

Barber County:
A Proposal for Partnership

April 2005

Revitalizing _____ _____ Rural America

Rural America in the 21st Century:

Leveraging Technology to Create Economic Growth

Despite the accelerating economic diversification of rural areas, many outside observers and policymakers believe that rural America is synonymous with agriculture. While agriculture will always be a cornerstone of the rural economy, the prosperity of rural regions in the new century will depend crucially on their ability to produce more than cows and corn.

While the changes were more evolutionary than revolutionary, rural America's economic landscape shifted significantly over the 20th century. Technological innovations boosted farm productivity and allowed rural America to spawn new economic opportunities. While some of these opportunities emerged from agriculture, many came in manufacturing and service industries. Rural America does not often receive credit for the evolutions it has undergone and the growth it has produced over the last century. To be sure, challenges still remain for many rural places. But by expanding its economic base, rural America has begun positioning itself for success in the 21st Century.



**BARBER COUNTY:
A PROPOSAL FOR PARTNERSHIP**

A report to
RSI, Inc. of Kiowa, KS

from

Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.
an Agent for the Revitalizing Rural America Program

April 2005

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
I INTRODUCTION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW	1
Introduction and Purpose	1
Work Completed	2
Organization of Report	3
Economic Development Strategy	3
Challenge and Mission	3
Comparative Advantages	4
Comparative Disadvantages	5
Recommended Actions and Policies	5
Concentrate on Serving Existing Firms in Market Area	5
Hold Retention Meetings	6
Make Infrastructure Improvements	6
Continue to Make “Quality of Life” Improvements	6
Monitor Progress and Results	7
II ANALYSIS OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC, LABOR FORCE, AND HOUSING MARKET CHARACTERISTICS OF MEDICINE LODGE, KIOWA AND BARBER COUNTY	8
Introduction	8
Demographic and Labor Force Characteristics and Trends	9
Population Trends	9
Household Formations	15
Age Distribution Trends	17

TABLE OF CONTENTS
Continued

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
Income and Distribution of Income Trends	19
Educational Attainment	25
Labor Force Characteristics	28
Proportion of Residents Who Work Outside Their Places of Residence	30
Workforce Participation Rates	32
Housing Growth and Characteristics	33
III TRADE AREA RESIDENT SURVEY ANALYSIS	35
Introduction	35
Data Collection	35
Results and Analysis	35
IV HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SURVEY ANALYSIS	45
Introduction	45
Data Collection	45
Results and Analysis	45
V TRADE AREA RESIDENT RETAIL SURVEY ANALYSIS	54
Introduction	54
Data Collection	54
Results and Analysis	54
VI THE STRUCTURE OF THE MEDICINE LODGE, KIOWA AND BARBER COUNTY AVAILABLE WORKFORCE	60
Introduction	60

TABLE OF CONTENTS
Continued

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
Results and Analysis	60
Hours of Operation	63
Full and Part-time Applicants	63
Benefits and Health Insurance	63
Related Experience of Applicants	64
Educational Attainment of Applicants	64
VII EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	68
Conclusions and Recommendations	68

Appendix

- A TRADE AREA RESIDENT SURVEY
- HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SURVEY
- TRADE AREA RESIDENT RETAIL SURVEY
- B BUSINESS OWNER SURVEY

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
II-1 Barber County Population	9
II-2 Population Migration for Barber County: 1995-2000	14
II-3 Households and Persons per Household for Medicine Lodge, Kiowa, Sharon, Hardtner, Barber County and Kansas: 1990-2000 . . .	15
II-4 Distribution of Population by Age for Medicine Lodge, Kiowa, Sharon, and Hardtner: 2000	17
II-5 Household and Per Capita Income Comparison for Medicine Lodge, Hardtner, Kiowa, Sharon, Barber County, and Kansas: 1990 – 2000	19
II-6 Distribution of Household Income for Medicine Lodge, Barber County, and Kansas: 1990 – 2000	21
II-7 Educational Attainment of Population 25-Years or Older in Medicine Lodge, Barber County, and the State of Kansas: 1990-2000	25
II-8 Employment Status in 2000 for the Population 16 Years and Over: Medicine Lodge, Hardtner, Kiowa, and Sharon	27
II-9 Labor Force Characteristics by Occupation for Barber County and Kansas: 1990 - 2000	29
II-10 Estimates of the Proportion of Residents Who Work in Barber County And Labor Importation	30
II-11 Average Commute Times for Medicine Lodge, Kiowa, and Barber County Work Forces: 1990 - 2000	31
II-12 2000 Workforce Participation in Barber County, Kansas, and the United States	32
II-13 Number and Proportion of Housing Units by Unit Type in Barber County: 1990 - 2000	34
III-1 Resident Survey Results: Please rate the following features of the community based on a 10-point scale	35
III-2 Given the Situation, State if the Condition is a Major Problem, a Minor Problem, or Not a Problem	41

LIST OF TABLES
Continued

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
IV-1 Student Survey Results: Please rate the following features of the community based on a 10-point scale	46
V-1 Respondents' Personal Purchasing Habits – Home Products	59
V-2 Respondents Personal Purchasing Habits – Personal Care and Entertainment Products	59
VI-1 Medicine Lodge and Kiowa Area Applicants: Proposal Locations And Commute Times	61

LIST OF CHARTS

LIST OF CHARTS

<u>Chart</u>	<u>Page</u>
II-1 Barber County Population and Unemployment Rates	12
II-2 Employment by Industry: Mining for Barber County: 1981 - 1999 . .	13
II-3 Household Income Levels for Medicine Lodge: 1990 – 2000	22
II-4 Household Income Levels for Barber County: 1990 – 2000	22
II-5 Household Income Levels for the State of Kansas: 1990 – 2000 . . .	23
II-6 Labor Force Characteristics by Occupation for Barber County and Kansas: 1990	28
II-7 Labor Force Characteristics by Occupation for Barber County and Kansas: 2000	28
II-8 Barber County Housing Characteristics	33
III-1 How Long have You Lived in the Community	37
III-2 Do You Own or Rent Your Home	37
III-3 How Has the Community Changed Over the Past Two Years	38
III-4 How Will the Community Change Over the Next Two Years	39
III-5 What Aspects of the Community Do You Consider Strong Points . .	40
III-6 How Long Would You Prefer to Live in the Community	40
III-7 Where is Your Employment Located	42
III-8 If You Work Outside the Community, What Factors Would Influence You to Work in the Local Economy	42
III-9 Is There a Computer in Your Home	43
III-10 Does Your Household Have Access to the Internet	43
III-11 Do You Feel You Need Additional Computer Training	44
III-12 How Comfortable are You at Using a Computer	44

LIST OF CHARTS
Continued

<u>Chart</u>	<u>Page</u>
IV-1 How Long Have You Lived in the Community	47
IV-2 How Has the Community Changed Over the Past Two Years	48
IV-3 How Will the Community Changed Over the Next Two Years	48
IV-4 What Aspects of the Community Do You Consider Strong Points . . .	49
IV-5 Do You Currently Have an After-School Job	50
IV-6 How Many Hours Do You Work on Average Each Week	50
IV-7 What is Your hourly Wage	51
IV-8 How Comfortable are You Using a Computer	52
IV-9 Do You Feel You Have Adequate Computer Skills to Prepare You for the Future	52
IV-10 Upon Graduation You Plan to	53
V-1 What Do You Consider the Current State of the Economy in the County/Community with Regards to Economic Improvement	55
V-2 Which Forms of Economic Growth are Best Suited for the County . .	55
V-3 Which Types of Business Do You Prefer to Have the Greatest Impact on the Economic Growth in the County	56
V-4 What is Your Primary Source for Retail Goods	57
V-5 What is Your Secondary Source for Retail Goods	57
V-6 What is Your Primary Source for Groceries	58
V-7 What Is Your Secondary Source for Groceries	58
VI-1 Applicant Shift Preferences	66
VI-2 Applicant Schedule Preferences	66
VI-3 High School Education	67

CHAPTER I

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The cities of Medicine Lodge and Kiowa recognize the need to improve the economic, fiscal, and social vitality of their communities and Barber County. Each desires to enhance the community's appeal as a place for beneficial businesses to locate and operate in order to meet the objective of improving the vitality of the area. They recognize that Barber County and municipal governments cannot make development occur unilaterally and that market forces not within the control of the County or municipal governments will ultimately impact the pace of development. The County and municipal governments, however, can direct and/or support policies, programs and initiatives to encourage firm growth and retention. This can be accomplished primarily by working to enhance the civic, social, and physical infrastructure, or local economic environmental conditions, to help beneficial businesses adapt and remain successful.

The City of Medicine Lodge and RSI, Inc., located in Kiowa, KS retained the services of Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc, (IRC) to conduct market and economic research and analysis in order to complete an independent assessment of conditions in and trends affecting Medicine Lodge, Kiowa and Barber County. This was done in an effort to attract an outsourcing contract through the Revitalizing America Project. Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.'s research and analysis was directed toward:

- Developing an information base for the implementation of an ongoing economic development program;
- Identifying opportunities and constraints for attracting and retaining desirable businesses;
- Identifying the comparative advantages that these target industries derive from a Barber County location; and
- Identifying the economic development policies and programs on both state and federal levels that enhance private sector economic conditions and capabilities.

WORK COMPLETED

In order to accomplish the study objectives, Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc. performed the following principal tasks:

1. Data collection and analysis of relevant demographic, housing and labor force characteristics for Medicine Lodge, Kiowa and the serviceable area;
2. Data collection and analysis of employment changes and shifts by economic sector over time, and between sectors within the local and regional economies and analysis of gross receipt trends by economic sector and jurisdiction in order to: (a) derive a profile of the economic structure and employment base; and (b) identify the potential available workforce of the serviceable area;
3. A survey and analysis of results from a sample of industrial and non-industrial firms, and interviews with real estate developers and real estate brokers, leaders of financial institutions, merchants, farmers, manufacturers, and representatives of healthcare providers and educational institutions as well as municipal and economic development professionals to: (a) identify the assets and liabilities of the area from the perspective of firms that are currently located in the communities; (b) ascertain the factors important in attracting new firms and encouraging the health and retention of existing firms in Medicine Lodge, Kiowa and Barber County; and (c) obtain insight into the types of industries likely to be attracted to the area;
4. Synthesized the results, conclusions, and recommendations associated with the research and analysis undertaken by Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc. into elements of a strategic action economic development plan. The plan contains: (a) a summary of identified opportunities and constraints; (b) primary target industries; and (c) the rationale for their selection. The plan reflects on the resources and strengths of the community and identifies policies which can be implemented and actions that will help indigenous and complementary new businesses create and sustain their competitive advantages so they can succeed, remain, and grow in the community.

ORGANIZATION OF REPORT

Chapter II describes the demographic, labor force, and housing characteristics of Medicine Lodge, Kiowa and Barber County. Chapters III through V present the results of Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.'s surveys and interviews of trade area residents. This data presents insight into the viewpoints of local residents as it relates to living conditions, retail conditions, and the public's views on the current economic structure and future economic endeavors. Chapter VI presents an analysis of the available employment base of Medicine Lodge, Kiowa and the serviceable area.

Appendix A presents a copy of each of the surveys distributed by IRC to local residents. Appendix B presents a copy of the survey distributed to the business community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The rest of this chapter outlines the recommended elements of an economic development plan as it relates to the Revitalizing Rural America Project for Medicine Lodge. These elements include:

- A statement about the primary challenge and mission of the economic development and/or recruitment plan for Medicine Lodge and Kiowa;
- The rationale for the selection of the Revitalizing Rural America Program and the factors that make Medicine Lodge and Kiowa desirable locations for corporate partners.

CHALLENGE AND MISSION

The primary challenge and mission for Barber County as it pertains to the Revitalizing Rural America Program will be to continue to support the existing economic base reliant upon the mining and agriculture sectors while fostering the development of conditions that will attract, retain, and expand a greater proportion of newer and more diverse businesses. This will be accomplished by utilizing the communities' existing telecommunications infrastructure.

Barber County: A Proposal for Partnership

The general objective of the economic development plan includes increasing the economic and social health of Medicine Lodge and Kiowa. Specific goals consistent with this objective include:

- Encouraging the retention and expansion of existing businesses and institutions;
- Attracting new businesses that find Medicine Lodge and Kiowa a productive and viable location;
- Creating and implementing plans and actions that respond to the needs of beneficial businesses in order to help them succeed; and
- Creating a positive social and economic environment that attracts families to the community.

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

The results of IRC's demographic and economic analysis, field research, interviews, and surveys have resulted in the identification of comparative advantages a corporation will derive from outsourcing to Medicine Lodge and Kiowa. Comparative advantages refer to the attributes that enable firms to effectively, and therefore, profitably compete in their industries. The primary comparative advantages of the area include the following:

- Ample, low-cost land available for development;
- A low cost housing market that help keep living costs down, as well as wage and salary requirements;
- Sufficient supply of semi-skilled and low-skilled workers. The interviews, surveys, and studies indicate that communities and their serviceable area includes a stable, indigenous labor force, with a reputation for a strong work ethic and a preference for staying in the area because they see it as a desirable place to raise a family;
- A positive business climate and a form of sincere, civic pride and can-do attitude not commonly found in many communities today;



- A progressive, independent telecommunications provider with a vested interest in creating successful economic development endeavors;
- Availability of natural resources to retain existing businesses and industries and possibly foster the growth of new enterprises.

COMPARATIVE DISADVANTAGES

The field research, interviews and surveys suggest that the constraints on capturing potential demand opportunities on economic development include the following:

- A location geographically isolated from major population and employment centers (relates to both access to markets and access to transportation linkages);
- Lack of proximity to major airport and interstate highway transportation links;
- Limited supply of high-skilled workers with strong advanced educational competencies.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS AND POLICIES

In order to facilitate the growth of businesses within the community the following actions and policies are presented for consideration.

CONCENTRATE ON SERVING EXISTING FIRMS IN MARKET AREA

The generalizations drawn from a synthesis of the results of the surveys and interviews suggest that Barber County should concentrate economic development efforts on serving existing firms in the immediate area and accommodating the expansion or consolidation needs of those firms located within 200 mile radius seeking additional locations or more efficient and/or larger facilities. Should a multi-site company from outside the region appear interested in establishing a local facility, a concentrated effort to meet the company's location and site requirements should be made. Such actions, however,

should be spurred by evidence of interest rather than a “shot gun” approach that attempts to reach numerous out-of-the-region, multi-site firms.

Hold Retention Meetings

Commence holding business retention meetings to identify or monitor concerns and recurring issues, including labor and real estate requirements with existing businesses. IRC’s surveys and interviews identified existing businesses that have an interest in potentially expanding their facilities or replacing obsolete space with space that better meets their current and long-term requirements.

MAKE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Assist in the development of an infrastructure that serves industrial parks and retail facilities, which can provide workplace and retail space that will attract and enhance a critical base for industry expansion. While the City and County should not give developers a “free-ride”, they should indicate a willingness to cooperate in mutually beneficial efforts to stimulate economic development.

CONTINUE TO MAKE “QUALITY OF LIFE” IMPROVEMENTS

The interviews and review of secondary data suggests the tendency for out-migration to be led by younger, more educated individuals. These residents’ concerns with life in Barber County relate to insufficient recreational, shopping and entertainment opportunities. Thus a continued effort to improve each community as a residential location that serves to attract the kind of talented labor, manufacturers, outside service contracts, and innovative businesses is needed. Community leaders must encourage the type of housing, shopping, restaurants, parks, libraries, and other community services and amenities that appeal to middle class households. The type of community that appeals to individuals and households seeking better quality of life or economic opportunities will also encourage locally based entrepreneurs to expand their enterprises as well as attract new firms seeking stable sources of labor with a strong work ethic.

MONITOR PROGRESS AND RESULTS

The results of the economic development initiative should be monitored. The data presented in this report pertaining to the number of jobs in Medicine Lodge, Kiowa and Barber County, median housing value, and population levels should be used as benchmarks to evaluate community progress and recognize shifts in demand or growth opportunities.

CHAPTER II

CHAPTER II

**ANALYSIS OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC, LABOR FORCE,
AND HOUSING STOCK CHARACTERISTICS OF BARBER COUNTY**

INTRODUCTION

Chapter II presents information and data relating to the population, labor force, and the housing market for Medicine Lodge, Kiowa and Barber County as a whole. IRC uses the data and information presented in Chapter II to understand the past and present economic conditions and forecast future opportunities for the area. In this chapter, IRC has created a database that can be used to describe and monitor Barber County's demographic and labor force make-up, housing market, and related characteristics that have a bearing on economic development.

The factors that influence the type and amount of job growth in a community or region include its geographical surroundings, its economic history, physical and social infrastructure, the amount and type of residential development, existing uses of land, and economic development policies. The quality and quantity of the labor force and housing, in turn, have a bearing on a community's prospect for economic development. The specific characteristics of the labor pool, such as educational level, skill mix, and income range influence the kinds of businesses that can successfully operate in a given area. IRC reviewed the following factors in order to assess the economic conditions in Medicine Lodge, Kiowa and Barber County.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS AND TRENDS

Population Trends

Table II-1 presents the location distribution of population in Barber County in 1980, 1990, and 2000.

Table II-1 Barber County Population ¹								
Location	Population #			Percentage of County Population %			Change in Population: 1980 - 2000	
	1980	1990	2000	1980	1990	2000	#	%
Sun City	85	88	81	1.2	1.5	1.5	-4	-4.7
Hardtner	336	198	199	4.8	3.4	3.7	-137	-40.8
Kiowa	1,409	1,160	1,055	20.1	19.7	19.9	-354	-25.1
Hazelton	143	128	144	2.0	2.2	2.7	1	0.7
Sharon	283	256	210	4.0	4.4	4.0	-73	-25.8
Isabel	137	104	108	2.0	1.8	2.0	-29	-21.2
Medicine Lodge	2,384	2,453	2,193	34.0	41.8	41.3	-191	-8.0
Barber County Total	7,016	5,874	5,307				-1,709	-24.4
¹ For those Counties with a federal or state correctional facility, each population value is adjusted downward by the corresponding annual inmate population. This adjustment accounts for the fact that, though residents, prisoners do not pay taxes to support the costs of services provided by County government.								
Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.								

Approximately 5,500 people lived in Barber County in 2000. Roughly 20 percent of the county population, or 1,055 people lived in the City of Kiowa. Approximately 41 percent of the population, or 2,193 people lived in the City of Medicine Lodge. In 2000, approximately 25 percent, or 1,317 lived in unincorporated portions of Barber County.

Between 1980 and 2000, the population of the County has declined by almost 25 percent or 1,709 people. The population of Medicine Lodge has seen less of a decline at 8 percent or 191 people. Kiowa noticed a significant decrease in population over the same period of years at 25.1 percent or 354 people. Hardtner, Sharon and Kiowa were the communities most drastically affected over this span of twenty years. The population of these three communities comprises approximately 27 percent of the total for the county; however, they represent 33 percent of the total loss of population.



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It is also worthy to note that while Barber County's total population fell by almost 25 percent from 1980 to 2000, the largest part of that decline occurred from 1980 to 1990. In the period from 1990 to 2000, the County's population only declined approximately 10 percent.

There were two significant events that affected the Barber County workforce in the mid 1980's, accounting for a sizeable portion of the plunge in population. The first, and most significant to the local economy, was the loss of jobs in the mining industry. As illustrated in Chart II-2, the local workforce employed by the mining industry fell by 359 laborers during a three-year span, 1985-1987, from 692 employees to 333 employees.

Also contributing to the population decline during the decade was the "oil crash" experienced in early 1986. The oil industry is a staple of the area's regional economy. Thus the dramatic shifts in prices from December 1985 through August 1986, around a 65 percent decrease in price to a low of nearly \$11.50/barrel, also had an effect on Barber County's workforce.

Chart II-1 illustrates the correlation that can be made between the effects experienced by the local economy and the population shifts felt during this time period. The years following the layoffs in the mining industry and the oil crash of 1986 show a significant decrease in population for Barber County. During this period the average yearly unemployment rose 2.3 percent from 3.3 percent in 1985 to 5.6 percent in 1986, and 4.8 percent in 1987, Barber County lost 590 residents or almost 10 percent of the entire population.

Based on this evidence, a trend becomes apparent. External economic forces can have a severe effect on the local economy of Barber County. Throughout the 1990's and into the new century, Barber County has experienced continual population decline, which is heightened during times of increased unemployment.

While the correlation between the rate of unemployment and decreases in population is not a new phenomenon to economists, sociologists, or even the average rural resident, it is being stated to demonstrate a point. Without a diversification of current industries and the influx of new businesses to the communities of Barber County, the region will continue to lose segments of its population each time an external market factor significantly impacts the economy.



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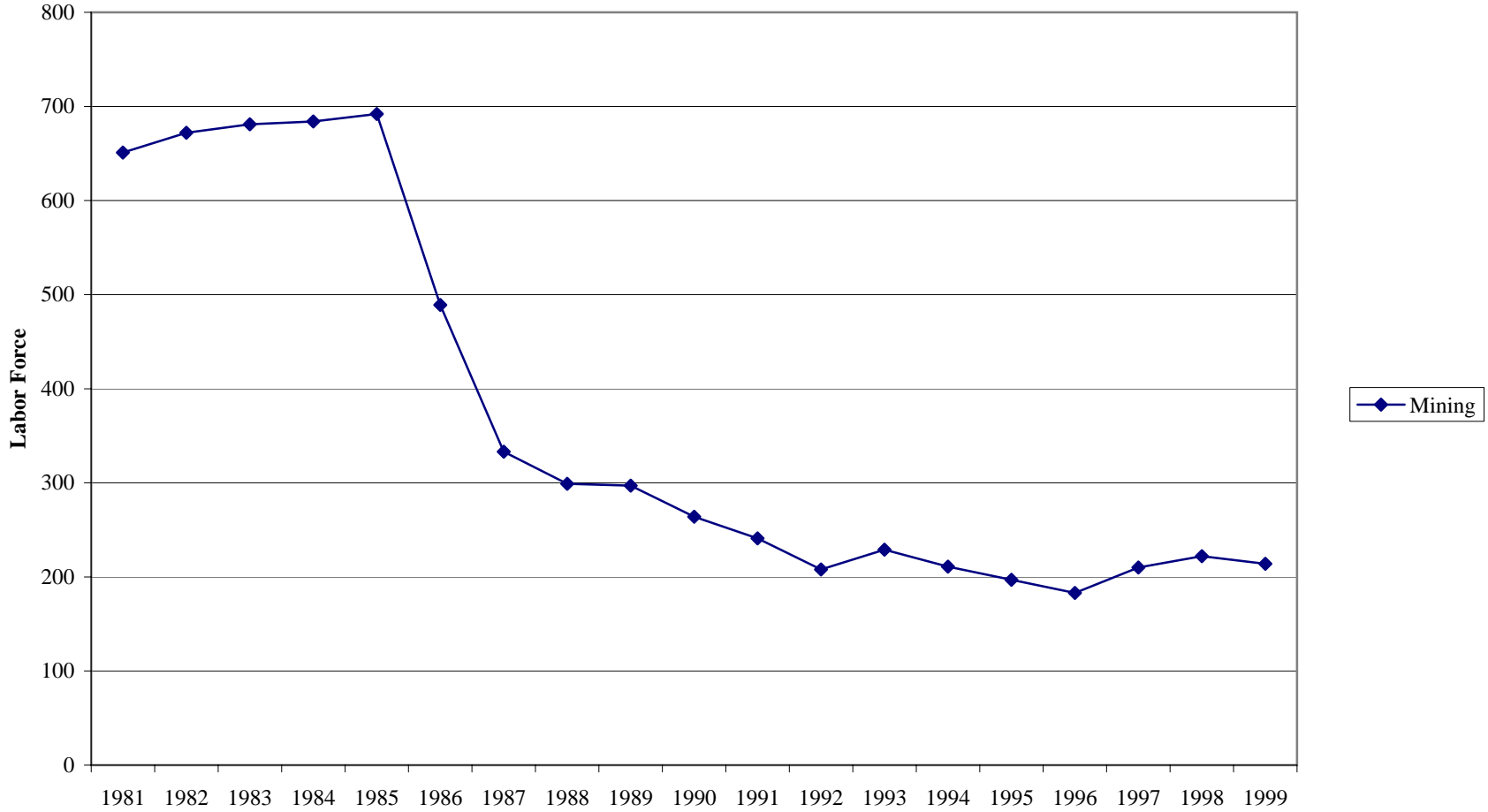
This would not be as important if the population returned to the county when unemployment rates fell. As illustrated in Chart II-1, this has not been the case and directly contributes to the net loss of population over the previous decades.



