



Burnett County Comprehensive Planning Public Opinion Survey Report

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Executive Summary

During the summer of 2009, the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls sent comprehensive planning public opinion surveys to 2,165 residents and property owners of Burnett County. The surveys were followed up with a second mailing to non-respondents. The overall response rate was 42 percent (909 completed questionnaires).

From the returned surveys, the SRC constructed a random sample of 374 surveys as a balanced sample of public opinion for the County as a whole. The 374 surveys provide estimates that are expected to be accurate to within plus or minus 4.6 percent.

Key findings of this study include:

Quality of Life

- The predominant reasons people gave for living in Burnett County were the natural beauty (64 percent) and recreational opportunities (55 percent).
- More than 4 of 5 respondents rated the overall quality of life in Burnett County as good or excellent.

Services and Facilities

- More than half of respondents rated fire protection, police protection, county parks, and county road maintenance as good or excellent.
- One service, wireless telecommunication, had more than one-half of all respondents in the County sample rating it fair or poor.
- An overwhelming majority (87%) indicated they favor the sharing of community services if savings occurred and service quality was maintained.

ATV Usage

- Most Burnett County property owners (92%) felt that ATV infrastructure (trails, signage, maintenance, etc.) should be funded through user fees.
- A majority (56%) disagree that additional use of roads for ATVs is needed in their community.

County Budget

- If allocating a surplus County budget, respondents would be most likely to cut taxes first, followed by distributing funds to emergency services, roads and bridges, and education.
- Recreation funding would take the biggest cut if respondents were faced with a County budget deficit, followed by cuts to social services, and economic development.

Communication

- Residents and property owners prefer to get information from Burnett County via direct mail (55 percent) and newsletters (49 percent).

Growth and Development

- When Burnett County residents were asked their preference for how to pay for *public infrastructure*, the responses were fairly equally distributed: 36 percent prefer taxes, 32 percent prefer user fees, and 28 percent prefer development impact fees.
- When paying for *public services*, 54 percent prefer taxes, 24 percent user fees, and 16 percent prefer development impact fees.

Residential Development

- A substantial majority of property owners in Burnett County (69 percent) favor rural developments that use cluster designs (smaller lots with shared open space) over traditional designs (larger lots with little or no shared open space).
- Majorities of respondents support the clustering of residential lots to preserve forest land, natural and environmental features, rural open space, and productive agricultural land.

Seasonal Rentals

- A very solid majority of respondents agree that noise limits on outdoor use of property should be imposed during late hours.
- A majority of respondents agree that septic systems should be designed and maintained to support the number of guests.
- Nearly one-half of respondents disagree with requiring landscaping along side property lines.
- Twenty-one percent of respondents believe that short-term rental of residential units should not be allowed.
- Nearly two-thirds of seasonal residences are used five or more months annually.

Economic Development

- When asked what types of businesses are the most important for Burnett County to attract, tourism and recreation businesses were deemed the most important followed by health care services.
- A majority of respondents agreed that restaurants, cocktail lounges, and resorts are appropriate commercial uses on waterfront property adjacent to residential development.

Survey Purpose

In the summer of 2009, the Survey Research Center at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls (SRC) sent comprehensive planning public opinion surveys to 2,165 residents and property owners of Burnett County. The motivation for this study was to gather opinions of residents and property owners about the future direction of development in Burnett County. Foth Infrastructure and Environment, LLC and Burnett County chose to work with the SRC to process, compile, and analyze the results of this survey. A total of 909 usable surveys were returned for an overall 42 percent return rate.

Survey Methods

The SRC used a stratified random sample process that over-sampled the thirteen jurisdictions in Burnett County (villages and towns) participating in the comprehensive plan grant. These jurisdictions represent 60 percent of the approximately 12,700 usable addresses for Burnett County. The SRC also mailed surveys to households in non-participating jurisdictions for which addresses were available to ensure that we could construct a sample representative of the entire County.

County Sample. The overall County sample, which is analyzed in this report, was constructed from the participating and non-participating sub-samples. The non-participating jurisdictions contain about 40 percent of the total available addresses in Burnett County. So, the observations from the non-participating jurisdiction represent 40 percent of the overall sample. The overall County sample of 374, therefore, contains 150 observations from the non-participating jurisdictions and 224 from participating jurisdictions. The SRC drew a random sample from each participating jurisdiction that was proportionate to its percentage of available addresses for the County. The SRC needed to construct the County sample in this way to avoid having excessive representation from the participating jurisdictions. Table 1 summarizes the available addresses from the County, the number of questionnaires mailed to residents/property owners in each jurisdiction, the number and percentage that were returned, the confidence interval, and the number randomly drawn to include in the overall County sample.

With a total County sample of 374, the estimated values reported in this summary of results should be accurate to plus or minus 4.6 percent.

Table 1: Burnett Sample from Participating Jurisdictions - Burnett County, 2009						
Jurisdiction	Addresses	Number Mailed Out	Returned Surveys	Percentage Returned	Confidence Interval	Needed for County Sample
Village of						
Grantsburg	566	133	51	38%	13%	14
Webster	362	128	54	42%	12%	9
Town of						
Anderson	312	139	41	29%	14%	8
Daniels	507	139	54	39%	13%	13
Dewey	323	135	50	37%	13%	8
Jackson	1290	128	68	53%	12%	33
Oakland	1141	127	44	35%	14%	29
Sand Lake	509	139	44	32%	14%	13
Siren	913	130	46	35%	14%	23
Trade Lake	712	129	61	47%	12%	18
Union	530	130	52	40%	13%	14
Webb Lake	1000	131	51	39%	13%	26
Wood River	635	132	55	42%	13%	16
Burnett Sample from Non-Participating Jurisdictions						
Jurisdiction	Addresses	Number Mailed Out	Returned Surveys	Percentage Returned	Confidence Interval	Needed for County Sample
Village of						
Siren	465	35	21	60%	21%	15
Town of						
Blaine	269	21	7	33%	37%	7
Grantsburg	549	42	26	62%	19%	14
La Follette	455	35	14	40%	26%	12
Lincoln	228	17	5	29%	43%	5
Meenon	986	75	38	51%	16%	25
Roosevelt	155	12	6	50%	39%	4
Rusk	399	30	9	30%	32%	9
Scott	1080	82	40	49%	15%	30
Swiss	969	74	37	50%	16%	25
W. Marshland	272	21	4	19%	49%	4
	Addresses	Number Mailed Out	Returned Surveys	Percentage Returned	Confidence Interval for County Sample = 4.6	County Sample
Blank/Multiples ¹			31	3%		
Total Participating	8800	1720	671	39%		224
Total Non-Part.	5827	445	207	47%		150
TOTAL	14627	2165	909	42%		374
Approx. Usable Addresses	12,700					

¹ Respondent either did not provide jurisdiction in which residence is located or selected multiple jurisdictions.

Non-response Bias Testing. Surveys have to be concerned with “non-response bias”. Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who do not return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who return their surveys. For example, Question 2b asked Burnett County residents and property owners to rate the quality of County public health services. Suppose only strong supporters of County public health services completed their questionnaires, and those who are not chose not to respond. In this case, non-response bias would exist and the results would overstate the overall satisfaction with County public health services.

A standard way to test for non-response bias is to see if respondents to the first mailing differ from those who responded to the second mailing (who are non-respondents to the first mailing). The SRC tested 110 variables included in the questionnaire and found only six instances in which responses from the first mailing and those from the second were statistically different. Not only is this a small number of differences but, while they are statistically significant, the differences do not change the overall interpretation of results. **Based upon our analysis (see Appendix A for a full description), the Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that there is little evidence that non-response bias is a concern for the Burnett County survey.**

In addition to the numeric responses, respondents provided additional written comments that were compiled by the SRC from the surveys. **Appendix B contains the compilation of comments from the County sample.**

Appendix C contains the survey questionnaire with a quantitative summary of responses by question for the County sample.

Profile of Respondents

Table 2 summarizes the demographic profile of the County sample. Comparisons with Census data are not appropriate for this sample due to the inclusion of seasonal (47% of sample) and non-resident landowners (7% of sample).

Highlights of Table 2 include:

- Respondents in the sample tend to be somewhat older; 67 percent are 55 or older
- Very few respondents report household incomes of less than \$15,000 (4 percent); more common are higher income respondents with incomes in excess of \$100,000 (24 percent).
- 71 percent report that they have resided or owned property in the County for more than 10 years.
- Nearly equal percentages report owning less than one-acre (20%) or over 40 acres (18%).
- Over half of the County sample report living in a shoreline residence.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Burnett County Sample, 2009							
Gender	Count	Male	Female				
County Sample	324	68%	32%				
Age	Count	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
County Sample	354	0%	2%	9%	21%	26%	41%
Highest Level of Education	Count	High School or Less	Some College	2-year college degree	4-year college degree	Grad/ Prof Degree	
County Sample	355	19%	22%	12%	26%	21%	
Household Income Range	Count	<\$15,000	\$15-\$24,999	\$25-\$49,999	\$50-\$74,999	\$75-\$99,999	\$100,000+
County Sample	328	4%	10%	24%	25%	13%	24%
Residential Status	Count	Full-time	Seasonal	Non-Res			
County Sample	356	45%	47%	7%			
Length Residency or Property-Ownership	Count	<1 year	1 - 5 years	6 – 10 years	11 – 15 years	16 – 20 years	20+ years
County Sample	361	0%	12%	17%	13%	9%	49%
Total Acres Owned in Burnett County	Count	<1 acre	1 - 5 acres	6 – 10 acres	11 – 20 acres	21 - 40 acres	40+ acres
County Sample	361	20%	40%	11%	5%	6%	18%
Residence Within Burnett County	Count	Within Village	Shoreline	Rural non-farm	Rural hobby farm	Rural farm	No Residence in County
County Sample	368	12%	52%	26%	5%	3%	2%

The Sample. There are substantially more males in the sample (68%) than females (32%). Interestingly, statistical tests show only three instances in the survey where males and females have statistically significant differences of opinion. For example, 40 percent of females said that they “strongly agree” or “agree” that too much farmland is being converted to non-farm uses; 32 percent of males felt this way. As we summarize the various elements of the survey, we will note the few differences between the opinions of men and women.

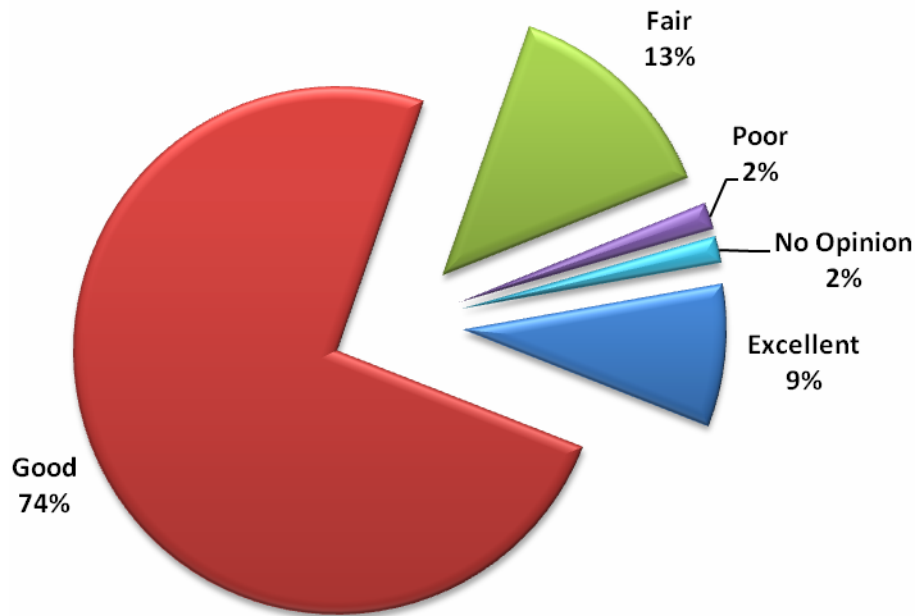
Another key deviation from the expected demographic profile is with respect to age. The sample has a higher proportion of older respondents and lower proportions of younger respondents, which is not unusual for surveys. This shortage is likely related to a couple of factors. First, our experience is that younger residents in most jurisdictions are less likely to participate in surveys than are their older neighbors. Second, the County’s property tax list was used to identify people to be included in the sample. Younger residents are less likely to be property owners than are older County residents. Thirteen percent of the variables tested showed a significant difference between the opinions of those 45 and older and those younger than that. Younger residents are more likely to say that the cost of a home and being near their job is a reason they choose to live in Burnett County. Perhaps not surprisingly, older respondents were more supportive of their community coordinating with the County and neighboring communities to plan for an aging population’s housing needs. Differences of opinion based on age will be noted throughout this report.

As noted earlier, more than one-half of the County sample were either seasonal residents or non-resident property owners. A key demographic result found that there is a high correlation between seasonal residents and higher levels of income and education. There are a number of points in the survey that speak to differences of opinion between these groups (full-time vs. seasonal) in terms of what they value and what they would support. Comparisons of key survey questions were made by the SRC based on respondents’ residential status and will be described throughout the report.

