

2005 Lethbridge Public Opinion Study (Winter)

Economic Development Lethbridge

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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% & 30.7% respectively.

Methodology

This report is based on data collected by Lethbridge Community College and Athabasca University students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods at Lethbridge Community College in the winter of 2005. Students interviewed 551 adult residents of the city of Lethbridge on February 12th and 13th, 2005 by telephone using the Western Wats Lethbridge call center facility. Telephone numbers were selected using random predictive dialing. We sincerely thank Western Wats for their hospitality.

The weighted sample yields a margin of error of $\pm 4.15\%$, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data.

Analysis of the demographic data indicates that, within acceptable limits, the sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the voting age population within the city of Lethbridge. The sample has been statistically weighted where necessary to even better reflect the demographic distribution of the population.

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. Economic Development Lethbridge sponsored this particular set of questions. We thank Economic Development Lethbridge for their support of our research endeavors.

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

Over two-thirds of Lethbridge residents believe that local business conditions are currently good (67.3%). This compares to only 50.6% who thought conditions were good one year ago.

Only 5.6% believe current business conditions to be poor, less than half the number who believed conditions to be poor one year earlier (14.0%).

Business Conditions in Six Months

Lethbridge residents are optimistic that business conditions will improve in the next six months. Almost three-quarters of all residents (72.8%) believe conditions will be good six months from now.

Only 6.0% believe conditions will be poor in six months, less than half the number who thought similarly one year ago.

Current Employment Conditions

A clear majority of Lethbridge residents (59.3%) believe local employment conditions are good, up from only 46.4% one year earlier

Only 17.3% believe employment conditions to be poor, down slightly from 20.9% last year.

Employment Conditions in Six Months

Almost two-thirds of all residents (64.1%) believe employment conditions will be good six months from now. This represents a considerable improvement from one year earlier when only 43.4% believed employment conditions would be good six months later.

Family's Current Economic Situation

Almost two-thirds of all residents (64.1%) rate their family's economic situation as good, essentially unchanged from one year earlier (62.6%).

Slightly more Lethbridge residents (9.1%) rated their family's economic situation as poor, up slightly from one year earlier (5.8%).

Family's Economic Situation in Six Months

Most Lethbridge residents are optimistic that their family economic situation will be good six months from now (72.8%), up slightly from one year earlier (67.3%).

Current Business Conditions (%)

	February 2004	February 2005
Good	50.6	67.3
Adequate	35.4	27.1
Poor	14.0	5.6

Business Conditions in Six Months (%)

	February 2004	February 2005
Good	51.6	72.8
Adequate	32.7	21.1
Poor	15.7	6.0

Current Employment Conditions (%)

	February 2004	February 2005
Good	46.4	59.3
Adequate	32.7	23.3
Poor	20.9	17.3

Employment Conditions in Six Months (%)

	February 2004	February 2005
Good	43.4	64.1
Adequate	32.5	21.6
Poor	24.1	14.3

Family's Current Economic Situation (%)

	February 2004	February 2005
Good	62.6	64.1
Adequate	31.6	26.9
Poor	5.8	9.1

Family's Economic Situation in Six Months (%)

	February 2004	February 2005
Good	67.3	72.8
Adequate	28.3	21.9
Poor	4.4	5.3

Current Business Conditions

Overall, Lethbridge residents demonstrate considerable confidence in the local economy. Most believe business conditions in the city are good (67.3%), a 16.6% increase from one year earlier.

Only 5.6% believe business conditions to be poor, a drop of 8.4% in the past year.

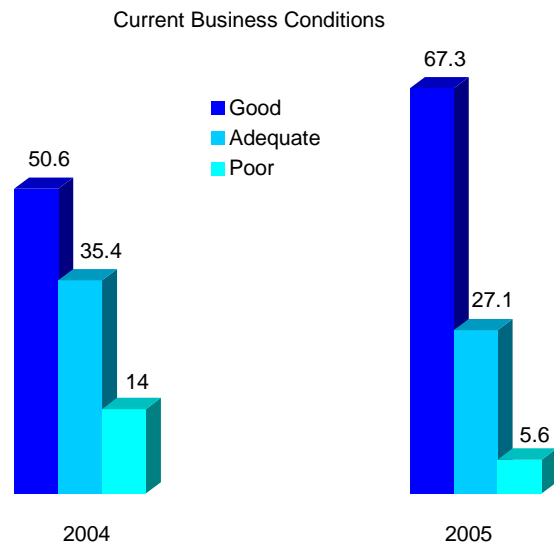
Men (71.7%) are slightly more positive than are women (63.3%).

