Staff and students working for the Survey Research Center (SRC) at UW-River Falls were instrumental in the completion of this study. We would like to thank Denise Parks, Shelly Hadley, Katrina Barrett, David Jacobsen, and Emily Johnson. We gratefully acknowledge their hard work and dedication.

The SRC would also like to thank Chris Stark, Nancy Miller, and Terri Miller from the Vilas County UW-Extension Department for their valuable guidance and input throughout the project.

Finally, we would like to thank the Vilas County residents who took time to complete their questionnaires.
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Executive Summary

The purpose of this study was to gather resident input to assist UW-Extension in better serving the residents of Vilas County.

In August 2015, the SRC mailed surveys to a random sample of 1,128 households in Vilas County. The overall response rate was 35 percent (400 completed questionnaires). The confidence interval for this data set is ±4.8%.

Only a bit more than half of respondents said the quality of life in the County is very good (42%) or excellent (12%).

Two-thirds of respondents said they feel connected (46%) or very connected (19%) to friends and family in the county.

Over half of respondents participate in social activities at least once per week.

A third of respondents have contacted a human service agency in the past 12 months.

Seven in ten respondents use the Internet on a daily basis. Four in ten respondents are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the speed and reliability of their Internet services.

Three-fourths of respondents typically shop for their groceries in Vilas County. About seven in ten respondents typically shop outside of Vilas County or shop online for other household items and durable goods.

About 5% of respondents rely on someone from outside their household for shopping assistance and for transportation.

Over half of respondents said they are retired. Among non-retirees, 70% are employed full-time, 13% part-time, 9% seasonally employed, 5% disabled, 4% unemployed and looking, and 1 percent unemployed and not looking.

Among employed respondents, 60% said they need reliable Internet for their jobs, 24% work from home, and 4% telecommute. Nearly two-thirds of employed respondents are very satisfied or extremely satisfied with their jobs.

Respondents have mixed opinions about the probability of moving out of the county if they lost their job; half of employed respondents said “maybe” (26%) they would move or it was “very likely” (26%) they would move out of the county.

A family issue was the single most important factor that would motivate respondents to move from Vilas County.

About half of respondents are not familiar with UW-Extension, 93% have not had contact with UW-Extension in the past year.

From a list of 17 educational program topics for UW-Extension, a majority of respondents rated 13 as important or very important. The highest priority programs UW-Extension programming
were development and extension of broadband Internet service, promoting positive, healthy youth development, spending food dollars wisely, and programs aimed at the retention and expansion of existing businesses.

When asked to describe the single best thing about living in Vilas County, the majority of comments focused on the natural beauty of the county, the rural atmosphere, and available outdoor recreational opportunities.
**Survey Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to gather resident input to assist UW-Extension in better serving the residents of Vilas County. Vilas County officials and the UW-Extension Department chose to work with the Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls to gather this information.

**Survey Methods**

In August 2015, the SRC mailed surveys to a random sample of 1,128 households in Vilas County.

The SRC received 400 useable responses, which represents a response rate of 35%. Based on the number of adults in Vilas County, 17,726 in the 2009-2013 US Census Bureau American Community Survey, the confidence interval (“margin of error”) for these data is plus/minus 4.8%.

Any survey has to be concerned with “non-response bias.” Non-response bias refers to a situation in which people who do not return a questionnaire have opinions that are systematically different from the opinions of those who return their surveys. A standard way to test for non-response bias is to compare the responses of those who respond to the first mailing or online invitation to those who respond to the second mailing or online invitation. Those who respond to the second mailing are, in effect, a sample of non-respondents (to the first mailing), and we assume that they are representative of that group. Due to the unusually large response to the first mailing, the SRC did not send a second mailing. Thus, it was not possible to test the results for non-response bias. The survey results found few differences across demographic groups, which suggests that non-response bias is not likely an issue for these data.

In addition to numeric data, respondents provided additional written answers and comments. **Appendix A** contains the written responses.

**Appendix B** contains copies of survey questionnaire with a complete quantitative summary of responses by question.
Profile of Respondents

Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of the survey respondents. Where comparable data were available from the 5-year estimates (2009-2013) of the US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS), the sample data were compared to the overall profile of Vilas County adults.

The sample contains a slightly higher percentage of men (56%) than would be expected (50%).

Young adults are under-represented in sample. Conversely, the sample contains a larger percentage of adults age 55 years and above than in the overall population. Our experience is that younger residents are less likely to participate in surveys.

Respondents tend to be long-term residents of the County. Half of respondents have lived in Vilas County for at least 20 years.

The household composition pattern generally aligns with the ACS data. The largest percentage of households in the sample have two adults and no dependent children. There are slightly more households in the sample without dependent children than in the overall population; this is likely a function of the smaller proportion of younger respondents in the sample as noted in the previous paragraph.

About four in ten respondents have family other than those in their households who also live in Vilas County.

With respect to ethnicity and race, the sample reflects that the county population is mostly white. However, the percentage of Native Americans in the sample (1%) was substantially less than in the overall county population (10%).

The distribution of annual household income aligns generally with the Census ACS data. There were slightly fewer low-income respondents (under $15,000 annual household income) and slightly more respondents in the $50,000 to $74,000 bracket.

The SRC performed statistical tests to see if there were significant differences in the responses of the survey questions based on demographic characteristics. In statistics, a result is called **statistically significant** if it is unlikely to have occurred by chance. Statistical significance is expressed as a probability that the differences between demographic groups (e.g. men and women) are not real. A commonly used probability standard is .05 (5%). Statistical significance at the .05 level indicates a 5 in 100 probability that the observed difference across demographic groups for a given variable is not real. It does not mean the difference is necessarily large, important, or significant in the common meaning of the word. Given a sufficiently large sample, even small differences of opinion across demographic groups will be statistically significant.

