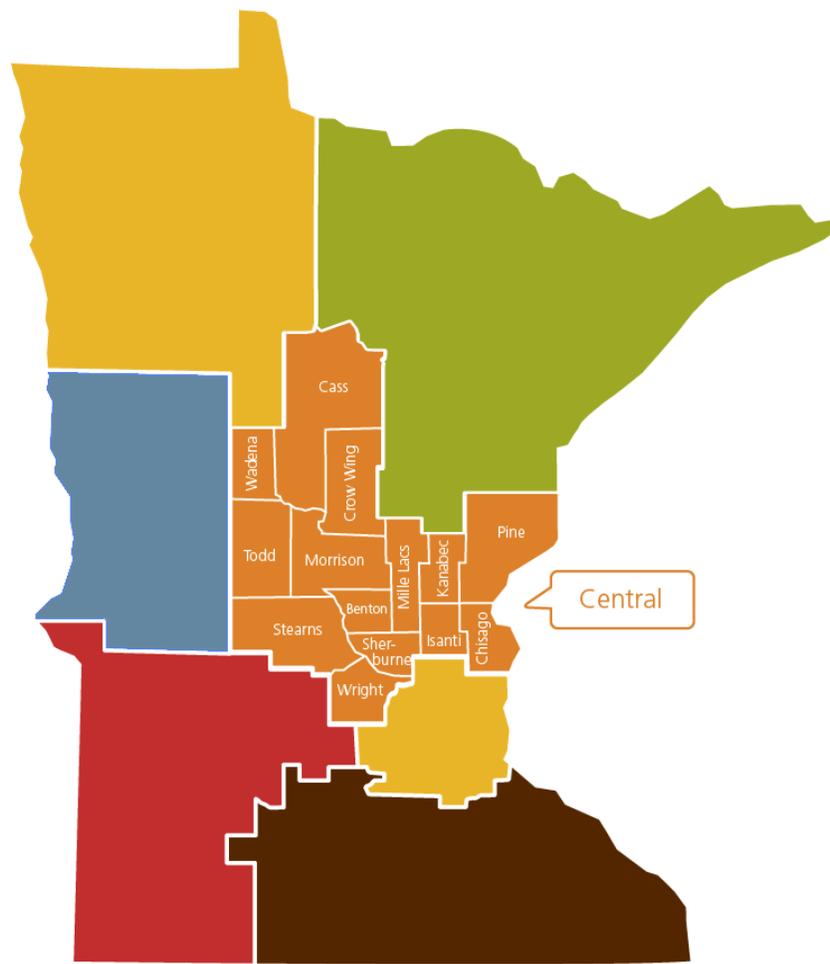




RURAL PULSE™ SNAPSHOT: CENTRAL MINNESOTA

Rural Pulse™ is a research study commissioned by the Grand Rapids-based Blandin Foundation to gain a real-time snapshot of the concerns, perceptions and priorities of rural Minnesota residents. This initiative was last conducted in 2016 and has served to identify trends within significant, complex subject areas including the economy, education, employment and quality of life.

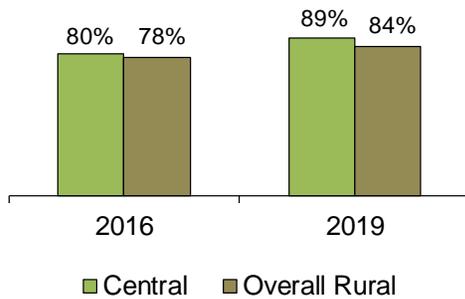
*In completing this comprehensive research study, 1,068 telephone interviews were conducted with rural Minnesotans overall. The full report can be found at www.RuralPulse.org. To provide a localized perspective, study findings for Central Minnesota are included in the following pages and contrasted with overall rural Minnesota responses. Intended to serve as a regional snapshot against full study observations, data reflects a statistical reliability of +/- 6 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. Also, please note that results within regional reports **do not** include communities of 35,000+; these cities are grouped within metro Minnesota findings – see full report for more information.*



