

ROCKFORD AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

SURVEY OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY RESIDENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Seeking to understand public perceptions about local tourism, the Rockford Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (RACVB) contracted with Health Systems Research of the University of Illinois to conduct a survey of Winnebago County residents. Sent to a random sample of 5,000 households in March 2012, 686 surveys were returned, a 13.7% response. Survey respondents represent the county fairly well, however, are older, better educated and more likely to be white than the population as a whole, typical of most survey research.

Based on survey results, most county residents know that RACVB exists though awareness dips among blacks and adults under age 40. Far more respondents have encountered RACVB through the local media than any other means.

Almost all survey respondents feel that tourism exerts a positive effect. Tourism is important to the Rockford's regional economy say 94.4%, while 96.5% agree that drawing visitors improves the local economy. Asked to gauge the impact, two in three (63.7%) believe tourism's effect is strong, while one in three (35.4%) contend that limited spending by visitors contributes some positive benefit. Women value tourism's role in the economy more than men.

Three in four (77.5%) respondents feel that more money should be invested to bring more visitors to the Rockford area, a level that rises above 84% among residents living in 61103, 61101 and blacks. Asked about sources of funding for tourism activities, more than 90% say that businesses which benefit from tourism such as hotels and restaurants should be tapped, way ahead of a user tax (71.9%) and government (50.3%). Wider differences among groups occur for the user tax and government than funding from tourism-related businesses. The user tax draws more support from seniors than younger ages, while females and respondents under age 40 offer higher approval of government funding than males and older ages.

Of the six potential tourism projects posed for assessment, respondents give their highest endorsement to ecotourism and facilities for amateur sports tournaments. Ecotourism is particularly favored by families with children at home, persons under 40, and residents of 61102 and Roscoe. Groups most supportive of maintaining and improving amateur sports tournament facilities include households located in 61102, 61101, Rockton/South Beloit and Machesney Park as well as blacks.

Ranking third among tourism endeavors is connecting bike paths to rural and outlying areas of the county. Adding attractive gateways into Rockford and other towns and helping downtown Rockford revitalization receive similar scores and place fourth and fifth, respectively. Far lower than the other five, more respondents disagree than agree that a convention center with hotel be built in downtown Rockford. Respondents rank their recommendations for funding of the six tourism projects in the same pattern as they rate their value to the community.

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION, METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

INTRODUCTION

In order to understand public perceptions about the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) and local tourism efforts, RACVB contracted with Health Systems Research to conduct a survey. The survey covered awareness, role and development of tourism, support of specific projects along with demographics of survey respondents. Health Systems Research (HSR), an applied social service research unit of the University of Illinois at Rockford, specializes in survey research for health, education and civic organizations. Based in Rockford, HSR has assisted organizations in north and central Illinois for more than 30 years.

METHODOLOGY

RACVB staff worked jointly with HSR to develop the three-page survey instrument. Once the questionnaire was finalized, the project was submitted to and approved by the University of Illinois College of Medicine's Institutional Review Board. The survey was anonymous with no identifiers on the instrument itself or return envelope to tie responses to an individual.

Drawn randomly by zip code, the survey sample was generated by a commercial mailing list firm to include household residences but no businesses in Winnebago County. In March 2012, surveys were sent to 5,000 addresses, one in 20 households. The survey packet included a cover letter explaining the survey's purpose, the three-page survey instrument, a postage-paid envelope to return the completed survey, and discount coupons for Rockford Park District activities. See Appendix A for cover letter and survey instrument. Much publicity conducted by the RACVB occurred about the survey including media releases, television interviews, and email blasts. Returned surveys were entered into an SPSS database for analysis.

RESPONSE

As of May 31, 2012, 686 completed surveys were returned for a response rate of 13.7%. Recent surveys conducted by HSR in Barrington, McHenry County and Rockford have produced similar response rates, ranging from 12-15%. Anticipating a response at this level, the survey sample size was increased in order to obtain enough responses to generate valid results.

Survey responses vary dramatically by zip code (Table 1.1). Among zip codes in which more than ten residences received surveys, five produced response rates above 15% led by Rockford's 61114 with an impressive 26.1% return. Also surpassing 15% response are Rockford 61107 at 19.3%, Pecatonica 17.1%, Rockford 61108 16.3%, and Cherry Valley 15.3% (Table 1.2). In Seward and Shirland, small towns with only post office box delivery, two residences per zip code received surveys. Both Seward recipients returned the survey while one in Shirland did. Low return rates falling in the single digits occur for Durand 61024 (8.0%), South Beloit (8.2%), Rockford 61105 (9.1%), Rockford 61104 (9.2%), Rockton 61072 (9.6%) and Rockford 61102 (9.9%).

Table 1.1
ZIP CODE RESPONSE AND PERCENT RESPONDENTS

Zip Code	City/Town	Number Sent	Number Received	Percent Returned	Percent Respondents
61016	Cherry Valley	85	13	15.3%	1.9%
61024	Durand	50	4	8.0%	0.6%
61063	Pecatonica	82	14	17.1%	2.0%
61072	Rockton	208	20	9.6%	2.9%
61073	Roscoe	377	47	12.5%	6.9%
61077	Seward	2	2	100.0%	0.3%
61079	Shirland	2	1	50.0%	0.1%
61080	South Beloit	183	15	8.2%	2.2%
61088	Winnebago	126	13	10.3%	1.9%
61101	Rockford	363	38	10.5%	5.6%
61102	Rockford	262	26	9.9%	3.8%
61103	Rockford	341	41	12.0%	6.0%
61104	Rockford	260	24	9.2%	3.5%
61107	Rockford	533	103	19.3%	14.9%
61108	Rockford	491	80	16.3%	11.7%
61109	Rockford	466	62	13.3%	9.1%
61111	Loves Park	418	53	12.7%	7.7%
61114	Rockford	276	72	26.1%	10.5%
61115	Machesney Park	440	48	10.9%	7.0%
61132	Loves Park	16	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total		4,981	676	---	98.6%
No answer		---	10	---	1.4%
Other*		19	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total		5,000	686	13.7%	100.0%

*Four zip codes as P.O. boxes only with fewer than 10 addresses sent and no returns

Table 1.2
ZIP CODES WITH HIGHEST RETURN RATES¹

Zip Code and Description	Percent Returned
61114 - Rockford Far Northeast	26.1%
61107 - Rockford Near Northeast	19.3%
61063 - Pecatonica	17.1%
61108 - Rockford Southeast	16.3%
61016 - Cherry Valley	15.3%

¹Zip codes with fewer than 10 surveys sent omitted

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

More females than males responded to the survey though the difference is not great. More than seven in ten (71.7%) survey respondents are 50 years and older, with the 50-64 age group representing the largest volume and proportion of respondents, while only one in nine (11.7%) is under age 40. Most respondents (91.2%) claim their race/ethnicity to be white, non-Hispanic. The most common educational attainment level is some college/no degree which accounts for almost one in four (23.4%) followed by high school graduates (21.1%) and four-year college degree holders (20.3%). One-quarter (23.3%) of respondent households include children.

Table 1.3

SURVEY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS AND COMPARISON TO CENSUS 2010

Characteristic	Survey Respondents		2010 Census Percent ²
	Number	Percent ¹	
GENDER			
Female	379	55.7%	51.1%
Male	302	44.3%	48.9%
AGE GROUP			
18-29	22	3.2%	20.0%
30-39	58	8.5%	16.7%
40-49	113	16.5%	18.8%
50-64	257	37.6%	26.2%
65 and older	233	34.1%	18.3%
RACE/ETHNICITY			
White, non-Hispanic	611	91.2%	72.5%
Black, non-Hispanic	26	3.9%	12.0%
Hispanic	8	1.2%	10.9%
Asian	8	1.2%	2.3%
Multi-racial	9	1.3%	2.0%
Other	8	1.2%	0.3%
EDUCATION (Highest Level Completed)			
Less than high school	12	1.8%	15.6%
High school diploma	143	21.1%	33.2%
Some college, no degree	159	23.4%	22.3%
Associate's or technical degree	102	15.0%	7.7%
Bachelor's degree	138	20.3%	13.1%
Graduate/professional degree	125	18.4%	7.9%
PRESENCE OF CHILDREN <18 IN HOUSEHOLD			
Yes	159	23.3%	33.1%
No	523	76.7%	66.9%

¹Percents based on respondents who answered question. Frequencies including no answer responses shown in Appendix B.

²Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 decennial census for age, race and presence of children and 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates for education

Another demographic characteristic asked of survey participants was their length of residence in Winnebago County. No adequate comparison is available through the U.S. Census because the American Community Survey only asks whether your residence has changed in the past year. Based on the Census 2010 estimates, 4.1% of county residents age one year and older live in a different county than they did one year ago, much higher than survey respondent households in which 0.1% were not county residents a year earlier (Table 1.4). This comparison suggests that survey respondents do not accurately represent relative newcomers to the area.

Table 1.4
SURVEY RESPONDENT LENGTH OF RESIDENCE

Length of Residence in Winnebago County	Survey Respondents		2010 Census Percent ²
	Number	Percent	
Total ¹	683	100.0%	---
Less than 1 year	1	0.1%	4.1%
1-4 years	15	2.2%	---
5-9 years	43	6.3%	---
10-19 years	72	10.5%	---
20 years or more	552	80.8%	---

¹Total of survey respondents who answered this question.

²Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

SURVEY ACCURACY

To what degree survey respondents represent all Winnebago County households is not known. While the sample mailing was purely random and therefore representative of the population as a whole, the sample of respondents may not be representative because those who return the survey may differ from those who do not. One way to ascertain how well the respondents represent the county is to compare their demographic characteristics (Table 1.3).

Typically, survey respondents tend to be older, more educated, female, and predominantly white compared to the actual population they represent. To a degree that is true for this survey though the gender mix is fairly close to the Winnebago County population. In terms of age, one-third (34.1%) of survey respondents are 65 years and older, far more than the 18.3% who comprise the county's senior population. On the other hand, the younger population is not as well represented with 11.7% of respondents under age 40 compared to 36.7% who actually reside in the county. Nine in ten (91.2%) respondents are white, non-Hispanic versus 72.5% actual, while the remainder (8.8%) are minority populations. Respondents possessing a four-year college or professional degree account for 38.7% of survey respondents, far more than the actual population at 21.0%, while those with a high school diploma or less comprise 22.9% of survey respondents, about half the level of the actual population (48.8%). One in four (23.3%) survey respondents live in a household with children at home, a smaller proportion than the population (33.1%).

In addition to representativeness, an important consideration in judging the accuracy of the survey is the margin of error for responses since a sample, not the entire population, was surveyed. Given the response rate and sample size, the margins of error for most survey questions for the sample as a whole are +/- 3.5% at a 95% confidence level and +/-2.9% at a 90% confidence level. When results are analyzed by demographic characteristics such as age, race/ethnicity, or education, margins of error may be considerably larger than the sample as a whole. For that reason, analysis of survey questions by characteristic requires collapsing some categories within groups to achieve an adequate cell size. Specific consolidations are length of residence (less than 10 years = under 1 + 1-4 + 5-9 years), age (18-39 = 18-29 + 30-39), race/ethnicity (other race/ethnic = Hispanic + Asian + multi-racial + other), and education (high school education or less = less than high school + high school diploma). Geographic areas are defined by zip codes. Thirteen zip code groupings are used, eleven individual zip codes as well as two zip code consolidations (Rockton/South Beloit = 61072-Rockton + 61080-South Beloit; far southwest Winnebago County = 61063-Pecatonica + 61088-Winnebago + 61077-Seward). Two zip codes, 61016-Cherry Valley with 13 responses and 61024-Durand with four responses are not combined into larger groupings because of their distinct geography, however, the small number is not enough for analysis by geographic area but those responses are included in the overall analysis per question.

In the following chapters, statistically significant differences of mean scores by characteristic are stated at the end of the detailed tables. Because geographic area has numerous zip code groups, and therefore a smaller number of survey responses per group, differences must be wider to achieve statistical significance. While definite patterns emerge by zip code areas, in many cases the gaps are not wide enough to be statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. For survey questions with a four point scale, such as 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree, geographic areas' mean scores need to exceed a 0.4 point margin to be statistically different.

Chapter 2
 AWARENESS OF ROCKFORD AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

Two questions asked survey participants about their awareness of the Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB). If they knew that RACVB existed, a follow up question inquired about ways they had encountered RACVB.

KNOW EXISTENCE OF RACVB

Asked whether they knew that RACVB existed before receiving the survey itself, more than eight in ten (84.0%) respondents say that they did. One in ten (10.3%) do not know about RACVB and 5.5% are unsure. Females and males show a similar level of awareness, however, wide differences mark awareness based on age, race, length of residence and geography. Awareness also varies depending on level of education and presence of children at home though not to the same degree. Table 2.1 shows the responses by demographic group. In that table, the “no” and “not sure” responses are combined.

Groups with the greatest awareness of RACVB’s existence are residents living in zip code 61108-Rockford, residents in far southwest Winnebago County (Pecatonica, Winnebago and Seward), adults who have earned a graduate/professional degree, seniors ages 65 years and older, and residents of 61107-Rockford (Table 2.2).

In all groups, more than half of all respondents know that there is an organization known as RACVB and, in fact, except for adults under age 40, at least six in ten respondents indicate this awareness. Among 18-39 year olds, 57.5% know about RACVB, while the next four lowest groups are black/African Americans, residents who have lived in Winnebago County less than ten years, “other” race/ethnicity and Machesney Park residents.

