



Government of Saskatchewan

Public Opinion Polling

from July 1, 2003 – September 30, 2003

**Saskatchewan
Executive Council**

**Omnibus Polling
Program**

Report of Results
September 2003

Introduction

Objective

The objective of this poll was to query a sample of Saskatchewan residents on a range of issues identified by Saskatchewan Executive Council and its client departments.

A number of the queries are repeats from polls that have been conducted regularly over several years, in ongoing monitoring of issues and trends. Others are unique to this particular survey.

Methodology

Interviews were conducted across Saskatchewan with respondents aged 18 or older in households selected at random by computer. All fieldwork was done by telephone from Sigma's call centre.

A total of 1003 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.

Queries were supplied by Saskatchewan Executive Council.

This report is formatted so that Executive Council's general queries are reported first, as Section A, even though they made up Section B in the field instrument. The reason for reordering the queries is to maintain consistency with earlier reports.

Cautions

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

- 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

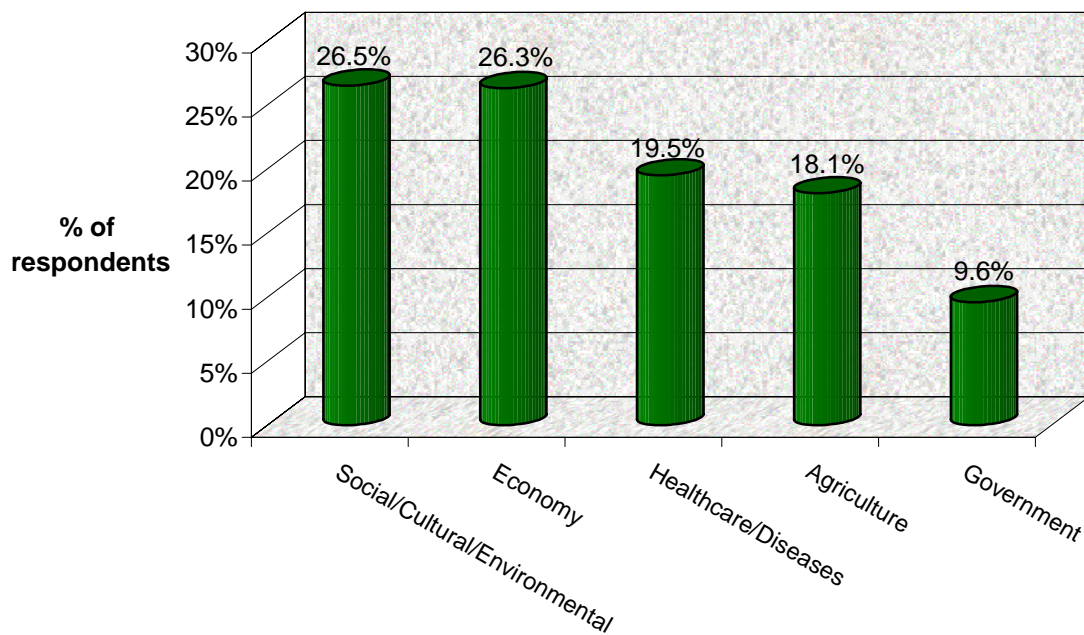
- The issue of defining same-sex unions as marriages shifted the ranking of top issues at the federal level. Healthcare, often the leading choice, fell to third place. The economy retained second place ranking.
- Within the province, the agriculture-rural issues area continued to lead as top concern, followed by economy-population. Healthcare fell several points.
- The Shand Greenhouse at Estevan was recognized as a news item by one in five respondents. Awareness of specifics of its operation and purpose is modest.
- Saskatchewan Health's HealthLine service appears to have gained a significant and favourable profile early in its development.
- The Canada-Saskatchewan Career & Employment Services office, and the Internet, dominate choices as place to go for job and career opportunities.
- Newspaper recruitment notices and word of mouth lead as media by which employers solicit job applications. Job seekers tend to apply in person for openings.
- Provincial government handling of the economy receives a modest majority endorsement, though among those holding strong views, a negative perception is much more likely than a positive one.
- About half of respondents find no change for better or worse in the province's economy or in the number of persons employed. Respondents who feel the economy is worsening outnumber those who think it is improving by 2.5:1. Those who feel employment is improving are outnumbered 1.5 by those who feel it is worsening.

Section A: General Issues

B1. What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?

September's responses are markedly different from the broad pattern of recent polls. The latter have generally shown healthcare at the top of the national agenda, as seen from Saskatchewan. In this survey, healthcare fell to third spot, replaced by the social-cultural-environmental category that more commonly rates well behind. This is an open-ended query. A review of the specific responses indicates that the question of same-sex marriage was a large factor in this shift.

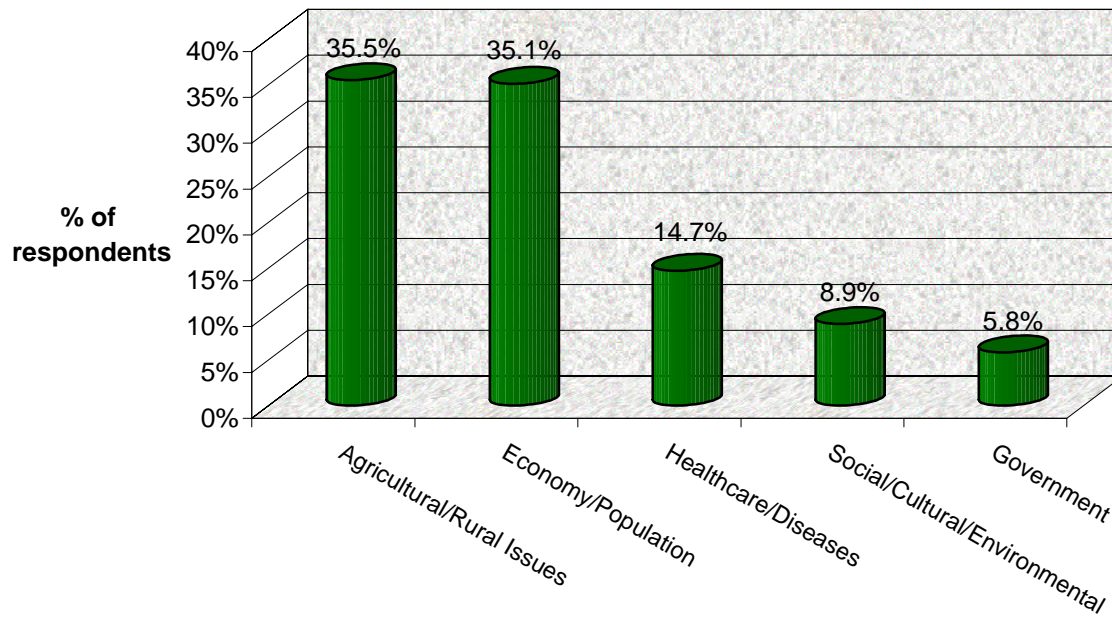
What do you think is the most important issue facing Canada today?



B2. What do you think is the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan today?

As in recent surveys, the agriculture and rural issue area is top, though economic issues have risen somewhat from the level in the last survey in June 2003.

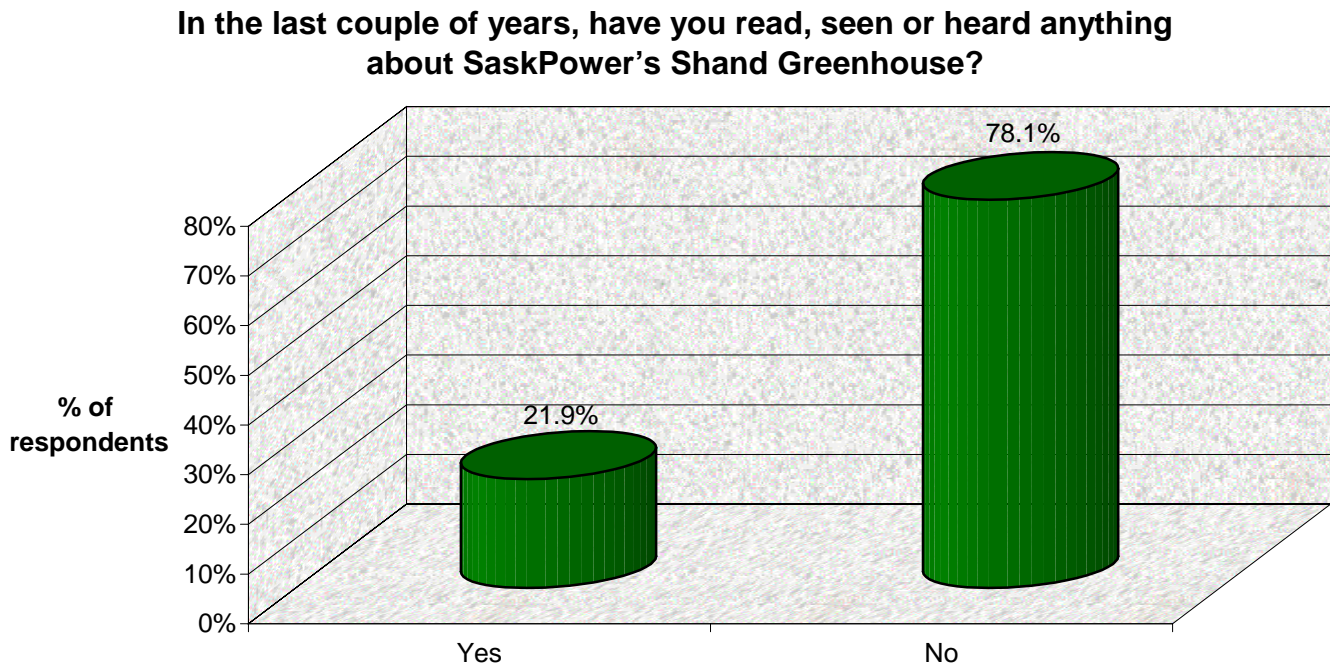
What do you think is the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan today?



