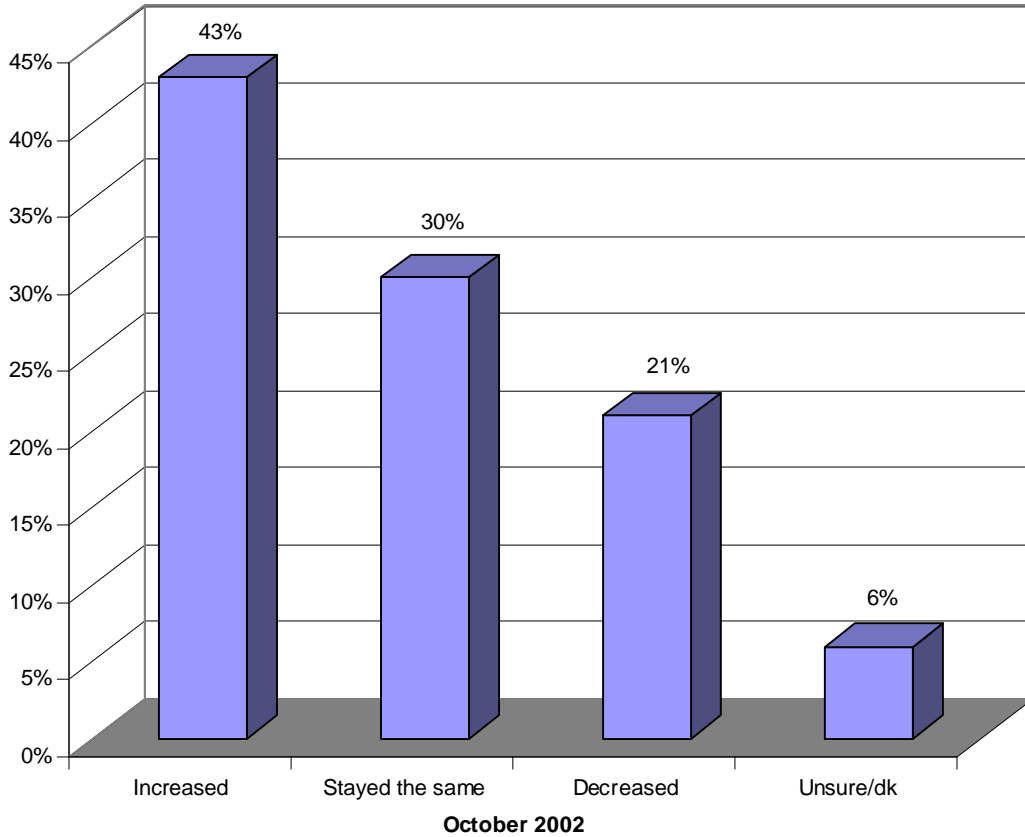
**Question 4.** As of September of this year, there were 438,000 people employed in non-agricultural jobs in Saskatchewan. Which of the following statements do you believe is most accurate?

During the past three years, the number of non-agricultural jobs in Saskatchewan has:



- One third (33%) of residents think the number of non-agricultural jobs in Saskatchewan has decreased (by almost 5,000), almost one half (45%) think the number of jobs has increased.

**Question 5.** During the past three years, do you believe provincial income taxes in Saskatchewan have increased, decreased or stayed the same?

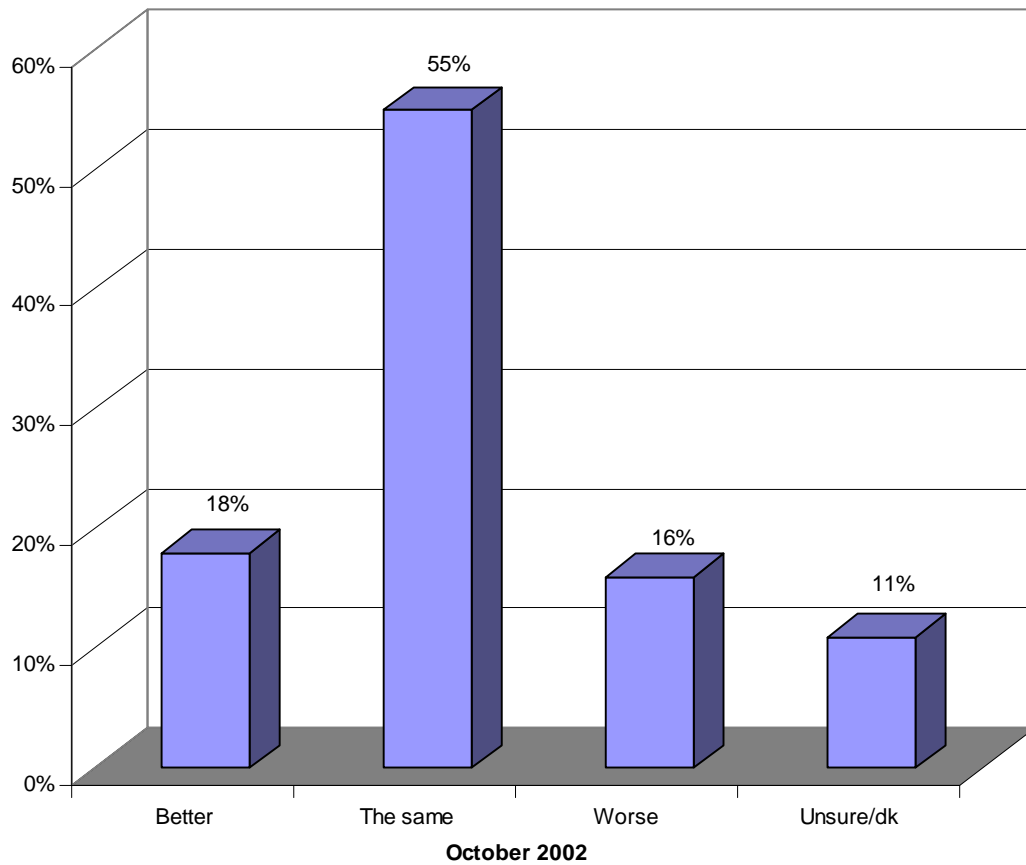


- Approximately 43% of Saskatchewan residents think provincial income taxes in Saskatchewan have increased during the past three years, 30% think they have stayed the same and 21% think provincial taxes have decreased.

