

2003 Lethbridge Public Opinion Study (Fall)

Economic Development

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for

The Industrial Association of Southern Alberta



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City of Lethbridge

Located in southwestern Alberta, the city of Lethbridge is home to 72,717 residents, 57,674 of which are 18 years of age or older.



The city is divided into six census areas, two each for its South, North and West geographic areas. It is divided north and south by Alberta highway 3, and east west by the Oldman River.

South Lethbridge's 27,941 residents represent 38.4 of the city's total population. West Lethbridge (22,429) and north Lethbridge (22,347) represent 30.8 and 30.7 respectively.

Methodology

This report is based on data collected by students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods and PSC150 – Local Government at Lethbridge Community College in the Fall of 2003. Students interviewed 769 adult residents by telephone over a two-week period from October 1 to 15, 2003 using numbers drawn randomly from the Lethbridge telephone directory.

Using this method, the sample yields a margin of error of ± 3.5 , 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data.

Analysis of the demographic data indicated that, within acceptable limits, the sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the voting age population within the city of Lethbridge.

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. The Industrial Association of Southern Alberta sponsored this analysis and we wish to express our thanks for their support of applied research at Lethbridge Community College.

What follows is a selection of our findings based on the questions below.

Faron Ellis, Ph.D.
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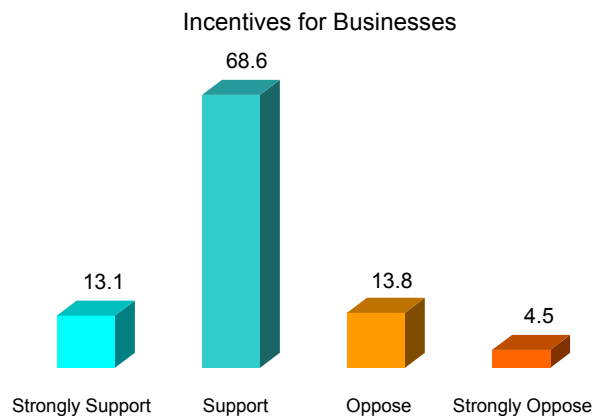
Questionnaire

- Q. The City of Lethbridge sometimes provide financial incentives to businesses such as low priced land or infrastructure upgrades to entice them to locate or expand operations in the city. Please tell me whether you strongly support, support, oppose or strongly oppose the City of Lethbridge providing businesses with financial incentives.
- Q. If the City of Lethbridge decides to provide financial incentives to businesses, do you think the emphasis should be on encouraging new businesses to locate in the city or to encourage existing businesses to expand in the city?
- Q. A mid-sized U.S. manufacture is about to expand its operations and is looking at locating in either Lethbridge, Kamloops BC or Boise Idaho. The manufacturer will employ 80 people after investing \$15 million to build the plant. Kamloops and Boise have each offered the company reduced land costs and other incentives totaling one-half million dollars. The company has picked Lethbridge as the best place to locate, but will only do so if the City of Lethbridge offers similar incentives. Under these conditions, do you strongly support, support, oppose or strongly oppose the City of Lethbridge offering financial incentives for this company to locate here.
- Q. Please tell me which of the following best describes what you think are the career prospects for Lethbridge youth.

Financial Incentives for Businesses

An overwhelming majority of Lethbridge residents support the City of Lethbridge providing businesses with incentives to locate or expand in Lethbridge. More than three quarters of all Lethbridge residents support business incentives (68.6%) and a further 13.1% strongly support incentives. Only 13.8% are opposed while 4.5% are strongly opposed.

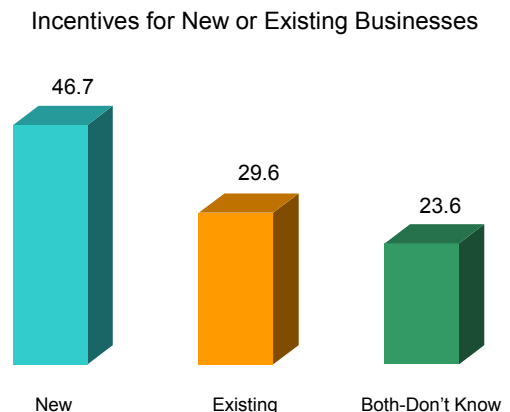
All demographic groups demonstrate strong support, including all income categories although men, university grads and upper income earners are slightly more intense in their strong support levels. Also, younger residents are most supportive and opposition increases slightly with age.