Section B: SaskPower

A1. In the last couple of years, have you read, seen or heard anything about SaskPower's Shand Greenhouse?

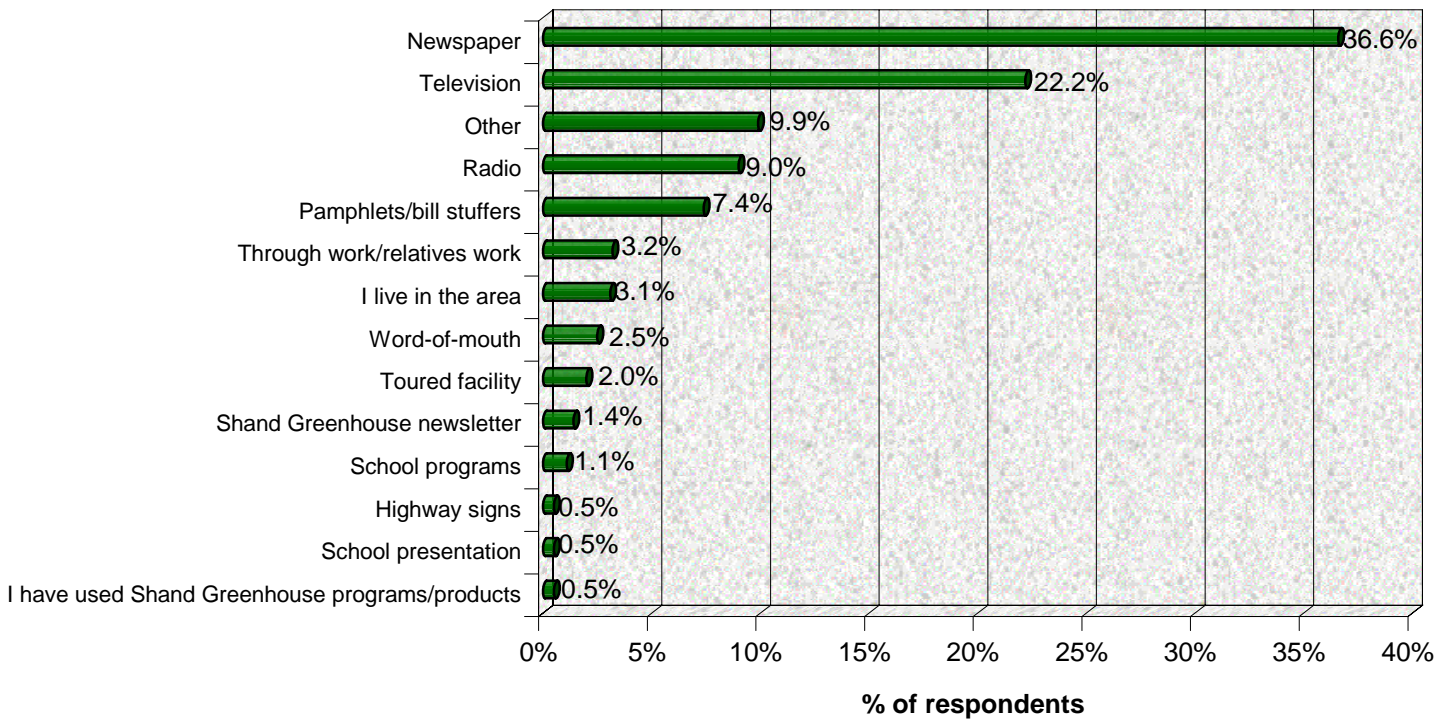
Roughly one in five respondents reported having awareness of Shand Greenhouse in the recent past.



A1a. Where did you read, see, or hear it?

The dominant source of information about Shand Greenhouse was recalled as being the newspaper, followed by television.

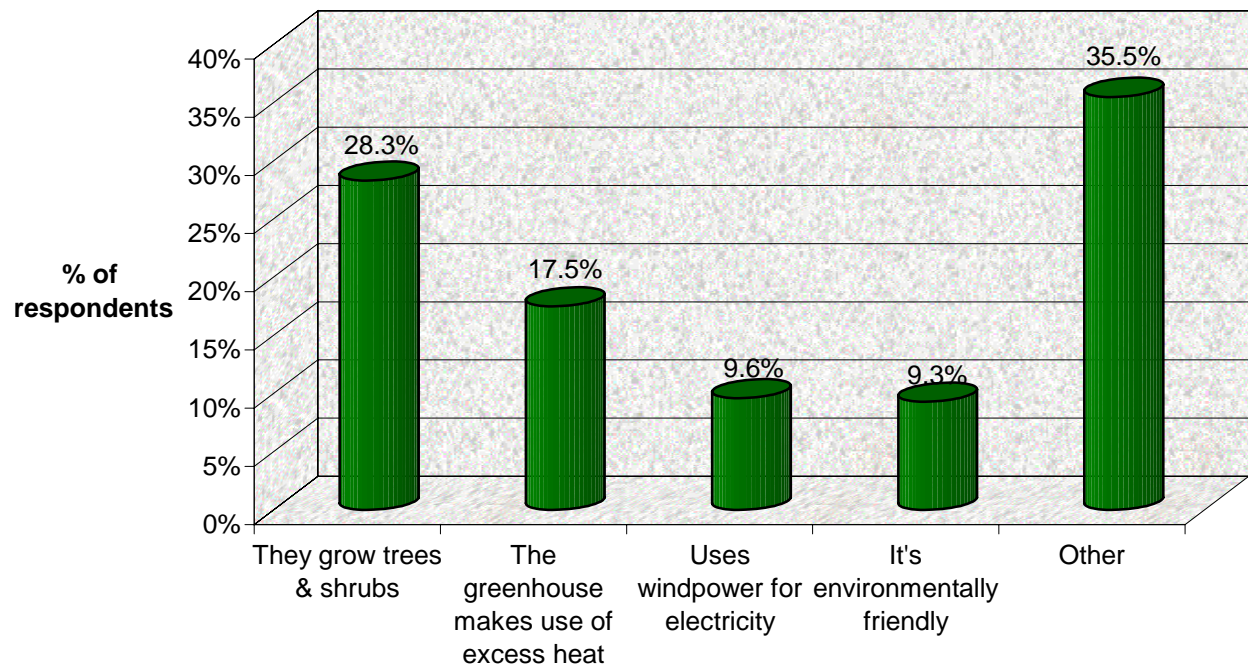
Where did your read, see, or hear it?



A1b. What did you read, see or hear about Shand Greenhouse?

On this open-ended query, the fact most commonly offered in regard to Shand Greenhouse is that it grows plants. It is possible this number could be driven in part by surmise. The most commonly mentioned fact not likely to be susceptible to surmise is that the Greenhouse uses excess heat, offered by a sizeable fraction of respondents.

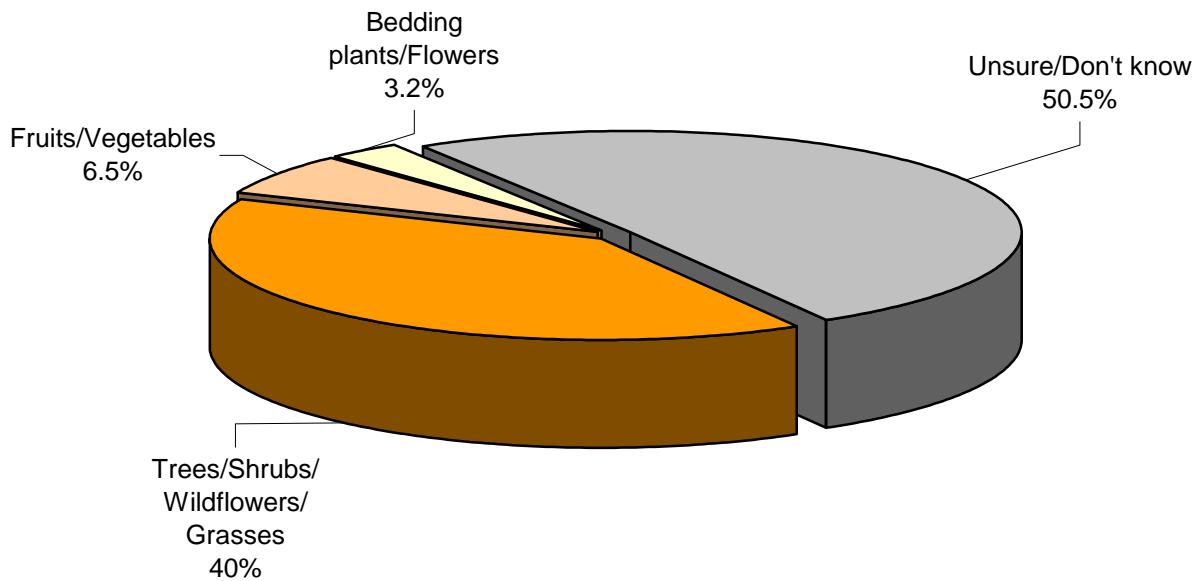
What did you read, see or hear about Shand Greenhouse?



