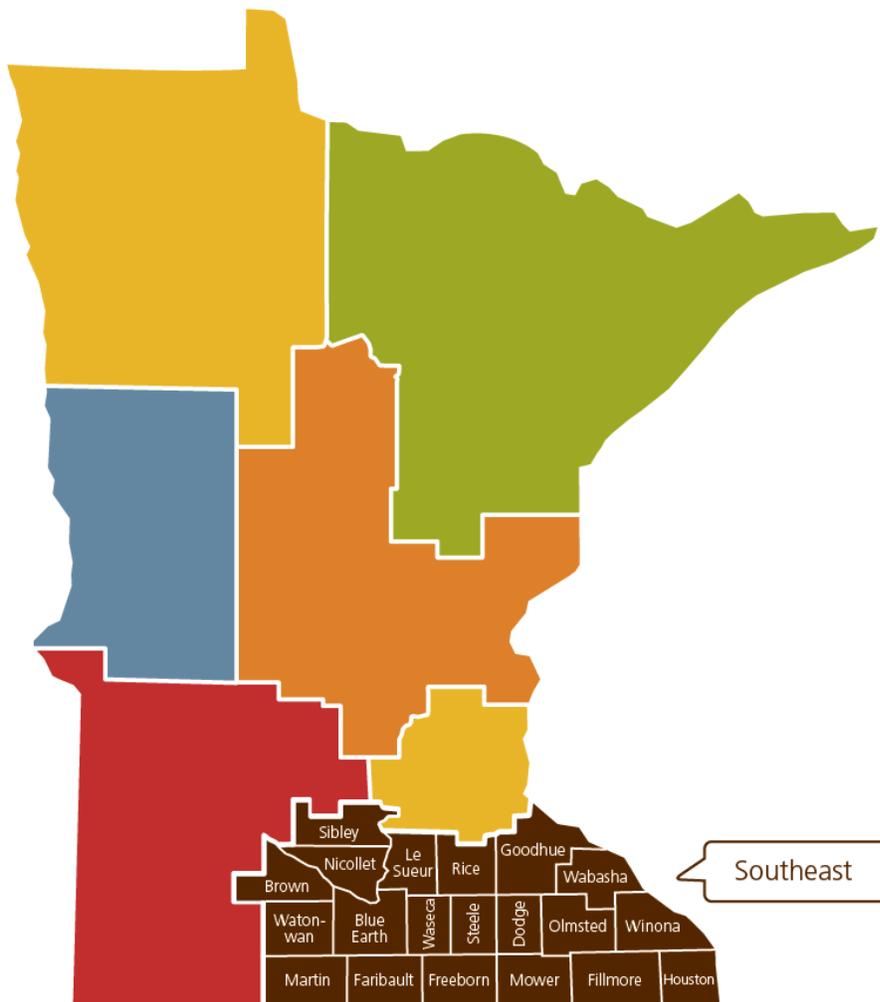




RURAL PULSE™ SNAPSHOT: SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA

Rural Pulse™ is a research study commissioned by the Grand Rapids-based Blandin Foundation to gain a real-time snapshot of the concerns, perceptions and priorities of rural Minnesota residents. This initiative was last conducted in 2016 and has served to identify trends within significant, complex subject areas including the economy, education, employment and quality of life.

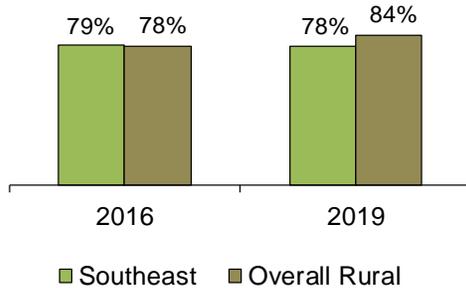
*In completing this comprehensive research study, 1,068 telephone interviews were conducted with rural Minnesotans. The full report can be found at www.RuralPulse.org. To provide a localized perspective, study findings for Southeast Minnesota are included in the following pages and contrasted with overall rural Minnesota responses. Intended to serve as a regional snapshot against full study observations, data reflects a statistical reliability of +/- 6 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. Also, please note that results within regional reports **do not** include communities of 35,000+; these cities are grouped within metro Minnesota findings – see full report for more information.*