Thus, not all differences among the demographic groups that are “statistically significant” are meaningful. For example, 97% of men said they do not rely on someone from outside their household for transportation compared to 91% of women respondents. While this difference is statistically significant, it is not meaningful because it indicates that a very large majority of both genders do not rely on outside transportation. Thus the 6% difference does not impact the interpretation of the results. The report will identify those instances where there were differences
in the response pattern across a given demographic group that would have affected the interpretation of the results.

### Table 1. Profile of Respondents – Vilas County Community Connections Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender (Age 18+)</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Bureau - ACS</td>
<td>17,726</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group (Age 18+)</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-44</th>
<th>45-54</th>
<th>55-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Bureau - ACS</td>
<td>17,726</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of residence in Vilas County</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>&lt;1 Yr.</th>
<th>1-5 Yrs.</th>
<th>6-10 Yrs.</th>
<th>11-15 Yrs.</th>
<th>16-20 Yrs.</th>
<th>20+ Yrs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Bureau - ACS</td>
<td>Not included in ACS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adults in Household</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Bureau - ACS</td>
<td>10,636</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children in Household Under Age 18</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Bureau - ACS</td>
<td>Not included in ACS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other family members in Vilas County</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Bureau - ACS</td>
<td>Not included in ACS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity/Race</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Native American or Alaskan Native</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Two or More</th>
<th>Latino</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Bureau - ACS</td>
<td>21,401</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household income range</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>&lt;$15K</th>
<th>$15K-$24.9K</th>
<th>$25K-$34.9K</th>
<th>$35K-$49.9K</th>
<th>$50K-$74.9K</th>
<th>$75K – $100K</th>
<th>$100K+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census Bureau - ACS</td>
<td>10,636</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Geographic Distribution of Respondents

Respondents were asked where they live in Vilas County. The questionnaire included a list of jurisdictions (14 towns plus Eagle River). Table 2 shows the results. With the exception of the Town of Lac du Flambeau, the geographic distribution of respondents aligns with the overall population of Vilas County. Since over half of the population of the Town of Lac du Flambeau (56%\footnote{American Community Survey, 5-year estimate, 2009-2013}) is Native American, the lower than expected number of responses from Lac du Flambeau is a probable explanation for the low percentage of Native American respondents noted in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent Sample</th>
<th>Percent Vilas County²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arbor Vitae</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boulder Junction</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloverland</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conover</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eagle River (city)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lac du Flambeau</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land O’ Lakes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitowish Waters</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phelps</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plum Lake</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presque Isle</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Germain</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchester</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>388</td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For purposes of geographical analysis of the results, the Vilas County UW-Extension Department asked the SRC to create groups of towns as follows:

Group 1: Boulder Junction, Manitowish Waters, Plum Lake, Presque Isle, and Winchester
Group 2: Eagle River, Cloverland, Lincoln, and Washington
Group 3: Conover, Land O’ Lakes, and Phelps
Group 4: Arbor Vitae and St. Germain
Group 5: Lac du Flambeau

\footnote{Calculated by the SRC from 2010 US Census data}
Community Connections

The first question in the survey asked respondents to rate the quality of life in Vilas County. As shown in Chart 1, respondents had mixed opinions about the county’s quality of life. The good news is that slightly more than half of respondents said the quality of life in the county is very good (42%) or excellent (12%). However, 34% of respondents were somewhat less enthusiastic, saying the quality of life is good, and 11% rated it as fair. Very few respondents rated the county’s quality of life as poor (1%).

Demographic comparisons. Non-White respondents rated the county’s quality of life lower than did White respondents.
The survey asked the respondents to rate how connected they feel to friends and family. Answer choices were on a scale that included very isolated, isolated, slightly isolated, slightly connected, connected and very connected. As shown in Chart 2, two-thirds of respondents said they feel connected (46%) or very connected (19%). While there are relatively few who reported being isolated or very isolated, a substantial minority (30%) landed in the middle of this spectrum, suggesting a lower level integration into Vilas County society.

**Chart 2. Connectedness to Friends and Family**

Demographic comparisons. Respondents who have other family members in Vilas County not in their households said they are more likely to report being very connected to friends and family.

Respondents with a higher degree of social connectedness also tended to give a higher rating to the quality of life in Vilas County.
Continuing with the social connectedness theme, respondents were asked how frequently they attend social activities. Answer choices were never, yearly, monthly, weekly, and daily.

Chart 3 indicates that over half of Vilas County respondents participate in social activities at least once per week. On the other end of the scale, there are about a quarter of the respondents who attend social activities infrequently (13% never plus 12% yearly).

Demographic comparisons. Respondents from households with annual household incomes of $50,000 or more attend social activities more frequently than those from households with less than $50,000 income.
The survey asked about contact with human service agencies. Chart 4 indicates that two-thirds of respondents said they have not contacted any of the human service agencies in Vilas County during the past 12 months. The Commission on Aging was most frequently contacted (15%), followed by Veteran’s Services (11%). Eight percent of respondents contacted the Aging and Disability Resource Center and 8% contacted the County Social Services Department. Only 2% had contacted the Human Resource Center in Rhinelander.

### Chart 4. Human Service Agencies Contacted in Past 12 Months

- None: 65%
- Commission on Aging: 15%
- Veteran's Services: 11%
- Aging and Disability Resource Center: 8%
- Social Services: 8%
- Human Resource Center Rhinelander: 2%
- Other: 2%

**Demographic comparisons.** A larger majority of men said they have not contacted any social service agencies than women.

A larger percentage of respondents from the group of towns comprising Boulder Junction, Manitowish Waters, Plum Lake, Presque Isle, and Winchester said they had not used any human service agencies in the past year.

Non-White respondents were more likely to have contacted Social Services in the past 12 months.
Two questions asked respondents about Internet usage and satisfaction.

As shown in Chart 5, Vilas County respondents are frequent users of the Internet, with seven in ten respondents accessing the Internet on a daily basis. Eight percent of respondents said Internet service is not available at their place of residence. Only 6% of respondents said they choose not to have Internet access even though it is available.