Chart II-1
Barber County Population and Unemployment Rates



Chart II-2
Employment by Industry
Mining for Barber County: 1981 - 1999



* Counts are by place of work

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis (REIS); Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.

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Table II-2 presents the migration of population in Barber County between 1995 and 2000.

Table II-2							
Population Migration							
for Barber County: 1995 - 2000							
	Same Residence in 1995 and 2000	Within County Movers	Domestic Immigrants	Movers from Abroad	Total Immigration	Out-Migrants	Net Migration (Total In - Out)
Total	3309	930	785	15	800	1304	-504
5 to 9 yrs	204	60	75	0	75	97	-22
10 to 14 yrs	277	81	80	0	80	85	-5
15 to 19 yrs	268	92	54	3	57	148	-91
20 to 24 yrs	46	69	80	4	84	164	-80
25 to 29 yrs	23	75	61	2	63	136	-73
30 to 34 yrs	110	79	57	0	57	69	-12
35 to 39 yrs	206	85	66	0	66	77	-11
40 to 44 yrs	319	77	30	0	30	91	-61
45 to 49 yrs	335	39	37	0	37	82	-45
50 to 54 yrs	232	56	51	4	55	34	21
55 to 59 yrs	208	53	53	0	53	34	19
60 to 64 yrs	188	31	27	2	29	97	-68
65 to 69 yrs	268	25	17	0	17	23	-6
70 to 74 yrs	201	12	29	0	29	39	-10
75 to 79 yrs	220	41	44	0	44	0	44
80 to 84 yrs	131	38	8	0	8	20	-12
85 yrs and over	73	17	16	0	16	108	-92
Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.							

Of the 5,307 residents living in Barber County in 2000, over 60 percent, or 3,309, had lived in their current residence for a minimum of five years. Additionally, almost twenty percent, or 930 residents, moved, but stayed within the County. Barber County experienced 800 residents migrating to the County, while 1,304 residents left. Of the 800 new residents, 60 percent were under the age of forty.



Household Formation and Average Household Size Trends

Household formation, size, and income are among the basic determinants for estimating demand for housing and retail goods and services. Household formation and household size characteristics also provide an indication of the potential labor supply. Table II-3 presents past and current average household size data for Barber County, Medicine Lodge, Kiowa, Sharon, Hardtner, and Kansas as a whole.

Table II-3					
Households and Persons per Household for					
Medicine Lodge, Kiowa, Sharon, Hardtner, Barber County and Kansas 1990-2000					
Places	Households			Persons Per Household ¹	
		#	Percentage Change: 1980-2000	#	
	1990	2000	%	1990	2000
Medicine Lodge	1014	909	-10.4	2.42	2.41
Kiowa	510	451	-11.6	1.97	2.34
Sharon	89	75	-15.7	2.88	2.80
Hardtner	86	88	2.3	2.30	2.26
Barber County	2,333	2,256	-3.3	2.47	2.32
Kansas	944,726	1,037,891	9.9	2.62	2.84
¹ Household size is determined by dividing the population that lives in households by the number of households. Those that do not live in households are determined to live in group quarters.					
Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.					

While the population of Barber County declined between 1990 and 2000 by 10.6 percent, the number of households declined by only 3.3 percent or 77 households. All of the jurisdictions experienced a decrease in average household size between 1990 and 2000 with the exception of Kiowa. The decrease in average household size explains the relatively small loss in the number of households in Barber County, given its decrease in population.

The average household size in Barber County has been consistently lower than the average household size for Kansas as a whole. The average household size in Kansas has increased from 2.62 persons per household in 1990 to 2.84 persons per household in

Barber County: A Proposal for Partnership

2000. Conversely, the average household size in Barber County continued to decrease from 2.47 persons per household in 1990 to 2.32 persons per household in 2000.

The number of households in Medicine Lodge declined by ten percent, or 105 households. When compared to the loss of population over the same time period, this statistic justifies the minimal decrease in average household size. Conversely, the loss of population in Kiowa when compared to the loss of households substantiates the increase in persons per household.



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Age Distribution Trends

Table II-4 outlines the age distributions for communities in Barber County, the county as a whole, and Kansas as a whole for the year 2000.

	Medicine Lodge	Kiowa	Sharon	Hardtner	Barber County	Kansas
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Under 5 Years	5.5	5.9	3.3	4.5	5.0	7.0
5 to 9 Years	6.6	5.6	7.1	1.5	6.4	7.3
10 to 14 Years	7.9	7.4	10.0	6.5	8.3	7.6
15 to 19 Years	8.3	6.4	8.1	7.5	7.8	7.8
20 to 24 Years	4.0	3.1	1.4	2.5	3.2	7.1
25 to 29 Years	3.8	3.0	4.3	1.0	3.4	6.4
30 to 34 Years	5.1	4.5	5.2	4.5	4.8	6.5
35 to 39 Years	7.9	5.9	4.8	4.5	6.8	7.7
40 to 44 Years	7.8	7.9	5.7	6.0	8.1	7.9
45 to 49 Years	7.6	7.0	9.0	6.0	7.7	7.2
50 to 54 Years	5.7	6.4	6.7	10.1	6.4	6.0
55 to 59 Years	4.6	6.3	7.6	7.5	5.6	4.5
60 to 64 Years	4.2	4.7	4.3	6.0	4.8	3.7
65 to 69 Years	5.2	4.9	5.2	8.5	5.7	3.4
70 to 74 Years	4.6	4.5	3.3	7.0	4.7	3.2
75 to 79 Years	4.8	7.2	6.7	5.5	5.2	2.8
80 to 84 Years	3.4	5.2	5.2	5.5	3.4	2.0
85 Years and Over	2.8	4.1	1.9	5.0	2.6	1.9
2000 Median Age	40.6	45.4	45.0	53.5	42.6	35.2

Sources: US Bureau of the Census; Innovative Research & Associates, Inc.



Barber County: A Proposal for Partnership

The skewed distribution that exists in Table II-4 suggests that in the coming years, Barber County and, in particular, the smaller communities that comprise it will experience a significant decline in population as they lose both the younger members of their communities and the elderly. When compared to state averages, Barber County consistently ranks well below the average for residents aged 20-35 years of age. Though many factors may account for this trend, lack of career opportunities should be placed near the forefront. Without a significant change in the availability of dependable economic opportunities this trend will continue.

These statistics highlight one of the primary concerns the majority of rural communities are experiencing today; the out-migration of the younger generation. It is imperative that teenagers see opportunities for employment within their communities and Counties. Understandably, many youth leave the area to continue their educations, however, communities must both provide and highlight the areas of opportunity so that (a) the younger generation will consider returning to the area post graduation; (b) those who do not move from the area for educational reasons seek out the employment opportunities locally.



Income and Distribution of Income Trends

Income is not only an important variable for estimating retail demand and leakage but is itself an indication of the vibrancy and structure of the economic base. Table II-5 shows the estimated per capita and median household income in Medicine Lodge, Hardtner, Kiowa, Sharon, Barber County, and Kansas as a whole for 1990 and 2000. The figures are in 2003 dollars, or in other words, have been adjusted to take into account the effects of inflation.

Table II-5						
Household and Per Capita Income Comparison for						
Medicine Lodge, Hardtner, Kiowa, Sharon, Barber County, and Kansas: 1990 - 2000 ¹						
	Median Household Income			Per Capita Income (2003\$) ²		
	1990 \$	2000 \$	Percent Change 1990 - 2000 %	1990 \$	2000 \$	Percent Change 1990 - 2000 %
Medicine Lodge	30,999	37,695	21.6	16,210	17,351	7.0
Hardtner	18,480	34,074	84.4	12,692	19,659	54.9
Kiowa	23,949	33,290	39.0	13,572	17,820	31.3
Sharon	32,937	39,754	20.7	13,448	13,639	1.4
Barber County	30,238	35,712	18.1	15,015	17,774	18.4
Kansas	38,425	43,427	13.0	18,726	21,921	17.1
¹ Adjusted to 2003 dollars ² Annual personal income estimates were obtained from the Bureau of Economic Analysis' Regional Economic Information System. Personal income is generally higher than measures such as adjusted gross and money income because it consists of income received by both individuals and nonprofit institutions serving individuals. Specifically, personal income includes wages and salaries, income from rent, self-employment earnings, dividends, interest, government employee retirement benefits, social security benefits, and nontaxable transfer payments, such as Medicaid, Medicare, and welfare benefits.						
Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index; U.S. Bureau of the Census; Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.						

When examining this table, it is important to consider the means of comparison. Though the median household income for Kansas experiences the lowest percentage increase between 1990 and 2000 among the communities studied in this report, it is still \$3,500 higher than any of the communities for the year 2000. Also of interest is the disparity between Sharon's household and per capita incomes. Based on the high household

Barber County: A Proposal for Partnership

income, it would be expected that per capita income for this community would be similar. The figures in Table II-5 show the opposite however, with Sharon's per capita income ranked the lowest among the communities listed. Thus the numbers should be considered jointly for each community rather than as individual statistics.

At first glance Table II-5 might suggest that Barber County experienced a period of robust economic growth during the last decade, but given the small size of the communities that comprise Barber County, other factors may have accounted for this growth. The influx of perhaps a handful of upper-middle class households into a community the size of Hardtner could have a large impact on the average income and produce the shifts seen in Table II-5. The loss of low-income households could also account for shifts in income.

Additional reasoning may be found in Barber County's emergence from a period of stagnant economic growth during the 1990's, thus facilitating a period of rapid expansion. While this provided a period of dramatic growth, it still has left Barber County far behind Kansas as a whole and in need of added opportunities to fuel further economic progress.



Barber County: A Proposal for Partnership

Table II-6 presents distribution of household income, unadjusted for inflation, for the largest concentration of population within Barber County, Medicine Lodge, of the County as a whole, and of the State from 1990 to 2000. Charts II-3, II-4, and II-5 provide additional analysis of income distributions within Medicine Lodge, Barber County, and Kansas respectively.

	1990			2000		
	Medicine Lodge	Barber County	Kansas	Medicine Lodge	Barber County	Kansas
Households by Income ¹	%	%	%	%	%	%
Less than \$10,000	19.8	20.4	15.8	8.8	9.7	8.6
\$10,000 to \$14,999	13.9	14.4	9.9	7.7	7.5	6.4
\$15,000 to \$19,999	11.3	11.7	10.0	6.2	8.7	6.6
\$20,000 to \$24,999	10.5	10.5	9.9	10.1	9.8	7.1
\$25,000 to \$29,999	9.5	8.2	8.9	7.4	8.2	7.0
\$30,000 to \$34,999	7.0	8.3	8.5	9.4	9.0	7.0
\$35,000 to \$39,999	5.7	5.7	7.0	8.4	7.1	6.4
\$40,000 to \$44,999	5.3	4.6	5.9	12.0	9.7	6.2
\$45,000 to \$49,999	5.7	5.1	4.8	5.0	4.4	5.4
\$50,000 to \$59,999	5.1	5.1	7.1	9.0	9.5	9.6
\$60,000 to \$74,999	3.6	3.2	5.8	7.6	7.6	10.8
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1.3	1.3	3.5	4.8	4.2	9.6
\$100,000 to \$124,999	0.2	0.9	1.3	2.6	2.2	4.2
\$125,000 to \$149,999	1.0	0.4	0.5	0.3	1.2	1.9
\$150,000 or more	0.0	0.1	1.1	0.8	1.2	3.2

¹ Values are in nominal dollars (i.e. not adjusted for inflation).

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.



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Chart II-3
Household Income Levels for Medicine Lodge: 1990 - 2000

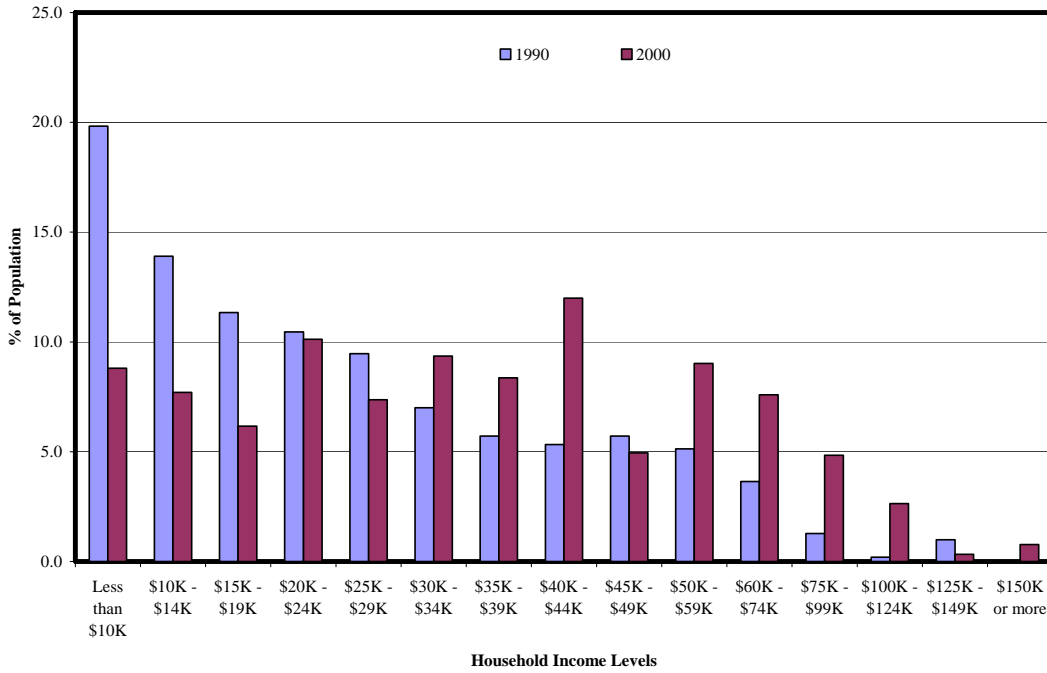
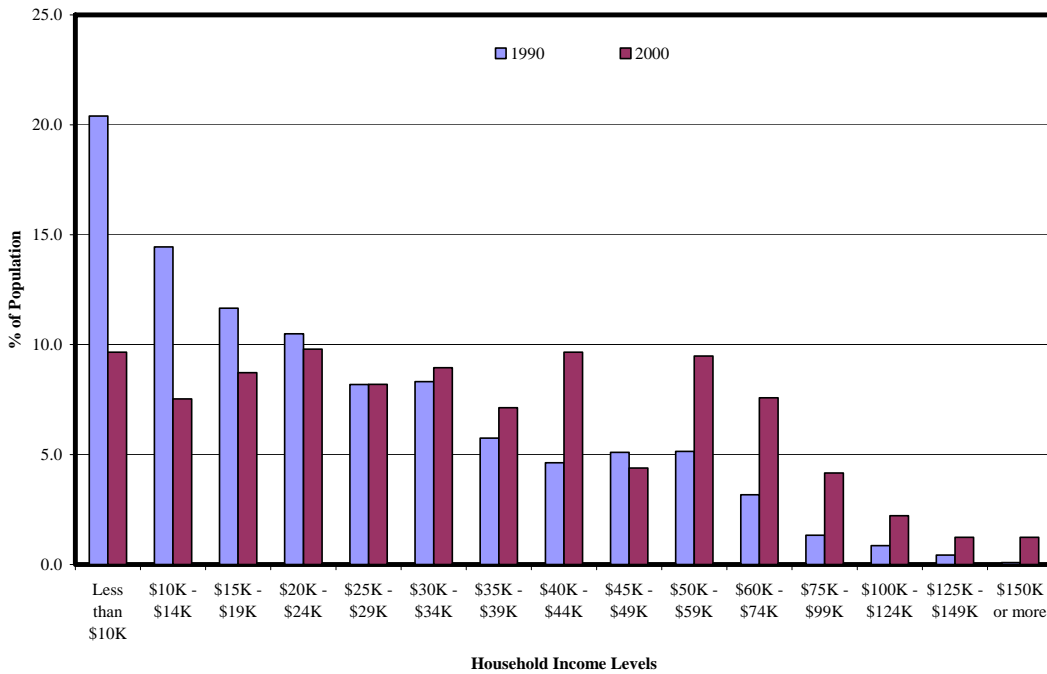
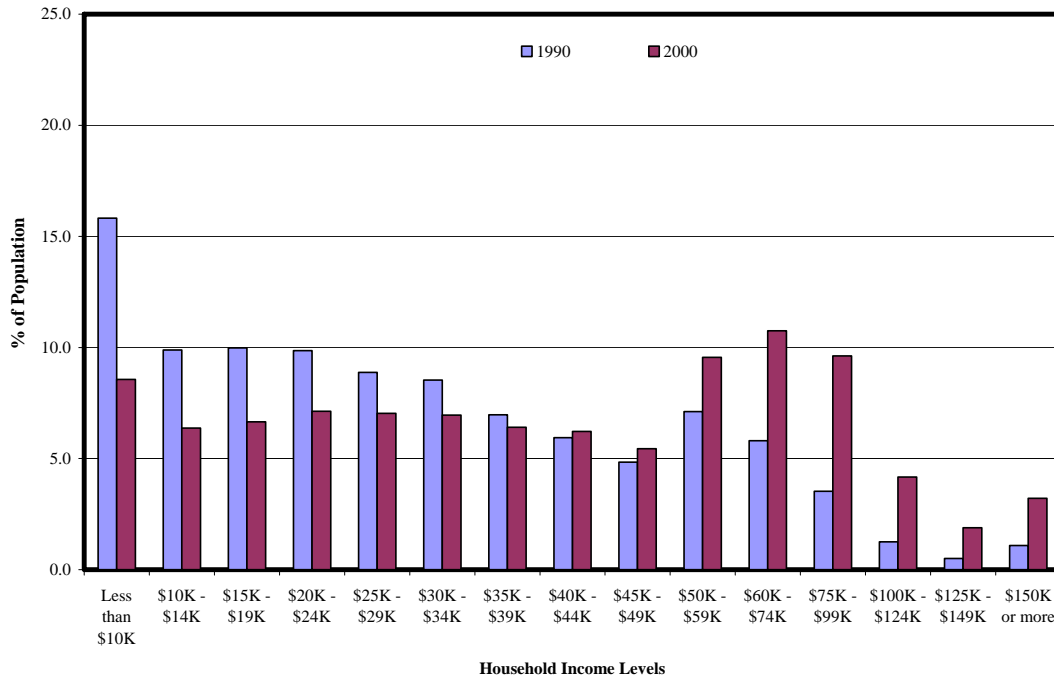


Chart II-4
Household Incomes for Barber County: 1990 - 2000



**Chart II-5
Household Incomes for the State of Kansas: 1990 - 2000**



Two important changes in income levels are easily seen in Table II-6. The first is the large increase in households with incomes greater than \$100,000 in Barber County. In 1990 only 1.4% of the total population’s income was greater than \$100,000. By the year 2000 this number had increased to 4.6%. While this may seem like a small increase, it is actually a three-fold increase over 1990. This increase in the \$100,000 income bracket has the potential to greatly impact the economic status of small communities, where changes in income are easily magnified.

The second change is the reduction in households with incomes less than \$30,000. In 1990, 65.2% of households in Barber County had incomes less than \$30,000. In 2000, the number had dropped to 43.9%. Undoubtedly, households moving above the \$30,000 income level accounted for part of this change, however, given the population decline outlined in Table II-1, it is unlikely that this accounted for the entire decline in low-income households.

The loss of the low-income households would have an effect similar to that seen in the increase of high-income households, namely an increase in median household income for

Barber County: A Proposal for Partnership

the communities of Barber County. Based on these arguments, thoughts of economic growth should be tempered against the reality of population shifts and declining job opportunities for low-income households.

The three charts provide further evidence of the economic disparity that existed in 1990 and the ability of the County to recover. Visually the reduction in low-income houses in the first two charts indicates a period of recovery during the 1990's for Medicine Lodge and Barber County, while Kansas experienced a much smaller shift in incomes. These graphs provide a clearer image of the economic disparity that existed in 1990 and the ability of the County to recover. However, in spite of this recovery, a significant portion of households should still be considered low-income and in need of additional opportunities to help further their economic status.



Educational Attainment

Table II-7 presents the educational attainment of residents 25 years or older for Medicine Lodge, Barber County, and Kansas as a whole.

Table II-7 Educational Attainment of Population 25-Years or Older in Medicine Lodge, Kiowa, Barber County, and the State of Kansas: 1990 - 2000								
Educational Attainment	Medicine Lodge		Kiowa		Barber County		Kansas	
	%		%		%		%	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Less Than High School Graduate	22.5	17.1	21.8	11.8	20.6	14.2	18.7	14.0
High School Graduate	40.6	32.0	36.3	30.0	39.0	32.8	32.8	29.8
Some College	18.2	22.3	22.4	30.0	20.5	26.6	21.9	24.6
Associate, Bachelor's Graduate or Professional Degree	18.7	28.7	19.5	28.2	19.8	26.4	26.5	31.6
Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.								

From 1990 to 2000, Barber County experienced a shift in educational levels that was significantly higher than that experienced by the State of Kansas as a whole. Both segments representing those with a high school diploma or less dropped significantly. The reduction in individuals with less than a high school diploma was 5.4 percent, 10 percent and 6.4 percent for Medicine Lodge, Kiowa, and Barber County respectively. The reduction in high school graduates was 8.6 percent, 6.3 percent, and 6.2 percent for Medicine Lodge, Kiowa, and Barber County respectively. These reductions in lower education levels were offset with an increase in those who have some college or a college degree. Medicine Lodge experienced an increase of 4.1 percent for those with some college while the increase in those with college degrees leaped ten percent. Kiowa residents with some college raised 7.6 percent while those with college degrees increased by almost nine percent. Barber County as a whole experienced similar increases of 6.1 percent and 6.6 percent for those with some college and those with college degrees respectively. These shifts were all more significant than the corresponding shifts experienced by the State as a whole.

Barber County: A Proposal for Partnership

These statistics indicate that Barber County has created an environment in which educational advancement is recognized by residents as important to economic and community development. By achieving educational milestones, such as graduation from high school or college, residents hope to further their economic interests. This has only been a partial success in Barber Country to date, as was evidenced in Table II-6. Though the advances in education have undoubtedly led to increases in income, not all residents have been rewarded for their investment. By creating new economic opportunities, residents who have worked to increase their educational level will find jobs that provide increased income levels and will encourage other community members to pursue higher levels of education.



Table II-8				
Employment Status in 2000 for the Population 16 Years				
and Over: Medicine Lodge, Hardtner, Kiowa, Sharon				
	Hardtner	Kiowa	Medicine Lodge	Sharon
Total employed civilian population 16 years and over	78	474	1066	103
Management, professional, and related occupations:	21	177	303	17
Management, business, and financial operations	14	71	109	11
Mgmt., except farmers and farm managers	7	31	73	6
Farmers and farm managers	4	26	16	5
Business and financial operations	3	14	20	0
Professional and related occupations:	7	106	194	6
Computer and mathematical	0	0	0	0
Architecture and engineering	0	3	0	0
Life, physical, and social sciences	0	0	0	0
Community and social service	2	15	25	0
Legal	0	4	10	0
Education, training, and library	3	57	105	6
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	0	0	0	0
Healthcare practitioner & technical	2	27	54	0
Service occupations:	9	56	205	9
Healthcare support	1	8	41	1
Protective service	0	0	7	0
Food preparation and serving	4	19	61	3
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	4	17	54	1
Personal care and service	0	12	42	4
Sales and office occupations:	22	107	182	38
Sales and related	2	44	58	25
Office and administrative support	20	63	124	13
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	0	10	9	8
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations:	8	53	168	14
Construction and extraction	6	22	112	4
Installation, maintenance, and repair	2	31	56	10
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations:	18	71	199	17
Production	3	16	84	11
Transportation and material moving	15	55	115	6

Labor Force Characteristics

Chart II-6, Chart II-7 and Table II-9 show Barber County and Kansas labor force characteristics by occupation.