Table 2.2
 GROUPS WITH HIGHEST AND LOWEST AWARENESS OF RACVB EXISTENCE

Rank	Description	Variable	Percent Yes
TOP FIVE			
1	61108 – Rockford	Residence	93.8%
2	Far SW Winnebago County	Residence	93.1%
3	Graduate, professional degree	Education	91.2%
4	65 years or older	Age	89.7%
5	61107 – Rockford	Residence	89.3%
LOWEST FIVE			
1	18-39 years	Age	57.5%
2	Black, non-Hispanic	Race/Ethnicity	61.5%
3	Less than 10 years	Length of residence	64.4%
4	Other	Race/Ethnicity	66.7%
4	Machesney Park	Residence	66.7%

Table 2.1
AWARENESS OF RACVB

Group	Yes		No/Not sure	
	Number	Percent ¹	Number	Percent ¹
All	576	84.0%	109	15.8%
Gender				
Female	314	82.8%	64	16.8%
Male	257	85.1%	45	14.9%
Age (in years)				
18-39	46	57.5%	34	42.6%
40-49	90	79.6%	23	20.3%
50-64	228	88.7%	29	11.3%
65+	209	89.7%	23	9.9%
Race/Ethnicity ²				
White	523	85.6%	87	14.3%
Black	16	61.5%	10	38.4%
Other	22	66.7%	11	33.4%
Education				
High school or less	123	79.4%	31	20.0%
Some college, no degree	132	83.0%	27	17.0%
Associate, technical degree	83	81.4%	19	18.6%
Bachelor's degree	118	85.5%	20	14.5%
Graduate, professional degree	114	91.2%	11	8.8%
Length of Residence				
Less than 10 years	38	64.4%	21	35.6%
10-19 years	51	70.8%	21	29.2%
20 years or more	484	87.7%	67	12.1%
Children < 18 at Home				
Yes	119	74.8%	40	25.1%
No	453	86.6%	69	13.2%

Group	Yes		No/Not sure	
	Number	Percent ¹	Number	Percent ¹
Geographic Area ³				
Far SW Winnebago County ⁴	27	93.1%	2	6.9%
61101 – Rockford	30	78.9%	8	21.1%
61102 – Rockford	23	88.5%	3	11.5%
61103 – Rockford	33	80.5%	8	19.5%
61104 – Rockford	17	70.8%	7	29.2%
61107 – Rockford	92	89.3%	11	10.7%
61108 – Rockford	75	93.8%	5	6.3%
61109 – Rockford	48	77.4%	14	22.6%
61114 – Rockford	64	88.9%	8	11.1%
Rockton and South Beloit	30	85.7%	5	14.3%
Roscoe	33	70.2%	13	27.7%
Machesney Park	32	66.7%	16	33.3%
Loves Park	46	86.8%	7	13.2%

¹Percents based on total sample including no answer replies, thus “yes” and “no/not sure” may add up to less than 100%.

²White and black groups are non-Hispanic, other includes Hispanic, Asian, multi-racial, other.

³Areas with 24 or more respondents.

⁴Pecatonica (61063), Winnebago (61088) and Seward (61077).

Statistically significant differences occur based on age group, race/ethnicity, length of residence and presence of children at home.

HOW DO THEY KNOW ABOUT RACVB

By far the leading means by which survey respondents have encountered RACVB is through the local media (79.6%). Less than half as high is next highest, an advertisement in a magazine (37.6%), followed closely by efforts to bring a casino to Rockford (36.0%), and calendar of events (32.7%). Amateur sports tournaments are the way in which one in five (21.7%) respondents know about RACVB. Much lower rates of encounters are by website/Facebook (5.5%) and working with RACVB on an event (2.9%).

Table 2.3
WAYS RESPONDENTS HAVE ENCOUNTERED RACVB

Rank	Description	Number	Percent ¹
1	Local media	489	79.6% (83.0%)
2	Advertisement in magazine	231	37.6% (39.8%)
3	Efforts to bring casino here	221	36.0% (36.1%)
4	Calendar of events	201	32.7% (34.0%)
5	Amateur sports tournaments	133	21.7% (22.3%)
6	Website, Facebook	34	5.5% (5.6%)
7	Worked with RACVB meeting, reunion, tournament	18	2.9% (3.1%)
---	Other	36	5.9% (6.3%)

¹Based on percent who say they know or are unsure about existence of RACVB (n = 614), followed by percent based only on respondents who know about RACVB (n = 576).

Note: Respondents could check more than one way they have encountered RACVB.

Respondents who wrote in another means said they have personal contacts or friends/relatives who work at RACVB (10), had visited the office (8), have work relationships that have brought them in contact with RACVB (7), word of mouth (2), maps (2) and assorted other means by individual respondents.

Figure 2.1: "Before receiving this survey, did you know that an organization named Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau exists?"

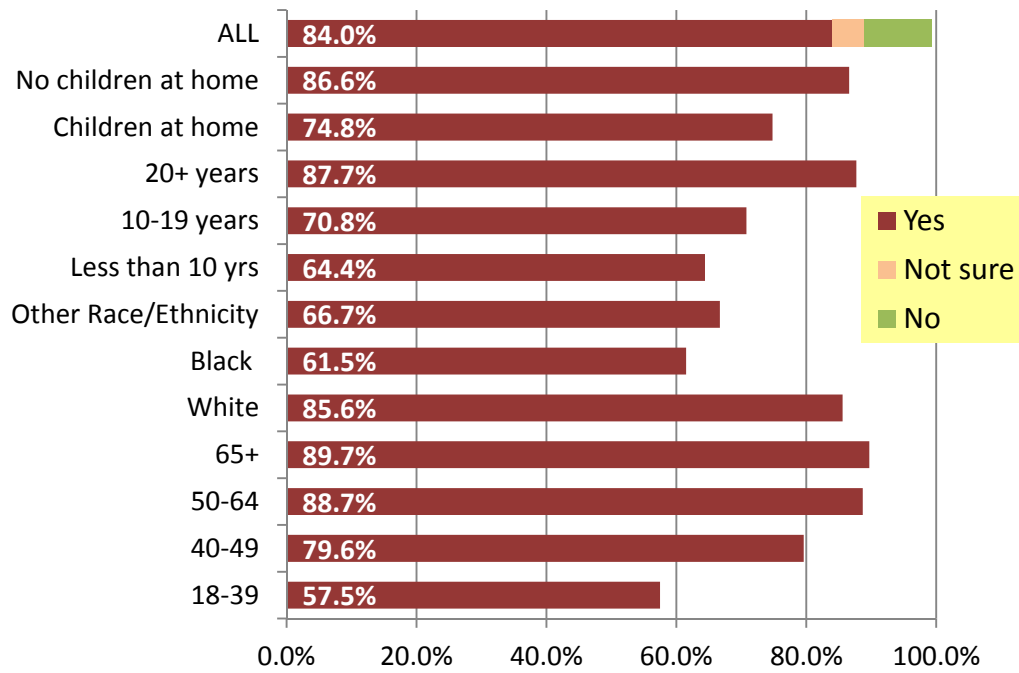
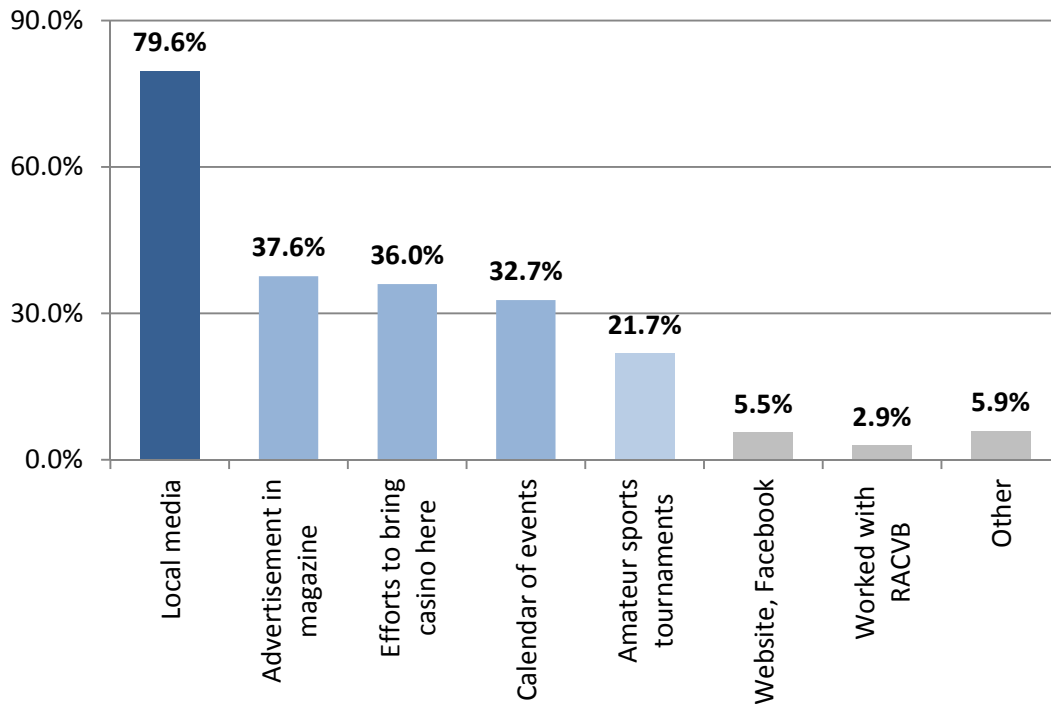


Figure 2.2: "I have encountered RACVB in the following ways..."



Chapter 3
IMPORTANCE AND EFFECT OF TOURISM ON LOCAL ECONOMY

Two survey questions asked respondents about the role of visitors and tourism in economic development of the Rockford region. The first question addresses the issue of visitors and tourism’s importance to the local economy, while the second asks about the effects.

IMPORTANCE OF VISITORS TO ROCKFORD’S REGIONAL ECONOMY

At 94.4%, the overwhelming majority of survey respondents feel that visitors and tourism are important or very important to Rockford’s regional economy (Table 3.1). About twice as many give their rating as “very important” (61.0%) as “important” (33.4%). Only a handful (2.3%) believes that visitors are not important, while 3.2% don’t know.

Table 3.1
IMPORTANCE OF VISITORS TO LOCAL ECONOMY

Response	Number	Percent ¹
Very important	418	61.0%
Important	229	33.4%
Not important	16	2.3%
Don’t know	22	3.2%

¹Percent based on respondents who answered question. No answer replies omitted from denominator.

Voicing the strongest support for visitors’ contribution to the local economy are respondents with some college education/no degree; residents of 61104, 61108, 61107; blacks; and seniors age 65 years and older. For these groups, more than 65% indicate that tourism is very important (Table 3.2).

On the other hand, fewer than 55% claim visitors to be very important among ages 40-49; residents in 61114, 61102 and Loves Park; respondents with a bachelor’s or associate/technical degree; and males. Even among the groups with the lowest ratings, however, more than half feel that tourism is very important to Rockford’s economy.

Table 3.2
GROUPS WITH HIGHEST AND LOWEST PROPORTIONS ABOUT
IMPORTANCE OF VISITORS TO REGIONAL ECONOMY

Percent Indicating Visitors "Very Important" for Local Economy					
HIGHEST (>65%)			LOWEST (<55%)		
1	Some college, no degree	70.4%	1	Age 40-49	50.4%
2	61104	66.7%	2	61114	52.8%
2	Female	66.7%	3	Bachelor's degree	52.9%
4	61108	66.3%	4	61102	53.8%
5	61107	66.0%	5	Male	54.0%
6	Black	65.4%	6	Loves Park	54.7%
7	Age 65+	65.1%	7	Associate, technical degree	54.9%

Mean scores which take into account all three possible responses (very important, important, not important) show a fairly tight range (Table 3.5). On a three-point scale from 1 = not important to 3 = very important, the overall mean of 2.61 leans toward very important.

Some factors matter more than others in explaining differences in scores. Females rate tourism's importance higher than males as do respondents 50 years and older compared to 40-49 year olds. Blacks give higher ratings than whites, respondents with some college produce higher scores than associate/technical and bachelor's degree holders, and respondents living in 61104, 61108 and Rockton/South Beloit are more confident about visitors' importance to the local economy than persons in Loves Park though differences by race/ethnicity, education and geographic area are not statistically significant. Length of residence in the county and presence of children at home did not factor into scores of importance.

EFFECT OF VISITORS ON LOCAL ECONOMY

Almost two in three (63.7%) respondents believe that visitors positively affect enough to improve the local economy (Table 3.3). An additional 35.4% feel that tourism contributes positively to the economy through limited visitor spending. A combined total of less than 1% feel visitors have no or a negative effect on the economy.

Table 3.3
EFFECT OF VISITORS ON LOCAL ECONOMY

Response	Number	Percent ¹
Strong enough positive to improve economy	434	63.7%
Some positive through limited visitor spending	241	35.4%
No effect	4	0.6%
Negative effect	2	0.3%

¹Percent based on respondents who answered question. No answer replies omitted from denominator.

Similar to the previous question, responses vary by group (Table 3.4). With more than 69% reporting that tourism exerts a strong enough positive effect to improve the economy are respondents whose educational level is some college or graduate/professional degree; live in 61108 and 61102. Fewer than 56% feel tourism is an engine for local economic development among respondents with a four-year college degree, residents of 61101 and Loves Park.

Table 3.4
 GROUPS WITH HIGHEST AND LOWEST PROPORTIONS
 ABOUT EFFECT OF VISITORS ON LOCAL ECONOMY

Percent Indicating “Strong enough positive effect to improve local economy”					
HIGHEST (>69%)			LOWEST (<56%)		
1	Some college, no degree	70.5%	1	Loves Park	54.7%
2	61108	70.0%	2	Bachelor’s degree	55.1%
3	61102	69.2%	3	61101	55.3%

Mean scores reflecting all possible question choices where 1 = negative effect, 2 = no effect, 3 = some positive effect and 4 = strong positive effect are shown on Table 3.5. These scores fall within an even narrower range than the previous question. Of the seven demographic factors, none show statistical differences though levels vary based on education and geographic area. Respondents with some college rate tourism’s effect on the economy more positively than persons with four-year college degrees. Among areas, residents living in 61108 (3.70) feel the most sanguine about the tourism’s positive economic effects while Loves Park (3.51) residents post the lowest mean score.

