



## **Government of Saskatchewan**

# **Public Opinion Polling**

from July 1, 2002 – September 30, 2002

**OMNIBUS**  
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

September 2002

Omnibus  
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

Prepared for:

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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- In September 2002, federal issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include health care, international issues, agriculture, the economy and jobs and unemployment.
- Provincial issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include agriculture, health care, jobs and unemployment, provincial taxes and the economy.
- Approximately one third of Saskatchewan residents are satisfied with the overall provincial highway system; one third are very dissatisfied. Residents generally feel safe when they are driving on Saskatchewan highways. Almost all residents think the federal government should pay a significant portion of the cost for twinning the national highway.
- The majority of residents think the Saskatchewan economy is improving or at least holding its own.
- The majority of residents agree Saskatchewan is a great place to live, work and do business and think the government should do more to promote the province in the future.
- The majority of residents are at least somewhat surprised, however, to hear that investment in Saskatchewan is expected to grow very quickly this year, that over the past several months, Saskatchewan has seen strong job growth, that Saskatchewan is ranked as having one of the most competitive business climates in North America and that in the past decade Saskatchewan had the highest growth in productivity in Canada.

# METHODOLOGY

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Fast Consulting conducted the September 2002 public opinion survey for the Government of Saskatchewan 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;
- learning;
- highways and transportation;
- industry and resources, and
- finance.

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 987 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.

Nine hundred and eighty seven residents of the province were interviewed between Monday, September 9 and Wednesday, September 18, 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 987 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.

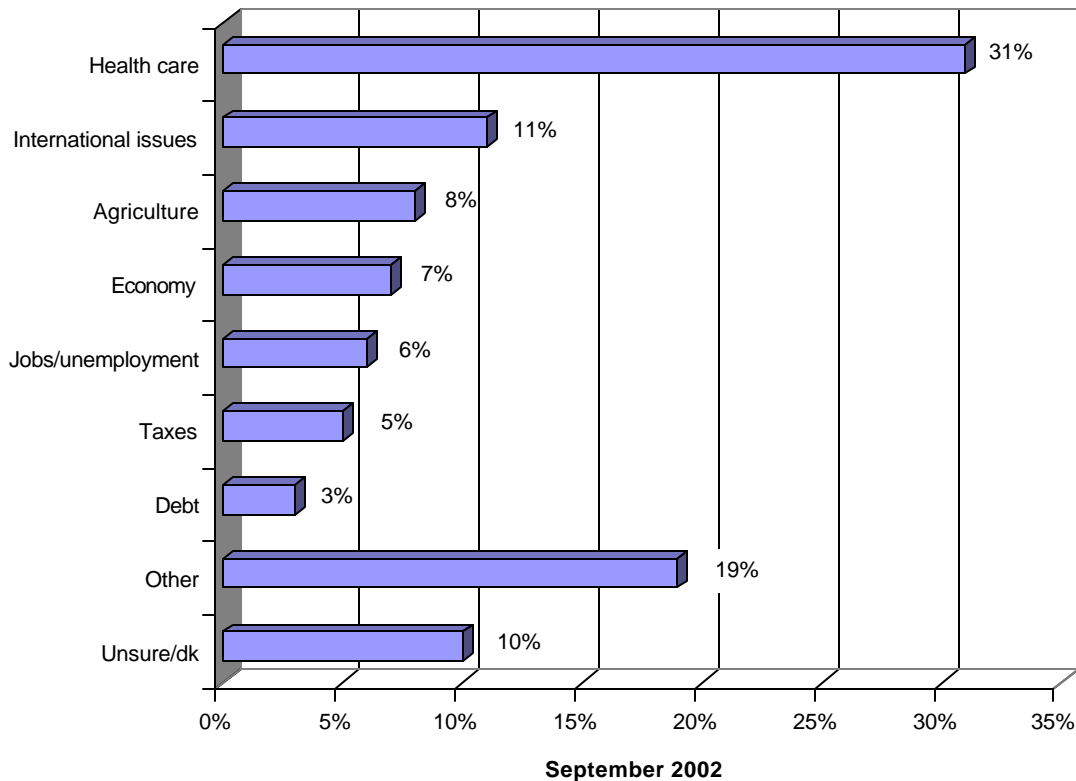
Fast Consulting designed and implemented programs to facilitate the statistical analysis of data using the industry standard SPSS computer program (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Data checking procedures were utilized at all times to ensure

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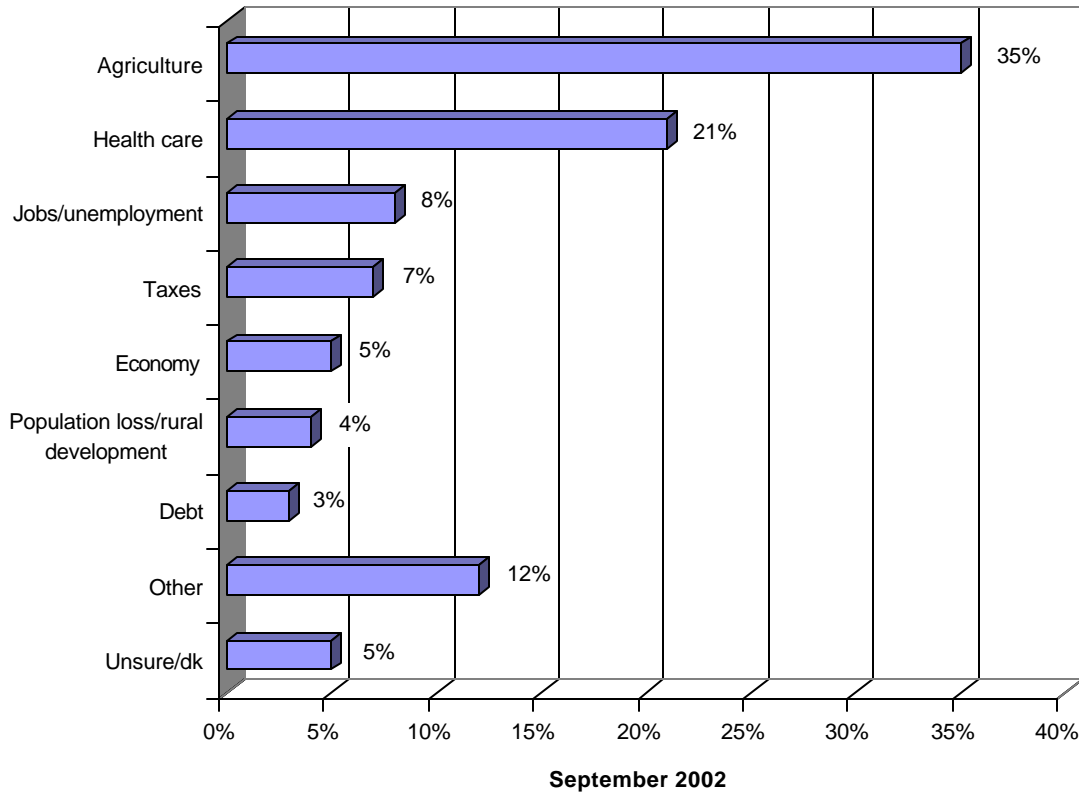
**Question 1.** What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?



- According to 31% of Saskatchewan residents, the most important issue facing Canada today is the health care system. Other important issues include international issues (11%), agriculture (8%), the economy (7%), jobs and unemployment (6%), federal taxes (5%) and the national deficit and accumulated debt (3%).
- Approximately 19% of residents are primarily concerned with 'other' issues such as the federal government in general (7%), the environment (2%), moral, social and religious issues (2%), Native issues (2%), crime and poverty (1%) and education (1%).



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

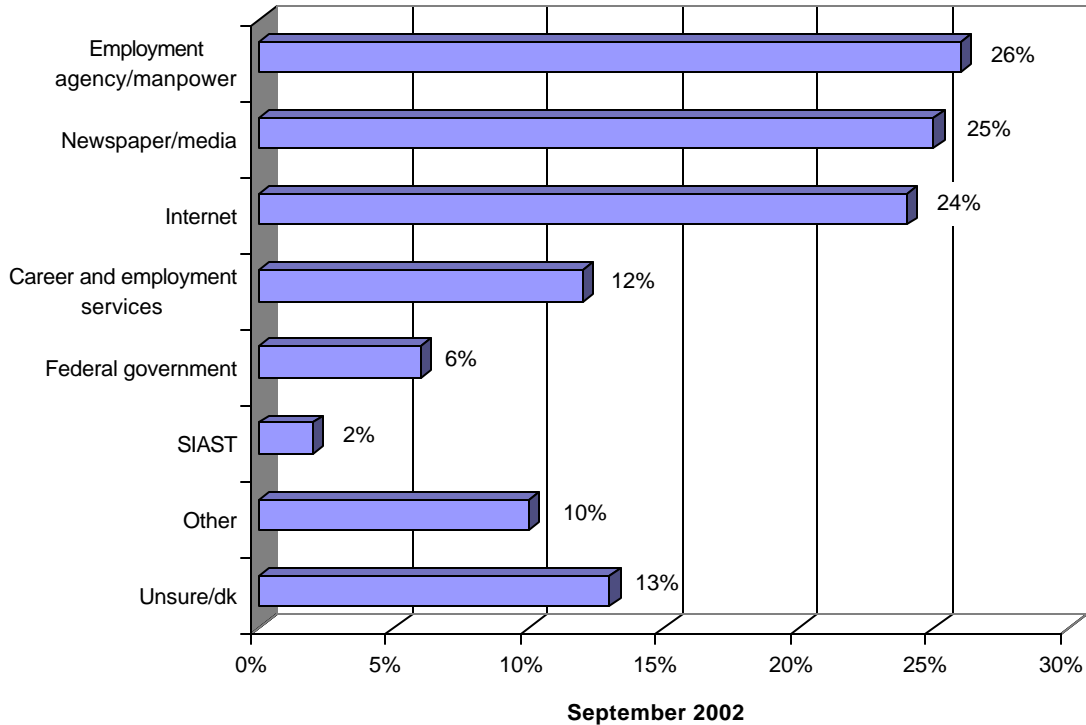


- The most important issue facing the province today, according to 35% of Saskatchewan residents, is agriculture. Approximately 21% of residents are concerned primarily with health care, 8% with jobs and unemployment, 7% with provincial taxes, 5% with the provincial economy, 4% with population loss and rural development and 3% the provincial debt.
- Included among 'other' important issues identified by 12% of residents are the provincial government in general (3%), Native issues (2%), crime and poverty (1%) and highways and transportation (1%).

