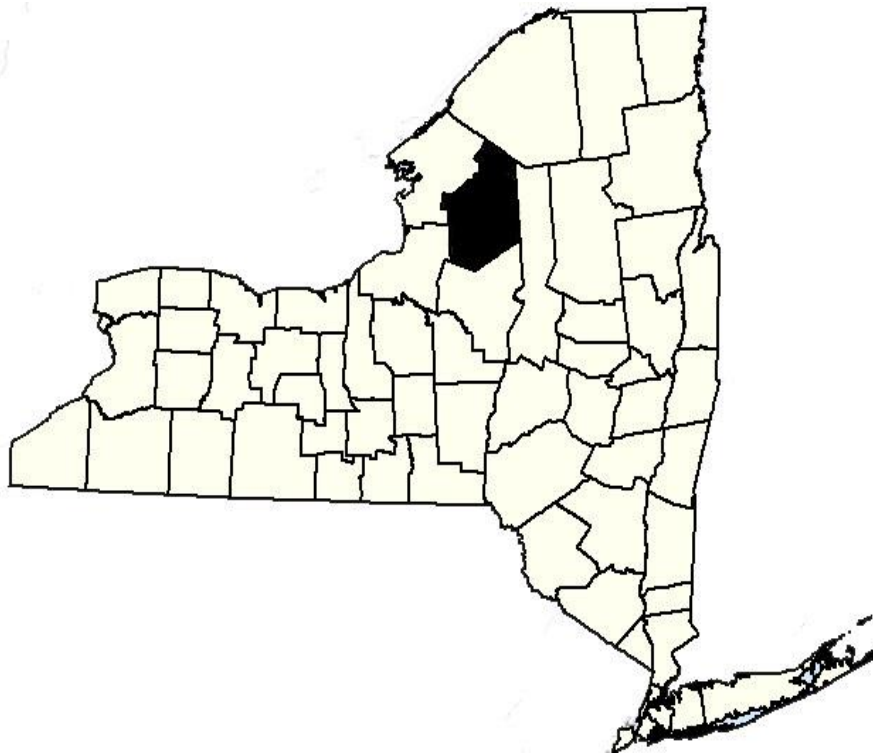


October
2019

13



13th Annual Lewis County Survey of the Community

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Faculty Supervisors for this Study:

Mr. Joel LaLone	Professor of Mathematics and Research Director of the Center for Community Studies
Mr. Larry Danforth	Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Research Coordinator of the Center for Community Studies
Mr. Andrew Draper	Instructor of Mathematics

The Advisory Board of the *Center for Community Studies*:

Don Alexander	Carl McLaughlin
Rebecca Allen	John O'Driscoll
Mary Corriveau	Ryan Piche
Larry Danforth	Megan Stadler
John Deans	Ty Stone
Sonja Draught	Steve Todd
Tom Finch	Eric Virkler
Joel LaLone	Henricus Wagenaar
Joe Lawrence	Dave Zembiec
Tracy Leonard	

Student Research Associates:

The following 55 students at SUNY Jefferson participated in this study by completing the interviews of Lewis County residents and/or compiling and cleansing data.

Ryan	Aubertine	Jacob	Heller	Melanie	Morin	Jacob	Shipps
Jessica	Bailey	Sean	Hennigan	Jillesa	Morrow	William	Simkin
Ryan	Blevins	Kayla	Hicks	Haylee	Murdock	Abby	Sullivan
Tyis	Castor	David	Hurst	Shaina	Padeken	Calleigh	Thomas
Jamie	Downs	Elizabeth	Kissman	Hannah	Peabody	Amber	Turck
Bobby	Dudley	Mason	Knapp	Amanda	Pease	Alana	VanAllen
Cote	Dupuis	Nathan	Lamb	Brittney	Reagon	Erin	Ward
Josephine	Elie	Keegan	Larive	Monica	Reed	Nicole	Welser
Megan	Ennenga	Patrick	Loftus	Lachlan	Rees	Corey	Whitaker
Savannah	Evenson	Isaiah	Matteson	Hannah	Reinhardt	Kylie	Wilson
Kiaya	Flynn	Bruce	Matthews	Donald	Roberts	Karlee	Wood
Emily	Goodrich	Connor	Maxwell	Rachel	Robson	Madison	Yott
Nathaniel	Greene	Michelle	Mendonsa	Mackenzie	Rust	Bailey	Zicari
Kollin	Hardy	Madeline	Monnat	Mitchell	Scoville		