A2. Do you know what is produced at SaskPower's Shand Greenhouse?

To this prompted query, 50.5% felt unable to give a response identifying a specific. The largest group of those who did, however, chose the most accurate response.

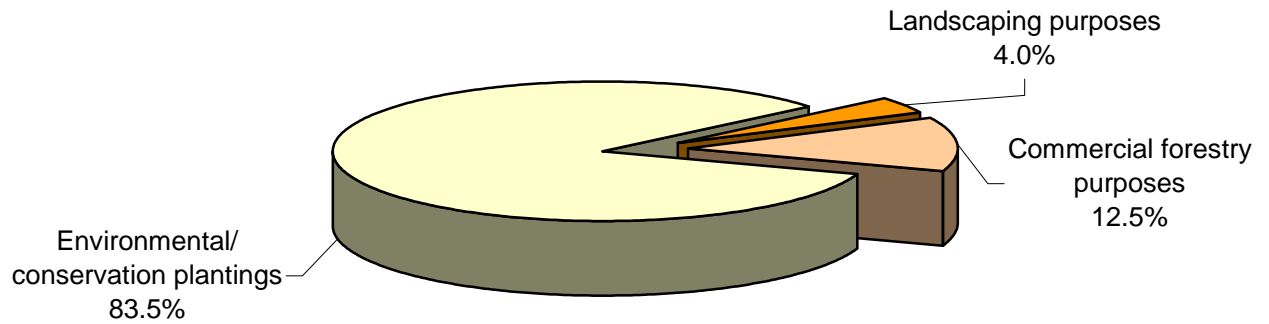
Do you know what is produced at SaskPower's Shand Greenhouse?



A2a. Do you know what is the main use for these plants?

On this prompted query, asked of those who had chosen trees and shrubs as the response to the previous query, the overwhelming majority chose environmental and conservation planting.

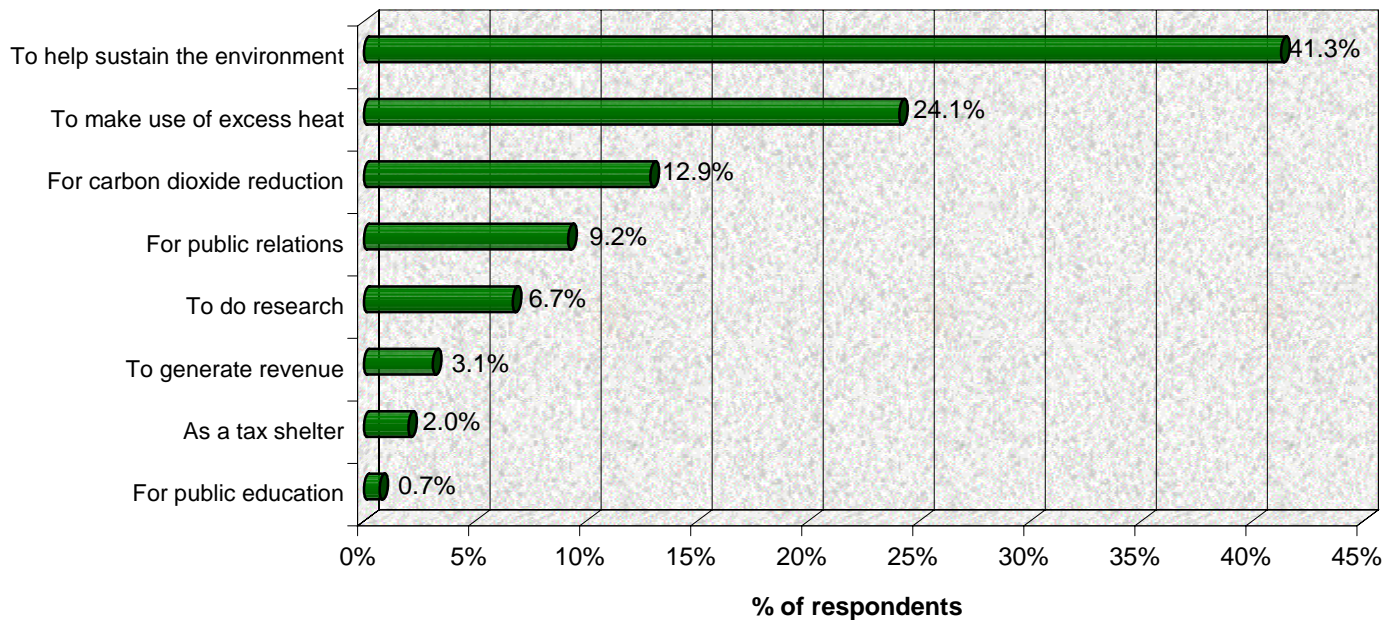
Do you know what is the main use for these plants?



A3. What do you think is the primary reason that SaskPower operates Shand Greenhouse?

To these not-mutually-exclusive prompted response options, the largest specific choice was “making use of excess heat”. The overall pattern of response clearly indicates a perception that the Greenhouse is operated for environmentally related purposes.

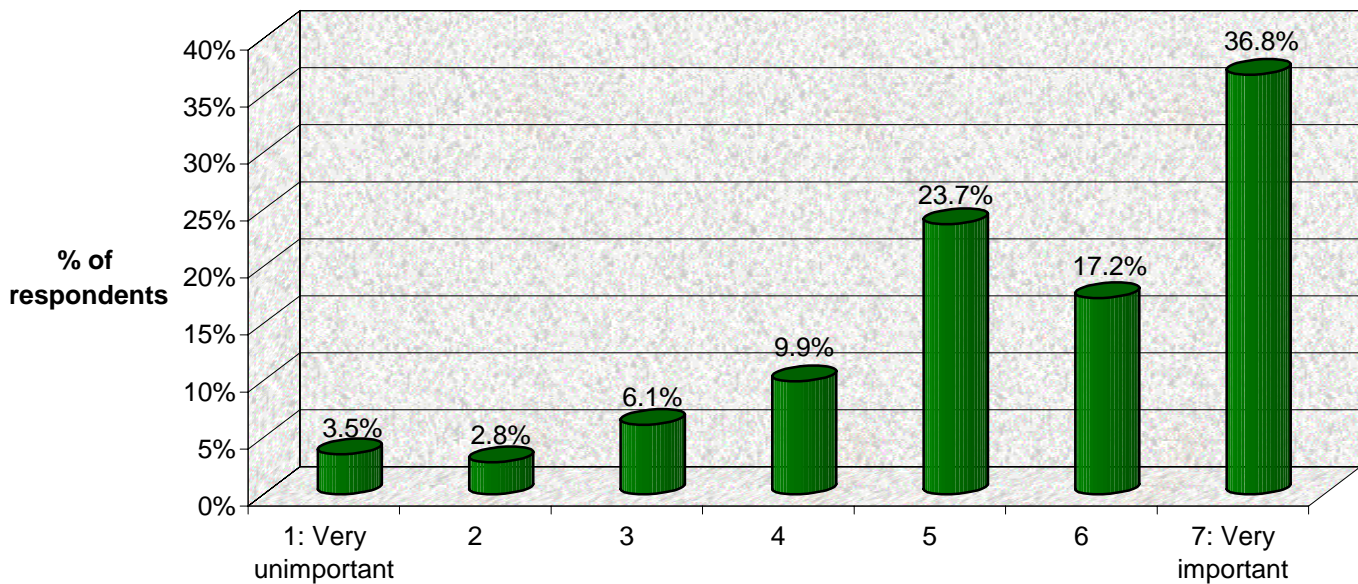
What do you think is the primary reason that SaskPower operates Shand Greenhouse?