## 2.0 LEARNING

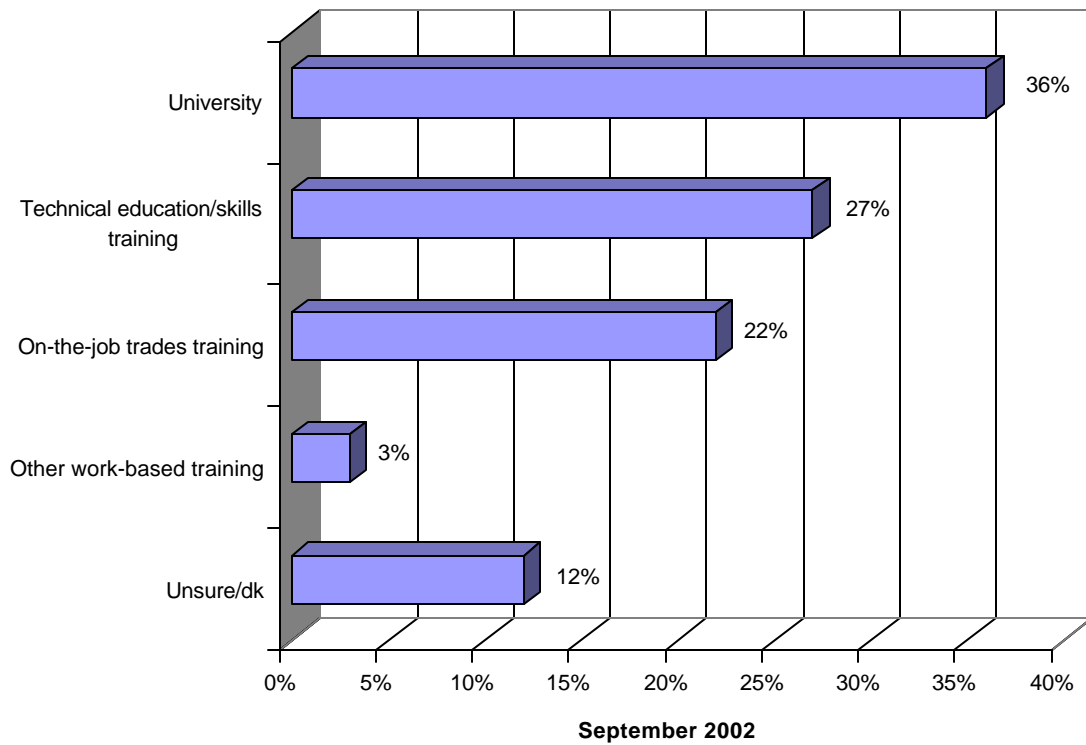
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**Question 3.** Where would you go for information about job opportunities or to find workers?



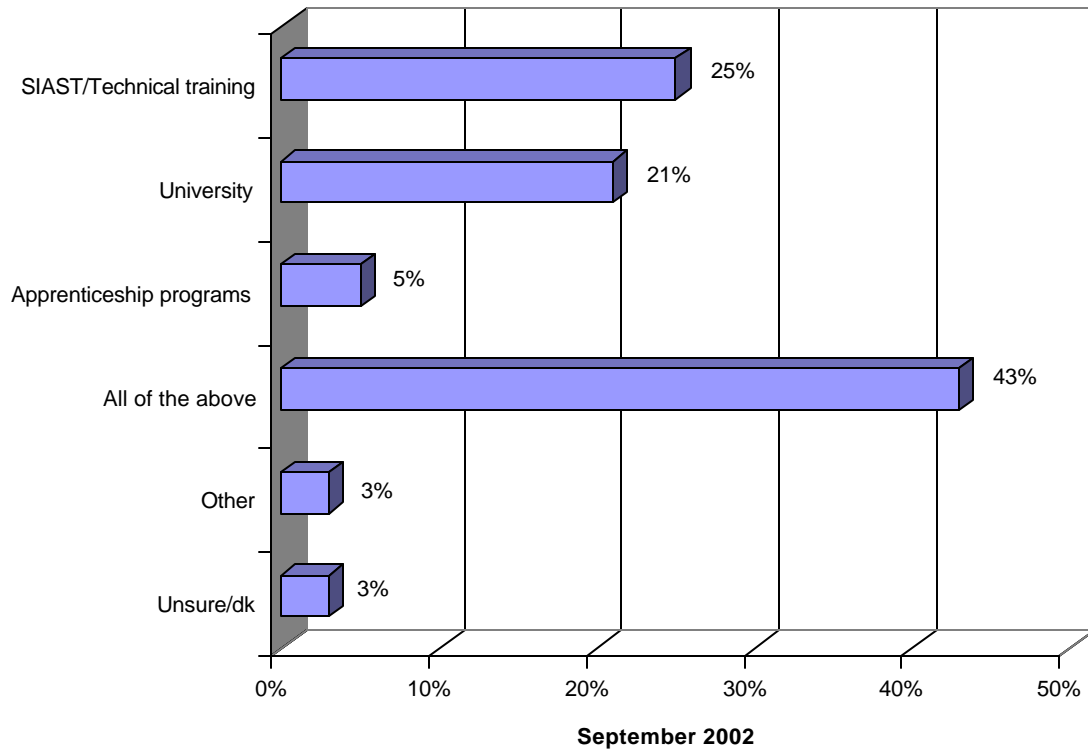
- Approximately one quarter of Saskatchewan residents indicate they would go to an employment agency or Manpower (26%), the newspaper or media (25%) and the Internet (24%) if they were looking for information about job opportunities or to find workers.

**Question 4.** If you were advising a young person today, would you recommend they choose technical education and skills training, on-the-job trades training through apprenticeship, other work-based training or university?



- More than one third (36%) of Saskatchewan residents would recommend university if they were advising a young person today, 27% would recommend technical education and skills training and 22% would recommend on-the-job trades training.

**Question 5.** Which institution would you suggest they attend? Would you recommend SIAST/Technical training, university, apprenticeship programs, out-of-province institution, regional college, private vocational school or all of the above?

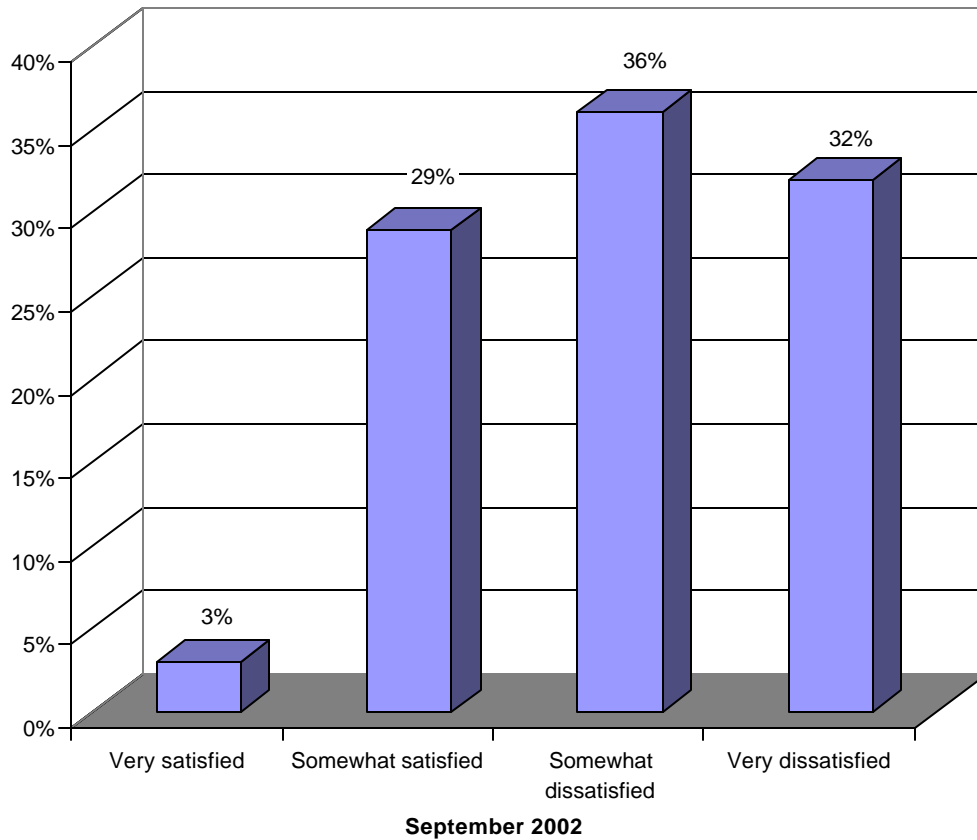


- If they were advising a young person today, approximately 25% of Saskatchewan residents would recommend they attend SIAST or technical training school and 21% would recommend university. Approximately 43% would recommend a variety of post-secondary institutions.

