

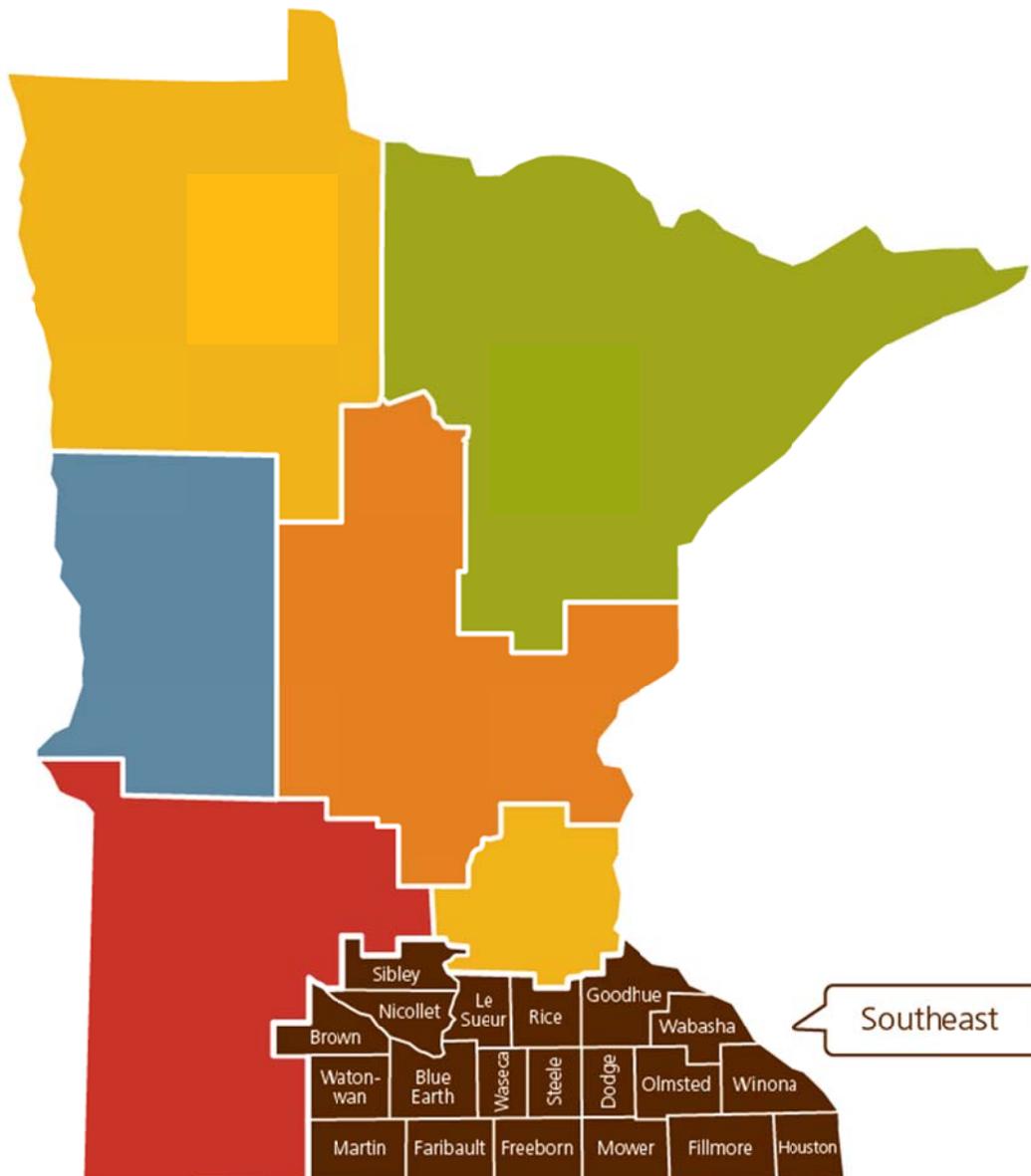


RURAL PULSE™ SNAPSHOT: SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA

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.