Contact Information for the *Center for Community Studies*

For more information, please contact

The *Center for Community Studies*
at Jefferson Community College
Office 2-100A
1220 Coffeen Street
Watertown, New York 13601
E-mail: jlalone@sunyjefferson.edu
Website: www.sunyjefferson.edu/community/community-studies/
Phone: (315)-786-2264

This final report of study findings is available for free by contacting Joel LaLone at jlalone@sunyjefferson.edu.
A summary of the study findings is available free online at
www.sunyjefferson.edu/community/community-studies/

The Thirteenth Annual Lewis County Survey of the Community

Based on 539 interviews conducted October 29 – November 8, 2019

Section 1 - Introduction

The *Center for Community Studies* at Jefferson Community College was established in October 1999, to engage in a variety of community-building and community-based research activities and to promote the productive discussion of ideas and issues of significance to our region. In collaboration with community partners, the *Center* conducts research that will benefit the local population, and engages in activities that reflect its commitment to enhancing the quality of life of the area.

The annual Lewis County Survey of the Community is one specific activity conducted each year by the *Center* to gauge the attitudes and opinions of a representative sample of Lewis County adult citizens. This activity results in a yearly updated inventory of the attitudes and opinions of adult citizens of Lewis County. This survey in Lewis County has been completed in October of each of the thirteen years, 2007 through 2019. The *Center* also completes a similar annual survey in each of Jefferson County (in April annually) and St. Lawrence County (in July annually).

This document is a summary of the results of the Thirteenth Annual Lewis County Survey of the Community, including comparisons with the results of the survey from its first twelve years. Further, the key community demographic characteristics of Gender, Age, Education Level, Household Income Level, and Political Ideology are investigated as potential explanatory variables that may be associated with or linked to quality-of-life indicators for the region, using the 2019 survey results. It is standard methodology with professional surveys to provide this more detailed information to the reader – information that may assist in explaining the overall findings – by reporting the results for all subgroups within these key demographic variables. Additionally, the most recent results in each of the neighboring counties of Jefferson and St. Lawrence are presented when possible to add perspective to the current Lewis County results. The results of this annual study provide important information about contemporary thinking of citizens; and, over time, will continue to provide important baseline and comparative information as well.

Section 1.1 – Methodology – How This Data Was Collected

The original survey instrument used in this annual survey was constructed in the fall of 2007 through the combined efforts of the professional staff of the *Center for Community Studies* and members of the Lewis County Annual Survey Planning Committee. The instrument is modified each year by the *Center for Community Studies*, with input from its staff and Advisory Board, the Lewis County Annual Survey Planning Committee, and student assistants employed at the *Center* throughout the current academic year. These survey modifications are completed to include new questions of relevance to local organizations and agencies. The total survey length each year is approximately 50-60 questions, with a core set of approximately 25 questions that are intended to be asked each year, or at least every-other-year, that the survey is completed. Several survey questions are asked on an every-other-year basis, to keep the survey length manageable each year. Newly developed questions regarding current county topics are typically introduced into the survey instrument each year.

The primary goal of the Annual Lewis County Survey of the Community is to collect data regarding quality-of-life issues of importance to the local citizens. A secondary goal is to provide a very real, research-based learning experience for undergraduate students enrolled at Jefferson Community College. In accomplishing this second goal, students are involved in all aspects of the research, from question formation to data collection (interviewing), to data entry and cleansing, to data analysis. The students analyze the data collected in this study annually as assignments and projects in statistics classes. However, all final responsibility for question-phrasing, question-inclusion versus omission, final data analysis, and final reporting of findings (this document) lies exclusively with the professional staff of the *Center*. The discussions that lead to the inclusion of questions at times arise from classroom discussions involving students and *Center* staff. The decision to include any question as a legitimate and meaningful part of an annual survey, however, is made exclusively by the *Center*. Similarly, data analysis of the information collected through the annual survey will transpire with faculty and students in the classrooms at Jefferson Community College; however, any statistical analysis reported in this document has been completed by the professional staff of the *Center*. Copies of the introductory script and survey instrument used in this study are attached as an appendix.

