

## Study shows disparity in satisfaction

**Survey: York countians outside the city are happier with quality of life than those in city.**

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Sep 19, 2007 — When it comes to figuring out the quality of life in York County, community advocacy group YorkCounts factors a lot into its periodic reports. Census data. Employment rates. What homes are selling for. Whether or not students are graduating.

But when York College students did their own survey, meant to complement the YorkCounts reports, they interviewed residents and found a number of interesting things - including that there seems to be a disparity in the quality of life between York city residents and York County residents as a whole.

Overall, surveyed York countians were satisfied with their quality of life.

On a scale of one to five, with one being "poor" and 5 being "excellent," 60.9 percent of county residents chose a rating of 4 or 5. But when those numbers were broken down based on where people live, the disparity became more evident: 63.6 percent of residents outside the city chose those ratings, compared to 36.1 percent of those live in the city.

And 74.3 percent of the respondents said they would remain in their current neighborhood if given a choice. But 77.7 percent of those living outside the city gave that response, compared with 43.2 percent of those within the city.

York College Professor David Polk, who oversaw the study, has been involved with the YorkCounts effort, including the most recent report from 2006. But he felt the results were missing something with their lack of direct interviews.

"I thought as interesting as it is, it's based on secondary data," he said. "I thought how interesting it would be to go out and talk to York Countians."

York Mayor John Brenner said he hasn't had a chance to review the study, but he trusts the results if Polk was involved.

"It all demonstrates the disparity between the city and the county," Brenner said.

"The long-term solutions in our community are really about addressing the concentration of poverty in the City of York."

Polk said that he incorporated the survey into a yearlong course on research methods in behavioral science.

He oversaw the survey, and representatives of YorkCounts gave feedback.

But college students at the junior and senior level handled both the survey's design and execution.

James DeBord, director of YorkCounts, said he considers the survey to be a valuable addition to his organization's data.

He doesn't know if doing such a survey periodically would be feasible, but he said he'd welcome it.

"There's serious work involved there and I appreciate it," DeBord said.

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## OTHER RESULTS

Seventeen percent of those surveyed reported losing their jobs because of downsizing. Of that sample, 48.8 percent have been unable to find satisfactory employment. Most of the respondents who said they had been laid off because of downsizing were between the ages of 55 and 64.

York County residents are only moderately satisfied with elected officials. Using a five-point scale, with one being "very dissatisfied" and five being "very satisfied," respondents rated three types of elected officials. The average ratings were:

**Mayor/township supervisors:** 3.14

**School board:** 2.92

**County commissioners:** 2.67.

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