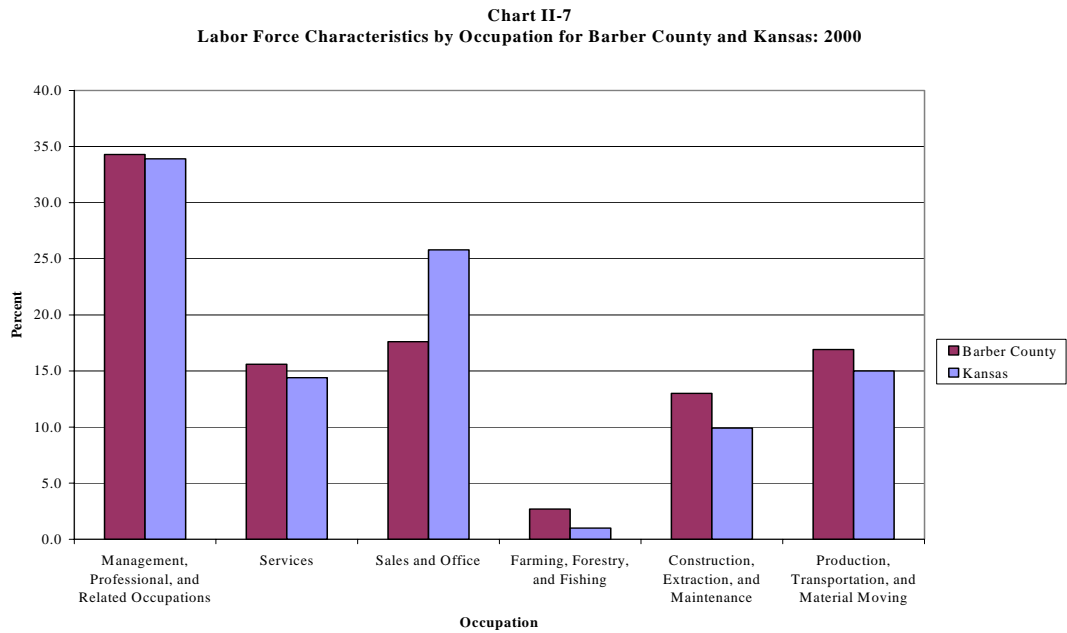
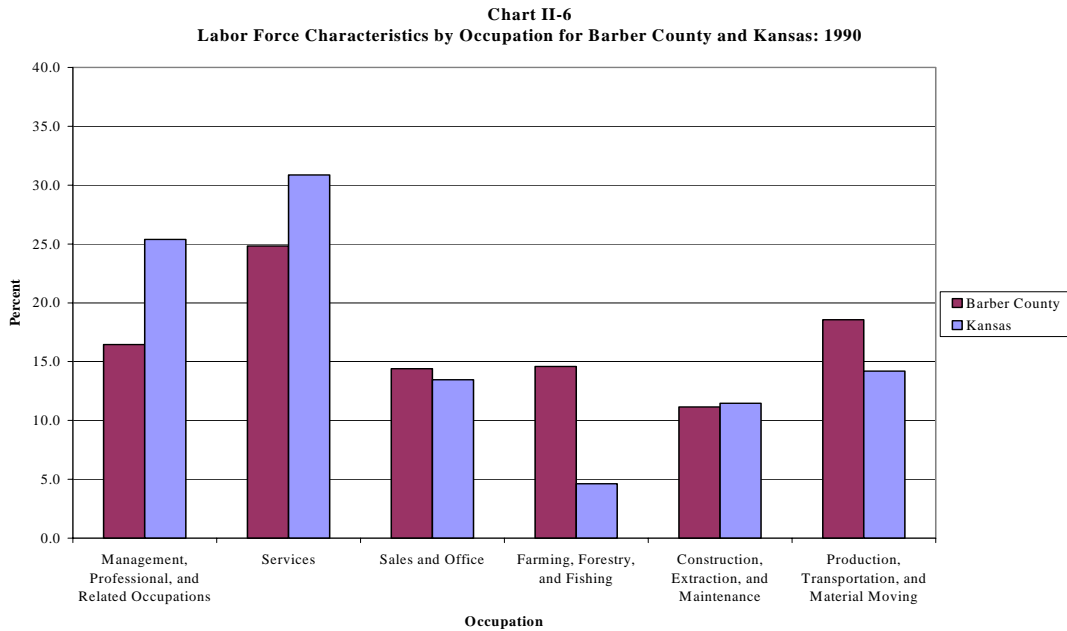


Table II-9				
Labor Force Characteristics by Occupation for Barber County and Kansas: 1990 - 2000 ¹				
Occupation	Barber County		Kansas	
	1990 %	2000 %	1990 %	2000 %
Management, professional, and related occupations	16.4	34.3	25.4	33.9
Services	24.8	15.6	30.9	14.4
Sales and office/administrative support	14.4	17.6	13.5	25.8
Farming, fishing, and forestry	14.6	2.7	4.6	1.0
Construction, extraction, and maintenance	11.2	13.0	11.5	9.9
Production, transportation, and material moving	18.6	16.9	14.2	15.0
¹ U.S. Census used different classifying methods for occupations in 1990 and 2000. This table estimates the 1990 figures based on the 2000 occupation definitions.				
Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.				

Between 1990 and 2000 Barber County saw a dramatic increase in the number of people employed in management/professional occupations. This increase was much greater than that which was experienced by the State as a whole and brought Barber County in line with the rest of the state. Examining the chart closer however, a significant decrease in jobs related to agriculture is seen. Given the changes in job classification between 1990 and 2000, it would appear that the increase in management positions were accounted for by farmers declaring themselves managers. Thus there appears to be only a small increase in the percentage of managerial/professional jobs in Barber County. When combined with the remaining statistics, which show either minimal growth or large declines, there appears to be at little change in the overall occupational structure of Barber County.

Proportion of Residents Who Work Outside Their Places of Residence

Table II-10 indicates that approximately 88 percent of the employed labor force in Barber County (i.e. Barber County residents who hold jobs) worked within the County in 2000.

Table II-10	
Estimates of the Proportion of Residents	
Who Work in Barber County and Labor Importation	
Number of Residents in Labor Force in 2000	2,517
Number of Non-Farm Jobs in Barber County in 2000	2,003
Percent of Employed Residents that work Within the County	87.9%
Percent of Local Jobs Filled by Non-Resident Workers	2.2%
Sources: Bureau of Economic Analysis; U.S. Bureau of the Census; Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.	

Non-resident workers filled approximately two percent of Barber County jobs. The data Table II-10 presents suggests that the County exports a small portion of its labor force. The data also suggests that Barber County does not serve as a job magnet for the labor force residing in surrounding counties. This compares unfavorably to the nearly 96 percent of Barber County residents who held jobs in Barber County in 1990.

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Average Commute to Work	Medicine Lodge			Kiowa			Barber County		
	1990	2000		1990	2000		1990	2000	
	%		+/-	%		+/-	%		+/-
Did not work at home ¹	95.6	97.7	2.2	96.3	97.0	0.7	93.3	94.8	1.6
Less than 5 minutes	23.9	23.9	0.0	46.9	30.5	-16.4	26.9	23.3	-3.5
5 to 9 minutes	47.4	47.1	-0.3	28.3	28.3	0.0	31.0	33.3	2.2
10 to 14 minutes	12.2	13.2	1.0	6.4	9.1	2.7	10.7	14.5	3.8
15 to 19 minutes	8.8	2.1	-6.7	4.7	7.6	2.9	11.8	8.2	-3.6
20 to 24 minutes	1.3	1.9	0.6	4.1	3.6	-0.5	6.7	5.7	-1.0
25 to 29 minutes	0.1	1.2	1.1	0.0	1.3	1.3	2.2	1.6	-0.6
30 to 34 minutes	3.8	2.6	-1.1	8.4	14.7	6.3	7.1	6.2	-0.9
35 to 39 minutes	0.7	0.9	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.0
40 to 44 minutes	0.7	2.2	1.5	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.8	1.4	0.6
45 to 59 minutes	0.7	1.1	0.4	0.9	1.3	0.5	1.1	1.6	0.5
60 to 89 minutes	0.3	2.3	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.4	0.8
90 or more minutes	0.2	1.5	1.3	0.0	3.1	3.1	0.7	2.4	1.7
Worked at home ¹	4.4	2.3	-2.2	3.7	3.0	-0.7	6.7	5.2	-1.6
¹ Percentage of Total Work Force									
Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.									

Table II-11 shows the average commute times for Medicine Lodge, Kiowa, and Barber County. Though there is a slight increase in the number of jobs requiring commutes greater than 30 minutes for Medicine Lodge, a significant portion of jobs require little travel and are located within the community. This is advantageous for Medicine Lodge, in that it induces consumer spending and enhances retail operations. Though residents may wish to travel to purchase some goods, such as luxury items, they are much more likely to purchase staple goods, such as groceries, in Medicine Lodge. The creation of additional jobs will only serve to further this trend and will provide local businesses with added income.



Workforce Participation Rates

Table II-12 shows the workforce participation rates of Barber County, the State of Kansas, and the United States.

Table II-12			
2000 Workforce Participation in Barber County, Kansas, and the United States			
	Barber County	Kansas	U.S.
Population aged 16 and older	4177	2,059,160	217,168,077
Percent in Labor Force	62.4%	67.5%	63.9%
Employed (share of civilian labor force)	61.1%	63.9%	59.7%
Unemployed (share of civilian labor force)	1.2%	2.8%	3.7%
Females aged 16 or older	1,198	1,054,952	112,185,795
Percent in Labor Force	54.6%	60.9%	57.5%
Employed (share of civilian labor force)	53.3%	58.2%	54.0%
Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.			

Based upon the number of Barber County and Kansas residents 16-years of age or older, the labor force participation rate in 2000 for Barber County was approximately 62 percent. This labor force participation rate is about five percent lower than the State of Kansas participation rate of almost 68 percent and comparable to the nearly 64 percent participation rate for the nation.

Labor participation rates of females in Barber County are lower than the State of Kansas at 55 percent, as compared to the State average of nearly 61 percent. However, the participation rates are consistent with those of the nation as a whole at nearly 58 percent.

Based on the percentages for the whole population and females in particular, Barber County appears to utilize a smaller portion of its available workforce, when compared to state and national averages. This is encouraging to business considering locating facilities in Barber County, because of the immediate availability of workers. When coupled with the advancement in educational training, which has been undertaken by County residents,

Barber County: A Proposal for Partnership

a very competitive argument for location of businesses to Barber County can be made versus other areas of the state or nation.

HOUSING GROWTH AND CHARACTERISTICS

Chart II-8 and Table II-13 summarize the housing characteristics for 1980, 1990, and 2000 for Barber County.

Chart II-8
Barber County Housing Characteristics

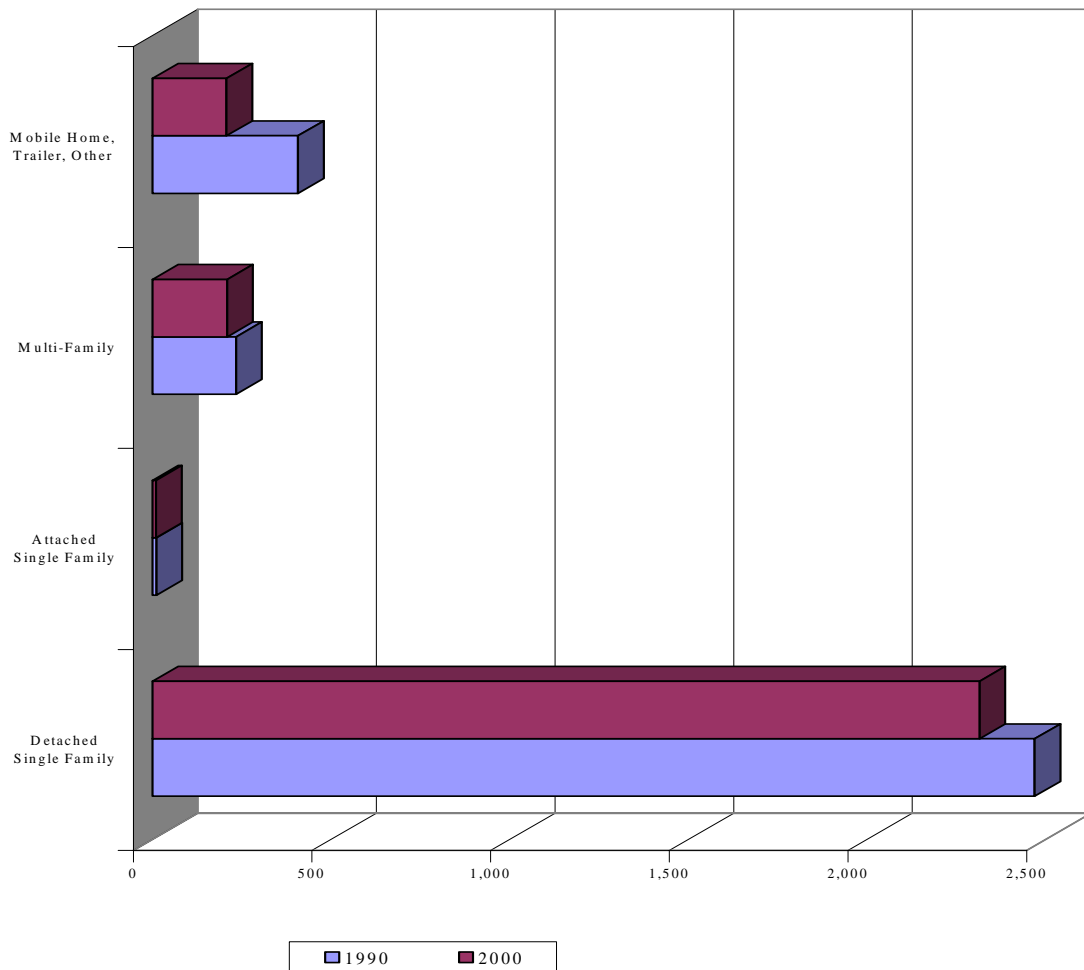


Table II-13						
Number and Proportion of Housing Units by Unit Type in Barber County: 1990 - 2000						
Type of Housing	1990		2000		Change in Units 1990 - 2000	
	Number of Units #	Proportion of Units %	Number of Units #	Proportion of Units %	#	%
Detached Single Family	2,468	79.1	2,314	84.5	-154	-6.2
Attached Single Family	11	0.4	10	0.4	-1	-9.1
Multi-Family	234	7.5	209	7.6	-25	-10.7
Mobile Home, Trailer, Other	407	13.0	207	7.6	-200	-49.1
Total	3,120	100.0	2,740	100.0	-380	-12.2

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.

The decline in housing units has been modest. Table II-13 shows that between 1990 and 2000, the supply of dwelling units in Barber County decreased by nearly 400 units or over twelve percent to 2,740 units. Detached single-family homes, which represented the largest segment, at 79 percent or approximately 2,450 homes in 1990, and almost 85 percent of the group at 2,300 homes in 2000, experienced a minimal decline of six percent or 150 units between the two periods. The largest change between 1990 and 2000 was experienced in mobile or trailer units. This segment was nearly cut in half, declining from 407 units in 1990 to 207 units in 2000.

CHAPTER III

**CHAPTER III
TRADE AREA RESIDENT SURVEY ANALYSIS**

INTRODUCTION

Resident's thoughts and opinions on current and future economic, cultural, and community issues were gauged through a series of surveys and interviews. The results of these efforts have yielded data which provide insight into the viewpoints of local residents and can be used to supply outside parties with a clear perspective on the culture of the local area. Data is presented both graphically and in table format, allowing for simple interpretation and use.

DATA COLLECTION

Surveys were mailed to random addresses within the community of Kiowa in an effort to gain an unbiased sampling of resident opinions. Each survey included a response sheet, cover letter detailing the importance of the survey to the local community, a self addressed, stamped envelope, and an overview of the Revitalizing Rural America Project. Personal interviews were also conducted by IRC staff as a means of bolstering the sample size and insuring a stronger representation of the population. Examples of the cover letter, resident survey, and one-page summary can be found in Appendix A.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A total of 300 surveys were distributed to Kiowa residents via the postal service. Of these, 106 surveys were returned, yielding a response rate of 35%. Additionally, 40 personal interviews were conducted, yielding a total of 146 responses.

Table III-1 summarizes residents' responses to ten questions relating to various community attributes. The highest percentage for each question is highlighted in yellow. Residents ranked Kiowa high in social attributes, such as schools, safety, churches, and as a favorable place to raise children. Jobs and economic opportunities were ranked at the low end of the spectrum, with few residents indicating that Kiowa provides strong employment opportunities.

A large majority of the respondents indicated they have lived in Kiowa for more than five years, with most of the residents preferring to own their own home rather than rent (Charts III-1 and III-2).



Table III-1 Resident Survey Results: Please rate the following features of the community based on a 10-point scale												
	VERY BAD			AVERAGE				VERY GOOD				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total Respondents	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	#	
As a Place to Live	0	0	1	1	7	5	9	24	22	32	106	
As a Place to Raise Children	1	0	0	0	2	5	4	15	21	53	107	
Child Care	2	3	3	6	24	12	11	16	7	14	97	
Public Schools	0	1	2	1	3	6	18	19	22	29	107	
Job and Economic Opportunities	8	12	18	13	21	12	9	3	3	1	108	
Safety	0	1	0	1	2	4	8	21	24	38	107	
Social Services	0	2	7	4	17	16	9	15	15	17	103	
Church Organizations	0	0	0	0	4	4	11	17	19	46	107	
The Upkeep of Homes and Apartments	2	0	3	4	7	15	22	25	14	7	107	
Park Maintenance and Repair	1	1	4	3	6	7	12	22	23	21	107	

Source: Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.

Chart III-1
How Long Have You Lived in the Community

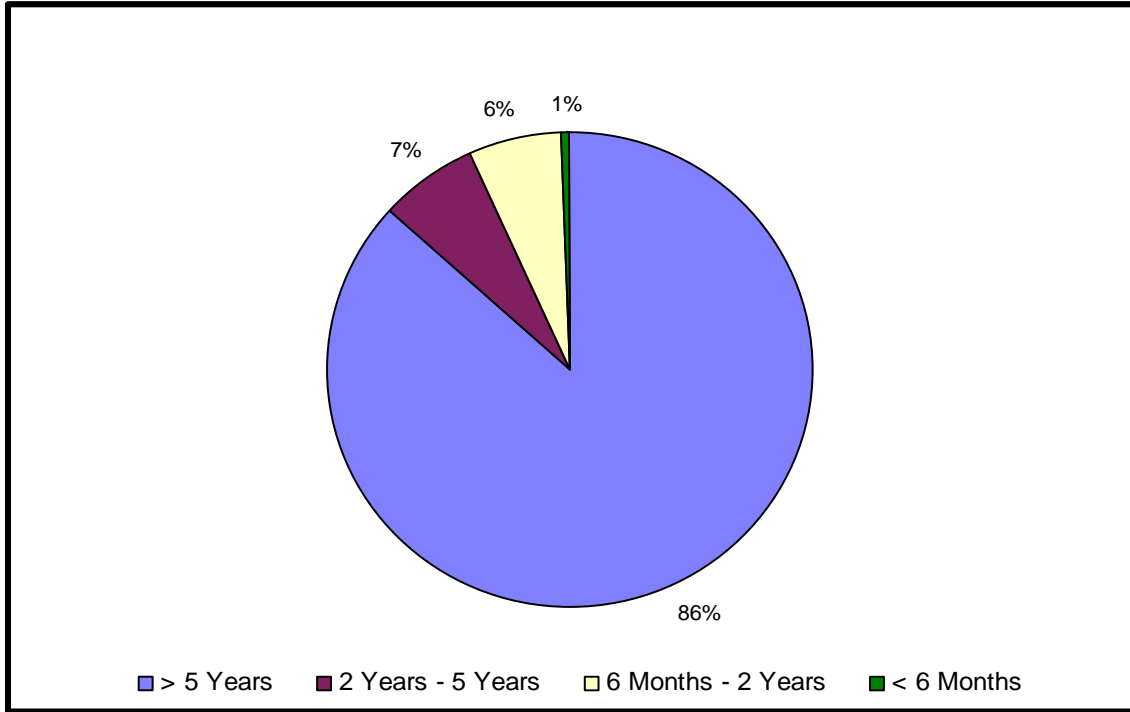
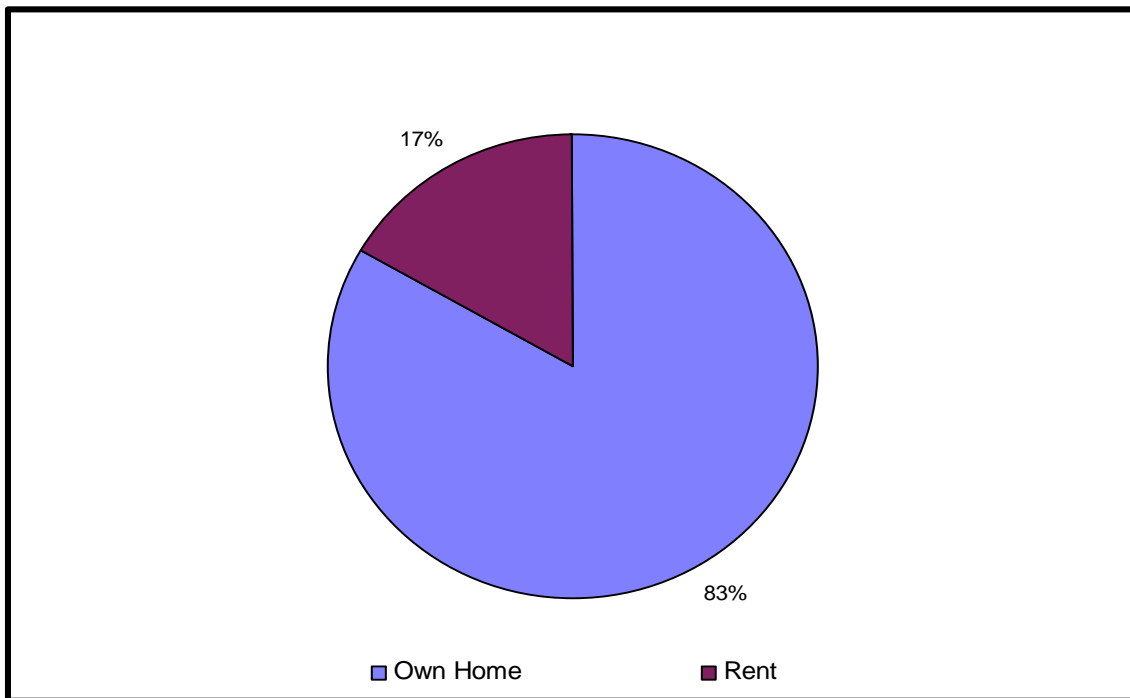


Chart III-2
Do You Own or Rent Your Home



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Chart III-3 examines residents' views on the overall changes experienced in Kiowa over the last two years. A majority of respondents believe the economy of Kiowa to be stagnant, while smaller, equal percentages believe the community to be improving or declining. Chart III-4 details residents' views on community change over the next two years. Although more residents have a positive outlook on the future of Kiowa, a majority still feel that it will remain stagnant or will experience decline.