South Lethbridge residents (71.9%) are slightly more upbeat than are west Lethbridge (69.0%) and north Lethbridge residents (61.2%).

Upper income residents (74.8%) are more positive than are middle income (67.9%) and lower income residents (62.3%).

University graduates (72.3%) and those with some post-secondary education (71.2%) are more positive than are college-technical-trade graduates (63.6%) and those with a high school education or less (62.5%).

Few differences are measured between age groups.



Business Conditions Six Months From Now

Lethbridge residents are optimistic that business conditions will improve even more in the next six months. Almost three-quarters of all residents (72.8%) believe conditions will be good six months from now.

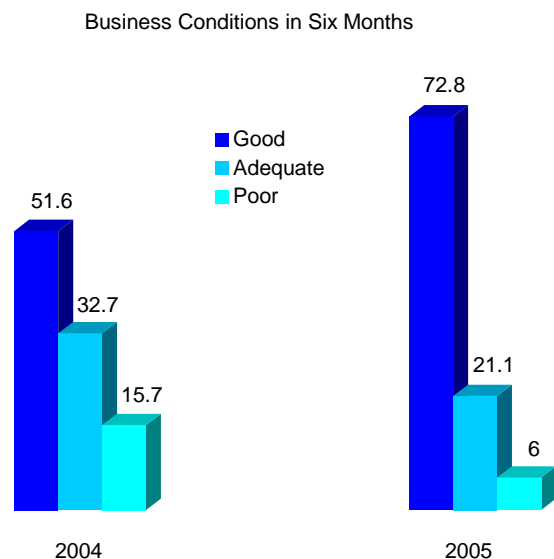
Only 6.0% believe conditions will be poor in six months, less than half the number who thought similarly one year ago.

Similar patterns emerge as were observed with the current business conditions.

Men (75.6%) are slightly more optimistic than are women (70.3%). South Lethbridge residents (76.2%) are slightly more optimistic than are north (71.2%) and west Lethbridge residents (71.6%).

Upper income residents (78.4%) are slightly more optimistic than are middle income (71.9%) and lower income residents (72.6%).

University grads and seniors distinguish themselves as slightly more positive than are all the other education and age groups.



Current Employment Conditions

A clear majority of Lethbridge residents (59.3%) believe local employment conditions are good, up from only 46.4% one year ago.

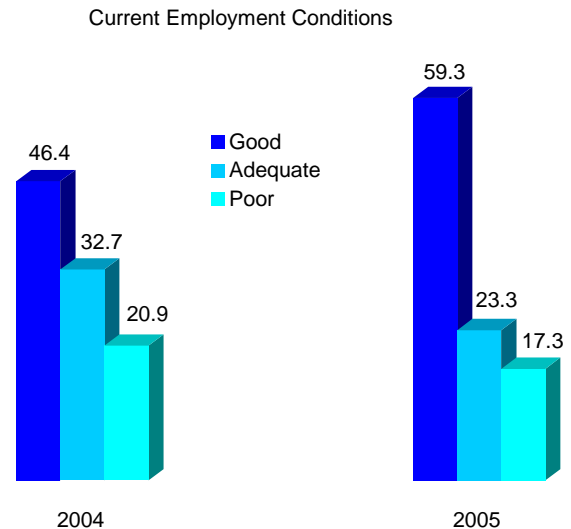
Only 17.3% believe employment conditions to be poor, slightly less than the 20.9% who believed employment conditions were poor one year ago.

Men (65.1%) are more positive than are women (53.6%).

Few differences in opinion about employment conditions are evident between residents the various areas of the city or between education categories.

Upper income residents (65.9%) are more positive about employment conditions than are middle income (60.3%) and lower income residents (51.3%).

Seniors (69.7%) are most positive about current employment conditions while the youth are the most pessimistic (50.7%), although they are still positive overall.



