



Government of Saskatchewan

**Public Opinion Polling
and Market Research**

from July 1, 2001 to September 30, 2001

OMNIBUS
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

September 2001

Omnibus
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

Prepared for:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Federal issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include international issues, health care and the economy.
- Provincial issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include agriculture, health care, jobs and unemployment and provincial taxes.
- The majority of residents approve of the way the provincial government is handling the policing of communities, education and the environment.
- Few Saskatchewan residents are familiar with the Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation (SOCO), Innovation Place or Regina Research Park.
- The majority of residents approve of SOCO's mandate to invest in businesses and to operate research parks in order to contribute to economic development and support job creation.
- Approximately one third 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.
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents agree having access to the Internet is critical to the province's economic success. One half of residents are aware of CommunityNet, the plan to provide high speed Internet service to schools, health facilities and government offices in over 350 communities. The majority of residents have access to the Internet in their homes.
- The majority of residents agree Saskatchewan is a good or excellent place of opportunity.
- The majority of residents think Saskatchewan's economy is improving or staying about the same.
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents approve of increased funding for a program called the Serious and Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program and to expand serious crimes units.
- One half of residents are under the impression that the number of people in Saskatchewan receiving welfare has been increasing over the past four years.

METHODOLOGY

Fast Consulting was retained by the Government of Saskatchewan to conduct the September 2001 public opinion survey with a representative sample of the Saskatchewan population. The September 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;
- Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation;
- highways and transportation;
- economic and co-operative development;
- justice; and
- social services.

Questions for the survey were provided by Saskatchewan Executive Council 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.

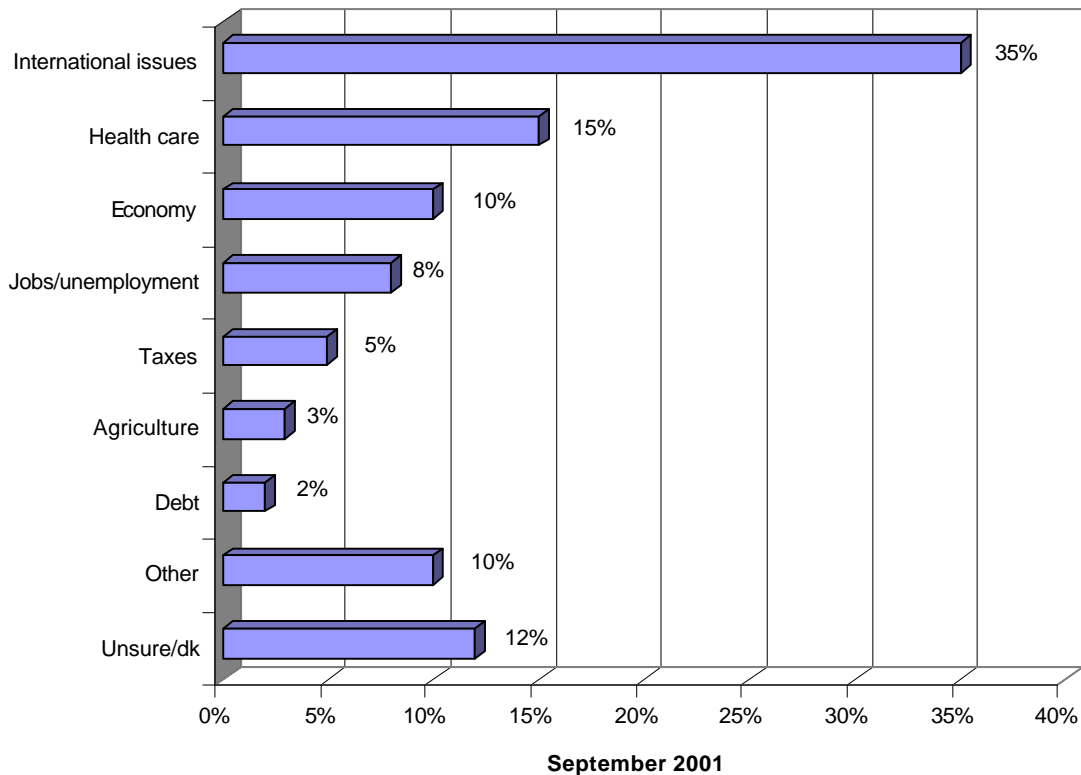
One thousand residents of the province were interviewed between Monday, September 17 and Tuesday, September 25, 2001. Interviews were conducted by telephone at times that were appropriate and convenient for respondents - weekdays between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. and weekends between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. All interviews were conducted by 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.

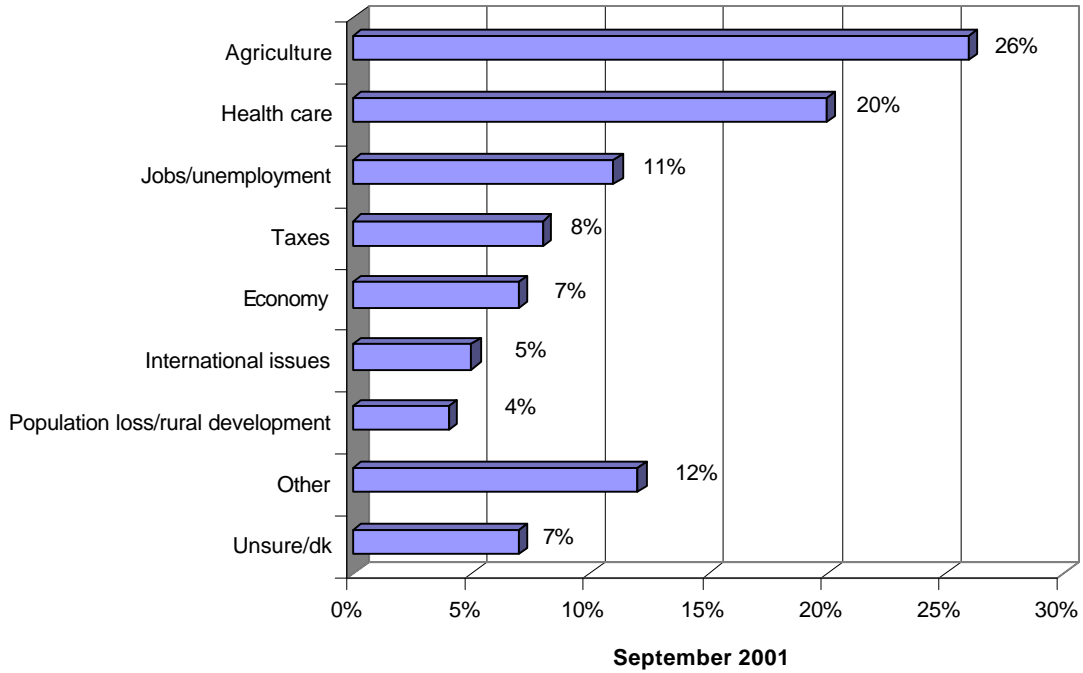
1.0 GENERAL ISSUES

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



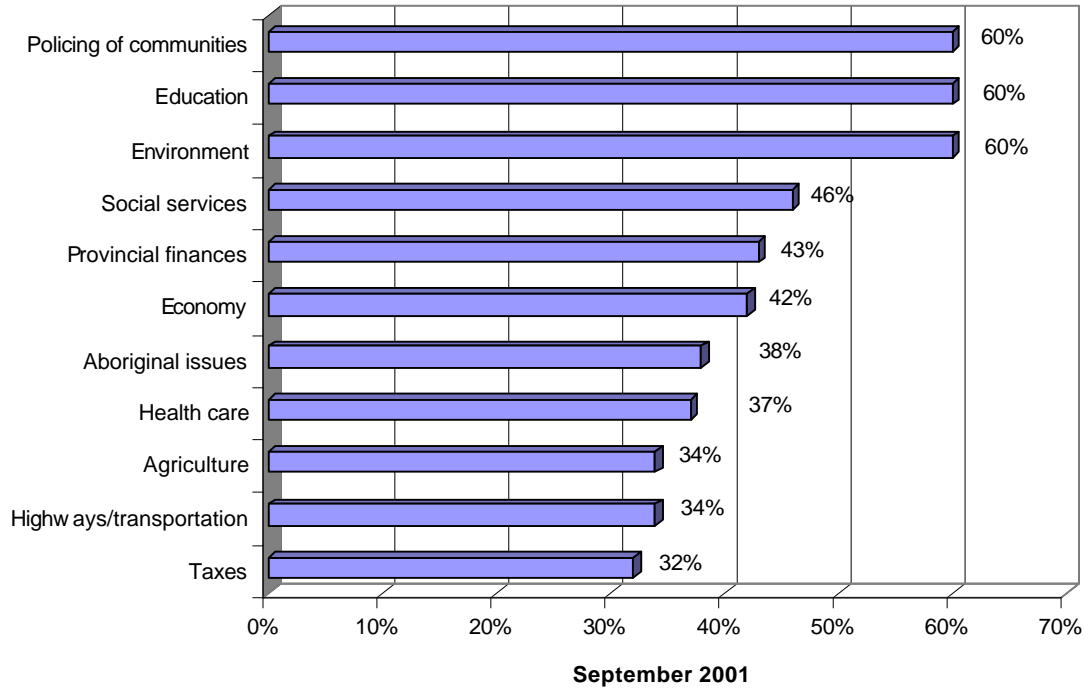
- According to 35% of Saskatchewan residents, the most important issue facing Canada today is international issues. This issue has come to the forefront in light of the September 11th terrorist attacks in the United States. Other important issues include the health care system (15%), the economy (10%), jobs and unemployment (8%), federal taxes (5%), agriculture (3%) and the national deficit and accumulated debt (2%).
- Approximately 10% of respondents are primarily concerned with 'other' issues such as the federal government in general (2%), national unity (1%), education (1%), children and youth (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 26% of Saskatchewan residents, is agriculture. Approximately 20% of residents are concerned primarily with health care, 11% with jobs and unemployment, 8% with provincial taxes and 7% are concerned with the provincial economy.
- Included among 'other' important issues identified by 12% of respondents are the provincial debt (2%), Native issues (2%), education (1%), fuel prices (1%) and the provincial government in general (1%),