![Chart 5. Frequency of Internet Usage](image)

Demographic comparisons. A smaller majority of long-term residents (20+ years) are daily Internet users.

A larger majority of respondents from households with at least $50,000 annual income use the Internet daily.
Chart 6 shows how respondents rated their level of satisfaction with the speed and reliability of their Internet connection. Among respondents with Internet access, six in ten said they are satisfied (51%) or very satisfied (9%). However a significant minority (40%) of respondents are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their Internet service.

Demographic comparisons.

Among Internet users, respondents from the Town of Lac du Flambeau were much more dissatisfied with their Internet service.
**Shopping**

Respondents were asked where they typically shop for groceries, other household items, and durable goods (such as appliances, electronics, furniture, and vehicles). Answer choices were in Vilas County, out of Vilas County, or online. Chart 7 summarizes the results. Among the three types of items purchased, groceries ranked first in terms of shopping in Vilas County. Three-fourths of respondents said they typically shop for groceries in the county, while a quarter buy their groceries in another county. None said they typically buy groceries online.

The results for the purchase of other household items and durable goods indicate that the majority of respondents shop out of the county or online. This represents a substantial leakage from the Vilas County economy. Six in ten respondents said they typically purchase non-grocery household items out of Vilas County (55%) or online (7%). An even larger percentage of durable goods purchases are made in out of Vilas County (69%) or online (3%).

**Demographic comparisons.** Respondents age 55+ were more likely to shop for groceries and other household items in Vilas County.

Non-White respondents were less likely to shop for other household items and durable goods in Vilas County.
Respondents from the group of jurisdictions including Cloverland, Eagle River, Lincoln, Washington, Conover, Land O’ Lakes, and Phelps were more likely to shop for their groceries in Vilas County. In contrast, respondents from Boulder Junction, Manitowish Waters, Plum Lake, Presque Isle, Winchester, Arbor Vitae, and St. Germain were more likely to buy groceries outside of Vilas County.
Two questions asked about the need for assistance. The first question asked how often the respondent needs someone from outside their homes to shop for them. Answer choices were never, monthly, weekly, twice weekly, and daily. The second question asked how often the respondent relies on others from outside their household for transportation.

In Chart 8, the top bar is the percentage of respondents relying on outside assistance for shopping, and the bottom bar is the percentage of respondents who need transportation assistance from outside their household.

About 5% of respondents said they require assistance from non-household members for shopping and for transportation. Among those who need outside assistance, the largest proportion said that they needed assistance monthly.

Demographic comparisons. Non-White respondents were more likely to rely on someone outside their households for transportation.
Employment

When asked about their current employment status, Chart 9 shows over half of respondents said they are retired. A third of respondents were employed full time. Less than 10% were employed part-time, seasonally, disabled, unemployed but looking, unemployed but not looking, or full-time student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed full time</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed seasonally</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed, not looking</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not employed, looking</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full time student</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic comparisons. Not surprisingly, respondents age 55 years and older were more likely to be retired.
Chart 10 presents another view of the employment results by excluding retirees. About seven in ten respondents are employed full-time, 13% are employed part time, and 9% are seasonal employees. Five percent of respondents said they are unemployed, which aligns with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development official unemployment rate of 4.9% (August 2015).
Respondents were asked if their work requires reliable Internet functionality, if they work from home, and if they telecommute. As shown in Chart 11, 60% of employed respondents said they need a reliable Internet connection for their work responsibilities. A quarter of employed respondents said they work from home. Relatively few (4%) telecommute.

**Chart 11. Additional Work Characteristics**
**Includes Only Employed Respondents**

Demographic comparisons. Among employed respondents, a larger majority under age 55 said their work depends on a reliable Internet connection.

Respondents from households with children were more likely to telecommute.
When asked about their level of satisfaction with their jobs, Chart 12 shows relatively high levels of satisfaction among respondents. Two thirds of respondents are very satisfied (45%) and 19% are extremely satisfied. Job satisfaction among Vilas County residents compares very favorably with a 2014 national job satisfaction survey conducted by the Nielsen Company for the Conference Board. That survey found that 48% of Americans were satisfied their jobs.³

![Chart 12. Satisfaction with Employment](chart.png)

Demographic comparisons. A larger majority of women said they are very satisfied or extremely satisfied with their employment.

The survey contained two questions about geographic mobility.

The first question asked respondents how likely they would be to leave Vilas County as a result of a job loss.

As shown in Chart 13, among employed respondents, 18% were very firm in their conviction, saying that there is no chance that they would move away. Another 30% of employed respondents said it is unlikely that they would move out of the county. However, 26% said maybe they would move away, and 26% said it was very likely that they would move out of the county. Thus, half of employed respondents are not firmly rooted in Vilas County in the event of a job loss.

**Demographic comparisons.** Respondents with children in the household were more likely to say they would move from Vilas County if they lost their job.

Respondents from households with under $50,000 annual income were more likely to say there is no chance they would move from Vilas County if they lost their jobs.

A larger percentage of respondents from the group of towns comprising Boulder Junction, Manitowish Waters, Plum Lake, Presque Isle, and Winchester said there was no chance that they would move from Vilas County.
In the second question about geographic mobility, respondents were asked what single reason would most likely induce them to move out of Vilas County. Answer choices were loss of job, higher paying job, lack of shopping opportunities, and family reasons. As shown in Chart 14, by far, the strongest motivator is related to family (59%). In a far distant second place, 17% of respondents said their retirement would be most likely to cause them to move away. Job loss and lack of shopping opportunities were chosen by relatively few respondents.

Demographic comparisons. Employment issues were a stronger motivating factor to move to a different county among respondents under age 55 and respondents with children in the household. Younger respondents and those with children in the household said loss of a job or finding a higher paying job were the top two mobility factors. Respondents age 55 years and older and those without children at home ranked family reasons at the top.
The survey contained three specific questions about UW-Extension. They focused on familiarity with UW-Extension, contacts with UW-Extension, and identifying educational priorities for Vilas County UW-Extension program development.