A4. The main goal of the Shand Greenhouse is to help protect the environment. Using a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is “Very unimportant” and 7 is “Very important” please rate how important you think this program is for SaskPower:

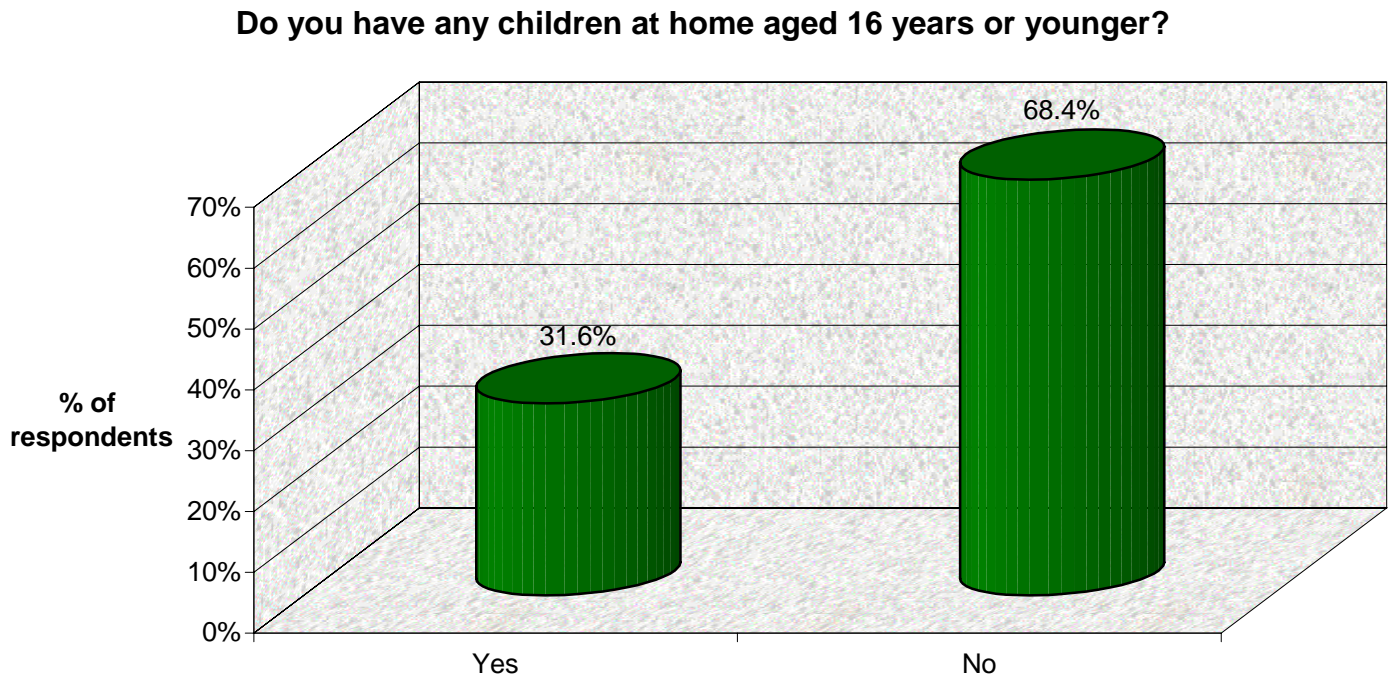
Respondents choosing a rating on the “important” side of the mid-point massively outweigh respondents who chose a rating on the “unimportant side.

Using a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 is “Very unimportant” and 7 is “Very important” please rate how important you think this program is for SaskPower:



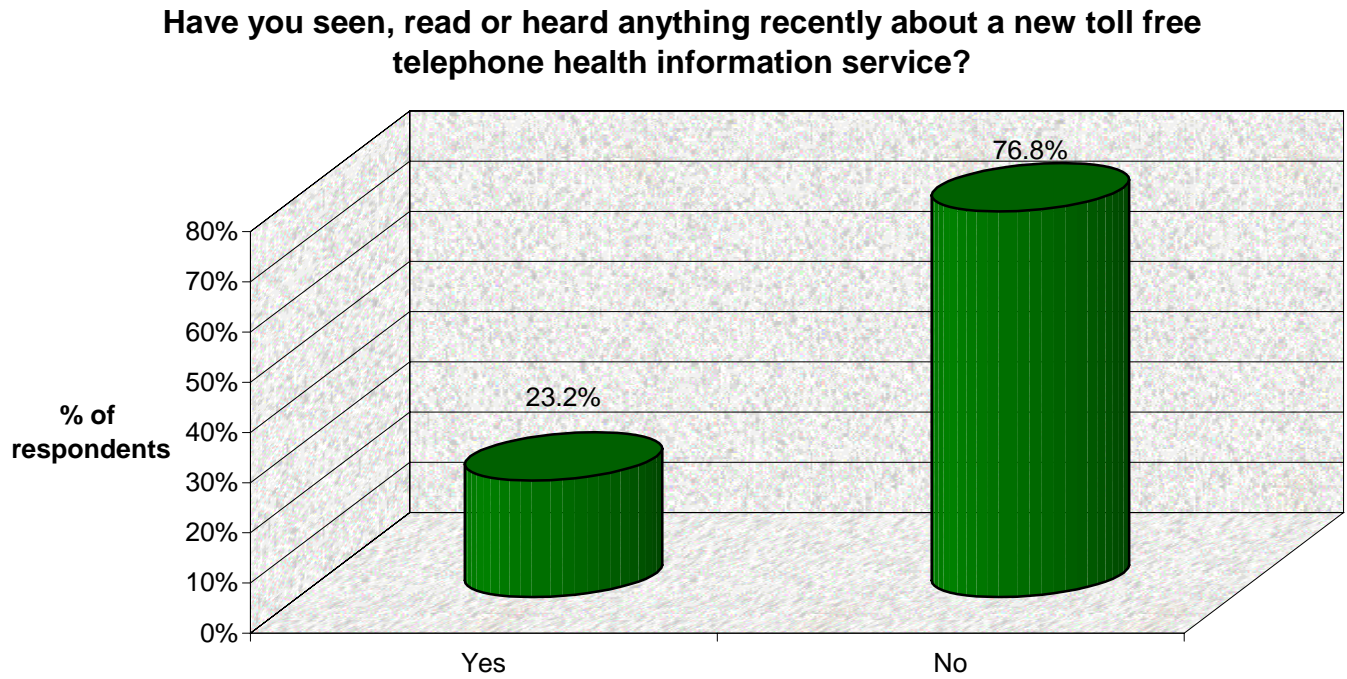
Section C: Saskatchewan Health

C1. Do you have any children at home aged 16 years or younger?



C2. Have you seen, read or heard anything recently about a new toll free telephone health information service?

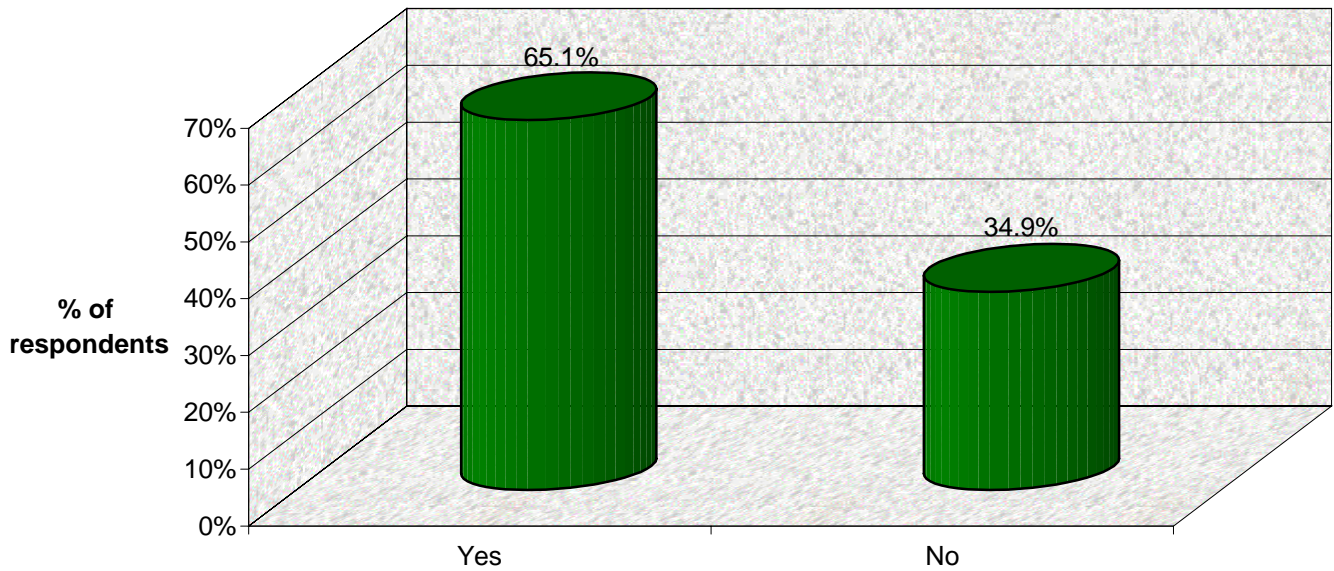
Approximately one quarter of respondents reported having heard of a toll free health information service.