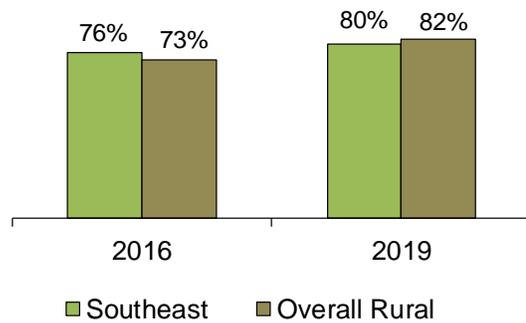
Collaboration and Contribution

Some four in five residents (78%) in Southeast Minnesota feel they can make a positive impact on their local community, and feel residents work together effectively.

Able to Make a Positive Community Impact
Somewhat or strongly agree



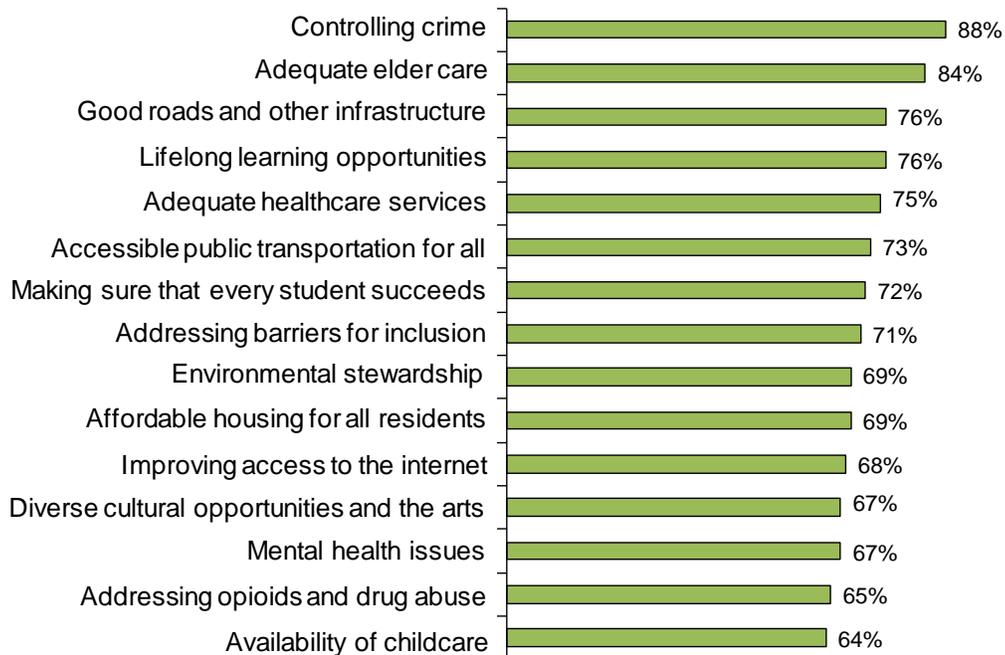
Residents are Able to Work Together Effectively
Somewhat or strongly agree



Community Performance

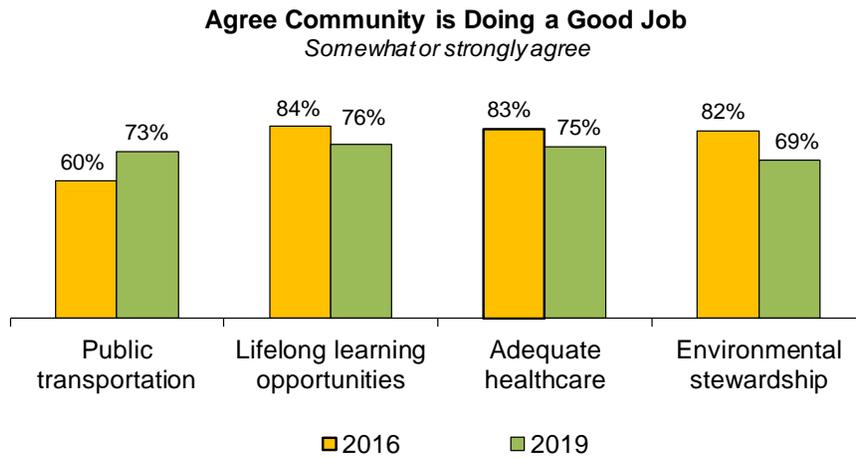
Southeast residents were most likely to agree that their community performed well in crime control, caring for the elderly, infrastructure, lifelong learning opportunities and healthcare. They were less likely to agree that their area did well in providing cultural/arts opportunities, addressing mental health, drugs and availability of childcare.

