

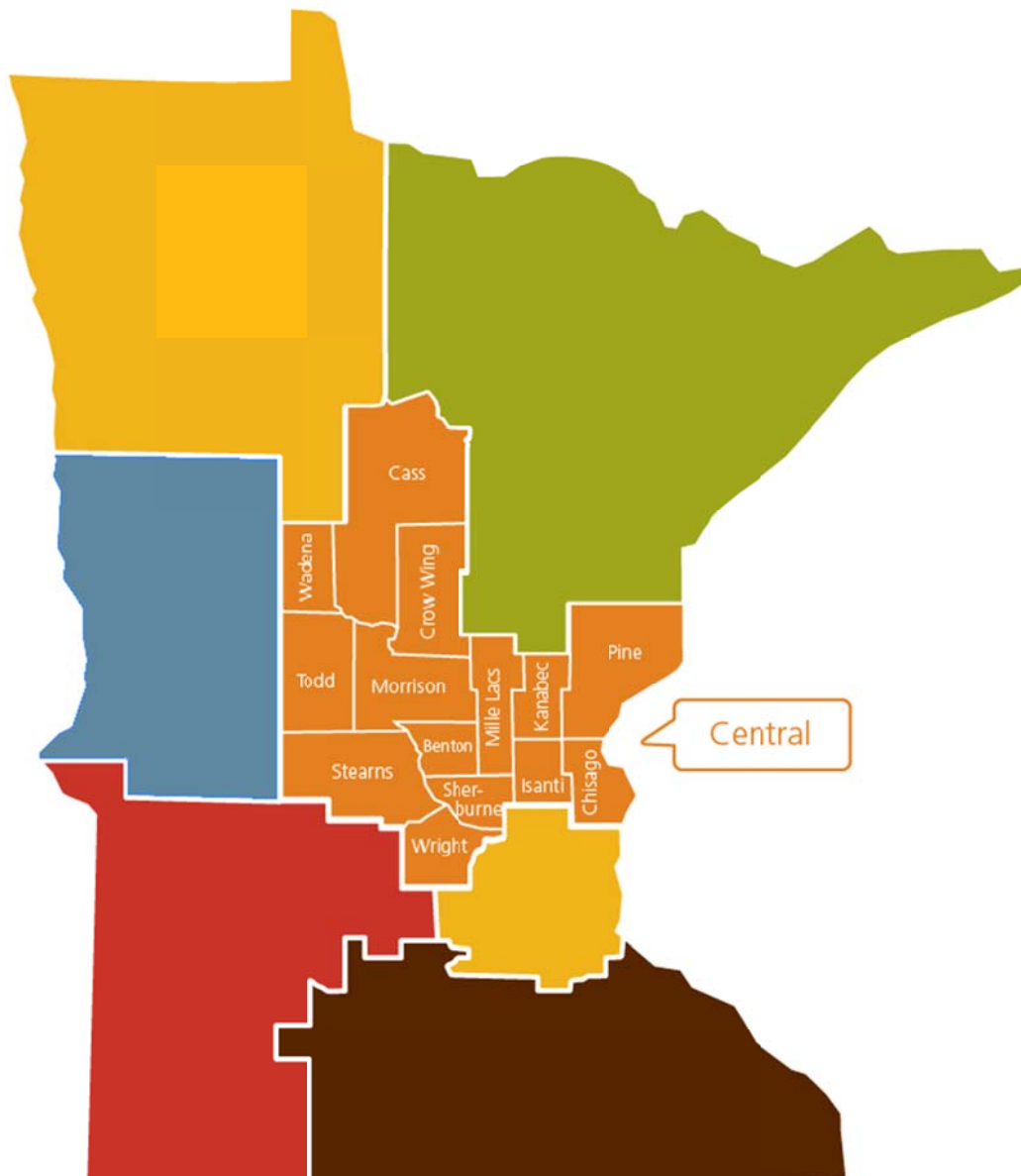


RURAL PULSE™ SNAPSHOT: CENTRAL MINNESOTA

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 2013 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, 1,144 telephone interviews were conducted with rural Minnesotans. The full report can be found at www.RuralPulse.org.

