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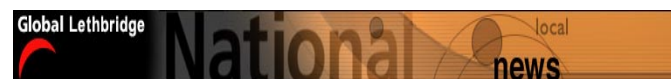
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Fall 2005 Lethbridge Public Opinion Study for Global News Lethbridge




Alberta Surplus Report

October 18, 2005

Methodology





-  **Population** The city of Lethbridge has a total population of 77,202 residents (2005 municipal census) approximately 79% of which are 18 years of age or older (61,250 est.). A total of 37,546 residents are male (48.6%) while 39,656 are female (51.4%). South Lethbridge is home to 27,894 residents (36.1%) while the rapidly expanding west side is now home to 26,407 residents (34.2%). There are 22,911 north Lethbridge residents (29.7%).
-  **Sample** Data were collected by Lethbridge Community College and Athabasca University students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods at Lethbridge Community College in the fall of 2005. Students interviewed 584 adult residents of the city of Lethbridge on October 1st and 2nd 2005 by telephone using the Western Wats Lethbridge call center facility. Telephone numbers were selected using random predictive dialing from a sample drawn from the Telus Superpages. We sincerely thank Western Wats for their hospitality.
-  **Representativeness** Analysis of the demographic data indicates that, within acceptable limits, the sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the adult population within the city of Lethbridge. The sample has been statistically weighted where necessary to even better reflect the demographic distribution of the population (gender and area of the city).
-  **Confidence** The weighted sample yields a margin of error of $\pm 4\%$, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data.
-  **Sponsorship** These data are part of a larger study of the opinions and attitudes of Lethbridge residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab at LCC. This particular set of questions was sponsored by Global News Lethbridge. We thank Global News for their support of our research endeavors.

Opinions about what to do with the Alberta government's surplus

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What to do with provincial surplus Lethbridge residents are looking for even more “Alberta advantages” from their provincial government. The vast majority (90.1%) want the province to use its surpluses in support of this generation of Albertans as opposed to saving it for future uses (9.9%). The largest plurality of residents (45.8%) wants the government to return surplus revenue back to Albertans by way of tax cuts (28.5%) or through rebates (17.3%). Almost as many residents (44.3%) would prefer the province to spend more on government programs. Although residents are not unconcerned about saving for future generations, 31.1% chose saving as their second most preferred option; their clear first choices are focused on current uses.
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How to spend When considering how to spend on programs, the clear first choice for most Lethbridge residents is health care (55.2%) followed by education (30.1%), social assistance (7.4%) and infrastructure (7.3%). Education (44.0%) trumps health care (32.6%) for second choice and infrastructure (39.1%) edges out social assistance (32.4%) for third choice.
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How to cut taxes When asked to choose between four options of how the provincial government might reduce Albertans’ taxes, Lethbridge residents sided with a reduction in health care premiums (40.0%) as their first choice, followed by personal tax cuts (33.9%) and reduction in the gas tax provincial gasoline tax (23.4%). Corporate tax cuts were the first choice of only 2.7% of all residents. Personal tax cuts (34.0%) edged out gas tax cuts (30.6%) and reductions in the health care premiums (27.1%) as the most preferred second choice.


What to do with surplus	1 st choice	How to spend surplus	1 st choice	How to give money back	1 st choice
Spend	44.3	Health care	55.2	Reduce health premium	40.0
Cut taxes	28.5	Education	30.1	Personal tax cuts	33.9
Rebates	17.3	Social assistance	7.4	Reduce gas tax	23.4
Save	9.9	Infrastructure	7.3	Corporate tax cuts	2.7

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

-  **Demographic differences** Few differences exist between men and women's first choices except that women are slightly more likely to want rebates while men are slightly more likely to want savings.
-  **Demographic differences** Wealthy Lethbridge residents are most likely to prefer spending, while middle and lower income residents are more likely to prefer tax cuts and rebates.
-  **Demographic differences** Residents with higher levels of education tend to prefer spending while those with less formal education tend to lean toward tax cuts and rebates.
-  **Demographic differences** Middle aged residents tend to prefer spending while seniors and the youth are more likely to prefer tax cuts and rebates. Seniors are the most likely to prefer savings.