Employment Conditions Six Months From Now

Almost two-thirds of all residents (64.1%) believe employment conditions will be good six months from now.

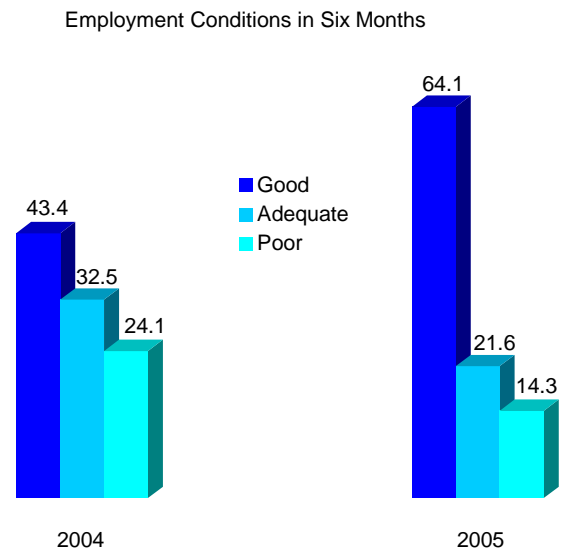
This represents a considerable improvement from one year earlier when only 43.4% believed employment conditions would be good six months down the road.

Men (69.6%) are again more optimistic than are women (58.6%).

Few differences are measured between residents of the three areas of Lethbridge or between residents with different levels of education.

Upper income residents (71.3%) are more optimistic than are either middle income (61.6%) or lower income residents (60.7%).

Seniors are the most optimistic about future employment (71.6%). Boomers are the least optimistic (58.0%), although they are still for the most part very positive.



Family's Current Economic Situation

Almost two-thirds of all residents rate their family's economic situation as good, essentially unchanged from one year earlier (62.6%).

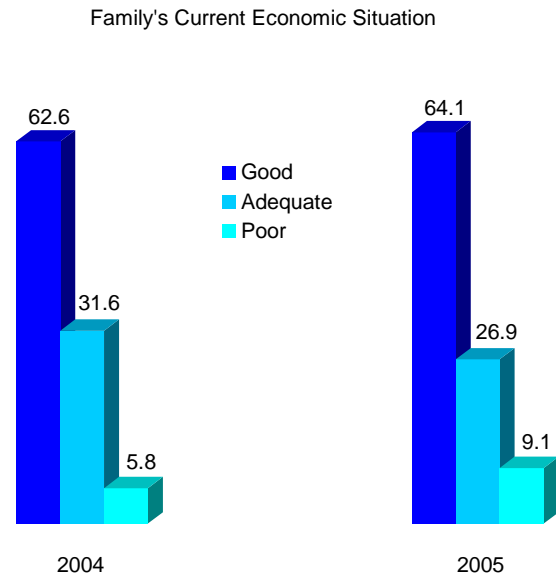
Slightly more Lethbridge residents (9.1%) rated their family's economic situation as poor, up slightly from one year earlier (5.8%).

Men (66.6%) are slightly more positive than are women (61.9%).

West Lethbridge residents (71.8%) are more positive than are north (64.4%) and south Lethbridge residents (58.9%).

As is to be expected, upper income residents (82.6%) are much more positive than are middle income (64.4%) and lower income residents (44.6%).

Few significant differences are measured between residents with different education levels or between the different age groups.



Family's Economic Situation Six Months From Now

Most Lethbridge residents are optimistic that their family's economic situation will be good six months from now (72.8%), up slightly from 67.3% one year earlier.

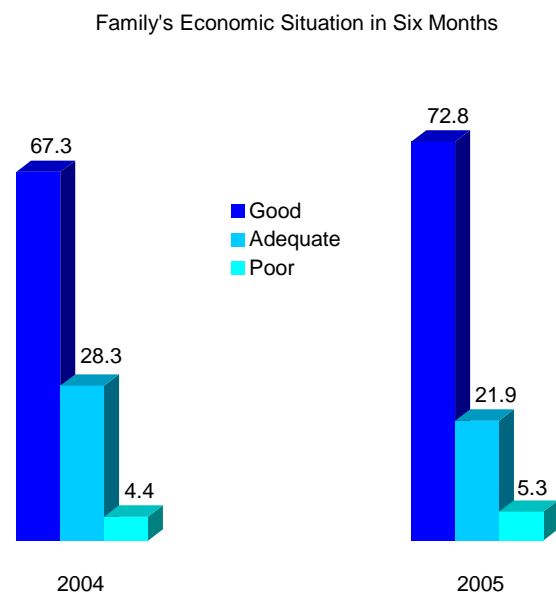
Men (75.8%) are again more optimistic than are women (69.9%).