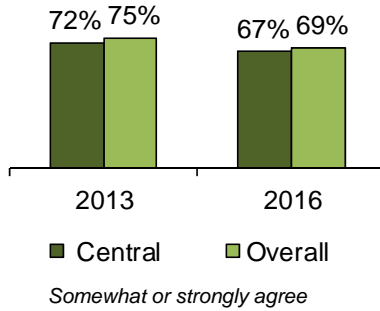
To provide a localized perspective, study findings for Central Minnesota are included in the following pages and contrasted with overall rural Minnesota responses.



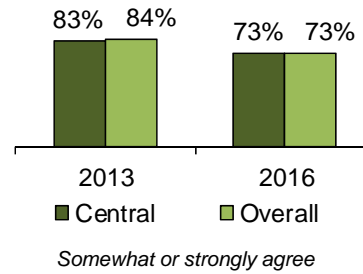
While many residents in rural Minnesota feel positive about their community, that sentiment has declined compared to 2013.

Two-thirds of residents in Central Minnesota feel their community is vibrant, and even more believe that they are resilient and able to recover from difficult situations. Fewer believe that they are able to contribute to their community’s future, though four in five still feel they can make a positive impact.

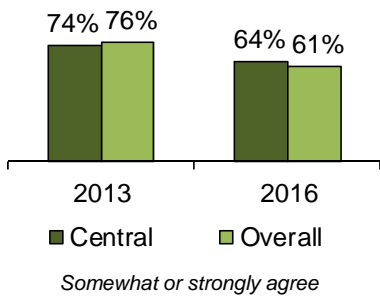
Community is a Vibrant Place to Live and Work



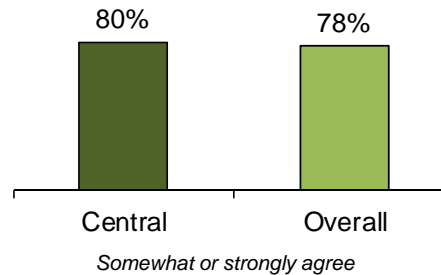
Community is Strong, Resilient and Able to Recover from Difficult Situations



Feel Ownership of Community and Ability to Contribute to Its Future

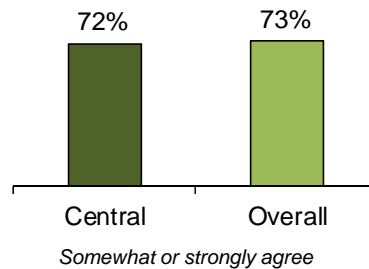


Able to Make a Positive Community Impact



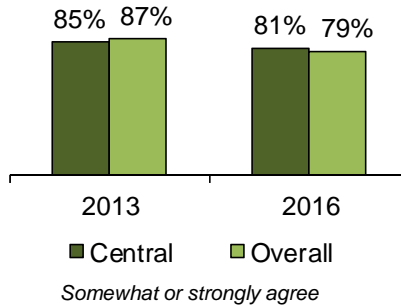
More than seven in 10 feel their community works together cohesively.