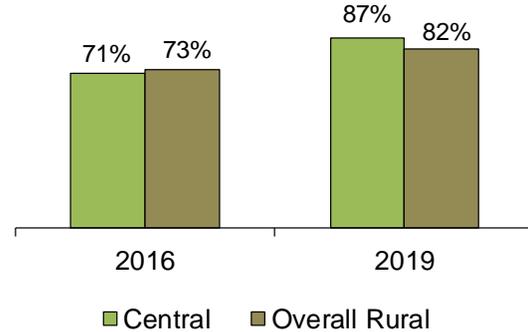
Collaboration and Contribution

The majority of residents in Central Minnesota felt that they can make a positive impact on their local community, and believe their community works together effectively – both up significantly since 2016.

Able to Make a Positive Community Impact
Somewhat or strongly agree



Residents are Able to Work Together Effectively
Somewhat or strongly agree

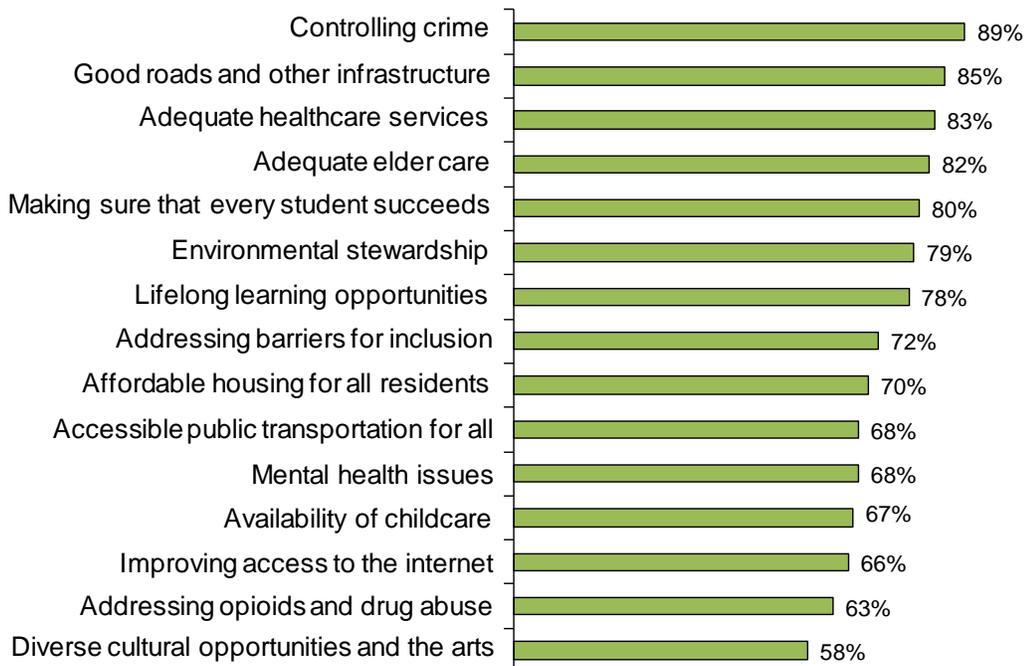


Community Performance

Central residents were most likely to agree that their community performed well in providing crime control, infrastructure, adequate healthcare, and caring for the elderly. They were less likely to feel their community performs well in providing quality internet access, addressing opioids and drug abuse, and cultural/arts opportunities.

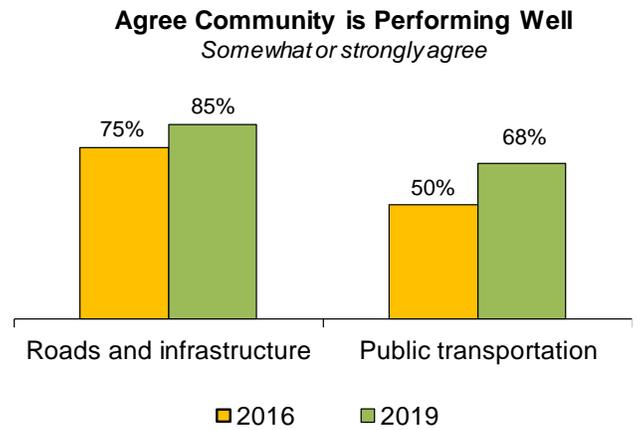
Agree Community is Performing Well

Somewhat or strongly agree



Central residents felt their community has improved since 2016 with regards to infrastructure, and especially in offering accessible public transportation for all, including the disabled.