## 2.0 LEARNING

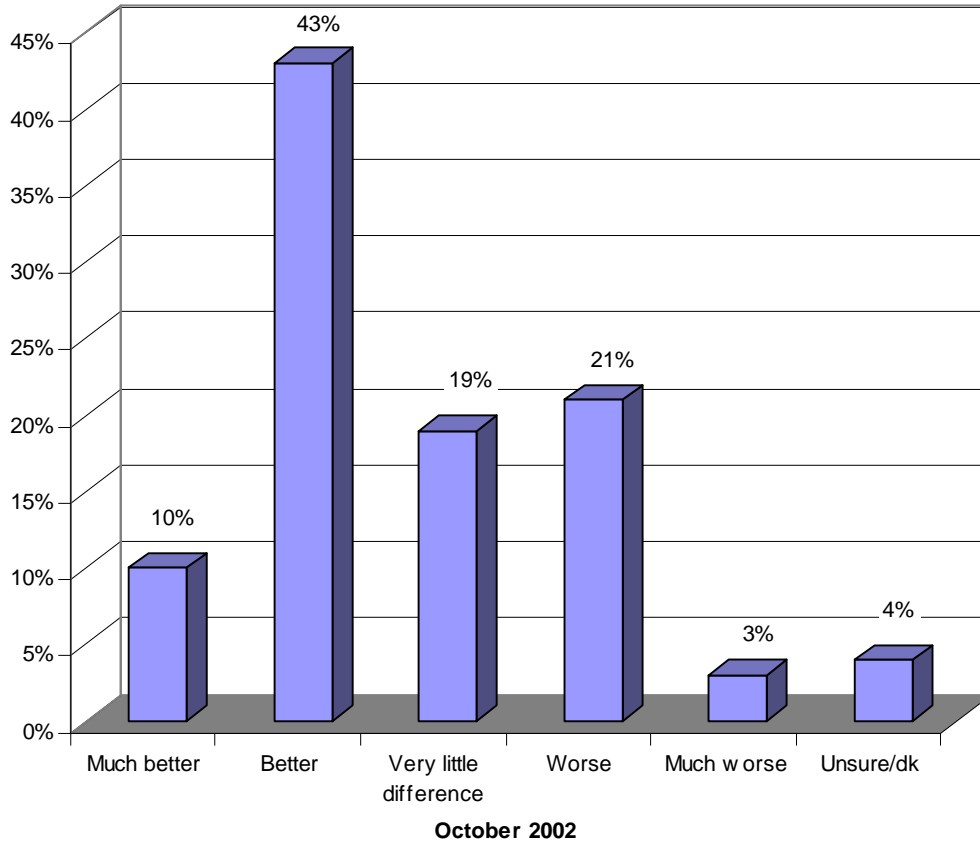
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**Question 6.** Compared to the rest of the country, do you think the education system in Saskatchewan is better, the same or worse?



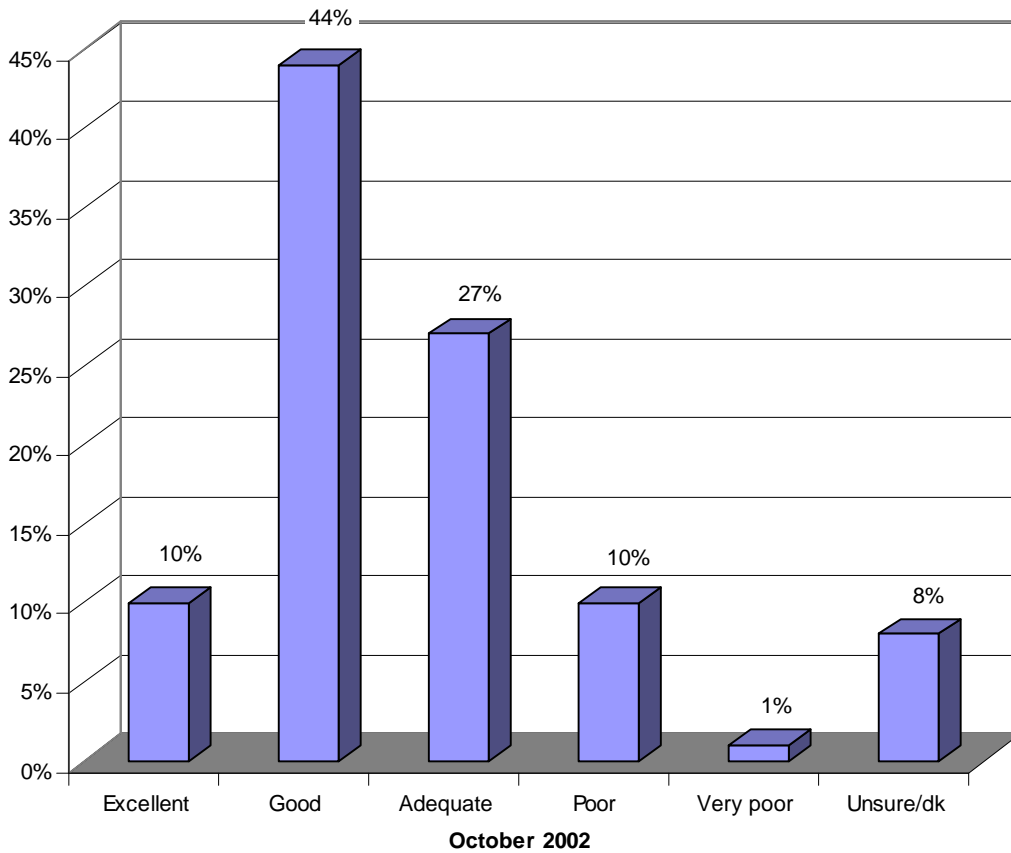
- Approximately three quarters (73%) of residents think the education system in Saskatchewan is the same or better than that of the rest of the country.