As shown in Chart 15, about half of respondents said they have some degree of familiarity with UW-Extension. Among respondents who have some degree of familiarity with UW-Extension, the largest portion said they are “somewhat” familiar with Extension rather than familiar or very familiar with Extension.

**Chart 15. Familiarity with UW-Extension**

- Not at all familiar: 47%
- Somewhat familiar: 37%
- Familiar: 13%
- Very familiar: 4%

**Demographic comparisons.** Respondents age 55 years and older were more likely to be “somewhat” familiar with UW-Extension.

Respondents with children in the household were less familiar with UW-Extension.
Respondents were then asked how many times they had contacted an Extension County Agent or had attended a UW-Extension program in the past year. As shown in Chart 16, about 8% of respondents said they have been engaged with UW-Extension during the past year. This contact rate is about the same as the percentage of adult residents who have contacted human service agencies in the past 12 months (see Chart 4); only the Commission on Aging ranked substantially higher (15%).

Demographic comparisons. There were no statistically significant differences among the demographic groups, suggesting that the Vilas County UW-Extension Department has a broad range of contacts across the county’s various demographic groups.
Outreach/Educational Needs

Respondents were presented with a list of 17 topics for potential educational programming that would help them live and thrive in Vilas County and asked to rate the importance of each. Answer choices were very important, important, don’t know, unimportant, or very unimportant. In order to identify the overall highest priority issues, the SRC compared the ratings of all 17 issues and placed them in rank order. To calculate the comparison, the SRC assigned a point value to each of the importance categories as follows: very important=4 points, important=3 points, unimportant=2 points, very unimportant=1 point. Responses in the “Don’t know” responses were excluded from the computation in order to include only the ratings among respondents with an opinion. From these data, the SRC calculated a mean (“average”) point value for each of the 17 issues.

The ranked results are shown in Chart 17. The mean scores ranged from 2.43 to 3.15. This range of scores suggests that there were several topics that ranked relatively high in importance, and none of the listed topics received an overall low importance rating.

Four topics were grouped closely at the top of the ratings. Development/Extension of broadband Internet service (3.15) ranked at the top, slightly ahead of retention/expansion of existing businesses (3.12), spending food dollars wisely (3.11), and promoting positive youth development (3.11). Additional analysis shows that two-thirds of the respondents who said they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their Internet service (Chart 6) rated development/expansion of broadband Internet as a very important program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Importance Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development/Extension of broadband</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business retention/expansion</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending food dollars wisely</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote positive youth devl.</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth leadership</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing healthful food</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing healthful diets</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding financial assistance</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult leadership</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-H clubs</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown development</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-parenting classes</td>
<td>2.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town court</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth in government</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting classes for inmates</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child development age 1-3 newsletter</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional topics whose average score was above 3.0 (important) include youth leadership (3.06), preparing healthful food (3.05), and choosing healthful diets (3.03). Entrepreneurship followed closely at 2.94.

The next group of topics included finding financial assistance resources (2.84), adult leadership (2.84), 4-H clubs (2.81), and downtown development (2.79).

Co-parenting classes for divorcing parents (2.66), teen court (2.60), youth in government (2.56), parenting classes for inmates (2.54), and child development age 1 to 3 newsletter (2.43) ranked lower in relation to other topics but were not unimportant.

As noted above, the results in Chart 17 did not include the “don’t know” responses. The overall results contained a group of topics for which a substantial proportion of respondents chose the “don’t know” category. These included teen court (41%), child development (37%), youth in government (37%), parenting classes for inmates (36%) and co-parenting classes for divorcing spouses (32%).

Appendix B contains the tabulated percentages for each of the 17 topics.

Demographic comparisons. Women gave higher importance ratings to downtown development, child development, and preparing healthful foods.

Respondents under age 55 gave higher importance ratings to downtown development, development/expansion of broadband Internet, entrepreneurship, retention/expansion of existing businesses, and programs to promote positive, healthy youth development.

Respondents from single-adult households were more likely to say that development/expansion of broadband Internet is important or very important.

Non-White respondents gave higher importance ratings to teen court and child development classes.

Respondents from households with annual incomes of above $50,000 were more likely to rate development/expansion of broadband Internet as very important.

Residents of the Town of Lac du Flambeau gave higher importance ratings to the development and extension of broadband Internet service. This is not surprising given that respondents from Lac du Flambeau reported the highest level of dissatisfaction with their Internet service (see demographic comparisons following Chart 6).

Respondents from households with children gave higher importance ratings to downtown development, entrepreneurship, retention and expansion of existing businesses, and programs to promote positive, healthy youth development.
Written Comments – Single best thing about living in Vilas County

The survey contained an open-ended question in which respondents were asked to describe the single best aspect about living in Vilas County. A total of 322 individuals provided written comments. The SRC analyzed the comments and placed them into five topical categories plus a miscellaneous category. Table 3 summarizes the results.

By far, the largest category of responses centered on the natural beauty and rural atmosphere of the county. This group of comments accounted for 54% of the total.

The following quotes are representative of this theme:

“Beauty of the northwoods”
“It’s away from the big city problems”
“Lakes and forests are beautiful”
“Natural surroundings i.e. lack of cement, asphalt, and brick”
“Rural lifestyle”

The second most popular aspect about living in Vilas County focused on outdoor recreational activities and accounted for 15% of the responses. The outdoor recreational activities mentioned by respondents were concentrated on activities related to the natural resource base of the county and are closely related to the natural beauty/rural atmosphere comments described above. Taken together, these two groups of comments comprise about 70% of all respondents most favorite aspects about Vilas County.

