

2004 Lethbridge Public Opinion Study (Winter)

# Economic Development Lethbridge

March 2004

Faron Ellis



**Citizen-Society Research Lab**

3000 College Drive South  
Lethbridge, Alberta T1K 1L6

[www.lethbridgecollege.ab.ca/departments/research/csrl](http://www.lethbridgecollege.ab.ca/departments/research/csrl)  
[faron.ellis@lethbridgecollege.ab.ca](mailto:faron.ellis@lethbridgecollege.ab.ca)

Telephone: (403) 320-3422  
Fax: (403) 317-3540

## 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% & 30.7% respectively.

## Methodology

This report is based on data collected by students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods at Lethbridge Community College in the winter of 2004. Students interviewed 488 adult residents by telephone over a three-week period from February 4 to 25, 2004 using numbers drawn randomly from the Lethbridge telephone directory.

Using this method, the sample yields a margin of error of  $\pm 4.4\%$ , 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 questions have been sponsored by Economic Development Lethbridge and are part of a larger study of the opinions and attitudes of Lethbridge residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab at LCC. We thank Economic Development Lethbridge for their support of our research efforts.

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

Faron Ellis, Ph.D.  
Citizen Society Research Lab

- Q. In your opinion, how would you evaluate current business conditions in Lethbridge?
- Q. What do you expect business conditions in Lethbridge to be like six months from now?
- Q. How would you evaluate the current employment conditions in Lethbridge?
- Q. What do you expect employment conditions in Lethbridge to be like six months from now?
- Q. How would you evaluate your own family's economic situation?
- Q. What do you expect your own family's economic situation to be like six months from now?

## Executive Summary (%)

### Current Business Conditions

A majority of Lethbridge residents believe business conditions in the city are good (50.6%). Only 14.9% view business conditions as poor while 35.4% view them as adequate.

#### Current Business Conditions (%)

Good	50.6
Adequate	35.4
Poor	14.0

### Business Conditions in Six Months

Residents see little change to business conditions over the next six months with 51.6% expecting them to remain good while 15.7% believe they will be poor.

#### Business Conditions in Six Months (%)

Good	51.6
Adequate	32.7
Poor	15.7

### Current Employment Conditions

Residents are also positive with respect to employment conditions with 46.4% believing employment conditions are good while 20.9% believe them to be poor.

#### Current Employment Conditions (%)

Good	46.4
Adequate	32.7
Poor	20.9

### Employment Conditions in Six Months

Residents believe employment conditions will worsen slightly over the next six months, but will still remain positive overall.

#### Employment Conditions in Six Months (%)

Good	43.4
Adequate	32.5
Poor	24.1

### Family's Economic Situation

Lethbridge residents are most positive when considering their own family's economic situation. Almost two-thirds (62.6%) state their current economic situation is good while only 5.8% state their economic situation is poor.

#### Family's Economic Situation (%)

Good	62.6
Adequate	31.6
Poor	5.8

### Family's Economic Situation in Six Months

Residents also believe their economic situation is likely to improve with 67.3% expecting it to be good in six months and only 4.4% expecting their economic situation to be poor.

#### Family's Economic Situation in Six Months (%)

Good	67.3
Adequate	28.3
Poor	4.4

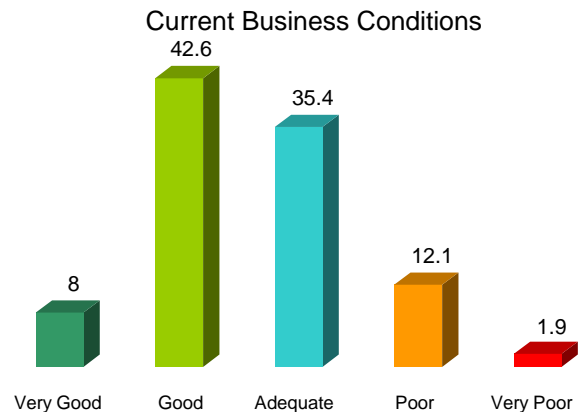
## Current Business Conditions

Overall, Lethbridge residents demonstrate considerable confidence in the local economy. Most believe business conditions in the city to be good (42.6%) or very good (8%). This compares to only 1.9% who think business conditions are very poor and a further 12.1% who believe they are poor. Slightly over one-third of residents (35.4%) believe business conditions are adequate.