Chart III-3
How Has the Community Changed Over the Past Two Years

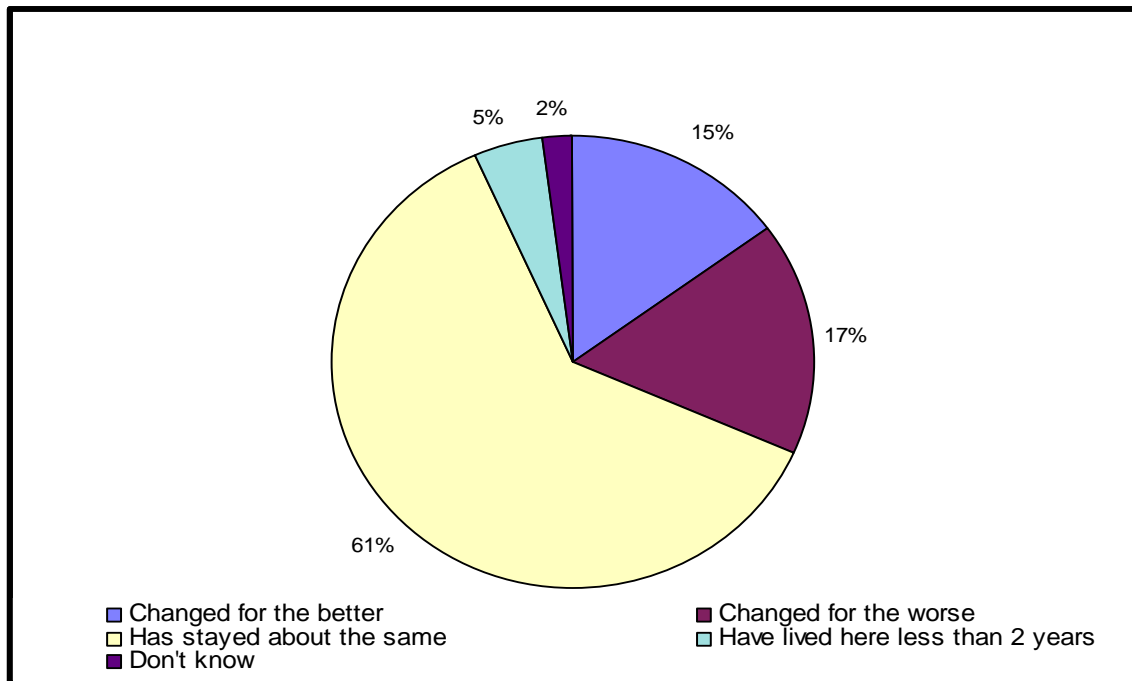


Chart III-4
How Will the Community Changed Over the Next Two Years

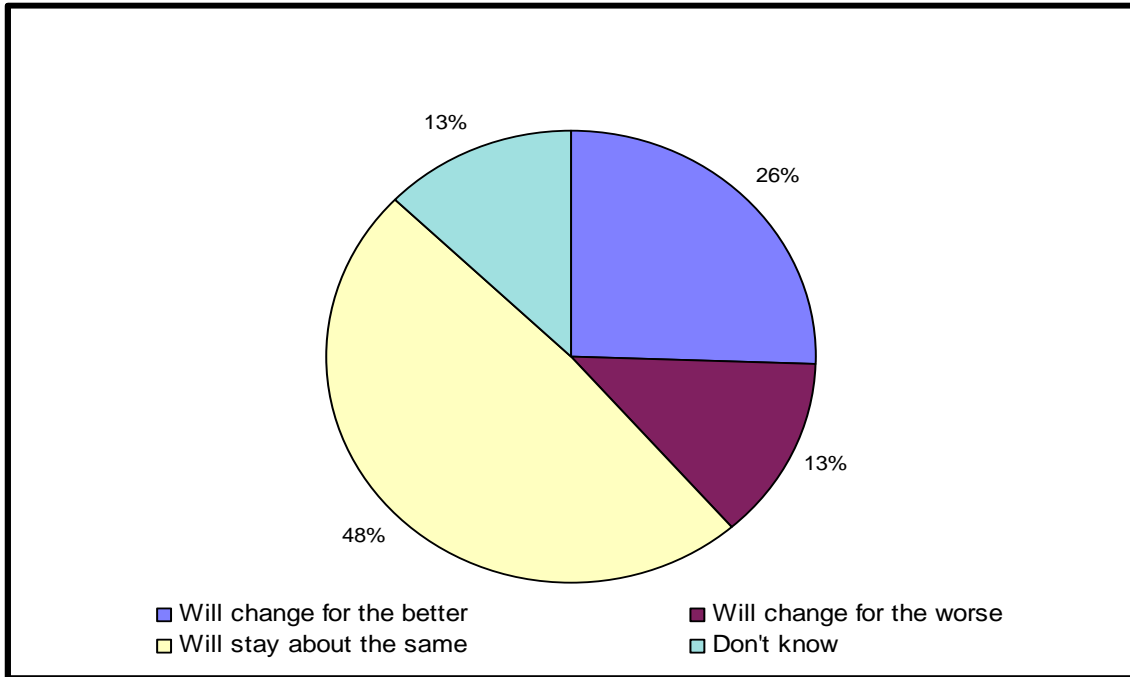
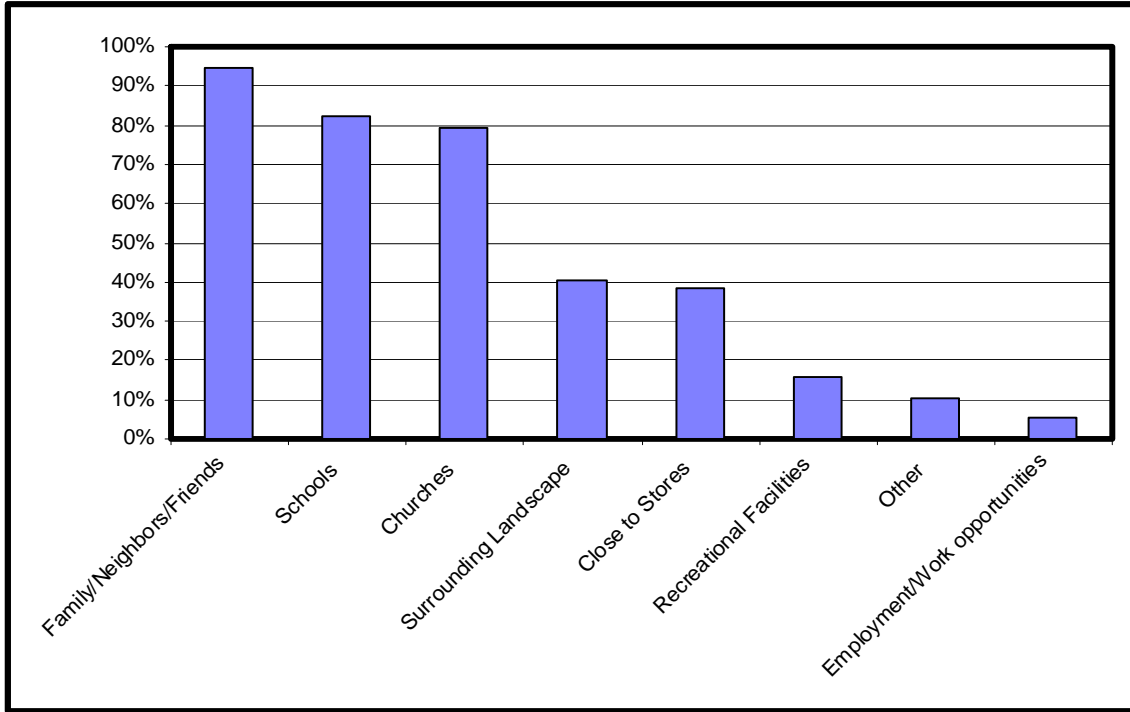


Chart III-5 provides a view of attributes which residents of Kiowa believe are strengths. Here residents ranked social and civic attributes, such as neighborhoods and churches, highly, while employment and retail opportunities were ranked very low. Though the lack of employment opportunities is troubling to residents, most desire to remain in the community, as shown in Chart III-6. No respondent indicated a desire to move immediately and only 15% desired to move within the next three years. Table III-2 shows that respondents consider unemployment the most severe problem facing their community with respect to other issues such as crime and drugs.

Chart III-5
What Aspects of the Community Do You Consider Strong Points



Note: Responses were not limited to one answer.

Chart III-6
How Long Would You Prefer to Live in the Community

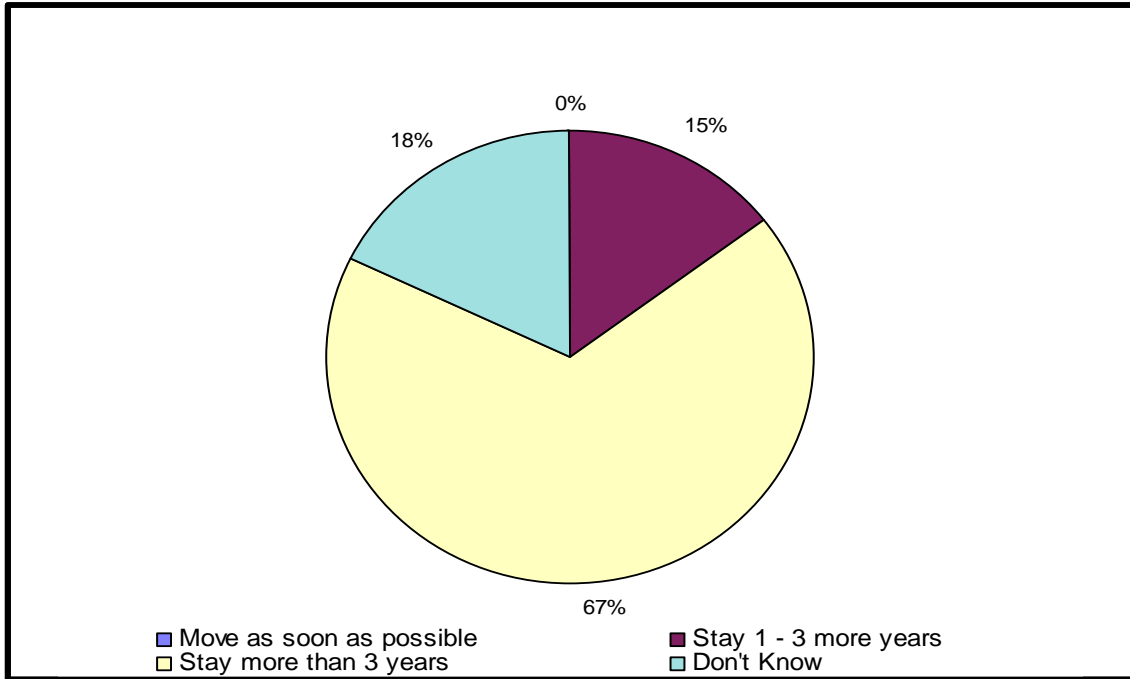


Table III-2					
Given the Situation, State if the Condition is a Major Problem, a Minor Problem, or Not a Problem					
	Major Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem	Don't Know	Total Respondents
	%	%	%	%	#
Violent Crime	0	11	87	2	140
Damage to Property	2	37	55	6	140
Litter or Trash On the Sidewalks and Streets	5	36	58	1	140
Vacant, Abandoned or Boarded Up Buildings	28	56	16	0	139
Drug Dealing	12	41	31	16	143
Noise	1	20	77	2	140
Unemployment	30	46	18	7	141
Source: Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.					

When examining the employment of residents IRC found a majority worked in and around the local community, while only 20% commuted more than 20 miles (Chart III-7). Those that did work outside the community were asked to indicate factors which would influence their seeking a job in Kiowa. Comparable pay and benefits were found to be the leading requirements for changing positions, while finding a comparable job lagged behind in overall importance (Chart III-8).

When examining computer skills, IRC found that a majority of residents owned a computer and had access to the internet (Charts III-9 and III-10). However, only a slight majority felt that they had adequate computer training and less than half felt very comfortable using a computer (Charts III-11 and III-12).

Chart III-7
Where is Your Employment Located

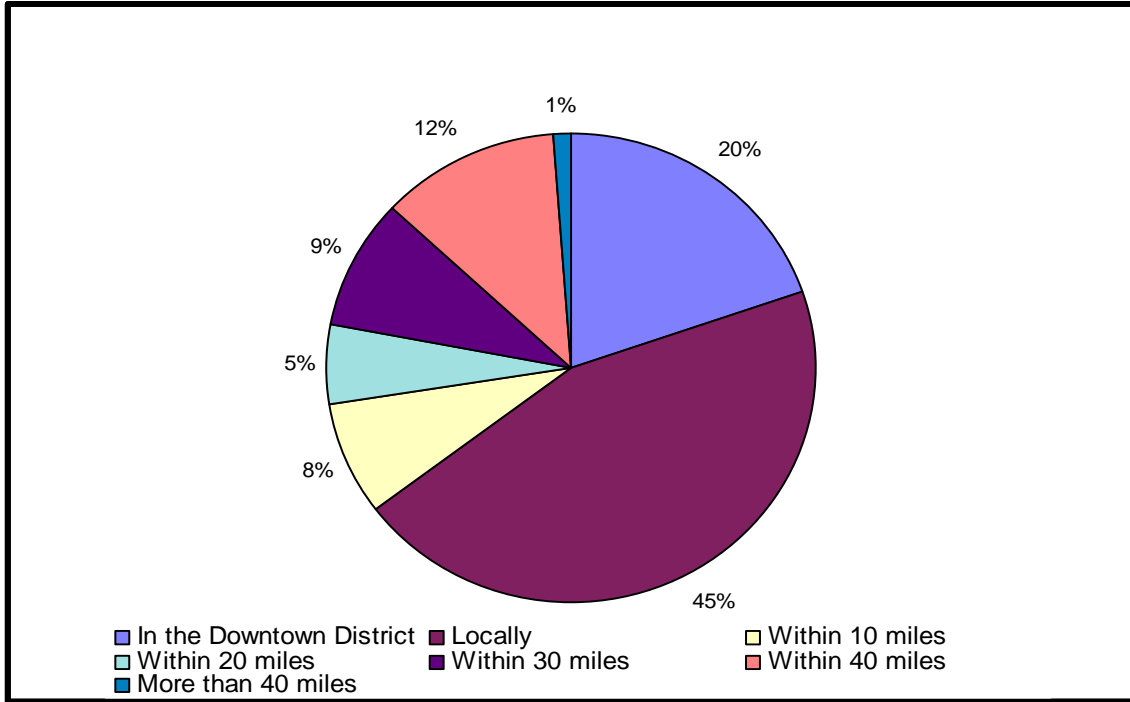
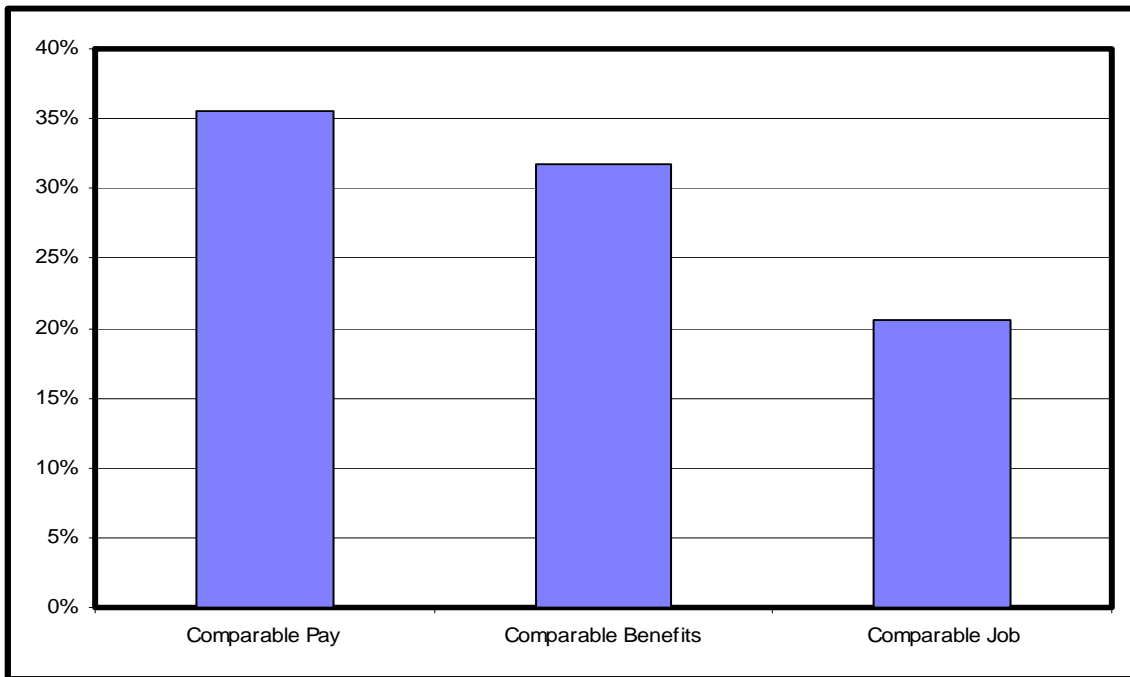


Chart III-8
If You Work Outside the Community, What Factors Would Influence You to Work in the Local Economy



Note: Responses were not limited to one answer.