## 3.0 HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

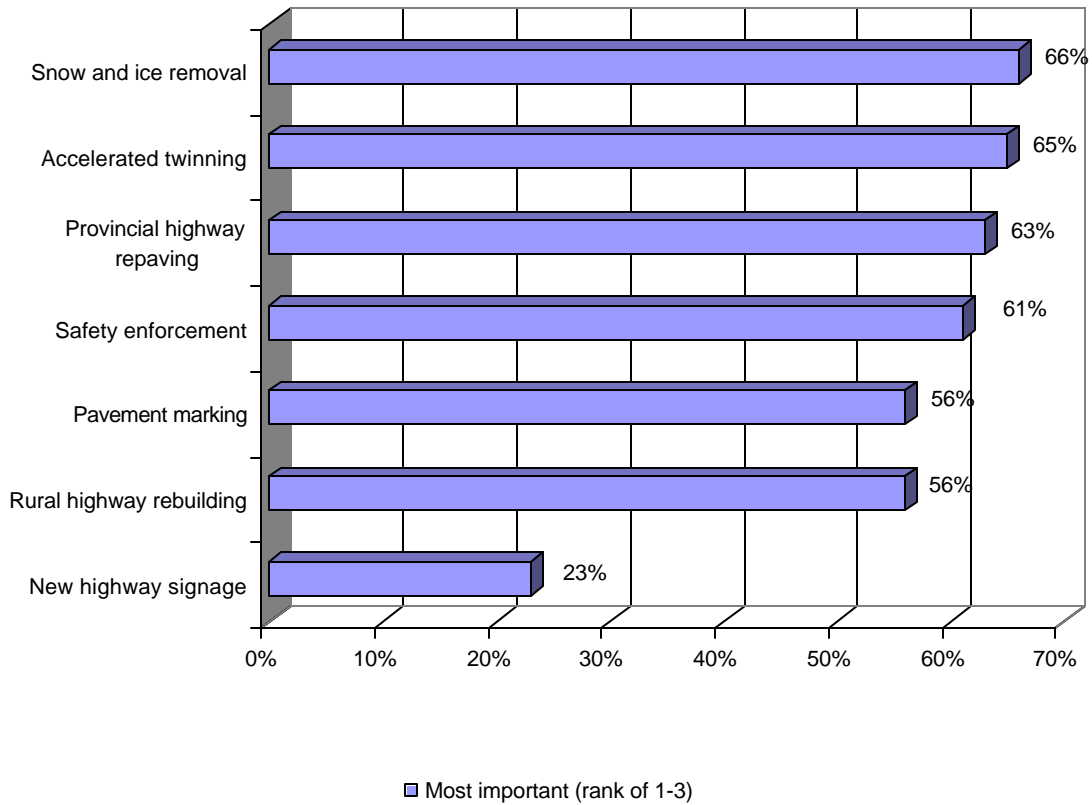
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**Question 6.** When you think of the overall provincial highway system, are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the system?



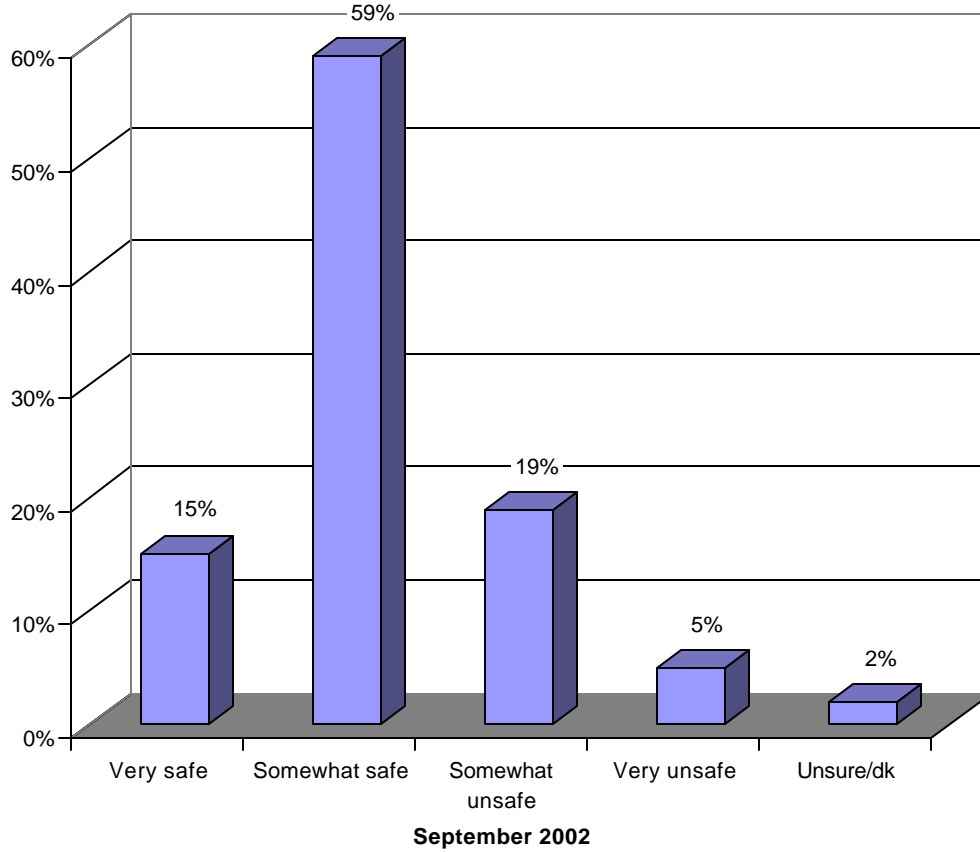
- Approximately one third (32%) of Saskatchewan residents are satisfied with the overall provincial highway system; 68% are at least somewhat dissatisfied.

**Question 7.** 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:



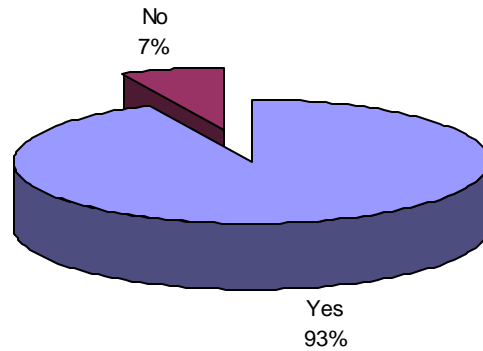
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents rate snow and ice removal (66%), accelerated twinning (65%), provincial highway repaving (63%), safety enforcement (61%), pavement marking (56%) and rural highway rebuilding (56%) highly in terms of importance (rank of 1 to 3).

**Question 8.** Overall, when driving on Saskatchewan's highways do you personally feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe?



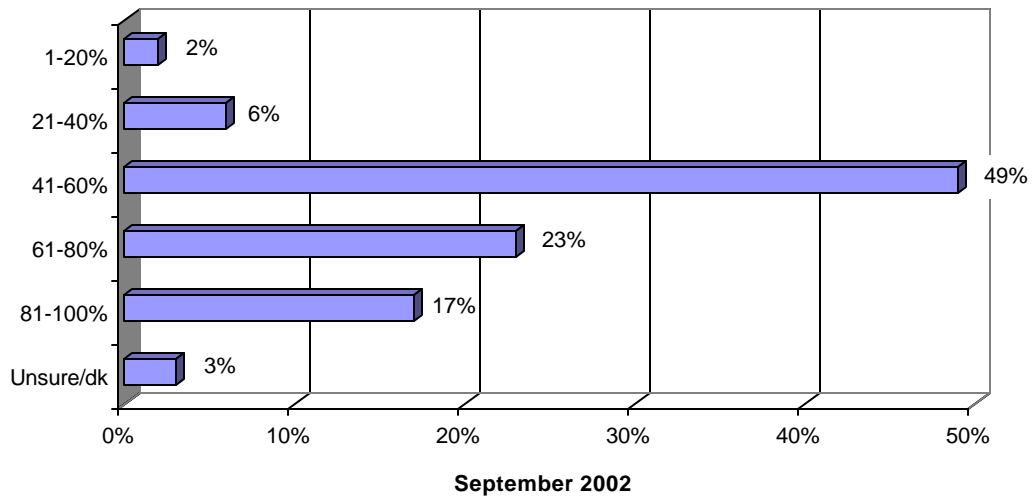
- The majority (74%) of residents feel safe when they are driving on Saskatchewan highways.

**Question 9.** 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 majority (93%) of Saskatchewan residents think the federal government should pay for twinning the national highway.