Few differences between demographic groups are measured with women as positive as men, and all regions of the city reporting similarly positive views.

Interestingly, all income and education groups share this positive perspective although middle income residents (46.9%) and those with some post-secondary education (42.5%) are slightly less positive than are other groups.

The youth (58.5%) and seniors (55%) are slightly more positive than are those aged 30 to 44 (45.6%) and those aged 45 to 64 (47%).



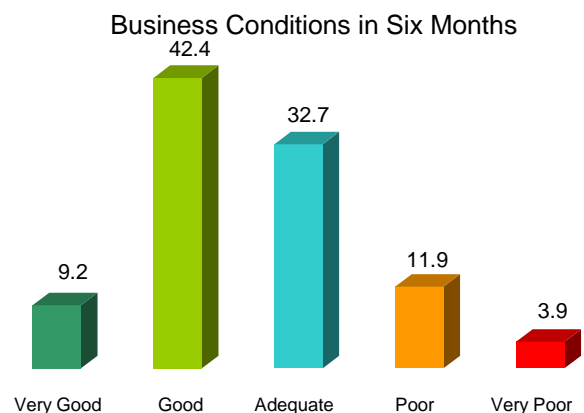
## Business Conditions Six Months From Now

Lethbridge residents' confidence in the local economy also extends into the short-term future with 9.2% of all residents stating they expect business conditions to be very good six months from now (9.2%) and a further 42.4% expecting business conditions to remain good. Again, few (3.9%) residents believe conditions are likely to be very poor in six months while a further 11.9% believe business conditions will be poor. Slightly less than one-third believe business conditions will be adequate in six months.

Again, few gender, education or regional differences are measured.

Middle income earners are again slightly less positive than are lower or upper income residents.

Youth (60.3%) and seniors (57.7%) are again more positive than gen-xers (43.5%) and boomers (46.5%).



## Current Employment Conditions

Lethbridge residents are slightly less positive about current employment conditions than they are about general business conditions, but are still more than twice as likely to believe current employment conditions are very good (11.75) or good (34.8%) than to believe they are poor (17.1%) or very poor (3.8%).

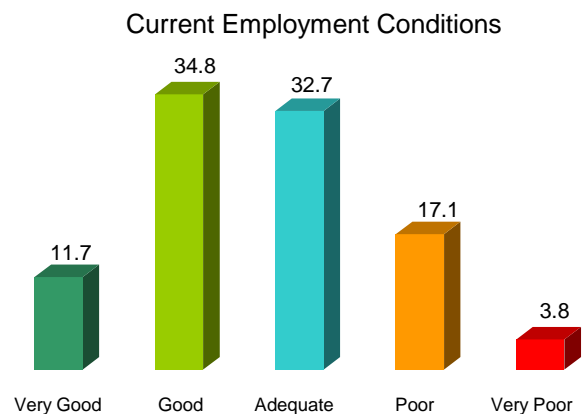
Men (51.4%) are more positive than are women (41.3%).

South Lethbridge residents (47.8%) and west Lethbridge residents (47%) are slightly more positive than are north Lethbridge residents (41.8%).

Levels of household income are an important determinant of opinion with lower income residents considerably less positive (31.1%) about the current employment situation than are middle income (53%) and upper income households (54.1%). In fact, lower income residents are more negative (39.6%) than they are positive (31.1%).

University graduates more positive about employment conditions (52.9%) than are all other education groups.

Boomers are less positive (42.3%) about employment conditions than are all other age groups.