Chart III-9
Is There a Computer in Your Home

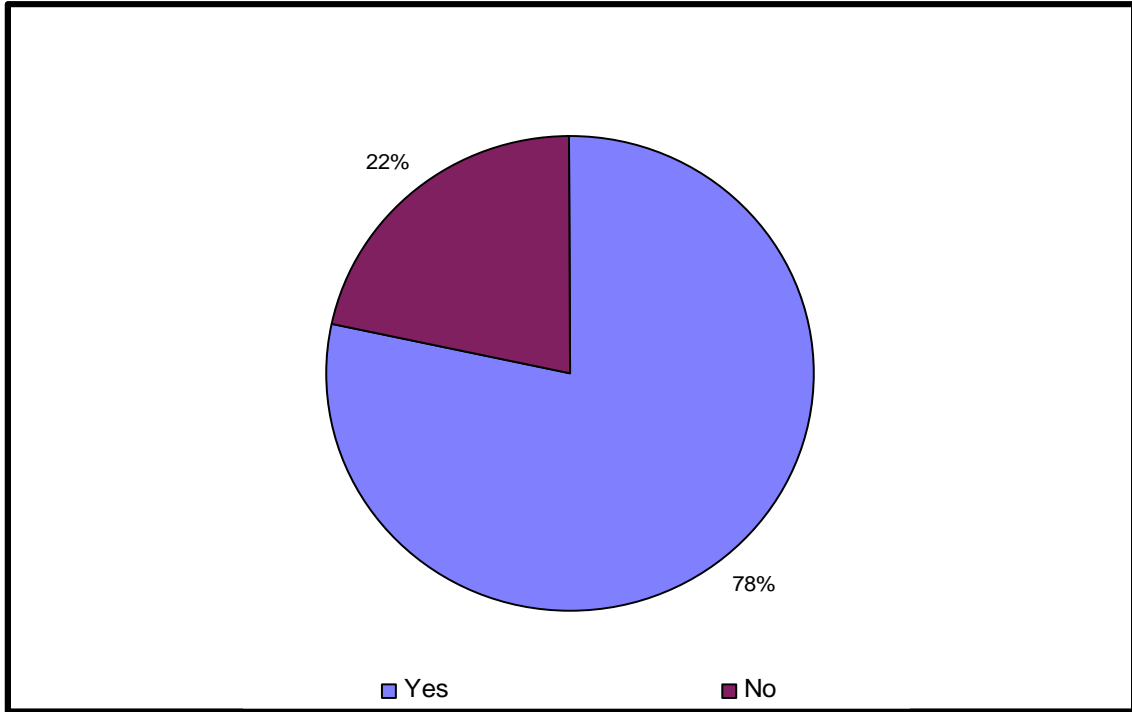


Chart III-10
Does Your Household Have Access to the Internet

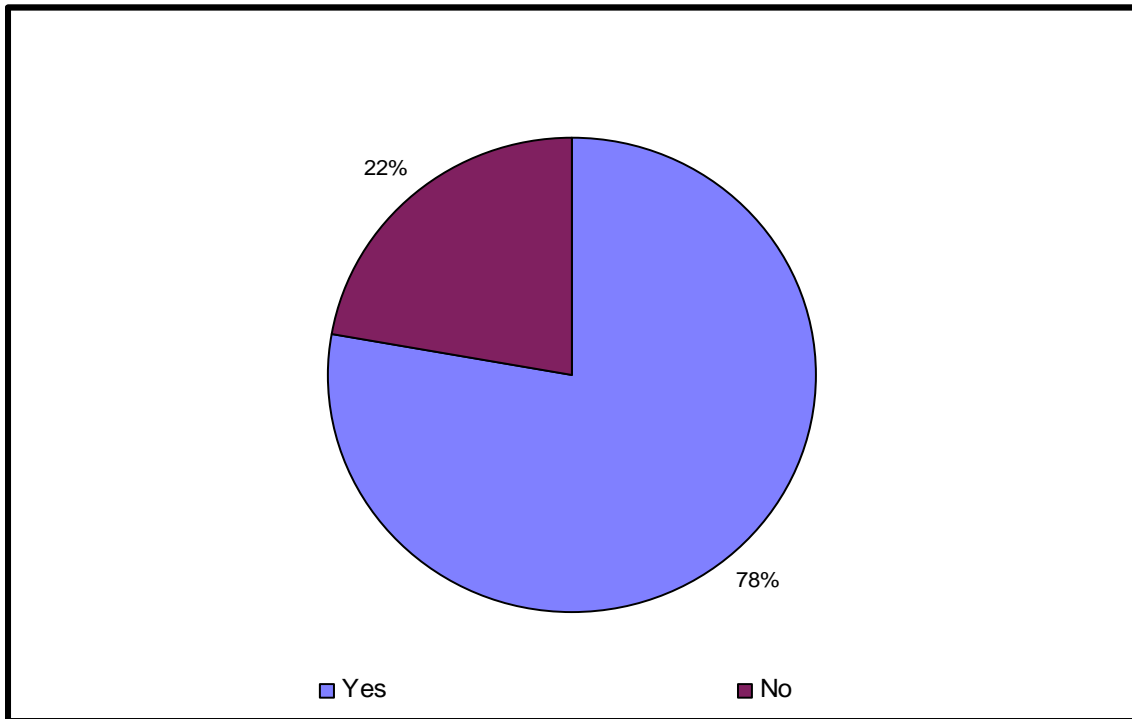


Chart III-11
Do You Feel You Need Additional Computer Training

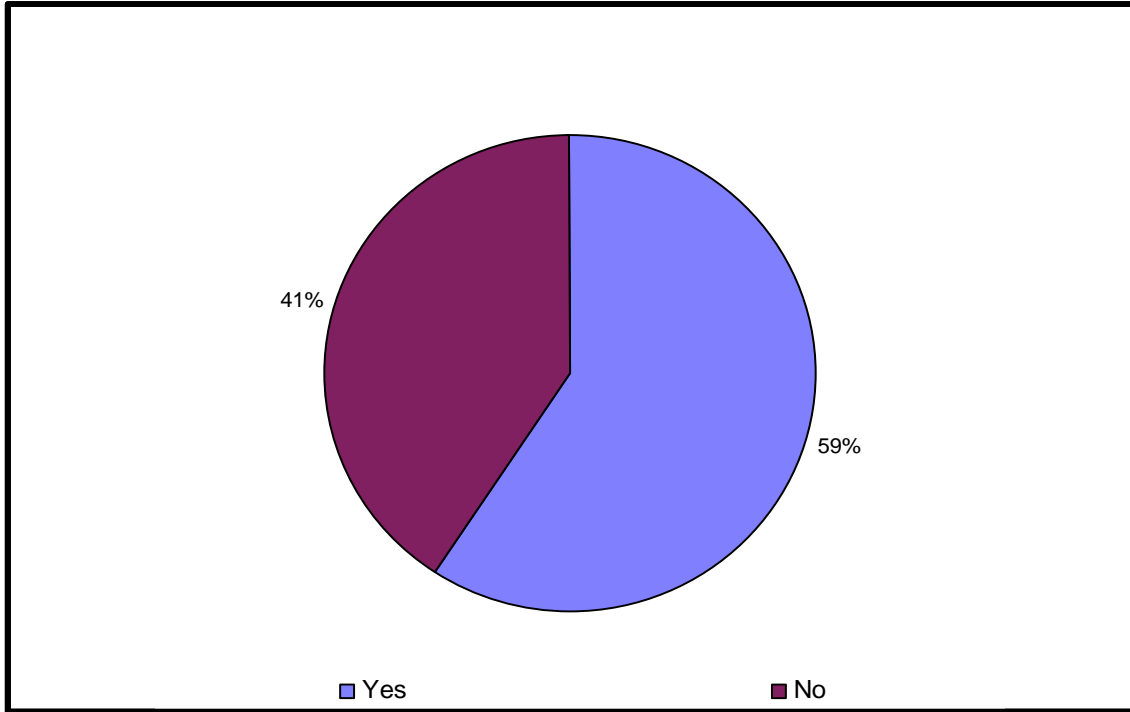
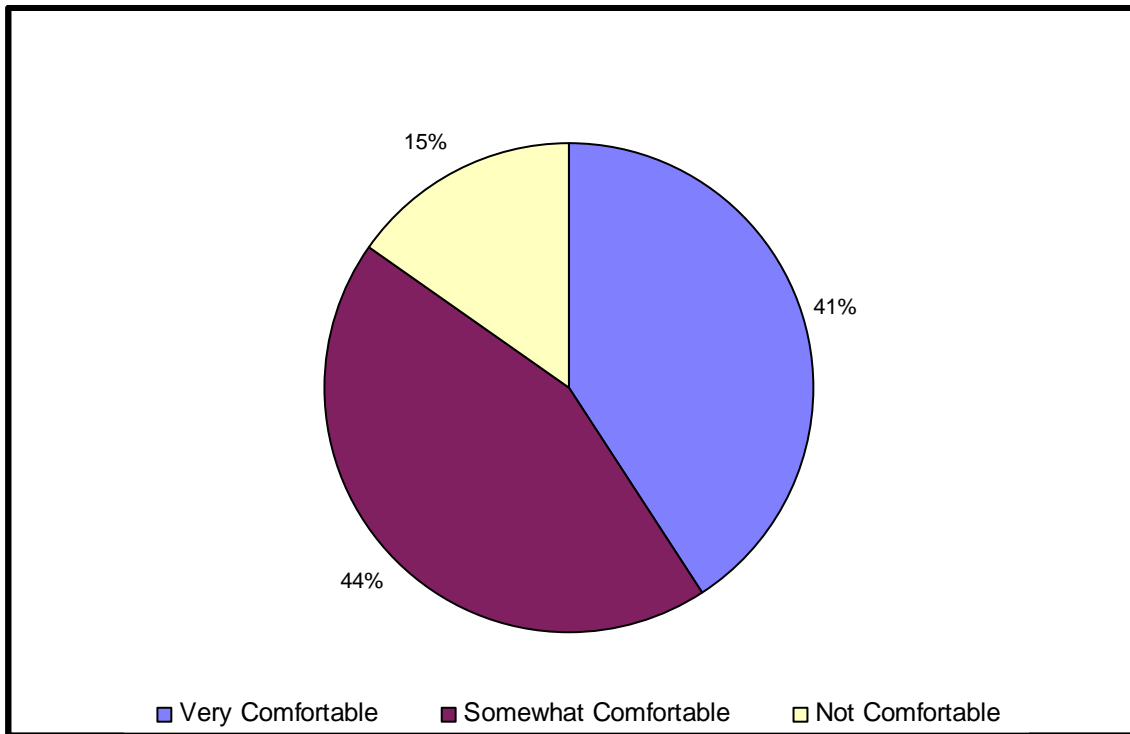


Chart III-12
How Comfortable are You Using a Computer



CHAPTER IV

CHAPTER IV

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

In addition to residents' thoughts and opinions on economic, cultural, and community issues, IRC also surveyed high school students to gauge their opinion of the community. The results of these efforts have yielded data which provide insight into the viewpoints of a segment of the future employment base for the area. Data is presented in a manner consistent with the previous chapter.

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected with the aid of high school administrators and faculty. Surveys were distributed to grades nine through twelve and were completed over the course of a single class period. A total of 71 surveys were collected from this segment of the population. An example of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Table IV-1 examines students responses to the ten community attribute questions asked of residents in Chapter III. The highest percentage for each question is again highlighted in yellow. The students ranked Kiowa high in the same categories as the residents of the community, though they were not as optimistic in each category as the residents. Jobs and Economic Opportunities were ranked low by the students, which was consistent with the responses by the residents. Social Services were also ranked low by the students, though this may stem from lack of knowledge/experience with the services provided in Kiowa rather than relation to actual quality.



Table IV-1 Student Survey Results: Please rate the following features of the community based on a 10-point scale												
	VERY BAD			AVERAGE				VERY GOOD				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total Respondents	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	#	
As a Place to Live	3	1	0	7	7	9	18	30	13	10	71	
As a Place to Raise Children	2	3	2	2	2	2	23	18	23	26	71	
Child Care	1	0	3	7	18	15	24	13	9	10	69	
Public Schools	3	0	0	18	10	13	16	21	10	7	71	
Job and Economic Opportunities	4	13	13	21	21	13	7	3	4	1	71	
Safety	2	0	2	2	3	6	13	31	19	23	71	
Social Services	3	0	8	9	26	20	12	15	6	2	66	
Church Organizations	3	0	0	0	5	6	12	32	23	18	70	
The Upkeep of Homes and Apartments	2	0	2	8	15	6	23	24	15	6	70	
Park Maintenance and Repair	1	3	3	9	10	10	21	21	18	3	69	

Source: Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.

Barber County: A Proposal for Partnership

Chart IV-1 indicates that almost 90% of the students have lived in Kiowa for more than five years. A majority of students indicated that over the past two years little had changed in the community, with more responding that Kiowa had changed for the worse rather than the better (Chart IV-2). Furthermore, a high percentage of students indicated that Kiowa would likely change for the worse over the next two years, with only a small percentage indicating a change for the better (Chart IV-3).

Chart IV-4 shows that students consider Kiowa to have strong community attributes related to families and friends. However, students do not rank any other community attribute highly and are pessimistic on many areas which were ranked very high by residents in Chapter III.

Chart IV-1
How Long Have You Lived in the Community

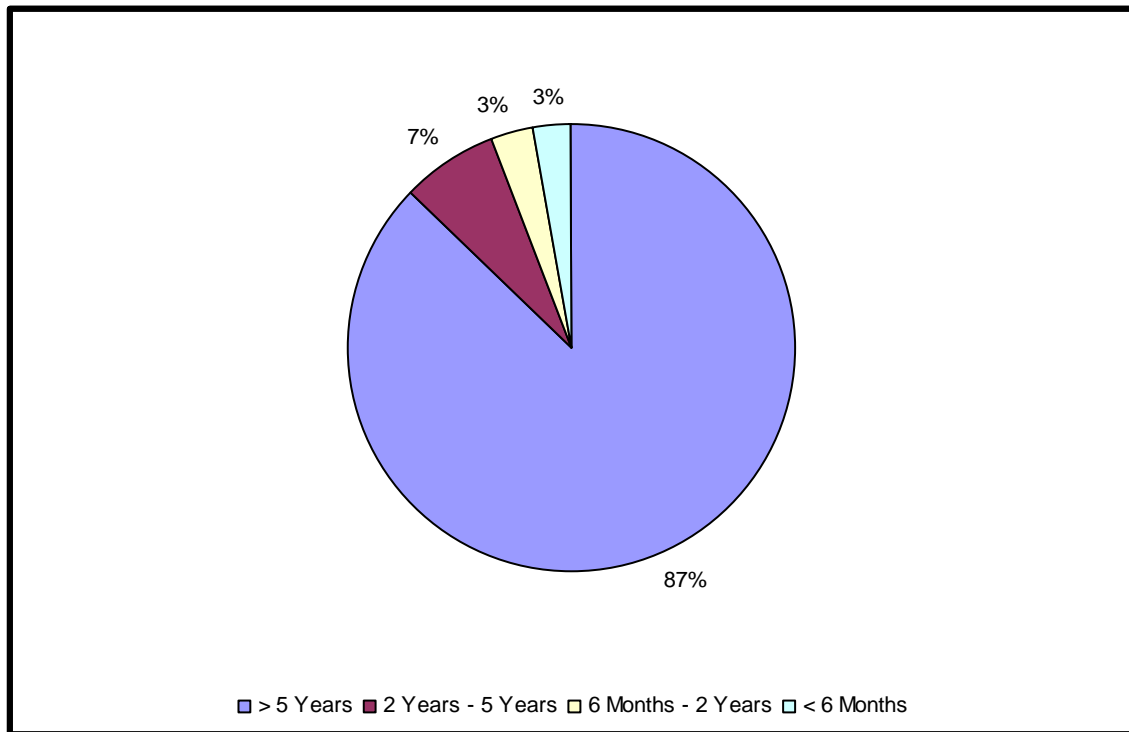


Chart IV-2
How Has the Community Changed Over the Past Two Years

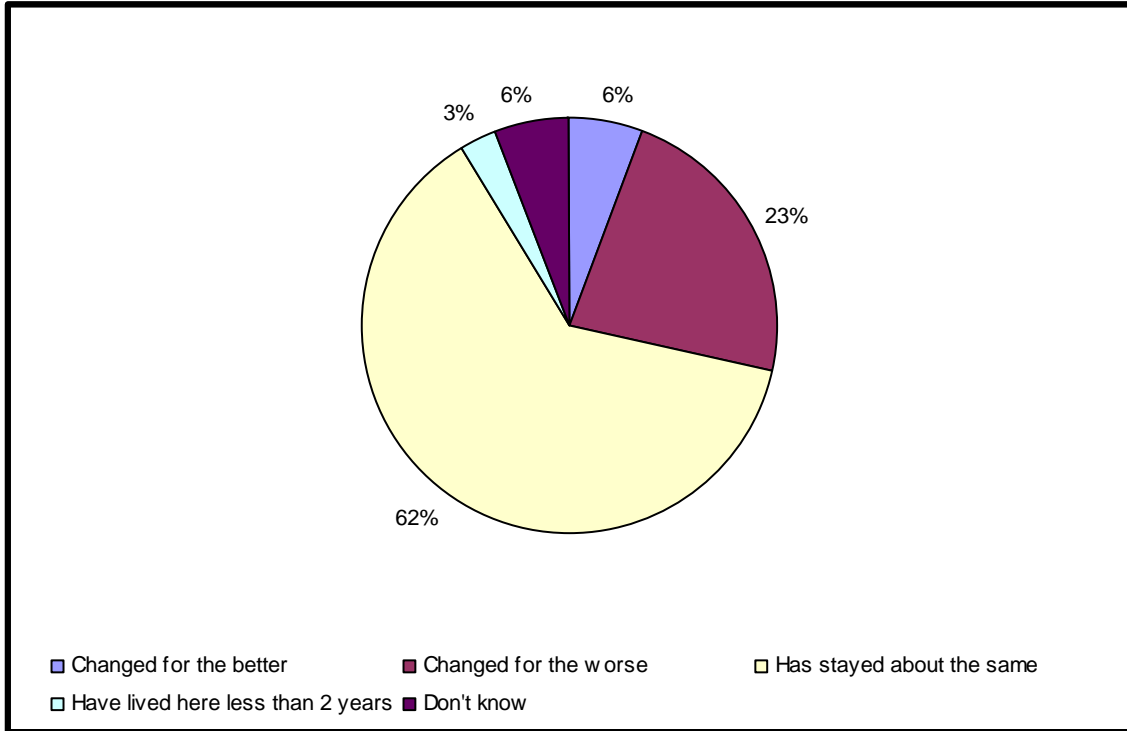


Chart IV-3
How Will the Community Changed Over the Next Two Years

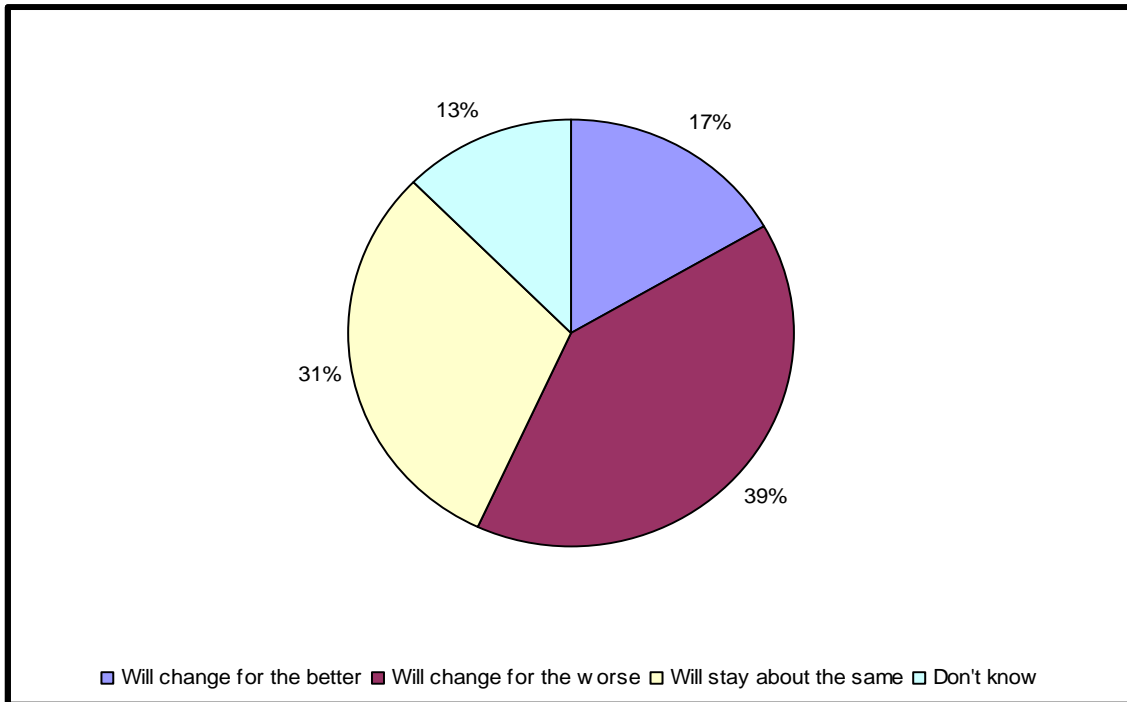
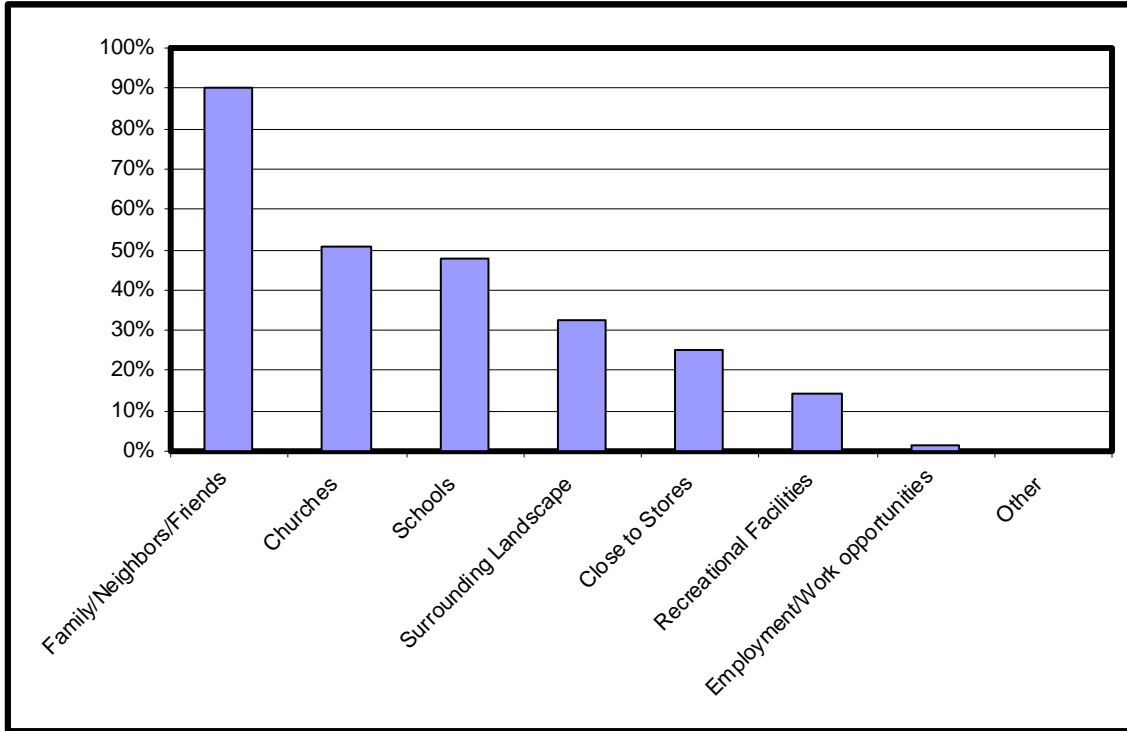


Chart IV-4
What Aspects of the Community Do You Consider Strong Points



Note: Responses were not limited to one answer.

Charts IV-5, IV-6, and IV-7 detail student's employment status, as well as hours worked and wages earned. Over half of the respondents indicated that they were currently employed, with 50% working between 11 – 20 hours per week. No student indicated that he/she worked more than 30 hours per week. A majority of the students earned less than \$6.00/hour, with none of the students earning more than \$10.00/hour.

Chart IV-5
Do You Currently Have an After-School Job

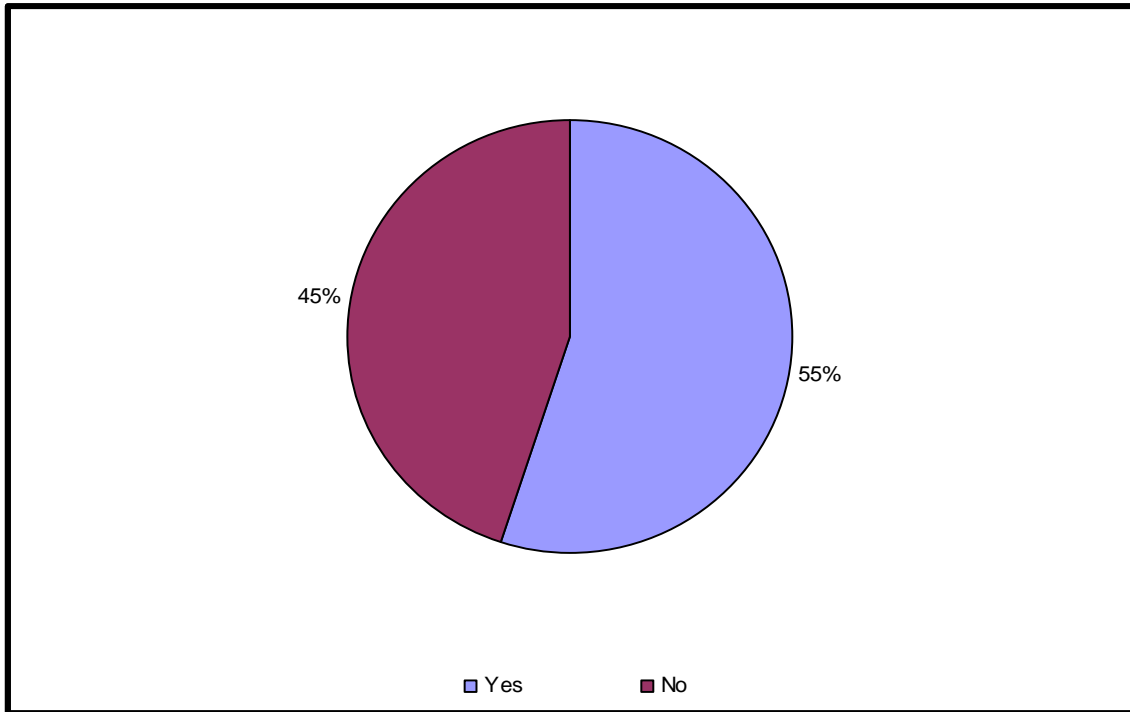
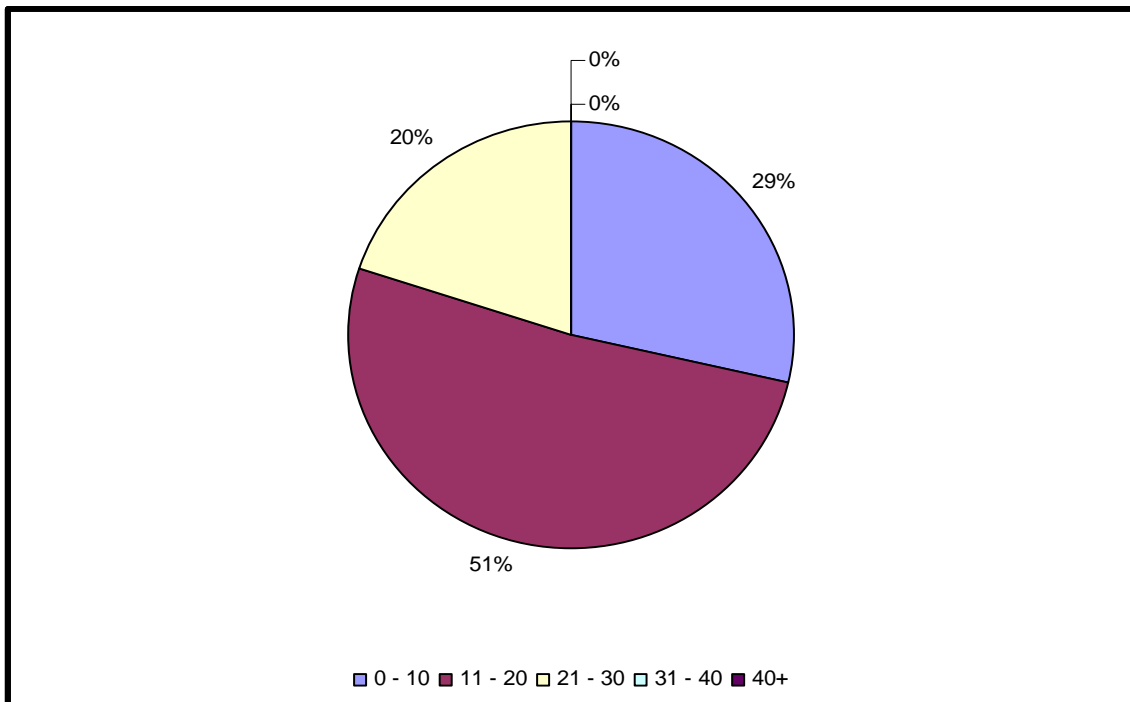
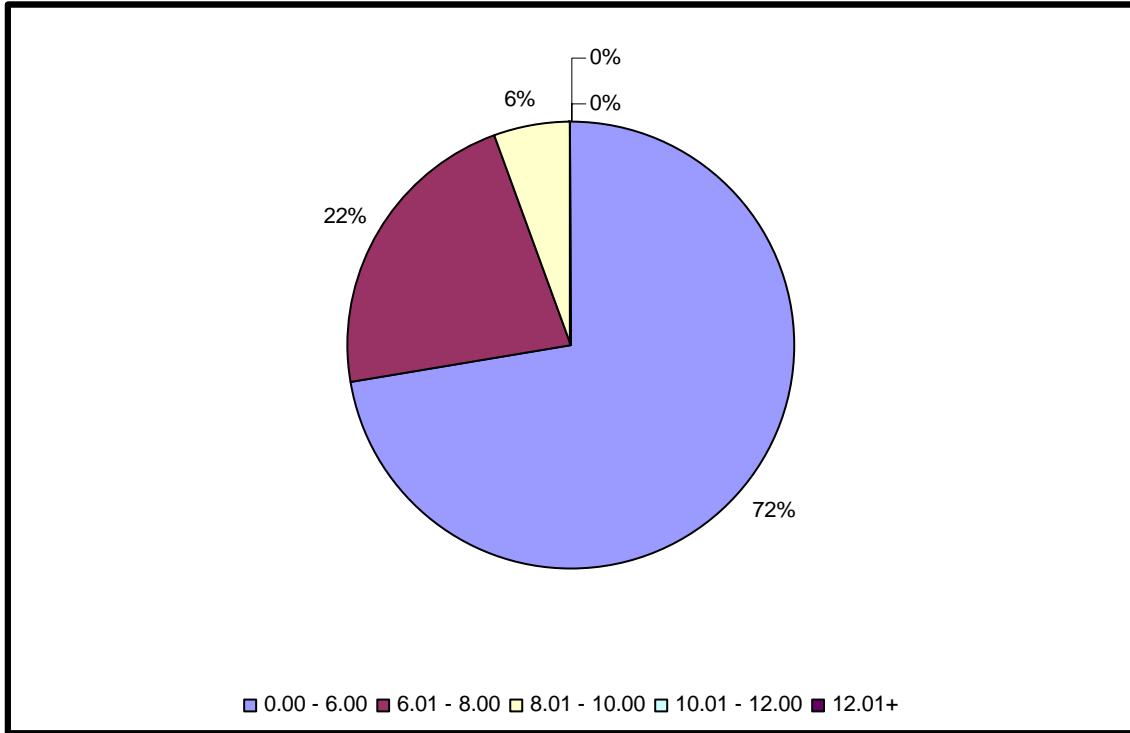


Chart IV-6
How Many Hours Do You Work on Average Each Week



**Chart IV-7
What is Your Hourly Wage**



Almost 70% of students indicated that they were very comfortable operating a computer, while nearly all felt that they had some or all of the computer skills they would need in the future (Charts IV-8 and IV-9).