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

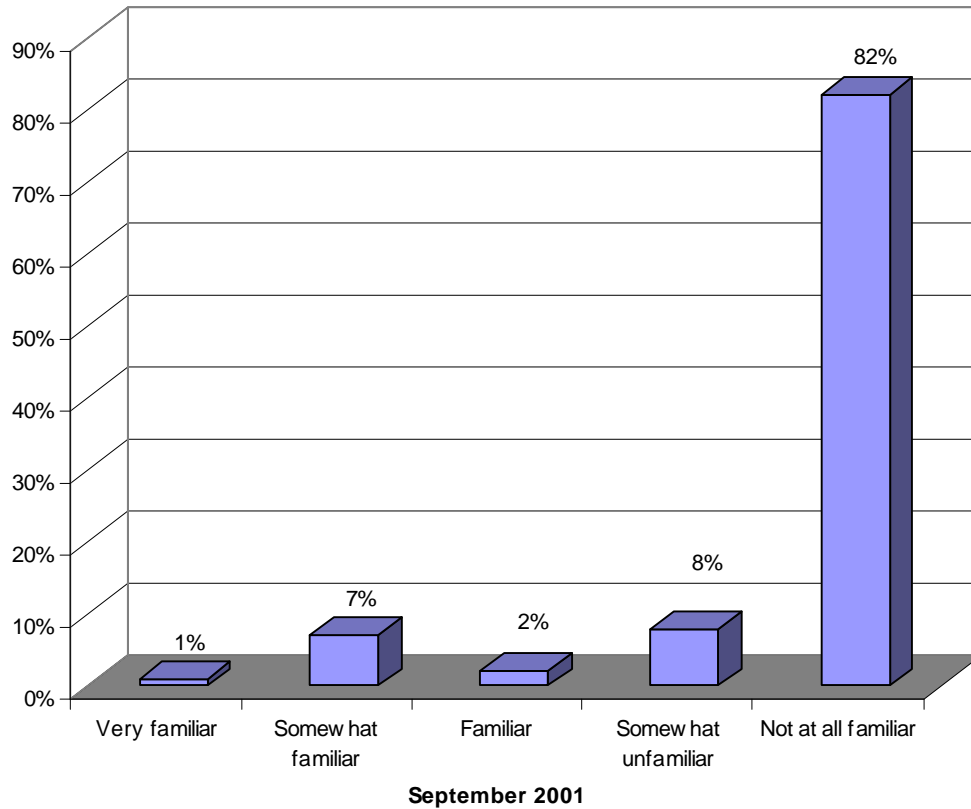


Note: the above chart combines strongly and moderately approve to give a combined approval rating.

- The majority of Saskatchewan residents approve of the way the provincial government is handling the policing of communities (60%), education (60%) and the environment (60%).
- More than one third approve of the way the provincial government is handling social services (46%), provincial finances (43%), the economy (42%), Aboriginal issues (38%), health care (37%), agriculture (34%) and highways and transportation (34%).
- More than one quarter approve of the way the provincial government is handling taxes (32%).

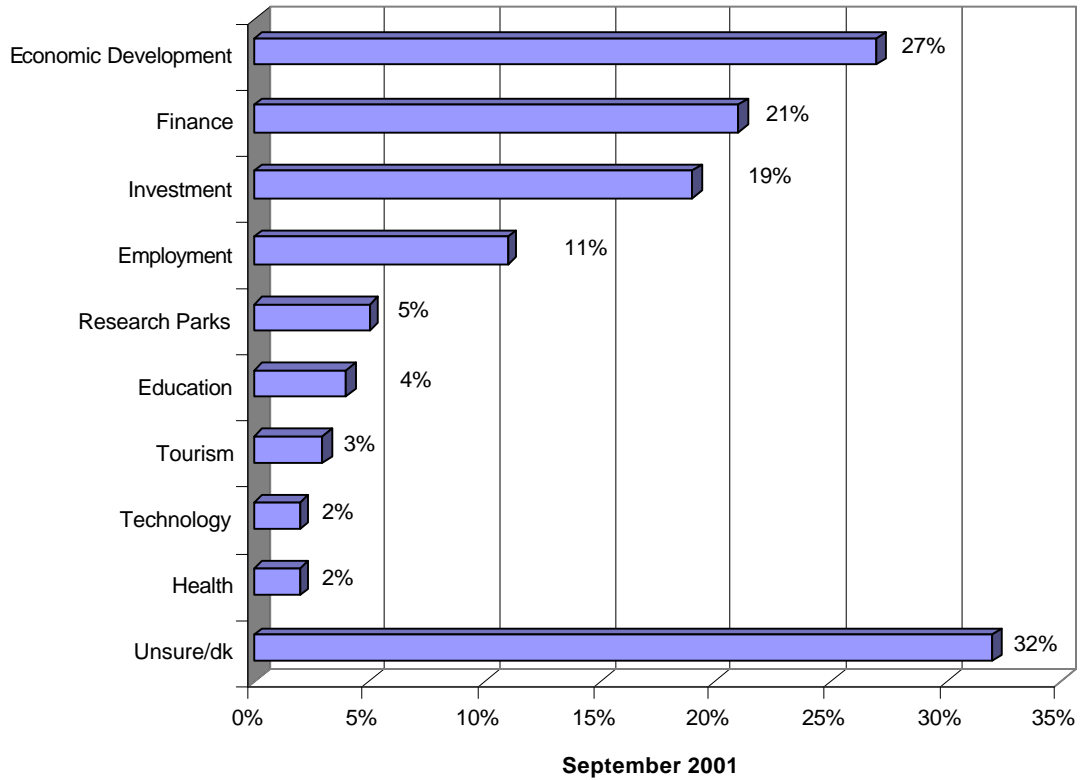
2.0 SASKATCHEWAN OPPORTUNITIES CORPORATION

Question 4. How familiar are you with the Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation, also called SOCO?



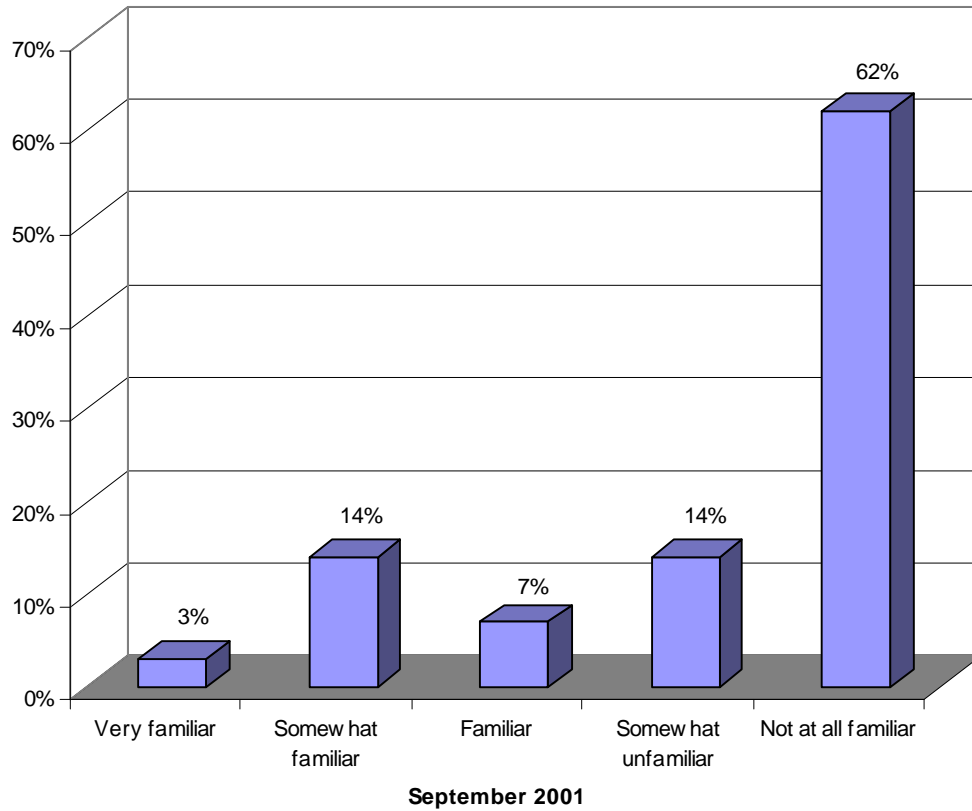
- The large majority (82%) of residents are not familiar with the Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation.

Question 5. If you are familiar with SOCO, what business would you say SOCO is in?



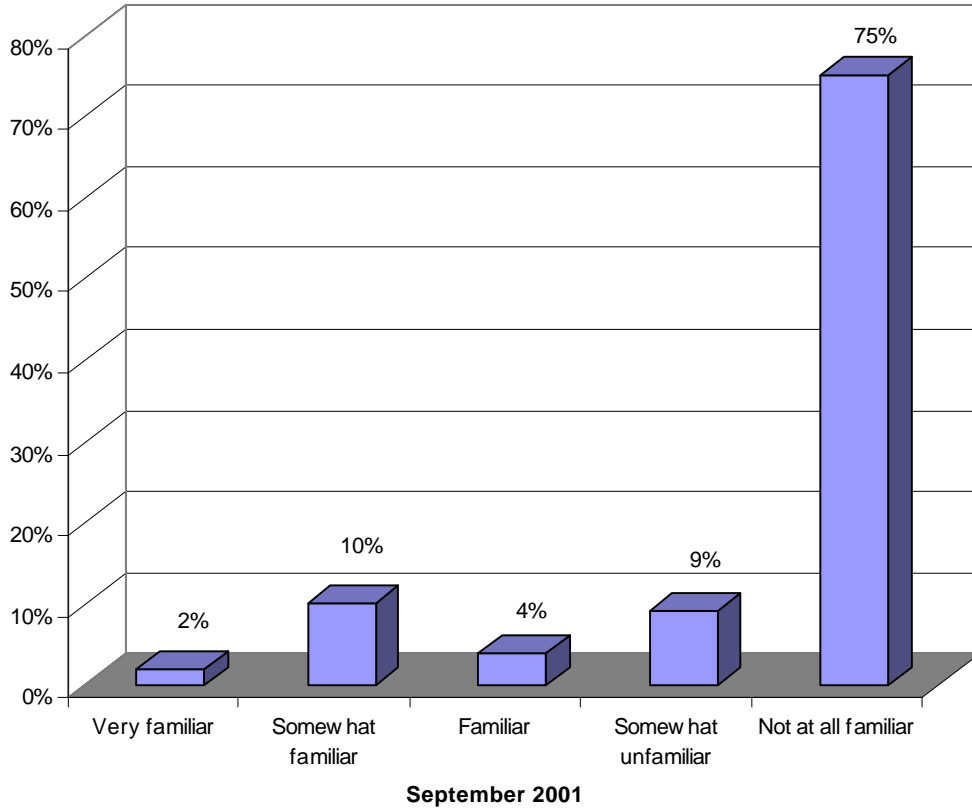
- More than one quarter (27%) of those residents who are familiar with SOCO think the organization is involved in economic development (3% of all respondents), 21% think SOCO is involved in the finance industry (2% of all respondents) and 19% think SOCO is involved in investments (2% of all respondents).