Table 3.5
MEAN SCORES OF IMPORTANCE AND EFFECT OF TOURISM ON LOCAL ECONOMY

Group	Mean Scores of Relationship Between Visitors and Local Economy	
	Importance (Scale 1-3) ¹	Effect (Scale 1-4) ²
All	2.61	3.63
Gender		
Female	2.66	3.64
Male	2.53	3.60
Age (in years)		
18-39	2.58	3.66
40-49	2.52	3.61
50-64	2.61	3.62
65+	2.65	3.63
Race/Ethnicity ³		
White	2.61	3.63
Black	2.71	3.65
Other	2.63	3.67
Education		
High school or less	2.63	3.60
Some college, no degree	2.68	3.71
Associate, technical degree	2.55	3.62
Bachelor's degree	2.54	3.55
Graduate, professional degree	2.61	3.66
Length of Residence		
Less than 10 years	2.65	3.64
10-19 years	2.63	3.59
20 years or more	2.60	3.63
Children < 18 at Home		
Yes	2.61	3.65
No	2.61	3.62

Group	Mean Scores of Relationship Between Visitors and Local Economy	
	Importance (Scale 1-3) ¹	Effect (Scale 1-4) ²
Geographic Area ⁴		
Far SW Winnebago County ⁵	2.55	3.59
61101 – Rockford	2.64	3.55
61102 – Rockford	2.58	3.69
61103 – Rockford	2.65	3.61
61104 – Rockford	2.67	3.63
61107 – Rockford	2.65	3.62
61108 – Rockford	2.66	3.70
61109 – Rockford	2.63	3.62
61114 – Rockford	2.49	3.68
Rockton and South Beloit	2.67	3.67
Roscoe	2.60	3.59
Machesney Park	2.62	3.65
Loves Park	2.47	3.51

¹1 = not important, 2 = important, 3 = very important.

²1 = negative effect, 2 = no effect, 3 = some positive, 4 = strong positive.

³White and black groups are non-Hispanic; other includes Hispanic, Asian, multi-racial, other.

⁴Areas with 24 or more respondents.

⁵Pecatonica (61063), Winnebago (61088) and Seward (61077).

Mean score differences are statistically significant based on gender and age group for “How important are visitors and tourism to Rockford’s regional economy?” No statistically significant differences by characteristics for “How do you think visitors affect local economy?”

Figure 3.1: "How important are visitors and tourism to Rockford's regional economy?"

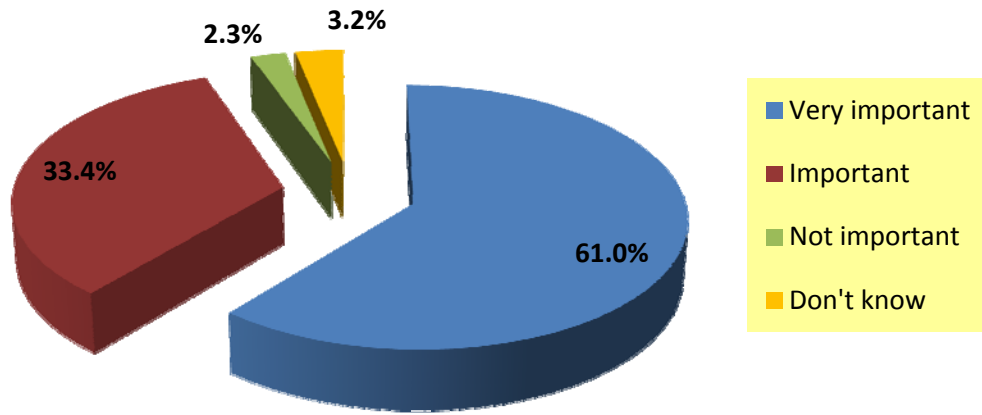
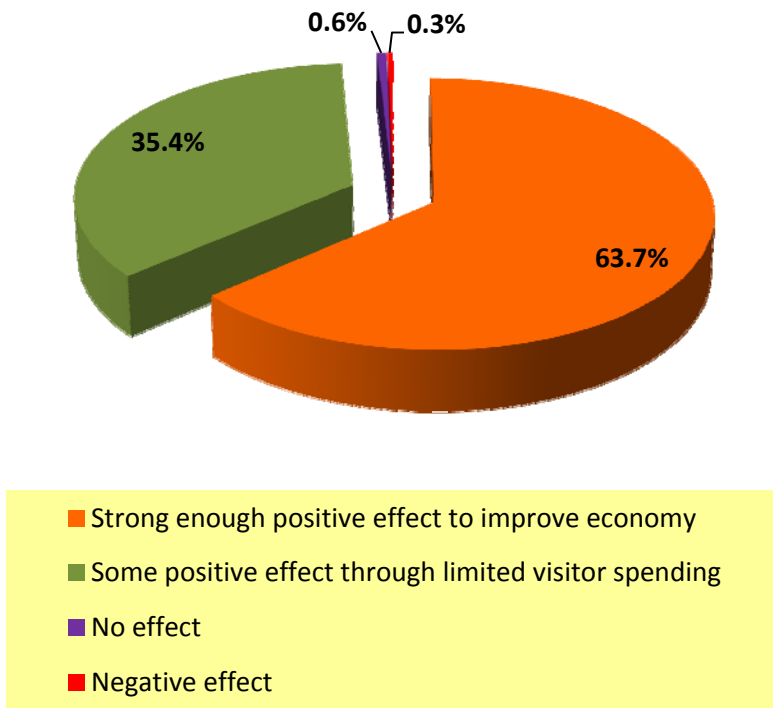


Figure 3.2: "How do you think visitors affect the local economy?"



Chapter 4 IMPACT OF TOURISM AND FUNDING SOURCES

Five survey questions dealt with tourism's relationship to the local economy and sources of funding for regional tourism efforts. Response options ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree as well as don't know.

IMPACT ON ECONOMY

The two questions about tourism's effect on the economy asked whether survey participant agree that

- Drawing visitors to the Rockford region improves the local economy
- More money should be invested to bring more visitors to the Rockford area.

The first question repeats the topic of tourism's relationship to the economy but asks in a slightly different way.

More than any other survey question, respondents agree that drawing visitors to the Rockford region improves the local economy. Almost all (96.5%) agree, more than half of whom (55.2%) strongly agree. Unanimity of agreement occurs across respondent groups, none of which show agreement lower than 93% (Table 4.1).

The high level of agreement that visitors improve the local economy is also reflected in the mean scores that incorporate the intensity of agreement/disagreement. On the four-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree, the mean score for all respondents at 3.54 weighs more heavily toward strongly agree than agree. Mean scores for demographic categories vary from 3.40 to 3.65, a rather limited range. The only variable showing a statistical difference is gender with females (3.60) more likely to agree than males (3.47). Among geographic areas, Rockford-61104 and Rockford-61109, both 3.65, post high mean scores compared to low scores by Roscoe (3.40) and far southwest Winnebago County (3.41).

Responses to the subsequent statement about investing more money also draws strong support though not as high as tourism's ability to improve the local economy (Table 4.2). Among all respondents, three in four (77.3%) agree that more money should be invested, leaning more toward agree (51.9%) than strongly agree (25.4%), also reflected in the 3.15 mean score. Wider differences separate groups on this question. Higher agreement about investing money in tourism is reported by females over males, respondents under 40 compared to older age groups, blacks more than whites, shorter term residents, and households with families at home. Geographic areas' mean scores range from 3.43 for 61103-Rockford to 2.92 reported by far southwest Winnebago County.

Table 4.1
 AGREEMENT LEVELS FOR REGIONAL TOURISM'S ABILITY TO IMPROVE LOCAL ECONOMY

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
All	96.5%	1.7%	1.6%	3.54
Gender				
Female	96.8%	1.1%	1.1%	3.60
Male	96.0%	2.6%	1.3%	3.47
Age (in years)				
18-39	98.8%	1.3%	0.0%	3.56
40-49	97.3%	0.9%	1.8%	3.55
50-64	96.1%	2.3%	1.6%	3.55
65+	95.7%	1.7%	2.1%	3.53
Race/Ethnicity ³				
White	97.2%	1.5%	1.1%	3.54
Black	96.2%	3.8%	0.0%	3.50
Other	93.9%	3.0%	3.0%	3.69
Education				
High school or less	95.5%	0.6%	3.2%	3.54
Some college, no degree	96.9%	1.9%	1.3%	3.64
Associate, technical degree	97.1%	2.0%	1.0%	3.49
Bachelor's degree	96.4%	2.9%	0.7%	3.42
Graduate, professional degree	96.8%	1.6%	1.6%	3.61
Length of Residence				
Less than 10 years	98.3%	1.7%	0.0%	3.54
10-19 years	97.2%	0.0%	2.8%	3.60
20 years or more	96.2%	2.0%	1.6%	3.54
Children < 18 at Home				
Yes	99.4%	0.6%	0.0%	3.61
No	95.6%	2.1%	2.1%	3.52

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
Geographic Area ⁴				
Far SW Winnebago County ⁵	93.1%	6.9%	0.0%	3.41
61101 – Rockford	94.7%	0.0%	5.3%	3.47
61102 – Rockford	96.2%	3.8%	0.0%	3.62
61103 – Rockford	95.1%	0.0%	4.9%	3.51
61104 – Rockford	95.8%	0.0%	4.2%	3.65
61107 – Rockford	98.1%	1.0%	1.0%	3.54
61108 – Rockford	96.3%	3.8%	0.0%	3.59
61109 – Rockford	96.8%	0.0%	3.2%	3.65
61114 – Rockford	97.2%	2.8%	0.0%	3.58
Rockton and South Beloit	97.1%	0.0%	2.9%	3.59
Roscoe	93.6%	2.1%	2.1%	3.40
Machesney Park	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.56
Loves Park	94.3%	3.8%	1.9%	3.50

¹Percents based on total sample including no answer.

²Mean score from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. “Don’t know” responses omitted from mean score computations.

³White and black groups are non-Hispanic; other includes Hispanic, Asian, multi-racial, other.

⁴Areas with 24 or more respondents.

⁵Pecatonica (61063), Winnebago (61088) and Seward (61077).

Statistically significant mean score differences by gender.

Table 4.2
 AGREEMENT LEVELS FOR MORE MONEY SHOULD BE INVESTED TO BRING VISITORS

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
All	77.3%	10.6%	11.1%	3.15
Gender				
Female	79.7%	8.2%	10.8%	3.19
Male	74.5%	13.9%	11.3%	3.10
Age (in years)				
18-39	83.8%	6.3%	10.0%	3.26
40-49	77.9%	14.2%	7.1%	3.12
50-64	76.7%	12.1%	10.5%	3.13
65+	76.0%	9.0%	13.7%	3.14
Race/Ethnicity ³				
White	77.6%	10.0%	11.6%	3.16
Black	92.3%	7.7%	0.0%	3.27
Other	69.7%	18.2%	9.1%	3.00
Education				
High school or less	77.4%	9.7%	10.3%	3.16
Some college, no degree	78.6%	10.1%	11.3%	3.22
Associate, technical degree	76.5%	8.8%	13.7%	3.16
Bachelor's degree	73.2%	13.0%	13.8%	3.09
Graduate, professional degree	81.6%	11.2%	6.4%	3.10
Length of Residence				
Less than 10 years	83.1%	8.5%	8.5%	3.26
10-19 years	81.9%	12.5%	5.6%	3.10
20 years or more	76.3%	10.7%	12.0%	3.14
Children < 18 at Home				
Yes	81.1%	9.4%	8.2%	3.24
No	76.3%	11.1%	11.9%	3.12

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
Geographic Area ⁴				
Far SW Winnebago County ⁵	69.0%	17.2%	13.8%	2.92
61101 – Rockford	84.2%	5.3%	10.5%	3.24
61102 – Rockford	76.9%	15.4%	7.7%	3.21
61103 – Rockford	85.4%	0.0%	14.6%	3.43
61104 – Rockford	83.3%	0.0%	16.7%	3.35
61107 – Rockford	73.8%	13.6%	12.6%	3.06
61108 – Rockford	81.3%	7.5%	8.8%	3.21
61109 – Rockford	72.6%	14.5%	12.9%	3.17
61114 – Rockford	81.9%	11.1%	5.6%	3.19
Rockton and South Beloit	77.1%	8.6%	11.4%	3.17
Roscoe	76.6%	12.8%	8.5%	3.00
Machesney Park	79.2%	4.2%	16.7%	3.23
Loves Park	71.7%	18.9%	9.4%	2.96

¹Percents based on total sample including no answer.

²Mean score from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. “Don’t know” responses omitted from mean score computations.

³White and black groups are non-Hispanic; other includes Hispanic, Asian, multi-racial, other.

⁴Areas with 24 or more respondents.

⁵Pecatonica (61063), Winnebago (61088) and Seward (61077).

Mean score differences exceeding 0.5 for geographic areas are statistically significant.

Table 4.3
TOP AND BOTTOM THREE GROUPS FOR OVERALL SUPPORT¹

Statement (Overall Mean)	Top Groups (Mean)	Bottom Groups (Mean)
Drawing visitors improves local economy (3.54)	1. Other race/ethnic (3.69)	1. Roscoe (3.40)
	2. 61109 (3.65)	2. Far SW Winnebago Co. (3.41)
	2. 61104 (3.65)	3. Bachelor's degree (3.42)
More money should be invested to bring more visitors to Rockford area. (3.15)	1. 61103 (3.43)	1. Far SW Winnebago Co. (2.92)
	2. 61104 (3.35)	2. Loves Park (2.96)
	3. Black (3.27)	3. Roscoe (3.00)
		3. Other race/ethnic (3.00)

¹Based on mean scores (scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree).

SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR TOURISM

Survey respondents were asked about three sources of funds to increase tourism: government, businesses related to tourism (hotels and restaurants), and a user tax paid when visitors purchase food/beverages or stay in a hotel. Strongest support is expressed for funding by tourism-related businesses, followed by user tax and third, government (Table 4.4).

