RURAL PULSE™ SNAPSHOT: NORTHEAST 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 Northeast 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 Northeast Minnesota feel their community is vibrant, and seven in 10 believe that regional communities are resilient and able to recover from difficult situations. The Northeast region experienced a significant decline from 2013 in belief that they are able to contribute to their community’s future, although three in four still feel they can make a positive impact.

About seven in 10 feel their community works together cohesively.
More than three in four in the Northeast region feel that access to basic community services is equal for all residents – a decline from 2013 findings. Service areas of greatest concern are improving internet, diverse cultural and arts, and public transportation.

### Equal Access to Essential and Basic Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Northeast</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Community is Doing a Good Job

- **Agree or strongly agree**
  - Caring for the elderly: 81% (Northeast), 83% (Overall)
  - Providing adequate healthcare services: 81% (Northeast), 80% (Overall)
  - Controlling crime: 80% (Northeast), 80% (Overall)
  - Providing quality educational opportunities: 79% (Northeast), 83% (Overall)
  - Being good stewards of the environment: 76% (Northeast), 83% (Overall)
  - Having adequate housing for all residents: 70% (Northeast), 79% (Overall)
  - Ensuring good roads and other infrastructure: 64% (Northeast), 74% (Overall)
  - Teaching life skills: 63% (Northeast), 72% (Overall)
  - Improving access to the Internet: 61% (Northeast), 64% (Overall)
  - Considering diverse cultural opportunities and the arts: 59% (Northeast), 64% (Overall)
  - Providing sufficient public transportation: 54% (Northeast), 55% (Overall)
Most people in the Northeast feel parents are responsible for educational opportunities, though many believe the government should hold obligation for such.

It is the least likely region to feel quality of life will improve within the next five years; however, seven in 10 are optimistic about their community’s future.
Many residents in the Northeast have concern that the needs of rural communities are not important to lawmakers. It is the most likely region to feel supporting political candidates who address rural issues is of high importance.

It is the least likely region to feel the local economy has improved within the past year.

The perception in Northeast Minnesota is that there has been little improvement to the economy, as concerns about jobs still top the priority list. The most critical issues to address in the Northeast region are said to be growing local job opportunities, attracting new business, educational opportunities and crime.

**Most Critical to Your Community**

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

**Overall**
1. Growing local job opportunities
2. New business
3. Crime
4. Education
The Northeast is the most likely region to believe there are insufficient living-wage jobs (66%), that regional communities do not maintain/grow job opportunities (39%) and that there are not enough new businesses being started locally (49%).

Three in four 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.
Northeast residents are the least likely to say that their household income has increased over the past year. Seventeen percent say they have experienced a job loss within their household.

Eighteen percent do not expect to live in their same community five years from now, and 21 percent have considered moving to a larger city. Most say job opportunities are the motivating factor for considering migration, followed by quality of life.
About half of residents in the Northeast feel the population has become more diverse in recent years, and seven in 10 believe their communities are welcoming and embrace differences such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and nationality.

### Main Reason for Considering a Move

- **Job opportunities**: 63% (Northeast) and 46% (Overall)
- **Quality of life**: 28% (Northeast) and 43% (Overall)
- **Educational opportunities**: 9% (Northeast) and 4% (Overall)
- **Other**: 0% (Northeast) and 9% (Overall)

### Population Has Become More Diverse Over Past Five Years

- **Northeast**: 49%
- **Overall**: 53%

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

- **2013**
  - **Northeast**: 75%
  - **Overall**: 82%
- **2016**
  - **Northeast**: 71%
  - **Overall**: 71%

### Community Accepts and Embraces Differences (e.g., Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Nationality)

- **Northeast**: 71%
- **Overall**: 69%
There is a perception that community leadership is not inclusive. Two in five say they have served in a leadership capacity, a significant decrease from 2013 findings. Twenty-seven percent say that they would definitely consider serving in leadership if asked.

People From Diverse Backgrounds Fill Leadership Roles Within the Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Northeast</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat or strongly agree</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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Served In a Community Leadership Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat or strongly agree</td>
<td>55% 53%</td>
<td>41% 41%</td>
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Why Haven't Served In a Leadership Role

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Northeast</th>
<th>Overall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not enough time</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No interest</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasn't invited/asked</td>
<td>24%</td>
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Would Definitely Consider Serving If Asked

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<th>Northeast</th>
<th>Overall</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Those who have not served in leadership in the past</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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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.