Question 6. How familiar are you with Innovation Place in Saskatoon?



- Although the majority (62%) of residents are not familiar with Innovation Place in Saskatoon, almost one quarter (24%) of the population are at least somewhat familiar with it.

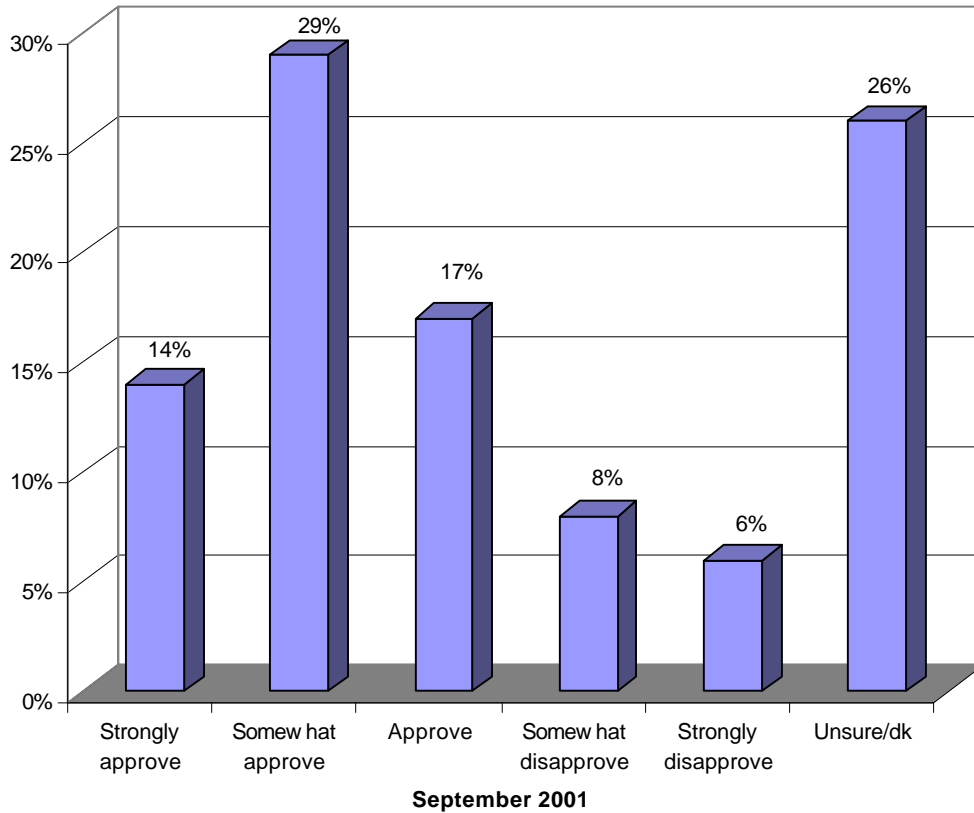
Question 7. How familiar are you with Regina Research Park?



- Three quarters (75%) of Saskatchewan residents are not at all familiar with Regina Research Park.

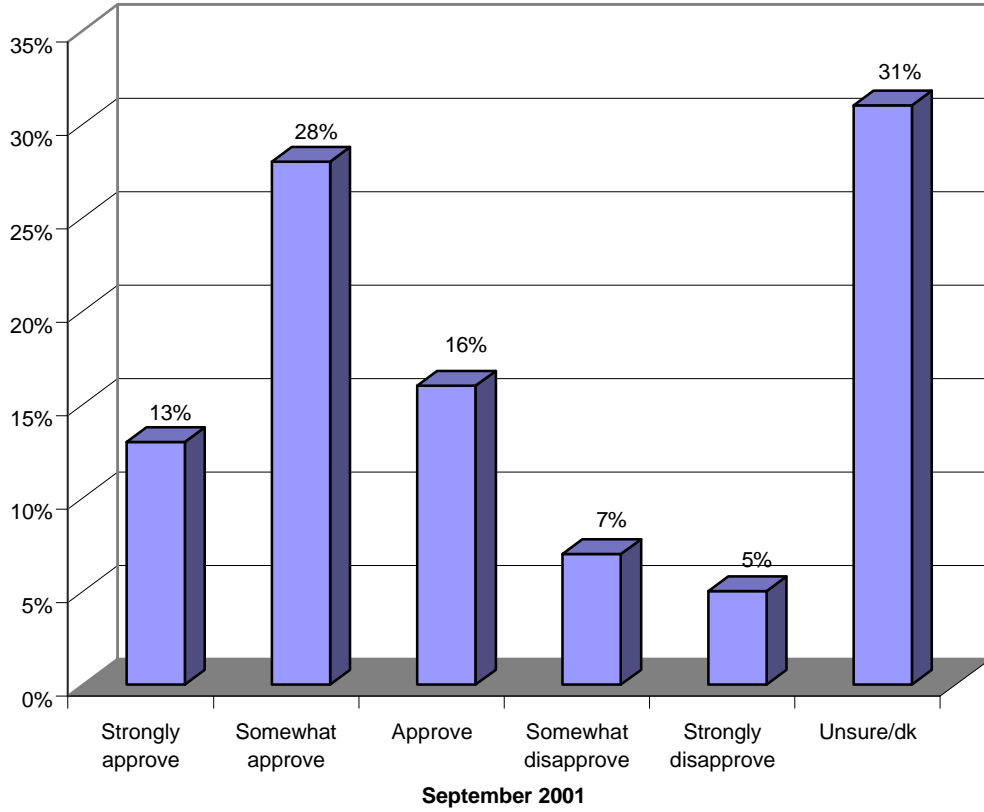
SOCO has a dual mandate to invest in businesses and to operate research parks in order to contribute to economic development and support job creation.

Question 8. Please indicate your level of approval of SOCO's mandate to invest in businesses. Do you strongly disapprove, somewhat disapprove, approve, somewhat approve or strongly approve?



- The majority (60%) of residents approve of SOCO's mandate to invest in businesses.

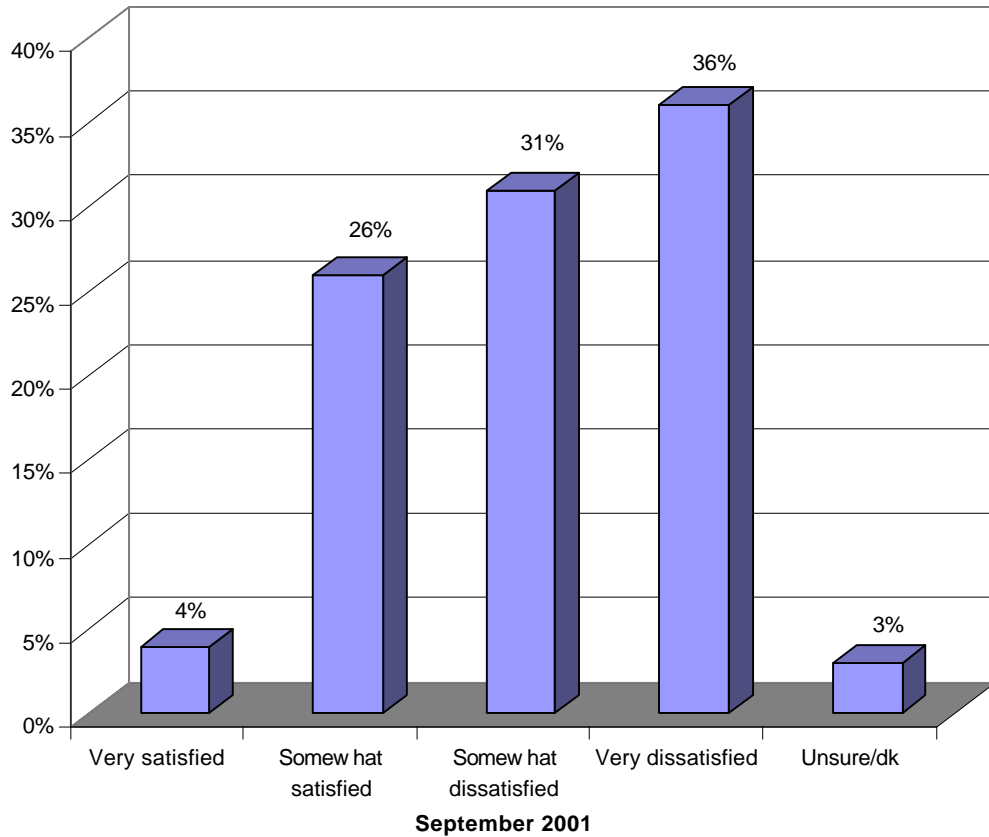
Question 9. Please indicate your level of approval of SOCO's mandate to operate research parks. Do you strongly disapprove, somewhat disapprove, approve, somewhat approve or strongly approve?



- The majority (57%) of residents approve of SOCO's mandate to operate research parks.