This study in 2019 included completing a total of 539 interviews of Lewis County adult residents. A mixed-mode sampling methodology was employed in this study with two blended samples: 381 interviews/surveys completed using telephone-interview methodology (both landlines and cellular phones), and 158 additional surveys completed via an online survey using email invitation mode. In accordance with the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Transparency Initiative pledge, the following details and disclosure for the **telephone-interviewing and online surveying** employed in this study, including the following characteristics and facts should be considered by any reader:

1. **(T) Dates of Data Collection:** October 29 – November 8, 2019.
2. **(R) Recruitment:**
 - Telephone: All telephone participants were recruited to participate via telephone by random selection from a list of all available valid active residential and cellular telephone lines in Lewis County, New York, USA.
 - Online: All online participants were recruited to participate via an email invitation with a link to the survey embedded.
3. **(A) Population Under Study:** All adult residents of Lewis County, New York, USA. There are approximately 27,000 residents in the county. Approximately 20,000 of the 27,000 residents are adults, it is these adults who are the population of interest in this study.
4. **(N) List Source:**
 - Telephone: Electronic Voice Services, Inc., www.voice-boards.com
 - Online: Bulk Email Superstore, www.contactai.com, and InfoUSA,
5. **(S) Sampling Design:**
 - Telephone: The entire phone list described in #2 was randomized, and approximately 5,000 valid residential and cellular phone numbers were selected to contact to invite to participate in the survey.
 - Online: The entire email address lists described in #4 were randomized, and approximately 9,000 email addresses of residents of Lewis County, NY were selected to contact to invite to participate in the survey.
6. **(P) Population Sampling Frame:**
 - Telephone: As described in #2, the sampling frame includes all available residential listed phone numbers, for adults in Lewis County, NY, both landlines and cellular phones included.
 - Online: As described in #5, the sampling frame includes all available email addresses of residents of Lewis County, NY.
7. **(A) Administration:**
 - Telephone: Survey administered via telephone from a call center in Watertown, NY, only in English, using SurveyMonkey as the CATI system.
 - Online: Survey administered online from an email invitation, only in English, using SurveyMonkey.
8. **(R) Researchers:** The study is an annual survey completed by the *Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College*, with funding provided by the College and three community sponsors: the Lewis County, New York, Board of Legislature; the Northern New York Community Foundation, Inc.; and the Development Authority of the North Country, Inc., Watertown, New York, USA
9. **(E) Exact Wording of Survey:** The survey instrument is attached as an appendix.
10. **(N) Sample Sizes:** As is discussed in much greater detail for this study later in this report: n=539 overall for the study, with an overall average margin of error of $\pm 4.8\%$, including the design effect due to weighting.
11. **(C) Calculation of Weights:** As is discussed in much greater detail for this study later in this report: results are weighted by gender, age, educational attainment, geography (location of residence within Lewis County), and phone ownership, with slight calibration of the online results toward telephone results to address potential social desirability bias. Target weighting parameters are obtained from a combination of: the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for phone ownership; and the U.S. Census for gender, age, location of residence, and educational attainment.
12. **(Y) Contact Information:** Mr. Joel LaLone, Research Director, *Center for Community Studies*, contact information on page 4.

Further details of study methodology and sampling include that a total of 539 interviews of Lewis County adult residents were completed. A mixed-mode sampling methodology was employed in this study with two blended samples: 381 interviews/surveys completed using telephone-interview methodology, and 158 additional surveys completed via an online survey after email invitation mode. Approximately 23% of the total sample selected (119 of the 525 interviews who provided their phone ownership information) indicated that they are “cell-only”. After weighting, these cell-only participants account for 32% of this rural Upstate New York sample. To be eligible to complete the survey, the resident was required to be at least 18 years old. All telephone calls were made between 4:00 and 9:00 p.m. from a call center in Watertown, New York on the evenings of October 29 – November 8, 2019. The Jefferson Community College students who completed the telephone interviews had completed training in both human subject research methodology and effective interviewing

techniques. Professional staff from the *Center* supervised all interviewing at all times. The online sampling was supervised by the professional staff at the *Center*, with two reminder follow-up emails sent to any non-responders over the two week sampling time spanning October 29 – November 8, 2019. No rewards, neither pre-incentives nor post-incentives, were used in either of the two sampling modalities to encourage participation.