C2a. Was what you saw or heard an advertisement about the new telephone health service called HealthLine?

Of the one in four who have heard of the health information service, two thirds report seeing an advertisement.

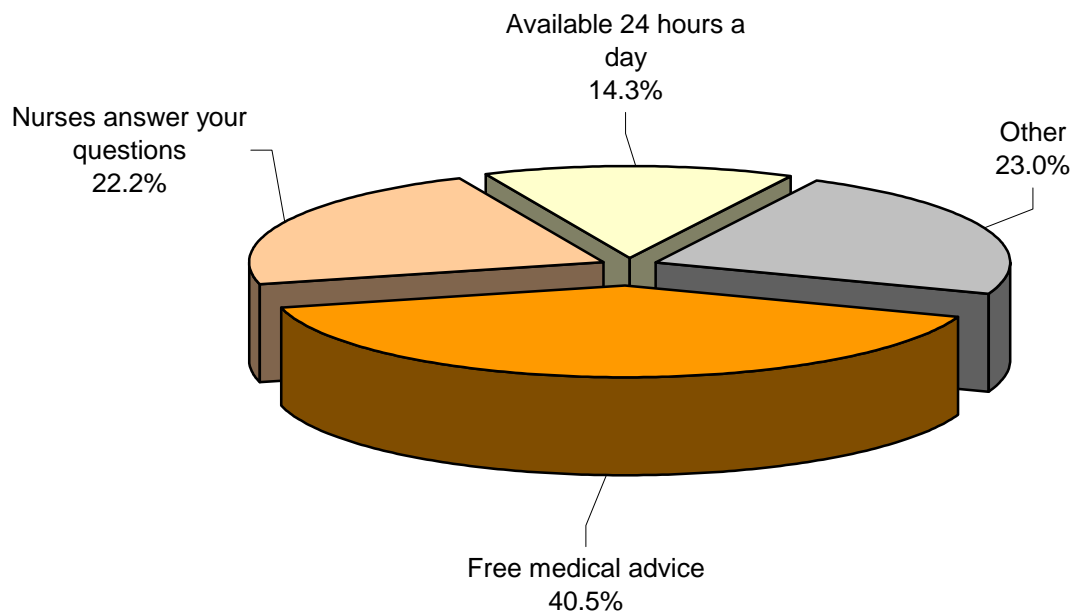
Was what you saw or heard an advertisement about the new telephone health service called HealthLine?



C2b. Being as specific as you can, what do you recall about the HealthLine ads you have seen, read or heard?

The dominant theme recalled by those who report having seen a HealthLine advertisement is that the service offers free advice. That nurses give the advice was offered by roughly half as many as those who indicated “free advice.”

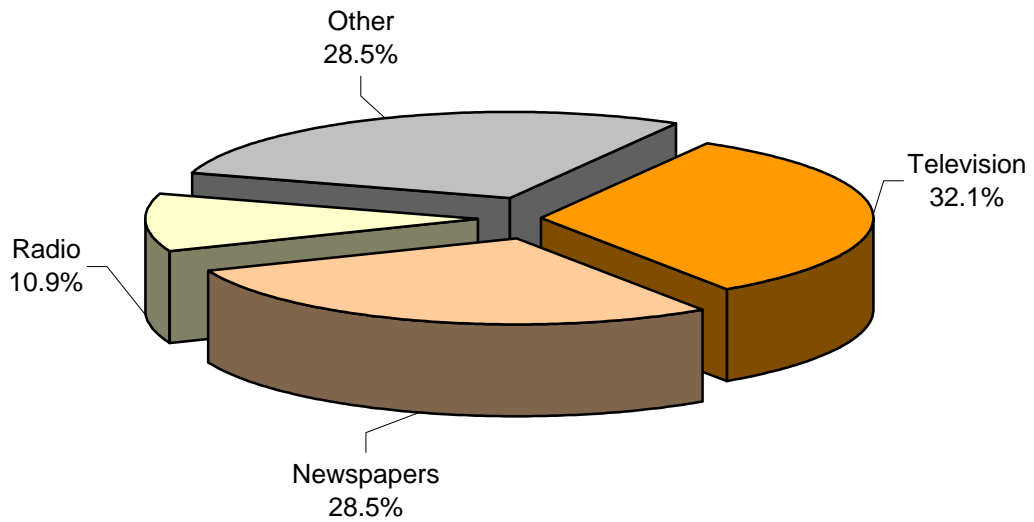
Being as specific as you can, what do you recall about the HealthLine ads you have seen, read or heard?



C2c. Where do you recall reading, seeing or hearing the HealthLine ads?

Television leads as the most-mentioned medium for the advertising, followed closely by newspapers.

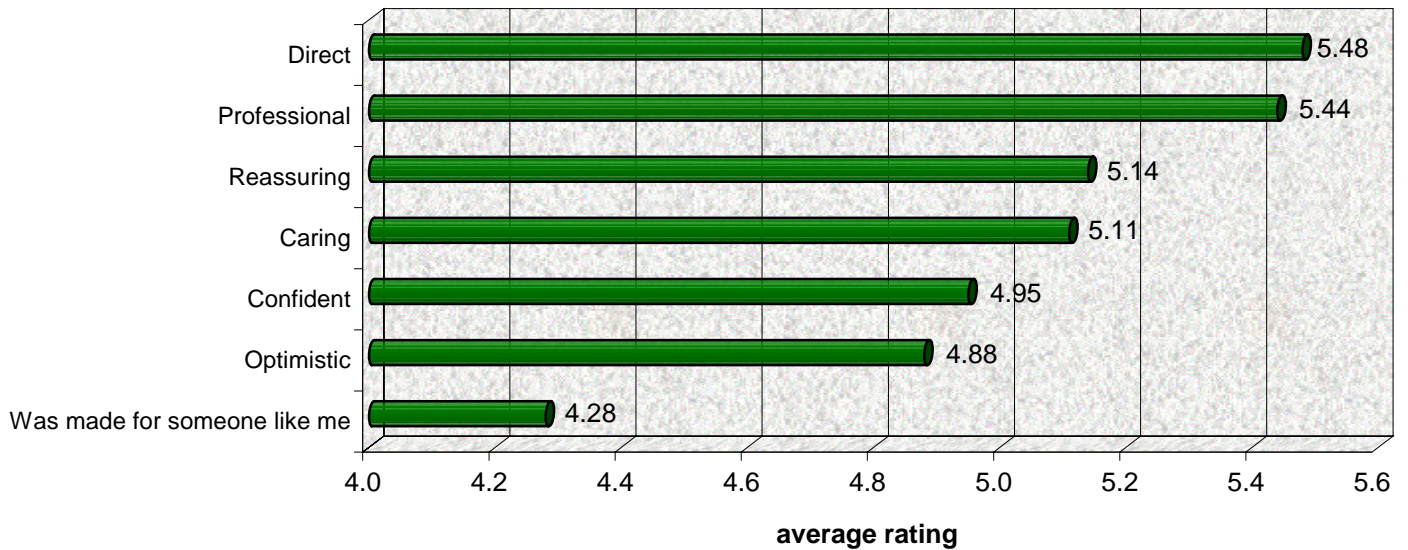
Where do you recall reading, seeing or hearing the HealthLine ads?



C2d. I'm now going to read a list of words or statements. Using a 1 to 7 scale where 1 is "not at all" and 7 is "completely" please state to what degree you associate each word with the HealthLine ad that you saw:

The HealthLine advertisements would appear to have had a positive impact, based on the words "direct" and "professional" receiving strong means scores, and "reassuring" following closely.

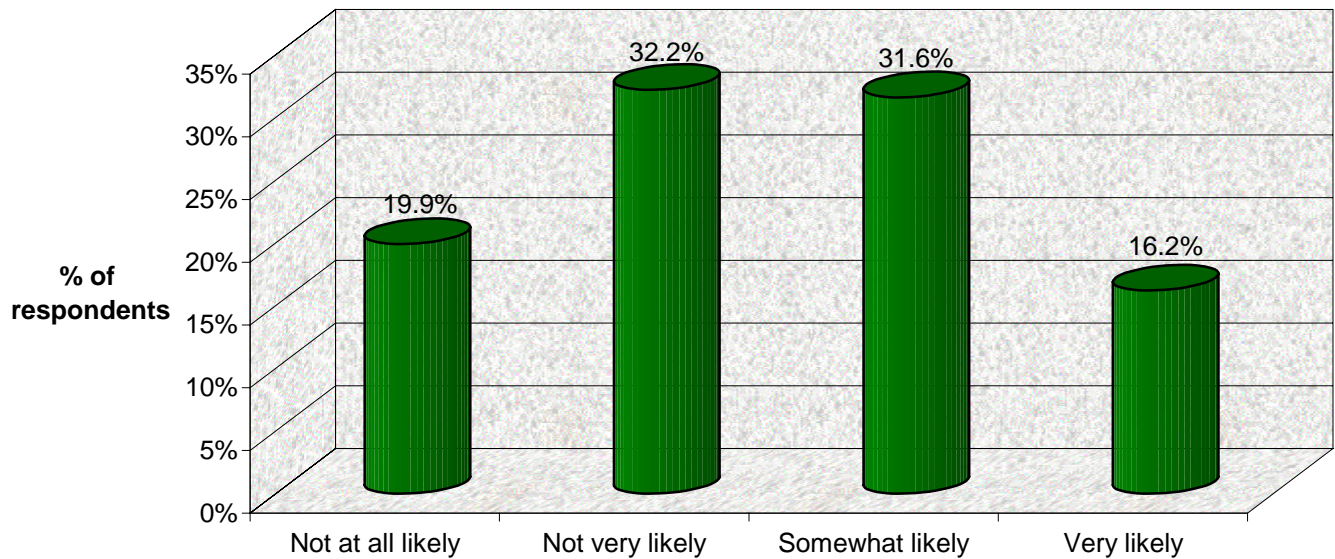
Using a 1 to 7 scale where 1 is "not at all" and 7 is "completely" please state to what degree you associate each word with the HealthLine ad that you saw:



C3. Saskatchewan’s HealthLine is a free, confidential telephone service you can call to get health advice or general information from a Registered Nurse. The service provides round-the-clock access to a qualified health professional. How likely would you be to call HealthLine for yourself or someone in your household?