Most students indicated they plan on attending a 4-year or 2-year college after high school, while those seeking employment stated they would most likely search for a job outside of Kiowa (Chart IV-10).

Chart IV-8
How Comfortable are You Using a Computer

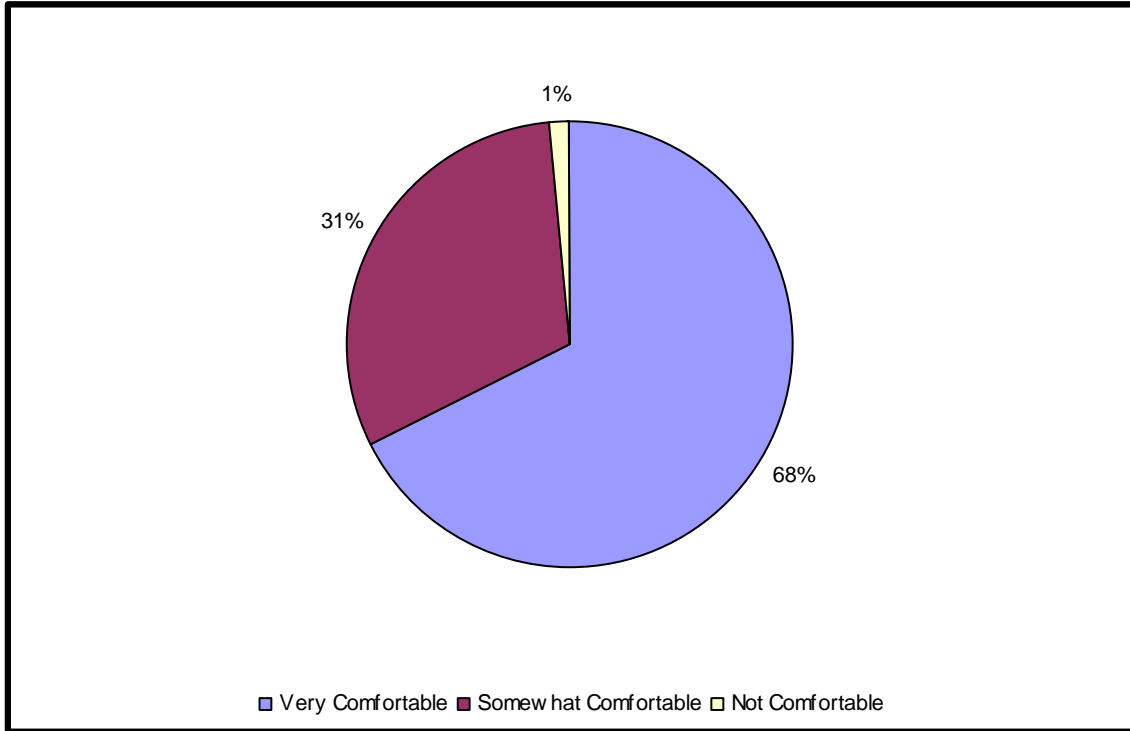


Chart IV-9
Do You Feel You Have Adequate Computer Skills to Prepare You for the Future

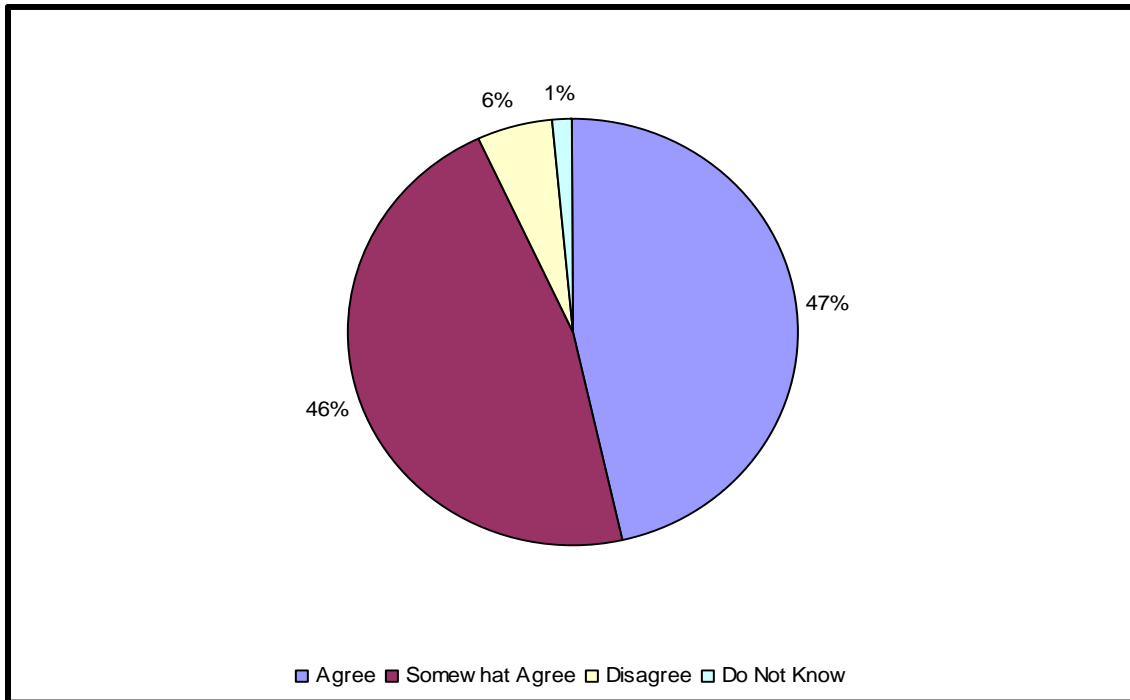
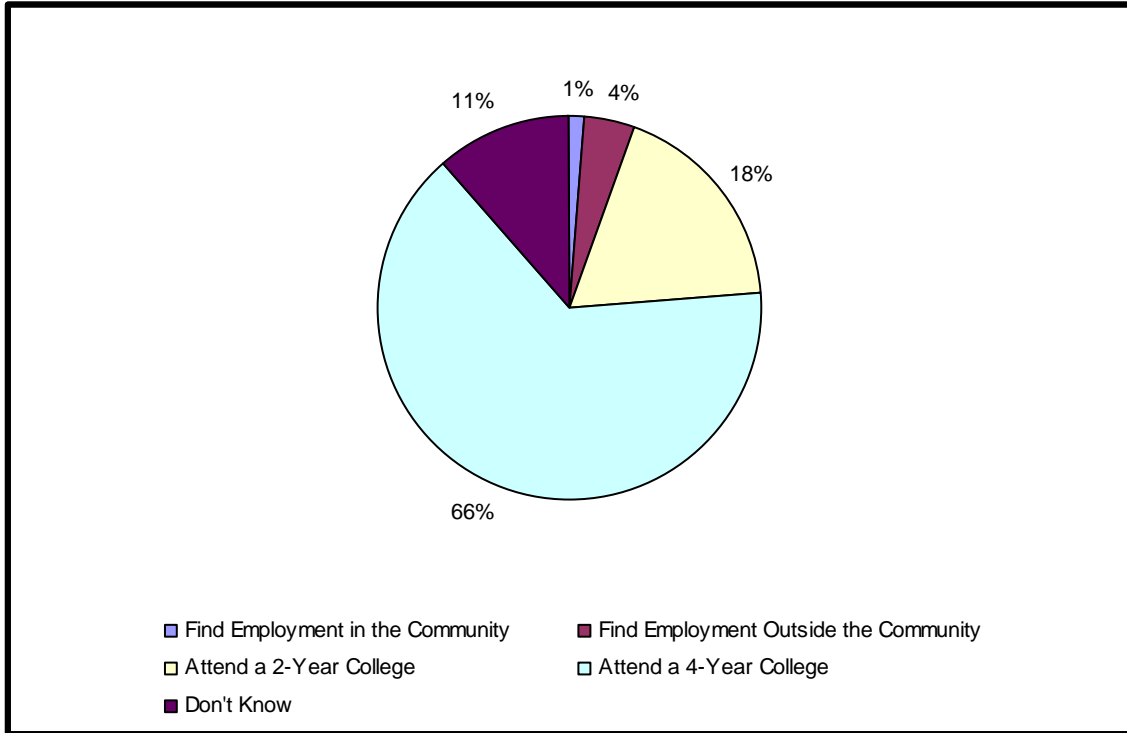


Chart IV-10
Upon Graduation, You Plan to



CHAPTER V

CHAPTER V

TRADE AREA RESIDENT RETAIL SURVEY ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

As a supplement to Chapter III, residents were also surveyed to measure their views on the local economy, with specific attention paid to retail purchasing patterns. This data has been gathered to assess the tendency of residents to travel outside the local area in order to purchase goods and services.

DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected in a manner similar to that which was outlined in Chapter III. A cover letter, response sheet, self addressed, stamped envelope, and an overview of the Revitalizing Rural America Project were sent to random Kiowa addresses. An example of the materials distributed to residents can be found in Appendix A.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

A total of 300 surveys were mailed to area residents. This survey yielded a much lower response rate, with only 74 surveys returned, generating a response rate of 25%.

Chart V-1 summarizes residents' opinions of the county and community economies. A majority of the respondents felt that both economies were either declining or stagnant, while less than 5% felt that either economy was growing. When asked about economic growth, 46% of residents felt that new businesses were Kiowa's best option, while 33% and 21% indicated that start-ups or expansion of existing businesses would best benefit the community (Chart V-2). Additionally, over half of respondents stated they would prefer small businesses to have the greatest impact on economic growth in Kiowa, while only 25% stated they would prefer economic growth to come from large businesses (Chart V-3).

Chart V-1

What Do You Consider the Current State of the Economy in the County/Community with Regards to Economic Improvement

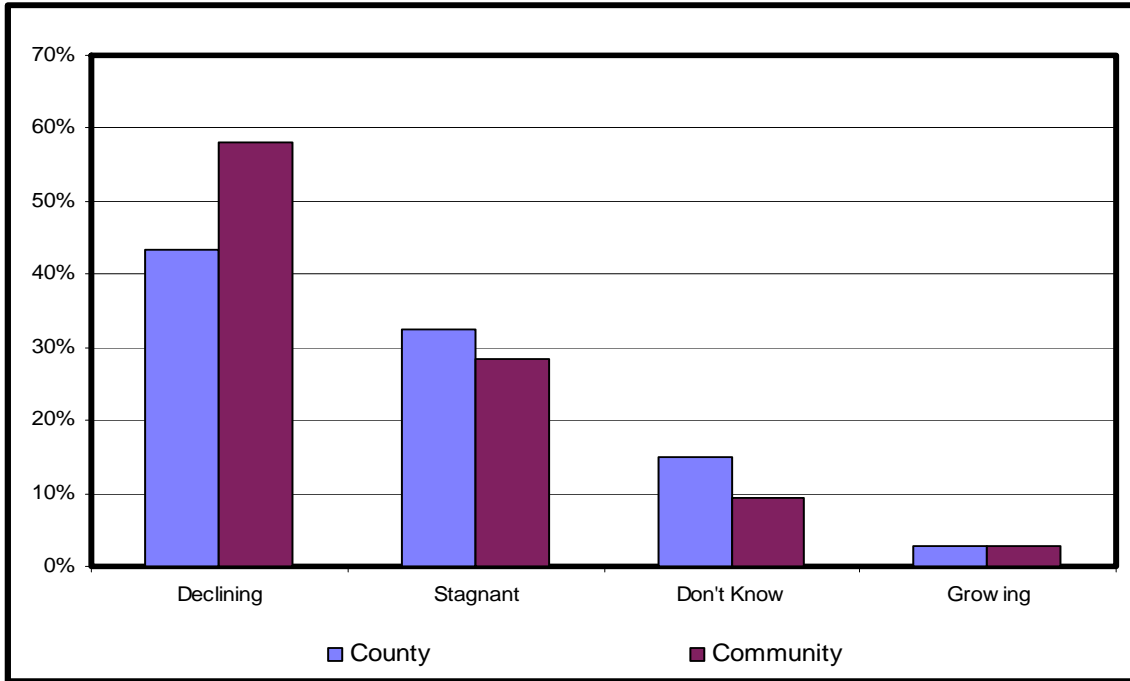


Chart V-2

Which Forms of Economic Growth are Best Suited for the County

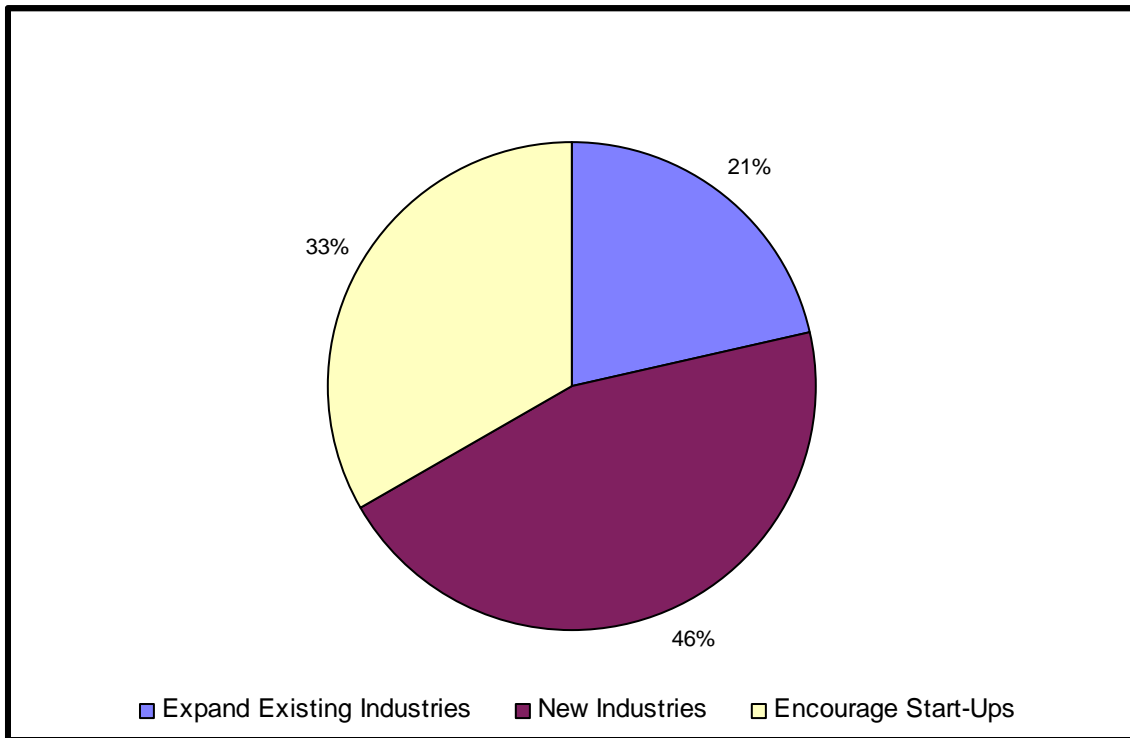
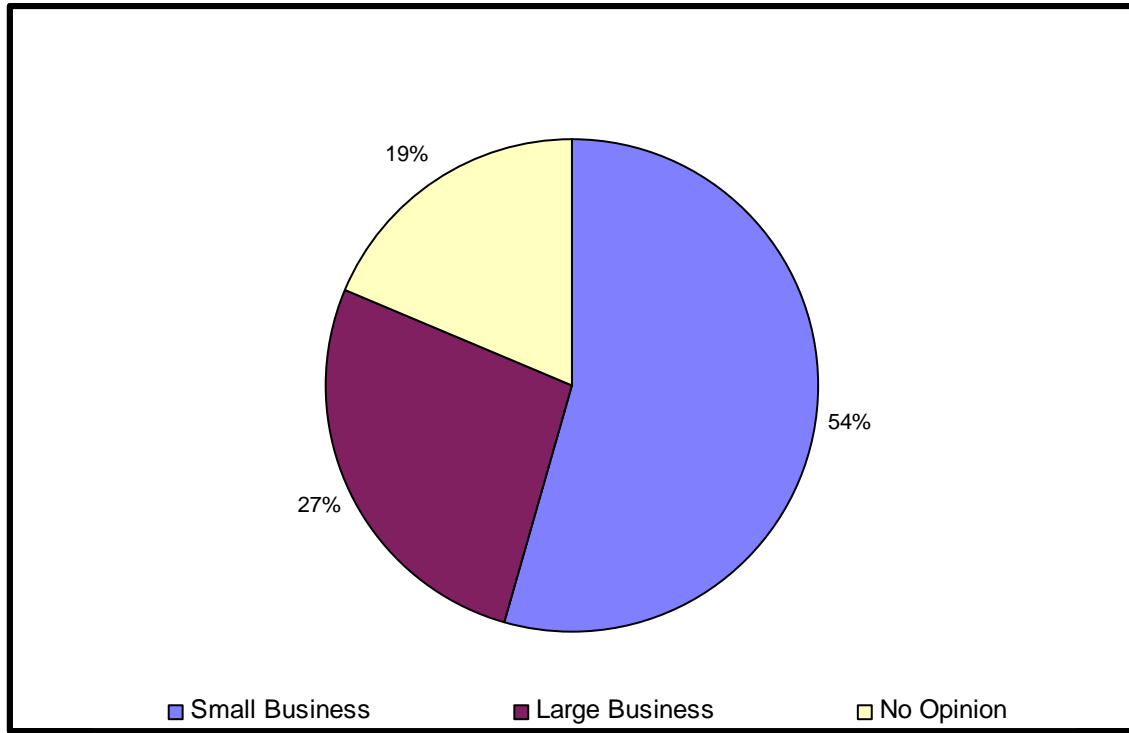


Chart V-3
Which Types of Business Do You Prefer to Have the Greatest Impact on the Economic Growth in the County



Residents were asked to indicate where they purchased their retail and grocery goods. A majority listed either downtown or locally as their primary source for retail products, while over half stated their secondary source for retail products was Alva, OK (Charts V-4 and V-5). Similar results were shown for groceries, with a majority of residents indicating downtown or locally as their primary source, while outside of the community was the main secondary source (Charts V-6 and V-7). Tables V-1 and V-2 discuss residents purchasing habits for specific product groups in greater detail.