When each of the telephone numbers in the random telephone sampling portion of this study was attempted, one of four results occurred: Completion of an interview; a Decline to be interviewed; No Answer/Busy; or an Invalid Number (including both disconnected numbers, as well as numbers for individuals who do not currently reside in Lewis County). Voluntary informed consent was obtained from each resident before the interview was completed. This sampling protocol included informing each resident that it was his or her right to decline to answer any and all individual questions within the interview. To be categorized as a completed interview, at least one-half of the questions on the survey had to be completed. The resident's refusal to answer more than one-half of the questions was considered a decline to be interviewed. The typical length of a completed telephone survey was approximately 10 minutes. Declines to be interviewed (refusals) were not called back in an attempt to convince the resident to reconsider the interview. If no contact was made at a telephone number (No Answer/Busy), a maximum of four call-backs were made to the number. Telephone numbers that were not successfully contacted were ultimately categorized as No Answer/Busy. No messages were left on answering machines at homes where no person answered the telephone. The introductory script of the online version of the survey acquired consent and validation of adult age and within-county residence. The response rate results for the study are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 – Response Rates for the 13th Annual Lewis County Survey of the Community

Methodology Utilized	Number of Surveys Completed (unweighted contribution to the sample)	Number of Surveys Completed (weighted contribution to the sample)	% of Total Sample (weighted contribution to the sample)	Number who are "Cell-only" (weighted contribution to the sample)	% of Total Sample who are "Cell-only" (weighted contribution to the sample)
Telephone interviews on Landlines	287	225	42%	0	0%
Telephone interviews on Cell Phones	94	162	30%	125	23%
Online surveys	158	152	28%	48	9%
Totals	539	539	100%	173	32%

Response rates for LANDLINES & CELL PHONES COMBINED attempted in this study:	Complete Interview	Decline to be Interviewed	No Answer/ Busy	TOTALS
% of Valid Numbers	8%	18%	74%	100%
% of Contacted Residents	29%	71%	–	100%

Response rates for ONLINE SURVEYS attempted in this study:	Complete Survey	Did Not Complete Survey	TOTALS
Count	158	9,039	9,197
Percentage	2%	98%	100%

Within the fields of social science and educational research, when using a hybrid design including both cell phone and landline telephone interview methodology, a response rate of approximately 8% of all valid phone numbers attempted, and almost 30% of all successful contacts where a person is actually talking on the phone, are both considered quite successful. Response rates of approximately 2% when email invitations are sent to opt-in email accounts with an invitation to complete a survey online with no incentives or rewards are typical, and appear to be increasing over the past two years of experimentation at the *Center for Community Studies*. The methodology employed in this annual survey continues to meet industry standards.

Section 1.2 – Demographics of the Sample – Who was Interviewed?

This section of the report includes a description of the results for the demographic variables included in the survey sample. The demographic characteristics of the sampled adult residents can be used to attain three separate objectives.

1. Initially, this information adds to the knowledge and awareness about the true characteristics of the population of adult residents in the sampled county (e.g. What is the typical household composition, educational profile, and household income level in Lewis County?).
2. Secondly, this demographic information facilitates the ability for the data to be sorted or partitioned to investigate for significant relationships – relationships between demographic characteristics of residents and their attitudes and

behaviors regarding the quality of life in Lewis County. Identification of significant relationships allows local citizens to use the data more effectively, to better understand the factors that are correlated with various aspects of life in the county.

- Finally, the demographic information also serves an important purpose when compared to established facts about Lewis County to analyze the representativeness of the sample that was randomly selected in this study, and to determine the post-stratification weighting schematic to be applied to the data.