More than one-third (35.7%) strongly agree and an additional 54.4% agree that funding should come from businesses that benefit from tourism. Considerably lower, but still at a solid agreement level is user tax with 22.0% strongly agreeing and 49.9% more agreeing. Falling midway between agree and disagree is support for government funds to increase tourism efforts.

Table 4.4
SOURCES OF FUNDS TO INCREASE TOURISM

Rank	Source	Mean Score	Percent Respondents				
			Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
1	Business	3.32	35.7%	54.4%	2.0%	1.9%	2.8%
2	User tax	2.99	22.0%	49.9%	12.7%	5.2%	5.4%
3	Government	2.67	14.4%	35.9%	18.5%	11.1%	9.9%

The survey respondents' agreement/disagreement is presented both as mean scores that range from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree and as composite agreement (strongly agree and agree combined) and disagreement (disagree and strongly disagree combined) proportions. Table 4.5 summarizes the top and bottom demographic groups for each funding type based on mean score. Details for responses including agreement/disagreement composites and mean scores for every demographic group as well as statements of statistical significance are shown on Tables 4.6 to 4.8 (numbered in order in which they appear in survey).

Table 4.5
TOP AND BOTTOM GROUPS FOR TYPE OF FUNDING TO INCREASE TOURISM¹

Funding Source (Overall Mean)	Top Groups (Mean)	Bottom Groups (Mean)
Business related to tourism (3.32)	1. 61102 (3.50)	1. Far SW Winnebago Co. (3.11)
	2. 61109 (3.42)	2. Loves Park (3.13)
	3. 10-19 yr. residents (3.40)	3. 61104 (3.18)
	4. Black (3.39)	4. Bachelor's degree (3.27)
	4. Machesney Park (3.39)	4. Male (3.27)
User tax (2.99)	1. Black (3.25)	1. Loves Park (2.65)
	2. 61102 (3.21)	2. 10-19 yrs. In county (2.73)
	3. 61104 (3.20)	3. Machesney Park (2.82)
	4. 61114 (3.17)	4. Roscoe (2.83)
	5. Age 65+ (3.13)	5. Age 18-39 (2.89)
Government (2.67)	1. Age 18-39 (3.04)	1. Far SW Winnebago Co. (2.42)
	2. 61109 (3.02)	2. Loves Park (2.51)
	3. High school or less (2.89)	2. Male (2.51)
	4. 61104 (2.88)	4. Bachelor's degree (2.52)

¹Based on mean scores (scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree).

Use of Business Funds

Agreement about using business funds to increase tourism is similar based on gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, length of residence and presence of children at home (Table 4.7). Agreement levels range from 85.0% to 92.8% and mean scores 3.27 to 3.40, a narrow spread. Somewhat greater differences occur based on geographic area of household from low (79.3% agreement) by far southwest Winnebago County residents (3.11 mean) to high for Rockton/South Beloit at 100.0% agreement or 61102 using mean score, 3.50. This geography-

based range, while wider than other characteristics, is smaller than the zip code spread for the two other funding sources. Looking at disagreement, only one group displays a double-digit level (combined disagree and strongly disagree) – far southwest Winnebago County at 13.8%.

Use of User Tax

The user tax finds higher support among females, seniors ages 65 years and older, blacks, and residents who have lived in the county for less than a decade (Table 4.8). Mean scores by zip code of residence range from 61102 (3.21) followed closely by 61104 (3.20) down to Loves Park (2.65). More seniors ages 65+ like the user tax (3.13) than 18-39 (2.89) and 40-49 year olds (2.86). Differences are small for education and presence of children at home.

Using composite agreement levels, more than four in five residents of 61114 (86.1%), 61102 (84.6%) and blacks (80.8%) agree about imposing user taxes, while lowest agreement comes from 10-19 year county residents (56.9%) and Loves Park (58.5%). Disagreement tops one third (34.0%) among Loves Park residents.

Use of Government Funds

Not only is overall support lower for government funds to increase tourism efforts, more variation occurs among demographic groups than for the other two funding mechanisms. Females and 18-39 year olds are more likely to support the use of government funds as are blacks, respondents with a high school education, county residents of 10-19 years, and households with children at home. Support is high among households in 61109 and low among far southwest Winnebago County and Loves Park residents (Table 4.6).

Using composite agreement and disagreement levels, more than six in ten agree that government funds should be used for tourism among ages 18-39 (67.5%), 61109 (64.5%) and county residents of 10-19 years (61.1%). Fewer than four in ten feel that way among far southwest Winnebago County residents (37.9%) and seniors 65+ (38.2%). More far southwest Winnebago County residents disagree (44.8%) about using government funds than agree, the only group in which disagreement surpasses agreement.

Table 4.6
AGREEMENT LEVELS FOR USING GOVERNMENT FUNDS TO INCREASE TOURISM

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
All	50.3%	29.6%	9.9%	2.67
Gender				
Female	52.8%	24.0%	10.8%	2.81
Male	47.7%	36.4%	8.9%	2.51
Age (in years)				
18-39	67.5%	21.3%	10.0%	3.04
40-49	56.6%	31.9%	8.8%	2.67
50-64	53.3%	33.1%	7.0%	2.65
65+	38.2%	27.9%	13.7%	2.53
Race/Ethnicity ³				
White	50.9%	29.3%	10.5%	2.67
Black	57.7%	23.1%	3.8%	2.86
Other	45.5%	36.4%	6.1%	2.63
Education				
High school or less	49.0%	20.6%	14.8%	2.89
Some college, no degree	50.3%	27.0%	10.7%	2.68
Associate, technical degree	46.1%	41.2%	10.8%	2.60
Bachelor's degree	49.3%	35.5%	6.5%	2.52
Graduate, professional degree	56.8%	28.0%	6.4%	2.65
Length of Residence				
Less than 10 years	59.3%	32.2%	3.4%	2.67
10-19 years	61.1%	25.0%	11.1%	2.82
20 years or more	48.0%	30.1%	10.5%	2.65
Children < 18 at Home				
Yes	54.7%	33.3%	7.5%	2.75
No	48.9%	28.7%	10.7%	2.64

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
Geographic Area ⁴				
Far SW Winnebago County ⁵	37.9%	44.8%	3.4%	2.42
61101 – Rockford	50.0%	23.7%	7.9%	2.86
61102 – Rockford	50.0%	23.1%	3.8%	2.79
61103 – Rockford	53.7%	24.4%	19.5%	2.84
61104 – Rockford	41.7%	29.2%	20.8%	2.88
61107 – Rockford	50.5%	28.2%	11.7%	2.60
61108 – Rockford	55.0%	27.5%	7.5%	2.61
61109 – Rockford	64.5%	19.4%	9.7%	3.02
61114 – Rockford	40.3%	36.1%	9.7%	2.53
Rockton and South Beloit	48.6%	31.4%	14.3%	2.68
Roscoe	48.9%	29.8%	10.6%	2.73
Machesney Park	52.1%	35.4%	6.3%	2.55
Loves Park	47.2%	41.5%	7.5%	2.51

¹Percents based on total sample including no answer.

²Mean score from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. “Don’t know” responses omitted from mean score computations.

³White and black groups are non-Hispanic; other includes Hispanic, Asian, multi-racial, other.

⁴Areas with 24 or more respondents.

⁵Pecatonica (61063), Winnebago (61088) and Seward (61077).

Statistically significant mean score differences by age and gender, also geographic areas where differences exceed 0.5.

Table 4.7
 AGREEMENT LEVELS FOR USING BUSINESS FUNDS TO INCREASE TOURISM

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
All	90.1%	3.9%	2.8%	3.32
Gender				
Female	90.2%	3.2%	3.2%	3.36
Male	90.1%	5.0%	2.3%	3.27
Age (in years)				
18-39	88.8%	7.5%	2.5%	3.30
40-49	85.0%	5.3%	6.2%	3.28
50-64	91.4%	3.1%	3.1%	3.31
65+	91.8%	3.0%	0.9%	3.35
Race/Ethnicity ³				
White	90.7%	3.8%	2.8%	3.32
Black	88.5%	0.0%	11.5%	3.39
Other	87.9%	6.1%	3.9%	3.29
Education				
High school or less	87.1%	2.6%	4.5%	3.37
Some college, no degree	90.6%	4.4%	4.4%	3.32
Associate, technical degree	91.2%	5.9%	2.0%	3.30
Bachelor's degree	90.6%	4.3%	0.7%	3.27
Graduate, professional degree	92.8%	2.4%	1.6%	3.34
Length of Residence				
Less than 10 years	88.1%	6.8%	3.4%	3.34
10-19 years	91.7%	2.8%	4.2%	3.40
20 years or more	90.2%	3.8%	2.5%	3.31
Children < 18 at Home				
Yes	89.3%	6.3%	2.5%	3.29
No	90.4%	3.3%	2.9%	3.33

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
Geographic Area ⁴				
Far SW Winnebago County ⁵	79.3%	13.8%	3.4%	3.11
61101 – Rockford	84.2%	5.3%	2.6%	3.35
61102 – Rockford	92.3%	0.0%	0.0%	3.50
61103 – Rockford	87.8%	4.9%	4.9%	3.29
61104 – Rockford	83.3%	8.3%	4.2%	3.18
61107 – Rockford	90.3%	4.9%	2.9%	3.29
61108 – Rockford	93.8%	2.5%	3.8%	3.38
61109 – Rockford	88.7%	0.0%	6.5%	3.42
61114 – Rockford	88.9%	4.2%	1.4%	3.34
Rockton and South Beloit	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.37
Roscoe	95.7%	2.1%	2.1%	3.30
Machesney Park	93.8%	2.1%	0.0%	3.39
Loves Park	90.6%	7.5%	1.9%	3.13

¹Percents based on total sample including no answer.

²Mean score from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. “Don’t know” responses omitted from mean score computations.

³White and black groups are non-Hispanic; other includes Hispanic, Asian, multi-racial, other.

⁴Areas with 24 or more respondents.

⁵Pecatonica (61063), Winnebago (61088) and Seward (61077).

No statistically significant mean score differences by characteristic.

Table 4.8
 AGREEMENT LEVELS FOR USING USER TAX TO INCREASE TOURISM

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
All	71.9%	17.9%	5.4%	2.99
Gender				
Female	72.3%	15.6%	5.0%	3.04
Male	71.5%	21.2%	6.0%	2.93
Age (in years)				
18-39	68.8%	25.0%	6.3%	2.89
40-49	67.3%	20.4%	8.8%	2.86
50-64	71.6%	21.0%	4.7%	2.95
65+	76.0%	11.2%	4.3%	3.13
Race/Ethnicity ³				
White	72.2%	17.8%	5.7%	2.98
Black	80.8%	11.5%	0.0%	3.25
Other	75.8%	18.2%	6.1%	3.06
Education				
High school or less	67.1%	19.4%	7.1%	3.00
Some college, no degree	67.9%	19.5%	5.7%	2.96
Associate, technical degree	73.5%	17.6%	5.9%	2.98
Bachelor's degree	74.6%	19.6%	2.9%	2.97
Graduate, professional degree	78.4%	13.6%	5.6%	3.01
Length of Residence				
Less than 10 years	74.6%	15.3%	5.1%	3.09
10-19 years	56.9%	29.2%	11.1%	2.73
20 years or more	73.7%	16.8%	4.7%	3.01
Children < 18 at Home				
Yes	71.1%	21.4%	6.3%	2.93
No	72.3%	17.0%	5.2%	3.00

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
Geographic Area ⁴				
Far SW Winnebago County ⁵	65.5%	17.2%	6.9%	2.92
61101 – Rockford	73.7%	15.8%	0.0%	3.12
61102 – Rockford	84.6%	7.7%	3.8%	3.21
61103 – Rockford	68.3%	17.1%	9.8%	3.03
61104 – Rockford	70.8%	12.5%	8.3%	3.20
61107 – Rockford	76.7%	12.6%	5.8%	3.09
61108 – Rockford	70.0%	22.5%	5.0%	2.92
61109 – Rockford	71.0%	17.7%	8.1%	3.02
61114 – Rockford	86.1%	9.7%	2.8%	3.17
Rockton and South Beloit	68.6%	22.9%	5.7%	2.91
Roscoe	68.1%	21.3%	2.1%	2.83
Machesney Park	68.8%	22.9%	4.2%	2.82
Loves Park	58.5%	34.0%	5.7%	2.65

¹Percents based on total sample including no answer.

²Mean score from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. “Don’t know” responses omitted from mean score computations.

³White and black groups are non-Hispanic; other includes Hispanic, Asian, multi-racial, other.

⁴Areas with 24 or more respondents.

⁵Pecatonica (61063), Winnebago (61088) and Seward (61077).

Statistically significant mean score differences by age group.

Figure 4.1: "More money should be invested to bring more visitors to the Rockford area."