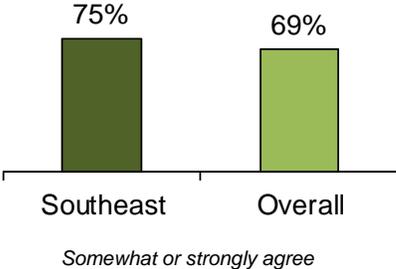
In completing this comprehensive research study, 1,144 telephone interviews were conducted with rural Minnesotans. The full report can be found at www.RuralPulse.org.

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

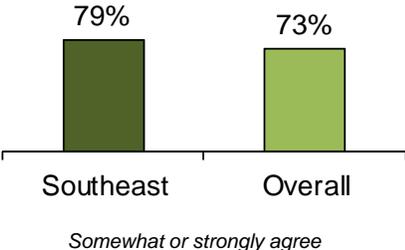


Many Southeast Minnesota residents feel positive about their community. Three in four believe that their community is vibrant and resilient. They also feel the most strongly about being able to contribute to its future, although that sentiment has declined since 2013. Four in five feel they can make a positive impact.

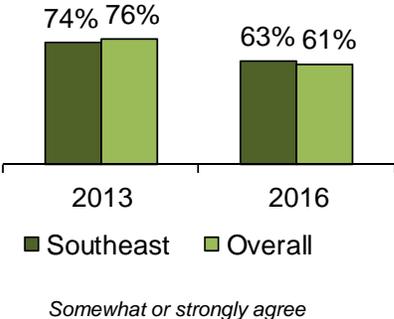
Community is a Vibrant Place to Live and Work



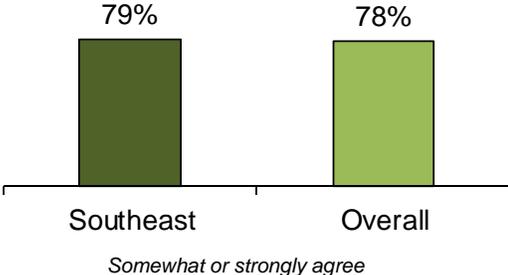
Community is Strong, Resilient and Able to Recover from Difficult Situations



Feel Ownership of Community and Ability to Contribute to Its Future

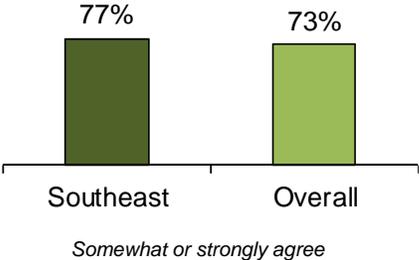


Able to Make a Positive Community Impact



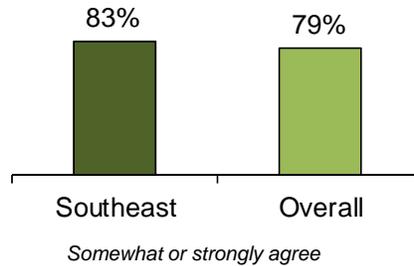
More than three in four feel their community works together cohesively.