Community Works Together Effectively to Address Local Issues

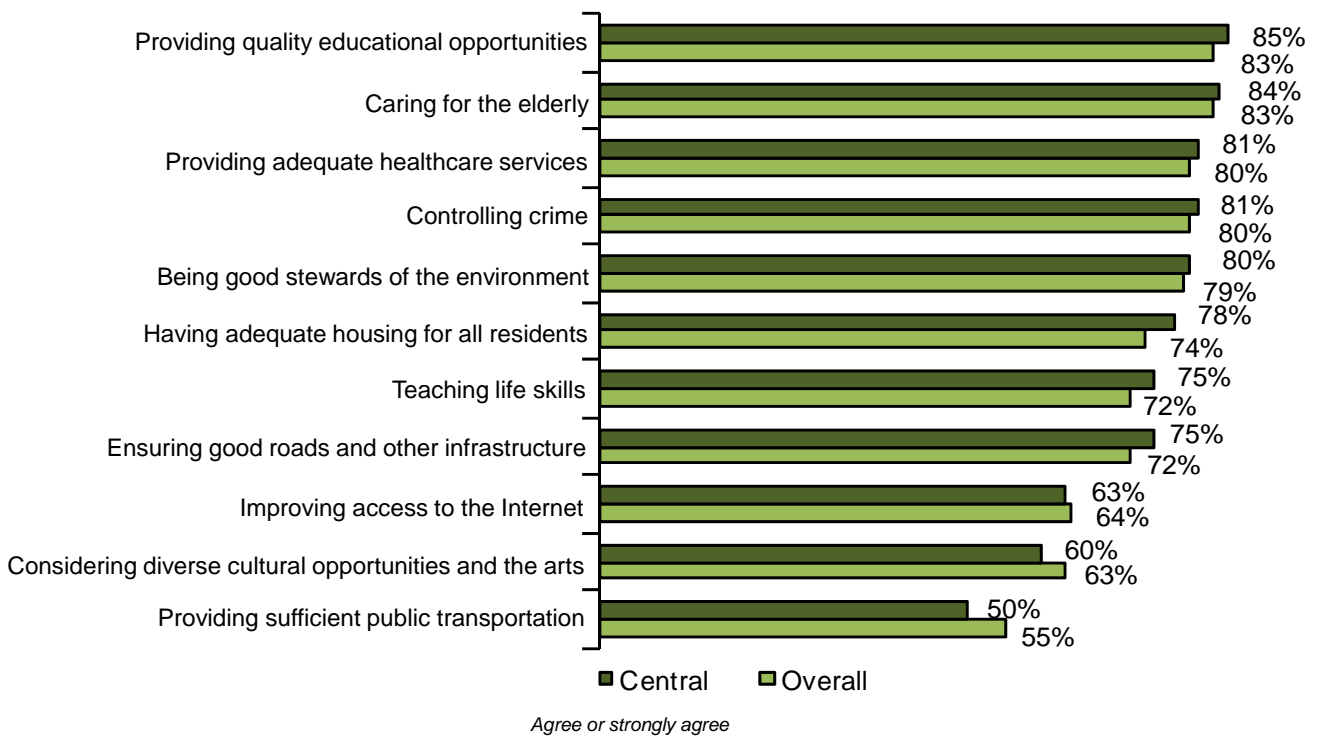


Four in five residents in Central Minnesota feel that access to basic community services is equal for all residents. The service areas of greatest concern, however, are improving internet, diverse cultural and arts, and public transportation.

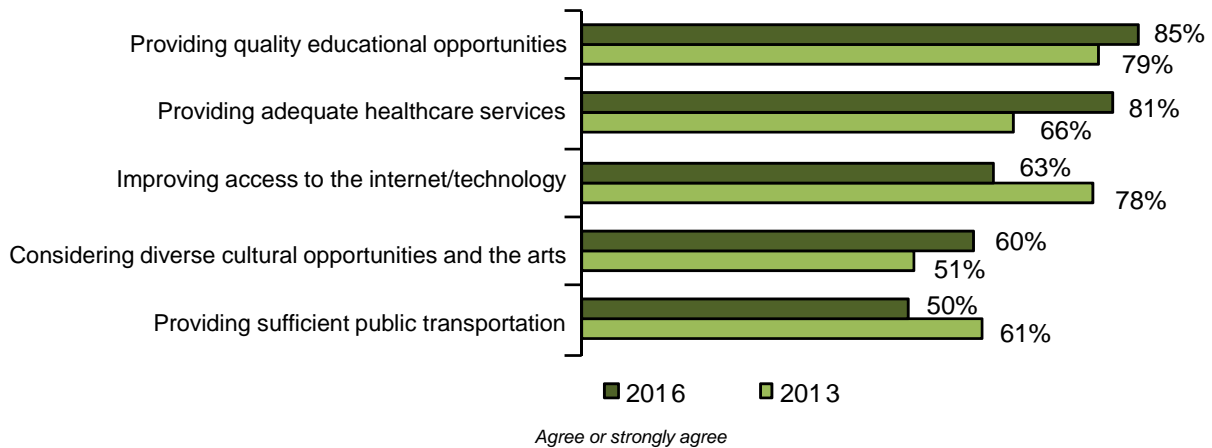
Equal Access to Essential and Basic Services