What to do with surplus	2 nd choice	How to spend surplus	2 nd choice	How to give money back	2 nd choice
Spend	21.0	Health care	32.6	Reduce health premium	27.1
Cut taxes	29.2	Education	44.0	Personal tax cuts	34.0
Rebates	18.8	Social assistance	13.2	Reduce gas tax	30.6
Save	31.1	Infrastructure	10.2	Corporate tax cuts	8.2

What to do with surplus	3 rd choice	How to spend surplus	3 rd choice	How to give money back	3 rd choice
Spend	17.5	Health care	9.2	Reduce health premium	23.7
Cut taxes	28.4	Education	19.3	Personal tax cuts	28.3
Rebates	24.0	Social assistance	32.4	Reduce gas tax	31.9
Save	30.0	Infrastructure	39.1	Corporate tax cuts	16.1

-  **“Prosperity rebate” program** Most Lethbridge residents (69.3%) support the provincial government's planned ‘prosperity rebate’ program (69.3%). Women (73.6%) are more supportive than are men (64.8%). North Lethbridge (73.3%), lower income (75.4%) and less educated residents are most supportive, as are seniors (70.5%) and the youth (76.4%).

Opinions about rebates	
Support	69.3
Oppose	30.7

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

What to do with surplus by demographic groups

	Male	Female	All Residents
Spend	44.1	44.6	44.3
Cut Taxes	27.9	29.3	28.5
Rebates	15.6	19.0	17.3
Save	12.6	7.5	9.9

	South	North	West
Spend	41.1	44.8	47.2
Cut Taxes	28.1	30.5	27.3
Rebates	17.3	19.6	15.6
Save	13.4	4.9	10.1

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Spend	34.7	44.6	59.8
Cut Taxes	29.7	33.6	15.0
Rebates	26.3	12.5	13.0
Save	9.1	9.6	13.0

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Spend	38.3	35.5	49.6	55.7
Cut Taxes	31.1	29.9	27.0	26.0
Rebates	18.2	24.7	14.7	10.0
Save	12.1	10.2	8.7	8.0

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Spend	39.9	49.6	47.3	37.8
Cut Taxes	25.3	33.9	28.0	30.1
Rebates	26.3	11.6	12.9	15.9
Save	8.1	5.0	11.3	15.9

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

How to spend surplus by demographic groups

	Male	Female	All Residents
Health care	55.4	54.8	55.2
Education	30.0	30.5	30.1
Social assistance	6.6	8.1	7.4
Infrastructure	8.1	6.7	7.3

	South	North	West
Health care	58.0	55.6	52.0
Education	24.5	29.4	36.7
Social assistance	9.3	9.5	3.6
Infrastructure	8.8	5.3	7.6

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Health care	53.4	56.8	50.0
Education	32.6	31.4	28.2
Social assistance	9.0	5.2	9.9
Infrastructure	4.5	6.5	12.7

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Health care	61.2	55.2	56.9	48.7
Education	22.2	34.3	31.6	31.8
Social assistance	6.7	7.2	5.1	9.9
Infrastructure	9.6	3.6	6.8	9.9

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Health care	54.7	43.4	59.1	64.0
Education	36.0	46.3	22.5	14.0
Social assistance	4.7	7.3	8.5	10.3
Infrastructure	4.7	3.3	10.2	11.6

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

How to cut taxes by demographic groups

	Male	Female	All Residents
Cut health premiums	43.0	37.3	40.0
Cut personal taxes	34.1	33.7	33.9
Reduce gas tax	19.9	26.6	23.4
Cut corporate taxes	2.9	2.3	2.7

	South	North	West
Cut health premiums	40.0	45.9	35.2
Cut personal taxes	31.7	27.2	41.9
Reduce gas tax	24.9	26.0	19.6
Cut corporate taxes	3.4	1.2	3.0

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Cut health premiums	40.7	41.4	41.7
Cut personal taxes	21.5	40.7	34.9
Reduce gas tax	34.8	17.2	17.4
Cut corporate taxes	2.8	0.9	6.5

