

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Purpose

At the request of the City of Sandwich the Northern Illinois University's Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) conducted a mail and internet survey of Sandwich residents to determine their opinions of the City of Sandwich and which areas should be a priority for the City in the next two years. The survey findings will be used to assist the City of Sandwich in planning for the future.

Methodology

A 2-page questionnaire was developed by CGS with input from the City of Sandwich government. The questionnaire was designed to assess the following topics:

- residents' rating of the City of Sandwich as a place to live,
- what residents like most and least about living in the City of Sandwich,
- the top 3 issues the City of Sandwich government needs to address to make the City a better place to live,
- the priority the City should place on six areas in the next two years, and
- suggestions for improving the City of Sandwich.

The questionnaire was mailed with a cover letter signed by the mayor to 1,260 voting households in the City of Sandwich. The letter stated that they could complete the hard copy questionnaire or go online using the provided web address and unique identification number and complete the survey. Ten days later, non-responding households were sent a reminder either by email or mail to complete the survey. The survey was conducted from mid-January to mid-February.

A total of 466 residents of the City of Sandwich completed the survey. The American Association of Public Opinion's response rate calculator was used to determine the response rate. A 37% response rate was achieved.

Key Findings

- The majority (84.2%) of responding residents rate the City of Sandwich excellent (23.1%) or good (61.1%) as a place to live.
 - Those respondents who rated the City of Sandwich fair or poor as a place to live were asked why they gave that rating. The main reason reported was that the City needs to attract more businesses (31.3%).

- When the respondents were asked what they like **most** about living in the City of Sandwich the most frequent comments were the small town friendly atmosphere (30.2%), the people (15.3%), the low crime rate/feel safe (13.3%), the quiet/peacefulness of the City (11.8%), and the easy access to stores, especially Art's food market (7.5%).

- When the respondents were asked what they like **least** about living in the City of Sandwich the most frequent comments were there is not enough stores for shopping and not enough restaurants (24.7%), streets/roads need repair (8.7%), the high taxes (7.2%), homes rundown/not maintained (6.0%), and not enough sidewalks/sidewalks need repair (5.0%).

- The top 3 issues the responding residents would like the City of Sandwich to address are:
 - #1 issue-economic development (21.3%), street/road repair (10.9%), City government should control spending (7.3%), require that residents maintain their homes (6.1%), and repair and add sidewalks (4.7%)
 - #2 issue-economic development (16.4%), street/road repair (11.7%), repair/add sidewalks (6.4%), public safety/more police presence (5.0%), and improve transportation (5.0%).
 - #3 issue-economic development (13.9%), require that residents maintain their homes (6.6%), maintain appearance of the City (6.3%), and City government should control spending (5.6%).

- Next a question was asked about how much of a priority the City of Sandwich government should place on a six areas in the next two years. A follow-up question asked which area the City should put the greatest amount of resources and effort towards and which area the City should put the second greatest amount of resources and effort towards in the next two years.
 - Three-fourths (76.9%) of respondents think the City of Sandwich government should place a high priority on economic development in the next two years. Two-thirds (66.4%) of respondents believe the City government should place a high priority on road and street maintenance and repair. More than one-half of respondents would like to see a high priority placed on public safety (57.4%) and water and sewer system maintenance and repair (55.7%) in the next two years.

 - When asked which of the six areas the City of Sandwich should put the greatest amount of resources and effort toward in the next two years, a plurality (47.6%) of respondents indicated it should be economic development. The respondents were divided on which area the City of Sandwich should put the second greatest amount of resources and effort toward in the next two years, with road and street maintenance and repair receiving the highest percentage of responses (28.0%). When the first and second priorities responses are combined, economic

development (64.1%) receives the highest percentage of responses, followed by road and street maintenance and repair (46.0%).

- The most frequent suggestions for improving the City of Sandwich included:
 - Attract more businesses/retain business (14.6%)
 - The City government should be more fiscally responsible (10.7%)
 - Require that residents maintain the appearance of their home (10.0%)
 - Invest in infrastructure (9.6%)
 - Improve appearance of the City/downtown (6.9%)
 - More community events/activities (6.5%)
 - City government should keep residents better informed and more involved in decisions (6.1%)