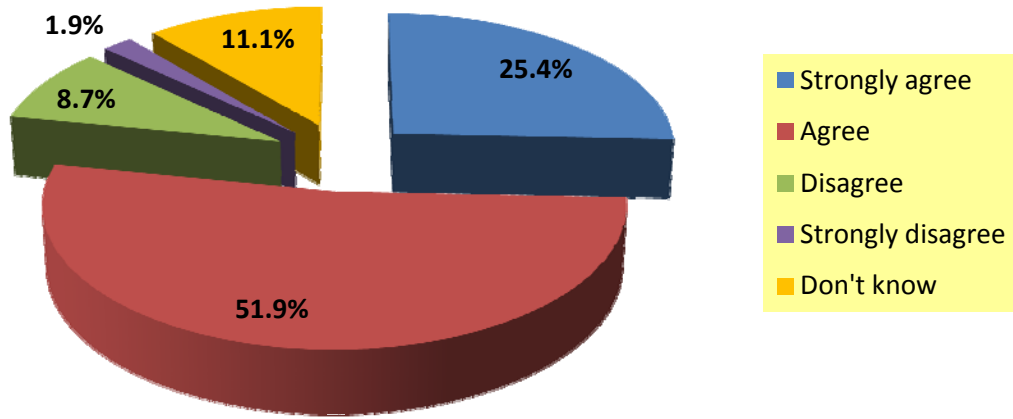
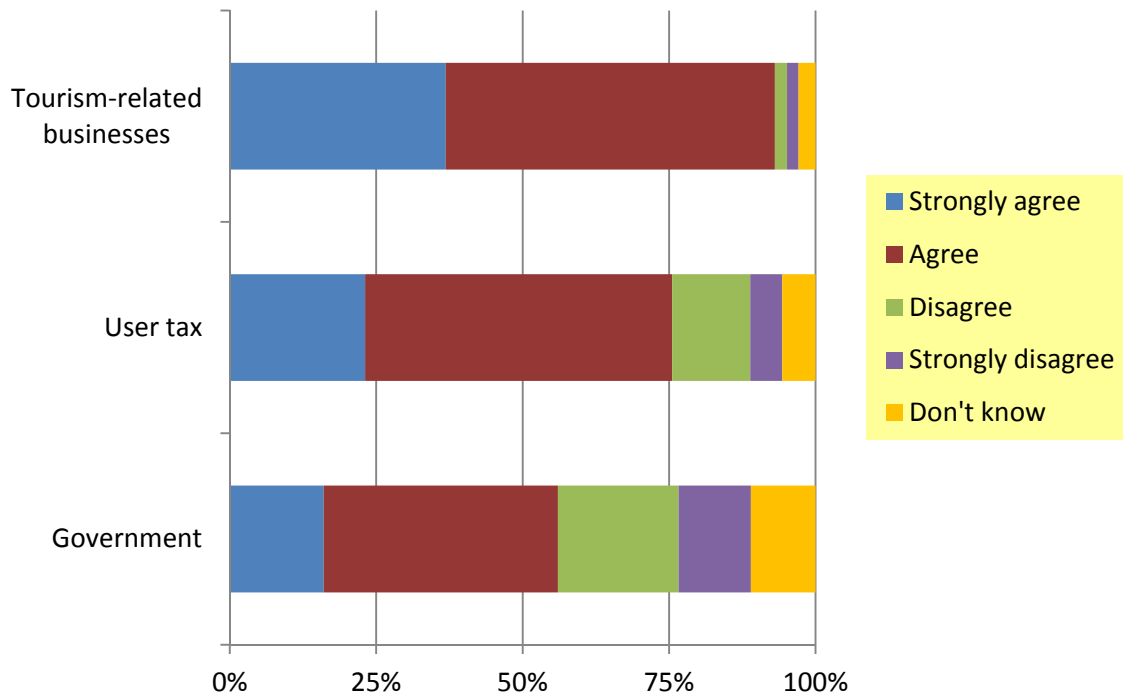


Figure 4.2: "Funds to increase tourism in Winnebago County should come from ..."



Chapter 5
SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC TOURISM PROJECTS

Six tourism projects were posed to survey respondents as to their importance to the community: build a convention center with hotel in downtown Rockford; add attractive gateways into the city of Rockford and other towns; maintain and improve facilities for amateur sports tournaments; help downtown Rockford revitalization; connect bike paths to rural and outlying areas of county; promote ecotourism such as nature/forest preserves, conservation, hiking and canoeing. After assessing the importance of the projects, survey respondents were asked which they would support for more funding.

RANKING OF TOURISM PROJECTS

Shown in order of support on Table 5.1, two projects emerge clearly on top as to their importance to the community: ecotourism and facilities for amateur sports tournaments.

Table 5.1
SUPPORT FOR SPECIFIC TOURISM PROJECTS

Rank	Initiative	Mean Score	Percent Respondents ¹			
			Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Promoting ecotourism	3.29	33.2%	58.3%	2.6%	1.6%
2	Facilities for amateur sports tournaments	3.27	32.2%	57.0%	2.8%	1.9%
3	Connecting bike paths	3.04	25.8%	44.0%	14.6%	3.6%
4	Adding attractive gateways	2.93	20.4%	45.9%	18.8%	4.1%
5	Downtown Rockford revitalization	2.92	26.1%	41.7%	16.2%	8.5%
6	Build convention center with hotel in downtown Rockford	2.42	14.3%	23.6%	29.9%	16.5%

¹Don't know not shown. See tables 5.9-5.14.

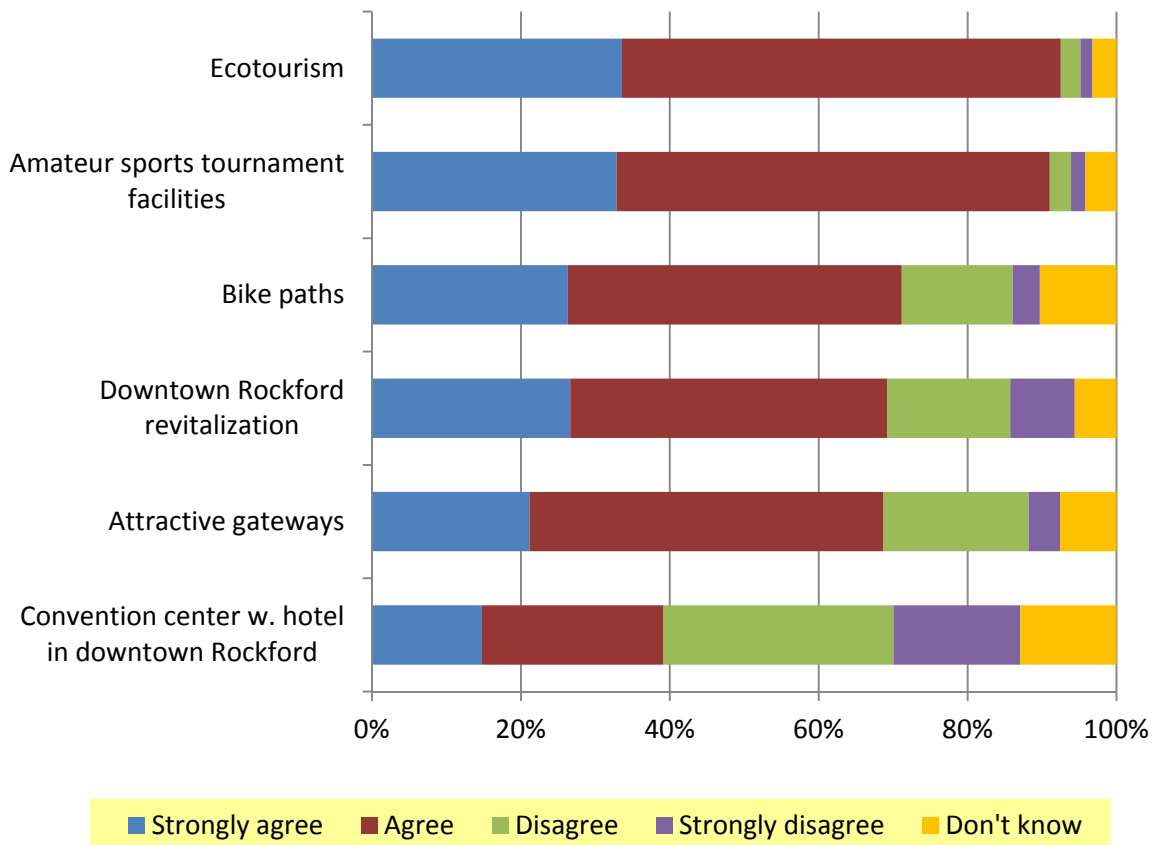
With practically identical levels of support, nine in ten respondents feel ecotourism and amateur sports tournaments are important. In both cases, one-third indicate strong agreement and an additional three in five agreement. Very low levels of disagreement (less than 5% for disagree plus strongly disagree) are expressed for these two projects. Their mean scores of 3.29 ecotourism and 3.27 amateur sports tournament facilities also reflect the favorable attitude survey respondents hold about these endeavors.

Placing third is connecting bike paths, rated favorably with almost seven in ten stating that they strong agree (25.8%) or agree (44.0%). The mean score of 3.04 indicates solid agreement with this project, though quite a bit lower than the top two.

Ranked as fourth and fifth are attractive gateways and downtown Rockford revitalization, two projects with similar support. In both cases, two in three respondents strongly agree or agree that these are important. For attractive gateways, one in five (20.4%) strongly agree and 45.9% agree, though 18.8% disagree and 4.1% strongly disagree. For downtown Rockford revitalization, one quarter (26.1%) strongly agree but 8.5% strongly disagree, more intense feelings about this project than the others.

With a mean score below 2.5 (midway between disagree and agree), building a convention center with hotel in downtown Rockford receives the lowest level of support of the six projects. Composite disagreement (46.4%) exceeds agreement (37.9%).

Figure 5.1: "The following projects are important to the community ..."



SUPPORT FOR EACH PROJECT

For discussion of the projects, respondents' agreement/disagreement is presented as mean scores ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree as well as composite agreement (strongly agree and agree combined) and disagreement (disagree and strongly disagree combined) proportions. Each section includes a summary table listing groups with the greatest and least support based on mean score. Details for responses including composite agreement/disagreement, mean scores for every demographic group and statements of statistical significance are shown on Tables 5.9 to 5.14 (numbered in order in which they appear in survey).

Promoting Ecotourism (Tables 5.2 and 5.14)

While survey respondents give their strongest endorsement to ecotourism as a strategy to pursue, differences are evident by gender, age group, length of residence and presence of children at home. Females post higher scores than males, young respondents (ages 18-39) over seniors, and households with children at home are statistically more supportive than their counterparts. Moreover, residents of 61102 or Roscoe favor ecotourism more than far southwest Winnebago County and Loves Park residents.

Table 5.2
TOP AND BOTTOM GROUPS FOR PROMOTING ECOTOURISM¹

Top Groups (Mean)	Bottom Groups (Mean)
1. 61102 (3.58)	1. Far SW Winnebago Co. (3.14)
2. Children at Home (3.42)	2. Age 65+ (3.19)
2. Ages 18-39 (3.42)	3. Bachelor's degree (3.20)
4. Roscoe (3.41)	4. Loves Park (3.22)
4. Other race/ethnic (3.41)	

¹Based on mean score where 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. Overall mean = 3.29.

When analyzing survey responses by composite agreement and disagreement, Rockton/South Beloit (97.1%) and 61102 (96.2%) show highest agreement while two groups display double-digit disagreement, Roscoe (12.8%) and far southwest Winnebago County (10.3%).

Facilities for Amateur Sports Tournaments (Tables 5.3 and 5.11)

Attitudes about maintaining and improving facilities for amateur sports tournaments exhibit the widest divergence based on geography, education, and race/ethnicity.

Most supportive of this project are residents of 61102, 61101, Rockton/South Beloit, Machesney Park and black respondents. Least supportive are residents of far southwest Winnebago County, Loves Park and 61103 along with four-year college degree holders and persons of other race/ethnicity.

Table 5.3
TOP AND BOTTOM GROUPS FOR MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING FACILITIES
FOR AMATEUR SPORTS TOURNAMENTS¹

Top Groups (Mean)	Bottom Groups (Mean)
1. 61102 (3.48)	1. Far SW Winnebago Co. (2.93)
2. 61101 (3.42)	2. Loves Park (3.06)
3. Rockton/S. Beloit (3.39)	3. Bachelor's degree (3.22)
4. Black (3.38)	4. 61103 (3.23)
5. Machesney Park (3.37)	4. Other race/ethnic (3.23)

¹Based on mean score where 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree.
Overall mean = 3.27.

Highest composite agreement for amateur sports tournament facilities comes from residents of 61101 (94.7%), Rockton/South Beloit (94.3%) and 61107 (94.2%), while far southwest Winnebago County (13.8%) and Loves Park (11.3%) express highest disagreement.

Connecting Bike Paths (Tables 5.4 and 5.13)

Connecting bike paths to the rural and outlying areas of the county is desired most by persons who have lived in the county for less than ten years, ages 18-39, and residents of Roscoe and Rockton/South Beloit. Least enthused about this project include seniors 65+ and residents of Loves Park, 61109 and 61104.

Table 5.4
TOP AND BOTTOM GROUPS FOR CONNECTING BIKE PATHS
TO RURAL AND OUTLYING AREAS OF COUNTY¹

Top Groups (Mean)	Bottom Groups (Mean)
1. Residence < 10 yrs. (3.33)	1. Age 65+ (2.78)
2. Age 18-39 (3.30)	2. Loves Park (2.82)
3. Roscoe (3.27)	2. 61109 (2.82)
4. Rockton/S. Beloit (3.24)	4. 61104 (2.86)

¹Based on mean score where 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. Overall mean = 3.04.

Composite agreement about bike paths indicate that Roscoe residents (85.1%), county residents of less than 10 years (84.7%), 18-39 year olds (82.5%) and those with children at home (82.4%) are most supportive, while disagreement accounts for one-quarter of respondents in 61109 (27.4%), 61104 (25.0%) and ages 65+ (24.9%).

Using a statistical technique called inter-item correlation, respondents' opinions about bike paths resemble responses about ecotourism more than any of the other four projects.

Adding Attractive Gateways (Tables 5.5 and 5.10)

Geographic area most affected the opinion about adding attractive gateways into Rockford and other towns. Residents living in 61104, 61102, and 61103 are most inclined to support this project, while Loves Park, far southwest Winnebago County, Roscoe and Machesney Park residents least likely. Blacks also favor the addition of attractive gateways.

Table 5.5
TOP AND BOTTOM GROUPS FOR
ADDING ATTRACTIVE GATEWAYS INTO ROCKFORD AND OTHER TOWNS¹

Top Groups (Mean)	Bottom Groups (Mean)
1. 61104 (3.24)	1. Loves Park (2.46)
1. 61102 (3.24)	2. Far SW Winnebago Co. (2.73)
3. Black (3.17)	2. Roscoe (2.73)
4. 61103 (3.11)	4. Machesney Park (2.76)

¹Based on mean score where 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. Overall mean = 2.93.

