

## **POLK COUNTY COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS ALL FOCUS GROUPS – QUESTION 2**

### **Amery Focus Group February 26, 2007**

35 people signed in.

**WHERE ARE WE NOW? Current Assessment. What trends and issues do you see developing in our County and in our communities?**

- Turnover/change of elected officials (schools, county) – lack of continuity.
- Dysfunctional County Board.
- Influx of individuals needing public assistance.
- Local retail transition.
- Lack of “community” – individuals moving in isolate themselves.
- Need organization to bring together/unify.
- Northern/southern part of county is facing different issues.
- Loss of decent jobs.
- Decline school enrollment.
- Export of young people.
- Import of individuals 50-60-70, aging population.
- Natural resources/lakes.
- Increase in homes in country.
- Smaller family size.
- MN immigrants/urbanization.
- Village economy – nursing homes and public housing – public support growth.
- Lack of transportation – dependent car travel.
- Opportunities differ in northern/southern part county.
- Neighbors NOT helping neighbors – don’t know each other.
- Resource conflicts/lack of planning for protection of lakes, open spaces.
- Lack of cooperation and collaboration.

### **Town of Apple River Focus Group March 12, 2007**

**WHERE ARE WE NOW? Current Assessment. What trends and issues do you see developing in our County and in our communities?**

- Larger tax base.
- Development/building.
- County board does not have control over employees.
- Too large of a county board.
- Lack good paying jobs.
- Lack infrastructure/highways for business.
- School administrators act as corporate CEO’s.
- Expanded/better communications.
- Lack of accountability on County board.
- Increased crime, drugs (meth).
- Better health care.
- More traffic on Hwy 8.
- Increased burden on Social Services.
- Lakeshore development.
- Pockets of poverty.

## **County Employees Focus Group**

**March 13, 2007**

11 people signed in.

**WHERE ARE WE NOW? Current Assessment. What trends and issues do you see developing in our County and in our communities?**

- Social need is high.
- Weekend get-a-way.
- Community identity.
- Attitude (self v. community).
- South of 8 v. North of 8 (2 identities).
- Internet.
- Transportation to receive goods.
- Government industry – large workforce. (11%)
- Crossroads – 1. Metro or 2. Rural.
- Fringe of urban sprawl.
- Less compassion.
- Outside influence – Met Council.
- Losing family farms.
- Exporting youth.
- Retirement destination.
- Low paying jobs – difference in have & have nots.
- Drug issues – alcohol and controlled substance.
- Tourism (untapped).

## **Luck Focus Group**

**February 12, 2007**

27 people signed in.

**WHERE ARE WE NOW? Current Assessment. What trends and issues do you see developing in our County and in our communities?**

- Tourism-based economy.
- More fluid – mobile.
- Searching for identity/values.
- Lack of industry – local job opportunities.
- Dependent on Twin Cities.
- Part of global economy.
- Reactive not proactive.
- More technologically advanced than admit.
- Behind on wireless connectiveness.
- Lack of community connectedness.
- Loss of community spirit.
- Dependent on outside 'food'.
- Conflict between land use.
- Commuting long distances to work.
- Main Streets 'surviving.'

## **Osceola Focus Group**

**February 22, 2007**

26 people signed in.

**WHERE ARE WE NOW? Current Assessment. What trends and issues do you see developing in our County and in our communities?**

- Transition from farms – residential – small parcels.
- Loss of wildlife habitat.
- Lack of Higher Educational Institutions.
- Agriculture to light industry.
- Urban encroachment/impact.
- Rise in taxes.
- Loss of 'community'/'localness'.
- Brain-drain of youth.
- Demise of small business.
- Influx of 'Big Box.'
- Growth of CSA's/Farmers Market.
- Increase demand for services.
- Aging population.
- School enrollments declining.
- Loss of traditional values.
- Low paying jobs.
- Lack of land-use planning.
- Local control – home rule.
- Rise in crime.
- Clean air, water, environment.
- Opportunities – good quality of life.
- Tourism based economy.

## **City of St. Croix Falls Focus Group**

**March 12, 2007**

**WHERE ARE WE NOW? Current Assessment. What trends and issues do you see developing in our County and in our communities?**

- It looks beautiful.
- Bedroom community.
- Transition from ag to eco-tourism.
- Target of expansion from cities.
- Recreational expansion/activities.
- Quality of life.
- Poised to make choices: between retail and tourism.
- Commercial/industry not viable – economic development strategy.
- Sense of community – small town atmosphere.
- More ecological minded.

## **Tourism Council February 2007**

**WHERE ARE WE NOW? Current Assessment. What trends and issues do you see developing in our County and in our communities?**

- More roads, less farm-land.
- Many recreational opportunities.
- More tourism oriented.
- More mobile society.
- More commuter residents.
- Loss of local entrepreneurs.
- Not enough time.
- Too many community events – sometimes overlap.
- High income class and low income class. No middle class.
- Low income housing.
- Multi-generational families living together.
- Housing/property \$ rising.
- Single families.