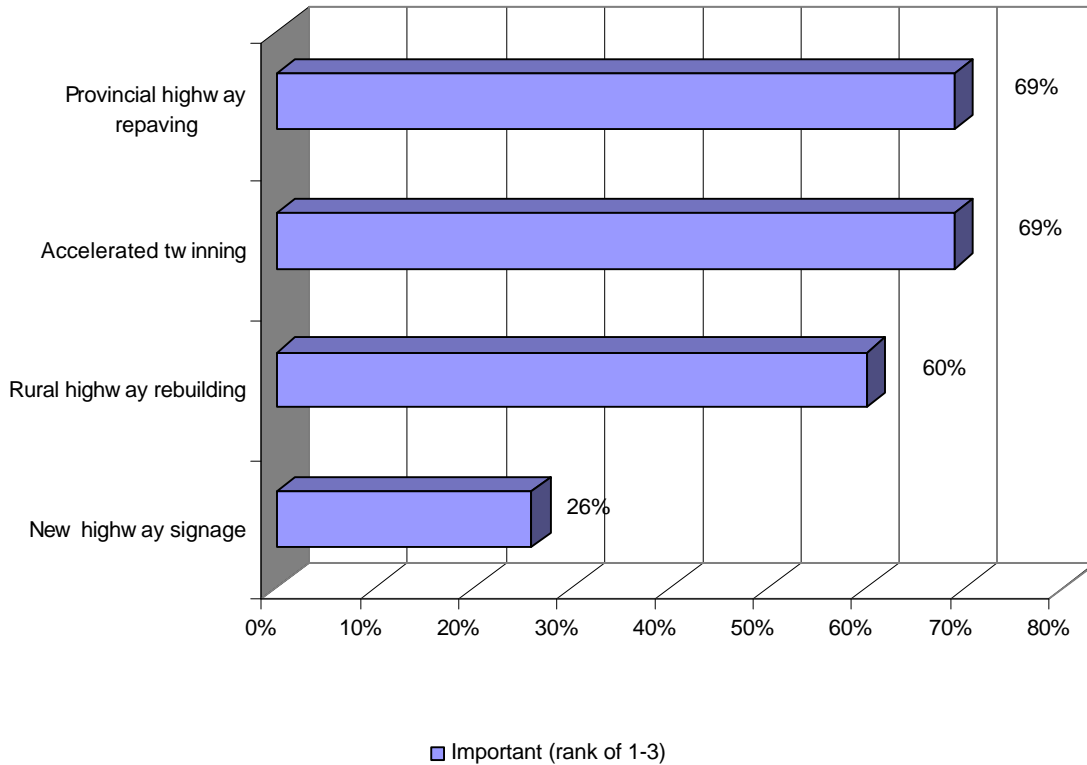
3.0 HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

Question 10. When you think of the overall provincial highway system, are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the system?



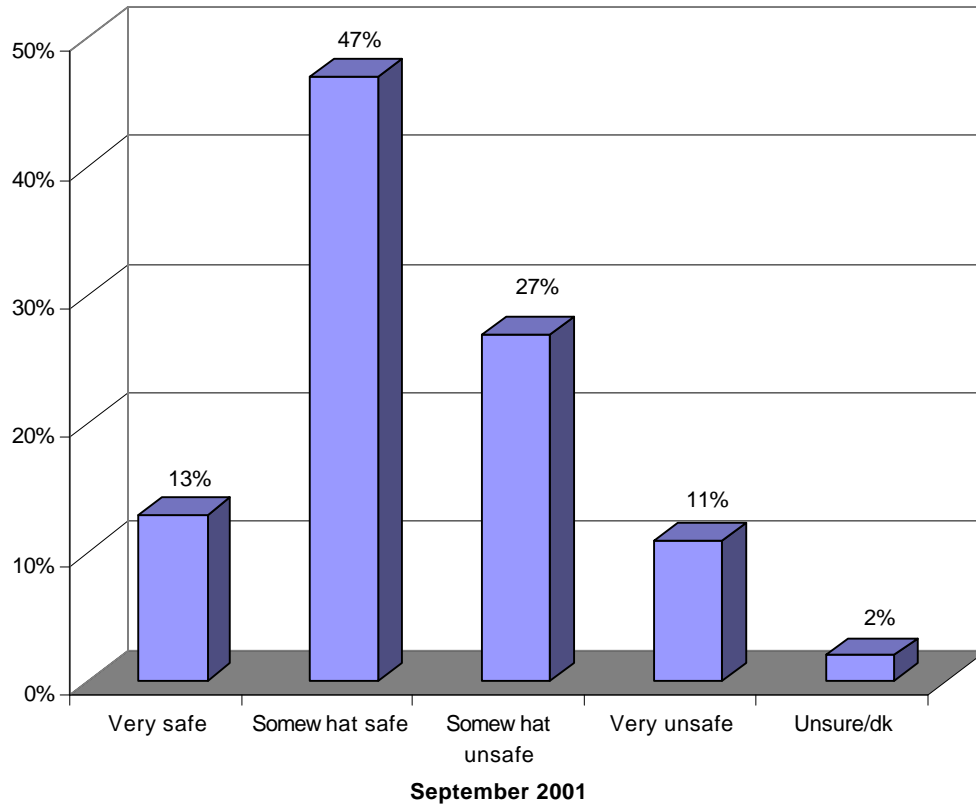
- Approximately 30% of Saskatchewan residents are satisfied with the overall provincial highway system; two thirds (67%) are dissatisfied.

Question 11. Out of 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 majority of Saskatchewan residents rate provincial highway repaving (69%), accelerated twinning (69%) and rural highway rebuilding (60%) as important (rank of 1 to 3).

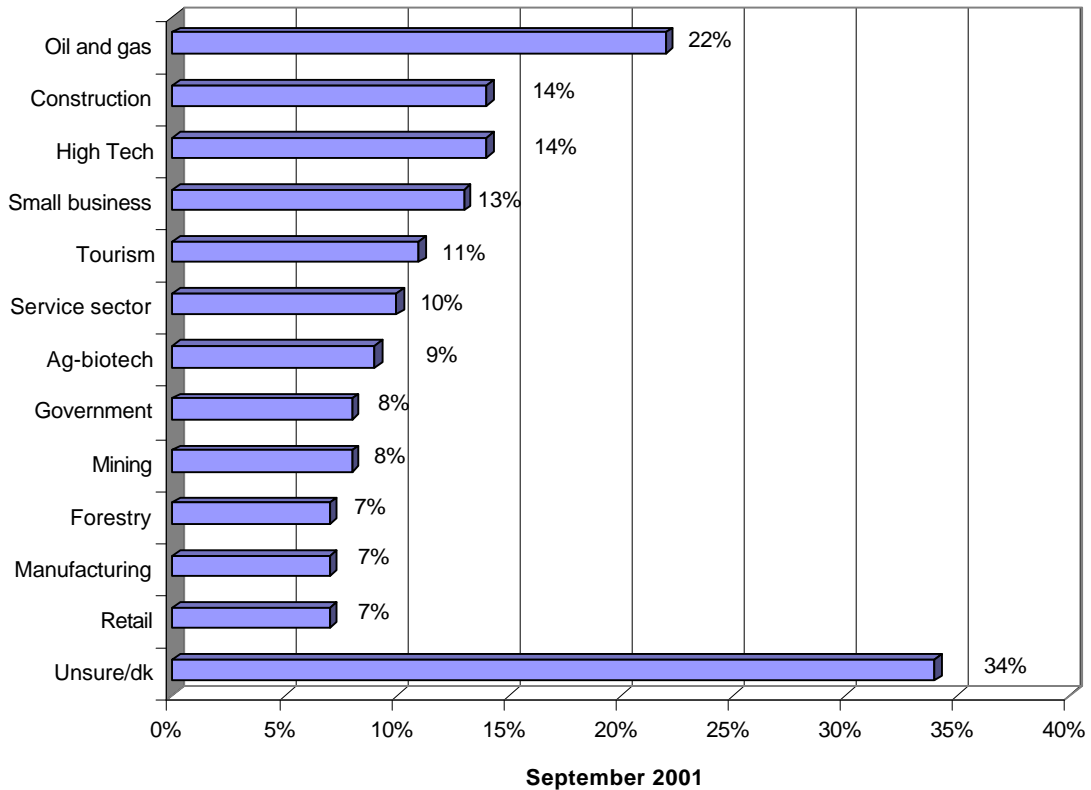
Question 12. Overall when driving on Saskatchewan's highways do you personally feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe?



- The majority (60%) of residents feel safe when they are driving on Saskatchewan highways.

4.0 ECONOMIC & CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

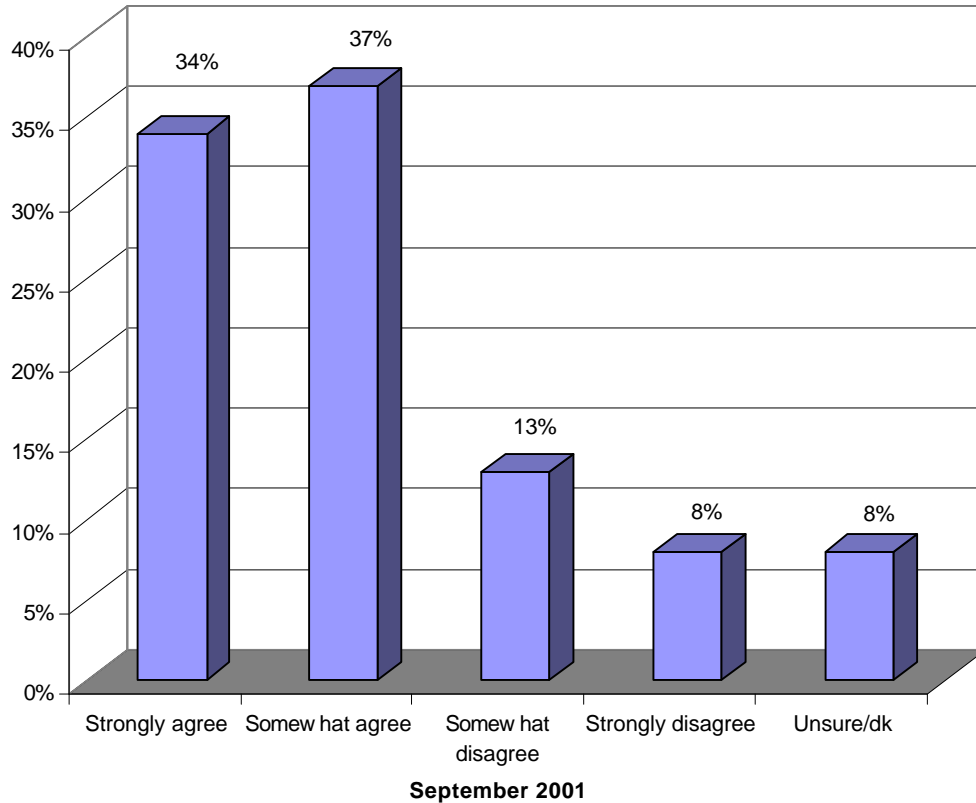
Question 13. What two sectors of the economy do you think have created more jobs in the past year or two?



- Approximately 22% of Saskatchewan residents select the oil and gas sector as their first or second response as a sector of the economy they think has created more jobs in the past year or two, 14% select construction, another 14% select high technology, 13% select small business, 11% select tourism and 10% select the service sector as their first or second choice.

