

2004 Lethbridge Public Opinion Study (Winter)

# Lethbridge City Council Performance

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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 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 data are part of a larger study of the opinions and attitudes of Lethbridge residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab at LCC.

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

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Citizen Society Research Lab

- Q. Using a scale that ranges from very good, to good, adequate, poor, and very poor, how would you rate the overall performance of the Lethbridge City Council?
- Q. Using the same scale, how would you rate the overall performance of Mayor Bob Tarleck?
- Q. Thinking for a moment about Alderman Darlene Heatherington, which of the following do you think Alderman Heatherington should do?

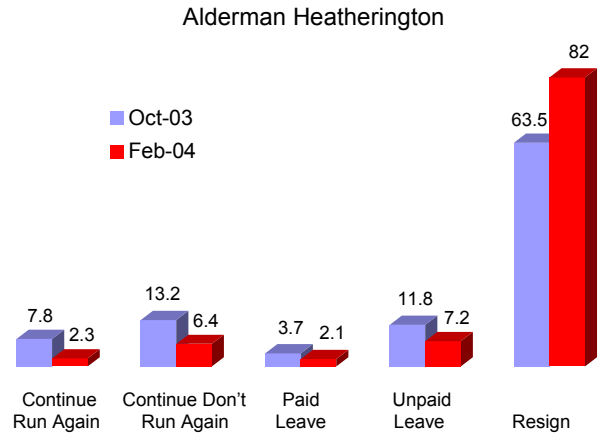
Note: Fall 2003 data are derived from a sample of 769 adult residents interviewed by telephone between October 1 to 15, 2003 using numbers drawn randomly from the Lethbridge telephone directory. The sample yields a margin of error of  $\pm 3.5$ , 19 times out of 20.

## Alderman Heatherington

When asked to reflect on the Alderman Darlene Heatherington situation, and offer an opinion on what course of action she should choose, an overwhelming majority of Lethbridge residents would prefer her to resign immediately (82.0%), up from the 63.5% who thought she should resign when we asked residents the same question last fall.

Only 2.3% believe she should continue on as alderman and seek re-election, down from 7.8% last fall. A further 6.2% believe she should continue on as alderman but not seek re-election while 7.2% believe she should seek an unpaid leave of absence. Only 2.1% think she should take a paid leave of absence.

Few significant differences were measured when comparing demographic categories.

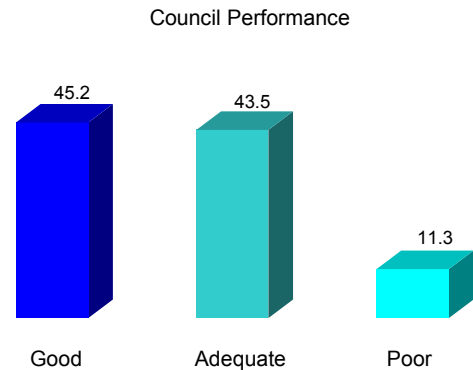


## Council Performance

Lethbridge City Council, on the other hand, received very positive performance evaluations from residents with 45.3% stating council is doing a good job while only 11.3% evaluated council poorly. The remaining 43.5% believe council is performing adequately.

These performance evaluations are virtually identical to those council received last fall.

Although all groups of voters rate council positively, seniors, university graduates, middle-income residents, and women are most positive.



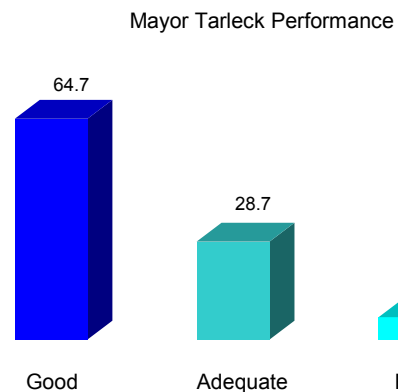
## Mayor Tarleck Performance

Mayor Tarleck is perceived by Lethbridge residents to be performing even better than council as a whole.

Almost two-thirds of all residents believe the Mayor to be performing well (64.7%) while only 6.6% believe he is doing a poor job. A further 28.7% of residents believe him to be performing adequately.

As with council, the Mayor's performance evaluations are virtually unchanged from last fall.

Women, north side residents, middle-income residents, College-Technical-Trades graduates and seniors are most positive towards the Mayor.