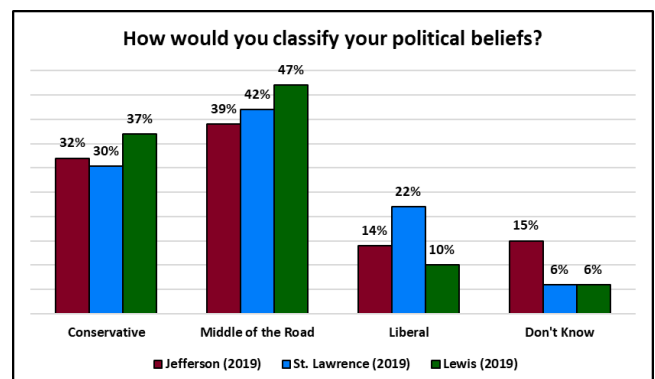
The results for the demographic questions in the survey are summarized in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2 – Demographics of the October 2019 Lewis County Sample – *The Nature of this Sample* (%'s weighted by Gender, Age, Education Level, Geography, and Phone Ownership, and calibrated for social desirability bias)

Demographic Characteristics:	Weighted % (contribution to this study sample)	Raw Sample Size
Gender: (US Census updates for Lewis County: 50% male)		
Male	50%	n=199
Female	50%	n=326
Age: (US Census updates for Lewis County: among those 18+, 19% are age 18-29, 16% are age 70+)		
18-29 years of age	12%	n=27
30-49 years of age	29%	n=104
50-69 years of age	43%	n=262
70 years of age or older	16%	n=132
Education Level: (US Census for Lewis County: among those age 25+, 16% have Bach. Deg. or higher)		
High school graduate (including GED) or less	54%	n=159
Some college, no 4+ year degree	30%	n=221
Bachelor's degree or higher	16%	n=145
Annual Household Income: (US Census for Lewis County: 20% earn less than \$25,000, 32% earn \$75,000+)		
Less than \$25,000	13%	n=65
\$25,001-\$50,000	25%	n=126
\$50,001-\$75,000	26%	n=117
\$75,001-\$100,000	20%	n=87
More than \$100,000	16%	n=79
Political Ideology: (no comparative statistics for the entire county)		
Very Conservative	6%	n=30
Conservative	31%	n=163
Middle of the Road	47%	n=242
Liberal	9%	n=50
Very Liberal	1%	n=9
Not Sure	6%	n=21
Household Composition: (US Census for Lewis County: 23% 1-person household)		
1 person in household	13%	n=96
2 persons in household	36%	n=235
3 persons in household	16%	n=69
4 persons in household	19%	n=64
5 persons in household	9%	n=29
6+ persons in household	8%	n=21

(NOTE: in Table 2 above, and all other tables included in this study, a column of percentages may not, in fact, sum to exactly 100% simply due to rounding each statistic in the table individually to the nearest percent, or at times, tenth of a percent)

Many subsequent investigations in this report will be completed analyzing links between political beliefs and other attitudes, opinions, and behaviors of Northern New York adult residents. Further, many recent county comparisons will be shown contrasting the three Northern New York counties studied annually at the *Center for Community Studies*. Therefore, to add perspective to the survey results presented in this study, the political ideology distributions in the three Northern New York counties should be considered, and are shown to the right.



The distribution of towns or villages of residence reported below (self-reported by participants) of the participating respondents resulted in the Thirteenth Annual Lewis County Survey of the Community, and after application of post-stratification weights for Gender, Age, Education, Geography, and Phone Ownership, closely parallel that which is true for the distribution of all Lewis County adults – the entire county was proportionally represented very accurately in this study.

Table 3 – Geographic Distribution of Participants in the 13th Annual Lewis County Survey of the Community