Quality of Life

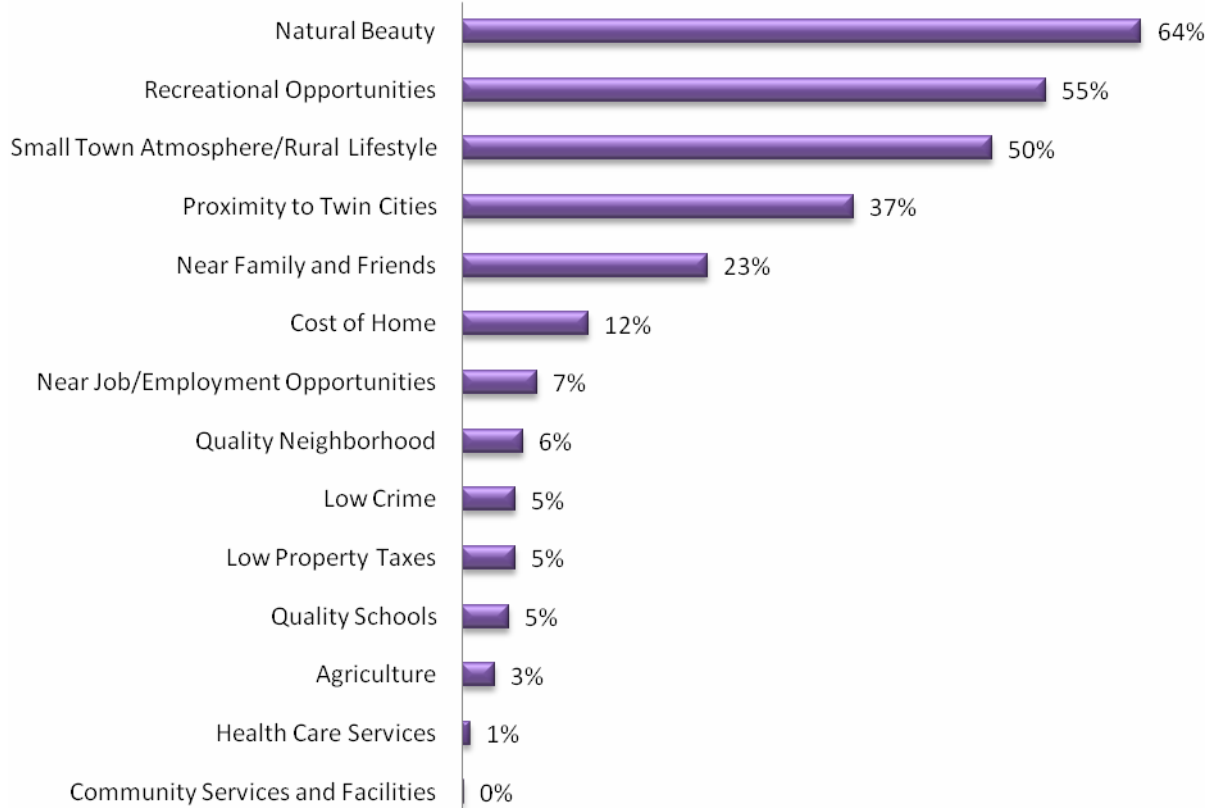
Residents and property owners generally expressed contentment with the quality of life in the County. Figure 1 shows that more than 4 of 5 Burnett County residents and property owners feel that the overall quality of life in the County is “good” (74%) or excellent (9%). There are no statistically significant differences by demographic group in the sample.

Figure 1: Overall Quality of Life in Burnett County



Respondents were asked to identify their three most important reasons for living in Burnett County and a summary of their responses is shown in Figure 2. The natural beauty of the County was ranked the highest by respondents (64% indicated this to be very important in their decision to live in the County). As shown, more than half of respondents in the County sample said that recreational opportunities were key to their location decision. The small town atmosphere/rural lifestyle was the third most important reason for living in the County for half of the respondents. There is a substantial drop from these three characteristics to the proportion saying that they live in Burnett County to be near the Twin Cities (37 percent) and another significant drop to those who cited being near their family and friends (23%) and cost of home (12%).

Figure 2: Top 3 Reasons to Live in Burnett County



There are some statistically significant differences in the reasons different demographic groups give for living in Burnett County. For example, younger respondents (<45) and those living in the County for 10 years or less were significantly more likely to say that the cost of a home is an important reason to live in Burnett County. Those who have lived in the County for longer periods of time are more likely to say that being near family and friends is a reason for living in Burnett County but less likely to be influenced by the cost of homes.

Respondents that own 10 acres or less in Burnett County were more likely to say that the proximity to the Twin Cities was an important reason to live in the County, while those owning over 10 acres were more likely to cite the proximity of family and friends as a key reason for living in Burnett County.

Seasonal residents were significantly more likely to identify recreational opportunities and the proximity to the Twin Cities as reasons they choose to live in Burnett County. Full-time residents were more likely to say that being close to their place of employment, the small town atmosphere/rural lifestyle, and being near family and friends are reasons for living in Burnett County.

Higher income respondents were more likely to cite recreational opportunities as a reason to live in Burnett County; lower income respondents were more influenced by proximity to family and friends.

Services and Facilities

A majority of respondents rated four services or facilities as “excellent” or “good”: county parks (60% excellent/good), fire protection (56%), police protection (55%), and county road maintenance (54%). About half of the respondents gave good or excellent ratings to emergency 911 service, and local town/village road maintenance. A majority of County respondents rated only one service, wireless telecommunication, as “fair” or “poor”. Generally, services with low overall ratings (wireless telecommunication, county nuisance ordinance enforcement, county public health service, etc.) also have high proportions of people with no opinion. In fact, one-fourth or more of respondents had no opinion about the quality of nine of the 15 services and facilities listed on the survey.

Table 3: Quality of Services and Facilities , Burnett County, 2009						
	Count	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
Fire protection	359	13%	43%	18%	3%	24%
Emergency dispatch service (911)	362	12%	38%	10%	3%	37%
Police protection/law enforcement	362	9%	46%	22%	4%	20%
Local public school system	361	9%	29%	10%	3%	49%
County parks	356	8%	52%	14%	2%	23%
Public libraries	362	8%	28%	17%	4%	43%
County road maintenance	364	7%	47%	34%	10%	2%
County recycling programs	360	5%	34%	24%	9%	28%
Local Town/Village road maintenance	364	5%	45%	30%	12%	8%
County public health services	360	4%	30%	18%	2%	46%
Local Town/Village hall	359	4%	40%	21%	4%	31%
Wireless telecommunication service	356	3%	16%	24%	33%	25%
County zoning code enforcement	359	2%	33%	25%	7%	34%
County building code enforcement	359	2%	39%	18%	8%	34%
County nuisance ordinance enforcement	358	1%	20%	18%	15%	47%

Lower income respondents are slightly more satisfied with the local public school system and public libraries. Older respondents are more likely to rate County road maintenance higher. In general, seasonal residents were more likely to have no opinion about the quality of services and facilities in the County.

Wireless Communication Network. As noted earlier in Table 3, a majority of respondents were not satisfied with wireless telecommunication services. When asked about strategies to improve the wireless communication network in the County while still maintaining the “Northwoods Character”, 50 percent believe it is more important to allow fewer, but taller communication towers. Approximately one-fourth (26%) were in favor of more, but shorter communication towers, and 24 percent had no opinion. There are no statistically significant differences by demographic group in the sample.

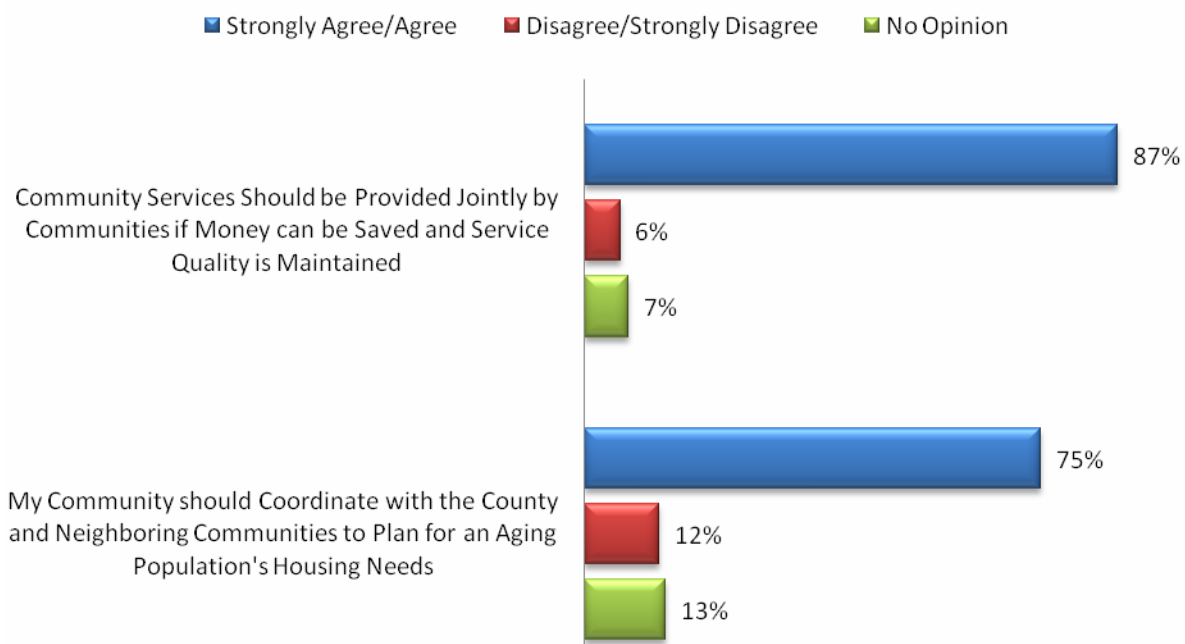
Internet Service. Respondents were asked to indicate if they currently have internet service at their residence in Burnett County. Eight percent report having dial-up modem service, 37 percent have high speed/broadband, and over half have no internet service. Seasonal residents and older respondents were less likely to have internet service at their residence.

For those with internet service, nearly six in ten would not work from home if that option was available; however, 15 percent do (or would) work from home three or more days/week.

Two survey questions addressed the need for coordinated efforts between communities and the County. The first question asked respondents if they agree that services should be provided jointly by communities if money can be saved and service quality can be maintained. The second question asked respondents if they agree that a coordinated effort is needed between neighboring communities and the County to plan for an aging population's housing needs. In Figure 3, responses are grouped into "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" (top bar in each pair), "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" (the middle bar in each pair), and "No Opinion" (the bottom bar in each pair).

If joint community services results in a cost saving (and service quality is maintained), a large percentage of residents (87%) are for it. Residents are generally in favor (75%) of a coordinated plan by Burnett County and neighboring communities to address housing needs for an aging population.

Figure 3: Joint Community Services and Coordinated Housing Plans



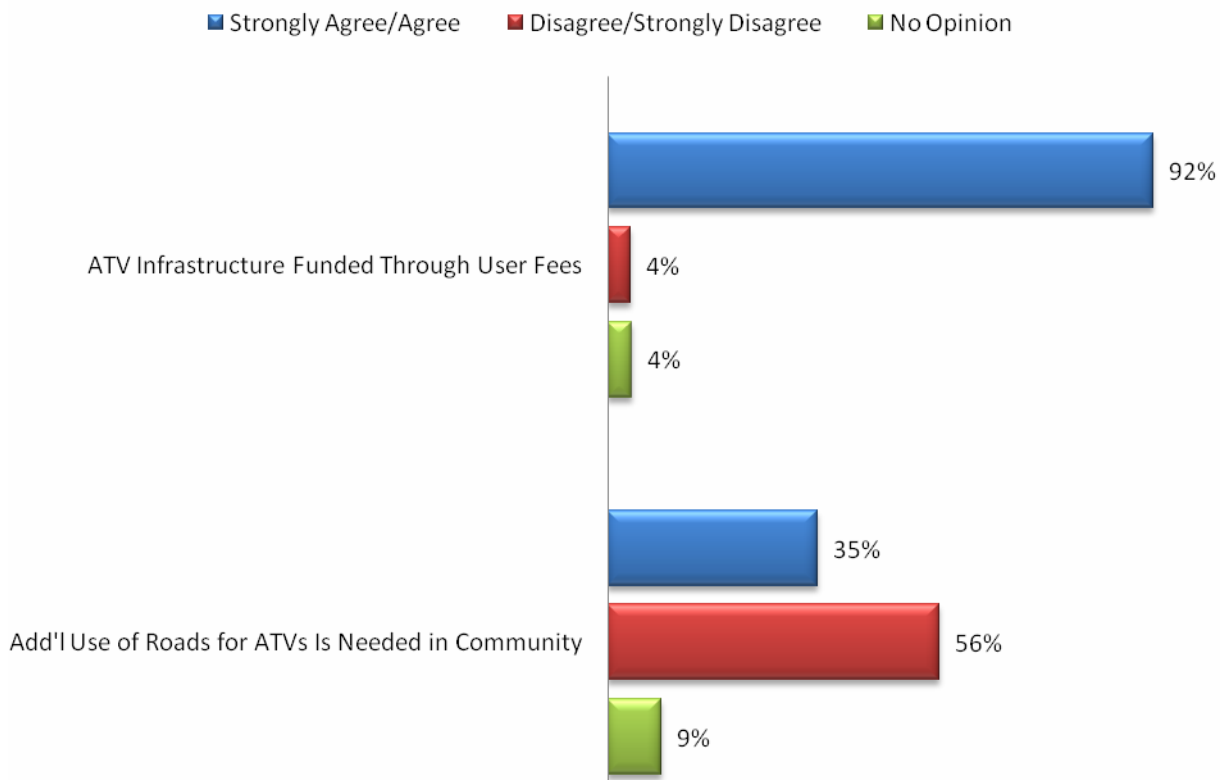
Respondents with higher levels of education and higher incomes were more likely to strongly agree that community services should be provided jointly by communities if money can be saved and service quality is maintained. Older residents were significantly more likely to support county and community coordination in planning for an aging population's housing needs.