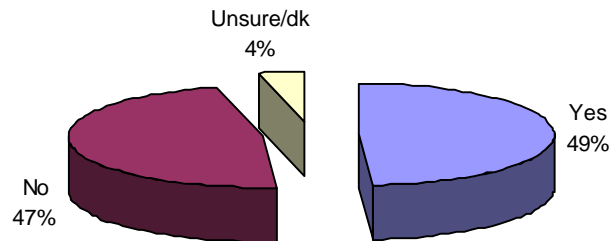
Question 14. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with following statement:

Having access to the Internet is critical to the province's economic success.



- The majority (71%) of Saskatchewan residents agree having access to the Internet is critical to the province's economic success.

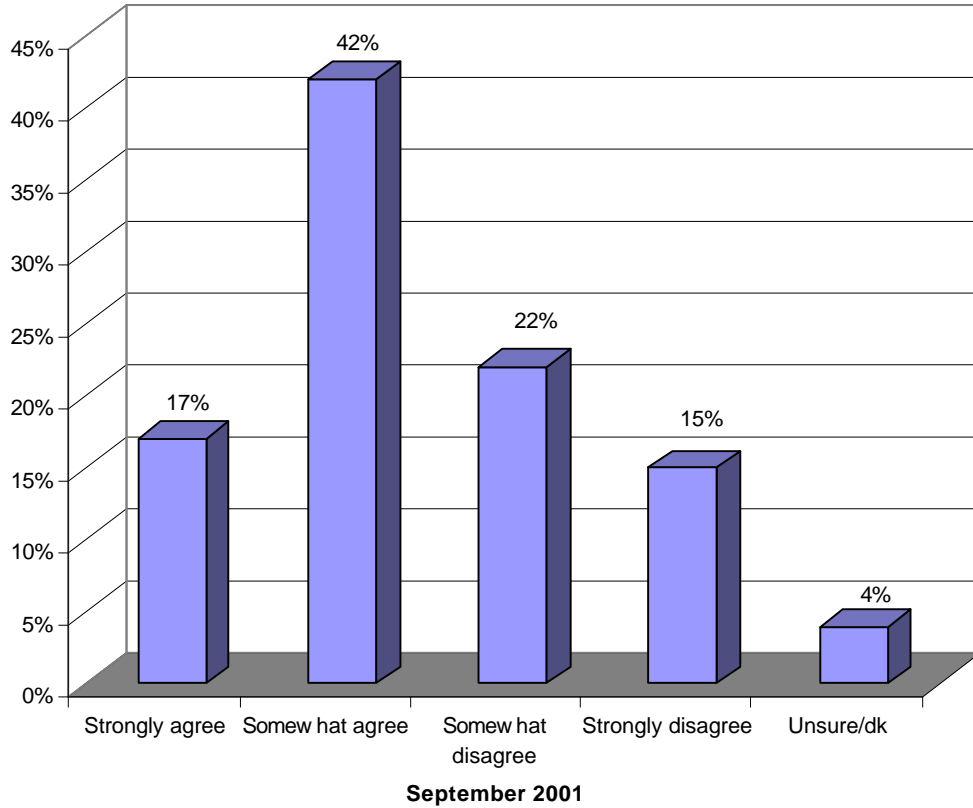
Question 15. Are you aware of CommunityNet, the plan to provide high speed Internet service to schools, health facilities and government offices in over 350 communities?



- Approximately one half (49%) of residents are aware of CommunityNet.

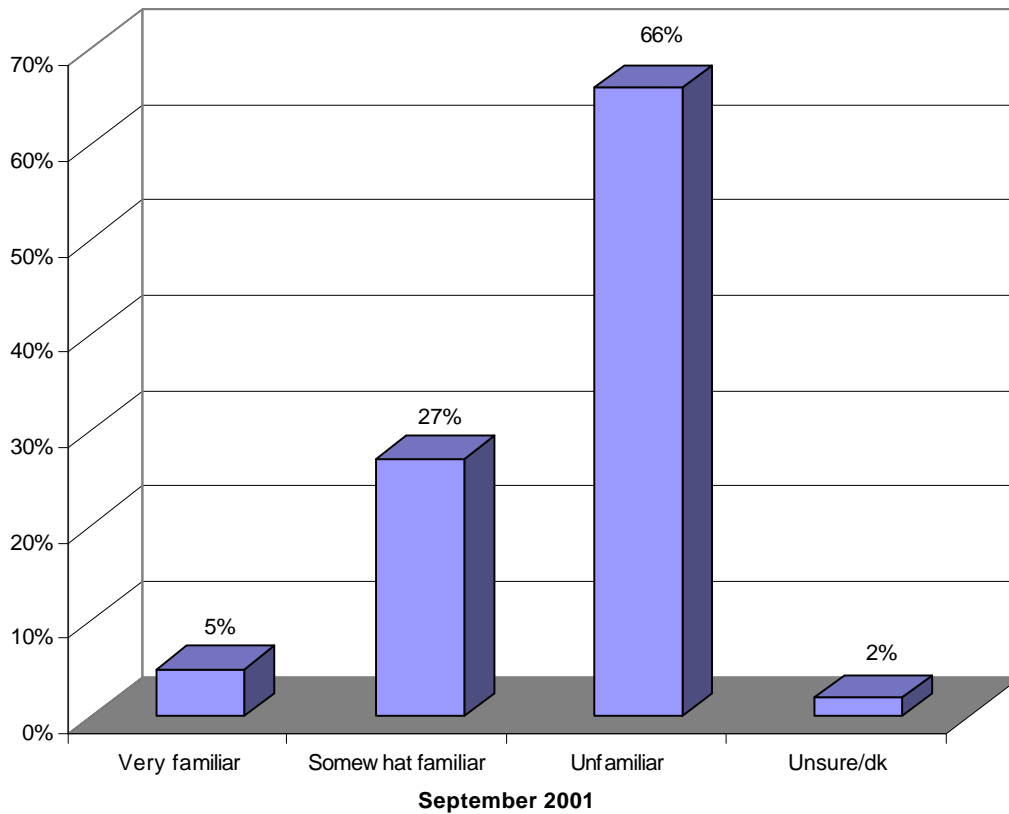
Question 16. Do you strongly agree, moderately agree, moderately disagree, strongly disagree or are unsure about the following statement:

Saskatchewan is a good or excellent place of opportunity.



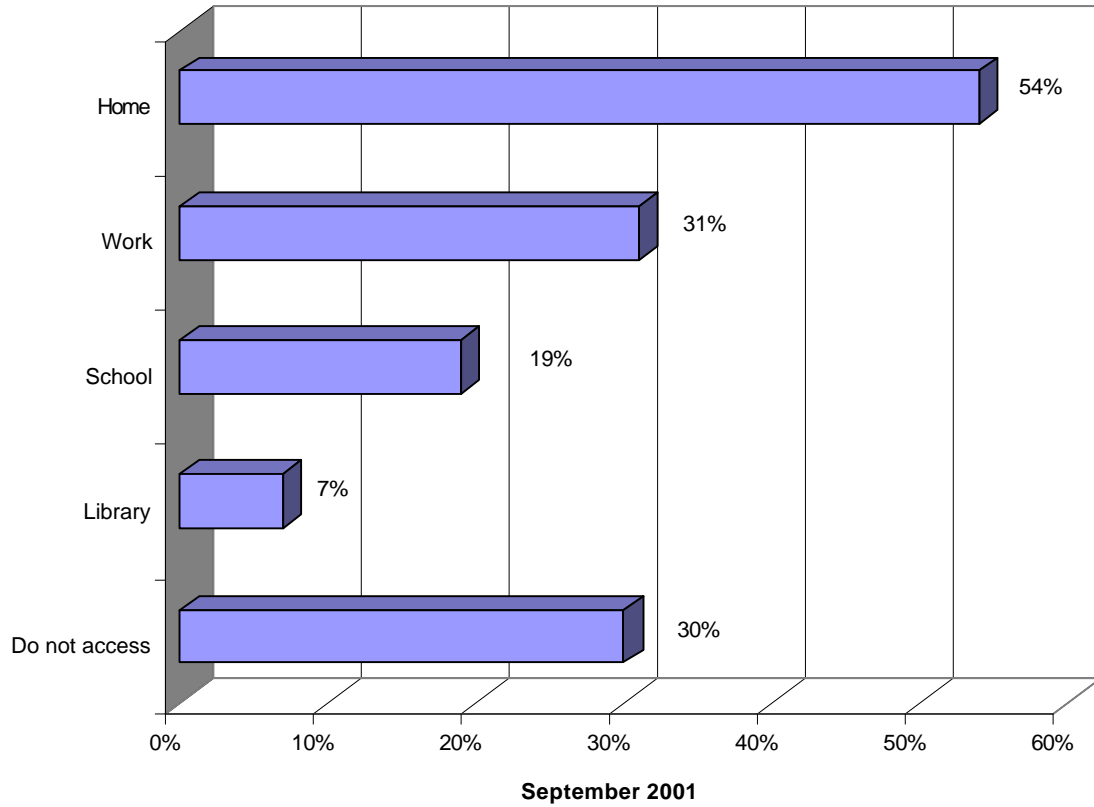
- The majority (59%) of residents agree Saskatchewan is a good or excellent place of opportunity.

Question 17. How familiar are you with the provincial REDA's (Regional Economic Development Authorities) and what they do? Are you very familiar, somewhat familiar or unfamiliar?



