

# Western Independence

## Lethbridge Public Opinion Study

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March 2003



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## City of Lethbridge

A garden city 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.

The south side'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.

Lethbridge residents tend to hold opinions that are similar to other Albertans about the issue of Western Canadians beginning to explore the idea of creating their own country.

While support for exploring independence is relatively modest, one-in-five Lethbridge voters consistently support the idea. Support has risen by five per cent over the past three years to nearly one-quarter of all residents, and support is even greater amongst men, middle-income earners and seniors.

## Methodology

This report is based on data collected by Interdisciplinary Studies students and Communication Arts students enrolled in STS270 – Social Science Research Methods and PSC150 – Local Government at Lethbridge Community College in the winter of 2003, the fall of 2002, the fall of 2001 and the winter of 2001. Students conducted telephone interviews during October and February using numbers drawn randomly from the Lethbridge telephone directory.

Using this method, the February 2003 sample size of 469 yields a margin of error of  $\pm 4.7\%$ , 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data.

Demographic analysis 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 following represents a selection of our results.

## Explore Western Independence

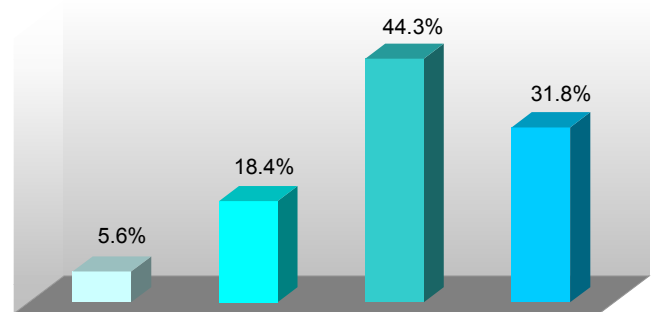
A majority of Lethbridge residents give a thumbs down to the idea of Western Canadians beginning to explore the idea of creating their own country (76.1%). However, this is down from 81.1% just two years ago in February of 2001.

While support for exploring independence is relatively modest, a consistent one-in-five Lethbridge voters support the idea. Support has increased over the last two years to the point where almost one-quarter of all Lethbridge residents (24%) indicate they are ready to have the debate about western independence.

Support is strongest amongst male voters (24.9%), middle-income earners (28.7%), and seniors (29.8%).

Interestingly, we have recently measured a slight increase in support amongst female residents, from 19.2% last fall to 22.8% this February.