**Question 7.** 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?



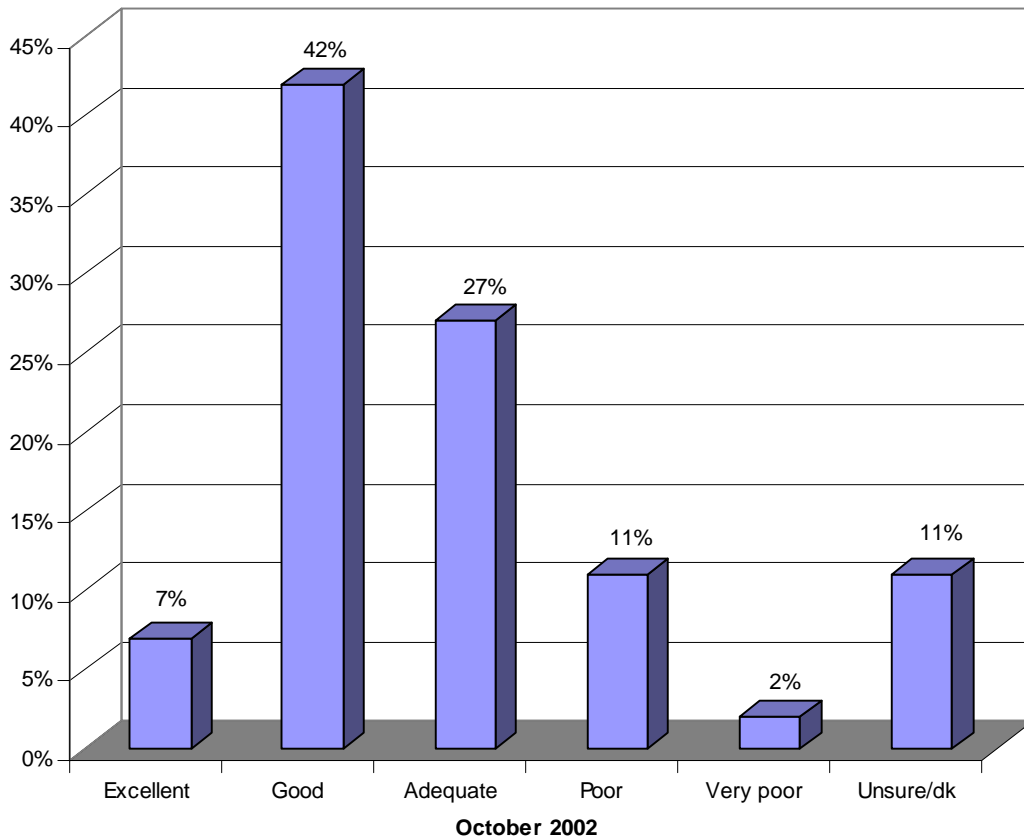
- The majority (53%) of Saskatchewan residents believe students' education today is better than the education they received; 19% believe there is very little difference.

**Question 8.** Do you think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



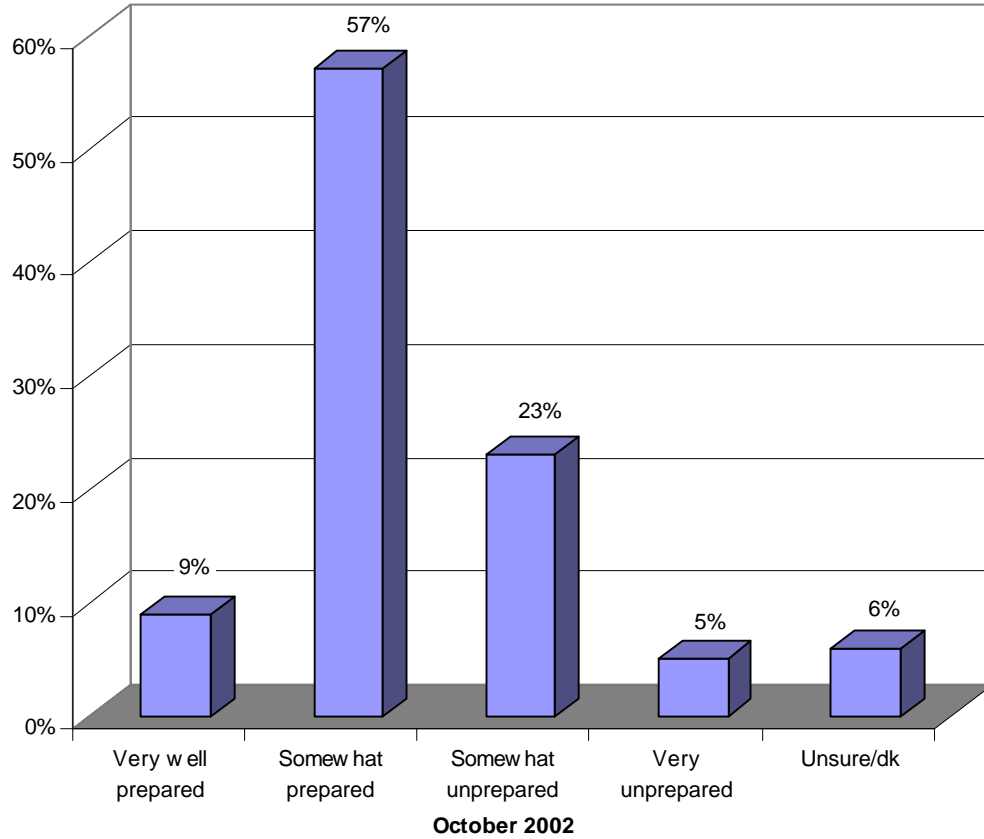
- More than three quarters (81%) of Saskatchewan residents think the quality of elementary education in Saskatchewan is adequate or better; the majority believe that the quality is good or excellent.

