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Winter 2006 Lethbridge Public Opinion Study

Municipal Political Issues
for
Global News Lethbridge

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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 winter of 2006 students interviewed 512 adult residents of the city of Lethbridge (February 11th and 12th 2006) 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. We also sincerely appreciate and thank all the Lethbridge residents who took time out of their day to respond to our survey.
-  **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 $\pm 4.3\%$, 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 ongoing support of our research endeavors.

Municipal Political Issues

- By an almost two to one margin, Lethbridge residents are opposed to the City of Lethbridge's recent decision to end its electricity arrangements with Enmax. A clear majority (62.3%) are opposed while just over one-third of residents (37.7%) are supportive. Women (64.5%), south Lethbridge residents (69.9%), upper income (68.9%) and lower income (66.0%) residents, higher educated (68.4%) and lower educated (68.0%) residents, and seniors (68.2%) are most opposed. Homeowners (63.8%) are slightly more opposed than are renters (57.4%)
- A substantial majority of Lethbridge residents (70.7%) believe the City of Lethbridge did a poor job communicating the changes to electricity policies. South Lethbridge residents (74.5%), upper income earners (82.1%), University graduates (76.2%) and boomers (81.8%) are most critical. Homeowners are much more critical (74.3%) than are renters (59.6%).
- Over three-quarters of all residents (75.4%) are opposed to the City of Lethbridge proposed property tax increases for the next three years. Opposition is consistently strong among all demographic groups with lower income residents (82.5%) most opposed. Interestingly, renters (75.2%) are just as opposed as are homeowners (75.5%)

Electricity Policy Changes

	All Residents
Support	37.7
Oppose	62.3

Electricity Policy Communication

	All Residents
Good	29.3
Poor	70.7

Property Taxes

	All Residents
Support	24.6
Oppose	75.4

	All Residents
Strong Sup.	2.8
Support	28.6
Oppose	24.0
Strong Op.	27.8
Don't Know	16.8

	All Residents
Very Good	3.7
Good	22.2
Poor	35.1
Very Poor	27.5
Don't Know	11.5

	All Residents
Strong Sup.	1.0
Support	22.7
Oppose	33.8
Strong Op.	38.7
Don't Know	3.7

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

Electricity policy changes by demographic group (%) (February 2006)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Support	40.0	35.5	37.7
Oppose	60.0	64.5	62.3

	South	North	West
Support	30.1	43.5	40.8
Oppose	69.9	56.5	59.2

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Support	34.0	43.1	31.1
Oppose	66.0	56.9	68.9

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Support	32.0	44.2	42.7	31.6
Oppose	68.0	55.8	57.3	68.4

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Support	44.1	37.5	34.9	31.8
Oppose	55.9	62.5	65.1	68.2

	Homeowner	Renter
Support	36.2	42.6
Oppose	63.8	57.4

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

Electricity policy communications by demographic group (%) (February 2006)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Good	30.0	28.8	29.3
Poor	70.0	71.2	70.7

	South	North	West
Good	25.5	32.6	30.4
Poor	74.5	67.4	69.6

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Good	33.3	33.2	17.9
Poor	66.7	66.8	82.1

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Good	28.7	33.0	33.0	23.8
Poor	71.3	67.0	67.0	76.2

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Good	45.5	33.7	18.2	25.5
Poor	54.5	66.3	81.8	74.5

	Homeowner	Renter
Good	25.7	40.4
Poor	74.3	59.6

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

Property tax policies by demographic group (%) (February 2006)

	Male	Female	All Residents
Support	23.1	26.3	24.6
Oppose	76.9	73.7	75.4

	South	North	West
Support	23.0	21.1	29.6
Oppose	77.0	78.9	70.4

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$70,000	Over \$70,000
Support	17.5	25.2	26.6
Oppose	82.5	74.8	73.4

	High School or less	Some Post Secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Support	20.5	24.0	30.9	24.4
Oppose	79.5	76.0	69.1	75.6

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Support	23.0	20.6	27.4	25.7
Oppose	77.0	79.4	72.6	74.3

	Homeowner	Renter
Support	24.5	24.8
Oppose	75.5	75.2

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

Demographics

Gender (%)		Area of City (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
Male	48.4	South	35.8	Under \$30,000	30.1	H-School/less	24.0	18-29	26.5
Female	51.6	North	29.7	\$30-\$70,000	45.7	Some P-Sec.	27.0	30-44	20.5
		West	34.6	Over \$70,000	24.2	Col-Tech-Grad	22.6	45-64	31.8
						University Grad	26.4	65 or older	21.2

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

Questions

Recently the city of Lethbridge made significant changes to its electricity policies. From what you know about these changes, please tell me how much you support or oppose the changes.

Please tell me which of the following best represents your opinion about how the City of Lethbridge handled the communications, timing and administration of the changes to its electricity policies.

The Lethbridge city council has approved a preliminary operating budget that includes property tax increases averaging 7.6% per year for the next three years resulting in an approximately 23% increase in city property taxes over the three year period. Please tell me how much you support or oppose the tax increase provisions of the new city of Lethbridge operating budget.