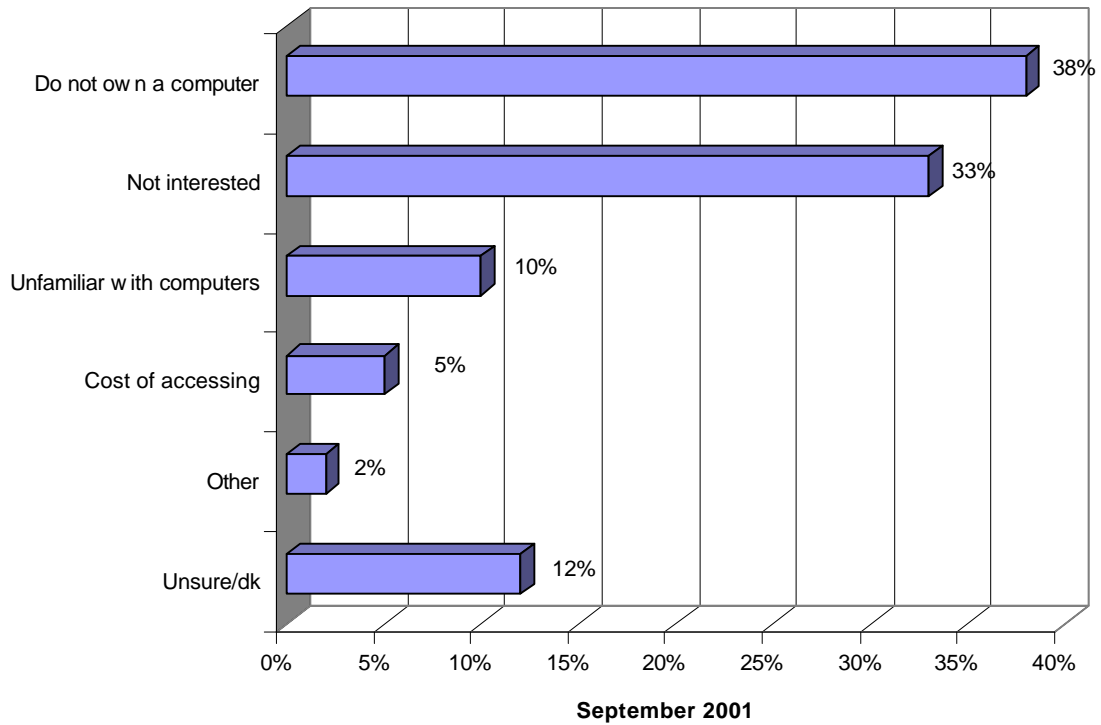
- Two thirds (66%) of Saskatchewan residents are unfamiliar with the provincial REDA's and what they do.

Question 18. Where do members of your household access the Internet?



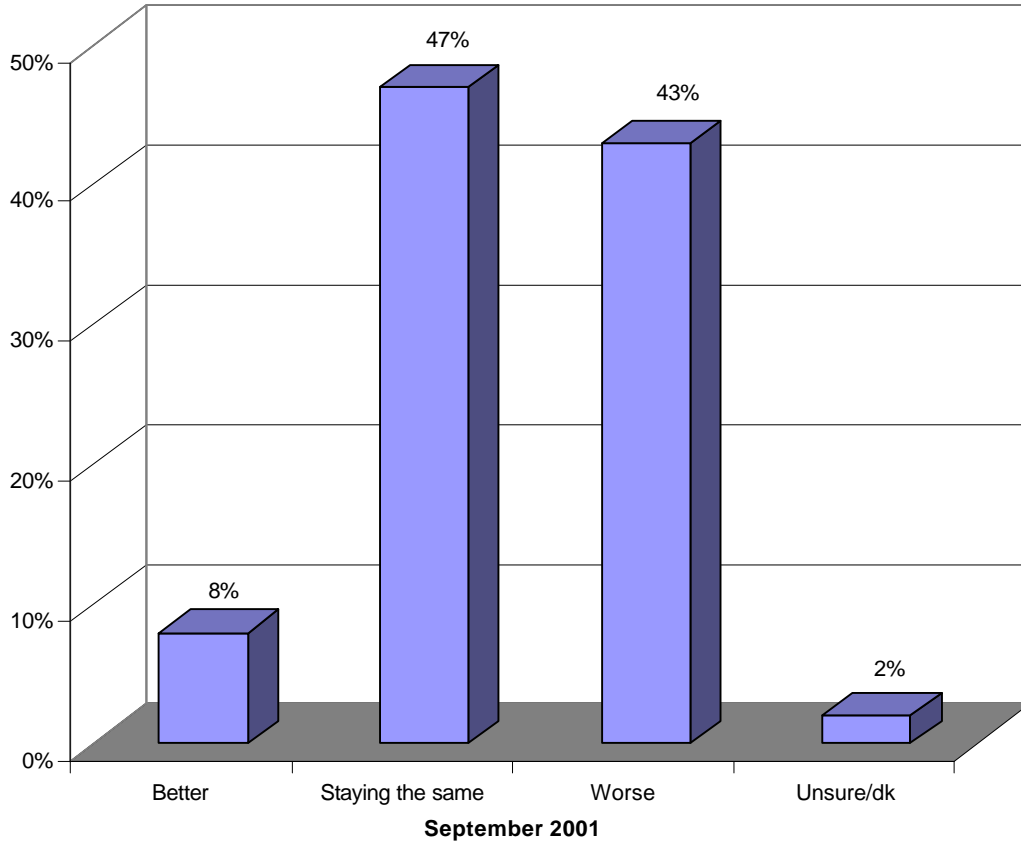
- The majority (54%) of residents indicate members of their household access the Internet from home, 31% access the Internet at work and 19% at school.

Question 19. If no one in your household accesses the Internet, what is the main reason?



- More than one third (38%) of residents indicate they do not access the Internet because they do not own a computer and 33% indicate they are not interested in accessing the Internet. Few people in Saskatchewan do not access the Internet for reasons related to cost.

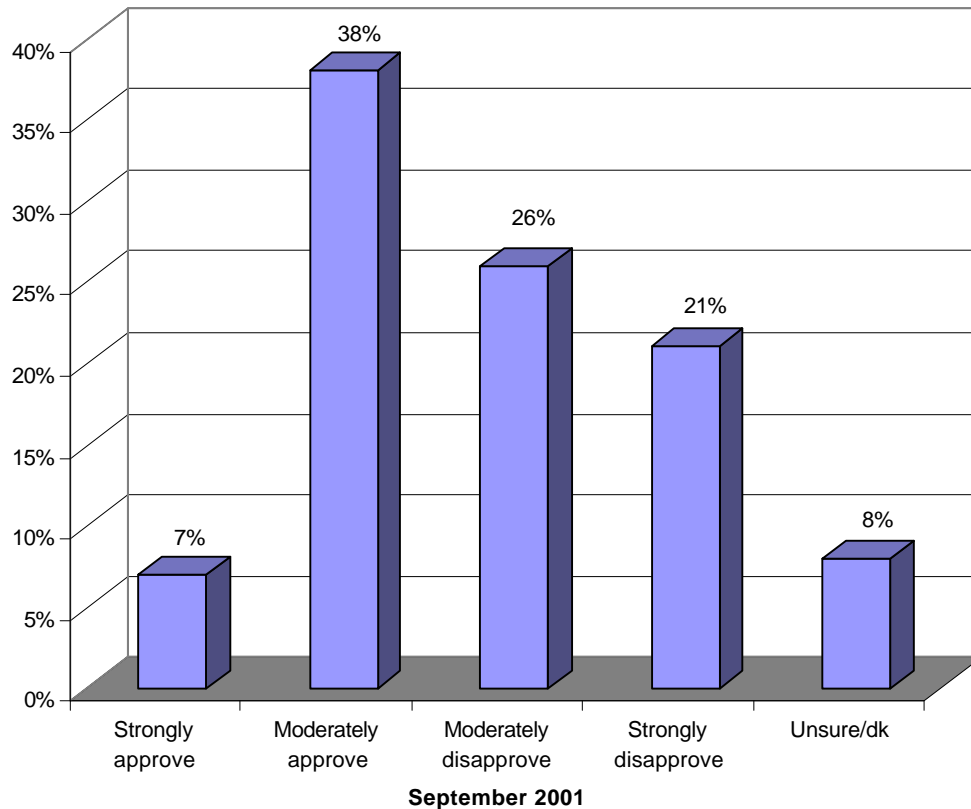
Question 20. How do you feel about the Saskatchewan economy right now? In general, do you think things are getting better, worse or staying about the same?



- The majority (55%) of residents think Saskatchewan's economy is improving or staying about the same.

5.0 JUSTICE

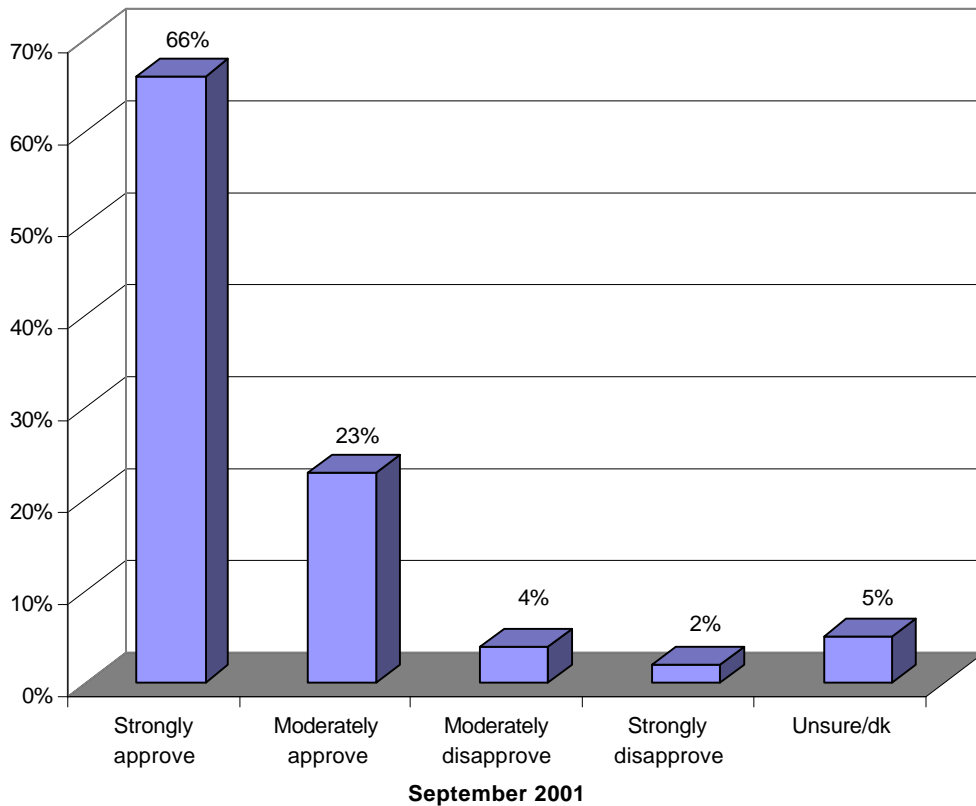
Question 21. Generally speaking, do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove or strongly disapprove of the way Saskatchewan's provincial government is handling the policing of communities and the prosecution of criminals?