**Question 9.** Do you think the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is generally excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor?



- More than three quarters (76%) of Saskatchewan residents think the quality of secondary or high school education in Saskatchewan is adequate or better.

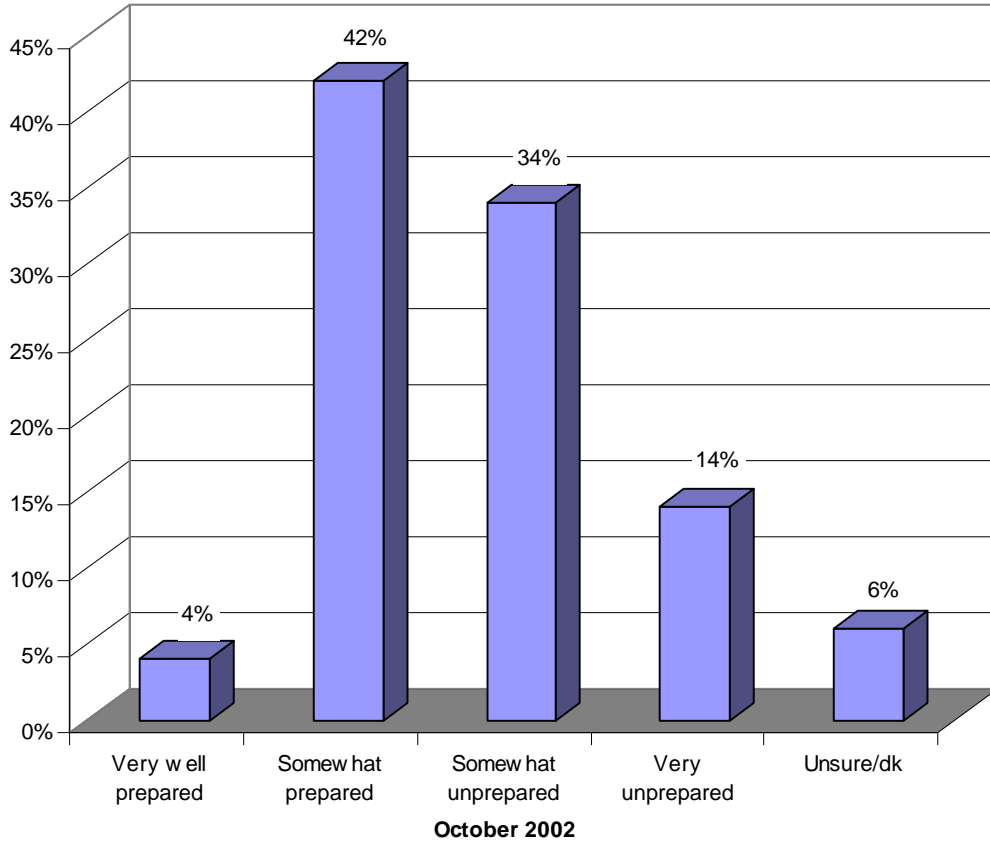
**Question 10.** Which best describes how well prepared you think Saskatchewan high school students are for entering post-secondary institutions like colleges or universities? Do you think they are very well prepared, only somewhat prepared, somewhat unprepared or very unprepared?



- Approximately two thirds (66%) of residents think Saskatchewan high school students are prepared for entering post-secondary institutions like colleges or universities.



**Question 11.** How well prepared do 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?

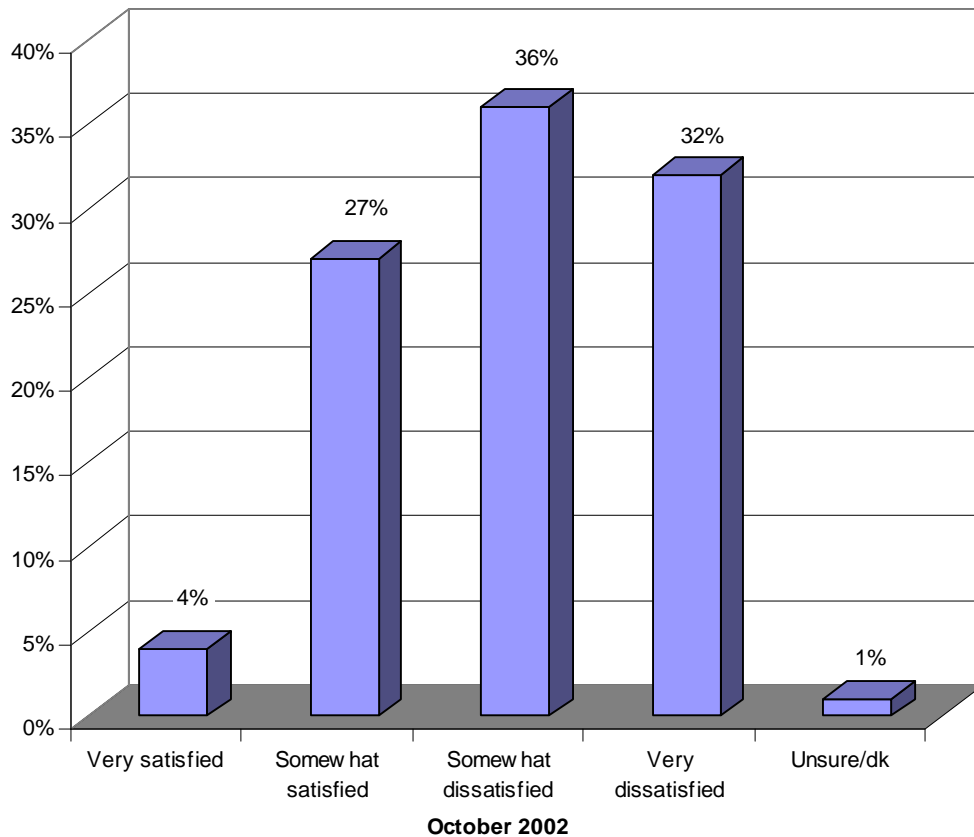


- Approximately 46% of residents think Saskatchewan high school students are prepared for entering the workforce.