	13 th Annual Survey Sample (October 2019) <small>(weighted by Gender, Age, Education, Geography, Phone Ownership, and calibrated for social desirability)</small>		U.S. Census Estimates
	Count (raw)	% (weighted)	%
Town of Residence:			
Castorland (village)	11	3%	1%
Constableville (village)	4	1%	1%
Copenhagen (village)	22	4%	3%
Croghan (town)	48	12%	9%
Croghan (village)	18	5%	2%
Denmark (town)	25	6%	6%
Diana (town)	19	5%	4%
Greig (town)	23	4%	5%
Harrisburg (town)	10	2%	1%
Harrisville (village)	18	3%	2%
Lewis (town)	9	2%	3%
Leyden (town)	8	1%	4%
Lowville (village)	72	13%	13%
Lowville (town)	52	6%	4%
Lyons Falls (village)	16	3%	3%
Lyonsdale (town)	12	2%	5%
Martinsburg (town)	31	6%	5%
Montague (town)	2	0%	0%
New Bremen (town)	46	6%	10%
Osceola (town)	4	1%	1%
Pinckney (town)	6	1%	1%
Port Leyden (village)	5	1%	3%
Turin (town)	15	3%	2%
Turin (village)	3	0%	1%
Watson (town)	35	7%	8%
West Turin (town)	10	1%	3%
Not sure/No Answer	15	1%	–
TOTAL	n=539	100%	N=27,087

In general, Tables 2-3 demonstrate that after weighting the data collected in this study for Gender, Age, Education, Geography, and Phone Ownership, the responses to the demographic questions for the Lewis County residents who are included in the survey (those who actually answered the telephone and completed the survey, and those who completed the survey online) appear to closely parallel that which is true for the entire adult population of the county. The targets for demographic characteristics were drawn from the U.S. Census updates for Lewis County. Gender, Age, Education, and Geography were selected as the factors by which to weight the survey data, since the data collected in this Thirteenth Annual Lewis County Survey of the Community is susceptible to the typical types of sampling error that are inherent in telephone methodology: women were more likely than men to answer the telephone and/or agree to a survey; older residents are more likely to participate in the survey than younger adult residents; those individuals with higher formal education levels are more likely to agree to the interviews; and residents of more urban regions (in Lewis County, this would be “villages”) are more likely to participate than residents of rural regions. Standard survey research methodology has shown that regardless of the subject of the survey, these are four expected sources of sampling error. In addition to these standard four weight variables it has become increasingly the case that adults in our society are not accessible via landline – they are “cell-phone-only” individuals. Therefore, the current Lewis County data has additionally been weighted by Phone Ownership, with targets that have been generated from repeated surveying in Lewis County by the *Center for Community Studies*, along with cell-only estimates for geographic regions in the United States that are published by the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. To compensate for this overrepresentation of females, older residents, village residents, the highly educated, and those interviewed on landlines in the sample collected in this study, post-stratification weights for Gender, Age, Education Level, Geography, and Phone

Ownership have been applied in any further analysis of the data analyzed in this report. Finally, to address potential social desirability response bias, the online survey results were calibrated according to overall assessment of the quality of life found within the telephone-collected results. In summary, all subsequent statistics that will be reported in this document are weighted by Gender, Age, Education Level, and Geography toward the most current U.S. Census reports that describe the Gender, Age, Educational Attainment, and Town/Village of Residence distributions of the actual entire adult population that resides in Lewis County, and toward the Phone Ownership targets described above.

When using the sample statistics presented in this report to estimate that which would be expected for the entire Lewis County adult population, the exact margin of error for this survey is question-specific. The margin of error depends upon the sample size for each specific question, the resulting sample percentage for each question, the confidence level utilized, and the design effect. Sample sizes tend to vary for each question on the survey, since some questions are only appropriate for certain subgroups, and/or as a result of persons refusing to answer questions. In general, the results of this survey for any questions that were answered by the entire sample of 539 residents may be generalized to the population of all adults at least 18 years of age residing in Jefferson County with a 95% confidence level to within a margin of error of approximately ± 4.8 percentage points. For questions that were posed only to certain specific subgroups the resulting smaller sample sizes allow generalization to the specific subpopulation of all adults at least 18 years of age residing in the county (e.g. generalization of some specific characteristics of sampled Lewis County males to all males in Lewis County) with a 95% confidence level to within a margin of error of larger than ± 4.8 percentage points. Table 4 is provided below as a guide for the appropriate margin of error to use when analyzing subgroups of the entire group of 539 interviewed adults. Note that the approximate margins of error provided in Table 4 are average margins of error, averaging across all possible sample proportions that might result between 0% and 100%, and please note that all are using a 95% confidence level, and all include the design effect of 2.05 for this study. For more specific detail regarding the margin of error for this survey, please refer to the appendices of this report and/or contact the professional staff at the *Center for Community Studies*.