## Snapshot of Responses (%)

Alderman Heatherington	October '03	February '04
Continue—run again	7.8	2.3
Continue—don't run again	13.2	6.4
Paid leave	3.7	2.1
Unpaid leave	11.8	7.2
Resign immediately	63.5	82.0

Council Performance	February '02	October '02	February '03	October '03	February '04
Good	46.5	46.7	50.2	44.1	45.2
Adequate	44.4	39.8	39.1	43.1	43.5
Poor	9.1	13.5	10.7	12.8	11.3

Mayor Performance	February '02	October '02	February '03	October '03	February '04
Good	56.2	57.6	60.5	66.4	64.7
Adequate	39.8	33.0	33.9	27.6	28.7
Poor	4.0	9.4	5.6	6.0	6.6

## Tabular Data

### Alderman Heatherington (%)

Q. Thinking for a moment about Alderman Darlene Heatherington, which of the following do you think Alderman Heatherington should do?

#### Alderman Heatherington by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Continue—run again	2.3	2.3	2.3
Continue—don't run	6.9	6.3	6.4
Paid leave	2.3	1.8	2.1
Unpaid leave	8.8	5.4	7.2
Resign	79.7	84.2	82.0

#### Alderman Heatherington by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Continue—run again	2.8	2.0	2.0
Continue—don't run	5.1	6.1	8.1
Paid leave	1.1	2.0	3.4
Unpaid leave	9.6	5.1	5.4
Resign	81.4	84.8	81.2

#### Alderman Heatherington by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Continue—run again	2.9	1.4	2.6
Continue—don't run	11.5	6.3	2.6
Paid leave	2.9	1.4	2.6
Unpaid leave	3.8	9.0	7.9
Resign	78.8	81.9	84.2

#### Alderman Heatherington by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Continue—run again	1.9	1.0	1.7	4.5
Continue—don't run	7.5	7.1	5.0	6.4
Paid leave	1.9	2.0	2.5	1.8
Unpaid leave	3.7	5.1	5.9	13.6
Resign	85.0	84.7	84.9	73.6

#### Alderman Heatherington by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Continue—run again	3.6	1.7	2.1	1.8
Continue—don't run	12.5	2.6	4.9	5.5
Paid leave	2.7	1.7	1.4	3.6
Unpaid leave	4.5	7.8	9.1	7.3
Resign	76.8	86.2	82.5	81.8

## Council Performance (%)

Q. Using a scale that ranges from very good, to good, adequate, poor, and very poor, how would you rate the overall performance of the Lethbridge City Council?

### Council Performance by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Good	43.1	47.0	45.2
Adequate	44.0	43.3	43.5
Poor	12.8	9.7	11.3

### Council Performance by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Good	47.0	49.5	40.1
Adequate	39.3	42.3	49.0
Poor	13.7	8.2	10.9

### Council Performance by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Good	41.4	50.4	41.4
Adequate	47.5	38.3	46.6
Poor	11.1	11.3	12.1

### Council Performance by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Good	39.3	45.2	45.0	52.2
Adequate	43.9	45.2	44.2	40.0
Poor	16.8	9.7	10.8	7.8

### Council Performance by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Good	41.7	43.5	43.7	53.2
Adequate	46.6	44.4	44.4	37.1
Poor	11.7	12.0	11.9	9.7

## Mayor Performance (%)

Q. Using a scale that ranges from very good, to good, adequate, poor, and very poor, how would you rate the overall performance of Mayor Bob Tarleck?

### Mayor Performance by Gender (%)

	Male	Female	Total
Good	60.1	69.3	64.7
Adequate	32.9	24.2	28.7
Poor	7.0	6.5	6.6

### Mayor Performance by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Good	66.9	70.4	58.0
Adequate	25.3	25.5	35.7
Poor	7.9	4.1	6.3

### Mayor Performance by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Good	63.4	69.3	56.9
Adequate	29.0	25.0	35.3
Poor	7.5	5.7	7.8

### Mayor Performance by Education (%)

	H-School or less	Some Post-Secondary	Col-Tech-Trade Grad	University Grad
Good	64.8	57.6	72.2	64.0
Adequate	25.7	32.6	22.6	32.5
Poor	9.5	9.8	5.2	3.5

### Mayor Performance by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Good	60.2	62.6	63.3	73.8
Adequate	35.7	29.0	29.3	19.7
Poor	4.1	8.4	7.3	6.6