## 3.0 HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

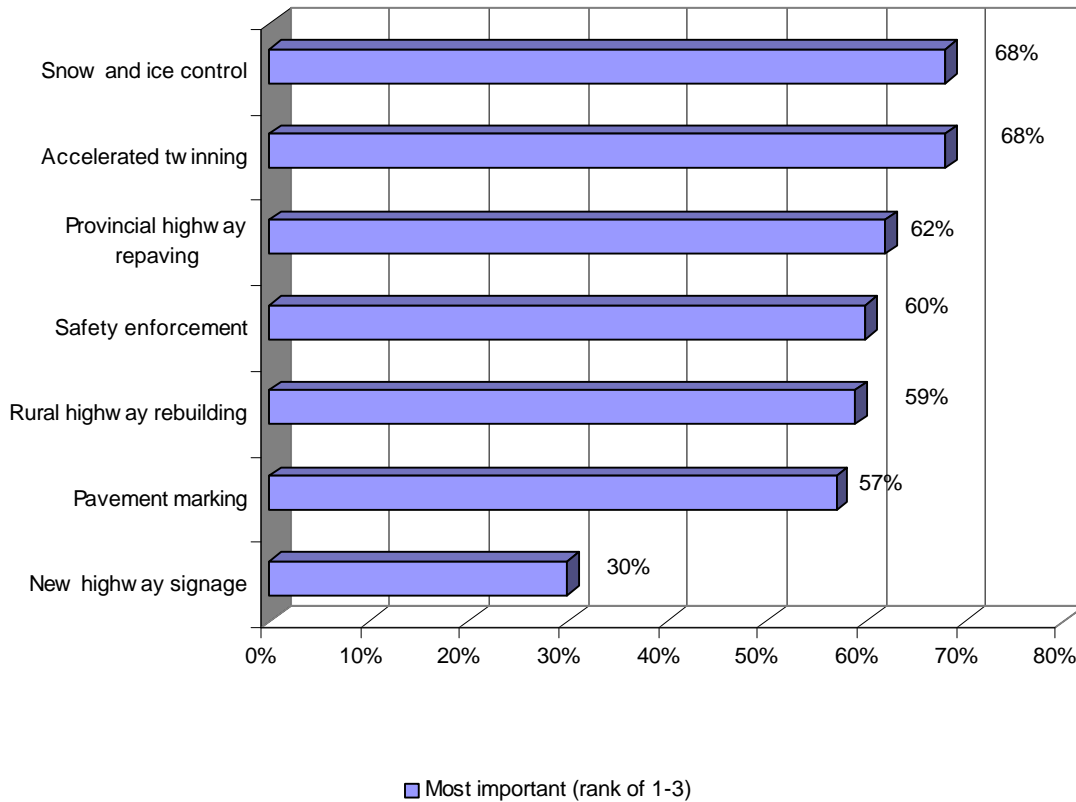
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**Question 12.** When you think of the overall provincial highway system, are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the system?



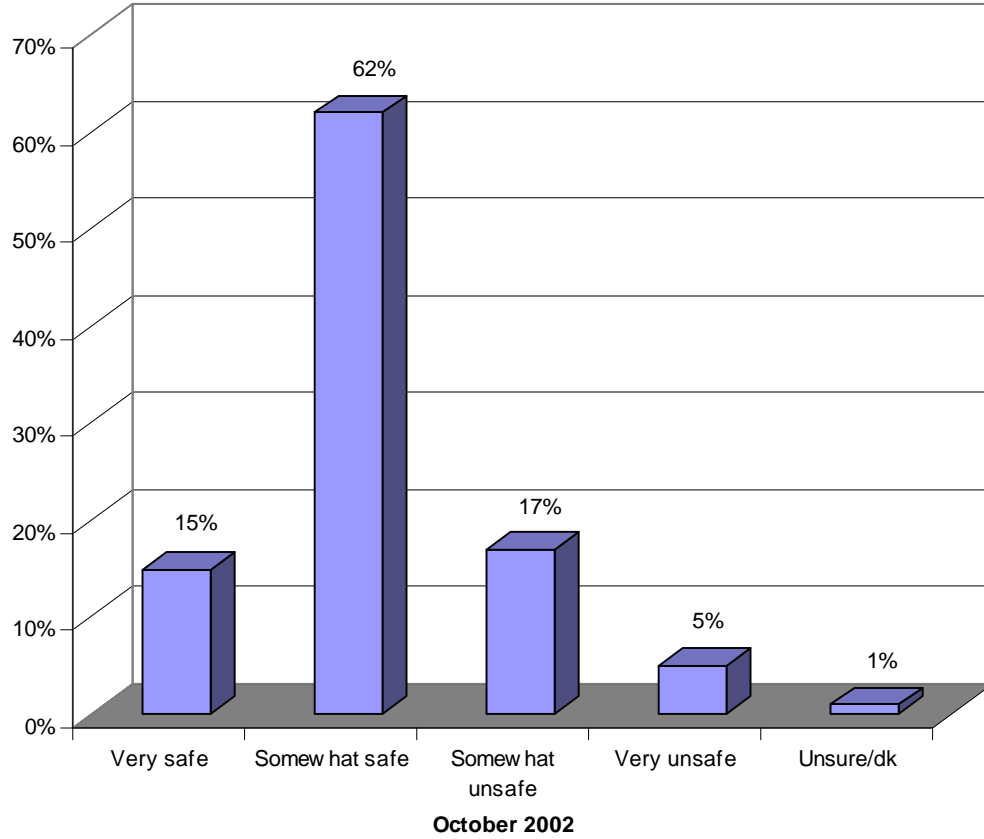
- Approximately one third (31%) of Saskatchewan residents are satisfied with the overall provincial highway system; 68% are at least somewhat dissatisfied.

