

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
NOVEMBER 7, 2005**

## CITY GETS TOP MARKS IN RESIDENT SATISFACTION SURVEY

**Medicine Hat** – Ninety-four per cent of residents consider Medicine Hat's quality of life to be excellent or good. That's just one of the results released today in the City's Resident Satisfaction Survey.

In addition to saying Medicine Hat has an enviable quality of life, nearly 90 per cent of residents gave the City top marks for the services it provides.

"The responses to the survey questions provide useful information to Council and Administration as they set priorities, evaluate programs and services, and make strategic decisions that shape the future of the City of Medicine Hat," says Mayor Garth Valley.

The random telephone survey of 400 residents was done for the City of Medicine Hat in September by the Alberta-based firm Banister Research.

"The survey is important because it helps identify what we do well, and where we can improve," said Gerry Labas, Chief Administrative Officer. "We are delivering a tremendous number of services 365 days a year and Medicine Hatters are telling us we're meeting the challenge and living up to their expectations. This is in no small part due to the dedication and skill of our City staff, as is shown in the high satisfaction residents expressed in their contact with City employees."

The statistically significant results include:

### **Quality of Life:**

- The most frequently mentioned factors contributing to a high quality of life in Medicine Hat were a smaller city with the conveniences of a larger city (27%), the low cost of utilities (24%), and a good climate (18%).
- 32% of respondents feel the quality of life in Medicine Hat has increased over the past three years.
- Although 34% of respondents responded "don't know" to what would make Medicine Hat a better place to live, better shopping with more variety of stores and more jobs/better employment each ranked the highest among people who provided a response.

### **Services, Facilities and Programs:**

- 87% of respondents were either very or somewhat satisfied overall with the services and programs provided by the City of Medicine Hat.
- Highest levels of satisfaction were expressed for electric services (88% are somewhat or very satisfied), natural gas services (87%), parks, trails and natural areas (85%), fire services (81%), and police services (80%).

**Contact with City Employees:**

- Of the 47% of respondents who said they had been in contact with a City employee in the past 12 months:
  - 87% said employees are knowledgeable about the services they provide.
  - 84% said employees are courteous and helpful.
  - 78% said employees responded quickly to their requests and concerns.
  - 62% said employees exceeded expectations in the services provided.

**City Communications:**

- Respondents want to receive more information about garbage collection and recycling, budget and tax expenditures, land use and city planning, and services and programs in general.
- The majority of respondents (75%) get information about the City of Medicine Hat through newspaper articles or advertising.

**Views toward Property Taxes:**

- Medicine Hat homeowner respondents provided a rating of very good (14%) and good (48%) in terms of their perceived value for tax dollar, while 31% gave a rating of fair and 4% said poor value.
- 44% of respondents indicated that, over the next five years, they would be more likely to support an inflationary tax increase to maintain services. Thirteen per cent support a tax increase, above inflation, to enhance service, while 9% support cutting services to maintain the current tax level and 4% support cutting services to reduce taxes.

**Natural Gas:**

- The vast majority of respondents (84%) are aware the City sells some of its natural gas in the external market place and uses the money to keep utility rates and property taxes low.
- 33% supported the establishment of a financial fund for future generations by setting aside some monies collected through increased utility rates and property taxes, while 42% felt no fund should be established and utility rates and property taxes should be kept low.

**Community Issues:**

- When asked about Council's five priorities, almost half said exploring energy alternatives should be the City's highest priority.
- In terms of important issues facing City Council, 11% responded managing urban growth, followed by the need for more affordable housing, reducing crime, and addressing increasing taxes and utility rates.

Copies of the executive summary are available from the City Clerk Department at City Hall and complete survey results are available on the City's website [www.medicinehat.ca](http://www.medicinehat.ca).

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