Community is Doing a Good Job

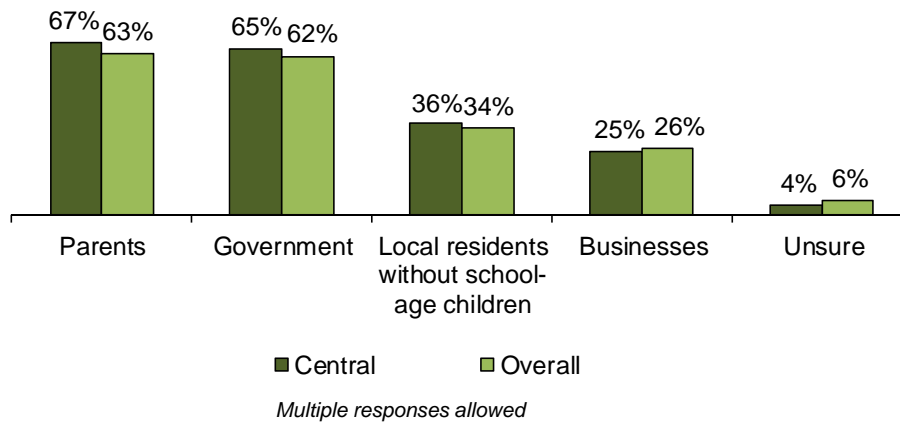


**Central Region:
Community is Doing a Good Job**

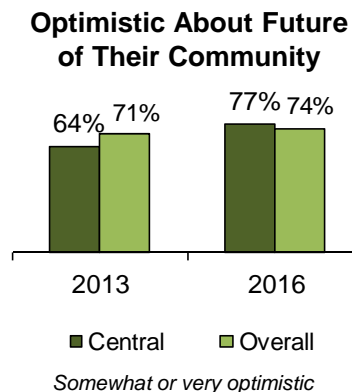
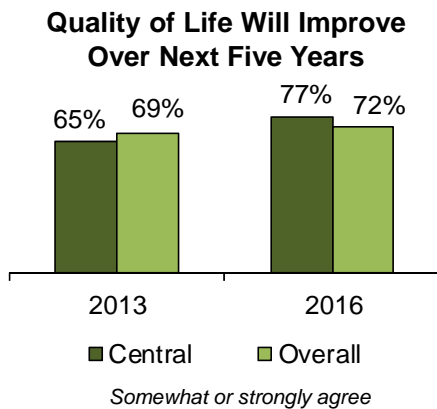


Most Central Minnesotans feel parents are responsible for educational opportunities, though many also believe the government holds obligation for such.

Who Is Responsible for Ensuring Adequate, Quality Educational Opportunities

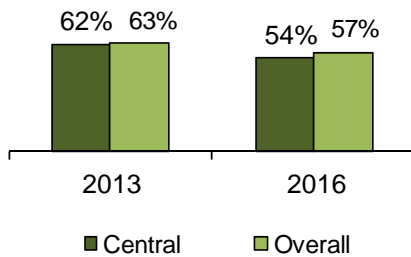


Most feel quality of life will improve within the next five years and are optimistic about their community's future.

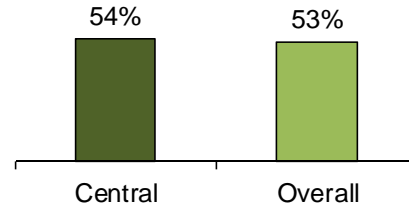


Many residents in Central Minnesota have concern that the needs of regional communities are not important to lawmakers. More than half feel supporting political candidates who address rural issues is of high importance.

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

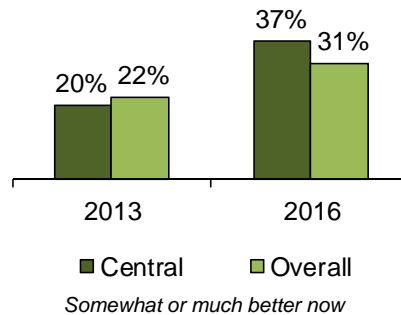


Very Important to Support Political Candidates Who Actively Address Rural Issues



More than a third feel the local economy has improved within the past year, a significant increase from 2013 findings.

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



While there is sentiment that the condition of the economy has improved in Central Minnesota, concerns about jobs still top the priority list. The most critical issues to address for Central Minnesota residents are said to be attracting new business, growing local job opportunities, crime and educational opportunities.