**Question 13.** Out of a scale of 1 – 10, with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least important, how important do you rate each of the following: (ROTATE)



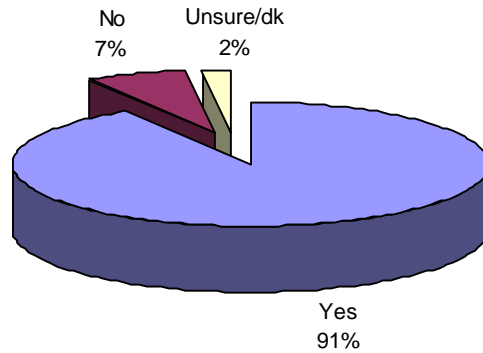
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents rate snow and ice control (68%), accelerated twinning (68%), provincial highway repaving (62%), safety enforcement (60%), rural highway rebuilding (59%) and pavement marking (57%) highly in terms of importance (rank of 1 to 3).

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



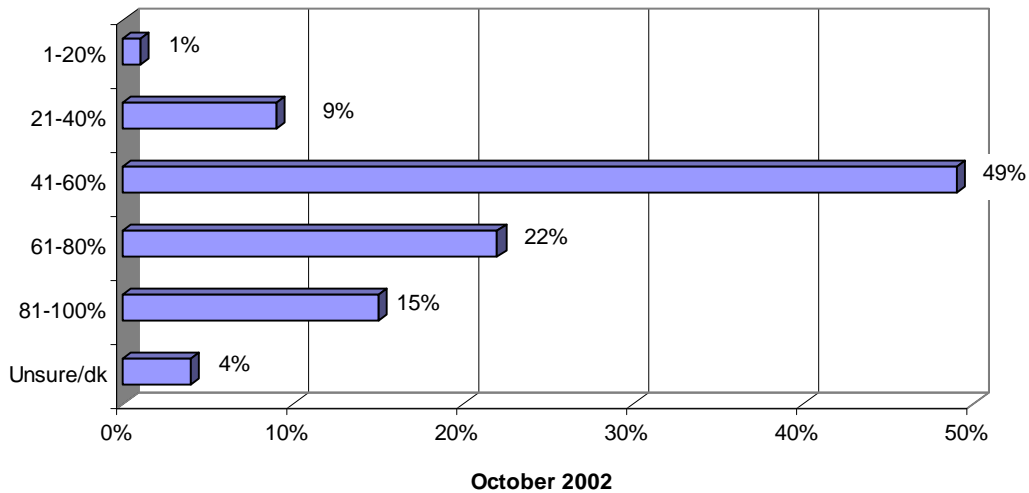
- More than three quarters (77%) of residents feel safe when they are driving on Saskatchewan highways.

**Question 15.** Recently the federal government has talked about twinning the national highway system from coast to coast. To date, the Saskatchewan government has paid 100 per cent of the twinning costs for the national highways in Saskatchewan. Do you think the federal government should pay for twinning the national highway?



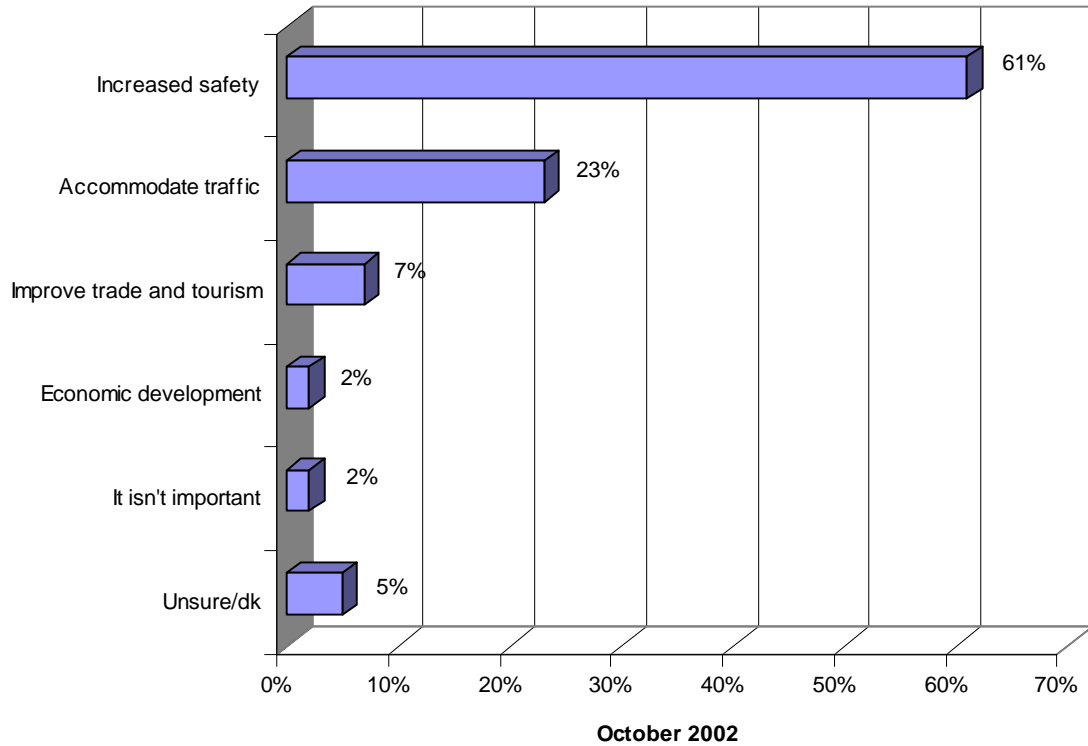
- The large majority (91%) of Saskatchewan residents think the federal government should pay for twinning the national highway.