The distribution of responses is nearly balanced – probably a strong result for a start-up service.

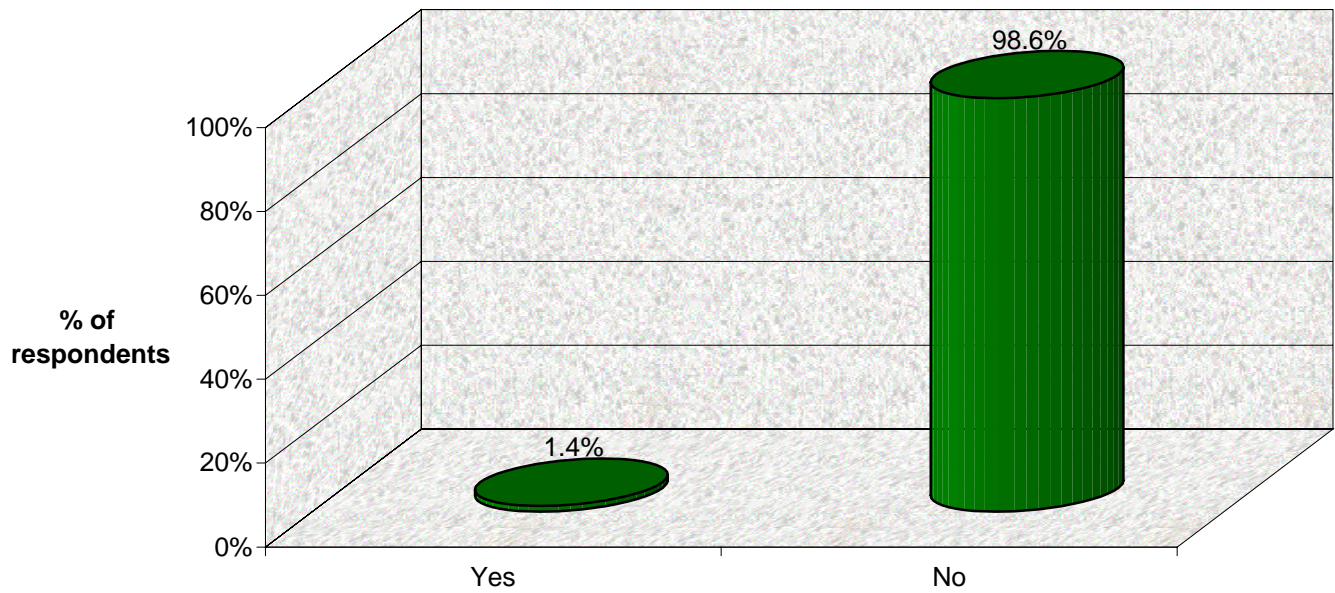
How likely would you be to call HealthLine for yourself or someone in your household?



C4. Have you or a member of your household ever called HealthLine?

Given the recency of initiation of the service, the minuscule Yes response may be understandable.

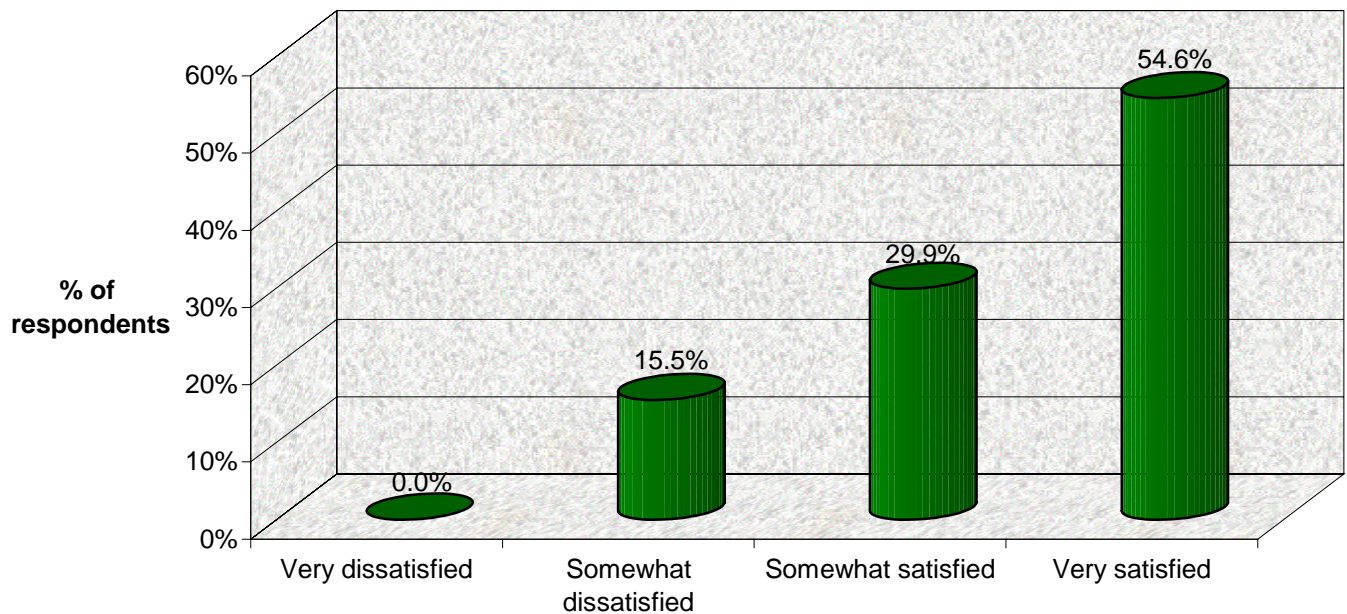
Have you or a member of your household ever called HealthLine?



C4a. Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience with HealthLine?

The table below shows percentages but due to the small size of the cells, these numbers are not reliable. Fourteen individuals responded to the preceding query. Of them 13 responded to this query. Seven reported being very satisfied.

Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience with HealthLine?

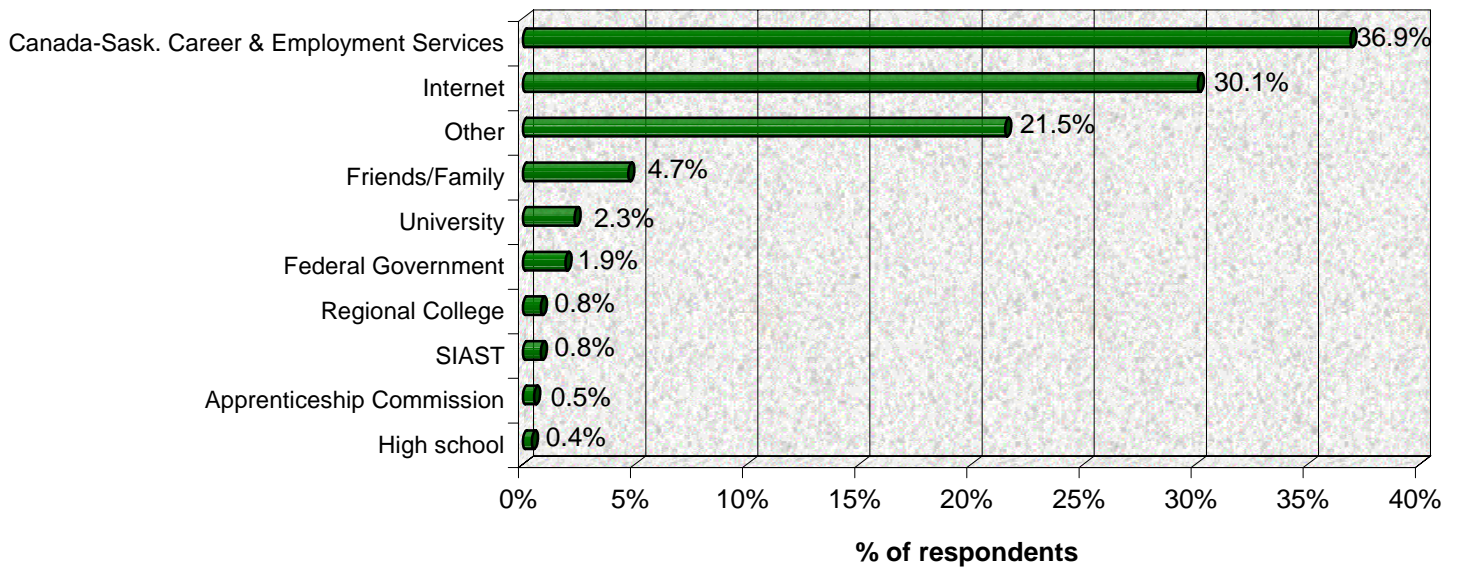


Section D: Community Resources & Employment

D1. Where would you go for information about job opportunities or to find workers?

The Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Service leads as most frequent mention in this prompted list.

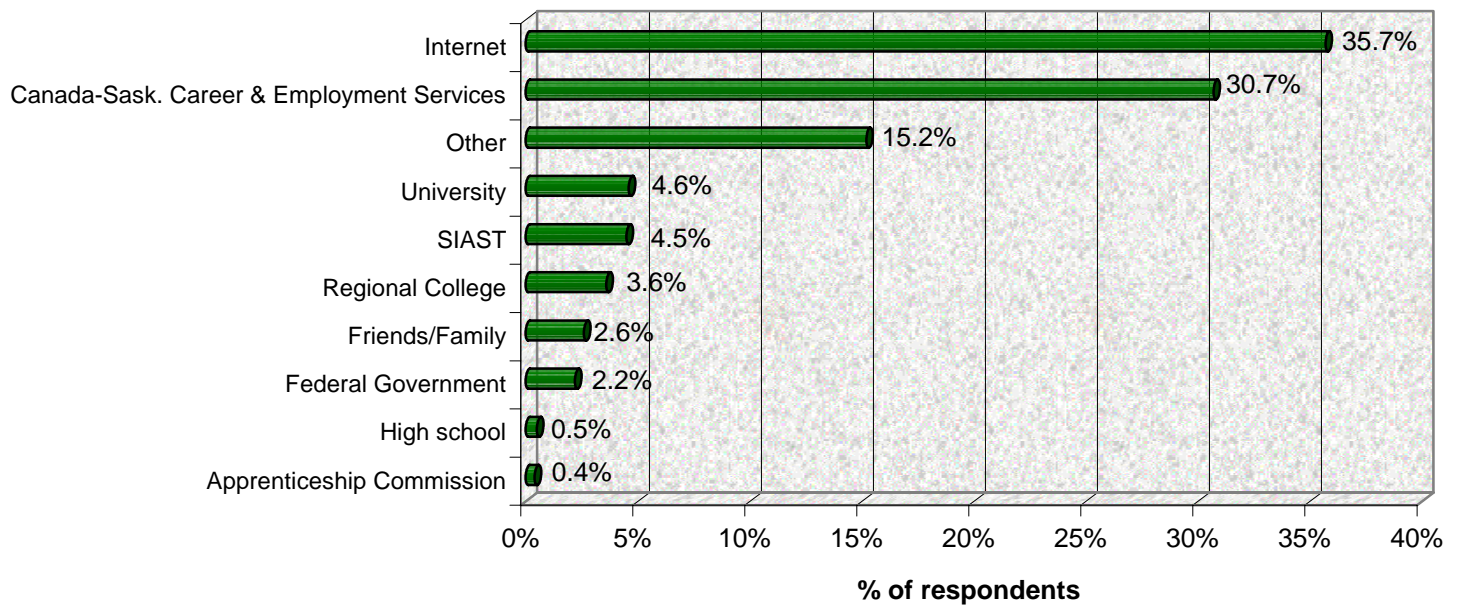
Where would you go for information about job opportunities or to find workers?



D2. Where would you go for career and employment information?

On this query, very similar to the one preceding, the numbers for the career placement service and for Internet reverse from the earlier result.

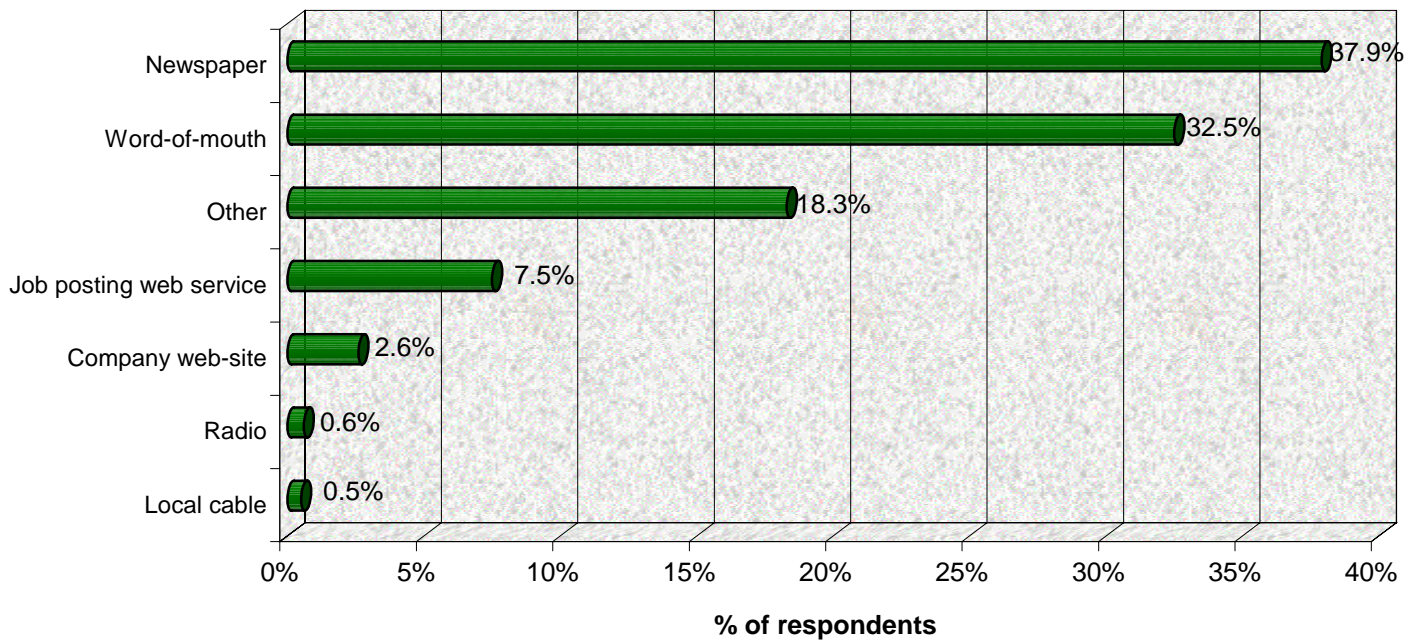
Where would you go for career and employment information?



D3. If you hired an employee during the last year, how did you advertise the job?

Newspaper job recruitment ads dominate, but word of mouth follows closely as a medium for recruitment.

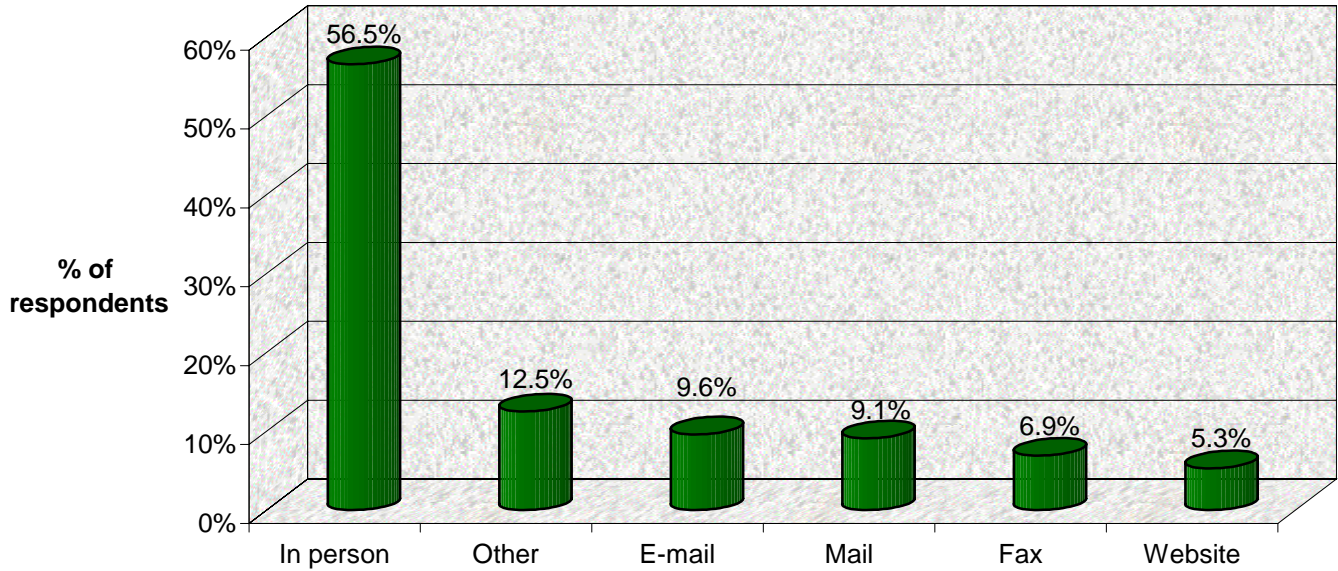
If you hired an employee during the last year, how did you advertise the job?