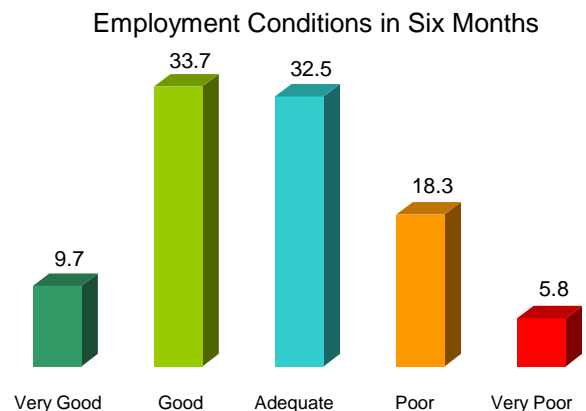
## Employment Conditions Six Months From Now

Similar patterns of opinion consensus and divergence emerge when respondents were asked to consider what they expect employment conditions to be like six months down the road.

No significant gender, education or regional differences are measured.

Income is important in that lower income residents (26.7%) are much less positive, and more negative (39.3%) than positive overall, than are middle income earners (45.6%) and upper income residents (55.5%).

Age is an interesting predictor of opinion about future employment prospects. Boomers (38.5%) and their kids (41.9%) are less positive than are gen-xers (49.1%) and seniors (52%).



## Family's Current Economic Situation

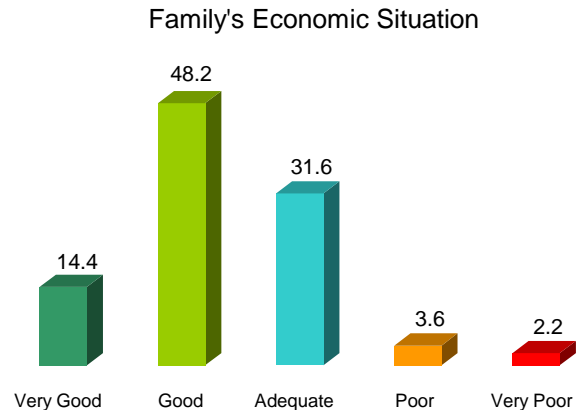
Lethbridge residents are most positive when considering their own family's economic situation, both now and when looking six months into the future.

Almost half of all residents (48.2%) state their family's current economic situation is good, and another 14.4% state it is very good. This compares to slightly less than one-third (31.6%) who state their economic situation is adequate. Only 3.6% state their situation is poor while 2.2% say their family's current economic situation is very poor.

Again, no significant gender differences are measures with women as positive as men.

Interestingly, north Lethbridge residents (68%) are more positive about their family's current economic situation than are south (60.6%) and west (60.6%) Lethbridge residents.

University grads are slightly more positive than are other education groups while seniors are slightly less positive than are other age groups.



## Family's Economic Situation Six Months From Now

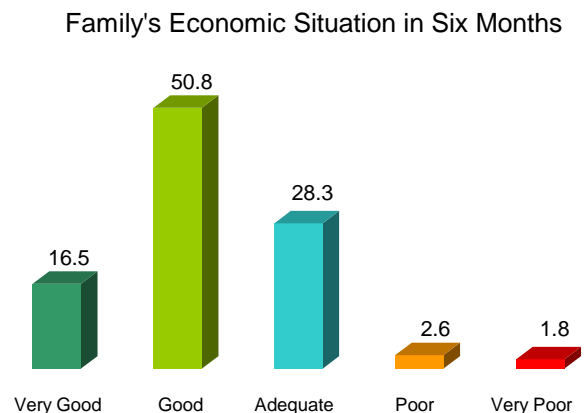
Lethbridge residents are even more optimistic about their family's economic prospects six months from now.

Fully two-thirds of all residents (67.3%) state that their family's economic situation will be positive in six months with 16.5% stating it will be very good and another 50.8% believing it will be good. Just over one-quarter of all residents believe their family's economic situation will be adequate while only 2.6% believe it will be poor and 1.8% believe their economic situation will be very poor.

No significant gender or regional differences are measured.

Optimism increases with household income in that 49.5% of lower income residents believe their family's economic situation will be positive six months from now, increasing to 63.8% amongst middle income earners and 83.2% among upper income residents.

University graduates are again the most positive while seniors are the most pessimistic, although still much more positive than negative.