Most Critical to Your Community

Central

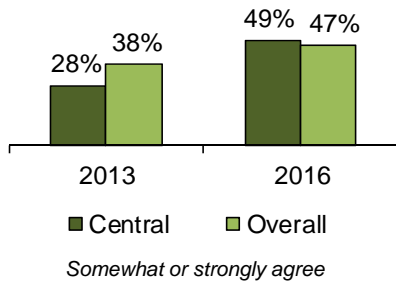
1. New business
2. Growing local job opportunities
3. Crime
3. Education

Overall

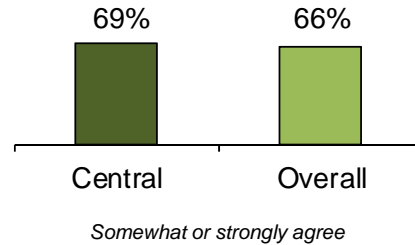
1. Growing local job opportunities
2. New business
3. Crime
4. Education

Nearly half (46%) still feel that there are insufficient living-wage jobs; however, this represents a positive upswing compared to 2013. Many feel that regional communities do not maintain/grow job opportunities (29%) and even more believe that there are not enough new businesses being started locally (43%).

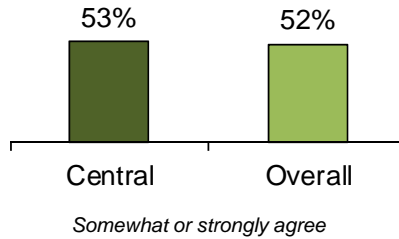
Adequate Number of Jobs that Pay Household-Supporting Wages



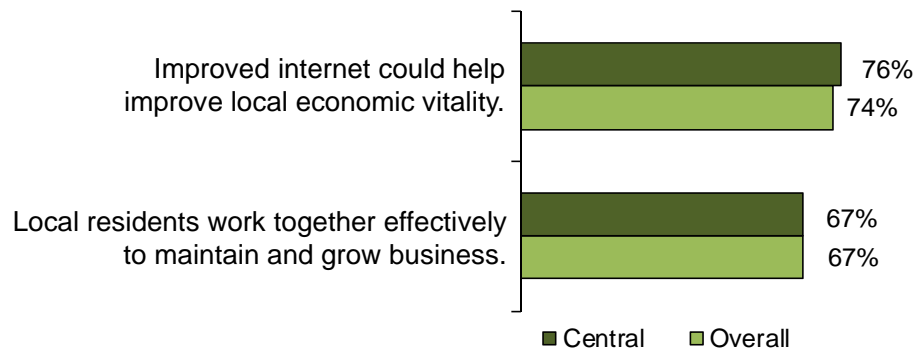
Community Successfully Maintains and Grows Job Opportunities



Community Sufficiently Attracts New Businesses



Most believe improved internet could assist local economy. While many are aware of local resources to help find employment, there is belief that resources to help start new businesses are lacking.

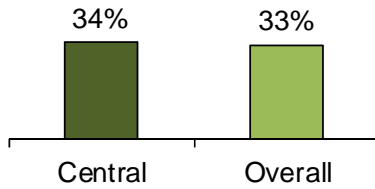


Awareness of Job Growth Resources

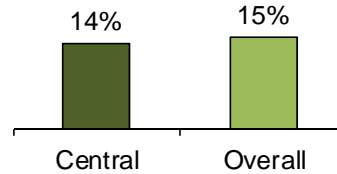


A third of residents in Central Minnesota say their household income has increased over past year. Fourteen percent say they have experienced a job loss within their household.

Household Income Has Increased Over Past Year

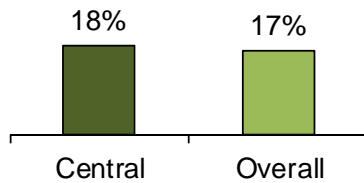


Someone in Household Lost a Job Over Past Year

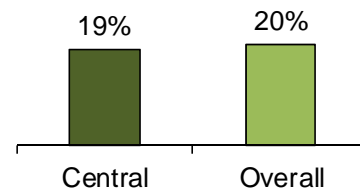


Eighteen percent do not expect to live in their same community five years from now, and 19 percent have considered moving to a larger city. Many say quality of life is the motivating factor for considering migration, followed closely by job opportunities. Other reasons listed, in addition to educational opportunities, include being closer to family, among others.