ATV Usage

Residents were asked two specific questions about motorized all-terrain vehicles. Respondents were asked if additional use of roads for ATVs is needed in their community, and if ATV infrastructure should be funded through user fees. In Figure 4, opinions are grouped into “strongly agree” and “agree” (top bar in each pair), “disagree” and “strongly disagree” (the middle bar in each pair), and “no opinion” (the bottom bar in each pair).

The data in Figure 4 indicate that the overwhelming majority of Burnett County property owners feel that ATV infrastructure (trails, signage, maintenance, etc.) should be funded through user fees. A majority (56%), however, disagree that additional use of roads for ATVs is needed in their community. In terms of demographic differences with respect to ATV issues, higher income and higher educated respondents feel more strongly that ATV infrastructure should be funded through user fees.

Figure 4: Opinions Regarding ATV Infrastructure and Usage



County Budget

Allocating County Budget. Respondents were given the opportunity to allocate the County budget based on two budget scenarios: having a \$100 surplus or facing a \$100 deficit. Figure 5 highlights the average amount respondents from the County sample allocated per item. The SRC eliminated responses in which totals did not add up to \$100.²

The surplus count and deficit count listed on the left side of the table under each budget item are determined by the number of respondents who both included a value for that category and had total budgets equaling \$100 as requested on the questionnaire. As an example, when dealing with a County surplus, roads and bridges would receive an average amount of \$14 based on values provided by 190 respondents with totals equaling \$100 for the entire budget. Alternatively, when faced with a \$100 deficit, 153 respondents would cut roads and bridges, on average, \$8.

Figure 5: Allocating the County Budget:

	There is a <u>\$100 surplus</u> . Distribute it among the following: AVERAGE AMT. WRITTEN BY RESPONDENTS	There is a <u>\$100 deficit</u> . Balance the budget by cutting it from the following: AVERAGE AMT. WRITTEN BY RESPONDENTS
Taxes <i>Surplus count = 159 Deficit count = 127</i>	\$23 (decrease)	\$11 (increase)
Emergency services <i>Surplus count = 206 Deficit count = 109</i>	\$17	\$ 4
Roads and bridges <i>Surplus count = 190 Deficit count = 153</i>	\$14	\$ 8
Education <i>Surplus count = 173 Deficit count = 134</i>	\$13	\$ 9
Environment <i>Surplus count = 169 Deficit count = 195</i>	\$10	\$14
Recreation <i>Surplus count = 155 Deficit count = 233</i>	\$ 8	\$21
Economic development <i>Surplus count = 143 Deficit count = 202</i>	\$ 8	\$16
Social services <i>Surplus count = 143 Deficit count = 192</i>	\$ 7	\$17
Total = must add to 100	\$100	\$100

Survey responses (Figure 5) indicate that when dealing with a surplus, respondents would be most likely to cut taxes first, followed by distributing surplus funds to emergency services, roads and bridges, and education. Alternatively, if respondents need to balance the budget by cutting funds, recreation would take the biggest hit (on average), followed by social services, and economic development. On average, emergency services would be the service cut the least.

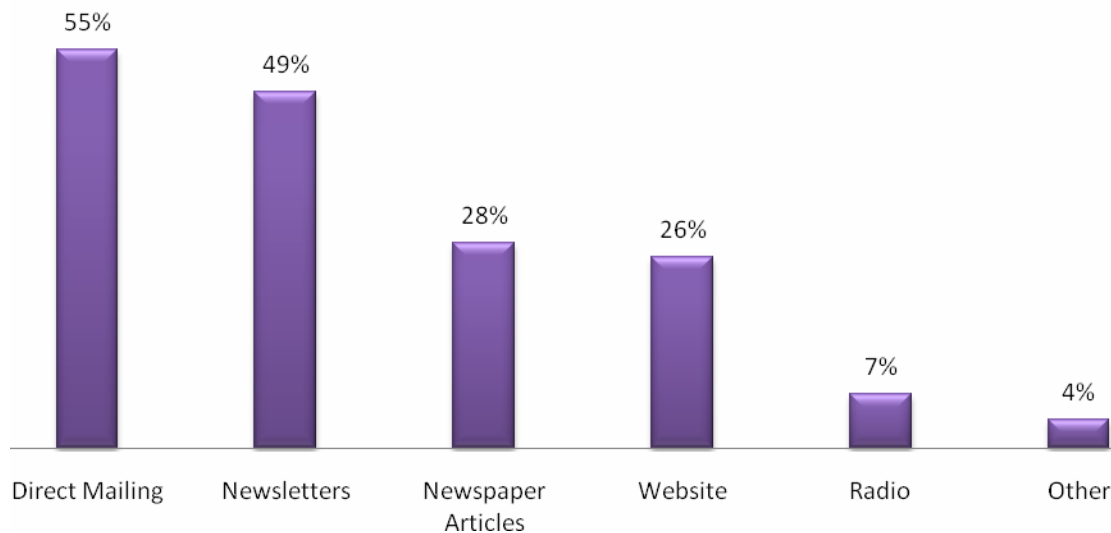
² Surplus results from 24 respondents were eliminated because their sums didn't total \$100. Deficit results for 17 respondents were eliminated because their sums did not total \$100.

In at least one area, recreation, the attributes that people value about Burnett County do not necessarily align with budget balancing. Respondents' allocated one of the smallest surplus distributions to recreation and would give it the largest cut when dealing with a deficit. As described earlier in the report, the second most important reason this group of respondents lives in Burnett County was the recreational opportunities available to them. In addition, County parks had the highest excellent/good ratings in terms of services and facilities, and, as will be discussed later in the report, tourism and recreation businesses received the most "high priority" ratings when discussing the most important types of businesses for Burnett County. It is, in short, interesting that the recreational attributes that respondents find most attractive about the County and which are likely to figure prominently in a tourism/recreation-based economic development strategy do not fare well in the budget reallocations summarized in Figure 5.

Communication

Receiving Information from Burnett County. Figure 6 indicates that the most preferred methods of receiving information from Burnett County for this group of respondents are direct mailings and newsletters – roughly half the respondents identified these as their preferred communication channels. About one-fourth of respondents prefer newspaper articles and the website. Other surveys of this type that the SRC has done around the state have consistently identified direct mailings as a preferred means of receiving information. "Other" responses include receiving this sort of information electronically through email. Appendix B contains the complete compilation of "other" communication methods mentioned.

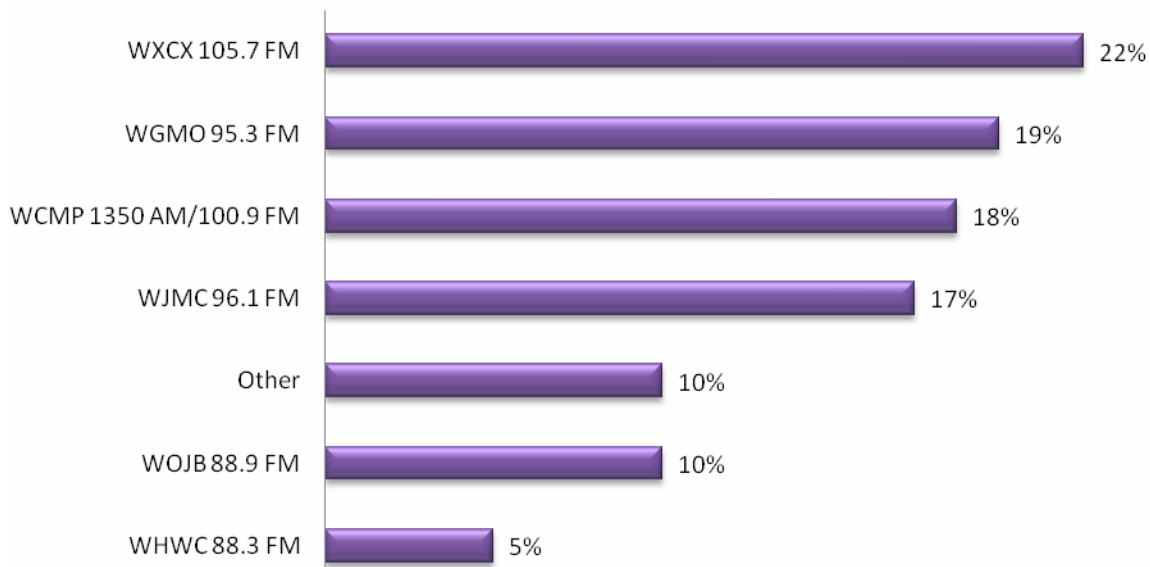
Figure 6: Preferred Communication Methods from Burnett County



The County website, while not identified as one of the two most preferred means of receiving information from Burnett County, does appeal to specific subgroups. Seasonal residents are more likely to want to receive information from the website, as are higher income respondents, and those with more formal education. Full-time residents, those who own more acreage, and those with less income are significantly more interested than their counterparts in receiving information from newspaper articles and the radio.

Preferred Radio Station for County Information. Although a relatively small proportion of respondents choose radio as a preferred method of communication with the County (7%), those who did were asked which radio station they would prefer to receive information from. Figure 7 highlights respondents' preferences. Four stations were preferred by similar numbers of respondents with WXCX 105.7 slightly higher than WGMO, WCMP, and WJMC.

Figure 7: Preferred Radio Station for Receiving County Information

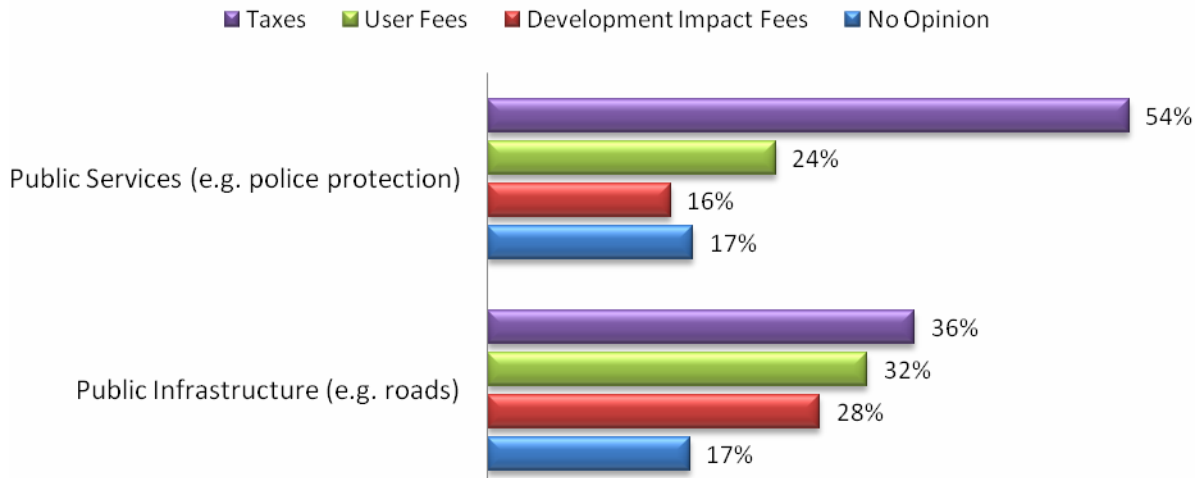


Growth and Development

Paying for Costs Associated with Growth and Development. Respondents were asked their preferred ways of paying for the costs associated with growth and development in terms of public infrastructure, such as roads and public services, such as police protection.

The top bar in each set in Figure 8 shows the percentage who prefer that taxes be used to cover the costs associated with growth and development, the second bar shows the percentage that believe that user fees should be collected for associated costs, the third bar describes the percentage that believe development impact fees should be used, and the bottom bar shows the percentage that do not have an opinion. In both instances, the most preferred option was to pay for growth and development costs through taxes. However, paying taxes for public services was the only option in which a majority of respondents agreed and it is just a slight majority at 54 percent. User fees and development impact fees were slightly more popular choices for public infrastructure than for public services.

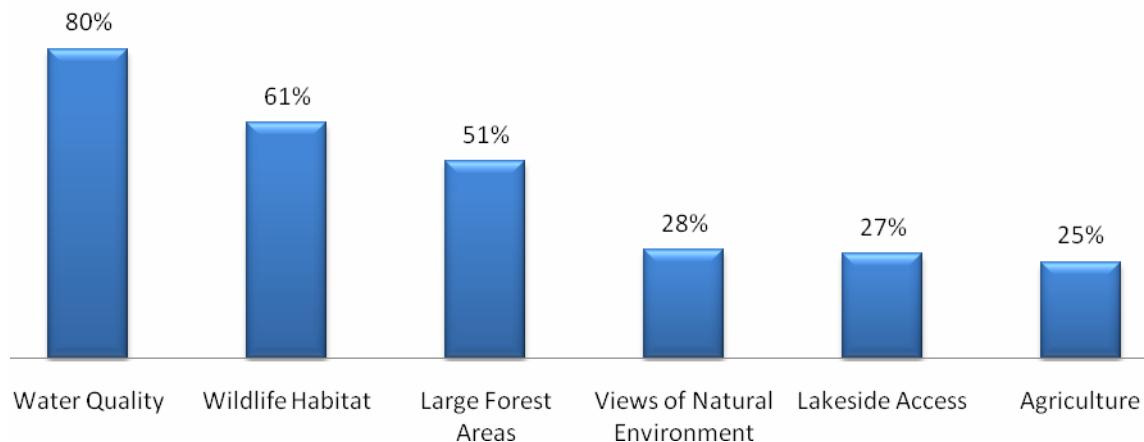
Figure 8: Preferred Ways of Paying for Costs Associated with Growth and Development



There are few differences across demographic groups in terms of the preferred methods of paying for the costs associated with growth and development. The preference for taxes grows with income. Respondents with less education and less income were more likely to say they have no opinion regarding how to pay for additional infrastructure and services associated with development.