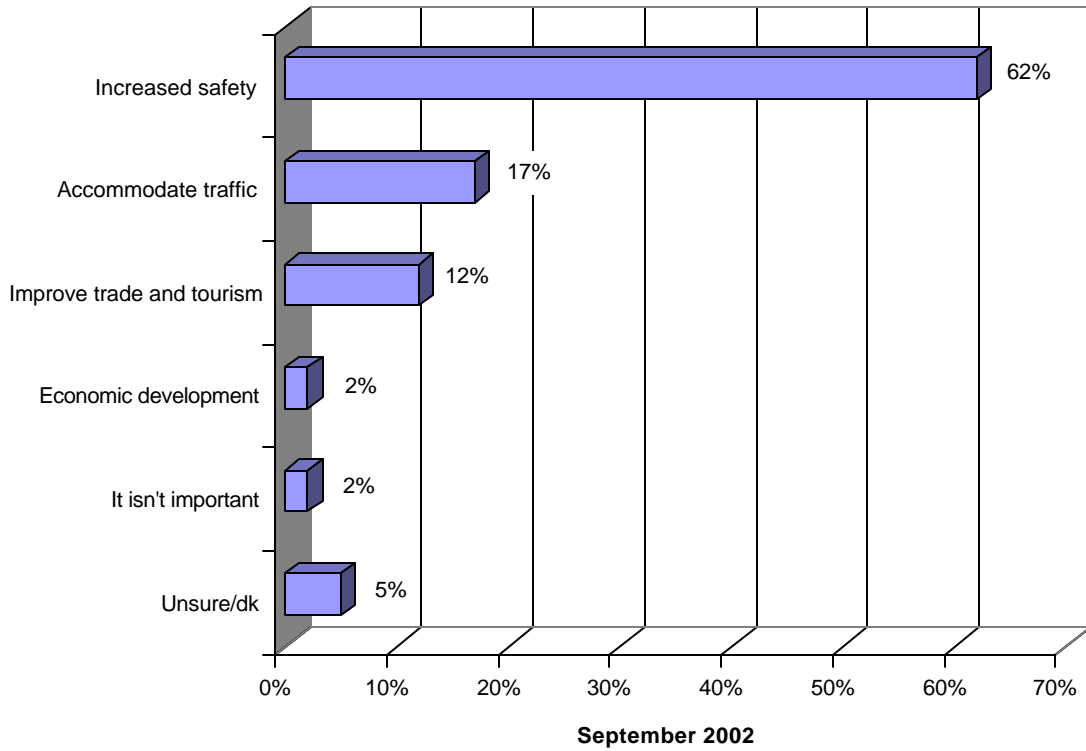
**Question 10.** What percentage should the federal government pay?



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

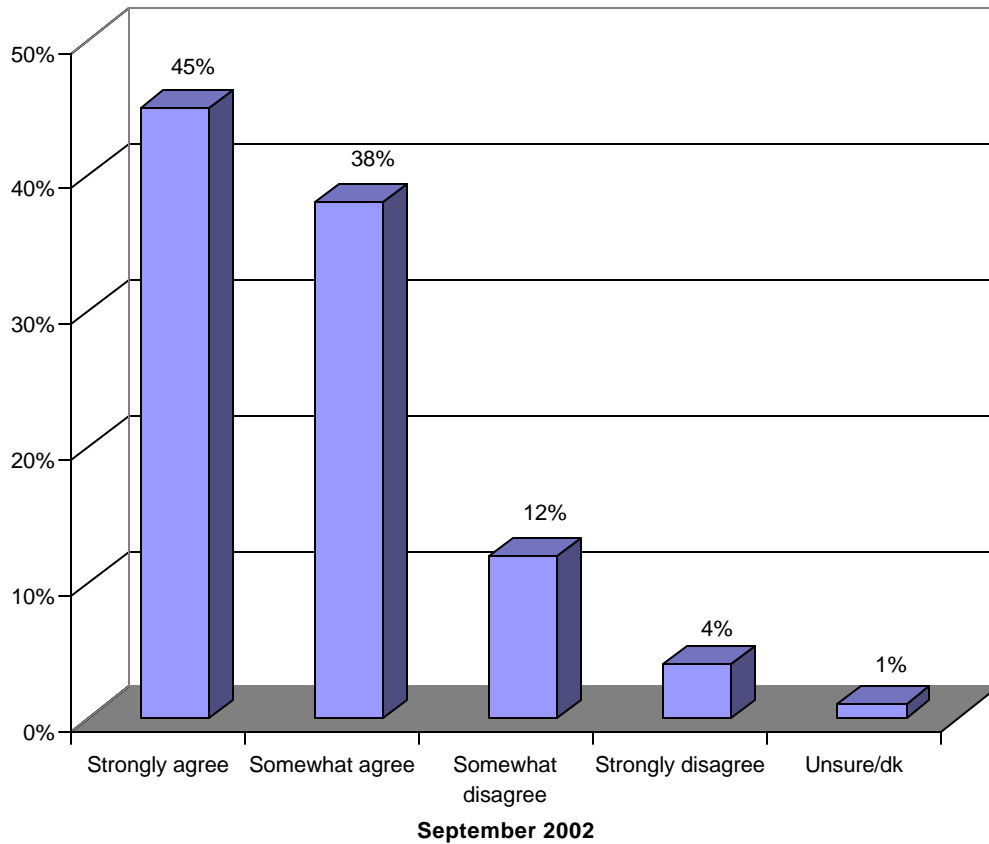


- The majority (62%) of Saskatchewan residents think increased safety is the most important reason to twin the national highway system.

## 4.0 INDUSTRY & RESOURCES

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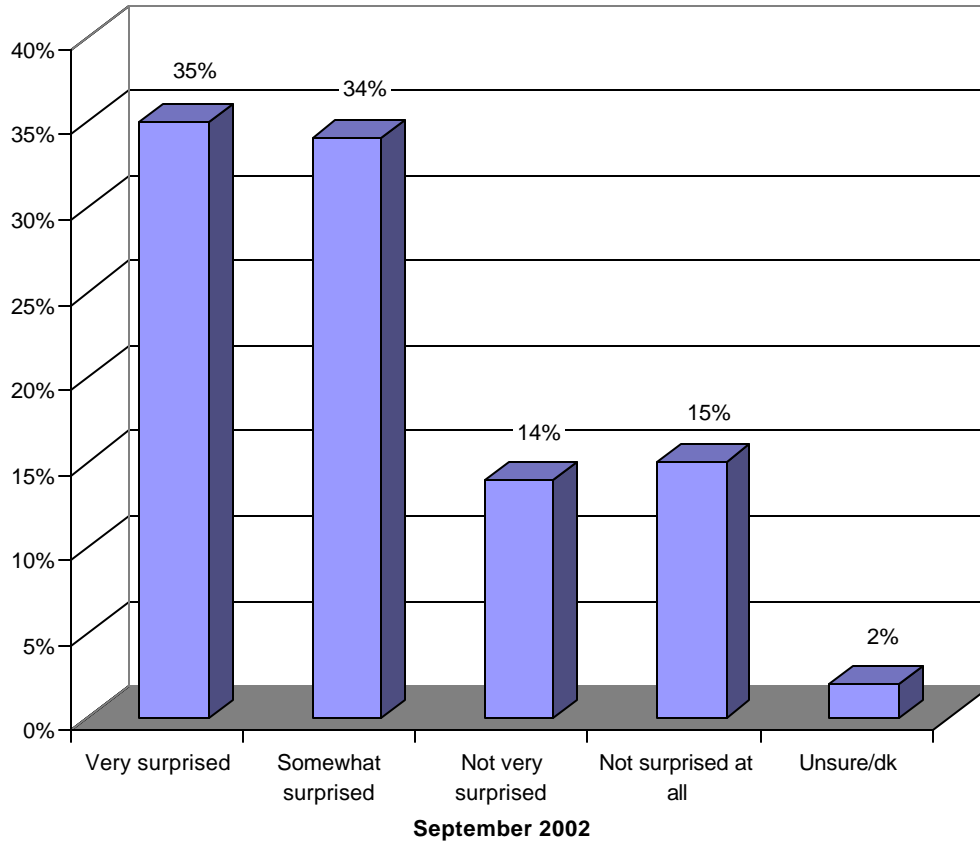
**Question 12.** How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: "Saskatchewan is a great place to live, work and do business".



- The large majority (83%) of residents agree Saskatchewan is a great place to live, work and do business.

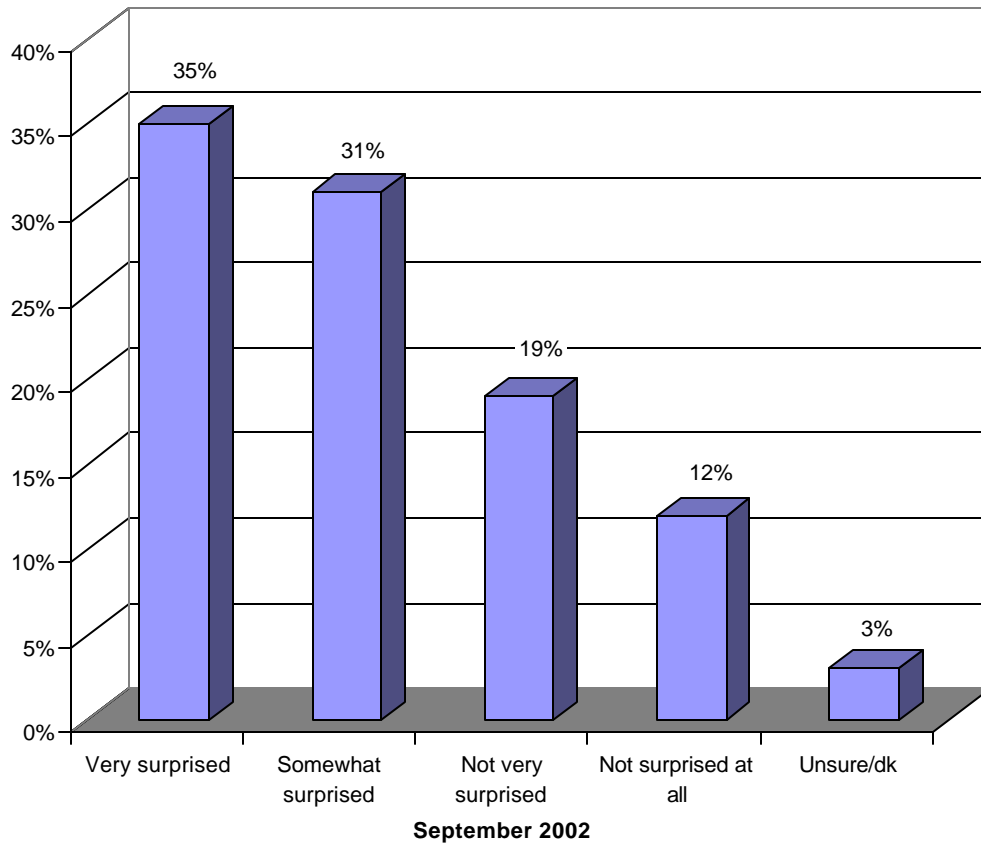
**Question 13.** Would you be very surprised, somewhat surprised, not very surprised or not surprised at all if someone told you:

- a) Investment in manufacturing in Saskatchewan is expected to grow very quickly this year.