## Tabular Data

### Current Business Conditions (%)

Q. In your opinion, how would you evaluate current business conditions in Lethbridge?

#### Current Business Conditions by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Very Good	8.4	7.4	8.0
Good	41.4	43.7	42.6
Adequate	35.2	35.8	35.4
Poor	13.2	10.9	12.1
Very Poor	1.8	2.2	1.9

#### Current Business Conditions by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Very Good	8.8	4.0	9.9
Good	40.1	44.6	42.9
Adequate	39.0	28.7	36.0
Poor	10.4	18.8	10.6
Very Poor	1.6	4.0	0.6

#### Current Business Conditions by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Very Good	3.6	7.6	11.7
Good	48.6	39.3	39.2
Adequate	31.5	32.4	40.0
Poor	10.8	19.3	9.2
Very Poor	5.4	1.4	0.0

#### Current Business Conditions by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Very Good	6.4	3.8	10.6	10.5
Good	43.6	38.7	43.9	43.0
Adequate	36.4	43.4	27.6	35.1
Poor	11.8	11.3	17.1	8.8
Very Poor	1.8	2.8	0.8	2.6

#### Current Business Conditions by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Very Good	5.7	7.9	10.9	8.3
Good	52.8	37.7	36.1	46.7
Adequate	31.7	37.7	36.1	33.3
Poor	7.3	16.7	13.6	10.0
Very Poor	2.4	0.0	3.4	1.7

## Business Conditions Six Months From Now (%)

Q. What do you expect business conditions in Lethbridge to be like six months from now?

Business Conditions in Six Months by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Very Good	8.2	10.0	9.2
Good	41.4	43.4	42.4
Adequate	34.5	30.8	32.7
Poor	12.3	11.8	11.9
Very Poor	3.6	4.1	3.9

Business Conditions in Six Months by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Very Good	9.7	8.2	9.6
Good	42.0	42.3	41.7
Adequate	33.5	28.9	35.9
Poor	11.4	12.4	11.5
Very Poor	3.4	8.2	1.3

Business Conditions in Six Months by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Very Good	5.7	7.8	10.3
Good	47.2	39.0	41.0
Adequate	30.2	32.6	36.8
Poor	9.4	17.0	10.3
Very Poor	7.5	3.5	1.7

Business Conditions in Six Months by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Very Good	10.4	5.0	11.7	9.8
Good	41.5	44.0	40.0	44.6
Adequate	34.0	38.0	30.0	28.6
Poor	8.5	9.0	15.0	14.3
Very Poor	5.7	4.0	3.3	2.7

Business Conditions in Six Months by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Very Good	6.9	10.0	11.1	10.2
Good	53.4	34.5	35.4	47.5
Adequate	29.3	41.8	29.9	32.2
Poor	7.8	12.7	16.7	6.8
Very Poor	2.6	0.9	6.9	3.4

## Current Employment Conditions (%)

Q. How would you evaluate the current employment conditions in Lethbridge?

### Current Employment Conditions by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Very Good	15.4	7.8	11.7
Good	36.0	33.5	34.8
Adequate	31.8	34.0	32.7
Poor	14.5	19.4	17.1
Very Poor	2.3	5.3	3.8

### Current Employment Conditions by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Very Good	12.9	5.8	13.9
Good	33.9	36.0	33.1
Adequate	32.7	30.2	33.8
Poor	16.4	24.4	15.2
Very Poor	4.1	3.5	4.0

### Current Employment Conditions by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Very Good	4.7	11.8	18.3
Good	26.4	41.2	35.8
Adequate	29.2	30.1	35.8
Poor	31.1	14.7	9.2
Very Poor	8.5	2.2	0.9

### Current Employment Conditions by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Very Good	11.5	4.0	12.2	18.3
Good	32.3	39.6	34.8	34.6
Adequate	30.2	34.7	30.4	33.7
Poor	20.8	19.8	18.3	9.6
Very Poor	5.2	2.0	4.3	3.8

### Current Employment Conditions by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Very Good	10.0	15.7	10.2	12.2
Good	38.3	32.4	32.1	38.8
Adequate	28.3	28.7	37.2	34.7
Poor	19.2	19.4	17.5	10.2
Very Poor	4.2	3.7	2.9	4.1