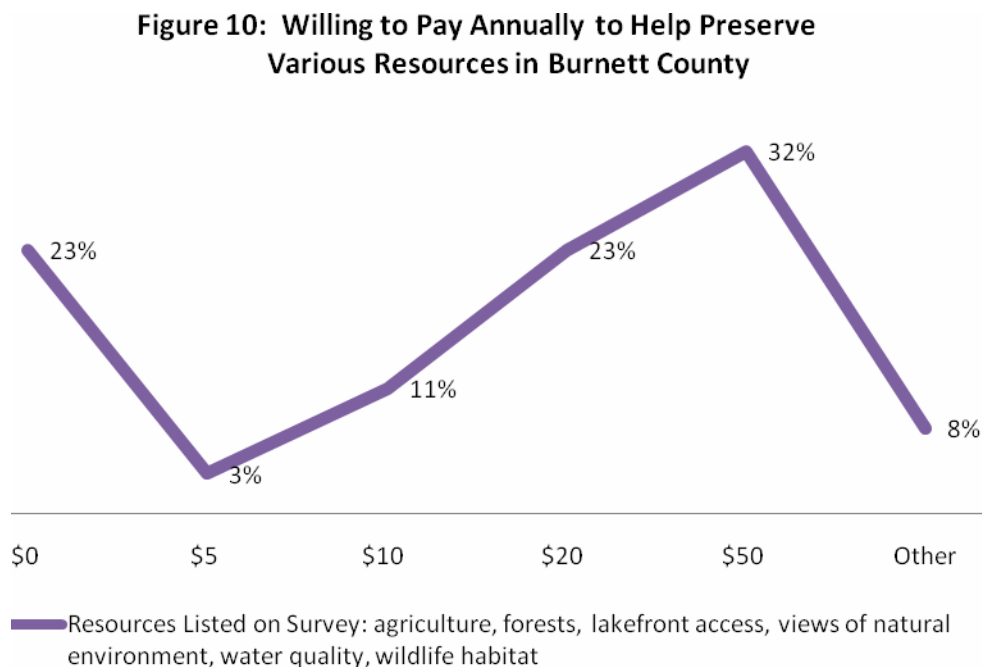
Preservation of County Resources. Respondents were asked to identify up to 3 resources they thought Burnett County should preserve as development occurs over time. Figure 9 indicates that residents in Burnett County are quite interested in preserving water quality in the area. The preservation of wildlife habitat was in the top three for 3 of 5 respondents. Preserving large areas of forest had a slight majority rating it in their top three. Preserving natural environment views, lakeside access, and agriculture was chosen by approximately one-fourth of respondents. One percent of respondents chose “other” or “none”.

Figure 9: Top 3 Most Important Things to Preserve in Burnett County



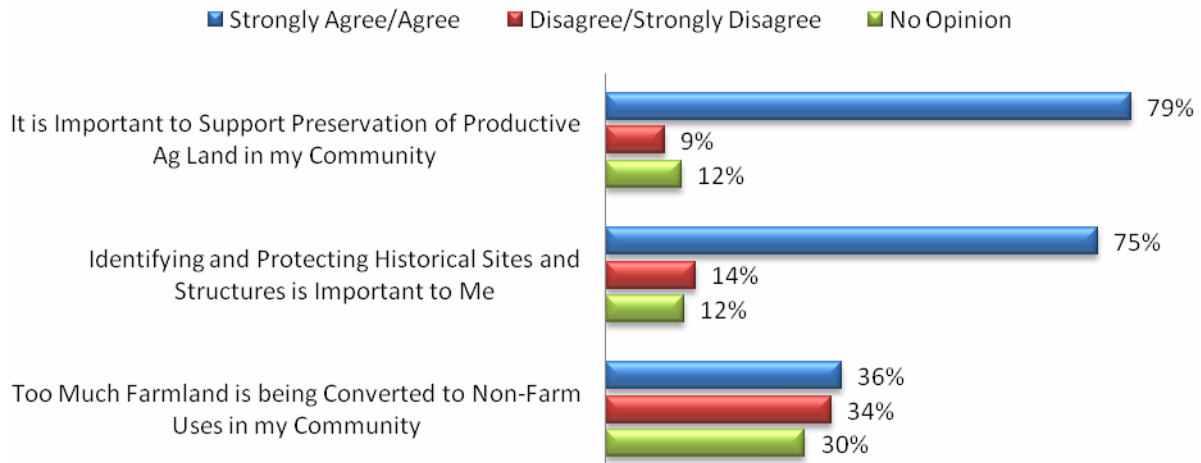
Males are more likely to say that preserving large areas of contiguous forests is one of their top 3 most important things to preserve as development occurs over time in Burnett County. The preservation of agriculture and preserving wildlife habitat are more likely to be in the top three for full-time residents. Seasonal residents are more likely to place importance on preserving views of the natural environment. Respondents with more formal education were more likely to believe that water quality is one of the most important things to preserve in the County, while respondents with less formal education are more likely to include agriculture and wildlife habitat in their top three.

In a follow-up question, respondents were asked how much they would be willing to pay annually to help preserve the items found in Figure 9. Nearly one-third of respondents would be willing to pay \$50/annually (Figure 10). Approximately one-fourth either would pay \$20 annually or would not pay anything. “Other” comments included \$100, or “depends on my income”. Appendix B contains the complete compilation of “other” responses. Higher income respondents were willing to pay more annually (\$50) to help preserve the resources mentioned in Figure 9.



A few additional questions on the survey addressed various types of preservation (agricultural land and historical sites and structures). In Figure 11, opinions are grouped into “strongly agree” and “agree” (top bar in each pair), “disagree” and “strongly disagree” (the middle bar in each pair), and “no opinion” (the bottom bar in each pair). A substantial majority (79%) of respondents support the preservation of agricultural land in their community. A nearly identical percentage (75%) place importance on the identification and protection of historical sites and structures. Respondents are almost evenly split on their opinions regarding excessive farmland conversion, 36 percent are in agreement, 34 percent disagree, and 30 percent have no opinion. In terms of demographic differences, females, full-time residents, and those with less formal education are more likely to believe that too much farmland is being converted to non-farm uses in their community.

Figure 11: Opinions about Preservation

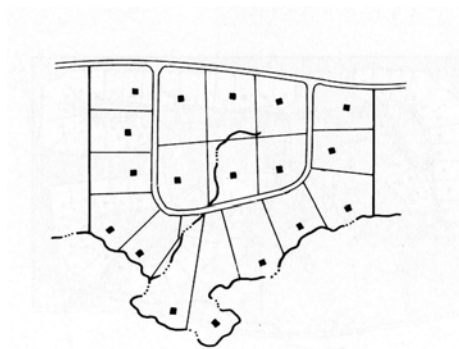


Residential Development

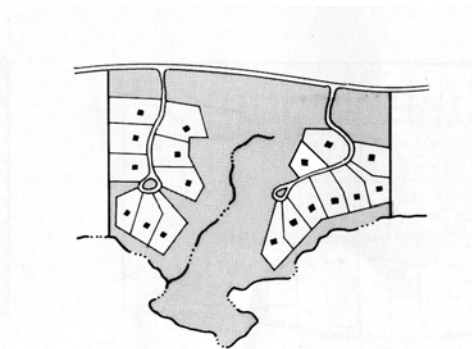
Respondents were asked to indicate their preference for a traditional rural development design (larger lot size, no common/open space – Option A below) versus a cluster concept (smaller lots, common/open space – Option B). Figure 12 indicates that by more than a two to one margin, Burnett County residents opt for the cluster design that creates shared open space.

Figure 12: Preference for Rural Housing Development Design:

Traditional Development Design
31% **OPTION A**



Cluster Development Design
69% **OPTION B**



The SRC has asked this question using the same or a substantially similar visual element in a large number of land use surveys throughout Wisconsin. In almost every instance, the cluster design option has been favored by a margin similar to that seen in Burnett County. The cluster design, while still preferred by a majority, had significantly lower levels of support from younger (<45 years old) respondents. Interestingly, other surveys of this type that the SRC has done around the state have shown that the cluster design has higher levels of support from younger respondents.

Clustering Residential Building Lots. An additional question asked survey respondents to state their opinions about requiring the cluster of residential building lots to preserve various resources. In Figure 13, opinions are grouped into “strongly agree” and “agree” (top bar in each pair), “disagree” and “strongly disagree” (the middle bar in each pair), and “no opinion” (the bottom bar in each pair).

Figure 13: Clustering Residential Building Lots Should be *Required* in Order to Preserve:

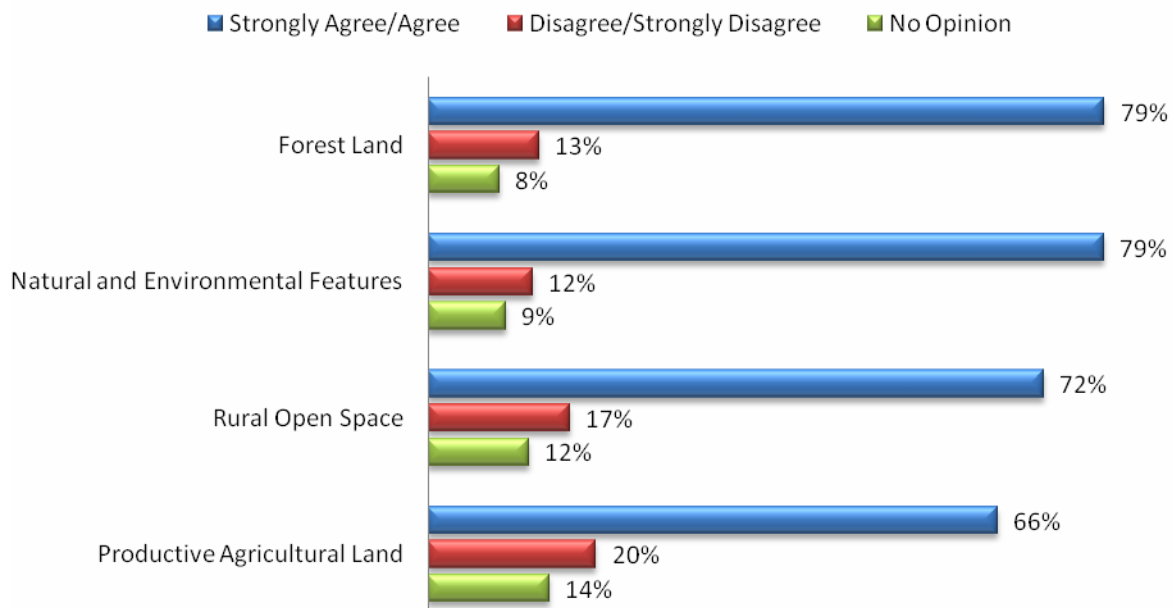


Figure 13 indicates that solid majorities of respondents agree that clustering requirements should be required for preserving each of the four features described. Nearly 4 of 5 respondents believe such requirements should be made to preserve forest land and natural and environmental features, and slightly less than three-fourths feel this way about preserving rural open space. Two-thirds of respondents are in favor of requiring the clustering of residential building lots to preserve productive agricultural land.

Full-time residents and those with more than 10 acres of land tend to be more supportive of clustering residential building lots to preserve productive agricultural land. As was the case with rural housing development design preferences (Figure 12), older respondents were significantly more supportive of clustering residential building lots to preserve rural open space.

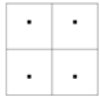
Additional questions regarding residential development were asked in the survey (Table 4). Approximately three-fourths of respondents are in favor of managing the location of new residential development to ensure efficient delivery of public services. A majority believe that new residential development should be located away from agricultural operations and a slight majority disagrees that agriculture uses should be restricted close to residences. More short-term residents agreed that new residential development should be located away from agricultural operations.

Table 4: New Residential Development Opinions, Burnett County, 2009						
	Count	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
The location of new residential development should be managed to ensure efficient delivery of public services.	356	21%	53%	12%	3%	12%
New residential development should be located away from agricultural operations.	355	12%	44%	22%	4%	18%
Ag uses should be restricted close to residences.	359	4%	23%	40%	11%	22%

Residential Density. Respondents were asked to provide the appropriate limit on density for various types of non-waterfront areas outside of villages within the County (agricultural areas, forest areas, and other rural areas). Definitions and graphics were provided showing housing options based on a 40-acre area.

The data in Figure 14 indicate that nearly one-third of respondents believe that one home per 40 acres is appropriate for agriculture areas. One home per 40 acres is also the most chosen option for forest areas, although one home per 10 acres is close behind (as are those with no opinion). When asked their opinion about residential density in “other rural areas”, one-fourth of respondents had no opinion, followed closely by residential density of one home per five acres (22%), and one home per 10 acres (20%). Few respondents were in favor of having more than eight homes per 40 acres for any of the non-waterfront areas described on the survey.