When comparing issue significance and satisfaction, Central Minnesotans felt their communities are underperforming in certain areas - to the most significant degree in addressing drug abuse and mental health issues.



Issue Importance vs. Community Performance

	Importance Mean	Performance Mean
Addressing opioids and drug abuse	3.5	2.8
Mental health issues	3.4	2.8
Job opportunities	3.3	2.9
Economic development	3.2	2.8

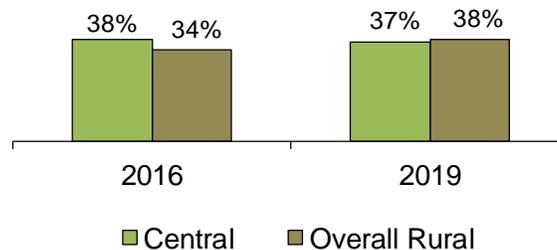
■ Significantly Below Expectations
■ Below Expectations

4 = High, 1 = Low

Rural Voice

More than a third of residents in Central Minnesota believed the needs of rural communities are not as important to policy makers as those of metro areas, about the same as in 2016 study findings.

Believe the Needs of Rural Communities are as Important to Legislators, Policymakers as Metropolitan Areas
Disagree



Critical Issues

The most critical issues to address in the Central region were said to be jobs, healthcare, opioids and drug abuse, mental health, public transportation and affordable housing.

Most Critical Issues

Central

1. Jobs
2. (tie) Opioids and drug abuse, Healthcare
3. Economic development
4. (tie) Mental health, Public transportation for all
5. Affordable housing

Overall Rural

1. Jobs
2. Healthcare
3. Opioids and drug abuse
4. Economic development
5. Mental health issues

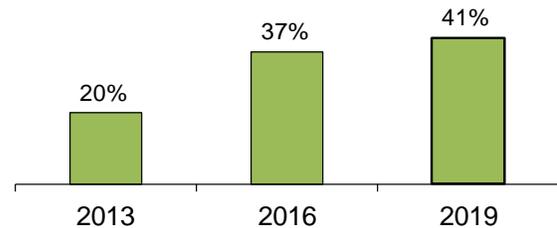
Economic Concerns Linger, But Show Improvement

Rural Minnesotans continue to experience a rebound in the economy, very clearly in Central Minnesota. About four in 10 felt the local economy has improved within the past year, showing a continued increase since 2013. There was growing belief that there are an adequate number of living-wage jobs. It was felt by 68 percent that Central region communities maintain/grow job opportunities.

Confidence that economic development is being promoted has increased. Seventy-two percent felt there is an adequate workforce available for local businesses.

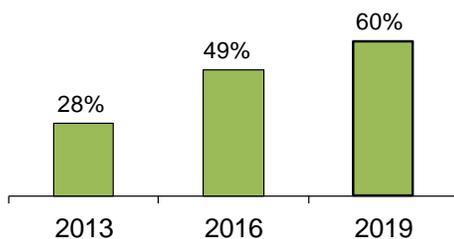
Condition of Community's Economy Has Improved, Compared to a Year Ago

Somewhat or much better now



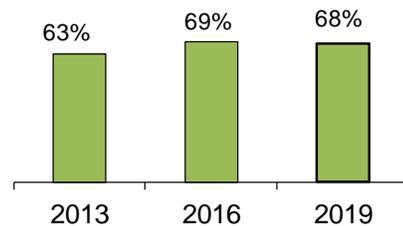
Adequate Number of Jobs that Pay Household-Supporting Wages