Chart V-4
What is Your Primary Source for Retail Goods

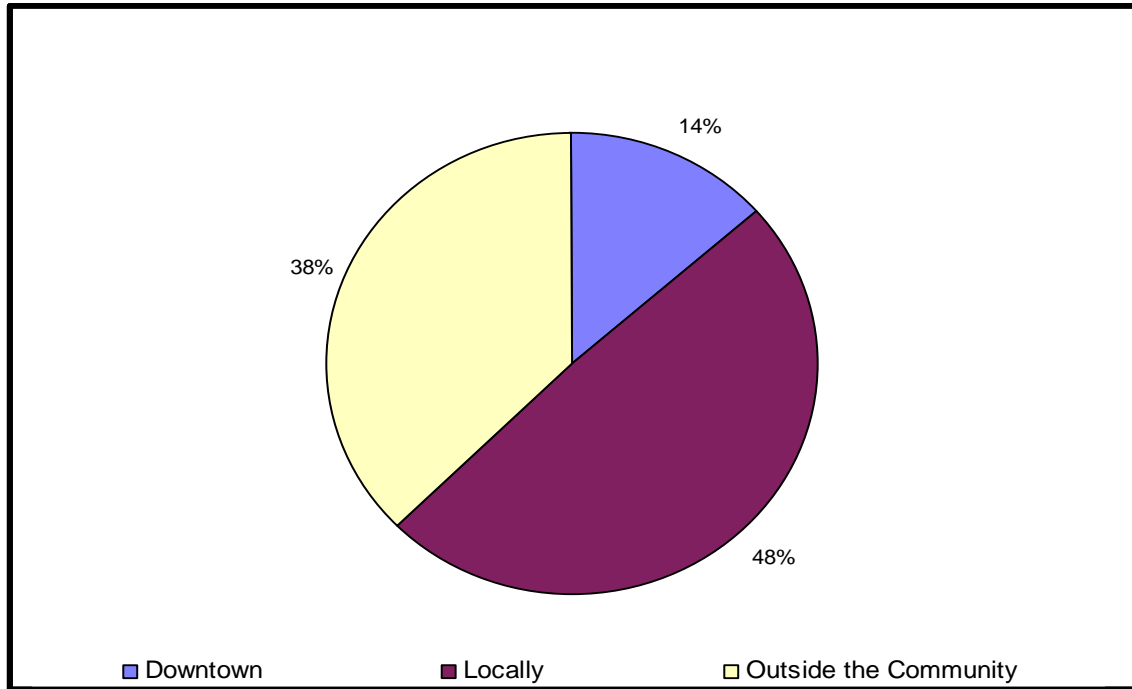


Chart V-5
What is Your Secondary Source for Retail Goods

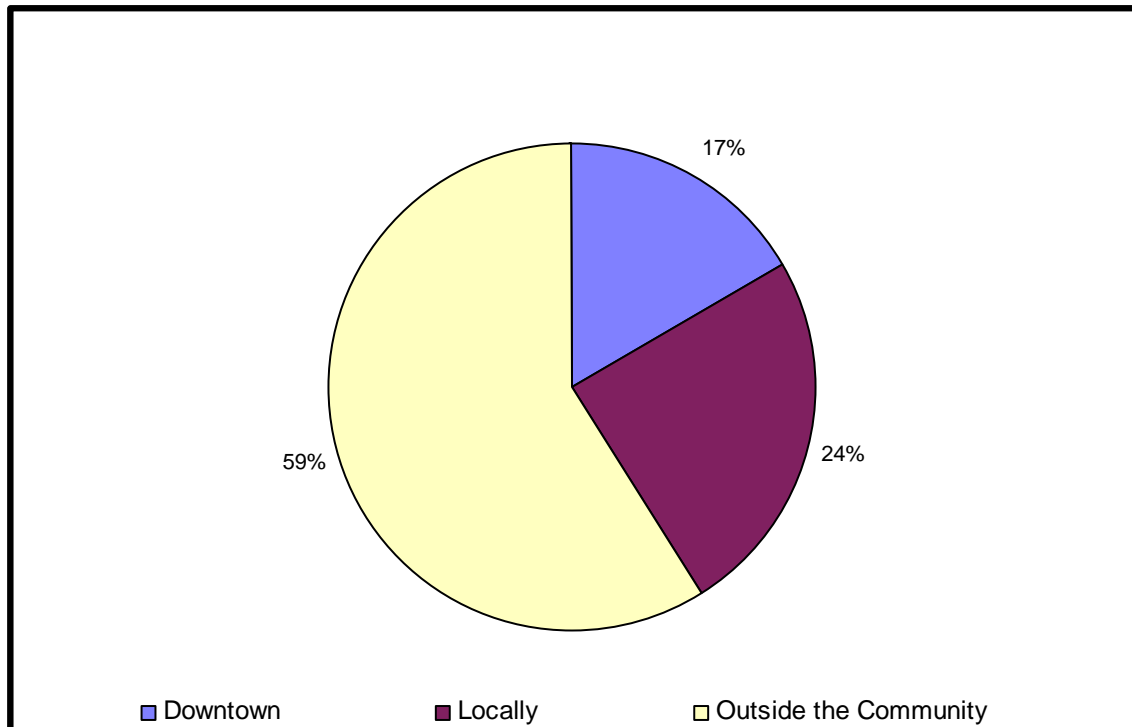


Chart V-6
What is Your Primary Source for Groceries

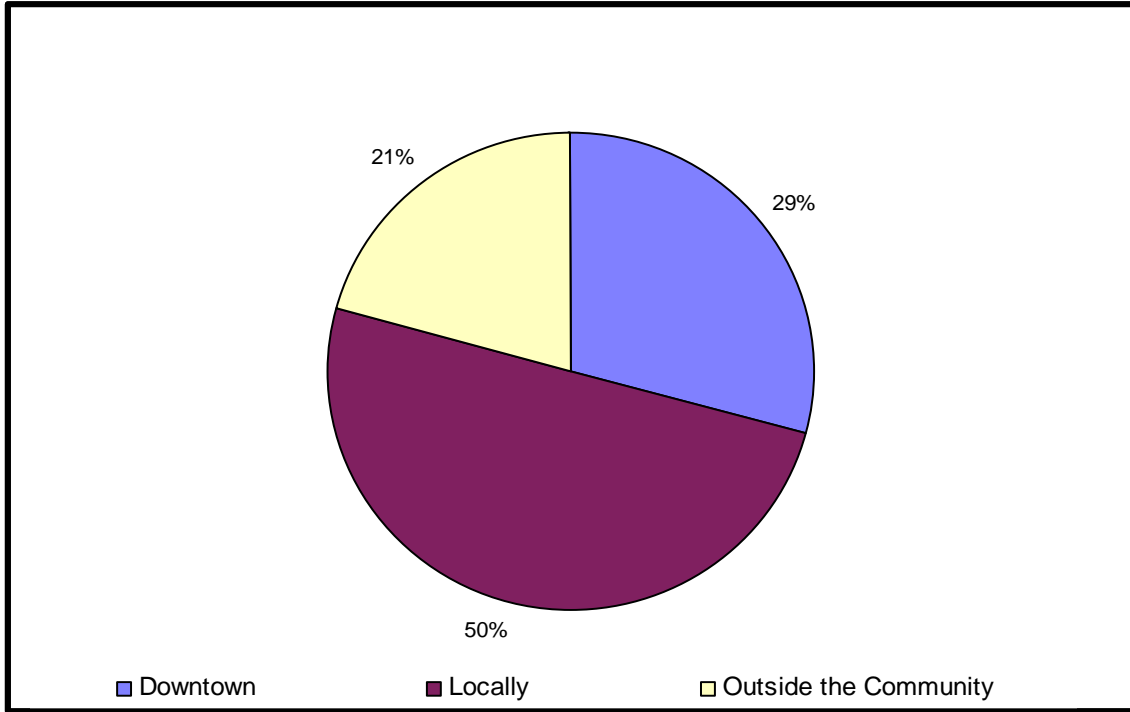
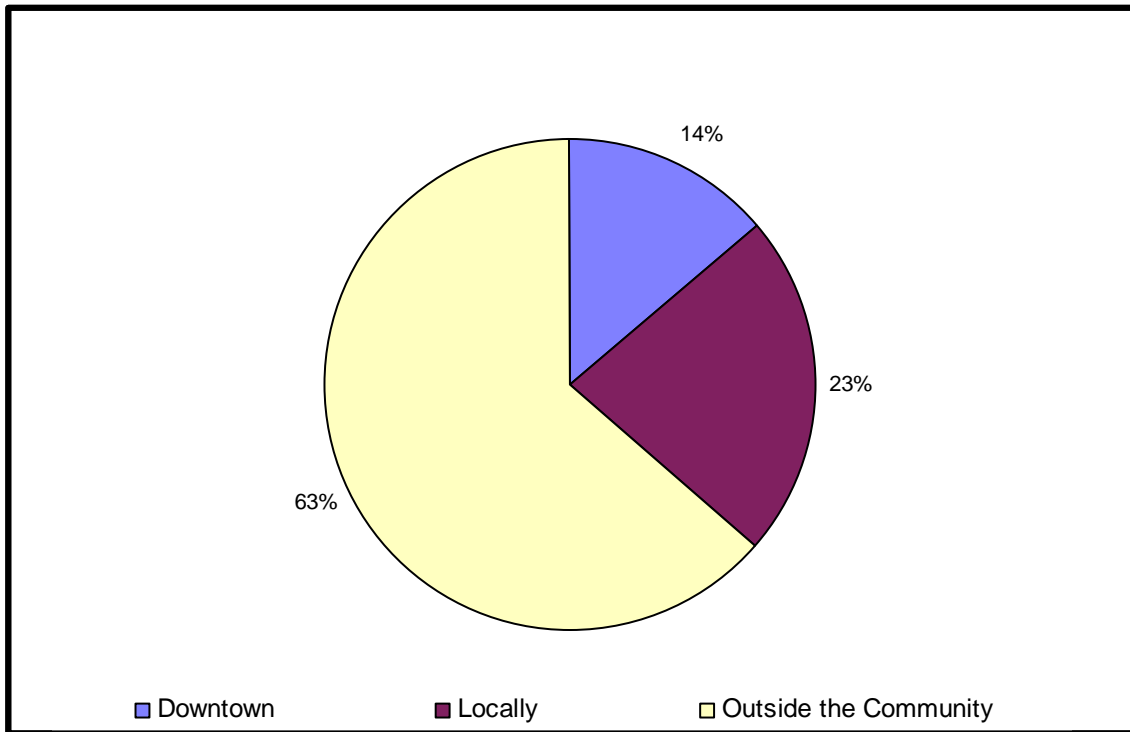


Chart V-7
What is Your Secondary Source for Groceries



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Table V-1									
Respondent's Personal Purchasing Habits - Home Products									
	<i>Responses</i>					Total Responses	<i>Summarized</i>		
	Locally	Alva	Medicine Lodge	Pratt	Wichita		Locally	Less than 30 Minutes	More than 30 Minutes
	%	%	%	%	%	#	%	%	%
Household Textiles	16	59	2	6	17	63	16	60	24
Furniture	3	47	6	3	40	62	3	53	44
Floor Coverings	3	65	3	3	26	66	3	68	29
Major Appliances	63	3	-	6	28	67	63	3	34
Small Appliances	36	52	-	6	6	69	36	52	12
Misc. Household Equipment	31	37	-	6	25	67	31	37	31

Source: Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.

Table V-2									
Respondents Personal Purchasing Habits - Personal Care and Entertainment Products									
	<i>Responses</i>					Total Responses	<i>Summarized</i>		
	Locally	Alva	Medicine Lodge	Pratt	Wichita		Locally	Less than 30 Minutes	More than 30 Minutes
	%	%	%	%	%	#	%	%	%
Prescription Drugs, Medical Supplies	69	19	1	6	4	68	69	21	10
Entertainment	82	11	-	2	5	56	82	11	7
Televisions, Radios, Sound Equipment	15	47	-	5	34	62	15	47	39
Pets, Toys, Playground Equipment	18	64	-	7	11	44	18	64	18
Other Entertainment Supplies and Services	6	35	-	4	55	51	6	35	59
Personal Care Products and Services	38	46	2	6	8	65	38	48	14
Reading	64	18	-	5	13	56	64	18	18
Tobacco	68	23	5	0	5	22	68	27	5

Source: Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.



CHAPTER VI

CHAPTER VI

**THE STRUCTURE OF THE MEDICINE LODGE, KIOWA,
AND BARBER COUNTY AVAILABLE WORKFORCE**

INTRODUCTION

In an effort to quantify and qualify the available workforce for possible employment with an inbound call center in Barber County, a thorough examination of all interested parties was conducted.

Applicants were solicited by utilizing available media outlets through a campaign consisting of advertising in local and regional newspapers, as well as an area-wide radio station. Each applicant was informed of a nationally recognized company seeking customer service representatives to be employed in an inbound call center. These positions were advertised as both full-time and part-time, with a starting hourly pay scale in the range of \$8.00 - \$10.00 per hour as well as the possibility of an accompanying benefits package. In addition, applicants were informed that night and weekend hours were a possibility with all positions. Respondents contacted IRC via a toll-free phone number, email, and fax. The campaign was conducted over a time period spanning several weeks to ensure that both the local and area residents had ample opportunity to apply. The advertising efforts resulted in the receipt of 233 area applicants.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Applications were received from a wide number of locations (Table VI-1). This indicated that interest in potential positions was high not only in Kiowa and Medicine Lodge, but also in the outlying communities. The typical applicant was found within a 30 mile radius of each community, though a small portion of applications were received from areas well outside this range. It was found that the applicants from extended markets were generally those who were interested in returning to the community.

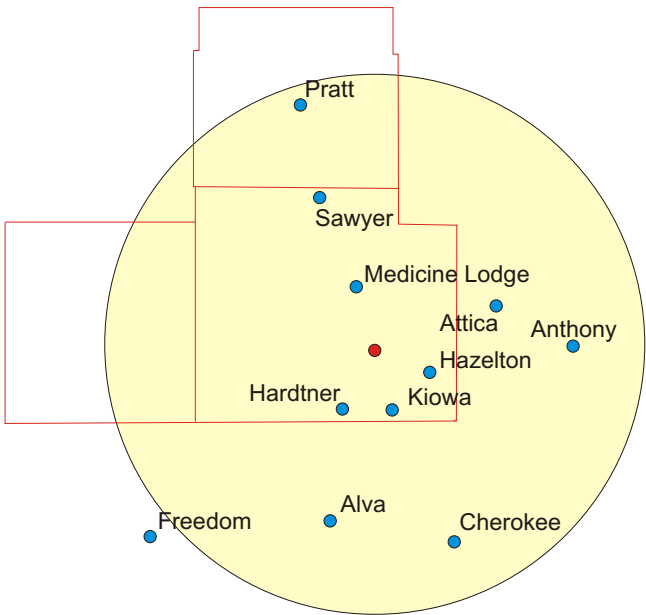
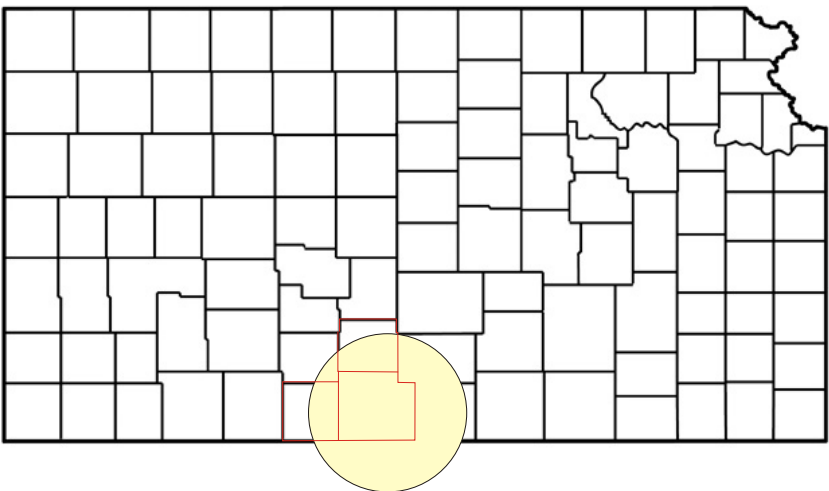
Barber County: A Proposal for Partnership

Table VI-1						
Medicine Lodge and Kiowa Area Applicants: Proposed Locations and Commute Times						
	Proposed Location of Employment					Distance from Proposed Location
	Medicine Lodge	Kiowa	Total Applicants			
	#	#	#	%	#	
Kiowa		81	81	35	-	
Alva		42	42	18	25	
Medicine Lodge	30		30	13	-	
Pratt	29		29	12	29	
Hazelton		15	15	6	7	
Hardtner		11	11	5	10	
Cherokee		8	8	3	26	
Anthony		3	3	1	29	
Sharon			0	0	10	
Waynoka	2	2	4	2	52	
Amorita		1	1	0	21	
Attica	1		1	0	20	
Dacoma		1	1	0	42	
Fairview		1	1	0	60	
Freedom		1	1	0	53	
Sawyer	1		1	0	18	
<i>Extended Markets</i>	-	-	4	2	-	
Total	63	166	233			
Grand Total	233		Average Distance of Commuters		28.7 Miles	
Source: Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.						



Illustration VI-1

Primary Points of Distribution Among Applicants



Hours of Operation

Charts VI-1, VI-2, and VI-3 depict data gathered from the applicants. Overall, 70 percent of applicants indicated they wished to work days, while approximately 50 and 30 percent stated they preferred to work evenings or nights, and 25 percent specified they would like to work weekends. Although many applicants indicated their preferences for daytime, evening or weekend work, when interviewed, the majority of applicants stressed that they were willing a wide variety of shifts.

Full-time and Part-time Applicants

Most applicants desired to work either full time (50%) or part-time (60%), with other applicants choosing various forms of temporary or seasonal employment. After interviewing applicants, it became apparent that many of the area residents who indicated that they were seeking part-time employment were actually college students. A majority of the applicants from Northwestern Oklahoma State University indicated that they would be available for full-time positions if a flexible schedule was provided to allow them to attend classes. Many of the students would also be interested in full-time employment when classes were not in session.

Two additional segments were identified in the group requesting temporary or seasonal employment. These segments primarily consisted of adults seeking supplemental income. One segment of the group was educators from the local and area school systems who were seeking summer employment. Another group identified was comprised of women seeking daytime employment while their children were in school so they would be able to care for them in the summer months. Depending on the extent of training required by the potential corporate partner, and the cost encumbered by the local corporation, these segments could be complimentary.

Benefits and Health Insurance

After applicants went through an interview process, several additional pieces of information were gathered. Applicants were asked if they had a preference between a smaller hourly wage and a benefits package which might include both healthcare and retirement benefits, or a slightly larger hourly wage and no benefits, 69 percent of applicants responded that they preferred no benefits. From responses gathered from

applicants, many indicated that some type of healthcare package currently covered them. For most this was either a product of their spouse already receiving a benefits package with his or her current occupation or the number of applicants in college who were still covered by their parents' insurance.

Related Experience of Applicants

When asked if they had previous experience as a customer service representative in a call center environment, a large majority responded that they did not. However, there were several applicants from the area who did possess this experience. Several of these applicants had previous experience as managers or coaches in a call center formerly located in the area. These applicants were those most excited about the prospect of the area gaining an out-sourcing contract. As anecdotal evidence, these applicants demonstrated their leadership abilities by contacting previous co-workers and employees to be sure that they were aware of this opportunity and were able to submit an application if they were interested.

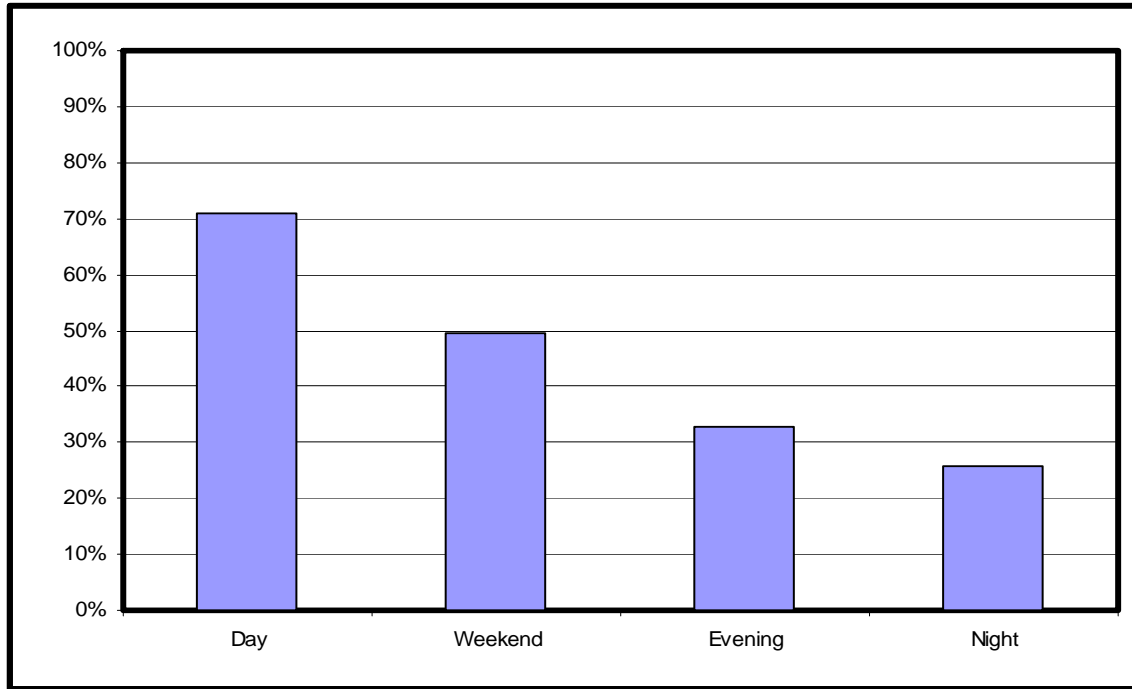
Though a large number of area residents with experience were not found, many applicants did state they felt that many of their previous occupations and experiences had provided them with many of the communication and technical skills required.

Educational Attainment of Applicants

Chart VI-3 illustrates the responses gathered from applications. The chart shows that 75% of applicants had attained a minimum of a high school diploma or equivalent. Without further explanation this information could be misleading. In an effort to bolster local support and enthusiasm for the Revitalizing Rural America Program within the community, a one-hour informational program was held at South Barber High School. A member of the IRC staff spoke to a group of the student body explaining the program, the potential benefits for the area and explained the current population migration trends impacting rural America today. It was explained to students that depending on the requirements stipulated by a potential corporate partner, customer service representative positions could be a possibility for a number of them. Approximately 40 applications were submitted the following week, many by the graduating class. These applicants account for the 25% of the total group without a high school diploma or equivalency.

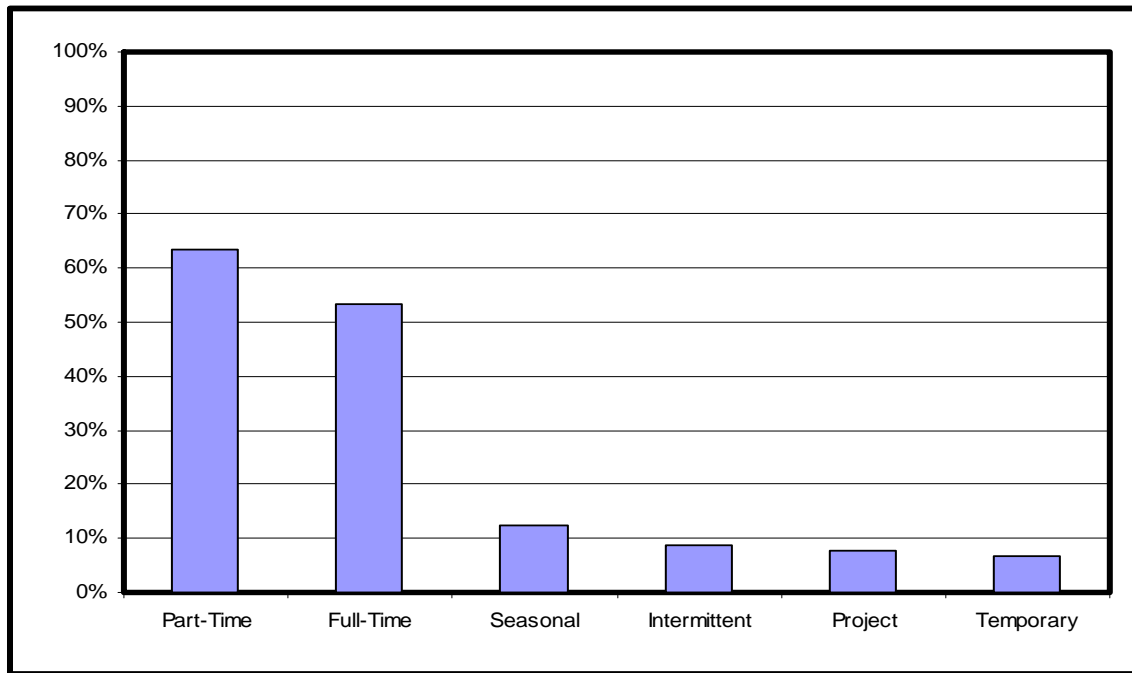
Chart VI-3 indicates that a significant portion of the applicants were not educated, in a formal sense, while analysis shows the contrary. Actually, the majority of respondents had attended an institution of higher learning with 15% of the applicants receiving a Bachelors degree, 10% receiving an Associates degree and an additional 35% had either attended some college or were currently enrolled.

**Chart VI-1
Applicant Shift Preferences**



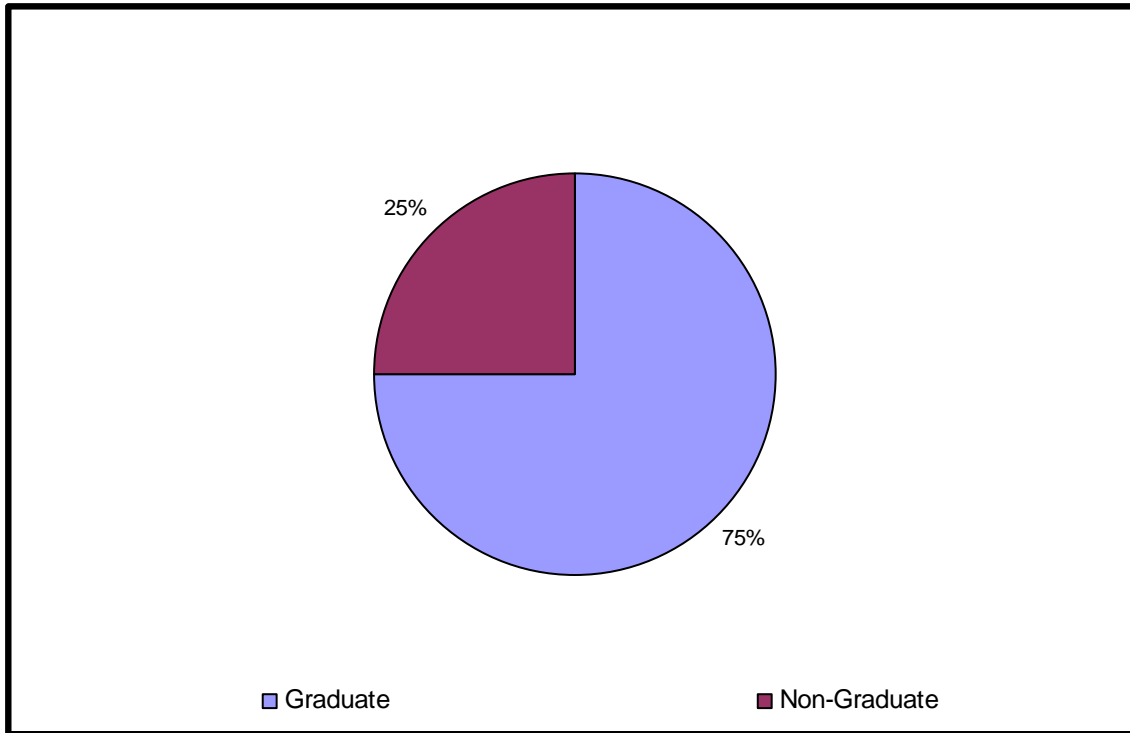
Note: Responses were not limited to one answer.