- Approximately 45% of residents approve of the way Saskatchewan's provincial government is handling the policing of communities and the prosecution of criminals.

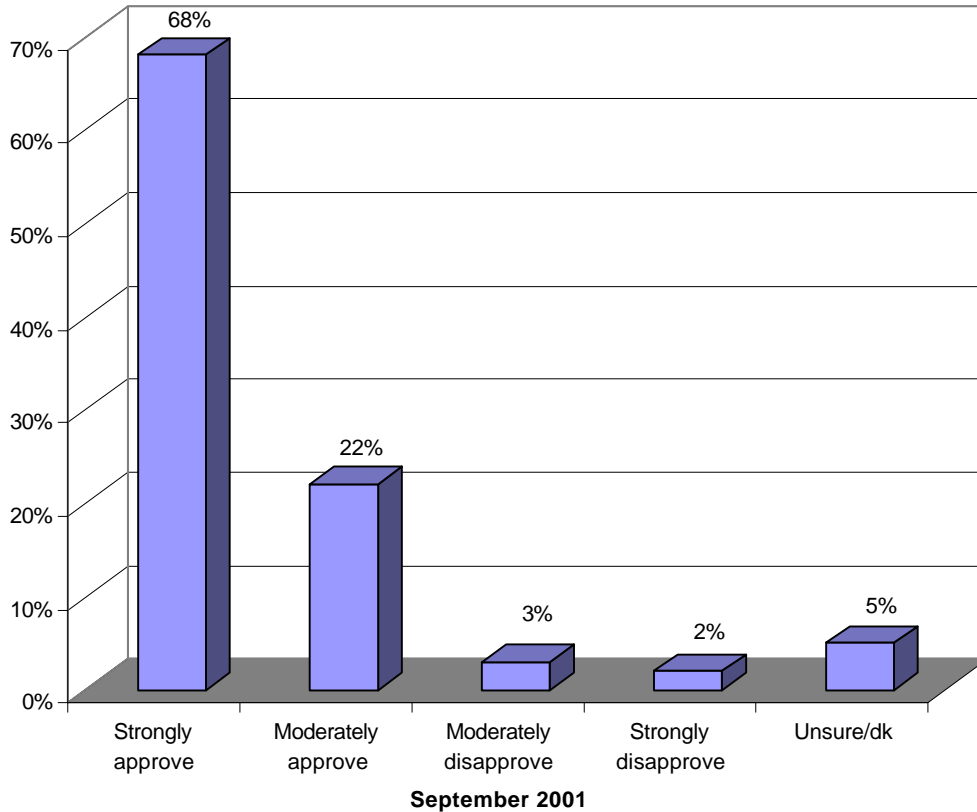
I'm going to outline some of the funding included in the 2001-2002 budget targeted to the justice system. I'd like you to tell me if you strongly approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove or strongly disapprove of the following initiatives:

Question 22a. In the recent budget the government increased funding to the "Serious and Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program". It's a partnership between police and prosecutors aimed at identifying the minority of young offenders who commit most of the crimes, tracking them, and getting them off the streets.



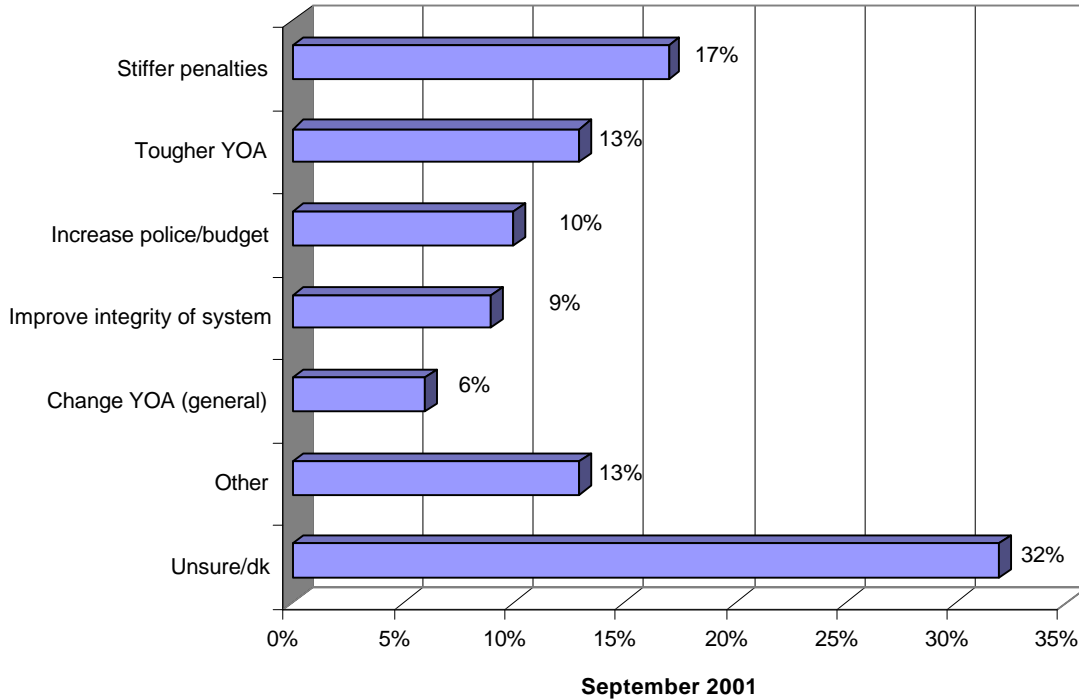
- The large majority (89%) of residents approve of increased funding for a program called the "Serious and Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program".

Question 22b. In the recent budget the government increased funding to expanding serious crime units to Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Estevan and Weyburn, to fight crimes like the drug and sex trade, child pornography and money laundering committed by organized groups like motorcycle gangs. Serious crime units bring together the RCMP, city police forces and special prosecution team.



- The large majority (90%) of residents approve of increased funding to expand serious crime units in Saskatchewan.

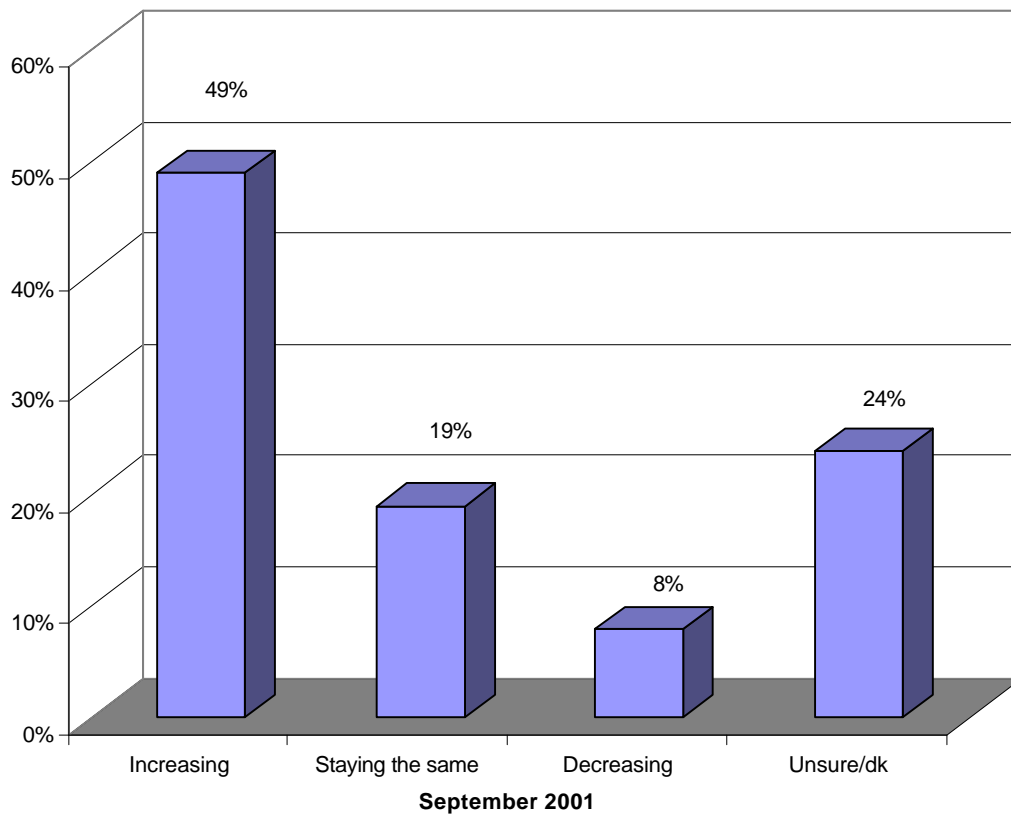
Question 23. What would you like to see changed about the way Saskatchewan's government manages policing and justice system?



- Approximately 17% of Saskatchewan residents would like the government to enforce stiffer penalties for offenders, 13% would like a tougher young offenders act, 10% would like the government to increase the budget and hire more police, 9% mention improving the integrity of the justice system and 6% would like changes to the young offenders act in general.
- About 13% of respondents mention 'other' changes they would like to see in the justice system such as dealing with Native issues more effectively (3%), increasing social programs (2%), increasing communications with communities (1%) and increasing funding to all areas (1%).

6.0 SOCIAL SERVICES

Question 24. On the whole, would you say the number of people in Saskatchewan receiving welfare has been increasing, decreasing or staying the same over the past four years?

