

POLK COUNTY COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS ALL FOCUS GROUPS – QUESTION 1

Amery Focus Group February 26, 2007

35 people signed in.

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN? Back to the future. What are some significant changes and history of Polk County that have taken place in the last 150 years.

- Trains/railroad full.
- Displacement of Native Americans.
- Loss of agriculture/loss of family farms, movement to larger farms.
- Tourist “mecca” weekend homes, development of lake property.
- Cut of base employment with overseas trade & jobs.
- Increase in demand for social services.
- Logging decline.
- Consolidation of school districts/one room school emphasis education.
- Motorized transportation.
- Electricity changed rural landscape.
- Influence of co-ops.
- “Radical” political history.
- Crop farming – wheat – originally then to dairy.
- Loss of dairy farms.
- Wheat – cattle – houses.
- Yoyo factory demise.
- Churches spaced 7 miles apart.

Town of Apple River Focus Group March 12, 2007

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN? Back to the future. What are some significant changes and history of Polk County that have taken place in the last 150 years.

- Development.
- Recreation – Natural Resources.
- Tourism.
- Rural to urban transition.
- Loss of family (dairy) farm.
- Urban sprawl (Twin Cities).
- Education – school consolidation.
- Big government.
- Loss of local control.
- Limited services (communication) in past.

County Employees Focus Group

March 13, 2007

11 people signed in.

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN? Back to the future. What are some significant changes and history of Polk County that have taken place in the last 150 years.

- Population growth.
- Rural (Ag) to Business Ag.
- European immigrant to new immigrant.
- Lake development – weekend, seasonal, year-round.
- Farming (Ag) to Industry.
- Autonomous small towns.
- Transportation – car, roads, bus.
- Trip expansion (town to town; town to TC).
- Railroad.
- County seat.
- Bridges.
- Commodity delivery.
- Expectations – instant gratification.

Osceola Focus Group

February 22, 2007

26 people signed in.

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN? Back to the future. What are some significant changes and history of Polk County that have taken place in the last 150 years.

- Interstate Park.
- Polk County Fair (1880).
- County Seat Debate – St. Croix Falls vs. Osceola.
- Trails became roads.
- Railroad/Bridge.
- Ag to manufacturing.
- Logging industry.
- Cession of tribal lands.
- Electrification of rural areas.
- Consolidation of schools.
- RFD – Rural farm mail delivery.
- Lake associations.

City of St. Croix Falls Focus Group

March 12, 2007

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN? Back to the future. What are some significant changes and history of Polk County that have taken place in the last 150 years.

- Electricity.
- Lumber industry to tourism/recreation/retail-based economy.
- State parks introduced tourism.
- Trains connected communities.
- Decline of small farms/dairy.

Luck Focus Group

February 12, 2007

27 people signed in.

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN? Back to the future. What are some significant changes and history of Polk County that have taken place in the last 150 years.

- Population shift/change – rise in in-migration.
- Agriculture change.
- Loss of native residents.
- Railroad rise and fall.
- Electricity to rural areas.
- Building bridges.
- Clear-cutting of forests.
- Growing importance of tourism.
- Roads/transportation.
- Consolidation of school districts.
- Medical facilities.
- Development of lakes.
- Loss of yo-yo factory.
- Loss of creamery.
- Proliferation of “retail” stores.
- Death of small towns.
- Internet.
- World wars impact on rural areas.
- Conservation of lands.
- Expansion of County Government.
- Rise of cooperatives.
- Shifts of coal to oil-based economy.
- Changes in land use.
- Crime activity.
- Disparity between ‘have’ and ‘have nots’.
- Agriculture – larger scale, intensified.
- Industry – mechanical.
- Reliance of volunteer-based organizations to provide services.
- Unsustainable community development.
- Lack of planning.
- Pressures on infrastructure.

Tourism Council

February 2007

WHERE HAVE WE BEEN? Back to the future. What are some significant changes and history of Polk County that have taken place in the last 150 years.

- Loss of railroad.
- Change in mobility of people.
- Loss of public transportation.
- In-migration – a lot of seasonal residents.
- Loss of locally-owned businesses.
- Influx of large ‘chain’ stores.
- Loss of being neighborly.