

HOUSING, POVERTY TOP PUBLIC CONCERNS

Economic Worries Eased As Brandon Residents Express Greater Concern About Social Issues in 2009

Brandon – Housing, crime and economic issues share the spotlight as Brandon's top public issues as we begin 2010. Affordable or more housing, homelessness and poverty were the most important issues facing Brandon (18%), along with crime (17%), and the economy (16%). These results were obtained from a random and representative survey of 400 Brandon adults in an exclusive Probe Research/*Brandon Sun* survey taken in December 2009.

The big story in the results is the shift in focus from one-year ago. During the early stages of the economic downturn in 2008, more than one in four people (27%) identified the economy, jobs and business growth as the most important concerns for Brandon. A year later in December 2009, only one in six (16%) identify the same concerns. The impact of the economic downturn might continue to be on the minds of Brandonites, however, as those identifying concerns about housing, homelessness and poverty in Brandon have increased significantly in the past year (from 11% in 2008 to 18% in 2009) and top the public issue agenda.

Consistent results for concerns about crime indicate that this also remains an important issue for many citizens (17% in both 2008 and 2009). More than one in ten people identified community infrastructure as a key concern, up slightly from 2008 (13%, up from 11%), while slightly less than one in ten (8%) now have healthcare as their key concern.

Very small proportions of citizens considered downtown renewal as an important issue for Brandon (3%, unchanged from 2008). While in 2008 the casino issue was still top of mind (5%), in 2009 the closure of CKX-TV continued to resonate with some Brandon residents as a key public issue (3%).

BRANDON PUBLIC ISSUE AGENDA		
- December 2009		
<i>"What do you consider to be the most important issue or concern facing Brandon today?"</i>		
ISSUE	DECEMBER 2009 (n=400) (%)	DECEMBER 2008 (N=400) (%)
Affordable or more housing/Poverty/Homelessness	18	11
Crime/Violence/Gangs/Drugs	17	17
Economy/Jobs/Business Growth	16	27
Infrastructure/Roads/Potholes	13	11
Health Care/Medicare	8	11
Education	5	5
Lack of civic leadership	5	3
Activities/Events/Recreation	4	2
Immigration/Racial issues	4	3
Police/Fire issues	4	3
Downtown Renewal	3	3
TV station closure	3	-
Municipal Taxes and Spending	3	4
Social Assistance/Childcare/Social Services	3	1
Taxes/Tax Reform	3	-
Casino	-	5

This Brandon-wide Omnibus survey was designed and conducted by Probe Research Inc. via telephone interviews conducted between December 16th and December 21st, 2009 among a random and representative sampling of 400 adults residing in Brandon. With a sample of 400, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within +/- 4.9 percentage points of what they would have been if the entire adult population of Brandon had been interviewed. The margin-of-error is higher within each of the survey's population sub-groups. Modified random-digit dialing was used to ensure that all Brandon adults would have an equal opportunity to participate in this Probe Research survey. Minor statistical weighting has been applied to this sample to ensure that the age and gender balance correspond with the city as a whole.

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