Figure 14: Preferences for Residential Density: Most Appropriate Limit on Density for each of the following non-waterfront areas outside of villages within the County.

(note that the placement of the dots in the following graphics does not necessarily represent where a home would be built in the given residential density option)	More than 8 homes/ 40 acres	8 homes/ 40 acres = 1 home/ 5 acres	4 homes/ 40 acres = 1 home/ 10 acres	2 homes/ 40 acres = 1 home/ 20 acres	1 home/ 40 acres	Other Density: Specify	No Opinion
						See Appendix B	
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
Ag areas n=325	6%	10%	14%	16%	31%	2%	22%
Forest areas n=326	6%	10%	21%	17%	22%	4%	21%
Other rural areas n=322	13%	22%	20%	10%	9%	1%	25%

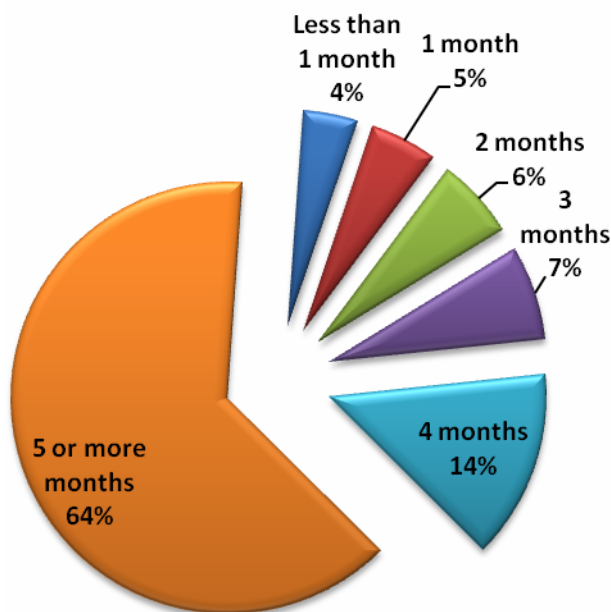
Respondents with higher levels of education were more likely to place the appropriate limit on density in agriculture area and forest areas as one home per 40 acres. Respondents who own fewer acres were more likely to believe the appropriate limit on density in agriculture areas is one home per 20 acres.

Seasonal Rentals

Seasonal residents were asked a set of questions about how they use their home. Responses of “residence is not seasonal” were eliminated for both questions shown in Figure 15a and Figure 15b. Most seasonal residences were used five or more months and nearly half were occupied by two people.

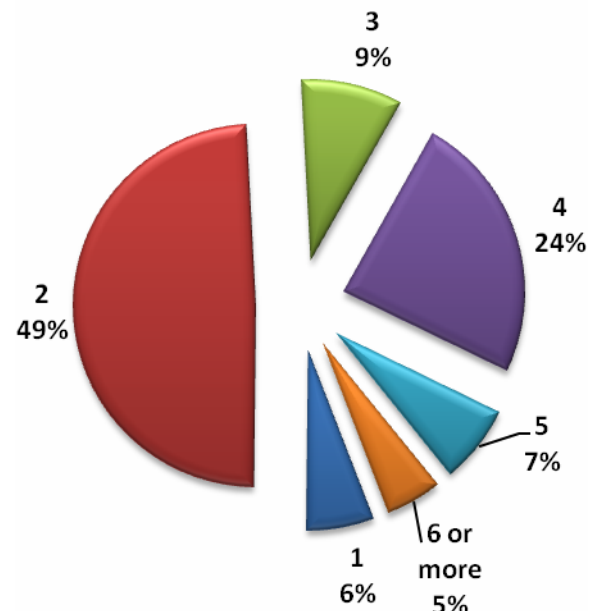
**Figure 15a: If Residence is Seasonal,
how many Months/Year is it Used?**

n = 188



**Figure 15b: If Residence is Seasonal,
how many People Use the
Residence at any Given Time?**

n = 204



Burnett County respondents were asked to consider certain statements as they apply to short-term seasonal rentals. Survey responses (Table 5) indicate that a strong majority of respondents in Burnett County (88%) agree that septic systems should be designed and maintained to support the number of guests. A very solid majority of respondents (83%) also agree that noise limits on outdoor use of property during late hours should be imposed.

Nearly 7 of 10 respondents believe that neighbors should have access to owner contact information. Although less support is shown for requiring reference checks of prospective renters, a majority of 60 percent agree to this condition. Nearly one-half of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that landscaping along side property lines should be required. Twenty-one percent of respondents believe that short-term rental of residential units should not be allowed.

Table 5: Short-term Seasonal Rental Opinions, Burnett County, 2009						
	Count	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
The septic system should be designed and maintained to support the number of guests	363	49%	39%	5%	1%	6%
Noise limits on outdoor use of the property should be imposed (late hours)	362	42%	41%	9%	3%	5%
Neighbors should have access to owner contact information	362	24%	45%	17%	6%	9%
Reference checks of prospective renters should be required	360	22%	38%	23%	6%	11%
Landscaping along side property lines should be required	361	11%	22%	36%	13%	18%
Short-term rental of residential units should not be allowed	364	10%	11%	49%	16%	14%

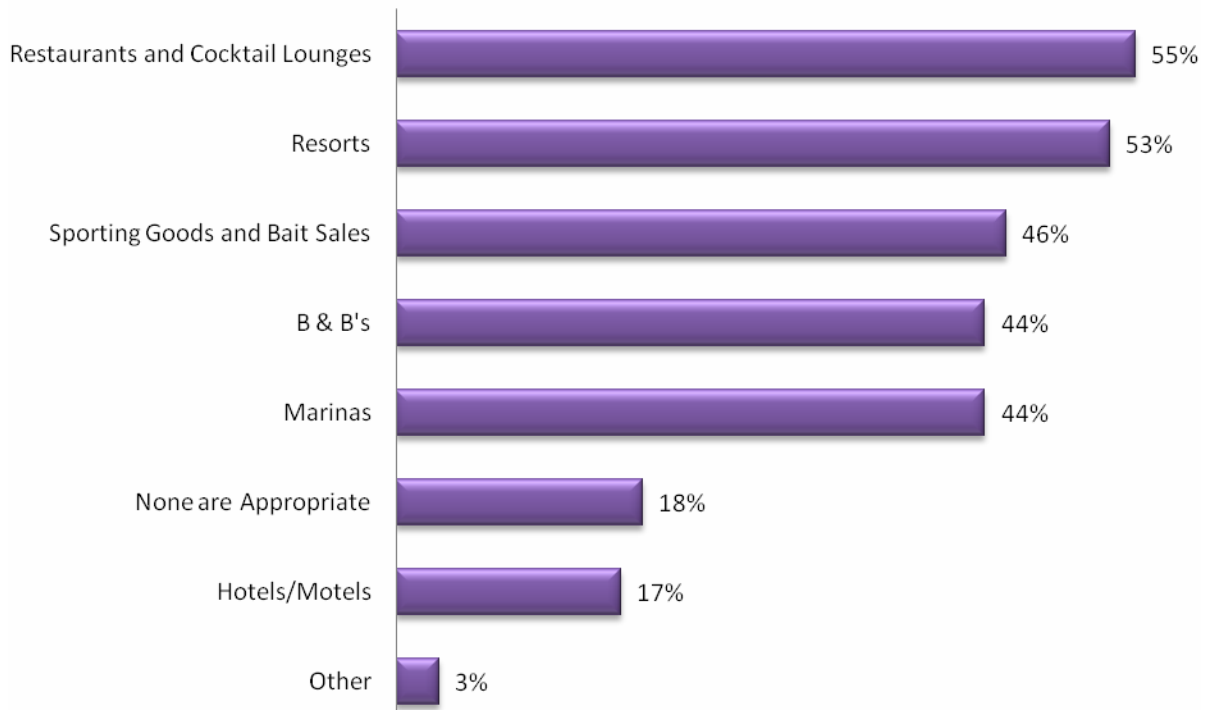
By demographic group:

- Nearly one-fourth of males believe that short-term rental of residential units should not be allowed (compared to 12% of females).
- Respondents with more formal education are more likely to strongly agree that septic systems should be designed and maintained to support the number of guests. They are also more likely to strongly agree that noise limits on outdoor use of property during late hours should be imposed.
- Older respondents are more likely to support required reference checks of prospective renters. Older respondents are also more likely than younger respondents to favor disallowing short-term rental of residential units.
- Support for reference checks of prospective renters and requiring landscaping along side property lines is stronger among full-time residents.

Economic Development

Recreational-oriented Commercial Uses. Respondents were asked which commercial uses might be appropriate on waterfront property adjacent to residential development. As summarized in Figure 16, a majority of respondents believe that restaurants/cocktail lounges, and resorts are appropriate. Nearly half (between 44 and 46 percent) of respondents would allow sporting good/bait sales, B & B's, and marinas. Nearly one-fifth of respondents would allow hotels/motels and a similar number do not believe that any of the uses listed are appropriate. Appendix B contains the complete compilation of "other" commercial uses mentioned.

Figure 16: Appropriate Commercial Uses on Waterfront Property Adjacent to Residential Development



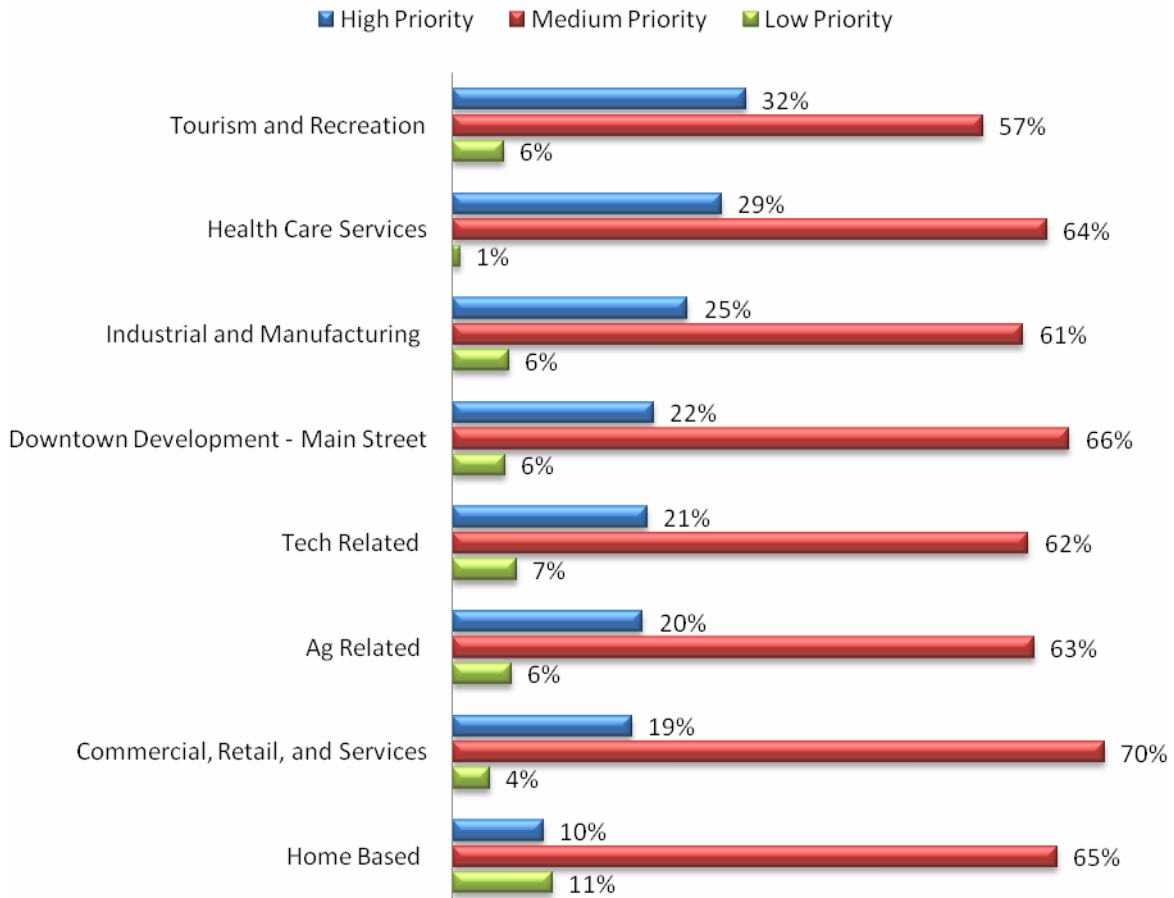
Younger residents were more likely to favor restaurants and cocktail lounges, resorts, and hotels/motels; older respondents were more likely to say that none of the commercial uses listed on the survey were appropriate on waterfront property adjacent to residential development.

Most Important Businesses/Industries to Attract. Burnett County residents were asked to rank the importance of various types of businesses on a scale of “5 = High Priority” to “1 = Low Priority”. In Figure 17, ratings are grouped into “high priority” (the top bar in each pair), “medium priority” (the middle bar in each pair), and “low priority” (the bottom bar in each pair).

