

# Youth Survey results unveiled

A more accurate snapshot of how youth view Swift Current was unveiled on Tuesday when the results of a comprehensive Youth Survey were released.

The Action Swift Current's Youth Committee conducted a survey to explore youth issues in the community and how better to retain and attract younger residents to the city.

In the summer of 2002, Action Swift Current identified one of the top 10 projects to be "to Attract and Retain Youth in Swift Current." A committee was formed, which then distributed their own survey in the spring of 2003. Overall 334 Swift Current and surrounding area residents participated in the 2003 Action Swift Current Youth Survey.

The Youth Committee is very excited to report that the results have provided them with a demographic profile of the youth in the city, as well as a better understanding of the social and cultural activities these residents are or would like to be involved in.

The largest proportion of respondents (35 per cent) were 20 to 24 years of age; one quarter of respondents were less than 20 years of age; one-fifth were 25 to 29 years and nearly one-fifth were 30 years or older. Of the respondents who are planning to enroll in post-secondary education in the next 12 months, half are staying in Swift Current, one-third are planning to attend in Saskatoon, 17 per cent are planning to attend in Regina, and 10 per cent in other Saskatchewan communities, primarily Moose Jaw. One quarter are planning to attend post-secondary education in Alberta cities: Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton. Overall, a greater number of women (59 per cent) than men (43 per cent) plan to enroll in post-secondary education in the next 12 months.

Nearly one half of the respondents make less than \$10,000 in income per year. Of these, the majority are less than 20 years old (43 per cent). A larger proportion of young women (62 per cent) reported income levels less than \$10,000 relative to young men (32 per cent), and a larger proportion of young men (33 per cent) reported incomes over \$30,000 relative to young women (five per cent).

Approximately 19 per cent indicated that they are presently attending school (secondary education), 36 per cent are currently in post-secondary education, while the remaining 45 per cent are not participating in formal education at this time. Results indicated 38 per cent of respondents are not employed, followed closely by 43 per cent of respondents who are employed full time or self-employed and 19 per cent who are employed part-time.

Family is the most common reason as to why respondents are attracted to the city. Well over half of respondents indicated their family is the main reason they were attracted to Swift Current. One-third stated they are attracted due to an employment opportunity, while one-fifth indicated they are attracted to the affordable lifestyle.

Over one-quarter of respondents feel that Swift Current and its amenities are youth-friendly; however, approximately half of the respondents feel that the city and its amenities are only somewhat youth-friendly. The vast majority of respondents (93 per cent) feel that the youth should become actively involved in the growth and development of the city of Swift Current.

In the arts, cultural and social activities, participation levels are closely related to the awareness levels of the particular activity. As such, the top five activities respondents participated most often in consisted of: Frontier Days, dining out, video rental, mall shopping and the cinema. Although awareness of sports and

recreational activities is higher, respondents did not report participating in these activities as often as arts, cultural and social activities. The activities respondents participate most often in included: golfing, hockey, working out, pool/billiards, and slo-pitch. Once again participation levels closely mirroring the activities respondents are most aware of.

In response to the survey results, the Youth Committee has identified various future goals and projects including:

- partnering with local service clubs and volunteer organizations to recruit younger members;
- working with local city organizations to attract new and encourage current businesses to be youth-friendly or cater directly to the preferences of the youth;
- helping to provide and promote affordable activities and events for young people;
- as well as to help raise awareness of the support currently available for finding training and employment.

Other projects are also in the works, including:

- recognizing and encouraging the contributions of young leaders in our community;
- advertising local events pertaining to young on an event poster-board;
- flyers distributed highlighting interesting points that came about from the survey;
- as well as other campaigns or related projects to retain and attract young people and their families to Swift Current.

For additional information and to see the results of the youth survey in its entirety you can visit the website:

[www.actionswiftcurrent.com](http://www.actionswiftcurrent.com).

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