The following quotes are representative of the outdoor recreation theme, including both motorized and silent sports:

“Bike trails, hiking, XC skiing, county, state and national forests, clean lakes, silent sports, clean air-let's keep it that way.”
“The recreational opportunities (i.e. hunting, fishing, ATV)”
“To me the best thing living in Vilas County is the outdoor activities, like fishing, hunting, bird watching, pristine wilderness.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural beauty/Rural atmosphere</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor recreational opportunities</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendliness, family, and social relationships</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerns/suggestions</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>322</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In third place (10%) were comments about the friendliness of people in the county and family relationships.

Low crime and safety topics were listed by 7% of respondents as the best thing about living in Vilas County.

Another 7% listed problems and concerns or made suggestions for improvement.

The miscellaneous category contained 7% of the total comments.

See Appendix A for the total list of compiled comments.
Conclusions

Key findings of this survey include the following:

- Respondents give mixed ratings to the quality of life in Vilas County, with half rating it very good or excellent.
- Respondents prize the natural beauty and rural atmosphere of the county.
- Social connectedness with friends and family is a mixed bag. Two-thirds have relatively high levels of connectedness, but a third reported being “slightly” connected at best.
- Daily use of the Internet is common among respondents, but 40% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the speed and reliability of their Internet service.
- Given limited resources, the high importance ratings for most of the 17 educational programming topics included in the survey present a challenge to Extension faculty and staff as they choose topics for their educational programs. The rankings in Chart 17 may be helpful as one source of input to identify topics that are relatively more important from those that are somewhat less important.
- While about half of respondents said they were at least somewhat familiar with UW-Extension, the remaining 47 percent who are not familiar with Extension represent an opportunity to develop additional public awareness of Extension services and to help improve the lives of more county residents. High priority programs are spread across multiple Extension program areas.
Appendix A – Open-Ended Comments and “Other” Written Responses

Q4. Please indicate the human service agencies you have visited or contacted in the past year, “Other”. (11 Responses)
- Social security (2x)
- Food pantry Eagle River
- Food Pantry Iron County
- Have Down syndrome son in group home.
- New cap
- Political
- Salvation army
- Senior dinners
- St. Germaine prime timers AARP
- UW Ext. office county nurse

Q18. If you had to choose one thing only, what is the best thing about living in Vilas County? (322 Responses)

Natural beauty/Rural atmosphere (174 Responses)
- Peace and quiet (7x)
- Lakes (4x)
- Natural beauty (4x)
- Natural resources (4x)
- Beauty of area (3x)
- Clean air and water (3x)
- Environment (3x)
- Forests and lakes (3x)
- Living on a lake lot (3x)
- Nature (3x)
- Peaceful (3x)
- Clean air (2x)
- Quality of life (2x)
- Quiet (2x)
- Small town atmosphere (2x)
- Weather (2x)
- A great beautiful corner of God's Eden
- Access to all the lakes!
- Air quality
- All the clean water and forests!
- All the different wildlife.
- Appreciate the small size of the towns of Vilas county compared to that of Chicago and (my home "town") of New York City
- Areas natural resources.
- Availability of access to lakes, hiking/biking trails, ski trails, safe and beautiful back roads to run on.
- Beautiful area
- Beautiful area. Close friends from church. 2 kids live in the area. LAKES.
- Beautiful forests and lakes.
- Beautiful lakes and forests-outdoor opportunities.
• Beautiful surroundings.
• Beauty of nature.
• Beauty of the area: lakes, Nicolet National Forest, wildlife, no air pollution, four seasons.
• Beauty of the northwoods.
• Beauty, friendly community
• Being able to access the state forests and thousands of lakes.
• Being able to walk out of my house and sit on the deck and watch all the birds and animals by the lake
• Better than any big city life
• Clean environment - no industry
• Clean lakes, water
• Clean northwoods air.
• Clean water in lake.
• Country location and lakes.
• Enjoying nature and wildlife
• Environment: clean air, clean water, quiet peaceful
• Environment: includes climate, lack of pollution, low population, lakes and natural beauty.
• Forests
• Forests, no ATV's, quietness.
• Good air quality and slower living pace.
• Green and clean.
• Healthy atmosphere-lakes and forests!
• I enjoy the beautiful lake and forests in Vilas
• I like the beauty of the forest and lakes.
• I love the northwoods
• It offers the rurally setting we sought out throughout our employment and child rearing years
• It would have to be the peace no rat race of a big city.
• It's beauty
• It’s peaceful
• It's away from the big city problems
• It's beautiful. We need to do all we can to preserve our lakes and woods.
• It's beautiful-God's country up here.
• It's not Milwaukee or Madison.
• It's quiet
• Lack of tension.
• Lakes and forests are beautiful
• Lakes and woods.
• Lakes, trees.
• Lakes, water quality
• Living in the great outdoors-close to lakes and forest land.
• Moved up from Madison area 1.5 years ago. Love small town. People are friendlier. Not as liberal as Madison. Thank God!
• Natural and smaller town environment.
• Natural resources.
• Natural resources. Enjoying retirement.
• Natural resources-our beautiful lakes and woods.
• Natural settings/environment relatively clean.
• Natural surroundings i.e. lack of cement, asphalt, and brick.
• Nature/lakes/trees.
• Nature's beauty. Please, please, please no more logging!
• No neighbors, relatively little contact with people. Enjoy peace and quiet.
- Northwood's tranquility: et al. Low pollution-noise, cars, etc. Slower traffic.
- Open spaces, the outdoors, friendly people, feeling safe.
- Our natural beauty/resources.
- Paradise
- Peace and natural beauty
- Peace and quiet, shoreline beauty.
- Peace and quiet. Beauty of the land/nature
- Peace and quiet. Not having to live near a city
- Peace and quiet. Watching all the animals in the yard and on the lake. I am 82 years old!
- Peaceful environment with potential
- Quality of life is so much better. Clean air, nicer people and a sense of community that was lacking in our southeast WI hometown.
- Quality of life, clean environment, peaceful region, beautiful place to live
- Quiet northwoods atmosphere!
- Quiet. Lovely. Like country, farm and clean.
- Relaxed living
- Rural area
- Rural lifestyle.
- Simplicity of life.
- Slower pace of industry
- That it has a small town-everyone knows everyone. Way about it. Help is always there from a neighbor, and you can turn around and repay the help.
- The ability to enjoy nature in scenic, serene park and lake areas makes Vilas County the best last wilderness.
- The ability to enjoy the natural resources of the area and share them with my children, like my father and grandfather did with me.
- The abundance of beautiful nature.
- The air, wildlife, people, forest.
- The beautiful lakes which still have public access for all people to enjoy. Would love to see more lakes in Vilas County with public access.
- The beautiful lakes, streams, and forests
- The beautiful northwoods!
- The beautiful surroundings and friendly people.
- The beauty of the county and the vast diversity of things to see and do. There is something for everyone!
- The beauty of the outdoors. The country life is peaceful and quiet.
- The beauty of the outdoors. The forests, lakes, and clean air all combine to promote serenity and a stress free lifestyle.
- The beauty, quietness, peacefulness, and outdoor activities out my back door! Kayaking, walking, hiking, boating, fishing, skiing, lakes and river and great water sports too! (Sorry more than one :))
- The best thing about Vilas County are the natural resources available.
- The best thing is the beautiful trees, lakes, resources.
- The clean lakes
- The diversity of our small towns and the enjoyment of our beautiful lakes.
- The environment of lakes and woods.
- The environment.
• The extensive natural resources...fish, wildlife, public forest lands, etc.
• The forest and lakes, streams
• The laid back tranquil life style.
• The natural beauty and resources provided by nature.
• The northwoods environment which unfortunately gets clear-cut every time a new/relocated business is developed. Some trees/landscaping would be more inviting.
• The northwoods. Natural resources. Quiet, scenery, lakes.
• The outdoors, lakes, woods, etc.
• The peacefulness of the northwoods/lakes. Great place to retire away from the rat-race of SE WI.
• The peacefulness. Lack of noise in areas.
• The quiet area and simplicity of life.
• The quiet peaceful living
• The rural setting.
• The secluded, private and quiet of our home in the woods.
• The tranquility of the area and the friendliness of the people.
• The wildlife and peace and quiet.
• Tranquility
• Unspoiled nature.
• Very scenic.
• You have to appreciate where you live every time you look outside.
• We like living in a rural community. Clean air, slower pace (except summer). Knowing people on a first name basis.
• Well away from the busy and hectic big city life.
• We're away from the "hustle and bustle" of the city.
• Wildlife. I grew up here and stayed here. #1 reason I chose to stay versus going to the city is the wildlife and enjoying the outdoor activities with it.