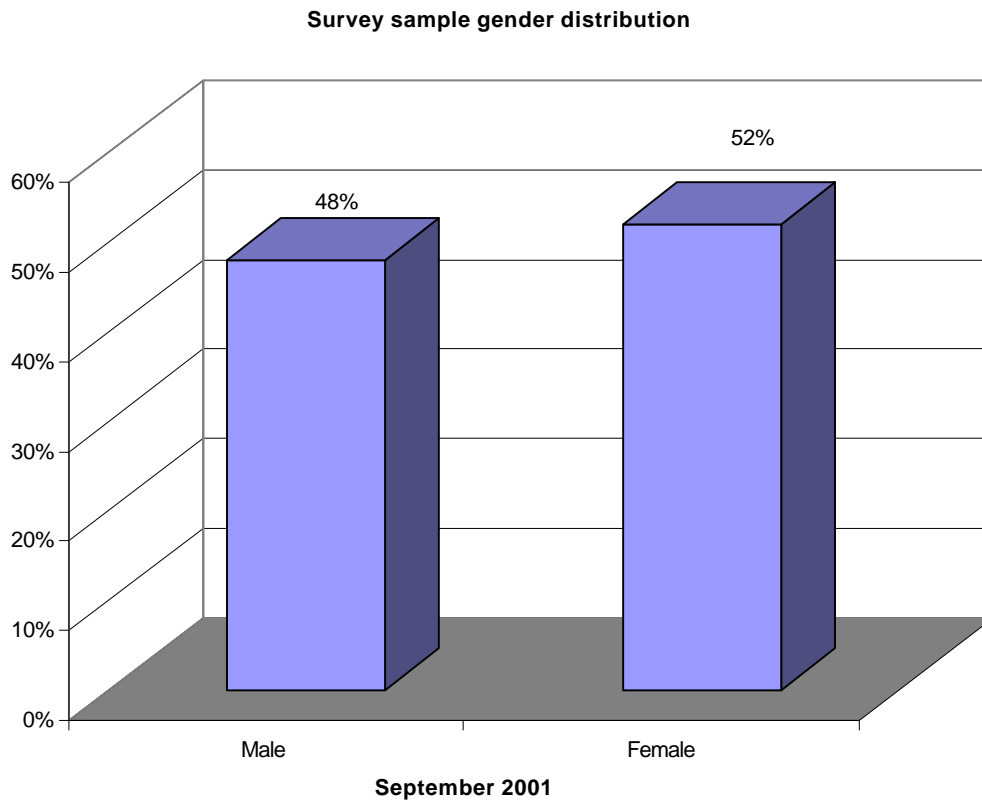


- Approximately one half (49%) of residents are under the impression that the number of people in Saskatchewan receiving welfare has been increasing over the past four years.

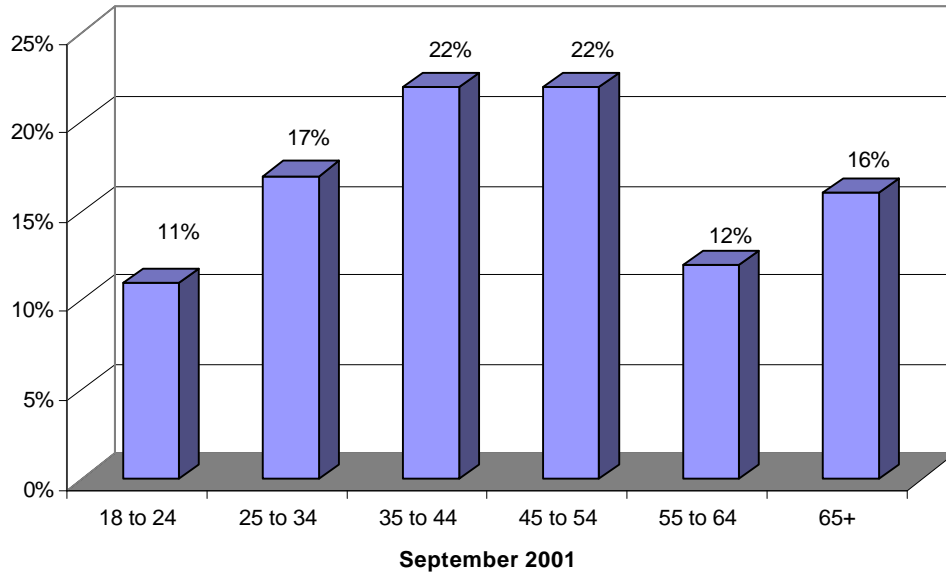
APPENDIX II SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

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.

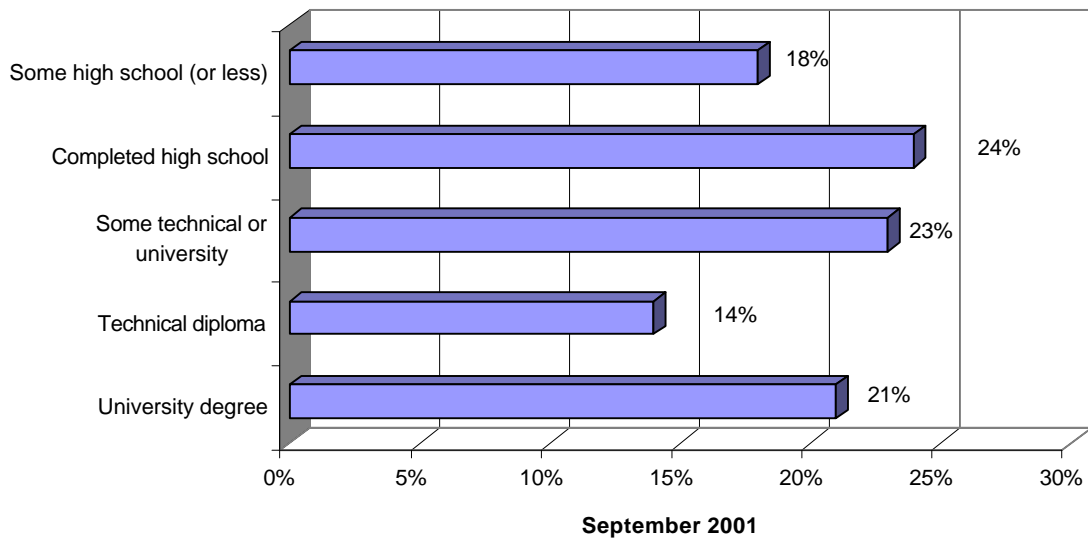
The omnibus survey sample size of 1,000 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error for the point estimates contained in this report of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.



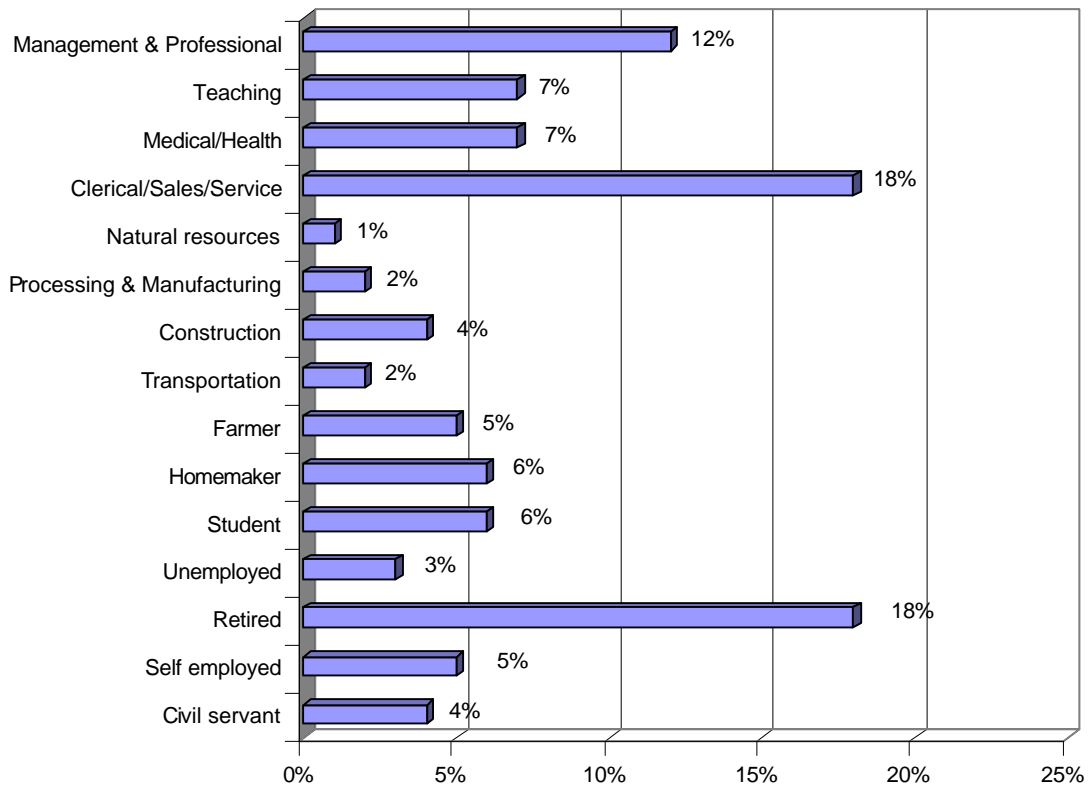
Survey sample age distribution



Survey sample education distribution

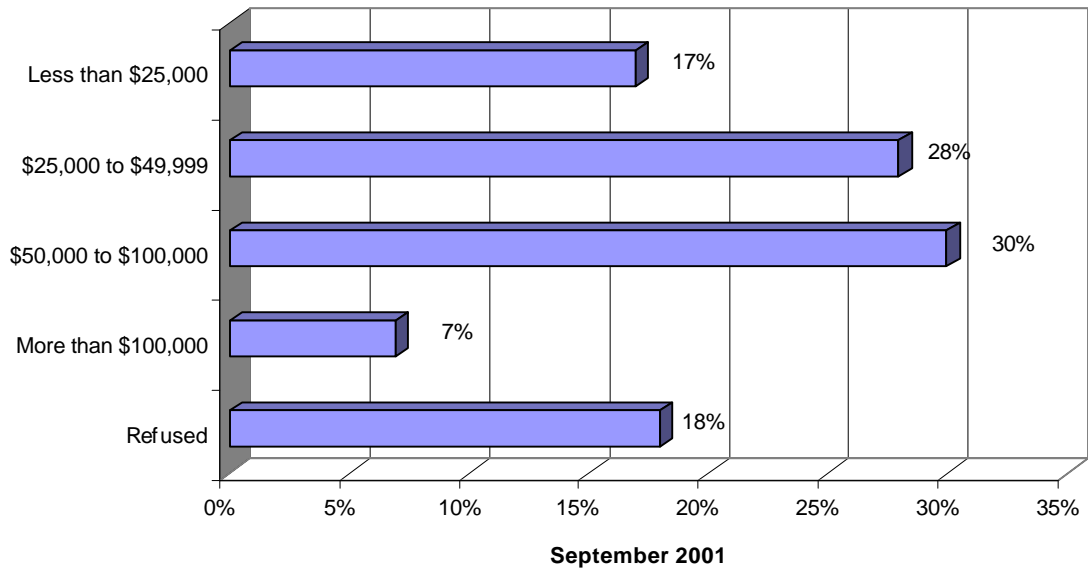


Survey sample occupation distribution



September 2001

Survey sample income distribution



Survey sample regional distribution