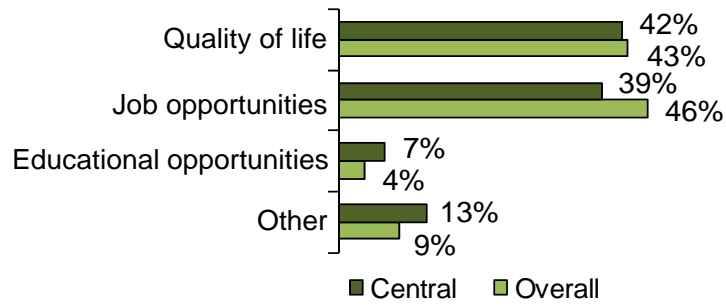
Do Not Expect to Live in Their Community Five Years From Now



Considered Moving to a Metro Area Within Past Two Years

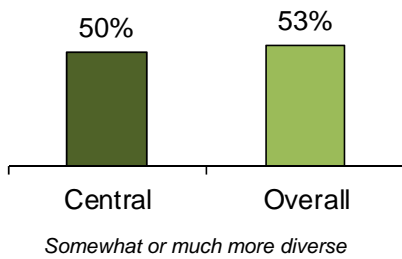


Main Reason for Considering a Move

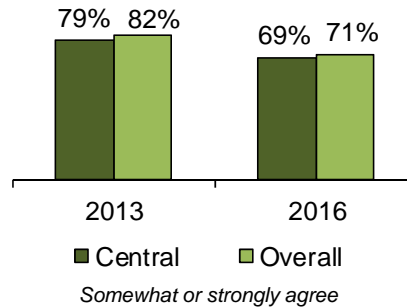


Half feel the population has become more diverse in recent years in Central Minnesota; however, many do not believe their community is welcoming – showing a significant decrease from 2013 findings. Two-thirds feel there is acceptance of differences within their community, such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and nationality.

Population Has Become More Diverse Over Past Five Years

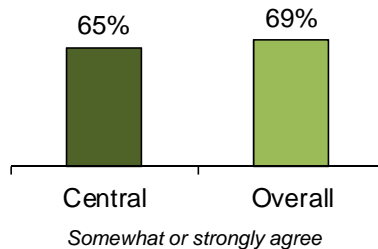


Community is a Welcoming Place for People of All Backgrounds and Perspectives



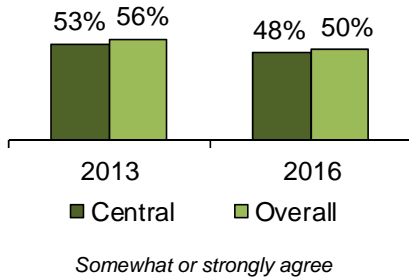
Community Accepts and Embraces Differences

(e.g., Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Nationality)

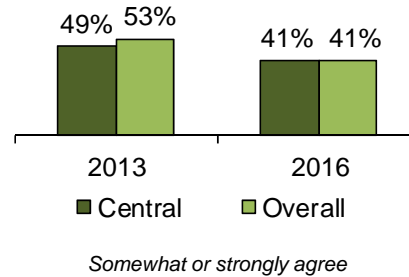


There is a perception that community leadership is not inclusive. Two in five say they have served in a leadership capacity, a decrease from 2013 findings. A third say that they would definitely consider serving in leadership if asked.

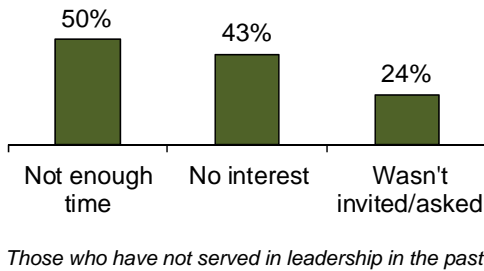
People From Diverse Backgrounds Fill Leadership Roles Within the Community



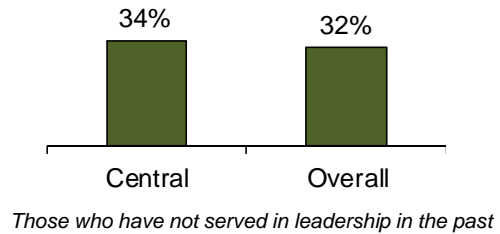
Served In a Community Leadership Role



Why Haven't Served In a Leadership Role



Would Definitely Consider Serving If Asked



For more information on Rural Pulse™ and to review the comprehensive, statewide report, visit www.RuralPulse.org. Additional questions on the community enrichment efforts of the Blandin Foundation can be directed to www.BlandinFoundation.org or 877-882-2257.