Community Works Together Effectively to Address Local Issues

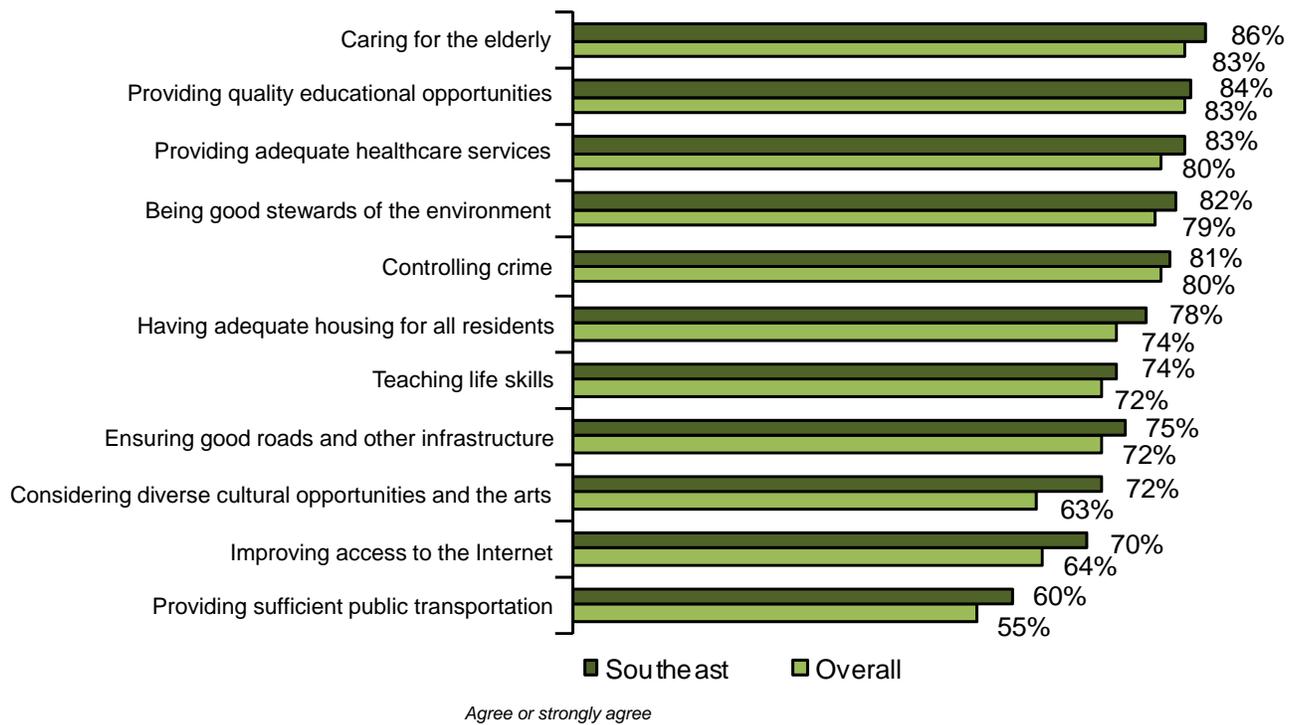


Southeast residents hold the greatest belief of all regions that access to basic community services is equal for everyone in their community. The service areas of largest concern are improving the internet and public transportation.

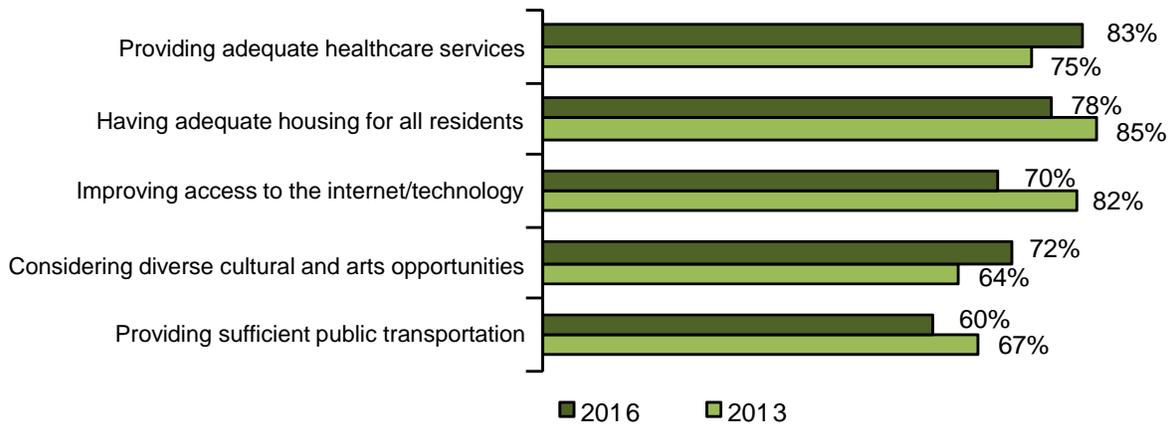
Equal Access to Essential and Basic Services



Community is Doing a Good Job



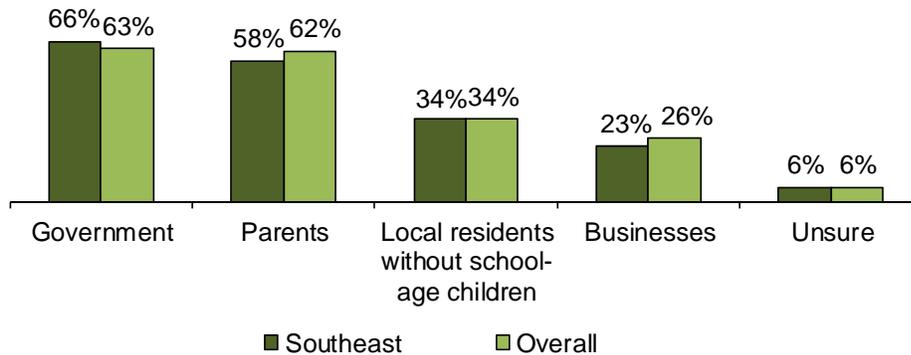
**Southeast Region:
Community is Doing a Good Job**