Agree Community is Performing Well
Somewhat or strongly agree



Southeast residents' perceptions of community performance has improved since 2016 study findings regarding providing public transportation for all, including the disabled. Areas that saw a decline in

perceived performance included lifelong learning opportunities, healthcare and environmental stewardship.



When comparing issue significance and satisfaction, Southeast Minnesotans felt their communities are underperforming in several key areas, most specifically: providing adequate healthcare, job opportunities, addressing drug abuse, availability of childcare, economic development and offering an adequate workforce for businesses.

Issue Importance vs. Community Performance

	Importance Mean	Performance Mean
Adequate healthcare services	3.5	3.0
Job opportunities	3.4	2.8
Addressing opioids and drug abuse	3.4	2.9
Availability of childcare	3.4	2.9
Economic development	3.3	2.7
Adequate workforce	3.3	2.8
Affordable housing	3.2	2.8
Addressing mental health issues	3.2	2.8

■ Significantly Below Expectations
■ Below Expectations

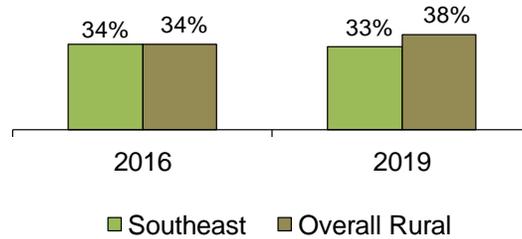
4 = High, 1 = Low

Rural Voice

A third of residents in Southeast Minnesota did not believe the needs of rural communities are important to policymakers, as compared to metro areas - similar to 2016.

Believe the Needs of Rural Communities are as Important to Legislators, Policymakers as Metropolitan Areas

Disagree



Critical Issues

The most critical issues to address in the Southeast region were said to be jobs, healthcare, economic development, crime, infrastructure and workforce adequacy.

Most Critical Issues

Southeast

1. Jobs
2. Healthcare
3. Economic development
4. Crime
5. (tie) Good infrastructure, Workforce

Overall Rural

1. Jobs
2. Healthcare
3. Opioids and drug abuse
4. Economic development
5. Mental health issues

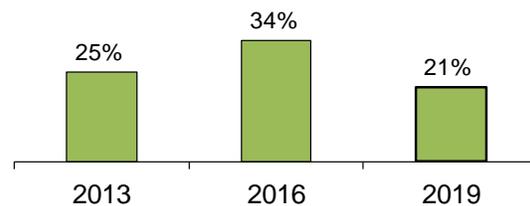
Economic Concerns Linger, But Show Improvement

Rural Minnesotans continue to experience an evolving economy. In the Southeast, 21 percent feel the local economy has improved within the past year – a decrease of 13 percent.

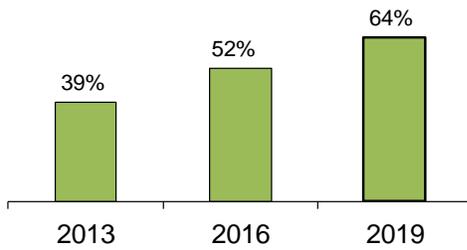
Confidence that there are adequate jobs that pay living wages has increased. There is a slight growth in confidence that economic development is being promoted well. Only 65 percent feel there is an adequate workforce available for local businesses.