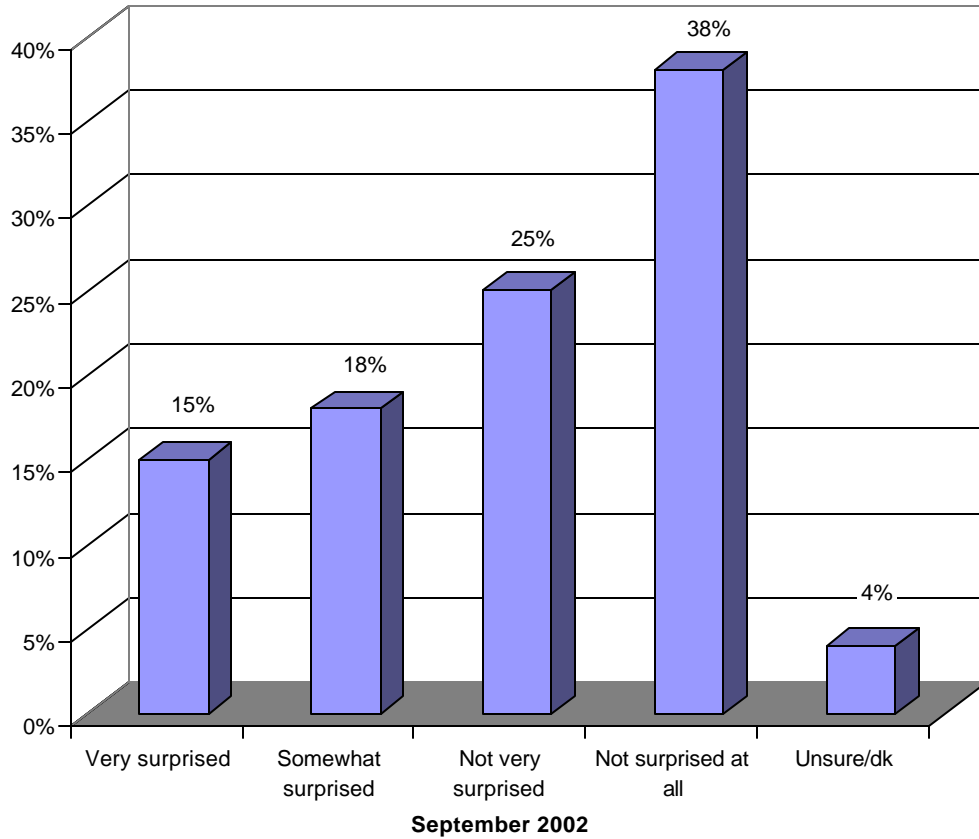
- More than two thirds (69%) of residents are at least somewhat surprised when told that investment in manufacturing in Saskatchewan is expected to grow very quickly this year.

b) Over the past several months, Saskatchewan has seen strong job growth.



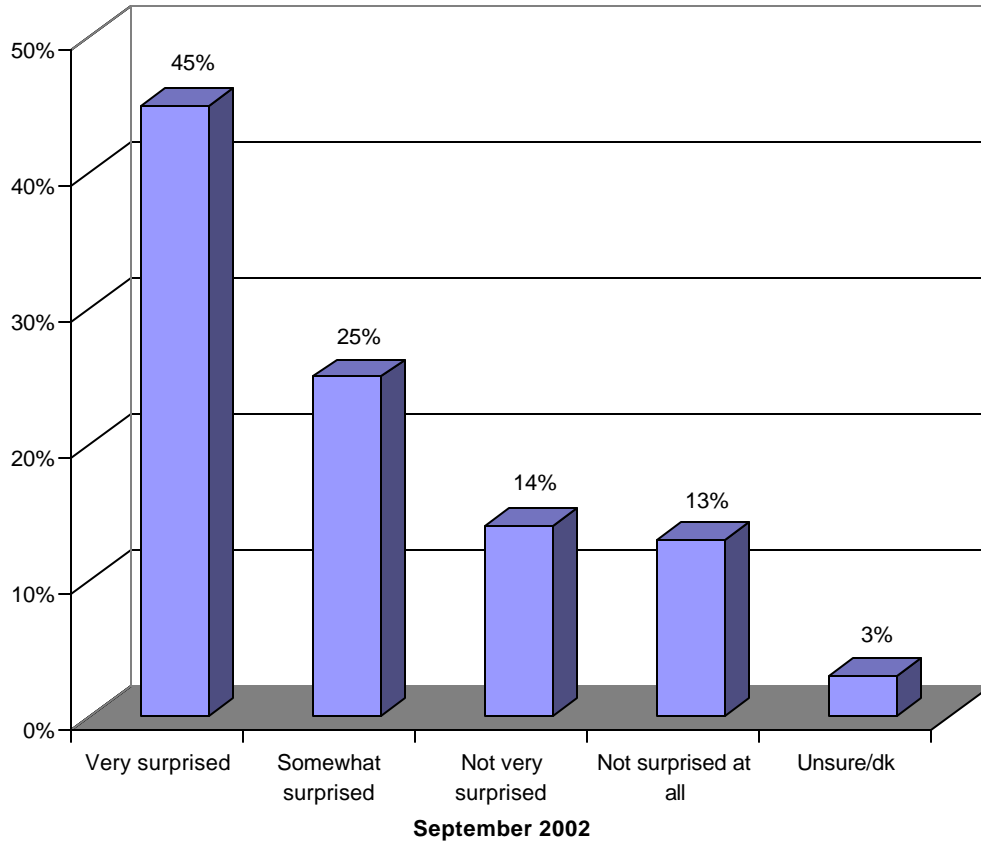
- Approximately two thirds (66%) of residents are at least somewhat surprised when told that over the past several months, Saskatchewan has seen strong job growth.

c) The sector that grew fastest in Saskatchewan last year was the mining, oil and gas sector.



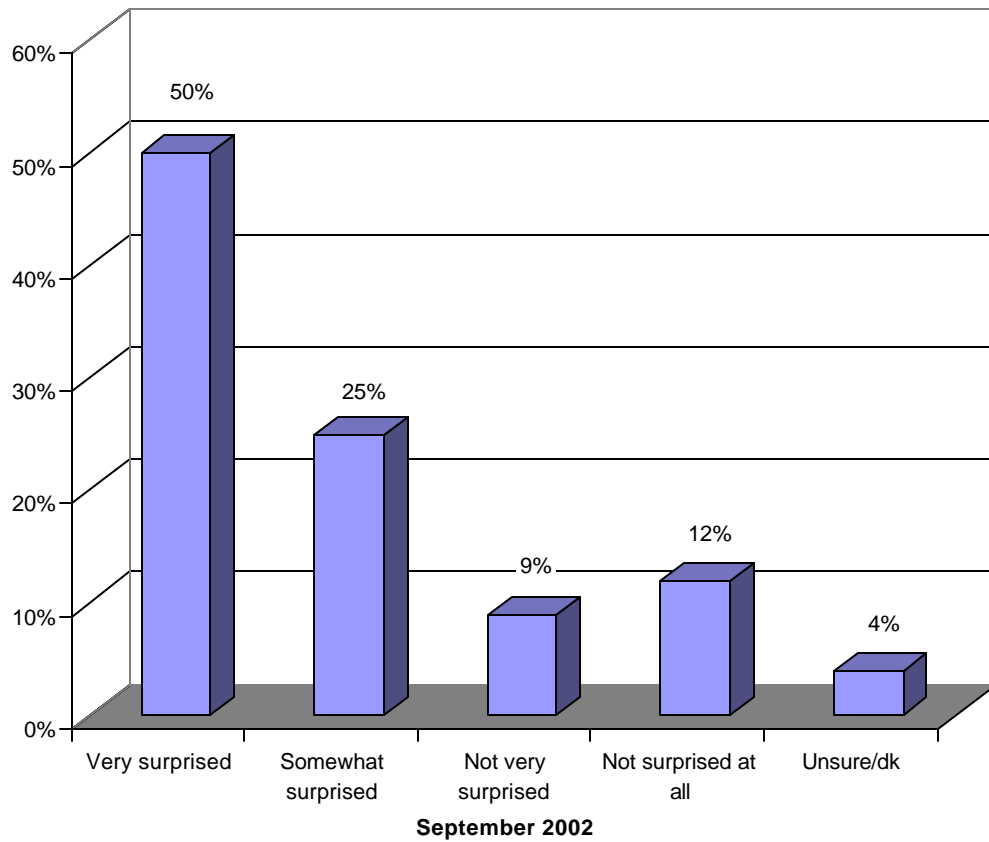
- Only about one third (33%) of residents are surprised that the sector that grew fastest in Saskatchewan last year was the mining, oil and gas sector; the majority of people (63%) are not surprised to hear this.

d) Saskatchewan is ranked as having one of the most competitive business climates in North America.