With at least three-quarters agreeing or strongly agreeing, 61102 (84.6%), 61104 (83.3%) and blacks (76.9%) display the highest composite agreement levels. Composite disagreement tops 30% among respondents in Loves Park (39.6%) and far southwest Winnebago County (31.0%). Length of residence in the county also matters with higher disagreement about the addition of attractive gateways by residents less than 10 years (32.2%) than 20+ year residents (20.8%). In no group, however, does composite disagreement surpass agreement.

Downtown Rockford Revitalization (Tables 5.6 and 5.12)

Helping to revitalize downtown Rockford finds greatest support among blacks, residents of 61103 and 61101, ages 18-39 and persons who have resided in the county for less than ten years. Expressing the least support are residents of Loves Park and 61114, males, associate/technical degree holders and seniors 65+.

Table 5.6
TOP AND BOTTOM GROUPS FOR HELPING
DOWNTOWN ROCKFORD REVITALIZATION¹

Top Groups (Mean)	Bottom Groups (Mean)
1. Black (3.46)	1. Loves Park (2.54)
2. 61103 (3.37)	2. 61114 (2.72)
3. Age 18-39 (3.31)	3. Male (2.80)
4. Residence < 10 yrs. (3.25)	3. Associate degree (2.80)
5. 61101 (3.23)	5. Age 65+ (2.83)

¹Based on mean score, where 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. Overall mean = 2.92.

Composite agreement levels are highest among blacks (92.3%) and residents of 61103 (90.2%), lowest among Loves Park (56.6%) and associate/technical degree holders (58.8%), both groups also with the highest disagreement at 37.7% and 30.4%, respectively. Statistical mean score differences occur based on gender, age, length of residence, presence of children at home and some geographical areas.

Building Convention Center with Hotel in Downtown Rockford (Tables 5.7 and 5.9)

Besides obtaining the lowest overall support, building a convention center with hotel in downtown Rockford also produces the widest differences among demographic groups. Showing a mean of about 3.0 which equates to agree on the four-point scale, blacks and residents of 61103 most favor this project. Also leaning towards a favorable assessment are 10-19 year residents and 61102. Conversely two groups post mean scores that represent disagree: Loves Park and Rockton/South Beloit.

Table 5.7
TOP AND BOTTOM GROUPS FOR
BUILDING CONVENTION CENTER WITH HOTEL IN DOWNTOWN ROCKFORD¹

Top Groups (Mean)	Bottom Groups (Mean)
1. Black (3.04)	1. Loves Park (2.00)
2. 61103 (2.94)	2. Rockton/S. Beloit (2.04)
3. Residence 10-19 yrs. (2.82)	3. Male (2.29)
4. 61102 (2.78)	4. Associate degree (2.30)

¹Based on mean score where 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. Overall mean = 2.42.

Five groups show wide gaps between composite agreement and disagreement. Agreement surpasses disagreement by more than 25 percentage points among blacks, 61103 and 61102 residents, while disagreement surpasses agreement to the same degree for residents of Loves Park, Rockton/South Beloit. Mean score differences are statistically significant based on gender, age, length of residence, presence of children at home and some geographical areas.

Using inter-item correlation, respondents' opinions about building a convention center are most similar to their responses about helping downtown Rockford revitalization.

FUNDING FOR PROJECTS

After assessment of importance, survey respondents indicated which of the six tourism projects they would support for more funding. They could select as many as they wished.

Not surprisingly, respondent support for additional funding closely resembles the projects' assessment of importance. Easily on top, with more than six in ten survey respondents supporting more funding, are promoting ecotourism (65.2%) and maintaining and improving facilities for amateur sports tournaments (62.7%). Half (49.4%) want more funding for connecting bike paths to the rural and outlying areas of Winnebago County. Fewer than half support funding for revitalizing downtown Rockford (44.6%) and adding attractive gateways into Rockford and other towns (42.7%). Only one-quarter (25.2%) believe that the construction of a convention center with hotel in downtown Rockford merits more funding.

Table 5.8
SUPPORT MORE FUNDING FOR PROJECTS

Rank	Initiative	Percent
1	Promoting ecotourism	65.2%
2	Facilities for amateur sports tournaments	62.7%
3	Connecting bike paths	49.4%
4	Revitalizing downtown Rockford	44.6%
5	Adding attractive gateways	42.7%
6	Building a convention center with hotel in downtown Rockford	25.2%

Table 5.9
 AGREEMENT LEVELS FOR
 BUILD CONVENTION CENTER WITH HOTEL IN DOWNTOWN ROCKFORD

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
All	37.9%	46.4%	12.5%	2.42
Gender				
Female	40.6%	40.6%	15.0%	2.55
Male	35.1%	52.6%	9.6%	2.29
Age (in years)				
18-39	52.5%	37.5%	10.0%	2.72
40-49	48.7%	39.8%	9.7%	2.52
50-64	36.2%	51.4%	10.5%	2.37
65+	30.0%	46.4%	17.2%	2.33
Race/Ethnicity ³				
White	36.5%	47.6%	12.8%	2.39
Black	61.5%	26.9%	7.7%	3.04
Other	51.5%	36.4%	9.1%	2.59
Education				
High school or less	35.5%	43.2%	16.1%	2.50
Some college, no degree	40.9%	44.0%	10.7%	2.45
Associate, technical degree	30.4%	54.9%	11.8%	2.30
Bachelor's degree	39.9%	45.7%	13.0%	2.42
Graduate, professional degree	41.6%	45.6%	11.2%	2.42
Length of Residence				
Less than 10 years	45.8%	37.3%	15.3%	2.61
10-19 years	50.0%	33.3%	15.3%	2.82
20 years or more	35.7%	48.7%	12.0%	2.36
Children < 18 at Home				
Yes	52.2%	35.8%	10.1%	2.71
No	33.7%	49.3%	13.4%	2.34

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
Geographic Area ⁴				
Far SW Winnebago County ⁵	31.0%	51.7%	3.4%	2.33
61101 – Rockford	44.7%	36.8%	10.5%	2.71
61102 – Rockford	57.7%	30.8%	7.7%	2.78
61103 – Rockford	61.0%	24.4%	12.2%	2.94
61104 – Rockford	45.8%	45.8%	4.2%	2.45
61107 – Rockford	34.0%	48.5%	15.5%	2.41
61108 – Rockford	40.0%	46.3%	7.5%	2.38
61109 – Rockford	45.2%	38.7%	14.5%	2.60
61114 – Rockford	38.9%	48.6%	11.1%	2.33
Rockton and South Beloit	25.7%	54.3%	17.1%	2.04
Roscoe	31.9%	51.1%	17.0%	2.46
Machesney Park	35.4%	50.0%	12.5%	2.39
Loves Park	22.6%	54.7%	22.6%	2.00

¹Percents based on total sample including no answer.

²Mean score from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. “Don’t know” responses omitted from mean score computations.

³White and black groups are non-Hispanic; other includes Hispanic, Asian, multi-racial, other.

⁴Areas with 24 or more respondents.

⁵Pecatonica (61063), Winnebago (61088) and Seward (61077).

Statistically significant mean score differences by gender, age group, race/ethnicity, length of residence, and presence of children at home. Also geographic areas in which scores differ by more than 0.5.

Table 5.10
 AGREEMENT LEVELS FOR ADDING ATTRACTIVE GATEWAYS INTO ROCKFORD
 AND OTHER TOWNS

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
All	66.3%	22.9%	7.3%	2.93
Gender				
Female	64.9%	23.2%	6.3%	2.92
Male	67.9%	22.5%	8.6%	2.94
Age (in years)				
18-39	65.0%	31.3%	3.8%	2.95
40-49	65.5%	22.1%	8.0%	2.89
50-64	68.5%	24.9%	5.1%	2.92
65+	64.8%	18.0%	10.7%	2.95
Race/Ethnicity ³				
White	66.4%	22.6%	7.2%	2.93
Black	76.9%	11.5%	7.7%	3.17
Other	60.6%	27.3%	12.1%	2.90
Education				
High school or less	68.4%	17.4%	7.7%	2.99
Some college, no degree	71.7%	17.6%	6.9%	2.98
Associate, technical degree	63.7%	26.5%	7.8%	2.84
Bachelor's degree	63.8%	26.8%	7.2%	2.92
Graduate, professional degree	62.4%	28.8%	6.4%	2.89
Length of Residence				
Less than 10 years	64.4%	32.2%	1.7%	2.82
10-19 years	62.5%	30.6%	4.2%	2.90
20 years or more	67.0%	20.8%	8.3%	2.95
Children < 18 at Home				
Yes	67.3%	27.7%	3.1%	2.93
No	66.0%	21.4%	8.6%	2.93

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
Geographic Area⁴				
Far SW Winnebago County ⁵	44.8%	31.0%	3.4%	2.73
61101 – Rockford	71.1%	13.2%	7.9%	3.09
61102 – Rockford	84.6%	11.5%	3.8%	3.24
61103 – Rockford	73.2%	19.5%	2.4%	3.11
61104 – Rockford	83.3%	4.2%	8.3%	3.24
61107 – Rockford	65.0%	26.2%	7.8%	2.90
61108 – Rockford	68.8%	18.8%	7.5%	3.01
61109 – Rockford	69.4%	21.0%	9.7%	3.00
61114 – Rockford	68.1%	20.8%	8.3%	3.00
Rockton and South Beloit	68.6%	25.7%	2.9%	2.94
Roscoe	66.0%	29.8%	2.1%	2.73
Machesney Park	58.3%	27.1%	10.4%	2.76
Loves Park	50.9%	39.6%	9.4%	2.46

¹Percents based on total sample including no answer.

²Mean score from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. “Don’t know” responses omitted from mean score computations.

³White and black groups are non-Hispanic; other includes Hispanic, Asian, multi-racial, other.

⁴Areas with 24 or more respondents.

⁵Pecatonica (61063), Winnebago (61088) and Seward (61077).

<i>Mean score differences exceeding 0.5 for geographic areas are statistically significant.</i>

Table 5.11
 AGREEMENT LEVELS FOR MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING FACILITIES FOR
 AMATEUR SPORTS TOURNAMENTS

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
All	89.2%	4.7%	4.1%	3.27
Gender				
Female	88.7%	4.7%	3.4%	3.28
Male	89.7%	4.6%	5.0%	3.27
Age (in years)				
18-39	88.8%	6.3%	5.0%	3.33
40-49	87.6%	3.5%	6.2%	3.29
50-64	90.3%	5.4%	2.7%	3.24
65+	88.8%	3.9%	4.3%	3.29
Race/Ethnicity ³				
White	89.9%	4.3%	4.3%	3.29
Black	92.3%	0.0%	0.0%	3.38
Other	84.8%	6.1%	6.1%	3.23
Education				
High school or less	87.7%	3.9%	5.2%	3.25
Some college, no degree	88.7%	4.4%	5.0%	3.28
Associate, technical degree	88.2%	2.9%	6.9%	3.29
Bachelor's degree	92.0%	5.8%	0.7%	3.22
Graduate, professional degree	89.6%	5.6%	3.2%	3.35
Length of Residence				
Less than 10 years	83.1%	5.1%	8.5%	3.29
10-19 years	86.1%	4.2%	5.6%	3.26
20 years or more	90.2%	4.7%	3.4%	3.27
Children < 18 at Home				
Yes	89.3%	4.4%	4.4%	3.33
No	89.1%	4.8%	4.0%	3.26

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
Geographic Area ⁴				
Far SW Winnebago County ⁵	79.3%	13.8%	0.0%	2.93
61101 – Rockford	94.7%	0.0%	2.6%	3.42
61102 – Rockford	92.3%	3.8%	0.0%	3.48
61103 – Rockford	90.2%	7.3%	0.0%	3.23
61104 – Rockford	79.2%	0.0%	16.7%	3.32
61107 – Rockford	94.2%	2.9%	2.9%	3.33
61108 – Rockford	90.0%	6.3%	0.0%	3.32
61109 – Rockford	87.1%	4.8%	8.1%	3.25
61114 – Rockford	90.3%	4.2%	5.6%	3.25
Rockton and South Beloit	94.3%	0.0%	2.9%	3.39
Roscoe	85.1%	4.3%	6.4%	3.26
Machesney Park	91.7%	4.2%	4.2%	3.37
Loves Park	81.1%	11.3%	5.7%	3.06

¹Percents based on total sample including no answer.

²Mean score from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. “Don’t know” responses omitted from mean score computations.

³White and black groups are non-Hispanic; other includes Hispanic, Asian, multi-racial, other.

⁴Areas with 24 or more respondents.

⁵Pecatonica (61063), Winnebago (61088) and Seward (61077).