Tourism and recreation received the most “high priority” ratings (32%), followed closely by health care services (29%). The rest of the industries were close together in terms of being given “high priority” (between 19 and 25 percent) with the exception of home based businesses at 10 percent. Home based businesses also had the highest (11%) “low priority” ratings. Between 57% - 70% of respondents, place medium priority on all of the businesses/industries listed on the survey.

Full-time residents and those with less formal education were more likely to place high priority on industrial and manufacturing development in Burnett County. Otherwise, there are no statistically significant differences by demographic group in the sample.

Figure 17: Most Important Types of Businesses/Industries for Burnett County to Attract



Attract and Retain Companies. Respondents were asked if Burnett County communities should pool resources to attract and retain companies that will create jobs. Eighty-five percent of respondents support such collaboration. Only 5 percent voiced any opposition; 10 percent had no opinion. No statistically significant differences were shown by demographic groups for this question. For a complete quantitative summary of this result, see Appendix C, Question 5d.

Additional Comments

Two open-ended questions were in the survey. The first asked respondents to provide any additional comments they have regarding residential density issues. In the second open-ended question, respondents were asked to report one thing they would change about Burnett County. By prior agreement with Foth Infrastructure and Environment, LLC, qualitative analysis was not completed for open-ended survey questions. The complete compilation of comments can be found in Appendix B.

Conclusions

The results of this survey indicate that residents in Burnett County are generally happy with the overall quality of life they have. Most appreciate the natural beauty and recreational opportunities available in the County. They place a high value on preserving productive agricultural land, forest land, rural open space, and natural and environmental features. For housing developments, they prefer cluster designs that preserve more open space, and generally believe that the location of new residential development should be managed to ensure efficient delivery of public services.

A majority of respondents rated four services or facilities as excellent or good: county parks, fire protection, police protection, and county road maintenance. In contrast, more than half rated wireless telecommunication service in the County as only fair or poor. Over half of survey respondents (53%) currently have no internet service at their residence.

Residents support joint community services if it results in a cost saving, and service quality is maintained. Residents also believe Burnett County communities should work together to recruit and retain companies. Tourism and recreation and health care services were considered the most important types of businesses for Burnett County to attract.

Finally, there are a number of demographic differences with respect to the comprehensive planning issues covered in this survey between seasonal residents and year-round residents. Seasonal residents were significantly more likely to identify recreational opportunities and the proximity to the Twin Cities as reasons they choose to live in Burnett County while full-time residents were more likely to say that being close to their place of employment, the small town atmosphere/rural lifestyle, and being near family and friends are reasons for living in Burnett County. Seasonal residents are more likely to want to receive County information from the website; full-time residents are significantly more interested in receiving information from newspaper articles and the radio. The preservation of agriculture and wildlife habitat are the most important resources to preserve for full-time residents, while seasonal residents are more likely to place importance on preserving views of the natural environment. In terms of seasonal rentals, support for reference checks of prospective renters and requiring landscaping along side property lines is stronger among full-time residents. Full-time residents were also more likely to place high priority on industrial and manufacturing development in Burnett County.

Appendix A – Non-Response Bias Test

Any survey has to be concerned with “non-response bias.” Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who do not respond to a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who do respond. For example, Question 2b asked Burnett County residents and property owners to rate the quality of County public health services. Suppose only strong supporters of County public health services completed their questionnaires, and those who are not chose not to respond. In this case, non-response bias would exist and the results would overstate the overall satisfaction with County public health services.

The standard way to test for non-response bias is to compare the responses of those who respond to the first mailing of a questionnaire to those who respond to subsequent mailings. Those who return subsequent mailings are, in effect, a sample of non-respondents (to the first mailing), and we assume that they are representative of that group. The County sample consisted of 261 respondents from the first mailing, and 113 from the second mailing.

Table A1 – Statistically Significant Differences Between Responses of First and Second Mailings			
Variable	Mean First Mailing	Mean Second Mailing	Statistical Significance
Q5b Joint community services for savings	1.90	2.17	.025
Q11a Septic system design/support guests	1.67	1.93	.027
Q11b Neighbors Access to Owner Contact Info	2.20	2.57	.005
Q13b Clustering of residential/forest lands	1.97	2.28	.023
Q23 Residential Status	1.57	1.75	.013
Q26a Seasonally use of Residence/months/yr.	5.83	5.37	.018

Out of 110 variables tested, we found six variables with statistically significant differences between the mean responses of these two groups of respondents (Table A1). As examples, respondents to the first survey, compared to later respondents, were slightly more likely to strongly agree to shared community services if savings occurred and service quality was maintained. They were also slightly more likely to agree that septic systems should be designed to support the number of residential guests. In short, while these items are statistically different, the differences are quite small and generally would not affect the overall interpretation of the results. **The Survey Research Center (SRC) concludes that non-response bias is not a concern for this sample.** This means that these data should accurately reflect the opinions of County residents and property owners.

Appendix B – Open-Ended Comments: Burnett County Sample, 2009

All comments are included as written with the exception of one comment where personal names have been marked out.

Question 1

Mark the three (3) most important reasons you and your family chose to live in Burnett County.

‘Other’ Responses (32 Responses)

- Born here (2x)
- Lake home (2x)
- Lake shore property (2x)
- Born and raised here
- Business opportunity
- Cabin owner
- Disabled and home is here. Can not relocate
- Employment requirement
- Family property
- Family raised here and passed land to their children
- Farm was willed to me
- Fishing
- Following my son, who was in NW Passage
- From Jackson Twn
- Grew up here, left and came back
- Grew up there
- Inheritance
- It's home. I've lived here most all my life
- Lake Cabin
- Lake, fishing, hunting, boating
- Lakes and rivers
- Lived here all my life
- Our job brought us here
- Passed down in my family
- Recreational cabin
- Retired
- Retirement Home
- Seasonal resident
- Second home on lake

Question 10

Historically, some recreational-oriented commercial uses have been allowed on waterfront property adjacent to residential development. Which of the following commercial uses may be appropriate in these areas?

'Other' Responses (11 Responses)

- Any commercial use
- Don't have an opinion
- In appropriate areas, all could be used if suitable.
- No comment
- No opinion
- No trailers
- Not even residential development. Keep waterfront for everyone's enjoyment, not just a few. Keep it wild/natural.
- Parks-public use.
- People own waterfront property to get away from it all. Why allow all sorts of businesses.
- Small cafes serving coffee beverage, wine, beer soda, snacks. NO liquor.
- Water for ag

Question 15a

Residential Density of Ag areas.

'Other' responses (6 Responses)

- 0
- 1/120
- 1/180
- 1/80
- 1+
- No subdividing farms.

Question 15b

Residential Density of Forest areas.

'Other' responses (11 Responses)

- 0 (2x)
- 1/120
- 1/180
- 1/2
- 1/4
- 1/640
- 1/80
- 2/20
- No subdividing forests.
- Owner option

Question 15c

Residential Density of Other rural areas.

'Other' responses (2 Responses)

- ½
- 80

Question 15d

Please provide any additional comments you have about residential density issues.

'Other' Responses (28 Responses)

- 2 homes on 20 acres. Leave wooded area alone if possible.
- Depends on the land.
- Do not raise taxes!
- Don't care how many if they are not "dumps"
- Don't understand issue.
- Encourage walking or bike trails or mutual commons area that is energy self sustaining (solar, wind, etc) with play ground, campsites, picnic tables, sheltered area for gatherings, dog runs, but only for people in that cluster, not open to general public.
- Family owned 40 or 80 should be able to build a home or homes without county, state or local governments dictating what they can do!
- Higher residential density, I believe, leads to more crime, ruins the rural image and I can't stand it.
- Homes with 5 acres or more must plant trees in yard.
- I believe the trend is to grow your own food and maybe some type of postage stamp farming
- I resent too many rules. If I own the land, I should be allowed to build where I'd like. Sell some if I like, etc. Anyway, doesn't young zoning take care of some of this? I can't really answer this question.
- In regards to 12, 1 or more in same yard.
- Increased density conserves all natural resources.
- It depends on how development is laid out (clustering better) and whether the land is managed with a healthy environment as a priority. Smaller organic farms could be better than a larger agricultural project that is managed with no regard for the environment. Larger parcels of forest are essential for wildlife.
- Just use common sense.
- Keep it in the village
- Less housing development-more conservation.
- Let the land owner decide
- Let the owner and buyers decide. Compact towns would be nice and S/B managed. However, a landowner should be able to sell for whatever purpose. Keep gov't small and off taxpayers backs.
- No greater development than I suggested above.
- Our lakes are now small cities. Eco systems are now failing. Just pick any lake in our community and do some tests. Now they are doing the same thing to our woodland etc with water sewer power lines etc.
- Preserve what cannot be built-LAND!

- Question 8 and 15 are out of my realm of knowledge.
- Residential development belongs to cities and villages with public sewer and water.
- Restrict/eliminate any further waterfront development.
- Voyager Village has a very high density. Major problems occur in this area, as people tend not to take care of their property. Bad deal!
- We have enough houses. Need to fill what we already have!
- You are too late on checking density. The county has already allowed lakefronts to become over crowded with cabins/homes piled on top of each other.

Question 16

As development occurs over time in Burnett County, the most important things to preserve are?

'Other' Responses (2 Responses)

- All important
- Fishing-eliminate spearing, it decimates game fish.

Question 17

How much would you be willing to pay annually to help preserve your selections in Ques. 16?

'Other' Responses (26 Responses)

- \$100 (6x)
- \$120 (2x)
- \$35 (2x)
- Not sure (2x)
- \$500
- \$60
- County board decision.
- Depends on my income.
- Depends on what happens.
- Developers user fees to finance
- How can one say? One dollar doesn't buy a thing these days.
- Money makes thieves and liars out of good people.
- None, you shouldn't have to pay anything to leave something alone.
- Pay too much now!
- Put our tax dollars to good use.
- Taxes
- Taxes are up enough already.
- Time

Question 18

What are your two preferred methods of receiving information from Burnett County?

'Other' Responses (15 Responses)

- E-mail (12x)
- Live here
- Not sure
- Word of mouth

Question 18a

If you chose radio in Q18, which radio station would you prefer to receive information from?

'Other' Responses (1 Response)

- WCCO 830 AM

Question 29

If you could change one thing about Burnett County, what would it be? (213 Responses)

- Lower taxes (7x)
- Lower property tax. (3x)
- Taxes (2x)
- A good fine dining restaurant.
- Ability to remodel/build a bigger cabin in the same spot as our existing cabin (within 75 ft of shoreline). ATV trails accessible from our property.
- Access to high-speed internet.
- Add a shooting range, pistols and rifles open 7 days a week, longer hours on weekends. More tornado sirens.
- Add countywide reasonable-priced WiFi access.
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Align taxes for residence overall the county - not punish people who live/chose to live on lakeshore property.
- All those unpaved roads!
- Allow ATV's on the streets in Scott (town). Less Strict enforcement with ATV's.
- Allow me to build a small boathouse on my very steep shoreline.
- Allow seasonal residents to vote for county officials and township officials.
- An opportunity for assisted living services in the Grantsburg area.
- As non-residents, we should be given tax relief and hunting and fishing privileges as senior citizens and WWII veterans.
- Attract a retail store such as Target, or Wal-Mart in one of the small towns like Spooner, Webster or Siren.
- ATV and dirt bikes would not be allowed on public property, only on privately owned property.
- Ban ATV's completely.
- Best possible internet service.
- Better communications between counties for emergency services mainly dispatch.
- Better county roads-especially Co Rd Z

- Better fish management-that's your primary resource (lake/fish quality) for property valuation and economy of the area. PS After age 65, we should not have to pay for fishing license regardless of where our primary residence is.
- Better management of forest lands and lakes for wildlife
- Better rural animal (dog) control.
- Better township roads. Banning fireworks sale businesses. Tourists come and buy this stuff and shoot it off year round on lakes in the area. This disturbs people and wildlife in our area.
- Better water patrol.
- Bring in internet service so people can work from seasonal residences.
- Bring in more industry to provide more work for Burnett County
- Building codes relative to land amount.
- Cater more toward the tourism industry since many dollars for the area come from tourists seeking the areas natural beauty.
- Cell phone service. Lower taxes.
- Cell phone service. Otherwise, ATV crossing on roads to minimal. Pretty happy with all services.
- Clean up all the run down residences
- Cleaner lakes, less agricultural run-off pollution.
- Clear junk from people's yards.
- Camping (overnight) in county parks. Less DNR control over certain issues.
- Community pride-pride in our homes!
- County Board
- Covenants required to discourage abandoned vehicles, motor homes, trash unenclosed. Unfinished homes exteriors, loose dogs. People don't finish their homes because taxes are cheaper.
- Cut back on the number of bars. More enforcement of DWI laws.
- Cut way back on all the billboards.
- De-emphasize support for gasoline-powered recreational vehicles (ATV's, snowmobiles). Promote quiet, sustainable sports and recreation.
- Develop and encourage more family "nature type" activities (apart from Crex) in the center and east side of the county. Nature hikes, birding, wild edibles, snowshoeing, etc. programs would utilize the county's natural resources and abundance of state/public land. Too many folks think Burnett Co. is only about hunting and ATV's. Many people would like to learn more about nature but have no advocates to encourage them.
- DNR should make great effort to preserve the Yellow River and lakes/waterways from invasive species.
- Do NOT ever pay for new schools, etc. by raising real estate taxes. That is GROSSLY unfair to farmers. Instead of raising taxes about \$100 per household, like they said it would, it raises the taxes for farmers about \$1000 per year and that is a direct unfair tax on our job and the tools we need to do our job of farming. Should they put a \$1000 tax/year on the car or truck that each household uses to go to their job? How about a \$1000 tax/yr on the desk that business people sit at? Or \$1000 tax on the computer or phone used to do their job? Or how about just putting a \$1000/yr tax on their job? Yet, it seems like its O.K. to tax the farmers excessively on what they need to do their job. Our land is what we need to do our job of

farming, just as business people need a vehicle, phone, desk, computer to do their job. Instead of increasing real estate taxes, tax each household so that everyone, even renters, help pay for the new school. Or put an extra tax on the income of each household, or increase sales tax.