Condition of Community's Economy Has Improved, Compared to a Year Ago

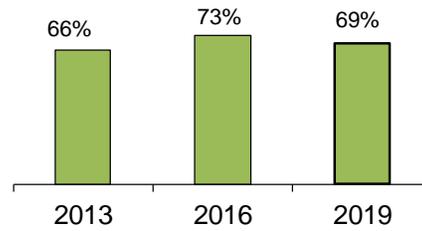
Somewhat or much better now



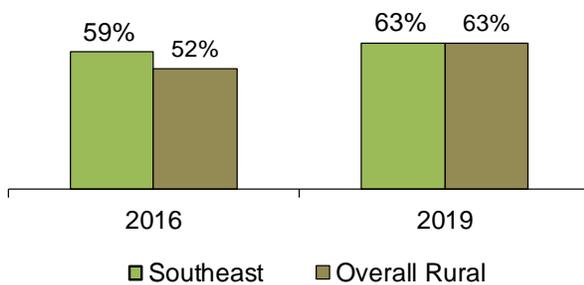
Adequate Number of Jobs that Pay Household-Supporting Wages
Somewhat or strongly agree



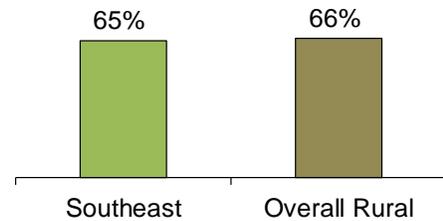
Community Successfully Maintains and Grows Job Opportunities
Somewhat or strongly agree



Community Sufficiently Promotes Economic Development
Somewhat or strongly agree



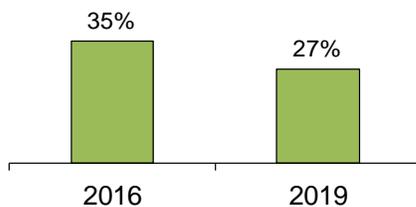
Adequate Workforce for Businesses
Somewhat or strongly agree



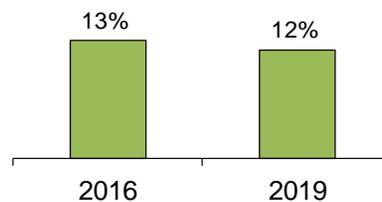
Impact of the Economy

More than one in four said that their household income has increased over the past year – down from 2016; about one in 10 experienced a job loss within the household.

Household Income Has Increased Over Past Year



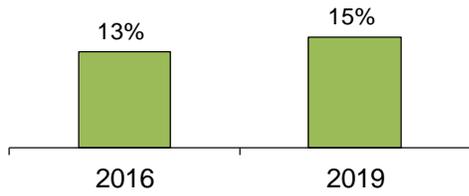
Lost a Job in Past Year



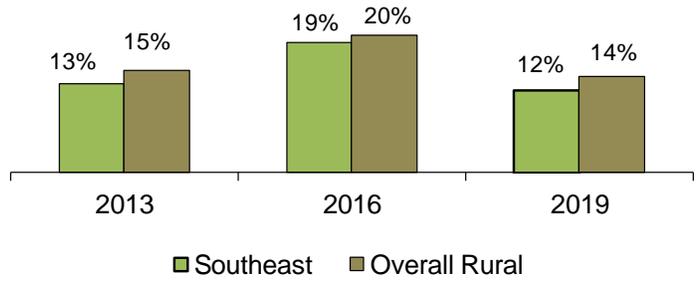
Migration

Fifteen percent said that they did not expect to live in their same community five years from now. Twelve percent have considered moving to a metropolitan area – a decrease from 2016 study findings. Those who have considered a move said that the search for job opportunities was a motivating factor for considering relocation.