D4. If you applied for a job within the last year, how did you apply?

Nearly six in 10 job seekers visited the employer's premises to make their application.

If you applied for a job within the last year, how did you apply?

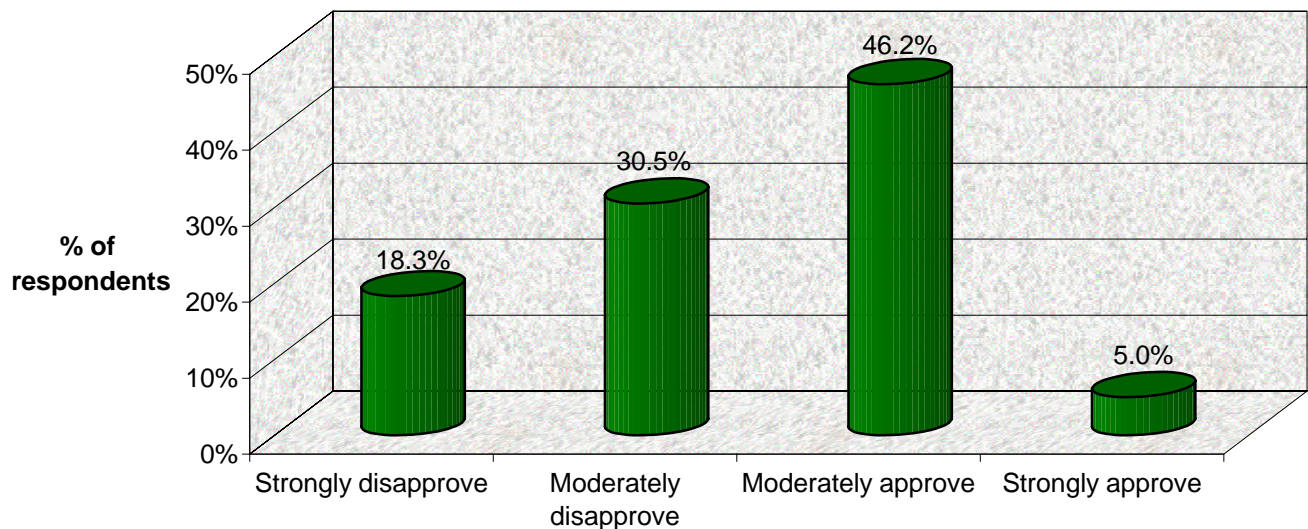


Section E: Industry & Resources

E1. Generally speaking, do you strongly approve, moderately approve, moderately disapprove or strongly disapprove of the way the provincial government is handling the economy?

While a small majority chose a positive response, those who chose a strongly negative response outweigh those who chose a response that is strongly favourable.

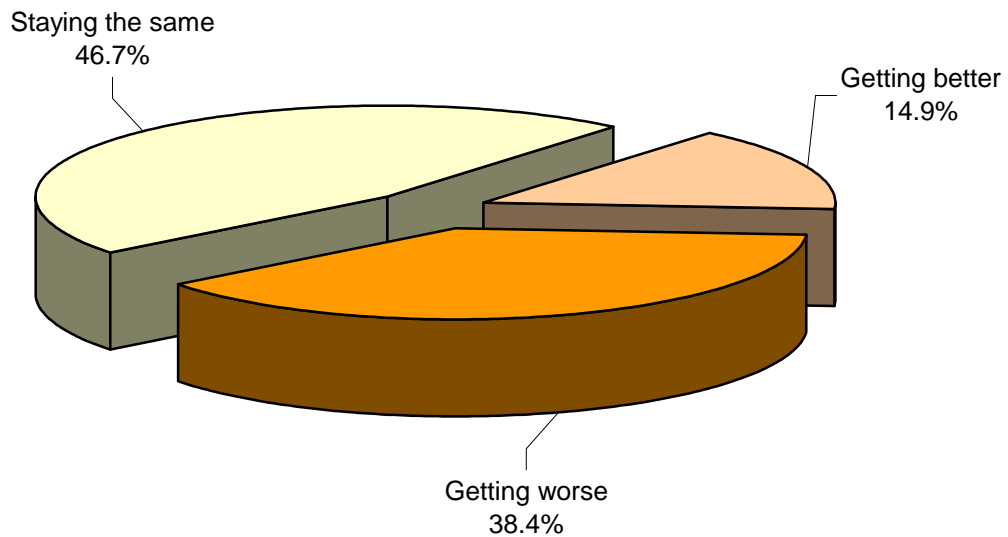
Generally speaking, do you strongly approve, moderately approve, moderately disapprove or strongly disapprove of the way the provincial government is handling the economy?



E2. How do you feel about the Saskatchewan economy right now? In general, do you think the economy is getting better, getting worse or staying the same?

Nearly half of respondents feel the provincial economy is neither improving or declining. Among those who feel a trend is visible, however, those who find the trend negative more than double those who find it positive.

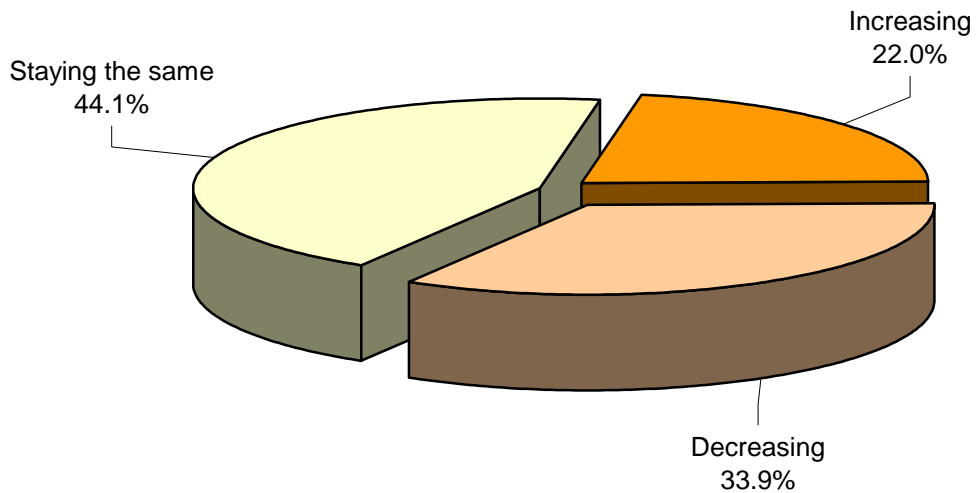
How do you feel about the Saskatchewan economy right now? In general, do you think the economy is getting better, getting worse or staying the same?



E3. Do you think the number of people employed in Saskatchewan during the recent months has been increasing, decreasing or staying about the same?

In terms of those who believe the number of persons working is about average, results on this query are not greatly different from the results in the preceding query regarding the economy. However, among those who find there is a change under way, the disparity between results on this query and those on the one preceding it is narrower.

Do you think the number of people employed in Saskatchewan during the recent months has been increasing, decreasing or staying about the same?



Demographics

Gender:

Male	49.8%
Female	50.2%

Age:

18 – 34	23.9%
35 – 54	39.8%
55 and over	36.3%

Location:

City	55.8%
Town/Village/Hamlet	27.8%
Rural Municipality	16.4%

Occupation:

Retired	23.0%
Student	5.7%
Homemaker	6.5%
Not employed	2.3%
Farmer	9.7%
Professional	14.6%
Trades person	5.9%
Business owner/self-employed	5.9%
Employee – private sector	5.7%
Employee – local government	2.3%
Employee – provincial/federal government	4.5%
Manager – private sector	1.8%
Manager – public sector	0.4%
Other	11.6%

Education:

Less than grade 12	17.0%
Grade 12	23.6%
Some technical or university	17.5%
Technical diploma	14.2%
University degree	21.6%
Graduate degree	6.2%

Income:

Less than \$25,000	21.6%
\$25,000 - \$50,000	34.4%
\$50,000 - \$100,000	31.7%
Over \$100,000	12.3%

Region:

Saskatoon	20.2%
Regina	18.0%
Moose Jaw	3.5%
Prince Albert	3.4%
Southeast	10.0%
Southwest	10.1%
East Central	10.2%
Central	9.1%
Northwest	12.1%
North	3.4%