- Don't know!
- Economic development.
- Eliminate ATV use of ALL our roadways and curtail excess boat traffic on our lakes before they are ruined.
- Eliminate loud/noisy fireworks (big bangs)
- Enforce motorcycle noise to auto level
- Enforce ordinances to make homeowners clean up junk filled yards and land. 95% of county looks good to great, 5% looks like Ma & Pa Kettle live there and a lot of this junk blows into public and private woods.
- Enforce traffic laws, especially the speeding, tailgating, passing on yellow lines, etc. of our Minnesota visitors.
- Enforce zoning and building guidelines.
- Enforcement of ordinances preventing people from collecting old junk cars and machinery and leaving them exposed to the elements for all the passers by to see. Very unsightly!
- Invasive weeds in lakes are taking over and are out of control.
- Equalized taxation (property) among permanent residence and absentee residence (lake cabin owners). Eliminate state, county, township, town property discrimination! Include: A follow up result data letter.
- Fair use of building codes. Accurate measures for buildup on shoreline-should be "farthest" measurement, not the closest when shoreline irregular. Stop assessor from assessing same property three years in a row.
- Fairer tax on land/housing.
- Fewer swampies.
- Find a sheriff who is willing to cooperate with other law enforcement agencies and someone who the public can trust. The current sheriff appears to have problems being truthful.
- Find a way to attract business without disturbing the natural spaces-perhaps more "green-friendly" new businesses with emphasis on recycling and re-using materials.
- Fire xxxxxxx and hire a full time County Administrator. Don't just hire another xxxxxxxx re-tread from Northwest Regional Planning.
- Game fish such as walleye and muskie have been greatly reduced because of spearing. These lakes are too small to sustain this activity. This needs to be stopped!
- Get all townships to agree to ATV use on all roads (no designated ATV routes). This would bring more recreational users to various townships and spread revenue throughout the county. This area is predominately recreational and this should be accommodated.
- Get more jobs in the county.
- Get rid of the drugs.
- Get rid of tourists and seasonal residents-Ha
- Good Job!

- Good survey keep up the good work. 2 years ago, many of the roads around the Yellow lake area were torn up (asphalt removed) for repair. It took about 12 months before they were resurfaced. Very poor planning.
- Grow bigger whitetail bucks.
- Happy with Burnett County! Love my cabin.
- Have better ordinances regulating dilapidated buildings and run-down, junk-like properties
- Have horse back riding available on the Gandy Dancer Trail.
- Help small businesses start and stay in the area.
- I like it!
- I live here because I like it here. As a Co. Board, don't get carried away with additional rules. They all need to be enforced which costs tax dollars. Trying to keep taxes under control should be your first priority.
- I love where I live-that is why I live here. No changes.
- I should not have to pay such exorbitant taxes for a property I've had for over 50 years! I pay more to visit 3 weeks in the summer than I do for my home all year! Stop discriminating against non-residents.
- I wish I could receive local TV without Dish or DirectTV. Our property is right on the boundary of Minneapolis and Duluth stations and we are not able to receive a TV signal. This probably only affects a small portion of Burnett Co.
- I would like some kind of public transportation for those who can't or don't drive any more because of age or other disabilities.
- I would like to see a universal no-wake rule from 6pm to 10am
- I would like to see more people involved in their communities through volunteering and networking their skills. I would appreciate more control of noise pollution from bars and noisy vehicles (loud motorcycles, jakebraking trucks, and fireworks at inappropriate times).
- I would live there full time. Farm runoff into river/lakes.
- I would not issue any building permits along lakes unless there was at least .5 mile of lakeshore between residences. I believe Century Owned Farms should enjoy certain taxable privilege if they have the original acreage and are practicing conservation and have no industrial business on the property, just original farm and forestland.
- I would send Minnesota people back home so local residents could control our own county, without illegal procedures or under table payoffs!
- I'd fix the roads outside of Siren (County). The only public library is 20 miles away (Grantsburg). I don't know of any other-NOT Siren or Webster. I do not oppose higher taxes if it's spent for education.
- If I could change one thing, it would be minimum lot sizes. I would go back to measuring lots by acres - not feet. Some of the smaller lakes are overcrowded by greedy landowners dividing shorelines into tiny lots. God, my grandparents didn't do that.
- Improve roads!
- Improved fishing. Property owners should get a break on hunting and fishing license fees.
- Increase commercial/manufacturing tax base through various incentives.
- Increase state/county owned land.
- Increase the rainfall!
- It's ok the way it is.

- Keep it natural-no big store such as Walmart.
- Keep it small town. No big box stores like Walmart, Menards, Home Depot, etc.
- Keep roads black topped.
- Keep rural
- Keep taxes down so family homes and farms can stay in the family. To make lake residents stay off road right of ways when riding bikes or walking in groups while they look to see what their neighbors have to steal. To keep our lakes and streams free from tourists that throw McDonald bags, cups, etc into the water. Our township is bad for all these things. PS To teach landowner how big an acre is etc.
- Leave lakeshore alone. Keep farming. Help lower taxes for schools. State has stopped helping with schools. Schools go too wild with enrollment dropping every year. Take better care of roads!
- Less taxes as there only 5 mo. Out of state fishing license should be same as residents year round.
- Less ticks
- Limit the amount of Government intervention.
- Local village boards that halt growth.
- Lock up all meth and drug sellers.
- Lower by 50% my seasonally used cabin! Give seniors a break! Since retiring, we can no longer afford Burnett tax for one bedroom 820 square foot cabin with 80X120' lot at \$4000 a year! We and several of our neighbors are waiting for market to change so we can sell and get out of Burnett County. No buyers at any price.
- Lower lakeshore property taxes. It is getting too expensive to justify ownership of a seasonal residence when the property tax is so high.
- Lower my real estate taxes!
- Lower property taxes on cabins.
- Lower property taxes, especially now that property values are down.
- Lower real estate taxes for all property owners (seasonal and permanent) starting with seasonal.
- Lower real estate taxes for seasonal residents. Currently paying an unfair percentage based on use.
- Lower residential property tax.
- Lower taxes by changing the budget spending.
- Lower taxes for fixed income.
- Lower taxes for seasonal property or lower cost for fishing licenses.
- Lower taxes for senior citizens! Many are being forced out of the community because of the high taxes due to the cost of new high school in Spooner-which the old could have been remodeled as they are doing that now for Jr. High School.
- Lower taxes on property
- Lower taxes, lower taxes. Another increase and I will be forced to sell my lake property.
- Lower taxes, more businesses to support employment
- Lower the taxes bring in more industry.

- Make the DNR give out lots more bear permits (for bow and gun). There are just too many black bears roaming everywhere!
- Make the natives clean up their properties. It shouldn't take 5 years to put siding on, etc. Junk cars, motorcycles, snowmobiles laying in yards etc. Money spent on cleanup programs would have a huge impact on values and image. The #1 complaint I here from guests is the messes in so many yards. Thank you.
- More blacktopping of gravel roads.
- More boating regulations to keep everyone safe on the lakes.
- More business to cut taxes, especially manufacturing and technical employment/companies.
- More cell phone towers.
- More companies with health care.
- More help for the elderly and better ways for them to find it.
- More industrial development.
- More industry
- More industry More jobs Less Poverty Less crime
- More jobs
- More protection of the environment, water quality, wildlife.
- More public access to lakes and rivers.
- More public campgrounds
- More resources available for small business. Small business is in trouble in this county. More incentives to have a small business.
- More set back rivers and lakes.
- More shopping facilities. Bigger stores are too far away.
- More stores/restaurants.
- More things to keep you busy.
- Move County Road A because there is little police enforcement. Trucks speed constantly and it's dangerous for adults, children, and animals.
- Movie theater in Grantsburg
- Need a barber in Siren.
- No big box stores. Keep it small town USA. Clean up storefronts and Main Streets.
- No fireworks sold in county!
- No more casino expansions.
- None
- Not have as many lake cabins or homes here. Have Burnett County further away from Minnesota.
- Nothing
- One school administrator for all schools in the county.
- Pave our cul-de-sac or grade more often.
- People who pay property taxes should be allowed to purchase hunting and fishing licenses at the resident rate.
- People who understand that quality of life is more important than making money. As in, loggers who refuse to clear-cut because they know it is a very damaging practice.
- Please lower property taxes.

- Poor logging practices-too much is being logged off too soon. When they do log, they do a bad job compared to the surrounding counties. Whoever is in charge of this public resource should be taken to task on this.
- Property tax equalization
- Property taxes are too high for lake property. We get very little benefit
- Property taxes are too high. Having the medical center is a really good thing.
- Property taxes too high on fixed income. Get more lottery taxes and from casino.
- Provide better fire protection! Rusk is part of Spooner fire district. It is 15 miles away!
- Provide better internet and wireless access.
- Provide sufficient Township and County information regarding building permits to avoid punishing the residents for making property improvements
- Provide tax break on seasonal properties
- Raise mean income via better jobs available from attracting industry/development.
- Reduce County Board size and elect county executive. Change board meetings to evenings only.
- Reduce non-resident fish licenses for property owners.
- Reduce property taxes.
- Reduce taxes-on woodland
- Reduce the lakeshore property taxes. The taxes are not reasonable!
- Remodel downtown Grantsburg
- Remodeling guidelines and taxes.
- Removal of the deerfly and the gnat in the Grantsburg area
- Rules and ordinances regarding shoreline use for seniors!
- Simpler surveys! Lower taxes.
- Stop the light pollution! Please.
- Stricter residential and commercial building codes/permits/enforcement, especially waterfront.
- Stricter rules and/or enforcement of shoreline preservation/restoration as well as banning or strictly controlling all lawn herbicides, fertilizers, and pesticides on lakes, shore property, as well as nearby lots.
- Take away the power of Polk Burnett Electric. Monopoly is not good-they are overcharging for the service provided.
- Taxes are too high
- Taxes-property has been in family 50 yrs and now we are taxed so high we cannot afford it as retired people-just because it is lakeshore land.
- That it wasn't getting so crowded and built up.
- That Siren/Webster schools combine. Not only would it benefit the funding, it would lower taxes and possibly entice more seasonal families to make BC permanent.
- The attitude of the "locals" toward the "tourists"- 3/4 of the property owners in the county are non-residents. They pay goodly amounts in taxes, non-resident licenses, not to mention spending a lot of money in the restaurants, groceries, boat dealers, bars, etc. If it were not for those people, this county would be a mega welfare community.
- The attitude of the people. A warmer expression of welcome.

- The attitude that if you're not born here you will never be considered a resident or member of the community. "Locals" are treated much better than transplants.
- The high property taxes.
- The policies of the cities that infringe upon tourism that directly affects businesses and local economy. (i.e. Gandy Dancer Trail)
- The poverty level of the residents is certainly a concern. Increasing tourism and jobs may assist with this issue and be a positive thing for the community.
- There is NO mention in this survey of the ARTS: Fine arts (drawing, painting, sculpture), performing arts (music, theater) and crafts (pottery, smithing, jewelry). The arts are a vital factor in attracting tourism, keeping youth active, providing an outlet for creativity and fostering a sense of community. Ten local businesses recently paid \$50 for a "patron" membership in the Burnett Area Arts Group-Indicative of the level of local support. Very disappointed that this "creative economy" aspect was not reflected in this survey. I would like to see communities coordinate on an annual basis to avoid conflicts when scheduling events.
- This is the poorest county in the state of Wisconsin. More money to help the poor-young and old.
- Too many RV trails, which cause erosion, destruction of wildlife habitat and the general serenity of the Northwood's atmosphere. Noise and air pollution and dust. They are destroying the county.
- Traffic pattern. Need traffic lights on Highway 35 & 70 north of Siren.
- Try and keep the same.
- Updated and improved EMS system county wide
- We don't need anymore non-productive people in the county. I would like the residents to have more common sense and work together.
- We feel that the taxes on lakeshore property are way too high.
- We have had rural recreational property in Burnett County for almost 40 years and the thing I have liked most is that the area has changed very little-mostly farms and hunting and recreational larger parcels. The fresh air and incredible birds and other wildlife have made it seem an Eden to us. That was starting to change during the real estate boom but now development has slowed. I hope in the future good community planning will help preserve this beautiful county. This survey is a good idea.
- We love Burnett County and love to bike and walk on the Gandy Dancer Trail. Please to not allow ATVs on the Gandy Dancer!!
- We need more working age people-less retired population.
- We need something for kids and young people; we have nothing but drugs and bars!
- We would have more retail shops and job opportunities.
- Would like to have a Menard's store!
- Would not change anything.