<i>Mean score differences exceeding 0.5 for geographic areas are statistically significant.</i>

Table 5.12
 AGREEMENT LEVELS FOR DOWNTOWN ROCKFORD REVITALIZATION

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
All	67.8%	24.6%	5.5%	2.92
Gender				
Female	71.5%	20.8%	5.0%	3.03
Male	63.2%	29.1%	6.3%	2.80
Age (in years)				
18-39	85.0%	12.5%	2.5%	3.31
40-49	69.9%	23.9%	5.3%	2.91
50-64	65.8%	28.8%	3.5%	2.89
65+	63.1%	24.5%	9.0%	2.83
Race/Ethnicity ³				
White	66.6%	25.5%	5.7%	2.90
Black	92.3%	7.7%	0.0%	3.46
Other	75.8%	18.2%	6.1%	3.00
Education				
High school or less	59.4%	28.4%	10.3%	2.85
Some college, no degree	71.1%	22.6%	2.5%	2.95
Associate, technical degree	58.8%	30.4%	9.8%	2.80
Bachelor's degree	72.5%	21.7%	3.6%	2.98
Graduate, professional degree	75.2%	21.6%	2.4%	2.99
Length of Residence				
Less than 10 years	84.7%	11.9%	1.7%	3.25
10-19 years	79.2%	15.3%	4.2%	3.15
20 years or more	64.5%	27.2%	6.2%	2.86
Children < 18 at Home				
Yes	79.2%	18.2%	1.9%	3.13
No	64.2%	26.6%	6.7%	2.86

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
Geographic Area ⁴				
Far SW Winnebago County ⁵	62.1%	31.0%	0.0%	2.87
61101 – Rockford	63.2%	15.8%	10.5%	3.23
61102 – Rockford	76.9%	23.1%	0.0%	3.08
61103 – Rockford	90.2%	9.8%	0.0%	3.37
61104 – Rockford	79.2%	16.7%	4.2%	3.09
61107 – Rockford	73.8%	20.4%	5.8%	3.02
61108 – Rockford	66.3%	22.5%	6.3%	2.94
61109 – Rockford	62.9%	25.8%	11.3%	2.87
61114 – Rockford	63.9%	31.9%	2.8%	2.72
Rockton and South Beloit	68.6%	25.7%	2.9%	2.88
Roscoe	66.0%	27.7%	6.4%	2.95
Machesney Park	64.6%	27.1%	4.2%	2.84
Loves Park	56.6%	37.7%	5.7%	2.54

¹Percents based on total sample including no answer.

²Mean score from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. “Don’t know” responses omitted from mean score computations.

³White and black groups are non-Hispanic; other includes Hispanic, Asian, multi-racial, other.

⁴Areas with 24 or more respondents.

⁵Pecatonica (61063), Winnebago (61088) and Seward (61077).

Statistically significant mean score differences by gender, age group, race/ethnicity, length of residence, and presence of children at home. Also geographic areas in which scores differ by more than 0.5.

Table 5.13
AGREEMENT LEVELS FOR CONNECTING BIKE PATHS

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
All	69.8%	18.2%	10.1%	3.04
Gender				
Female	71.2%	16.4%	9.5%	3.07
Male	68.2%	20.2%	10.9%	3.02
Age (in years)				
18-39	82.5%	12.5%	5.0%	3.30
40-49	81.4%	9.7%	6.2%	3.18
50-64	75.1%	17.1%	6.6%	3.12
65+	54.5%	24.9%	17.6%	2.78
Race/Ethnicity ³				
White	69.7%	17.7%	10.6%	3.05
Black	73.1%	15.4%	7.7%	3.22
Other	75.8%	21.2%	3.0%	2.94
Education				
High school or less	59.4%	21.9%	14.8%	2.95
Some college, no degree	74.2%	16.4%	8.2%	3.08
Associate, technical degree	70.6%	17.6%	9.8%	3.04
Bachelor's degree	71.0%	18.1%	9.4%	3.04
Graduate, professional degree	76.8%	15.2%	7.2%	3.13
Length of Residence				
Less than 10 years	84.7%	6.8%	8.5%	3.33
10-19 years	70.8%	13.9%	12.5%	3.15
20 years or more	68.3%	19.7%	10.0%	3.00
Children < 18 at Home				
Yes	82.4%	11.9%	4.4%	3.21
No	66.2%	19.9%	11.9%	2.99

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
Geographic Area ⁴				
Far SW Winnebago County ⁵	65.5%	24.1%	3.4%	3.08
61101 – Rockford	71.1%	10.5%	13.2%	3.19
61102 – Rockford	80.8%	15.4%	3.8%	3.16
61103 – Rockford	70.7%	17.1%	9.8%	3.08
61104 – Rockford	66.7%	25.0%	4.2%	2.86
61107 – Rockford	64.1%	17.5%	18.4%	3.08
61108 – Rockford	65.0%	20.0%	13.8%	3.00
61109 – Rockford	53.2%	27.4%	17.7%	2.82
61114 – Rockford	76.4%	18.1%	2.8%	3.06
Rockton and South Beloit	80.0%	14.3%	5.7%	3.24
Roscoe	85.1%	10.6%	4.3%	3.27
Machesney Park	75.0%	14.6%	6.3%	3.05
Loves Park	71.7%	20.8%	7.5%	2.82

¹Percents based on total sample including no answer.

²Mean score from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. “Don’t know” responses omitted from mean score computations.

³White and black groups are non-Hispanic; other includes Hispanic, Asian, multi-racial, other.

⁴Areas with 24 or more respondents.

⁵Pecatonica (61063), Winnebago (61088) and Seward (61077).

Statistically significant mean score differences by age group, length of residence, and presence of children at home. Also geographic areas in which scores differ by more than 0.5.

Table 5.14
AGREEMENT LEVELS FOR PROMOTING ECOTOURISM

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
All	91.5%	4.2%	3.2%	3.29
Gender				
Female	92.9%	3.7%	1.8%	3.33
Male	89.7%	5.0%	5.0%	3.23
Age (in years)				
18-39	91.3%	7.5%	1.3%	3.42
40-49	90.3%	3.5%	5.3%	3.36
50-64	92.2%	4.3%	2.7%	3.31
65+	91.4%	3.4%	3.4%	3.19
Race/Ethnicity ³				
White	92.1%	3.6%	3.4%	3.29
Black	88.5%	7.7%	0.0%	3.36
Other	93.9%	3.0%	3.0%	3.41
Education				
High school or less	89.0%	3.2%	5.2%	3.31
Some college, no degree	91.8%	3.8%	3.8%	3.27
Associate, technical degree	94.1%	2.9%	2.0%	3.32
Bachelor's degree	90.6%	5.8%	2.9%	3.20
Graduate, professional degree	92.8%	5.6%	1.6%	3.35
Length of Residence				
Less than 10 years	88.1%	3.4%	8.5%	3.39
10-19 years	91.7%	5.6%	2.8%	3.40
20 years or more	91.8%	4.2%	2.7%	3.26
Children < 18 at Home				
Yes	93.1%	3.8%	3.1%	3.42
No	91.0%	4.4%	3.3%	3.25

Group	Percent ¹			Mean Score ² (Scale 1-4)
	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	
Geographic Area ⁴				
Far SW Winnebago County ⁵	86.2%	10.3%	3.4%	3.14
61101 – Rockford	89.5%	5.3%	2.6%	3.25
61102 – Rockford	96.2%	3.8%	0.0%	3.58
61103 – Rockford	95.1%	2.4%	0.0%	3.40
61104 – Rockford	83.3%	8.3%	4.2%	3.23
61107 – Rockford	93.2%	4.9%	1.9%	3.25
61108 – Rockford	93.8%	2.5%	3.8%	3.34
61109 – Rockford	90.3%	6.5%	3.2%	3.23
61114 – Rockford	94.4%	5.6%	0.0%	3.24
Rockton and South Beloit	97.1%	0.0%	0.0%	3.29
Roscoe	87.2%	12.8%	0.0%	3.41
Machesney Park	87.5%	4.2%	4.2%	3.30
Loves Park	92.5%	3.8%	3.8%	3.22

¹Percents based on total sample including no answer.

²Mean score from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. “Don’t know” responses omitted from mean score computations.

³White and black groups are non-Hispanic; other includes Hispanic, Asian, multi-racial, other.

⁴Areas with 24 or more respondents.

⁵Pecatonica (61063), Winnebago (61088) and Seward (61077).

Statistically significant mean score differences by gender, age group, length of residence, and presence of children at home.

Chapter 6 OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

At the survey's end, respondents were asked to reply to two open-ended questions. Unlike questions with prescribed choices that enable a quantified look at significant issues, the open-ended questions ask survey respondents to express impressions, opinions and ideas in their own words. These comments give additional depth to topics covered in the survey. They offer valuable suggestions and anecdotes about personal experiences both here and in other locales.

The following sections summarize comments in terms of frequency. When a comment addressed several topics, each topic was tabulated separately. The reader is urged to read verbatim comments as presented in Appendix C to gain a fuller understanding of the scope and flavor of respondents' sentiments.

MAKING ROCKFORD AND WINNEBAGO COUNTY MORE WELCOMING

More than six in ten (62.4%) respondents made suggestions for ways to make Rockford and Winnebago County more welcoming to visitors. Receiving more than 80 mentions each are four areas: clean-up, appearance; amusements, activities, entertainment; lower crime, safety; and roads, transportation.

More than any other topic, survey respondents suggest that the city of Rockford and surrounding areas be cleaned up. A more attractive appearance would draw more tourists. Areas like parts of downtown Rockford, west Rockford, and gateway roads into the city look cluttered, unkempt and dirty, respondents stated. Described repeatedly as eyesores, some homes and buildings are dilapidated, unoccupied, or strewn with garbage. Litter and trash are unsightly. Trees and flowers beautify an area and should be abundant.

Additional activities would bring more visitors to the greater Rockford area say survey respondents. More events designed to appeal to families, children, adults and seniors are named as well as specific activities such as concerts, hiking, canoeing, skating, cross-country skiing, water rafting, dirt track, carnivals and sporting events like softball and soccer games. Amusement parks, playgrounds, and hosting more attractions and tournaments (fishing, golf) would encourage visitors to come to the region.

Numerous respondents say that safety plays a major role in efforts to increase local tourism. The sentiment of "less crime" is stated by 67 respondents as the foremost way to make Rockford and Winnebago County more welcoming. Several respondents remark on the city's high crime rate relative to other cities and several others point out the frequency of violent crime, factors that deter people from visiting. Many do not feel safe in downtown Rockford, especially walking there at night. Some suggest that more police be hired.

Table 6.1
COMMENTS ABOUT MAKING ROCKFORD AND
WINNEBAGO COUNTY MORE WELCOMING TO VISITORS

Rank	Topic	Number of Mentions
1	Clean-up, appearance	96
2	Amusements, activities, entertainment	92
3	Less crime, safer place, more police	91
4	Roads, ease of access, public transportation	85
5	Casino	51
6	Advertising, signage	39
7	Downtown, revitalization	35
8	Costs	27
9	Attitudes, image	26
10	More jobs and businesses	23
11	Rock River	21
12	Hotels, restaurants	18
13	Convention center	15
13	Park District, bike paths	15
15	Promote downtown events/shops	13
16	Improve schools	12
17	Lower taxes	10
18	Parking	9
19	Shops, outlet mall	8
20	Sidewalks	5
21	Not visitors' destination	4
---	Mixed	20

The fourth leading factor to enhance tourism involves transportation. Better roads are proposed by more than 50 respondents. While city streets need repair, particular attention should be paid to gateway roads into Rockford and those going into and out of the airport. Their poor condition creates a negative first impression. Two other dimensions of the transportation issue are the ease of access as well as traffic flows, both believed to be inadequate according to some survey respondents. Public transportation also affects the draw of visitors. Adding passenger train service between Rockford and Chicago and Wisconsin would boost tourism, some claim.

Placing fifth among ways to make the area more welcoming is the addition of a local casino. Most who specify a preferred location indicate that the casino should not be placed in downtown Rockford. While mentioned by 51 respondents, the frequency of the casino suggestion is notably lower than the top four topics.

Advertising and signage would help tourism efforts say 39 respondents. Advertisements could be general in nature as well as promoting one-time events and current attractions. Brochures, billboards, advertisements in Chicago magazines, television (“Discover Rockford” modeled after the Wisconsin version) and internet could all be used to convey better knowledge about the area. Signage should be upgraded, attractive, easy to read, and installed at frequently trafficked areas and gateway roads.

Downtown and related revitalization efforts were named by 35 respondents, most of whom strongly favor improving downtown Rockford.

The four next most commonly mentioned topics to boost tourism include costs, attitudes and image, more jobs and businesses, and the river. The factor of costs reinforces the importance of keeping the price of events and attractions affordable. Families are seeking worthwhile entertainment but will not participate if costs are too high. Comments about attitudes and image emphasize the need for local residents to feel positive about the area and convey those positive feelings to others. The preponderance of negative attitudes and publicity often puts Rockford in a bad light. Attracting businesses and adding jobs will stimulate tourism say 24 respondents, some of whom are dismayed by the loss of decent-paying local jobs.

The Rock River has untapped potential for events, shopping, entertainment and boating, according to 21 respondents. This natural asset could be enhanced, beautified and used as a pivotal waterfront attraction.

Receiving fewer than 20 mentions but worthy of discussion are the following means to make the region more welcoming to visitors: hotels, restaurants (specific suggestions for types and locations); promoting, preserving and maintaining the area’s parks and bike paths; adding a convention/visitors’ center located near the toll way or at the edge of Rockford; improving public schools and lower taxes.

ANYTHING ELSE

The final survey question gave respondents the opportunity to comment on other matters related to tourism in the Rockford region. In many cases, comments mirror suggestions and perceptions offered in the previous question. Numerous comments address activities/amusements/entertainment/shops which as a group is the most frequent category of mention. Many of these comments talk about cultivating the market for amateur sports, outdoor activities, and musical events. Downtown Rockford is the second most common category of mention with some viewing revitalization as a key development strategy, while others believing those efforts are wasted.

Table 6.2
COMMENTS ABOUT "ANYTHING ELSE"

Rank	Topic	Number of Mentions
1	Activities, amusements, entertainment	58
2	Downtown, revitalization	46
3	Advertising, signage	32
4	Roads, ease of access, public transportation, parking	26
5	Attitudes, publicity	23
5	Clean-up, appearance	23
7	Not a visitors' destination	15
7	Safety, lower crime	15
9	Casino	14
10	Convention center	12
10	Lower taxes	12
10	Park District	12
13	Hotels, restaurants	9
13	Lower costs	9
15	Business, jobs	8
16	Rock River	6
---	Mixed	42

Also in the top three topics about which respondents made comments is advertising/signage. Most urge more promotion of existing attractions. Touted are area's parks, gardens, golf courses, Klehm Arboretum, Nicholas Conservatory, Midway Village and Tinker Cottage, all of which could attract more visitors given their caliber and value. Advertising efforts should be directed toward Chicago, Wisconsin as well as local residents. Billboards, television and magazine advertisements are the primary vehicles mentioned for promotional efforts.