## Employment Conditions Six Months From Now (%)

Q. What do you expect employment conditions in Lethbridge to be like six months from now?

### Employment Conditions in Six Months by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Very Good	11.3	7.7	9.7
Good	35.4	31.9	33.7
Adequate	32.5	32.4	32.5
Poor	16.0	20.8	18.3
Very Poor	4.7	7.2	5.8

### Employment Conditions in Six Months by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Very Good	11.9	3.4	11.4
Good	33.3	38.6	31.5
Adequate	33.9	27.3	32.2
Poor	15.5	23.9	19.5
Very Poor	5.4	6.8	5.4

### Employment Conditions in Six Months by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Very Good	4.8	9.6	14.8
Good	21.9	36.0	40.7
Adequate	34.3	31.6	29.6
Poor	26.7	20.6	11.1
Very Poor	12.4	2.2	3.7

### Employment Conditions in Six Months by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Very Good	10.3	4.1	9.6	14.3
Good	33.0	35.7	35.1	32.4
Adequate	30.9	32.7	28.9	35.2
Poor	17.5	20.4	21.1	15.2
Very Poor	8.2	7.1	5.3	2.9

### Employment Conditions in Six Months by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Very Good	7.7	11.1	8.9	14.0
Good	34.2	38.0	29.6	38.0
Adequate	33.3	25.9	34.8	32.0
Poor	17.9	21.3	20.0	10.0
Very Poor	6.8	3.7	6.7	6.0

## Family's Current Economic Situation (%)

Q. How would you evaluate your own family's economic situation?

Family's Economic Situation by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Very Good	14.8	14.0	14.4
Good	48.3	48.3	48.2
Adequate	30.9	32.2	31.6
Poor	3.5	3.7	3.6
Very Poor	2.6	1.7	2.2

Family's Economic Situation by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Very Good	13.8	12.3	16.4
Good	46.8	55.7	44.2
Adequate	33.0	24.5	35.8
Poor	4.8	3.8	1.8
Very Poor	1.6	3.8	1.8

Family's Economic Situation by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Very Good	5.2	9.9	30.6
Good	38.3	46.7	50.0
Adequate	42.6	37.5	19.4
Poor	7.0	4.6	0.0
Very Poor	7.0	1.3	0.0

Family's Economic Situation by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Very Good	11.2	14.7	7.9	23.3
Good	51.7	44.0	52.0	44.8
Adequate	31.0	37.6	31.5	27.6
Poor	3.4	2.8	6.3	1.7
Very Poor	2.6	0.9	2.4	2.6

Family's Economic Situation by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Very Good	15.3	16.5	13.7	11.1
Good	49.2	49.6	49.0	41.3
Adequate	29.8	30.6	30.1	39.7
Poor	2.4	2.5	4.6	6.3
Very Poor	3.2	0.8	2.6	1.6

## Family's Economic Situation Six Months From Now (%)

Q. What do you expect your own family's economic situation to be like six months from now?

Family's Economic Situation in Six Months by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Very Good	16.5	16.7	16.5
Good	50.9	50.2	50.8
Adequate	27.4	29.3	28.3
Poor	2.6	2.5	2.6
Very Poor	2.6	1.3	1.8

Family's Economic Situation in Six Months by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Very Good	17.2	15.1	16.6
Good	47.3	60.4	49.1
Adequate	30.6	19.8	31.3
Poor	3.2	1.9	1.8
Very Poor	1.6	2.8	1.2

Family's Economic Situation in Six Months by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Very Good	7.8	12.5	32.8
Good	41.7	51.3	50.4
Adequate	39.1	32.2	16.8
Poor	5.2	2.6	0.0
Very Poor	6.1	1.3	0.0

Family's Economic Situation in Six Months by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Very Good	12.3	18.5	11.1	23.5
Good	53.5	46.3	53.2	50.4
Adequate	28.9	32.4	31.0	21.7
Poor	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.6
Very Poor	2.6	0.0	2.4	1.7

Family's Economic Situation in Six Months by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Very Good	19.5	21.0	14.5	8.2
Good	52.8	52.1	51.3	42.6
Adequate	22.0	25.2	29.6	42.6
Poor	3.3	1.7	2.0	4.9
Very Poor	2.4	0.0	2.6	1.6