West (75.3%) and north (75.2%) Lethbridge residents are more optimistic about their future economic situations than are south Lethbridge residents (68.2%).

Upper income residents (86.9%) are much more optimistic about their futures than are middle income (74.8%) and lower income residents (56.2%).

Few differences between education groups are measured.

Generation-X residents are most optimistic about their futures (81.0%) while boomers are the least optimistic (68.1%), although they are still very positive overall.



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	15.1	11.9	13.4
Good	56.6	51.4	53.9
Adequate	22.1	31.7	27.1
Poor	5.0	4.7	4.9
Very Poor	1.2	0.4	0.8

Current Business Conditions by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Very Good	16.6	9.7	14.0
Good	55.3	51.5	55.0
Adequate	21.1	32.1	28.1
Poor	6.0	6.7	1.8
Very Poor	1.0	0.0	1.2

Current Business Conditions by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Very Good	12.6	11.6	18.5
Good	49.7	56.3	56.3
Adequate	30.2	27.9	19.3
Poor	6.9	3.7	5.2
Very Poor	0.6	0.5	0.7

Current Business Conditions by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Very Good	14.7	13.6	10.6	14.2
Good	47.8	57.6	53.0	58.1
Adequate	33.8	23.7	31.1	20.3
Poor	2.9	4.2	5.3	6.1
Very Poor	0.7	0.8	0.0	1.4

Current Business Conditions by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Very Good	9.2	12.6	12.3	22.7
Good	55.6	54.1	56.4	46.6
Adequate	31.0	25.2	25.2	28.4
Poor	3.5	7.4	5.5	2.3
Very Poor	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.0

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	17.6	16.5	17.1
Good	58.0	53.8	55.8
Adequate	18.4	23.7	21.1
Poor	5.2	5.3	5.2
Very Poor	0.8	0.8	0.8

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

	South	North	West
Very Good	18.7	18.4	16.0
Good	57.5	52.8	55.6
Adequate	16.1	22.4	24.9
Poor	6.7	6.4	2.4
Very Poor	1.0	0.0	1.2

Business Conditions in Six Months by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Very Good	17.0	14.6	23.8
Good	55.6	57.3	54.6
Adequate	20.3	23.2	14.6
Poor	6.5	4.3	6.2
Very Poor	0.7	0.5	0.8

Business Conditions in Six Months by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Very Good	19.4	16.8	16.0	16.1
Good	51.9	55.8	55.2	59.7
Adequate	25.6	23.0	23.2	14.8
Poor	2.3	4.4	4.8	8.1
Very Poor	0.8	0.0	0.8	1.3

Business Conditions in Six Months by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Very Good	10.2	18.3	19.9	21.3
Good	62.0	56.5	49.7	56.3
Adequate	24.1	16.8	23.6	18.8
Poor	3.6	7.6	6.2	2.5
Very Poor	0.0	0.8	0.6	1.3

Current Employment Conditions

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

Current Employment Conditions by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Very Good	13.7	7.5	10.6
Good	51.4	46.1	48.8
Adequate	17.7	28.7	23.3
Poor	14.9	15.4	14.9
Very Poor	2.4	2.4	2.4

Current Employment Conditions by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Very Good	10.9	8.7	11.6
Good	50.0	50.0	47.6
Adequate	20.7	25.4	23.8
Poor	14.7	15.1	14.6
Very Poor	3.8	0.8	2.4

Current Employment Conditions by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Very Good	8.0	9.5	15.5
Good	43.3	50.8	50.4
Adequate	26.0	22.3	22.5
Poor	18.0	15.6	10.9
Very Poor	4.7	1.7	0.8