Agree or strongly agree

Two-thirds of those in the Southeast feel the government is responsible for educational opportunities, though many believe parents also hold obligation for such.

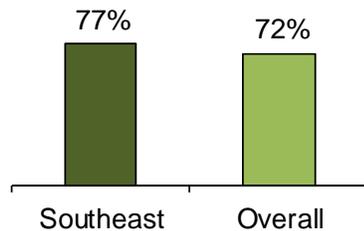
Who Is Responsible for Ensuring Adequate, Quality Educational Opportunities



Multiple responses allowed

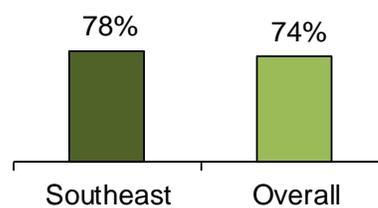
Nearly four in five feel quality of life will improve and are optimistic about their community's future.

Quality of Life Will Improve Over Next Five Years



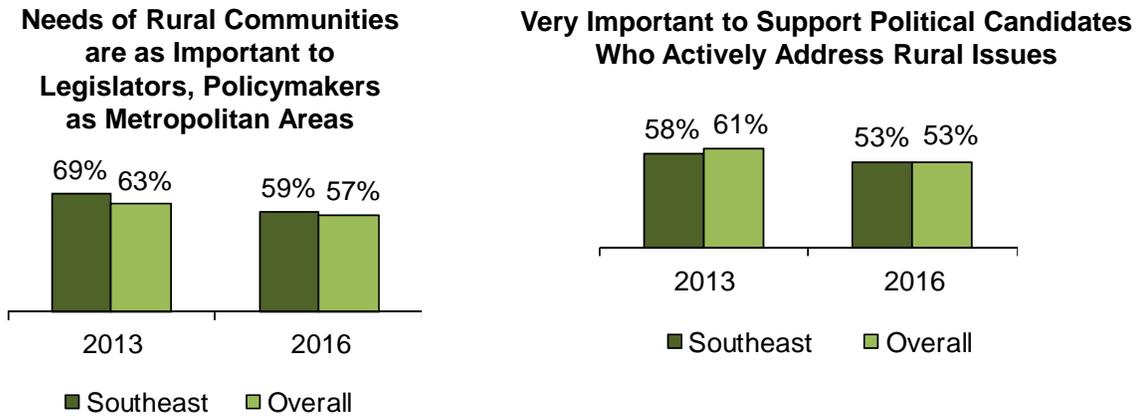
Somewhat or strongly agree

Optimistic About Future of Their Community



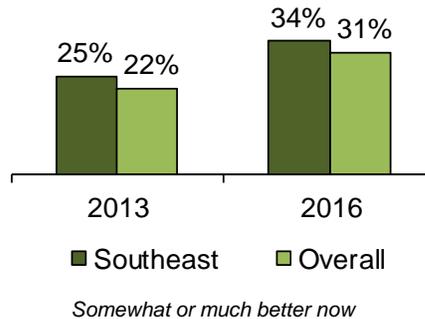
Somewhat or very optimistic

Three in five in the Southeast region believe the needs of rural communities are important to lawmakers – a decline from 2013 findings. Just over half feel it is very important to support political candidates who address rural issues.



A third feel the local economy has improved within the past year – an increase from 2013.

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



There is some sentiment that the condition of the economy has improved in Southeast Minnesota and that living-wage jobs have increased; however, the most critical issues to address in the Southeast are still said to be growing local job opportunities and attracting new business, followed by healthcare and crime.