**Chart VI-2
Applicant Schedule Preferences**



Note: Responses were not limited to one answer.

**Chart VI-3
High School Education**



CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VII

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The communities of Barber County, along with the rest of Kansas and the nation, are learning to cope with business and employment issues affected by technology and global trade that have significantly shifted the employment landscape. In an economy that is becoming progressively global, employees must have skills to be competitive with workers in other states and countries. In a future increasingly influenced by technology, workers must have technical and analytical skills that allow for flexibility, retraining, and problem solving. To achieve these standards, entire communities, through their governments, schools, businesses, and citizens, must cooperate and develop an environment where education and training are a priority. Economic viability for the 21st century is reliant upon a stable, flexible, and technologically capable employment pool. If rural Kansas' strength is its people, one of its' weaknesses is that the most skilled of those people often leave. For years, average skill levels and average-to-low pay have characterized the State. Neither of these bodes well for the future of Kansas, but proactive programs driven by meaningful data and aggressive citizens with a vested interest in the sustainability of their communities can affect change.

At the community level, an outsourcing contract such as an inbound call center can create an influx of new jobs, increase local incomes and wealth, and further connect the community to the global economy.

Through the data collected during the two independent studies conducted for Medicine Lodge and Kiowa, a plethora of data was collected. Through the research of Barber County's economy, culture, available workforce and telecommunications infrastructure, Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc. offers the following points for consideration:

1. The available workforce identified in the Medicine Lodge and Kiowa serviceable areas is sufficient to staff two call-centers. Based on the response rate of qualified applicants from the local workforce, a facility with a maximum of twenty stations in Medicine Lodge would be optimal. Kiowa experienced a significantly larger number of applicants, and would be capable of staffing a larger facility. With that stated, as noted in Chapter VI, 25 percent of the 166 applicants were high school

students whose unknown futures and lack of work experience exclude them as a practical factor for the majority of call center contracts being pursued. The primary distinction between the number of applicants in Kiowa and Medicine Lodge was the response from Kiowa's outlying communities. The workforce in Alva, OK responded very favorably to this type of employment opportunity. The majority of these applicants were students at the local University, of which a very large amount possessed both the communication and technological skills required as a customer service representative. After interviewing applicants and with the previously mentioned factors taken into consideration, it is the opinion of IRC that the workforce is present in the Kiowa area to initially staff 30-35 stations reliably. These recommendations take into consideration applicants' verbal, technical and analytical skills as well as future employee turnover.

It should also be noted that the applications received for this study were from individuals who recognized that a facility was not yet operational. A significant number of potential employees did not pursue an application when this was explained to them. IRC feels confident that a greater number of qualified employees will be identified when area residents are informed that a facility is operational.

2. When considering the optimal hours of operation, a facility with peak demands during non-traditional business hours will be difficult to staff. While an increase in hourly pay might attract additional workforce from extended markets, it is unknown if it would influence responses from the local workforce.
3. A business owner survey was completed by IRC. Through that data collection and analysis, an average starting pay was calculated for each community. The average starting pay is based on information gathered from a sampling of businesses within each community who employ individuals with comparable skill sets. The average pay for an employee with the required communication, problem-solving, and technical skills in the area of Medicine Lodge is approximately \$7.75. Employers in the Kiowa market pay an average of \$7.60. These numbers do not take into consideration the recognized value of a benefits package due to the varied amenities offered by each employer. However, the majority of employees performing comparable work in the area did not receive benefits of any kind. It should also be noted that analysis was not conducted on businesses in extended markets currently employing local residents.

4. Based on the requirements of the call-center contract, an area resident could be required to manage the facility. Among the applicants interviewed, a qualified manager could be hired for both facilities from this area. Several applicants were identified with varied call center and managerial experience who would be capable of managing such an operation. These numbers appear to be sufficient to staff both manager and coach positions in each facility.

APPENDIX A

January 7, 2005

Dear Residents,

As many of you have heard, a study is currently underway in Kiowa to determine the feasibility of bringing a new company with new jobs to the community. To do this, a thorough evaluation of the community and the surrounding area must be completed. The study measures the available workforce in the area, the current status of the economy and the resident's opinions of the community.

Enclosed you will find a one-page survey, front and back, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We are asking for everyone's cooperation in this stage of the process; your opinion does matter and will be included in the final report distributed to the corporate partners.

Please take a minute of your time to complete the survey and drop it in the mail. We thank you for your time and cooperation in advance.

Sincerely,

C.W. Feril

Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.
an Agent for the Revitalizing Rural America Project

If you would like more information concerning the Revitalizing Rural America Project, a one-page summary has been included that will provide an overview of the project.

Trade Area Resident Survey

Revitalizing Rural America Program

1. How long have you lived in the community?

Less than 6 months
 6 months to 2 years
 2 years to 5 years
 More than 5 years

2. Do you own or rent your home? Own Rent

If you rent, would you like to own a house or apartment in this community? Yes No

3. Please rate the following features of the community based on the 10-point scale.

VERY BAD				AVERAGE				VERY GOOD	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- | | |
|---|---|
| (a) <input type="checkbox"/> As a place to live
(b) <input type="checkbox"/> As a place to raise children
(c) <input type="checkbox"/> Child Care
(d) <input type="checkbox"/> Public Schools
(e) <input type="checkbox"/> Job and economic opportunities | (f) <input type="checkbox"/> Safety
(g) <input type="checkbox"/> Social services
(h) <input type="checkbox"/> Church organizations
(i) <input type="checkbox"/> The upkeep of homes and apartments
(j) <input type="checkbox"/> Park maintenance and repair |
|---|---|

4. In general, would you say that the community has changed for the better, has changed for the worse, or has stayed the same in the past 2 years?

- Changed for the better
- Changed for the worse
- Has stayed about the same
- Have lived here less than 2 years
- Don't know

5. Thinking of the future of the community, in general, would you say that the community will change for the better, will change for the worse, or will stay about the same in the next 2 years?

- Will change for the better
- Will change for the worse
- Will stay about the same
- Don't know

6. Which of the following things do you like about the community? (Choose as many as you would like)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Churches
<input type="checkbox"/> Family/neighbors/friends
<input type="checkbox"/> Close to stores | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment/Work opportunities
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreational facilities
<input type="checkbox"/> Surrounding landscape
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify): _____ |
|--|--|

Trade Area Resident Survey

Revitalizing Rural America Program

7. As things look to you now, how much longer would you like to live in this community?

- Move as soon as possible...**Continue to Q. 8**
- Stay 1 to 3 more years...**Skip to Q. 9**
- Stay more than 3 years...**Skip to Q. 9**
- Don't know...**Skip to Q. 9**

8. Why would you like to move as soon as possible? _____

9. For the next list of items about your community, please state if each situation or condition is- a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem.

	Major Problem	Minor Problem	Not a Problem	Don't Know
Violent crime	_____	_____	_____	_____
Damage to property	_____	_____	_____	_____
Litter or trash on the sidewalks and streets	_____	_____	_____	_____
Vacant, abandoned or boarded up buildings	_____	_____	_____	_____
Drug dealing	_____	_____	_____	_____
Noise	_____	_____	_____	_____
Unemployment	_____	_____	_____	_____

10. Where is your employment located?

- In the Downtown District
- Locally
- Within 10 miles
- Within 20 miles
- Within 30 miles
- Within 40 miles
- More than 40 miles

11. If you work outside of the community, what factors would influence you to work in the local economy?

- Comparable job (type of work)
- Comparable pay
- Comparable benefits

12. Is there a computer in your household? Yes No

13. Does your household have access to the Internet? Yes No

14. Do you feel you need more computer training? Yes No

15. How comfortable would you say you are using computers in general?

- Very comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Not comfortable

Summary of the Revitalizing Rural America Project

While the nation's population has nearly doubled over the past 50 years, Senator Sam Brownback is concerned about research that shows over 50% of Kansas counties have lost at least 10% of their population over the past 20 years. To combat these statistics, Senator Brownback is currently pursuing legislation and programs to reverse these patterns in Kansas.

RSI, Inc. and SC Telcom are also taking a proactive stance to reverse these trends. They understand that given the right opportunity, rural communities can play a vital role in the state's economy as well as serve as significant sources of opportunity for future business development. New technology, not unlike the establishment of the railroads more than 100 years ago, is making this possible today. Technology has begun to "level the playing field" for rural communities. Services that have traditionally been conducted in metropolitan areas can now be provided from virtually anywhere.

All too often a rural community, desperate for economic development and the creation of new jobs, has been inclined to "turn over the farm" to a new company promising jobs and new investment. These new jobs and capital infusion are important, but not at the expense of existing businesses. Special incentives and tax breaks should not be awarded to new companies while ignoring those existing companies who have helped to sustain and/or grow the local economy. Every community should be in control of its own destiny. And, who better knows the community and culture to be served than its own citizens.

A feasibility study is currently underway in Kiowa to measure the available resources of the community and the surrounding area. Part of the feasibility study will determine the available workforce in the area. The components of the feasibility study will be used to partner Kiowa with a Fortune 500 corporation looking to out-source part of their current operations to rural America. Corporations are drawn to rural communities because they see a level of pride and a work ethic that they have difficulty finding in many metropolitan areas. They feel that employing residents of rural communities will represent them well.

The Revitalizing Rural America Project creates a mutually beneficial relationship between communities and corporate partners. The program partners rural communities with corporations desiring to out-source their customer service departments. These customer service departments field the inbound calls from the corporation's customers; they do not do any out-bound calls or solicitation of business. To attract corporate partners, they are offered several benefits. First, the out-sourcing rate is set at a reduced rate of the level determined for in-house fulfillment. Secondly, the corporations gain a premier marketing and public relations opportunity. The savings generated for the partnering corporation, coupled with a very significant "feel good about American labor" story, will offer a significant marketing opportunity for the corporation. It will be an opportunity/story that would run contrary to the out-sourcing bad news American consumers hear of and complain about every day. Conversely, the local economy is aided by a new opportunity that is backed by a partner with the resources to guarantee the revenue for a minimum of five years. The creation of new jobs for local residents has the opportunity to profoundly impact the local economy. In addition, 5% of the gross contract revenues will be donated to the community for "Community Betterment Projects." This could be in the form of economic development, schools, parks, etc. as long as it is "visible" to the general public.

Exactly how many jobs the call-center will create will be dependent upon the results of the feasibility study and the number of applications received. However, the call-center has the potential to create anywhere from 5-20 jobs. These positions will initially be offered for second and third shifts and weekends. It is important that all interested parties go to RSI in Kiowa or any SC Telcom office to apply. The employees of the call-center will be asked to assist callers with their customer service needs.

High School Student Survey

Revitalizing Rural America Program

1. How long have you lived in the community?

Less than 6 months
 6 months to 2 years
 2 years to 5 years
 More than 5 years

2. Please rate the following features of the community based on the 10-point scale.

VERY BAD		AVERAGE				VERY GOOD			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

- | | |
|--|--|
| (a) ___ As a place to live
(b) ___ As a place to raise children
(c) ___ Child Care
(d) ___ Public Schools
(e) ___ Job and economic opportunities | (f) ___ Safety
(g) ___ Social services
(h) ___ Church organizations
(i) ___ The upkeep of homes and apartments
(j) ___ Park maintenance and repair |
|--|--|

3. In general, would you say that the community has changed for the better, has changed for the worse, or has stayed the same in the past 2 years?

- ___ Changed for the better
- ___ Changed for the worse
- ___ Has stayed about the same
- ___ Have lived here less than 2 years
- ___ Don't know

4. Thinking of the future of the community, in general, would you say that the community will change for the better, will change for the worse, or will stay about the same in the next 2 years?

- ___ Will change for the better
- ___ Will change for the worse
- ___ Will stay about the same
- ___ Don't know

5. Which of the following things do you like about the community? (Choose as many as you would like)

- | | |
|--|--|
| ___ Schools
___ Churches
___ Family/neighbors/friends
___ Close to stores | ___ Employment/Work opportunities
___ Recreational facilities
___ Surrounding landscape
___ Other (Please specify): _____ |
|--|--|

6. Do you currently have an after-school job? ___ Yes ___ No

6a. If yes, how many hours do you work on average each week?

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| ___ 0 – 10 | ___ 31 – 40 |
| ___ 11 – 20 | ___ 40 + |
| ___ 21 – 30 | |

High School Student Survey

Revitalizing Rural America Program

6b. What is your hourly wage?

- \$ 0.00 - \$ 6.00
- \$ 6.01 - \$ 8.00
- \$ 8.01 - \$ 10.00
- \$ 10.01 - \$ 12.00
- \$ 12.01 +

7. How comfortable would you say you are using computers in general?

- Very comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Not comfortable

8. Do you feel you have adequate computer skills to prepare you for the future?

- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Disagree
- Do Not Know

9. Upon graduation, do you plan to:

- Stay in the community and find employment
- Leave the community and find employment
- Leave the community to attend a 2-year college
- Leave the community to attend a 4-year university
- Don't Know / Undecided

9a. If you are considering leaving the community after graduation would you consider returning if employment was available?

- Yes
- No

9b. If you do not think returning to the community to live is an option, please indicate why.

10. Are you:

- Male
- Female

11. What grade are you in?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior

January 7, 2005

Dear Residents,

As many of you have heard, a study is currently underway in Kiowa to determine the feasibility of bringing a new company with new jobs to the community. To do this, a thorough evaluation of the community and the surrounding area must be completed. The study measures the available workforce in the area, the current status of the economy and the resident's opinions of the community.

Enclosed you will find a one-page survey, front and back, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We are asking for everyone's cooperation in this stage of the process; your opinion does matter and will be included in the final report distributed to the corporate partners.

Please take a minute of your time to complete the survey and drop it in the mail. We thank you for your time and cooperation in advance.

Sincerely,

C.W. Feril

Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.
an Agent for the Revitalizing Rural America Project

If you would like more information concerning the Revitalizing Rural America Project, a one-page summary has been included that will provide an overview of the project.

Trade Area Resident Survey

Revitalizing Rural America Program

1. How long have you lived in the community?

Less than 6 months 6 months to 2 years 2 years to 5 years More than 5 years

2. Do you own or rent your home? Own Rent

If you rent, would you like to own a house or apartment in this community? Yes No

3. What do you think is the current state of the economy and economic development in the County and in your Community concerning economic improvement? (Check one in each column)

	County	Community
Economy is growing	_____	_____
Economy is stagnant	_____	_____
Economy is declining	_____	_____
Don't know	_____	_____

4. Which of the following approaches to economic growth and diversification is best suited for the County? (Check all that apply)

- Expand existing industry in the county
- New industries/companies from outside the county
- Encourage new start-ups by county residents

5. How would you summarize your overall feeling about economic growth?

- No need for change from the present situation
- Growth in limited number of industries, consistent with concerns for quality of life
- Any growth that promotes employment and well-being of business

6. In your opinion, which of the following types of business do you prefer to have the greatest impact on the future economic growth and diversification in the County?

- Small business
- Large business
- No opinion

7. Do you do the majority of your retail shopping:

- Downtown
- Locally
- Outside the community, please specify: _____

8. What is the second most frequent place you do your retail shopping:

- Downtown
- Locally
- Outside the community, please specify: _____

Trade Area Resident Survey

Revitalizing Rural America Program

9. Where do you do the majority of your grocery shopping:

- Downtown
- Locally
- Outside the community, please specify: _____

10. What is the second most frequent place you do your grocery shopping:

- Downtown
- Locally
- Outside the community, please specify: _____

11. In regards to your personal buying habits, please indicate where you purchase the majority of these goods using the following table:

L – Locally A – Alva M – Medicine Lodge P – Pratt W - Wichita

Home Products

- Household Textiles (Linens, curtains, sewing materials)
- Furniture
- Floor Coverings (Carpet, rugs, and other soft floor coverings)
- Major Appliances (Refrigerators, freezers, stoves, ovens, vacuum cleaners, microwaves, air conditioners)
- Small Appliances & Misc Housewares (Small electrical kitchen appliances, portable heaters, dinnerware)
- Misc. Household Equipment (Luggage, lawnmowers, hand and power tools, outdoor equipment, computers)

Personal Care and Entertainment Products

- Prescription Drugs & Medical Supplies (Prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, dressings, eyeglasses)
- Entertainment (Sporting events, movies, concerts, plays, movie rentals)
- Televisions, Radios & Sound Equipment (T.V. sets, VCRs, DVD players, stereos, musical instruments)
- Pets, Toys & Playground Equipment (Pets, pet food, toys, games, hobbies, tricycles and playground equipment)
- Other Entertainment Supplies & Services (Exercise equipment, athletic shoes, bicycles, camping equipment)
- Personal Care Products & Services (Services and products for hair, oral hygiene products, cosmetics)
- Reading (Books, newspapers, magazines)
- Tobacco Products & Smoking Supplies

Summary of the Revitalizing Rural America Project

While the nation's population has nearly doubled over the past 50 years, Senator Sam Brownback is concerned about research that shows over 50% of Kansas counties have lost at least 10% of their population over the past 20 years. To combat these statistics, Senator Brownback is currently pursuing legislation and programs to reverse these patterns in Kansas.

RSI, Inc. and SC Telcom are also taking a proactive stance to reverse these trends. They understand that given the right opportunity, rural communities can play a vital role in the state's economy as well as serve as significant sources of opportunity for future business development. New technology, not unlike the establishment of the railroads more than 100 years ago, is making this possible today. Technology has begun to "level the playing field" for rural communities. Services that have traditionally been conducted in metropolitan areas can now be provided from virtually anywhere.

All too often a rural community, desperate for economic development and the creation of new jobs, has been inclined to "turn over the farm" to a new company promising jobs and new investment. These new jobs and capital infusion are important, but not at the expense of existing businesses. Special incentives and tax breaks should not be awarded to new companies while ignoring those existing companies who have helped to sustain and/or grow the local economy. Every community should be in control of its own destiny. And, who better knows the community and culture to be served than its own citizens.

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APPENDIX B

January 7, 2005

Dear Business Owners and Managers,

As many of you have heard, a study is currently underway in Kiowa to determine the feasibility of bringing a new company with new jobs to the community in an effort to bolster the local economy. To do this, a study must be completed that quantifies the available workforce in the area, analyzes key economic indicators and gauges resident and business owner opinions.

Having daily conversations with business owners across the nation, we would like to emphasize four brief but important reasons to respond to this questionnaire.

This project:

- is not in direct competition with any existing company in the area.
- is designed to compliment the local economy; not to inflate the local wage-scale.
- targets the unemployed or those forced to commute out of the area for jobs.
- allows you the opportunity to confidentially express your professional opinion in regards to the strengths and needs of the local area workforce.

The importance of the hourly-wage section of the questionnaire is that it allows us to estimate the average local wage for jobs comparable to the customer service representative positions which will be made available. Please remember that the inbound call-center is not designed to inflate the current wage scale or negatively impact the stability of your current workforce.

As a professional research and consulting firm, we understand the importance of accurate and reliable information. Your specific information will not be disclosed in a manner which could identify you or any of your firm's employees. Enclosed you will find a quick three-page survey, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Please take a minute of your time to complete the survey and drop it in the mail. We thank you for your time and cooperation in advance, please know that your input does matter and will be included in the report submitted to the corporate partners.

Sincerely,

C.W. Feril
Innovative Research & Consulting, Inc.

If you would like more information concerning the Revitalizing Rural America Project, a one-page summary has been included that will provide an overview of the project. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us toll-free at (888) 388-1441.

Workforce Assessment Survey

Revitalizing Rural America Program

Name of Company: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Website: _____ Email: _____

Confidentiality Requested: Yes No

BUSINESS SURVEY

Please fill in the blank or circle the appropriate response.

Company Overview

1. Please indicate the category that best describes the primary economic sector of your business:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale Trade | <input type="checkbox"/> Retail Trade |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service Industries | <input type="checkbox"/> Finance, Insurance or Real Estate | |

If you indicated "Service Industries," which of the following describes your organization's work?
(Please check only one)

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Educational Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Services _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering, Accounting, or Management Services | | |

2. Please provide a brief description of the products or services your organization provides from its facility or facilities. _____

3. How long has your organization been operating within the County?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less Than One Year | <input type="checkbox"/> Six to 10 Years | <input type="checkbox"/> 20 or More Years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> One to Two Years | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 to 15 Years | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three to Five Years | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 to 20 Years | |

4. How many workers does your organization employ in the area? _____

Of the total number of workers, approximately how many workers are:

Full-time _____ Part-time (Less than 32 Hours Per Week) _____

Workforce Assessment Survey

Revitalizing Rural America Program

5. Projecting your labor needs within the County, five years from now, do you expect the number of workers to _____ remain about the same, _____ decrease, or _____ increase?

If you expect the number of your workers to decrease, how many jobs do you expect to reduce?

If you expect the number of your workers to increase, how many jobs do you expect to add?

6. What skill level describes the majority of your employees?

- _____ Core work processes use relatively low employee skill level
- _____ Core work processes use relatively average employee skill level
- _____ Core work processes use relatively high employee skill level

7. What is the minimum educational level for most jobs in your business?

- _____ Less than a high school degree
- _____ High school degree
- _____ Associate degree
- _____ Bachelor degree
- _____ Masters degree or higher
- _____ Technical training
- _____ Technical certification

8. Please write in the entry hourly wage scale (i.e. \$5.50) for the following positions in your business. If you employ no workers in a particular position write 0 in the hourly wage space.

Position	Hourly Wage	Health Benefits	Retirement benefits
Clerical	\$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No
Sales	\$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No
Management	\$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No
Health care provider	\$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No
Designer/Draftsman	\$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No
Skilled trades/crafts	\$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No
Truck	\$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No
Heavy equipment	\$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No
Unskilled labor	\$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No
Customer service staff	\$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No
Other advanced professionals	\$ /hr	Yes No	Yes No

9. Do you use personal computers extensively in your operations?

Workforce Assessment Survey

Revitalizing Rural America Program

10. What functions do you use PCs for?

Task	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Accounting and Bookkeeping	_____	_____	_____
Word Processing	_____	_____	_____
Record Keeping	_____	_____	_____
Desktop Publishing (company & marketing materials)	_____	_____	_____
CAD/CAM Applications	_____	_____	_____
Training	_____	_____	_____
Email Communications	_____	_____	_____
Internet Use	_____	_____	_____

11. Is it difficult to find personnel with the needed computer, software and Internet skills from the local area?

- _____ Very difficult
- _____ Somewhat difficult
- _____ Not difficult

12. Would you rate public education as a strength or weakness of the area's business environment?

- _____ Very much of a weakness
- _____ Somewhat of a weakness
- _____ Neither a strength or a weakness
- _____ Somewhat of a strength
- _____ Very much of a strength
- _____ Don't know

13. How difficult is it to hire full-time skilled employees today compared to five years ago?

- _____ Much more difficult
- _____ Slightly more difficult
- _____ About the same
- _____ Slightly less difficult
- _____ Much less difficult
- _____ Don't know

14. How would you rate your potential for finding good skilled employees in the area over the next five years?

- _____ Improving
- _____ Staying about the same
- _____ Declining
- _____ Don't know

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