Somewhat or strongly agree



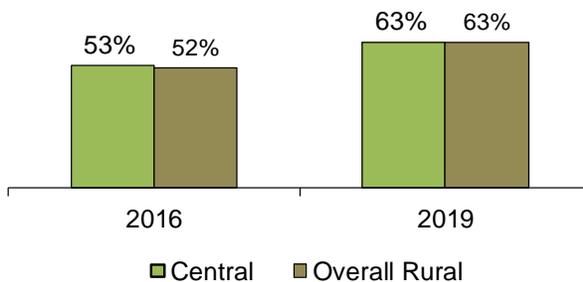
Community Successfully Maintains and Grows Job Opportunities

Somewhat or strongly agree



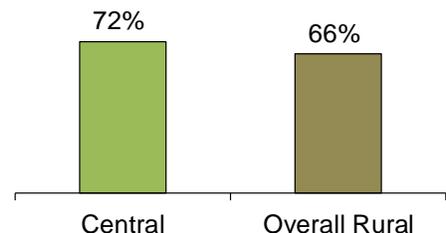
Community Sufficiently Promotes Economic Development

Somewhat or strongly agree



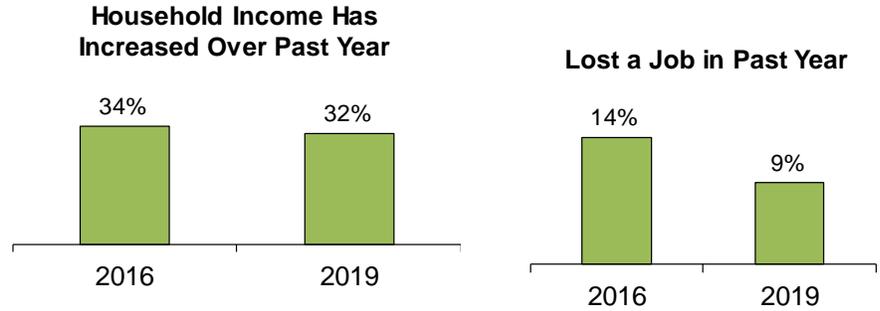
Adequate Workforce for Businesses

Somewhat or strongly agree



Impact of the Economy

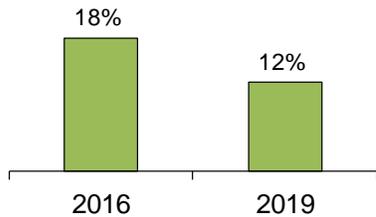
A third of Central region residents said their household income increased over the past year. Job losses have declined since 2016 study findings.



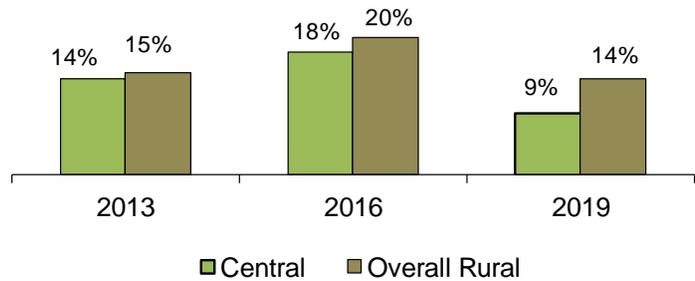
Migration

Twelve percent of Central residents said that they do not expect to live in their same community five years from now. Nine percent have considered moving to a metropolitan area – a significant decrease from 2016 study findings. Many said the search for job opportunities is the motivating factor for

Do Not Expect to Live in Their Community Five Years From Now



Considered Moving to Metro Area Within Past Two Years

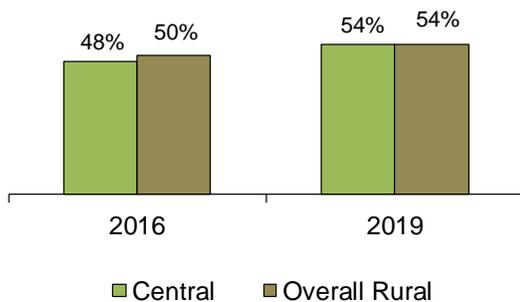


considering relocation.