Most Critical to Your Community

Southeast

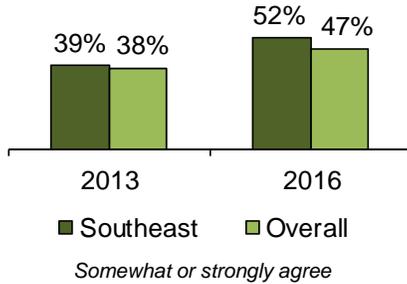
- Growing local job opportunities
New business
- Healthcare
- Crime

Overall

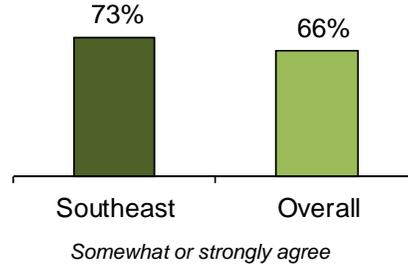
- Growing local job opportunities
- New business
- Crime
- Education

While an improvement from 2013, there is still concern that there are insufficient living-wage jobs (45%). And while close to three in four believe that regional communities do a good job maintaining and growing job opportunities (24% disagree), even more are concerned that there are not enough new businesses being started locally (37%).

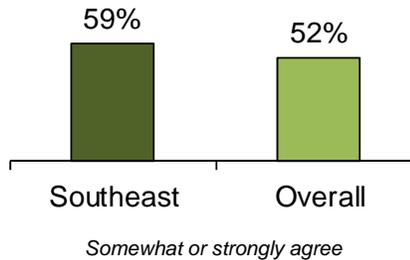
Adequate Number of Jobs that Pay Household-Supporting Wages



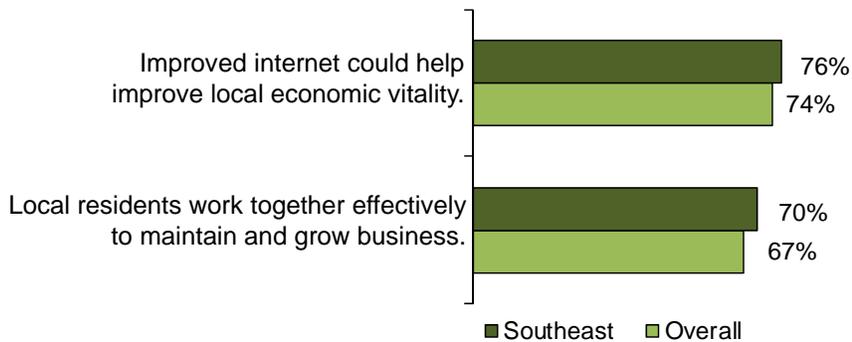
Community Successfully Maintains and Grows Job Opportunities



Community Sufficiently Attracts New Businesses



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.

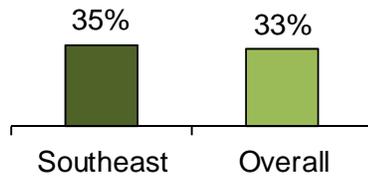


Awareness of Job Growth Resources

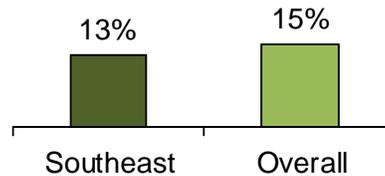


Thirty-five percent in the Southeast region say that their household income has increased over the past year; however, more than one in 10 have experienced a job loss within their household.

Household Income Has Increased Over Past Year

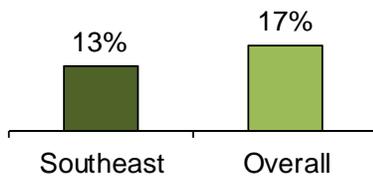


Someone in Household Lost a Job Over Past Year

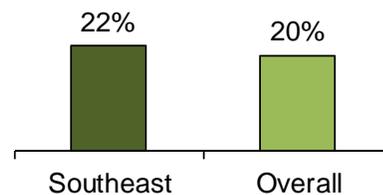


Thirteen percent do not expect to live in their same community five years from now, and more than one in five have considered moving to a larger city. Quality of life and job opportunities are both primary motivating factors for considering migration. Other reasons listed include being closer to family, among others.