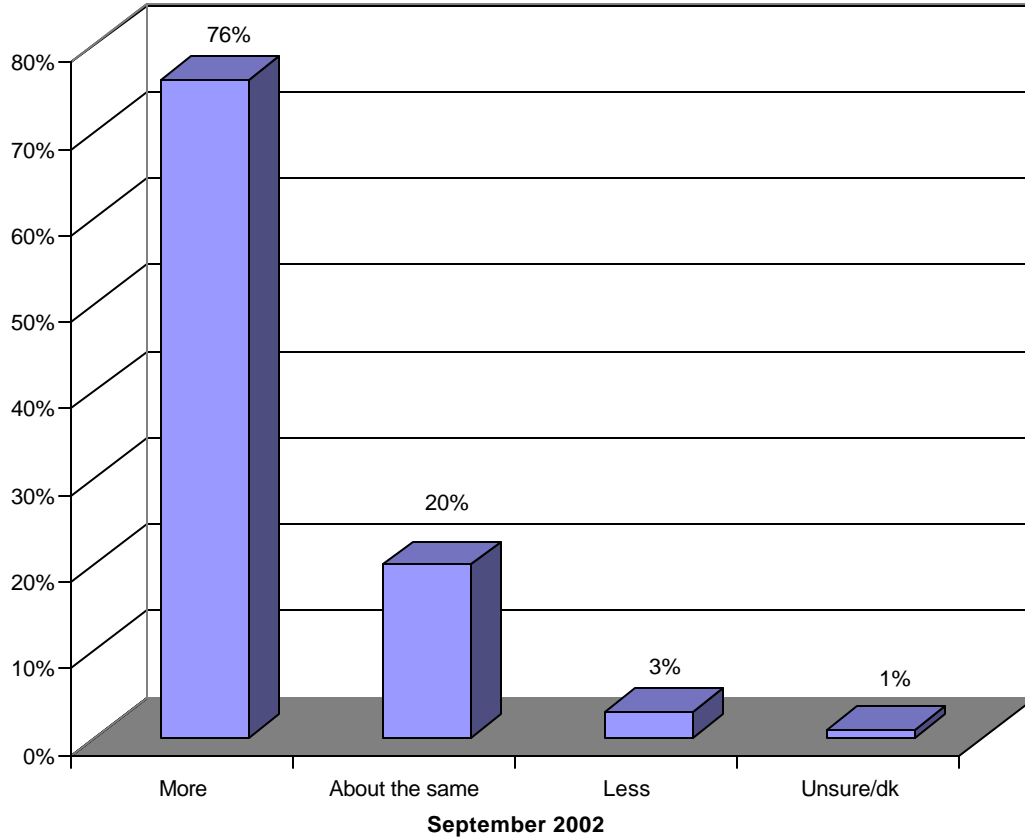
- More than two thirds (70%) of residents are at least somewhat surprised to hear that Saskatchewan is ranked as having one of the most competitive business climates in North America.

e) In the past decade Saskatchewan had the highest growth in productivity in Canada.



- Three quarters (75%) of residents are surprised that in the past decade Saskatchewan had the highest growth in productivity in Canada; the majority (50%) are 'very' surprised to hear this.

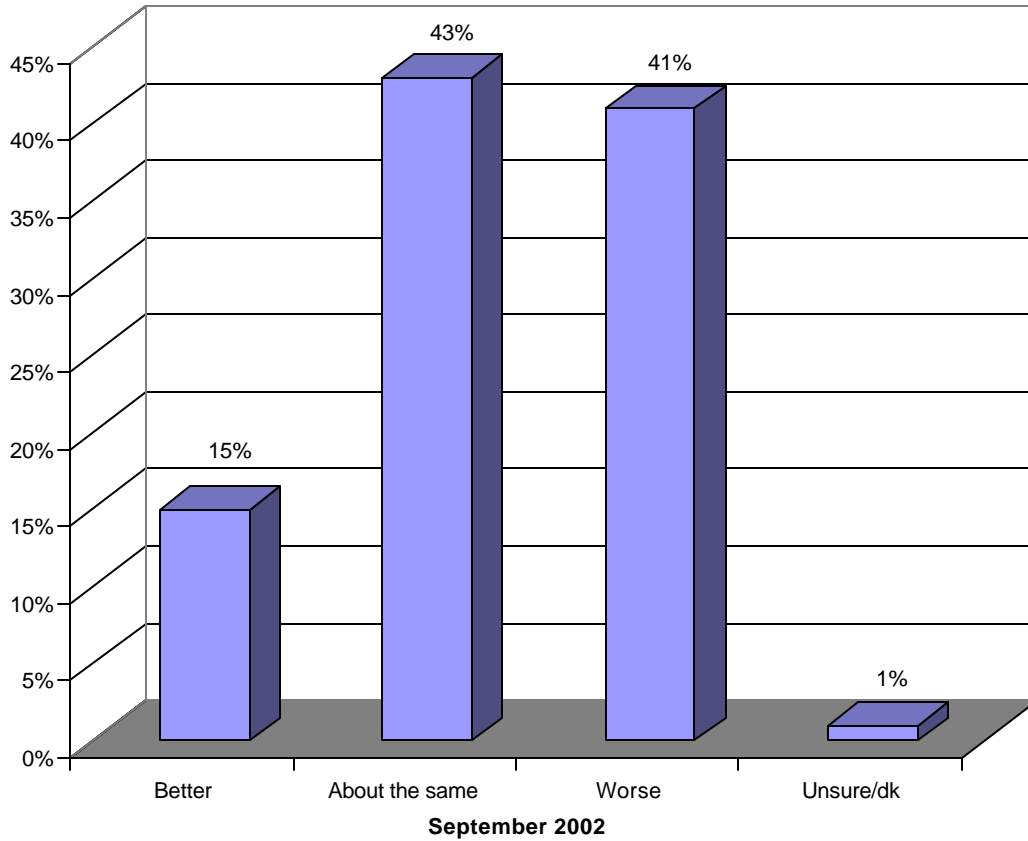
**Question 14.** In the future, do you think the government should do more, less or about the same to promote Saskatchewan?



- More than three quarters (76%) of provincial residents think the government should do more to promote Saskatchewan in the future.



**Question 15.** How do you feel about the Saskatchewan economy right now? In general, do you feel things are getting better, worse or about the same?

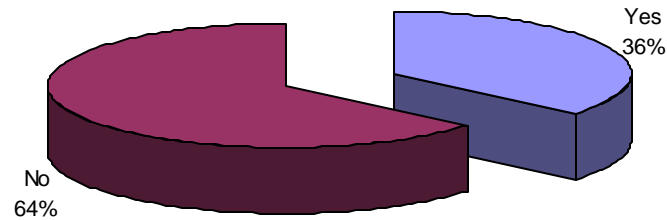


- Currently, the majority (58%) of residents think the Saskatchewan economy is getting better or staying about the same.

## 6.0 SASKPOWER

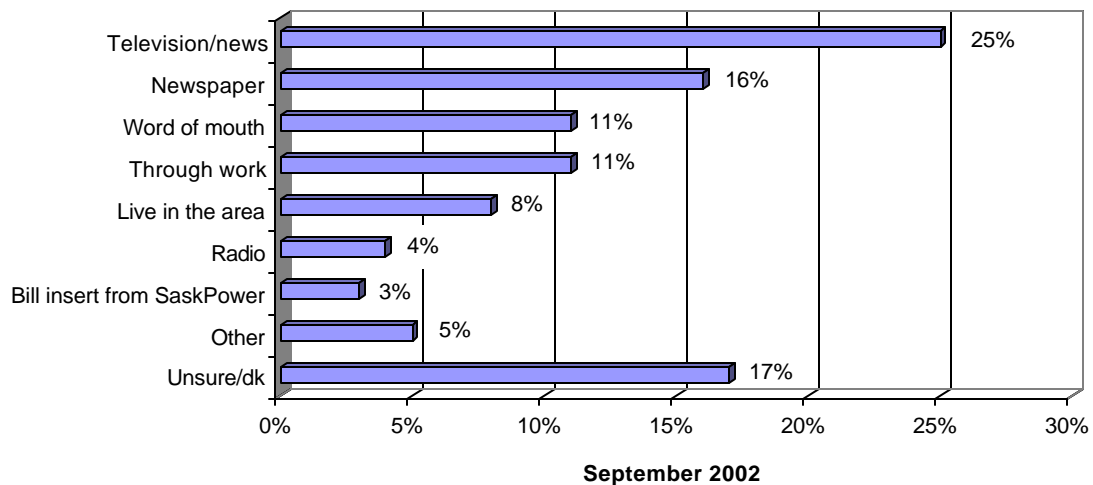
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**Question 36.** Have you ever heard of SaskPower's Shand Greenhouse?



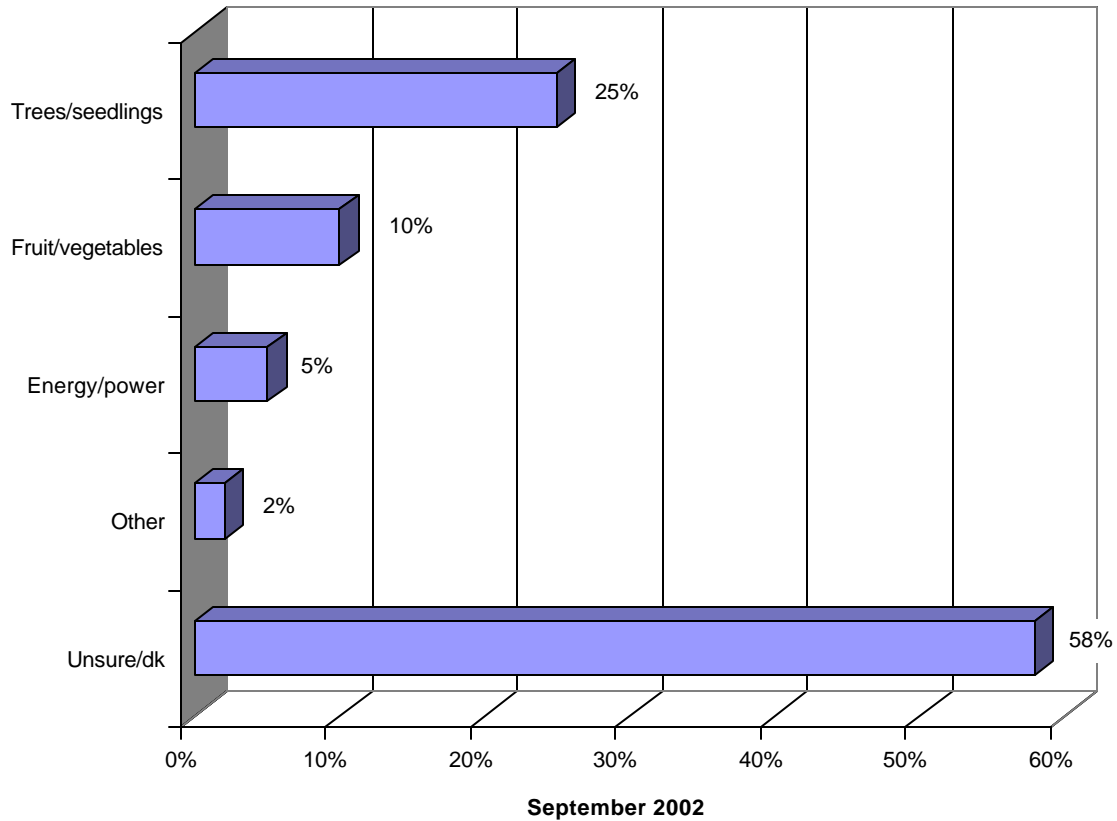
- Approximately one third (36%) of residents have heard of SaskPower's Shand Greenhouse.