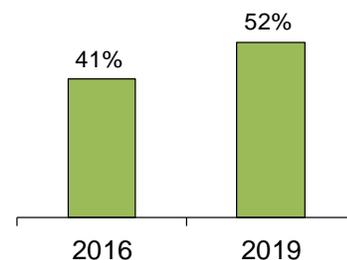
Leadership Composition

Just over half of Central residents said that they have served in a leadership capacity, an increase from 2016 study findings. Of those who have not, four in 10 said that they would consider serving in leadership, if asked – also an increase in interest from 2016 findings.

People From Diverse Backgrounds Fill Leadership Roles Within Community
Somewhat or strongly agree

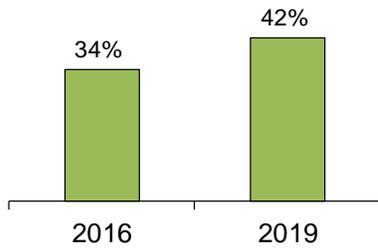


Have Served in a Leadership Role



Would Definitely Consider Serving If Asked

(Of those who have not served in leadership)



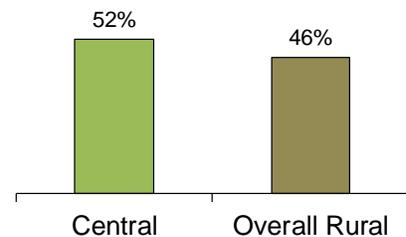
Inclusion

About half of residents in Central Minnesota said that they have at least some close friends of a different race or culture.

Central residents were most likely to have felt the groups that experience bias, discrimination or harassment within their community include transgender individuals, those with drug or mental health issues, recent immigrants, gays and lesbians, and Native Americans.

Have At Least Some Close Friends of Different Race or Culture

Some, most or all



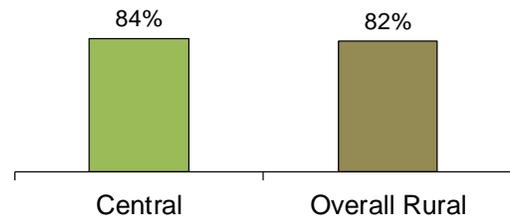
Groups Most Believed to Experience Bias, Discrimination or Harassment Within Their Community

Multiple Responses Allowed

1. Transgender people
2. Those with drug or mental health issues
3. Recent immigrants
4. Gays and lesbians
5. Native Americans / American Indians

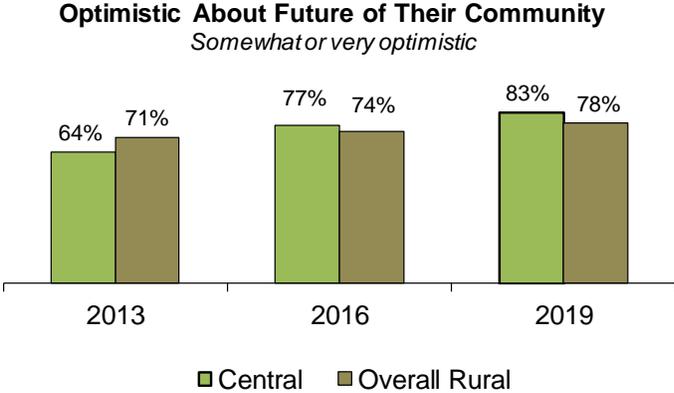
Just over four in five residents of Central Minnesota believe people in their community are able to stand up to hatred and discrimination.

Believe People in Community are Able to Stand Up to Hatred and Discrimination



Optimism Exists

Overall, more than four in five Central region residents are optimistic about their community's future.



For more information on Rural Pulse™ and to review the comprehensive, statewide report, visit www.RuralPulse.org. For more information on Blandin Foundation visit www.BlandinFoundation.org.