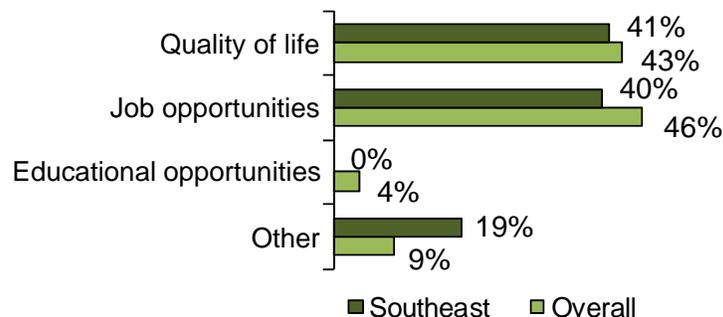
Do Not Expect to Live in Their Community Five Years From Now



Considered Moving to a Metro Area Within Past Two Years

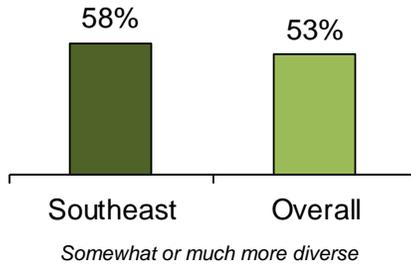


Main Reason for Considering a Move

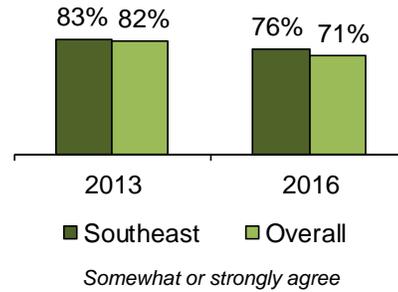


Nearly three in five feel the local population has become more diverse in recent years, and the Southeast is the most likely region to believe their communities are welcoming – a slight decline from 2013 findings. Three in four feel there is acceptance of differences, such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and nationality.

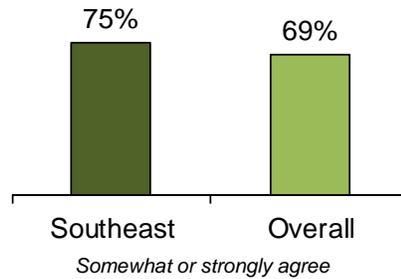
Population Has Become More Diverse Over Past Five Years



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

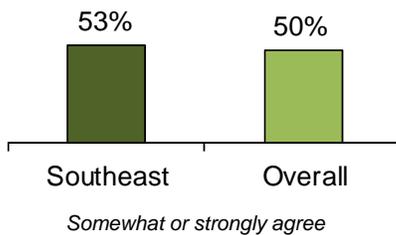


Community Accepts and Embraces Differences
(e.g., Ethnicity, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Nationality)

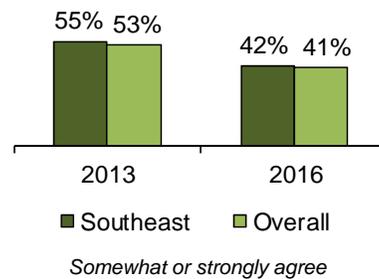


There is a perception that community leadership is not inclusive. While more than two in five say they have served in a leadership capacity, this represents a 13-point decrease from 2013 findings. A third say that they would definitely consider serving in leadership if asked.

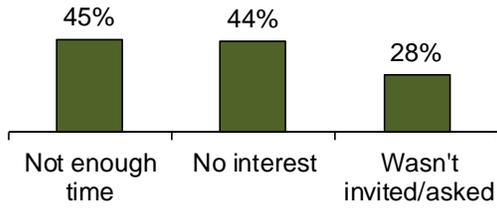
People From Diverse Backgrounds Fill Leadership Roles Within the Community



Served In a Community Leadership Role

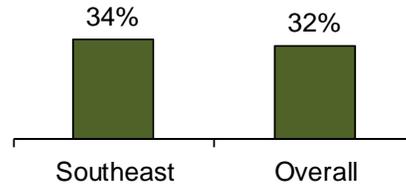


Why Haven't Served In a Leadership Role



Those who have not served in leadership in the past

Would Definitely Consider Serving If Asked



Those who have not served in leadership in the past

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.