**Question 37.** Can you tell me where you heard about SaskPower's Shand Greenhouse?



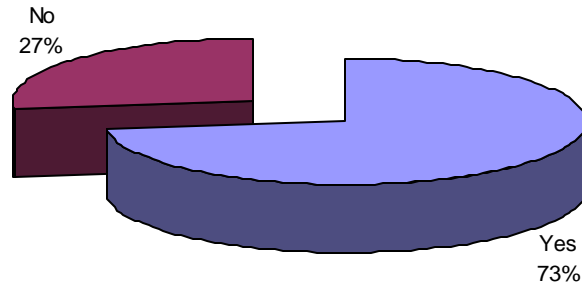
- One quarter (25%) of those residents who have heard of SaskPower's Shand Greenhouse indicate that their source of awareness was television or television news programs (9% of all respondents).

**Question 38.** Do you know what SaskPower uses the greenhouse to produce?



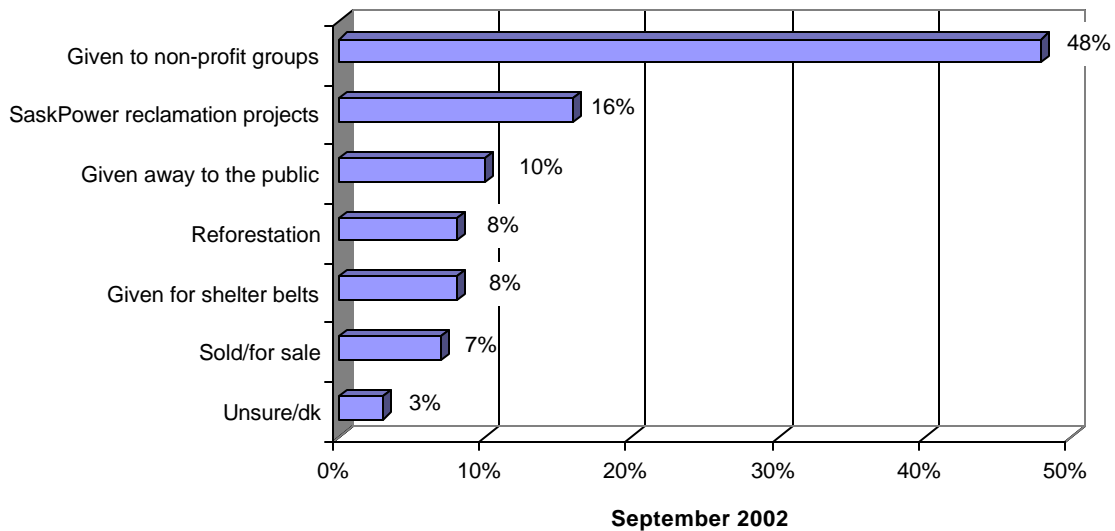
- One quarter (25%) of those residents who have heard of SaskPower's Shand Greenhouse think SaskPower uses the greenhouse to produce trees and saplings (9% of all respondents). The majority (58%) are unsure what SaskPower uses the greenhouse to produce (20% of all respondents).

**Question 39.** Do you know what is done with these seedlings?



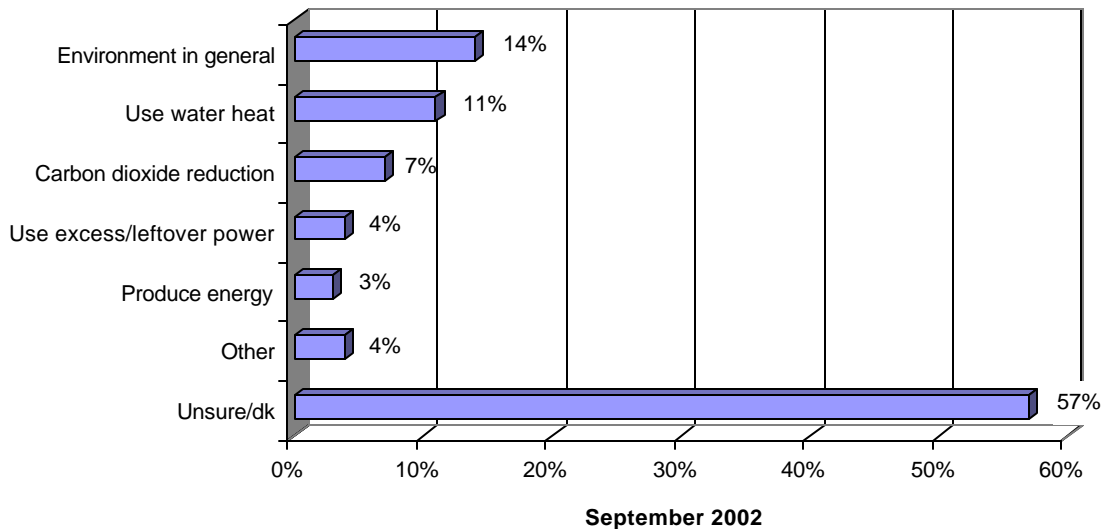
- Although representative of only a small segment of the overall provincial population, almost three quarters (73%) of those residents who are aware that SaskPower's Shand Greenhouse produces trees and seedlings indicate they know what is done with the seedlings (7% of all respondents).

**Question 39a.** If trees/seedlings, do you know what is done with these seedlings?



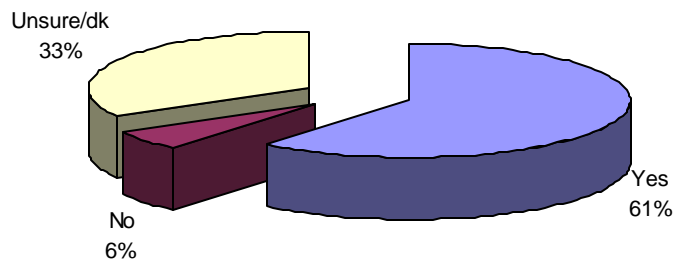
- Almost one half (48%) of those residents who are aware that SaskPower's Shand Greenhouse produces trees and seedlings think the seedlings are given to non-profit groups (3% of all respondents).

**Question 40.** Do you know why SaskPower operates the greenhouse or what purpose it services?



- Approximately 14% of those residents who have heard of SaskPower’s Shand Greenhouse think SaskPower operates the greenhouse because it is good for the environment (5% of all respondents). The majority (57%) of those residents who have heard of the greenhouse are unsure of specifically why SaskPower operates it (20% of all respondents).

**Question 41.** Do you believe the project is, on balance, a good environmental project?



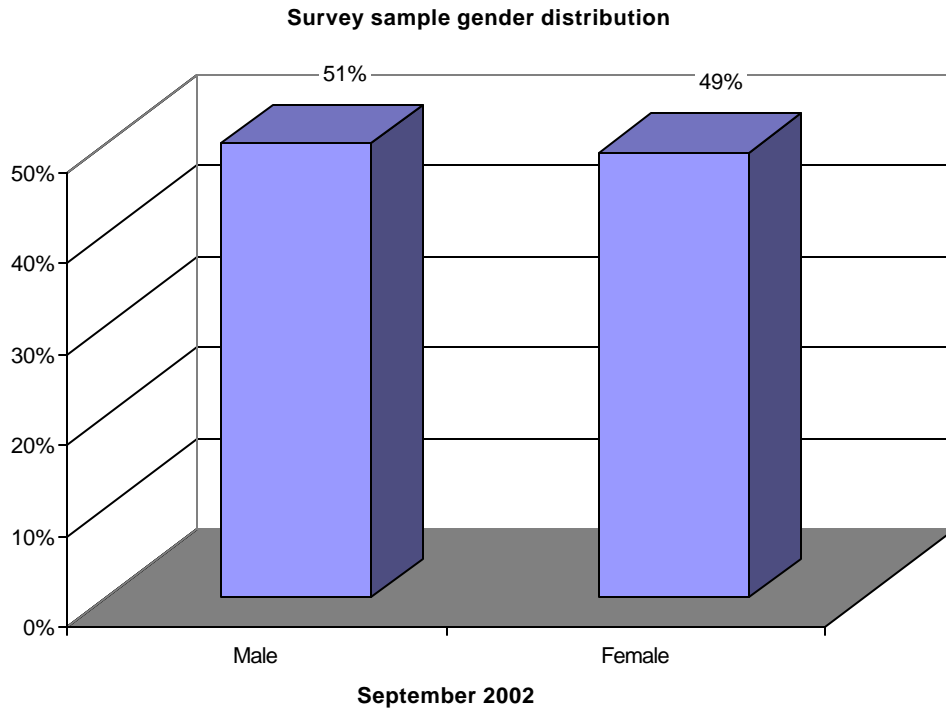
- The majority (61%) of residents who have heard of SaskPower’s Shand Greenhouse believe, on balance it is a good environmental project (22% of all respondents).