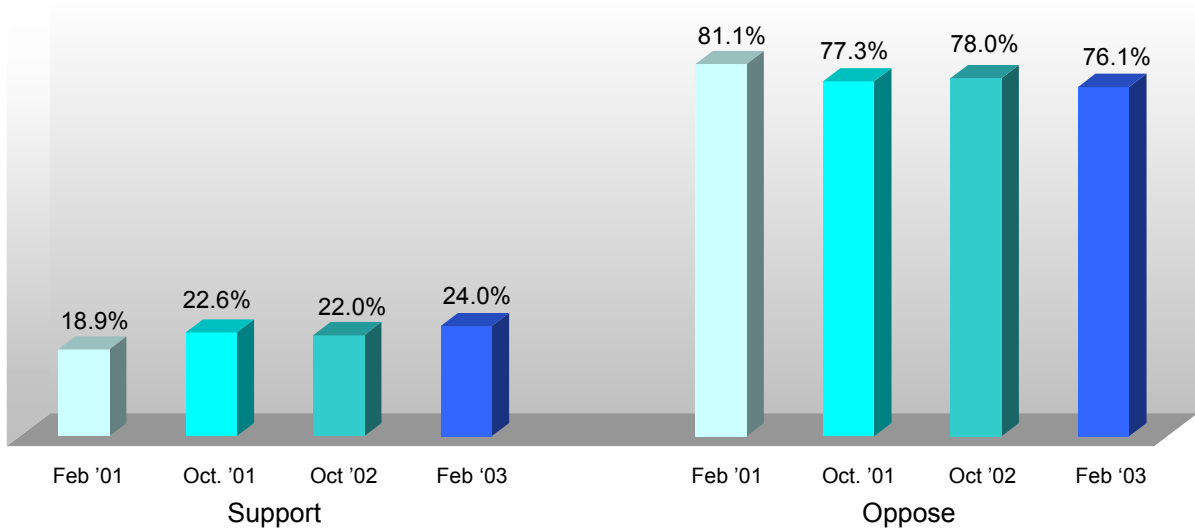
Explore Western Independence



## Rise in Support for Exploring Western Independence

Support for exploring the idea of Western Canada becoming an independent country has been modestly, but steadily increasing over the past two years to the point where almost one-quarter of all Lethbridge residents now support exploring independence.

Explore Independence (2001-2003)



## Tabular Data

### Explore Western Independence (February 2003) (%)

Explore Western Independence (%)	
Strongly Support	5.6
Support	18.4
Oppose	44.3
Strongly Oppose	31.8

### Explore Western Independence (October 2002) (%)

Explore Western Independence (%)	
Strongly Support	4.6
Support	17.4
Oppose	43.4
Strongly Oppose	34.6

### Explore Western Independence (October 2001) (%)

Explore Western Independence (%)	
Strongly Support	4.6
Support	18.0
Oppose	42.0
Strongly Oppose	35.3

### Explore Western Independence (February 2001) (%)

Explore Western Independence (%)	
Strongly Support	4.7
Support	14.2
Oppose	42.7
Strongly Oppose	38.4

### Question

- Western Canadians should begin to explore the idea of creating their own country.

## Explore Western Independence (October 2002) (%)

### Explore Western Independence by Gender (%)

	Male	Female
Strongly Support	7.7	3.4
Support	17.2	19.2
Oppose	42.5	46.2
Strongly Oppose	32.6	31.2

### Explore Western Independence by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Strongly Support	7.4	3.8	4.7
Support	18.5	19.2	17.0
Oppose	43.2	47.1	42.7
Strongly Oppose	30.9	29.8	35.7

### Explore Western Independence by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Strongly Support	5.0	3.2	6.1
Support	21.7	25.5	12.2
Oppose	46.1	43.6	40.5
Strongly Oppose	27.2	27.7	41.2

### Explore Western Independence by Education (%)

	High School or less	Some Post- Secondary	Col-Tech- Trade Grad	University Grad
Strongly Support	8.8	3.6	7.4	2.6
Support	21.9	18.8	13.9	18.8
Oppose	43.9	45.5	49.1	37.6
Strongly Oppose	25.4	32.1	29.6	41.0

### Explore Western Independence by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Strongly Support	5.7	5.4	4.6	7.0
Support	18.0	20.7	17.3	22.8
Oppose	42.6	44.6	42.2	49.1
Strongly Oppose	33.6	29.3	35.8	21.1

## Explore Western Independence (October 2002) (%)

### Explore Western Independence by Gender (%)

	Male	Female
Strongly Support	4.4	4.8
Support	22.4	12.6
Oppose	42.3	44.4
Strongly Oppose	30.9	38.2

### Explore Western Independence by Area of City (%)

	South	North	West
Strongly Support	5.9	6.0	3.1
Support	16.3	19.5	15.1
Oppose	43.9	48.1	37.5
Strongly Oppose	33.9	26.3	44.3

### Explore Western Independence by Income (%)

	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 to \$60,000	Over \$60,000
Strongly Support	3.1	5.7	5.1
Support	15.3	24.4	13.1
Oppose	41.7	45.1	40.1
Strongly Oppose	39.9	24.9	41.6

### Explore Western Independence by Education (%)

	High School or less	Some Post- Secondary	Col-Tech- Trade Grad	University Grad
Strongly Support	5.2	4.1	4.6	4.7
Support	20.7	17.7	17.7	14.6
Oppose	52.6	46.3	45.4	33.3
Strongly Oppose	21.6	32.0	32.3	47.4

### Explore Western Independence by Age (%)

	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 or older
Strongly Support	5.4	6.0	2.6	5.3
Support	18.1	19.3	16.9	14.5
Oppose	42.2	40.7	45.5	47.4
Strongly Oppose	34.3	34.0	35.1	32.9