Outdoor recreational opportunities (49 Responses)
• Fishing (4x)
• Outdoor activities (4x)
• The lakes and natural beauty that creates recreational opportunities (3x)
• Recreational opportunities (3x)
• Fishing and hunting (2x)
• Active lifestyle, and recreation options
• Availability of winter sports in snowmobiling and skiing.
• Beautiful recreation areas for all ages (fishing, hiking, skiing, etc.)
• Because of being retired the recreational possibilities are what we enjoy most-biking, hunting, fishing, snowmobiling. We enjoy all outdoor activities.
• Bike trails, hiking, XC skiing, county, state and national forests, clean lakes, silent sports, clean air-let's keep it that way.
• Camping sites-beautiful and secluded.
• Finally getting ATV/ UTV trails.
• Fishing opportunities, lakes.
• Fishing-lakes, rivers, and forests.
• Good fishing and hunting.
• Healthy environment to live and recreate in.
• Hiking and biking trails.
• Natural beauty with silent sport opportunities in uncongested area with far-sighted protective lakeshore zoning.
Outdoor activities. Great shooting range in Boulder Junction.

Outdoor activities-swimming, hiking, boating, etc.

Outdoor enjoyment of lakes/fishing

Outdoor recreation on the abundant public forest lands and lakes.

Outdoors environment

Quality of life. Outdoor activities of all kinds all year long.

Quality of life/living on a lake with abundant recreational/entertainment/volunteer opportunities.

Quiet sports (cross country skiing, snowshoeing, etc.), good roads (upkeep and plowing), fishing, boating. Good library. Hiking/biking trails

Recreational living during spring, summer, and fall. we travel south in the winter

Silent sport recreation.

Snowmobiling!

The beauty and peacefulness of Vilas County where silent sports are of interest importance.

The best thing about living in Vilas County is the outdoor activities. All of the things you can do on the lakes.

The biking and walking trails and our lakes. Anything to draw tourist up here because work is so reasonable with our harsh winters!

The proximity to amazing outdoor activities and scenery

The recreational opportunities (i.e. hunting, fishing, ATV)

The wild life and outside activities.

To me the best thing living in Vilas County is the outdoor activities, like fishing, hunting, bird watching, pristine wilderness.

Water recreation.

Family, Friendliness, Social relationships (32 Responses)

Friendly people (5x)

Family (2x)

A great place to live in retirement

Being from here

Being that I have lived all my life in Vilas County I would say that we have some of the best water for all activities so we should protect our water ways and groundwater.

Christ-centered church family

Community - safe for children, families, caring people, many activities, helpful

Find most persons living here very nice

For the most part nice people.

Friendliness of citizens

Friendly local people.

Friendly people who work together for our towns.

Friendly small businesses.

Friendly, caring people and healthy environment

Good neighbors.

Great people.

I am 78 years old, born and raised on a farm in Vilas County is still fairly rural. I've lived here 40 years, owned a bar and worked for St. Germaine Township for 24 years. Due to tribal speaking and overabundance of wolves, fishing, and hunting has deteriorated, but I still do. I have a lot of friends and 2 sons living here, so I guess the answer is "this is home"

I love the peace and quiet. People up here are very friendly and helpful if ever needed. When shopping many customers ask me if I need help. Very thoughtful people up here.