Similar to the previous section, local roads are not believed to be in good condition and this hurts tourism. Downtown traffic patterns are confusing to first time visitors. Rail service would benefit the area and the airport is appreciated.

Comments about appearance and clean up focus on specific areas of Rockford (west Rockford, Blackhawk Island, Ace of Diamonds, unused buildings along the river, downtown) as well as overall needs such as litter, sidewalk repair and the need to curtail expansion of the dump.

Despite the favorable aspects of living in the Rockford region, too many local attitudes are negative, some respondents say. That coupled with the high crime rate has given Rockford a poor reputation. More emphasis should be devoted to accentuating the positive. Numerous respondents believe Rockford and environs have much to be proud of. Some propose that more local involvement would build greater community pride.

Safety/crime, as mentioned by 15 respondents, addresses the importance of reducing crime in Rockford. The perception of violence and knowledge of the high crime rate make people uncomfortable. People do not want to visit places where they do not feel safe.

On equal footing with crime/safety in terms of frequency of comment is the perception that Rockford is not a visitors' destination. Rockford does not have enough attractions to attract a significant number of people to spend a vacation or extended weekend in the region. The parks, Conservatory and Coronado are draws but not enough for a sustained visit. Sporting events offer the greatest promise according to one commentator.

Of the 14 comments about a possible casino in the area, 11 favor such a development, while three are opposed. A dozen respondents comment about a convention center and related tourism efforts, most supportive but not all. Six express appreciation for RACVB. Rockford parks are mentioned by 12 respondents, eight of whom praise them highly and feel that the parks and Rockford Park District sponsored activities are one of the best features of the local area. Also mentioned by 12 respondents, taxes are felt to be too high.

Four other topics mentioned by fewer than ten respondents are hotels/restaurants, lower costs (of events, attractions), business/jobs and Rock River.

Appendix A

COVER LETTER AND SURVEY INSTRUMENT

March 2012

Dear Rockford area resident,

The Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) wants to know what YOU think about bringing more visitors to the Rockford area. We have talked to businesses, but need your opinion because our activities affect you too.

Why is it important that YOU complete this survey?

- RACVB seeks community guidance as we pursue major tourism-related projects to draw more leisure visitors and conferences/tournaments to the Rockford region.
- Your home is among the one in twenty Winnebago County households to receive this survey. We cannot ask everyone, so 5,000 households have been randomly selected to represent the entire county. That means YOUR REPLY stands for 20 homes.

Health Systems Research (HSR) of the University of Illinois at Rockford is helping us with this survey. Your completed survey should be sent to them by **April 30, 2012** in the enclosed postage-paid envelope. HSR will collect the surveys and prepare a report of findings. We will use these findings to decide how to move forward.

You are not asked for your name on this survey. This survey is anonymous so none of your responses or comments can be tied to you. Those who answer this survey must be 18 years or older. If you have any questions, please contact HSR at 1.815.395.5639 or toll-free 1.800.854.4461.

Because we know your time is valuable, please know how much we appreciate your efforts to fill out and return the survey. As a token of our thanks, we are enclosing coupons for Rockford Park District activities.

THANK YOU.

Linda Heckert
Chair, RACVB Board of Directors

John Groh
President/CEO, RACVB

ROCKFORD AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

SURVEY OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY RESIDENTS

AWARENESS

1. Before receiving this survey, did you know that an organization named Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) exists?

- (1) Yes (2) Not sure (3) No (Go to Q. 10)

2-9. I have encountered RACVB in the following ways: Check all that apply

- | | |
|--|---|
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Advertisement in magazine | 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Website, Facebook |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Amateur sports tournaments | 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Worked with RACVB on meeting, reunion, tournament, etc. |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Calendar of events | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Other - what? _____ |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Efforts to bring casino here | |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Local media | |

ROLE AND DEVELOPMENT

10. How important are visitors and tourism to Rockford's regional economy? Check one

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> (1) Very important | <input type="checkbox"/> (3) Not important |
| <input type="checkbox"/> (2) Important | <input type="checkbox"/> (4) Don't know |

11. How do you think visitors affect the local economy? Check one

- (1) No effect
 (2) Some positive effect by bringing in limited visitor spending
 (3) Strong enough positive effect to improve local economy
 (4) Negative effect - why? _____

SUPPORT

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree. Check one response per statement

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
12. Drawing visitors to the Rockford region improves the local economy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. More money should be invested to bring more visitors to the Rockford area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

ROCKFORD AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

SURVEY OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY RESIDENTS

Funds to increase tourism in Winnebago County should come from one or more of the following:

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
14. Government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Businesses related to tourism (hotels, restaurants)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. User tax (paid when visitors buy food and beverages, stay in hotels)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following projects are important to the community:

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
17. Build a convention center with hotel in downtown Rockford	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Add attractive gateways into the city of Rockford and other towns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Maintain and improve facilities for amateur sports tournaments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Help downtown Rockford revitalization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Connect existing bike paths to rural and outlying areas of county	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Promote ecotourism such as nature/forest preserves, conservation, hiking, canoeing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I would support more funding for: Check all that apply

- 23. Building a convention center with hotel in downtown Rockford
- 24. Adding attractive gateways into Rockford and surrounding towns
- 25. Maintaining and improving facilities for amateur sports tournaments
- 26. Revitalizing downtown Rockford
- 27. Connecting bike paths to other areas of county
- 28. Promoting ecotourism such as nature/forest preserves, conservation, hiking, canoeing

ROCKFORD AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

SURVEY OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY RESIDENTS

ABOUT YOU

29. Your zip code _____
30. Your age group (1) 18-29 (4) 50-64
 (2) 30-39 (5) 65 and older
 (3) 40-49
31. Your gender (1) Male (2) Female
32. Your race/ethnicity (1) White, non-Hispanic (4) Asian
 (2) Black, non-Hispanic (5) Multi-racial
 (3) Hispanic (6) Other
33. What is the highest (1) Less than high school (4) Associate's or technical degree
 grade in school you (2) High school diploma (5) Bachelor's degree
 completed? (3) Some college, no degree (6) Graduate/professional degree
34. Length of residence in (1) Less than one year (4) 10-19 years
 Winnebago County (2) 1-4 years (5) 20 years or more
 (3) 5-9 years
35. Does your household (1) Yes (2) No
 include children under
 age 18 living at home?

YOUR COMMENTS

36. What would make Rockford and Winnebago County more welcoming to visitors?
37. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about tourism in the Rockford area?

THANK YOU

Appendix B

SURVEY FREQUENCIES

ROCKFORD AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
SURVEY OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY RESIDENTS

Survey Frequencies

1. Before receiving this survey, did you know that an organization named Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) exists?

Response	Number	Percent
Yes	576	84.0%
Not sure	38	5.5%
No	71	10.3%
No answer	1	0.1%
Total	686	100.0%

- 2-9. I have encountered RACVB in the following ways: *Check all that apply*

Response	Number	Percent
Advertisement in magazine	231	33.7%
Amateur sports tournaments	133	19.4%
Calendar of events	201	29.3%
Efforts to bring casino here	221	32.2%
Local media	489	71.3%
Website, Facebook	34	5.0%
Worked with RACVB on meeting, reunion, tournament, etc.	18	2.6%
Other – what? <i>(See Comments in Appendix C.)</i>	36	5.2%

10. How important are visitors and tourism to Rockford’s regional economy? *Check one*

Response	Number	Percent
Very important	418	60.9%
Important	229	33.4%
Not important	16	2.3%
Don’t know	22	3.2%
No answer	1	0.1%
Total	686	100.0%

11. How do you think visitors affect the local economy? *Check one*

Response	Number	Percent
No effect	4	0.6%
Some positive effect by bringing in limited visitor spending	241	35.1%
Strong enough positive effect to improve local economy	434	63.3%
Negative effect – why? <i>(See comments in Appendix C.)</i>	2	0.3%
No answer	5	0.7%
Total	686	100.0%

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree. *Check one response per statement*

12. Drawing visitors to the Rockford region improves the local economy

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	379	55.2%
Agree	283	41.3%
Disagree	11	1.6%
Strongly disagree	1	0.1%
Don't know	11	1.6%
No answer	1	0.1%
Total	686	100.0%

13. More money should be invested to bring more visitors to the Rockford area

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	174	25.4%
Agree	356	51.9%
Disagree	60	8.7%
Strongly disagree	13	1.9%
Don't know	76	11.1%
No answer	7	1.0%
Total	686	100.0%

Funds to increase tourism in Winnebago County should come from one or more of the following:

14. Government

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	99	14.4%
Agree	246	35.9%
Disagree	127	18.5%
Strongly disagree	76	11.1%
Don't know	68	9.9%
No answer	70	10.2%
Total	686	100.0%

15. Businesses related to tourism (hotels, restaurants)

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	245	35.7%
Agree	373	54.4%
Disagree	14	2.0%
Strongly disagree	13	1.9%
Don't know	19	2.8%
No answer	22	3.2%
Total	686	100.0%

16. User tax (paid when visitors buy food and beverages, stay in hotels)

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	151	22.0%
Agree	342	49.9%
Disagree	87	12.7%
Strongly disagree	36	5.2%
Don't know	37	5.4%
No answer	33	4.8%
Total	686	100.0%

The following projects are important to the community:

17. Build a convention center with hotel in downtown Rockford

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	98	14.3%
Agree	162	23.6%
Disagree	205	29.9%
Strongly disagree	113	16.5%
Don't know	86	12.5%
No answer	22	3.2%
Total	686	100.0%

18. Add attractive gateways into the city of Rockford and other towns

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	140	20.4%
Agree	315	45.9%
Disagree	129	18.8%
Strongly disagree	28	4.1%
Don't know	50	7.3%
No answer	24	3.5%
Total	686	100.0%

19. Maintain and improve facilities for amateur sports tournaments

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	221	32.2%
Agree	391	57.0%
Disagree	19	2.8%
Strongly disagree	13	1.9%
Don't know	28	4.1%
No answer	14	2.0%
Total	686	100.0%

20. Help downtown Rockford revitalization

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	179	26.1%
Agree	286	41.7%
Disagree	111	16.2%
Strongly disagree	58	8.5%
Don't know	38	5.5%
No answer	14	2.0%
Total	686	100.0%

21. Connect existing bike paths to rural and outlying areas of county

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	177	25.8%
Agree	302	44.0%
Disagree	100	14.6%
Strongly disagree	25	3.6%
Don't know	69	10.1%
No answer	13	1.9%
Total	696	100.0%

22. Promote ecotourism such as nature/forest preserves, conservation, hiking, canoeing

Response	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	228	33.2%
Agree	400	58.3%
Disagree	18	2.6%
Strongly disagree	11	1.6%
Don't know	22	3.2%
No answer	7	1.0%
Total	686	100.0%

23-28. I would support more funding for: *Check all that apply*

Response	Number	Percent
Building a convention center with hotel in downtown Rockford	173	25.2%
Adding attractive gateways into Rockford and surrounding towns	293	42.7%
Maintaining and improving facilities for amateur sports tournaments	430	62.7%
Revitalizing downtown Rockford	306	44.6%
Connecting bike paths to other areas of county	339	49.4%
Promoting ecotourism such as nature/forest preserves, conservation, hiking, canoeing	447	65.2%

29. Your zip code

Response	Number	Percent
61016 – Cherry Valley	13	1.9%
61024 – Durand	4	0.6%
61063 – Pecatonica	14	2.0%
61072 – Rockton	20	2.9%
61073 – Roscoe	47	6.9%
61077 – Seward	2	0.3%
61079 – Shirland	1	0.1%
61080 – South Beloit	15	2.2%
61088 – Winnebago	13	1.9%
61101 – Rockford Northwest	38	5.5%
61102 – Rockford Southwest	26	3.8%
61103 – Rockford North End	41	6.0%
61104 – Rockford Midtown	24	3.5%
61107 – Rockford Northeast	103	15.0%
61108 – Rockford Southeast	80	11.7%
61109 – Rockford Bypass	62	9.0%
61111 – Loves Park	53	7.7%
61114 – Rockford Far Northeast	72	10.5%
61115 – Machesney Park	48	7.0%
No answer	10	1.5%
Total	686	100.0%

30. Your age group

Response	Number	Percent
18-29	22	3.2%
30-39	58	8.5%
40-49	113	16.5%
50-64	257	37.5%
65 and older	233	34.0%
No answer	3	0.4%
Total	686	100.0%

31. Your gender

Response	Number	Percent
Male	302	44.0%
Female	379	55.2%
No answer	5	0.7%
Total	686	100.0%

32. Your race/ethnicity

Response	Number	Percent
White, non-Hispanic	611	89.1%
Black, non-Hispanic	26	3.8%
Hispanic	8	1.2%
Asian	8	1.2%
Multi-racial	9	1.3%
Other	8	1.2%
No answer	16	2.3%
Total	686	100.0%

33. What is the highest grade in school you completed?

Response	Number	Percent
Less than high school	12	1.7%
High school diploma	143	20.8%
Some college, no degree	159	23.2%
Associate's or technical degree	102	14.9%
Bachelor's degree	138	20.1%
Graduate/professional degree	125	18.2%
No answer	7	1.0%
Total	686	100.0%

34. Length of residence in Winnebago County

Response	Number	Percent
Less than one year	1	0.1%
1-4 years	15	2.2%
5-9 years	43	6.3%
10-19 years	72	10.5%
20 years or more	552	80.5%
No answer	3	0.4%
Total	686	100.0%

35. Does your household include children under age 18 living at home?

Response	Number	Percent
Yes	159	23.2%
No	523	76.2%
No answer	4	0.6%
Total	686	100.0%

36. What would make Rockford and Winnebago County more welcoming to visitors?

	Number	Percent
Comments	428	62.4%

See comments in Appendix C.

37. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about tourism in the Rockford area?

	Number	Percent
Comments	265	38.6%

See comments in Appendix C.