Appendix C – Quantitative Summary by Question: Burnett County Sample, 2009

BURNETT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

PLEASE RETURN BY xxxxx, 2009

Fill the circle that most closely describes your perspective toward the following statements:

Like this: ☒ Not like this: ☐ ☐ ☐

1. Mark the three (3) most important reasons you and your family choose to live in Burnett County:

(Mark (•) three only)

3%	Agriculture	0%	Community services and facilities	1%	Health care services
5%	Quality schools	7%	Near job/employment opportunities	23%	Near family and friends
12%	Cost of home	55%	Recreational opportunities	5%	Low property taxes
5%	Low crime rate	50%	Small town atmosphere/rural lifestyle	6%	Quality neighborhood
64%	Natural beauty	37%	Proximity to Twin Cities	8%	Other: See Appendix B

2. Rate the quality of the following services and facilities:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
a. County parks	8%	52%	14%	2%	23%
b. County public health services	4%	30%	18%	2%	46%
c. County road maintenance	7%	47%	34%	10%	2%
d. County recycling programs	5%	34%	24%	9%	28%
e. County zoning code enforcement	2%	33%	25%	7%	34%
f. County building code enforcement	2%	39%	18%	8%	34%
g. County nuisance ordinance enforcement	1%	20%	18%	15%	47%
h. Emergency dispatch service (911)	12%	38%	10%	3%	37%
i. Police protection/law enforcement	9%	46%	22%	4%	20%
j. Fire protection	13%	43%	18%	3%	24%
k. Public libraries	8%	28%	17%	4%	43%
l. Local public school system	9%	29%	10%	3%	49%
m. Wireless telecommunication service	3%	16%	24%	33%	25%
n. Local Town/Village hall	4%	40%	21%	4%	31%
o. Local Town/Village road maintenance	5%	45%	30%	12%	8%

3. How would you rate the overall quality of life in Burnett County?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	No Opinion
	9%	74%	14%	2%	2%

4. Which two of the following ways of paying for the costs associated with growth and development do you prefer? (Mark (•) two only)

	Development impact fees	User fees	Taxes	No Opinion
a. Paying for public infrastructure (e.g. roads)	28%	32%	36%	17%
b. Paying for public services (e.g. police protection)	16%	24%	54%	17%

5. Provide your opinion on the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
a. The location of new residential development should be managed to ensure efficient delivery of public services.	21%	53%	12%	3%	12%
b. Community services (schools, police, fire, etc.) should be provided jointly by communities if money can be saved & service quality is maintained.	31%	56%	4%	2%	7%
c. My community should coordinate with the county and neighboring communities to plan for an aging population's housing needs.	23%	51%	9%	3%	13%
d. Burnett County communities should pool resources to attract/retain companies that will create jobs.	36%	49%	4%	1%	10%
e. It is important to support the preservation of productive agricultural land in my community.	31%	48%	8%	1%	12%
f. There is too much farmland being converted to non-farm uses in my community.	12%	23%	29%	5%	30%
g. Ag uses should be restricted close to residences.	4%	23%	40%	11%	22%
h. New residential development should be located away from agricultural operations.	12%	44%	22%	4%	18%
i. Identifying and protecting historical sites and structures is important to me.	20%	55%	9%	4%	12%
j. Additional use of roads for motorized all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) is needed in my community.	16%	19%	23%	33%	9%
k. ATV infrastructure (trails, signage, maintenance, etc.) should be funded through user fees.	51%	41%	2%	2%	4%

5. Assume that you are in charge of allocating the county budget:

	There is a <u>\$100 surplus</u> . Distribute it among the following: AVERAGE AMT. WRITTEN BY RESPONDENTS	There is a <u>\$100 deficit</u> . Balance the budget by cutting it from the following: AVERAGE AMT. WRITTEN BY RESPONDENTS
Emergency services <i>Surplus count = 206 Deficit count = 109</i>	\$17	\$ 4
Recreation <i>Surplus count = 155 Deficit count = 233</i>	\$ 8	\$21
Environment <i>Surplus count = 169 Deficit count = 195</i>	\$10	\$14
Social services <i>Surplus count = 143 Deficit count = 192</i>	\$ 7	\$17
Economic development <i>Surplus count = 143 Deficit count = 202</i>	\$ 8	\$16
Roads and bridges <i>Surplus count = 190 Deficit count = 153</i>	\$14	\$ 8
Education <i>Surplus count = 173 Deficit count = 134</i>	\$13	\$ 9
Taxes <i>Surplus count = 159 Deficit count = 127</i>	\$23 (decrease)	\$11 (increase)
Total = must add to 100	\$100	\$100

6. The county is exploring strategies to improve the wireless communication network and recognizes that maintaining the "Northwoods Character" is central to the quality of life for its residents. With this in mind, it is more important to allow: (Mark (●) one only)

Fewer, but taller communication towers	More, but shorter communication towers	No Opinion
50%	26%	24%

7. With respect to internet service at your residence in Burnett County, do you currently have:

Dial-up modem	High speed/broadband (e.g. DSL)	None	Don't know
8%	37%	53%	2%

8. If you have (or could have) access to broadband internet service, how often do (or would) you work from home in Burnett County?

Wouldn't work from home	Less than 1 day/week	1 – 2 days/week	3 or more days/week
61%	9%	14%	15%

9. Historically, some recreational-oriented commercial uses have been allowed on waterfront property adjacent to residential development. Which of the following commercial uses may be appropriate in these areas? (Mark (•) all that apply)

55%	Restaurants and cocktail lounges	44%	Bed and Breakfasts	17%	Hotels/motels
46%	Sporting goods and bait sales	53%	Resorts	44%	Marinas
18%	None of the above are appropriate	3%	Other: See Appendix B		

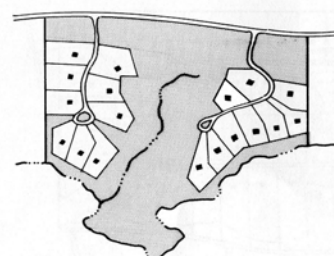
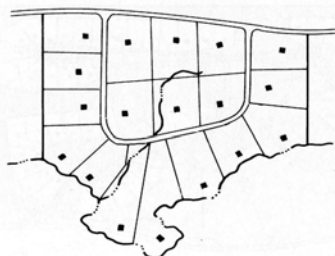
10. Seasonal residents are those that have their primary residence outside of Burnett County, but have a secondary residence within the County. In some cases, these residences are rented out on a short-term basis when not occupied by the owner. Please provide your opinion on the following conditions as they apply to short-term seasonal rentals:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
a. The septic system should be designed and maintained to support the number of guests	49%	39%	5%	1%	6%
b. Neighbors should have access to owner contact information	24%	45%	17%	6%	9%
c. Noise limits on outdoor use of the property should be imposed (late hours)	42%	41%	9%	3%	5%
d. Landscaping along side property lines should be required	11%	22%	36%	13%	18%
e. Reference checks of prospective renters should be required	22%	38%	23%	6%	11%
f. Short-term rental of residential units should not be allowed	10%	11%	49%	16%	14%

11. Traditionally, rural housing developments have been designed on large lots as in the diagram (Option A) on the left below. An alternative layout for rural housing is the "cluster" concept, which has smaller lots and permanently preserved open space as in the diagram (Option B) on the right below. Each option contains the same number of homes. Please mark which one you prefer:

31% Option A

69% Option B



12. Clustering of residential building lots should be required in order to preserve the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
a. Productive agricultural land	26%	41%	14%	6%	14%
b. Forest land	37%	42%	8%	5%	8%
c. Rural open space	31%	41%	11%	5%	12%
d. Natural and environmental features	38%	41%	7%	5%	9%

13. What types of businesses/industries do you believe are the most important for Burnett County to attract?

Please rate each of the following (5=High Priority to 1=Low Priority):

	5	4	3	2	1	No Opinion
a. Agricultural related businesses	20%	24%	29%	10%	6%	11%
b. Commercial, retail, and services	19%	33%	31%	6%	4%	7%
c. Health care services	29%	36%	23%	5%	1%	6%
d. Industrial and manufacturing development	25%	32%	22%	7%	6%	7%
e. Downtown development – “Main Street”	22%	33%	25%	7%	6%	6%
f. Home based businesses	10%	20%	29%	16%	11%	14%
g. Tourism and recreation	32%	34%	18%	5%	6%	6%
h. Tech related businesses (e.g. biotech, computers)	21%	30%	26%	6%	7%	10%

14. Residential density refers to the number of homes within a specific area and is usually expressed as the “number of homes per acre” or “number of homes/acre”. For instance, two (2) homes within a 40-acre area are twice as dense as one (1) home within a 40-acre area. Likewise, one (1) home within a 20-acre area is twice as dense as one (1) home within a 40-acre area. What is the most appropriate limit on density for each of the following non-waterfront areas outside of villages within the county? Mark (•) only one choice for each area described in a, b, and c. Use the table and diagrams below to answer the questions.

	More than 8 homes/ 40 acres	8 homes/ 40 acres = 1 home/ 5 acres	4 homes/ 40 acres = 1 home/ 10 acres	2 homes/ 40 acres = 1 home/ 20 acres	1 home/ 40 acres	Other Density: Specify	No Opinion
						See Appendix B	
	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
a. Ag areas - farming will be preserved & expanded long-term	6%	10%	14%	16%	31%	2%	22%
b. Forest areas -managed & harvested long-term	6%	10%	21%	17%	22%	4%	21%
c. Other rural areas	13%	22%	20%	10%	9%	1%	25%

d. Please provide any additional comments you have about residential density issues: **See Appendix B**

15. As development occurs over time in Burnett County, the most important things to preserve are: (Mark (●) up to three)

25%	Agriculture	51%	Large areas of contiguous forests	27%	Lakefront access
80%	Water Quality	28%	Views of the natural environment	61%	Wildlife habitat
1%	None	1%	Other: See Appendix B		

16. How much would you be willing to pay annually to help preserve your selections in Question 16?

23%	\$0	11%	\$10	32%	\$50
3%	\$5	23%	\$20	8%	Other: See Appendix B

17. What are your two (2) preferred methods of receiving information from Burnett County?

(Mark (●) two only):

Direct Mailing	Newsletters	Newspaper Articles	Radio	Website	Other: See Appendix B
55%	49%	28%	7%	26%	4%

18a. If you chose radio in Q18, which radio station would you prefer to receive information from? (Mark (●) one only)

WHWC 88.3 FM	WOJB 88.9 FM	WGMO 95.3 FM	WJMC 96.1 FM	WXCX 105.7 FM	WCMP 1350 AM /100.9 FM	Other: See App. B
5%	10%	19%	17%	22%	18%	10%

DEMOGRAPHICS: Please tell us some things about you:

18. Gender:	Male	Female	19. Age:	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
	68%	32%		0%	2%	9%	21%	26%	41%

20. Highest level of formal education:	High school or less	Some college	2-year college degree	4-year college degree	Grad/Professional degree	
	19%	22%	12%	26%	21%	
21. Household Income Range:	Less than 15,000	15,000 – 24,999	25,000 – 49,999	50,000 – 74,999	75,000 – 99,999	100,000 or more
	4%	10%	24%	25%	13%	24%

22. Which of the following describes your residential status in Burnett County?

Full-time	Seasonal (primary residence outside Burnett County)	Non-resident
45%	47%	7%

23. How many years have you resided or owned property in Burnett County?

Less than 1 year	1 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	11 – 15 years	16 – 20 years	20+ years
0%	12%	17%	13%	9%	49%

24. Total acres owned in Burnett County:

Less than 1 acre	1 – 5 acres	6 – 10 acres	11 – 20 acres	21 – 40 acres	40+ acres
20%	40%	11%	5%	6%	18%

25. If your residence within Burnett County is used seasonally:

- | | |
|--|--|
| a. How many months each year is it generally used? | b. When occupied, how many people generally use the residence at any given time? |
| 3% Less than 1 month | 4% 1 |
| 3 % 1 month | 36% 2 |
| 4% 2 months | 7% 3 |
| 5% 3 months | 18% 4 |
| 10% 4 months | 6% 5 |
| 44% 5 or more months | 4% 6 or more |
| 30% Residence is not seasonal | 25% Residence is not seasonal |

26. Location of residence or land within Burnett County: (Mark (•) one only)

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 2% Anderson (Town) | 9% Jackson (Town) | 2% Rusk (Town) | 5% Trade Lake (Town) |
| 2% Blaine (Town) | 3% La Follette (Town) | 3% Sand Lake (Town) | 4% Union (Town) |
| 3% Daniels (Town) | 1% Lincoln (Town) | 8% Scott (Town) | 7% Webb Lake (Town) |
| 2% Dewey (Town) | 7% Meenon (Town) | 6% Siren (Town) | 2% Webster (Village) |
| 4% Grantsburg (Town) | 8% Oakland (Town) | 4% Siren (Village) | 1% West Marshland (Town) |
| 4% Grantsburg (Village) | 1% Roosevelt (Town) | 7% Swiss (Town) | 4% Wood River (Town) |

28. My residence within Burnett County is: (Mark (•) one only)

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 12% Within a village | 5% A rural hobby farm residence (not primary source income) |
| 52% A shoreline residence | 3% A rural farm residence |
| 26% A rural non-farm residence | 2% No residence in Burnett County |

29. If you could change one (1) thing about Burnett County, what would it be? See Appendix B

Thank You for Completing the Survey! Your survey responses are anonymous and will be reported in group form only.

Please return your survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by xxxxxx, 2009 to:
Survey Research Center
124 RDI Building
University of Wisconsin - River Falls
410 S. Third St.
River Falls, WI 54022-5001