New vs. Existing Businesses

When asked to prioritize between incentives for new or existing businesses, a strong plurality of residents (46.7%) stated new businesses. Approximately one-in-three (29.6%) chose existing businesses while a further 23.6% stated that they couldn't choose between the two options or believe that both new and existing businesses should benefit equally from public incentives.

Men (51.8%) are more likely than women (42.1%) to choose new businesses while women (33.8%) prefer existing businesses. Seniors are most divided with 40% choosing new business and 35.5% existing businesses.

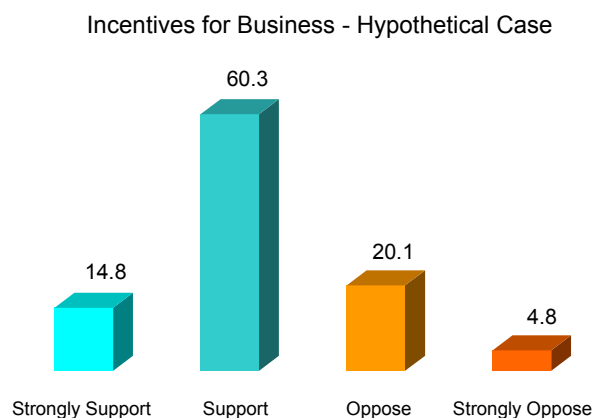


Incentives - Hypothetical Case

When asked about a specific hypothetical case, where the city of Lethbridge would be competing with two other cities for a new manufacturing business, support for financial incentives remains strong, but drops slightly from the more generic question about incentives asked earlier.

Strong support goes up slightly to 14.8%, but more limited support drops to 60.3%, still substantial, but lower than with the generic question.

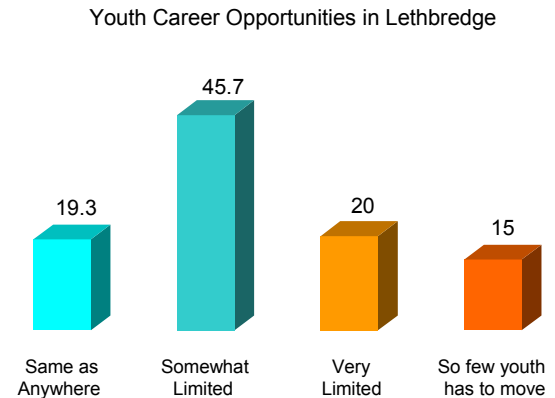
The overall patterns of support and opposition among the various demographic groups remains consistent between the two questions with university graduates, gen-xers and west side residents being most supportive. Lower income residents are least supportive.



Youth Career Opportunities

Almost one-in-five Lethbridge residents (19.3%) believe that the city's youth have as good career prospects in Lethbridge as they do pretty much anywhere else. Conversely, 15% believe career opportunities are so few that most youth will have to leave Lethbridge to find careers. The majority of residents either believed your career prospects are somewhat limited (45.7%) or very limited (20%).

Men are more optimistic than women, as are those with less education. Most importantly, the youth do not view their own career prospects as any more limited than do other Lethbridge residents. In fact, 21.2% of the youngest Lethbridge residents view their local career prospects as good as anywhere else. Only seniors are more optimistic (26.4%).



Snapshot of Opinion

Business Incentives (%)

	(%)
Support	81.7
Oppose	18.3

New vs. Existing Businesses (%)

	(%)
New	46.7
Existing	29.6
Don't Know – Both	23.6

Hypothetical Business Incentives (%)

	(%)
Support	75.1
Oppose	24.9

Youth Career Prospects (%)

	(%)
Same as anywhere	19.3
Somewhat limited	45.7
Very Limited	20.0
Youth have to leave	15.0

Tabular Data

Incentives to Businesses (%)

Q. The City of Lethbridge sometimes provide financial incentives to businesses such as low priced land or infrastructure upgrades to entice them to locate or expand operations in the city. Please tell me whether you strongly support, support, oppose or strongly oppose the City of Lethbridge providing businesses with financial incentives.

Incentives to Businesses by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Support	16.4	10.1	13.1
Support	64.9	72.0	68.6
Oppose	12.9	14.7	13.8
Strongly Oppose	5.7	3.3	4.5

Incentives to Businesses by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Strongly Support	16.3	11.0	11.2
Support	65.6	69.6	72.0
Oppose	12.2	13.8	14.5
Strongly Oppose	5.8	5.5	2.3

Incentives to Businesses by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Strongly Support	9.9	12.3	17.8
Support	72.2	69.7	64.5
Oppose	14.2	14.3	12.4
Strongly Oppose	3.8	3.7	5.3

Incentives to Businesses by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Strongly Support	8.1	12.5	11.6	20.3
Support	69.6	68.8	74.2	61.0
Oppose	16.8	15.9	9.5	13.4
Strongly Oppose	5.6	2.8	4.7	5.3

Incentives to Businesses by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Strongly Support	14.2	19.6	10.7	5.9
Support	74.3	65.6	67.4	65.7
Oppose	8.3	11.7	15.6	22.5
Strongly Oppose	3.2	3.1	6.3	5.9

Incentives - New vs. Existing Businesses (%)

Q. If the City of Lethbridge decides to provide financial incentives to businesses, do you think the emphasis should be on encouraging new businesses to locate in the city or to encourage existing businesses to expand in the city?