## APPENDIX II SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

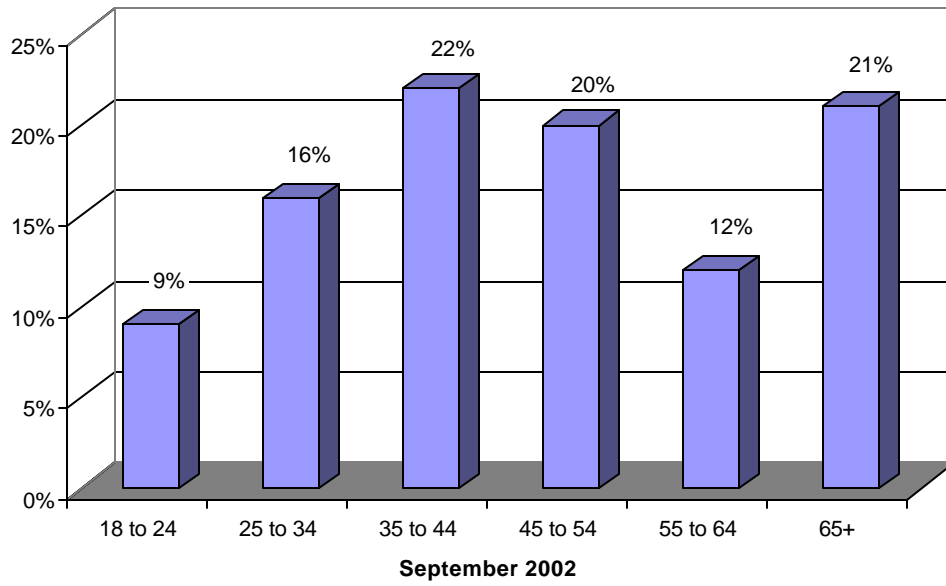
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The omnibus public opinion sample frame is constructed to facilitate proportionate representation of various demographic characteristics evident within the province of Saskatchewan. This ensures that opinions of all the various types of residents in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

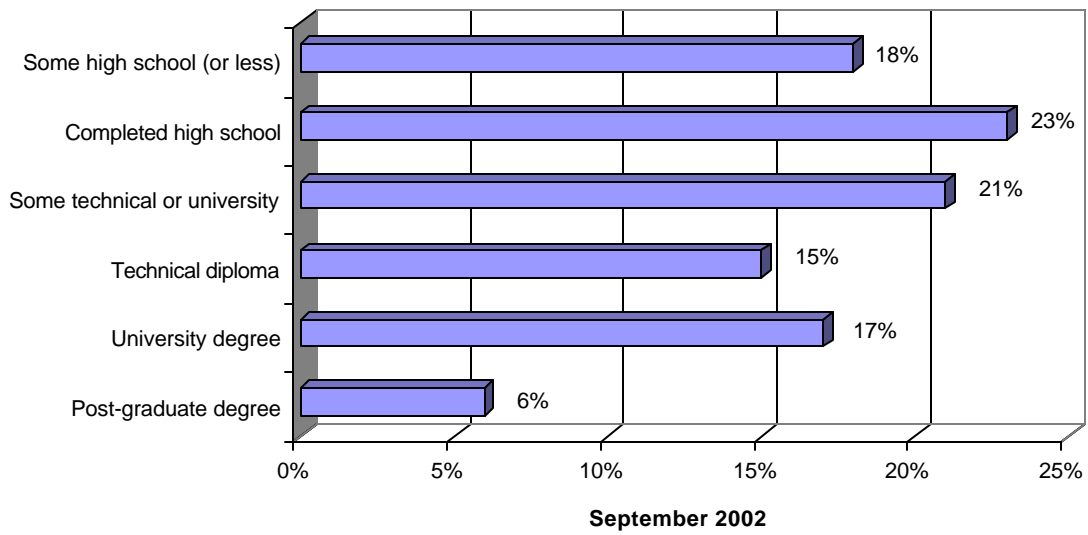
The omnibus survey sample size of 987 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error for the point estimates contained in this report of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.



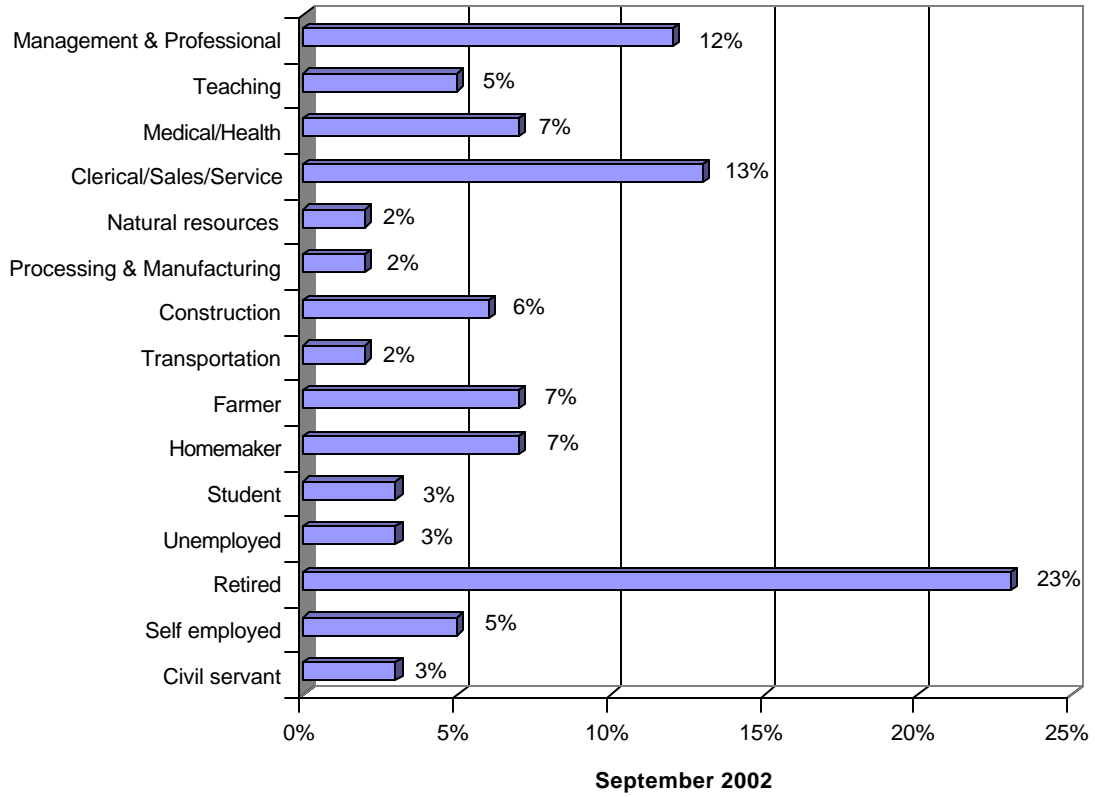
**Survey sample age distribution**



**Survey sample education distribution**

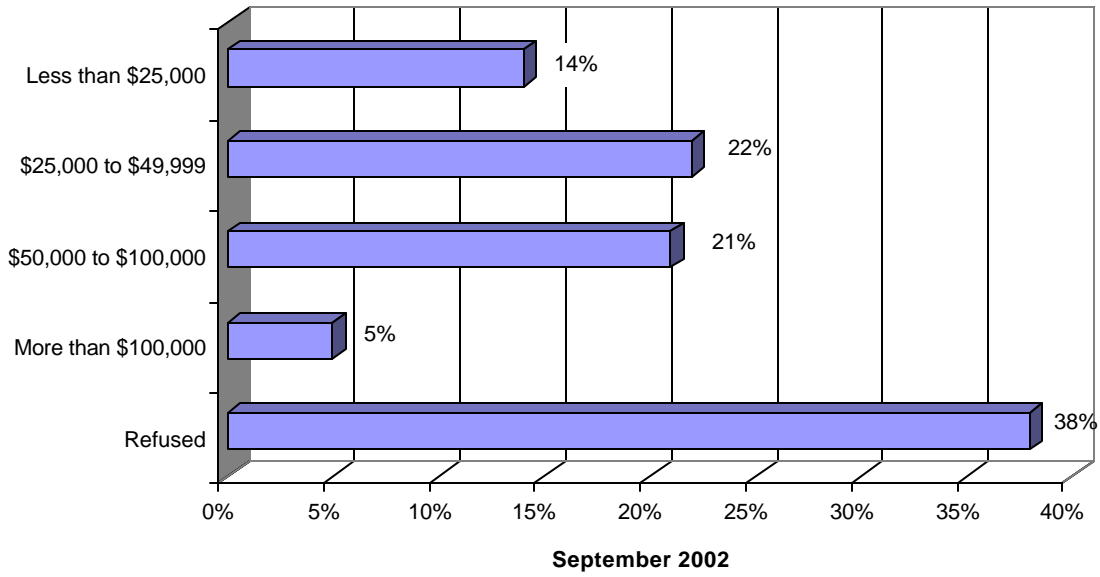


**Survey sample occupation distribution**





**Survey sample income distribution**



**Survey sample regional distribution**