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Cut health premiums	37.2	36.0	47.9	40.4
Cut personal taxes	28.7	34.9	34.2	37.3
Reduce gas tax	33.6	27.9	14.7	15.3
Cut corporate taxes	0.7	1.2	2.6	6.7

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Cut health premiums	35.4	37.7	47.1	37.1
Cut personal taxes	25.6	43.4	34.9	34.1
Reduce gas tax	36.9	16.4	15.0	25.0
Cut corporate taxes	2.3	1.6	3.2	4.5

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

Opinion about Alberta surplus “prosperity rebates” by demographic groups

	Male	Female	All Residents
Support	64.8	73.6	69.3
Oppose	35.2	26.4	30.7

	South	North	West
Support	68.4	73.3	66.5
Oppose	31.6	26.7	33.5

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Support	75.4	66.5	60.9
Oppose	24.6	33.5	39.1

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Support	77.9	74.0	65.0	58.9
Oppose	22.1	26.0	35.0	41.1

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Support	76.4	69.2	62.0	70.5
Oppose	23.6	30.8	38.0	29.5

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

Alberta surplus “prosperity rebates” by demographic groups (full)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Strongly support	25.1	29.8	27.4
Somewhat support	39.6	43.8	41.8
Somewhat oppose	20.1	15.4	17.7
Strongly oppose	15.2	11.0	13.0

	South	North	West
Strongly support	23.6	35.8	24.5
Somewhat support	45.2	37.6	42.0
Somewhat oppose	16.3	17.9	19.0
Strongly oppose	14.9	8.7	14.5

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Strongly support	43.5	17.7	22.7
Somewhat support	32.1	48.7	38.2
Somewhat oppose	16.8	19.8	17.3
Strongly oppose	7.6	13.8	21.8

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Strongly support	30.9	30.6	31.0	17.3
Somewhat support	46.8	43.9	33.6	41.3
Somewhat oppose	15.1	15.6	20.7	20.0
Strongly oppose	7.2	9.8	14.7	21.3

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Strongly support	38.8	24.2	21.4	21.8
Somewhat support	37.6	45.0	40.6	48.3
Somewhat oppose	14.0	24.2	18.8	14.9
Strongly oppose	9.6	6.7	19.3	14.9

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

Demographics

Gender (%)		Area of City (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
Male	48.3	South	36.0	Under \$30,000	34.8	H-School/less	23.8	18-29	30.5
Female	51.7	North	29.7	\$30-\$70,000	44.3	Some P-Sec.	29.9	30-44	20.9
		West	34.3	Over \$70,000	21.0	Col-Tech-Grad	20.3	45-64	33.2
						University Grad	26.1	65 or older	15.3

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

Questions

As you may be aware, the Alberta government is currently running a surplus. Please tell me which of the following you think should be the first priority of the Alberta government in deciding what to do with the Alberta surplus. Second priority? Third priority? Fourth?

- Spend the current surpluses on government programs (health, education, roads, social services...)
- Save the current surpluses in the Heritage Fund and other places for future uses
- Reduce Taxes
- Return surplus money to Albertans through a rebate payment

If the provincial government was to spend some or all of the current surplus, which of the following would you choose as the first priority, second priority, third priority, fourth priority...

- Health Care (including building hospitals, buying healthcare equipment...)
- Education (including building schools, hiring more teachers, post-secondary, colleges, universities and primary education...)
- Roads and other infrastructure (sewage, water treatment, community centers, libraries....)
- Social assistance, welfare and other social services (including senior services, the poor, the handicapped...)

If the provincial government was to use some or all of the current surplus to reduce taxes, which of the following would you choose as your first priority, second, third, fourth....

- Reduce personal income taxes
- Reduce corporate and business taxes
- Reduce the Alberta Health Care premiums
- Reduce provincial taxes on gasoline

The Alberta government recently announced that it will spend some of its surplus by giving money back to Albertans by sending a \$400 "prosperity rebate" cheque to every Albertan (every man, woman and child, excluding prisoners). Please tell me how much you support or oppose the "prosperity rebate" plan.