Current Employment Conditions by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Very Good	10.9	9.9	9.6	11.6
Good	46.9	49.5	50.4	48.6
Adequate	25.8	27.0	22.4	18.8
Poor	13.3	11.7	15.2	18.8
Very Poor	3.1	1.8	2.4	2.2

Current Employment Conditions by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Very Good	5.8	12.6	12.3	10.5
Good	44.9	52.8	43.5	59.2
Adequate	29.7	23.6	24.0	11.8
Poor	18.1	8.7	17.5	15.8
Very Poor	1.4	2.4	2.6	2.6

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	18.8	15.2	17.0
Good	50.8	43.4	47.1
Adequate	16.0	27.3	21.6
Poor	12.4	12.5	12.5
Very Poor	2.0	1.6	1.8

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

	South	North	West
Very Good	17.0	16.3	17.9
Good	48.4	50.4	44.4
Adequate	19.7	20.2	22.8
Poor	12.2	13.2	12.3
Very Poor	2.7	0.0	2.5

Employment Conditions in Six Months by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Very Good	16.0	17.6	17.8
Good	44.7	44.0	53.5
Adequate	23.3	22.5	17.8
Poor	13.3	15.4	9.3
Very Poor	2.7	0.5	1.6

Employment Conditions in Six Months by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Very Good	19.2	12.7	21.9	13.5
Good	44.8	54.5	41.4	48.2
Adequate	25.6	22.7	21.1	18.4
Poor	9.6	8.2	14.1	17.0
Very Poor	0.8	1.8	1.6	2.8

Employment Conditions in Six Months by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Very Good	9.4	15.7	21.3	22.2
Good	52.2	52.0	36.7	49.4
Adequate	21.7	22.0	25.3	16.0
Poor	15.9	8.7	15.3	8.6
Very Poor	0.7	1.6	1.3	3.7

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	10.8	12.6
Good	51.8	51.1	51.4
Adequate	23.3	30.2	26.9
Poor	8.2	7.2	7.7
Very Poor	1.9	0.7	1.4

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

	South	North	West
Very Good	12.9	9.1	15.9
Good	46.0	55.3	55.9
Adequate	24.8	30.3	24.7
Poor	14.4	4.5	2.9
Very Poor	2.0	0.8	0.6

Family's Economic Situation by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Very Good	6.4	8.4	27.5
Good	38.2	56.0	55.1
Adequate	33.1	30.4	16.7
Poor	19.1	4.2	0.7
Very Poor	3.2	1.0	0.0

Family's Economic Situation by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Very Good	10.9	11.0	5.4	21.5
Good	54.7	49.2	57.4	45.6
Adequate	24.8	30.5	29.5	23.5
Poor	7.3	7.6	7.8	8.1
Very Poor	2.2	1.7	0.0	1.3

Family's Economic Situation by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Very Good	10.6	17.3	11.5	10.2
Good	56.0	45.1	49.1	56.8
Adequate	24.8	28.6	26.7	28.4
Poor	7.1	9.0	10.3	3.4
Very Poor	1.4	0.0	2.4	1.1

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	19.8	17.2	18.4
Good	56.0	52.7	54.4
Adequate	18.3	25.3	21.9
Poor	3.9	4.0	4.0
Very Poor	1.9	0.7	1.4

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

	South	North	West
Very Good	18.9	18.6	18.2
Good	49.3	56.6	57.1
Adequate	22.9	21.7	21.8
Poor	7.0	1.6	2.4
Very Poor	2.0	1.6	0.6

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

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Very Good	15.7	14.1	28.5
Good	40.5	60.7	58.4
Adequate	30.1	22.0	13.1
Poor	11.1	1.6	0.0
Very Poor	2.6	1.6	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	16.5	19.7	14.0	23.0
Good	56.4	50.4	62.0	49.3
Adequate	22.6	21.4	20.2	23.0
Poor	3.0	7.7	2.3	3.4
Very Poor	1.5	0.9	1.6	1.4

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

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Very Good	20.9	24.2	16.6	10.2
Good	51.8	56.8	51.5	59.1
Adequate	21.6	14.4	25.2	27.3
Poor	4.3	3.8	4.9	2.3
Very Poor	1.4	0.8	1.8	1.1