**Question 16.** What percentage should the federal government pay?



- The majority of Saskatchewan residents believe the federal government should contribute almost one half or more of the cost for twinning the national highway.

**Question 17.** Why do you think twinning our national highway system is important to people in Saskatchewan?



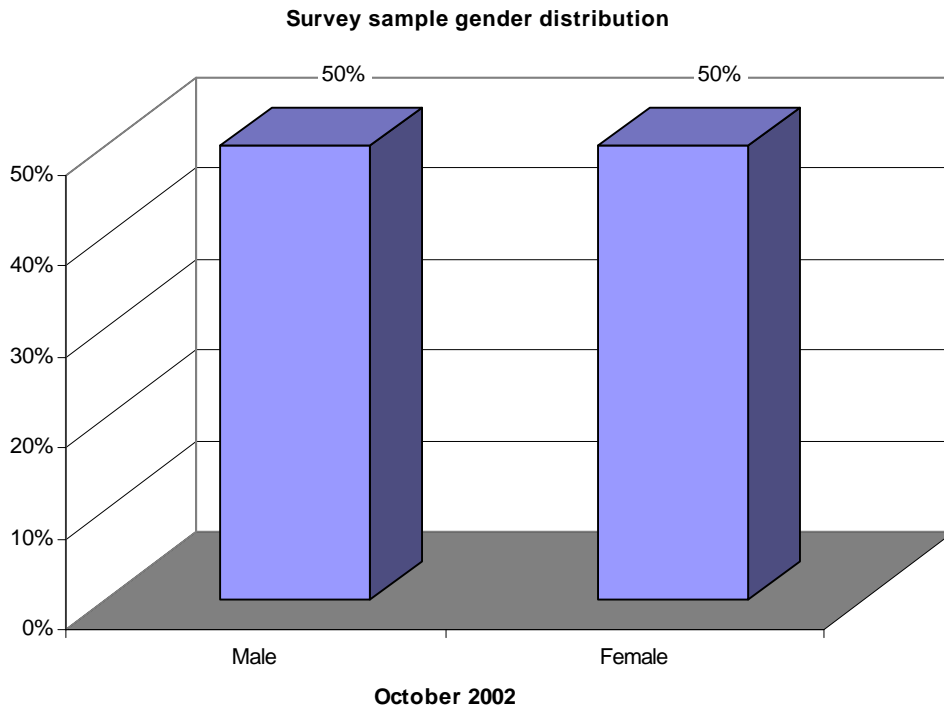
- The majority (61%) of Saskatchewan residents think increased safety is the most important reason to twin the national highway system.

## APPENDIX II SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

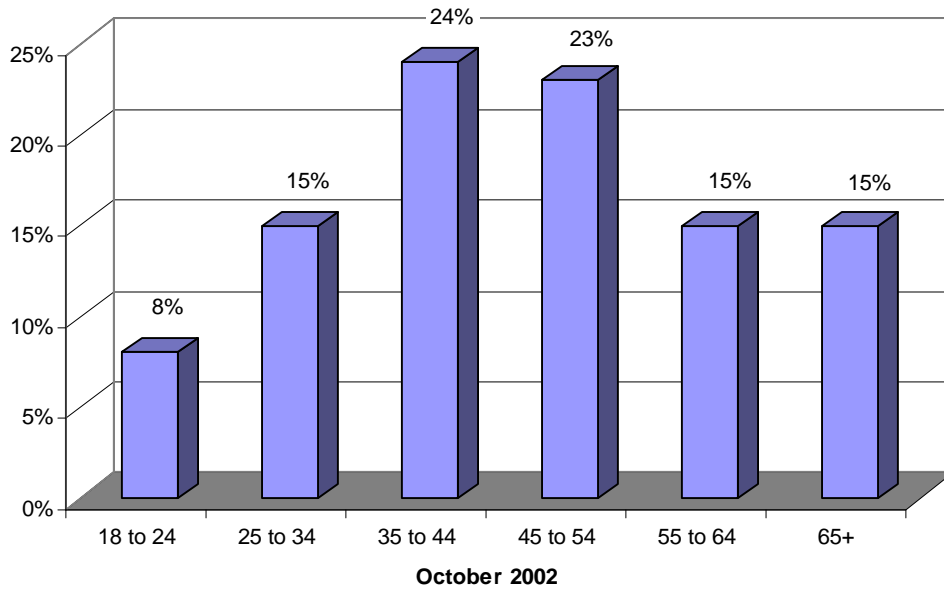
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The omnibus public opinion sample frame is constructed to facilitate proportionate representation of various demographic characteristics evident within the province of Saskatchewan. This ensures that opinions of all the various types of residents in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

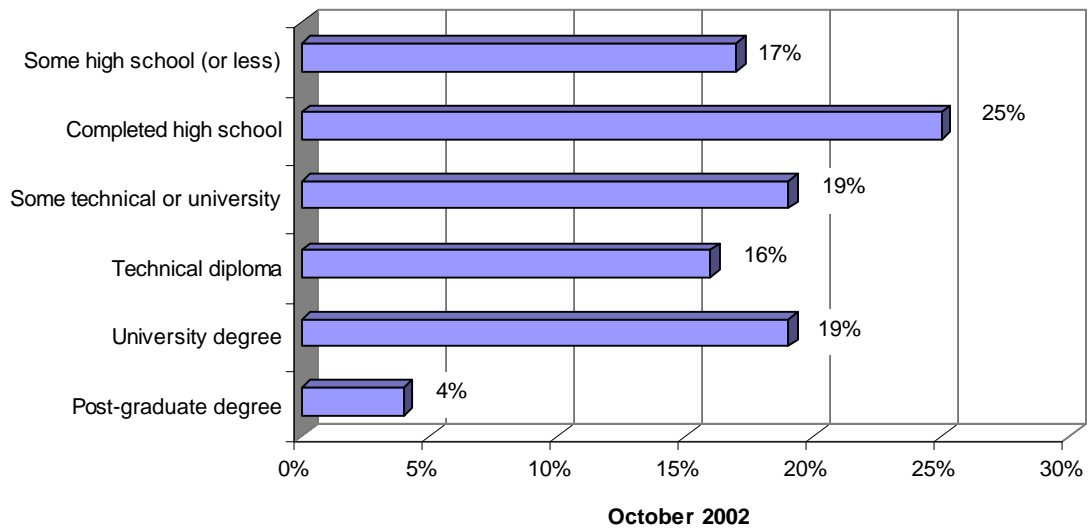
The omnibus survey sample size of 1,000 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error for the point estimates contained in this report of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.