Locals are very friendly and they help each other.

My mother is here.

Nature-people from here (locals) are mostly non-friendly.
• People being helpful in finding help with tax benefits and for senior citizens getting helpful advice.
• Relationships
• The helpfulness and friendliness of the people.
• The people and church.
• The sense of community that provides so many different programs and activities. Neighbor helping neighbor. The generosity of people supporting non-profit efforts to improve the quality of life in Vilas County.
• Very nice people

Safety (23 Responses)
• A feeling of a safe environment and a quality law enforcement department to assist and protect our freedoms and human rights.
• Arbor Vitae fire department.
• Feel safe!
• Feel safe. Love the summers.
• Fire department and police department are the best I have ever seen.
• General safety.
• Good law enforcement
• I raised my family in a wonderful community with low crime (still don't lock my doors).
• It is a safe place to live.
• Low crime
• Low crime rates.
• Low crime, taxes, traffic.
• Low crime.
• Low level of stress and safe place to live.
• Lower population density=less traffic, lower crime, closer community.
• Not much traffic except summer time.
• Peace and quiet yet emergency assistance (police, hospital, clinic, ambulance, fire).
• Safe living environment. i.e. not as much crime/violence as larger urban areas
• Safety and beauty.
• Stop ATV's on town and county roads-safety concerns. Stop state takeover of shoreline zoning which threatens our lakes and streams.
• The basic safety of most residents due to the wonderful life saving volunteer paramedics and our departments. The Vilas County sheriff department. The excellent health care facilities at Howard Young/Eagle River hospitals-Marshfield and Aspires clinics. The many resource agencies for help improving elderly, abused and drug education and volunteer food pantry workers and all the food stores like Sentry, Trigs, Save More and Bonson's Pick N Save for donating all the food.
• Traffic. Not crazy like in a city.
• We don't have Muslim terrorists yet. No slums in our towns yet. Safe place to raise children with good schools. Also very good health care.

Concerns/suggestions (21 Responses)
• BAD-upset that Nicolet College cannot use Northland Pines. I would be interested in many different classes but it is too far to go to Minocqua or Rhinelander especially in the dark. Why did this happen? We pay our biggest chunk of property taxes for the school. How come we can't use it anymore?
• Bring in some sort of employment so people will have work.
• Can't think of anything that's best in Vilas County. I like Northern Wisconsin, but Vilas County has lost most of the things that appeal to me. Hunting is poor, fishing is poor and now we to deal with ATV's running all over the place. Snowmobiles and PWC's were bad enough.
• Currently, we are looking to buy another home in the Fox Valley area and become seasonal residents in Vilas County. We are too isolated from family and friends. Variety in shopping is extremely poor.
• Dislike the lack of internet provided in Arbor Vitae. Cell service is terrible. Unable to use them in Arbor Vitae.
• Fares are way too high
• However, the worst thing is the lack of high speed reliable internet which is actually causing people to leave.
• I may leave Vilas County if the 2016-2018 state budget destroys the lakes, fishing, and recreational opportunities.
• It would be that it used to be nice and quiet and a slower pace of living. The county board used to listen to the majority of people. Now they no longer do. They listen to a small vocal minorities who push their agenda. Example-ATV’s all over the place. We don't need the aggravation from those machines.
• Let communities do what is best for their town, etc. Keep big government OUT!!! Fed up with the government trying to help everybody. It's not their job.
• More shopping as like department stores
• Nothing
• Nothing since Scott Walker was elected governor.
• The only reason we moved to Vilas County 30 years ago from Fond du Lac County was to be closer to national forests. I would not make that move today with ATV expansion, lake frontage crowded and local governmental agencies that don't represent the people. Only self-interest and the marketing of tourism, ignoring real issues like low paying employment, businesses that are caving. I know Wisconsin well and especially Vilas and I would live in a different county. Knowing what I know, Vilas is all about a positive image for tourism so real environmental, demographic, socio-economic problems are swept under the rug as if they don't exist. In trying to please all tourists they've lost many.
• The worst thing is the lack of internet and cell service.
• There are NONE!!!! Vilas County is an s*** hole!!!
• Too much economic development is not necessarily ecologically sound.
• Until the past few years, Vilas County's best attributes where it's quiet natural beauty and wildlife, clean waterways and especially its low population density and lack of urban/suburban development. Now we feel inundated by development, such as wider roads, curbs and sidewalks, too many street lights, too many signs, and much increased traffic congestion and speeds. We’ll likely move away in the next year or two. P.S. Extension programs in Vilas County would do well to include educational offerings more closely suited to the population such as master and organic gardening, bee keeping, pesticide reduction, reduction/elimination of exotics and invasive species; and support for healthy aging as well as opportunities for young people and families with children.
• We need much more economic development. There are no good employment opportunities. There is no tax base.
• What we need to do to make it better is to...lengthen summer bad shorten winter-what can you do about that?
• Would like to see a bigger park for the kids with basketball court. Would be nice to get an ice cream cone and head to a nice park. Many people have said this!!