Do Not Expect to Live in Their Community Five Years From Now



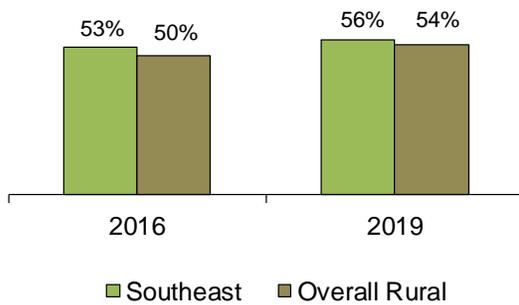
Considered Moving to Metro Area Within Past Two Years



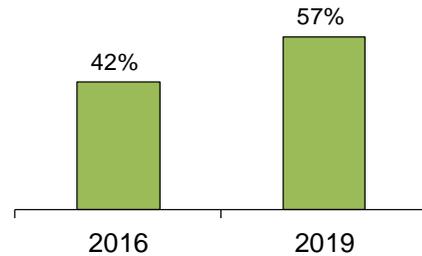
Leadership

Nearly six in 10 said they have served in a leadership capacity. A third who have not said that they would definitely consider serving in leadership if asked. There was a belief by 56 percent that people from diverse backgrounds fill leadership roles.

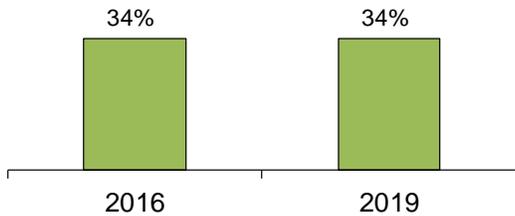
People From Diverse Backgrounds Fill Leadership Roles Within Community
Somewhat or strongly agree



Have Served in a Leadership Role



Would Definitely Consider Serving If Asked
(Of those who have not served in leadership)



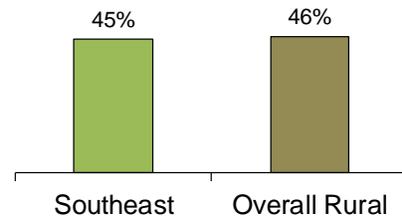
Inclusion

Forty-five percent of residents in Southeast Minnesota said that they have at least some close friends of a different race or culture.

Southeast residents were most likely to feel the groups that experience bias, discrimination or harassment within their community include those with drug or mental health issues, transgender individuals, recent immigrants, African Americans and gays and lesbians.

Have At Least Some Close Friends of Different Race or Culture

Some, most or all



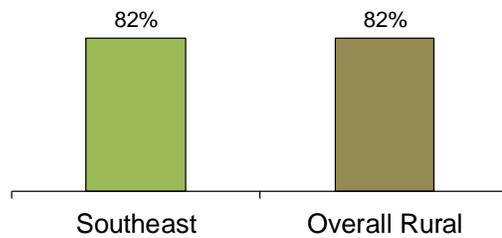
Groups Most Believed to Experience Bias, Discrimination or Harassment Within Their Community

Multiple Responses Allowed

1. Those with drug or mental health issues
2. Transgender people
3. Recent immigrants
4. African Americans
5. Gays and lesbians

Eight in 10 (82%) Southeast Minnesotans believed people in their community are able to stand up to hatred and discrimination.

Believe People in Community are Able to Stand Up to Hatred and Discrimination

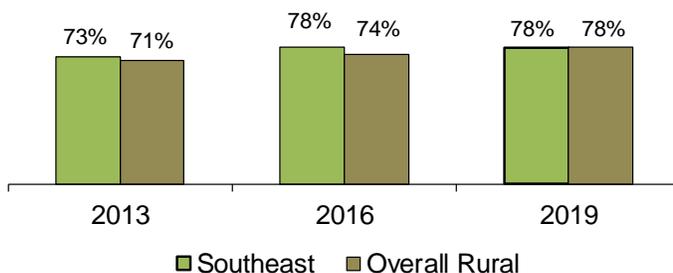


Optimism Exists

Overall, 78 percent of Southeast region residents were optimistic about their community's future.

Optimistic About Future of Their Community

Somewhat or very optimistic



For more information on Rural Pulse™ and to review the comprehensive, statewide report, visit www.RuralPulse.org. For more on Blandin Foundation visit www.BlandinFoundation.org.