New vs. Existing by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
New	51.8	42.1	46.7
Existing	25.1	33.8	29.6
Don't Know – Both	23.1	24.1	23.6

New vs. Existing by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
New	41.9	50.5	50.2
Existing	31.3	26.8	29.9
Don't Know – Both	26.8	22.6	19.9

New vs. Existing by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
New	51.8	42.5	50.6
Existing	34.5	31.0	22.4
Don't Know – Both	13.6	26.4	27.1

New vs. Existing by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
New	41.2	49.5	51.3	45.4
Existing	33.5	29.2	26.9	28.1
Don't Know – Both	25.3	21.4	21.8	26.5

New vs. Existing by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
New	51.7	50.9	43.2	40.0
Existing	33.6	26.0	25.1	35.5
Don't Know – Both	14.7	23.1	31.7	24.5

Businesses Incentives - Hypothetical Case (%)

Q. A mid-sized U.S. manufacture is about to expand its operations and is looking at locating in either Lethbridge, Kamloops BC or Boise Idaho. The manufacturer will employ 80 people after investing \$15 million to build the plant. Kamloops and Boise have each offered the company reduced land costs and other incentives totaling one-half million dollars. The company has picked Lethbridge as the best place to locate, but will only do so if the City of Lethbridge offers similar incentives. Under these conditions, do you strongly support, support, oppose or strongly oppose the City of Lethbridge offering financial incentives for this company to locate here.

Hypothetical Incentives by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Strongly Support	20.4	9.5	14.8
Support	55.5	64.9	60.3
Oppose	18.6	21.6	20.1
Strongly Oppose	5.6	4.0	4.8

Hypothetical Incentives by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Strongly Support	14.8	11.4	18.3
Support	59.7	59.7	61.4
Oppose	18.7	22.7	19.8
Strongly Oppose	6.7	6.3	0.5

Hypothetical Incentives by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Strongly Support	14.8	14.2	17.1
Support	55.7	63.3	62.0
Oppose	23.6	17.9	17.7
Strongly Oppose	5.9	4.6	3.2

Hypothetical Incentives by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post- Secondary	Col-Tech- Trade Grad	University Grad
Strongly Support	11.9	9.6	17.4	20.7
Support	61.0	65.1	60.9	54.6
Oppose	21.4	22.9	17.4	19.5
Strongly Oppose	5.7	2.4	4.3	5.2

Hypothetical Incentives by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Strongly Support	13.0	19.7	17.0	7.2
Support	63.8	68.4	55.5	53.6
Oppose	18.8	11.8	22.5	27.8
Strongly Oppose	4.3	0.0	5.0	11.3

Youth Career Opportunities (%)

Q. Please tell me which of the following best describes what you think are the career prospects for Lethbridge youth.

Youth Career Opportunities by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
As good as anywhere	22.9	15.7	19.3
Somewhat limited	46.6	44.9	45.7
Very limited	18.5	21.5	20.0
Youth have to leave	12.1	17.8	15.0

Youth Career Opportunities by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
As good as anywhere	20.5	17.9	18.1
Somewhat limited	45.7	42.6	48.4
Very limited	18.9	21.6	20.9
Youth have to leave	14.9	17.9	12.6

Youth Career Opportunities by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
As good as anywhere	19.3	16.8	20.7
Somewhat limited	47.6	44.1	47.6
Very limited	17.9	22.7	18.9
Youth have to leave	15.1	16.4	12.8

Youth Career Opportunities by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
As good as anywhere	25.3	19.0	17.0	16.7
Somewhat limited	40.4	49.5	43.3	50.0
Very limited	15.7	20.7	25.3	17.2
Youth have to leave	18.7	10.9	14.4	16.1

Youth Career Opportunities by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
As good as anywhere	21.2	16.3	16.2	26.4
Somewhat limited	43.3	48.8	49.3	38.7
Very limited	20.3	21.9	18.3	18.9
Youth have to leave	15.2	13.1	16.2	16.0