Miscellaneous (23 Responses)
• Also high volunteerism to make this area's offerings unique with unique opportunities/events.
• Also the Vilas co. food pantry
• As in question 11, I stated I am a retired teacher of 30 years and loved every way of teaching: good faculty that worked together, respectful students and I apologize for the messy writing but I was one of the lucky ones who had and have arthritis.
• Boulder junction area as a whole.
• Contentment
• Contentment that is the best word to describe the overall feeling gained by living in this area. The sum of all that in the Vilas area.
• I am a retired educator - and only live here during the summer months. This survey doesn't apply to me
• I'm single and loving it.
• Low taxes
• My life long home.
• Organizations that help with town projects
• Pace of life. If you want to be involved you can. If you choose to be left alone, for the most part you can be. "We" used to value our resources and the environment but now the dollars come before nature.
• Private property.
• Senior citizen meals, programs, centers, affordable classes for low-income seniors.
• Serenity. *No way to answer choosing only one thing. Add peace of mind, developing friendships, social setting, neighbors, educational opportunities, hunting, fishing, wildlife appreciation. Sitting naked on the deck with a cup of coffee observing the sun rise and the world wake up. Pretty young girls in summer dresses, short shorts and halter tops.
• The disability help for medical situations.
• The four seasons.
• The period of Labor Day to Memorial Day when we are not over run by tourist who are not friendly and know it all.
• The quality of life.
• Was quiet, ATVs suck
• When the tourist go home in the fall.
• While these programs don't necessarily speak to my needs-for quality of life of all residents; young and older, it's important to have quality programs available. A healthy society and economy depends on education informed decision making and opportunities for all people. We all rise or fall together
• Wonderful surroundings-hopefully will stay that way.
## Appendix B – Quantitative Summary of Responses by Question

### Vilas County Community Connections Survey

#### Community Connections

1. **Overall, how would you rate the quality of life for people living in Vilas County? (Mark one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **How connected to friends and/or family do you feel in Vilas County? (Mark one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connection Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Isolated</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isolated</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Isolated</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Connected</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **How often do you attend social activities where you meet with other people such as church, a service or sports club, an arts council, nonprofit, etc.? (Mark one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Please indicate the human service agencies you have visited or contacted in the past year: (Mark All That Apply)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commission on Aging</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran’s Services</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aging and Disability Resource Center</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resource Center Rhinelander</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other, specify</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. **How often do you use the Internet? (Mark one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internet Access Status</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet service is not available in my home</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet is available but I choose not to have it</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I rarely use it</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. **How satisfied are you with the speed and reliability of your internet service? (Mark one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Shopping

7. **Where do you typically shop for the following items? (Mark one in each row)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>In Vilas County</th>
<th>Out of Vilas County</th>
<th>Online</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Groceries</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Other household items</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Durable goods items (cars, appliances, consumer electronics, furniture, etc.)</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. How often do you need someone from outside of your household to shop for you? (Mark one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Twice Weekly</th>
<th>Daily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. Do you rely on others from outside your household for transportation? (Mark one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Twice Weekly</th>
<th>Daily</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment

10. Which answer best describes your employment situation? (Mark one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Situation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed Full Time</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Part Time</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed Seasonally</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Time Student</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Employed, Looking</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Employed, Not Looking</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Please give us a little information about your work situation

- Do you work from home: 12% Yes, 38% No, 51% Not applicable
- Does your work depend on reliable internet service: 29% Yes, 20% No, 51% Not applicable
- Do you work for a company as a telecommuter: 2% Yes, 45% No, 54% Not applicable

12. If employed, how satisfied are you with your job situation? (Mark one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not At All Satisfied</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Satisfied</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Satisfied</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Satisfied</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. How likely would you be to move out of Vilas County if you lost your job? (Mark one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likely to Move Out</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Likely</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Chance</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Which of the following would be the most likely to make you move out of Vilas County? (Mark one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Job</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Paying Job</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Shopping Opportunities</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Reasons</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outreach/Educational Needs

15. How familiar are you with programs offered by University of Wisconsin-Extension?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Familiarity Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all familiar</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat familiar</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very familiar</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. In terms of your ability to live and thrive in Vilas County, how important are educational offerings/programming in the following areas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown development</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development/Extension of broadband internet</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship &amp; small business development</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention/Expansion of existing businesses</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programming to promote positive, healthy youth development</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen court</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth in government</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-H clubs</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult leadership development</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth leadership development</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-parenting classes for divorcing parents</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting classes for Vilas County jail inmates</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child development newsletters for children ages birth to three</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choosing healthful diets</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing healthful food</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help finding financial assistance resources</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending food dollars wisely</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. In the past year, how many times have you participated in a UW-Extension program (such as those in question 16) or worked with a UW-Extension county agent?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>1 – 5 times</th>
<th>6 – 10 times</th>
<th>11+ times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments

18. If you had to choose one thing only, what is the best thing about living in Vilas County? Please describe in the space below.

See Appendix A
## Demographics

19. **What is your gender? (Mark one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. **What is your age? (Mark one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>18 to 24</th>
<th>25 to 34</th>
<th>35 to 44</th>
<th>45 to 54</th>
<th>55 to 65</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. **How long have you lived in Vilas County? (Mark one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Less than 1 Yr.</th>
<th>1 to 5 Yrs.</th>
<th>6 to 10 Yrs.</th>
<th>11 to 15 Yrs.</th>
<th>16 to 20 Yrs.</th>
<th>20+ Yrs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. **Where is your primary residence in Vilas County? (Mark one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arbor Vitae</th>
<th>Eagle River (city)</th>
<th>Manitowish Waters</th>
<th>St. Germain</th>
<th>Boulder Junction</th>
<th>Lac du Flambeau</th>
<th>Phelps</th>
<th>Washington</th>
<th>Cloverland</th>
<th>Land O’ Lakes</th>
<th>Plum Lake</th>
<th>Winchester</th>
<th>Conover</th>
<th>Lincoln</th>
<th>Presque Isle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23. **Number of adults (over 18) in household: (Mark one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. **Number of children (under 18) in household: (Mark one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

25. **Do you have family other than those in your household living in Vilas County? (Mark one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26. **What is your ethnicity/race? (Mark one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Native American or Alaskan Native</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>African-American</th>
<th>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</th>
<th>Latino</th>
<th>Two or More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27. **What is your annual household income? (Mark one)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Less than $15,000</th>
<th>$15,000 to $24,999</th>
<th>$25,000 to $34,999</th>
<th>$35,000 to $49,999</th>
<th>$50,000 to $74,999</th>
<th>$75,000 to $100,000</th>
<th>$100,000+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Thanks for completing the survey!**