**Survey sample age distribution**

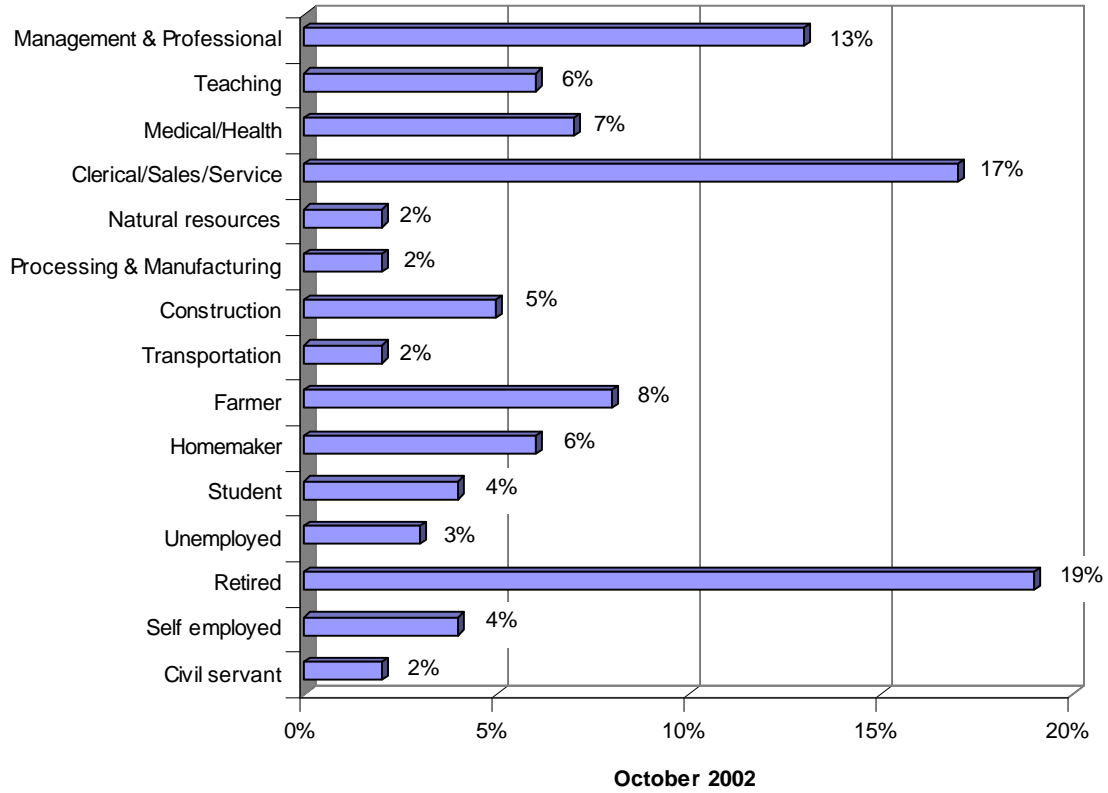


**Survey sample education distribution**

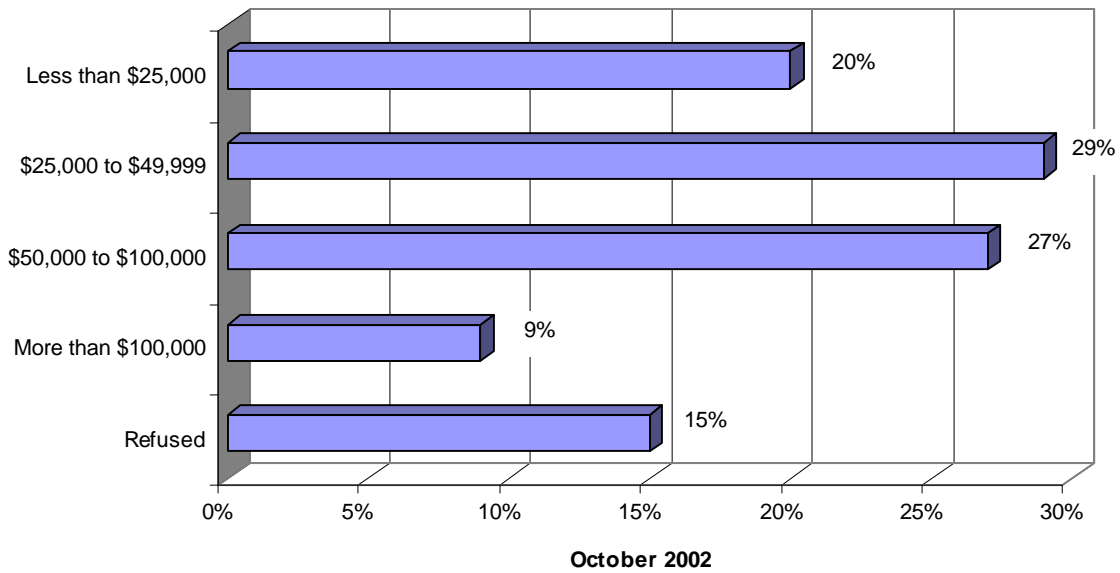




**Survey sample occupation distribution**



**Survey sample income distribution**



**Survey sample regional distribution**