Table 4 – Margins of Error for Varying Sample Sizes

Sample Size (n=...)	Approximate Margin of Error
30	$\pm 20.5\%$
50	$\pm 15.8\%$
75	$\pm 12.9\%$
100	$\pm 11.2\%$
125	$\pm 10.0\%$
150	$\pm 9.1\%$
175	$\pm 8.5\%$
200	$\pm 7.9\%$
225	$\pm 7.5\%$
250	$\pm 7.1\%$
275	$\pm 6.8\%$
300	$\pm 6.5\%$
350	$\pm 6.0\%$
400	$\pm 5.6\%$
450	$\pm 5.3\%$
500	$\pm 5.0\%$
539	$\pm 4.8\%$

In order to maximize comparability among the thirteen annual surveys that have been completed in Lewis County by the *Center for Community Studies* between 2007 and 2019, the procedures used to collect information and the *core* questions asked have remained virtually identical. All surveys were conducted in the month of October each year to control for seasonal variability, and the total number of interviews completed ranged from 328 to 539, depending upon the year. All interviewers have been similarly and extensively trained preceding data collection each year. Data management, cleansing, and transformation techniques used have remained similar throughout. The survey methodology used to complete the Thirteenth Annual Lewis County Survey of the Community is comparable to that used in the previous twelve years. Furthermore, post-stratification weights for gender, age, and education level were applied to all results from the first three years of surveying, while geography was additionally incorporated as a slight weighting factor since the fourth year of the survey (since 2010), and phone-ownership was added as a slight weighting factor since the sixth year of the survey (since 2012), as parts of the continuous improvement methods applied at the *Center* in an attempt to maximize the representativeness of the collected sample of adults. Finally, online surveying has been blended into the overall sample for the first time in 2019, with calibration to mitigate social desirability bias and improve comparability of data in trend analyses.

This maintenance of consistent methodology from year to year allows for valid comparisons for trends over the thirteen-year period that will be illustrated later in this report.

Throughout this report, key community demographic characteristics of Gender, Age, Education Level, Political Ideology, and Household Income Level are investigated as potential explanatory variables that may be associated with quality-of-life indicators and other community behavior and opinion variables for the county. It is standard methodology with professional surveys to provide this further rich information to the reader – information that may assist in explaining the overall findings – by reporting the cross-tabulated results for all subgroups within key demographic variables. The results provide important information about contemporary thinking of citizens and over time will continue to provide important baseline and comparative information as well. Further, the results for both Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties when surveyed in 2019 have also been presented when possible, and the methodology used in each of these other two Northern New York counties is identical to that which is used in Lewis County, allowing valid between-county comparisons of results. Again, for more specific detail regarding tests of statistical significance completed within this study, please refer to the appendices of this report and/or contact the professional staff at the *Center for Community Studies*.

All data compilation and statistical analyses within this study have been completed using *SPSS, Release 25*.

Section 2 - Summary of Findings

Section 2.0 – The View from 30,000 Feet! (or, “if one only has 30 seconds to review this report”)

1. The Local Lewis County Economy – One’s Personal Financial Situation and the Availability of Good Jobs – things are perceived as heading the right direction!

Currently 84% of residents indicate that their **personal financial situation has remained the same or improved in the past year** (31% improved, 53% remained same), while only 14% indicate that this situation has gotten worse. As a comparison, in 2008 the rates were – 12% “gotten better”, and a huge 40% “gotten worse”. Similarly, residents are increasingly optimistic regarding the **availability of good jobs** with one of the two highest rates of “Excellent or Good” ever recorded (25% in 2019) and only 29% responding “Poor” (the lowest ever measured found). As a comparison, the “Poor” rate was an all-time high of 57% in 2011. Finally, and more directly ... residents were asked the direction that Lewis County is headed ... 61% believe that **things in the county are headed in the right direction** while only 18% believe that things are headed in the wrong direction. On a nationwide basis, however, this optimism reduces – 42% believe that things in the country are headed in the right direction while 43% believe that things are headed in the wrong direction. (Tables 21, 44, 54, and 55)

2. Personal Opinions Regarding Community and Societal Issues – Political Dissonance

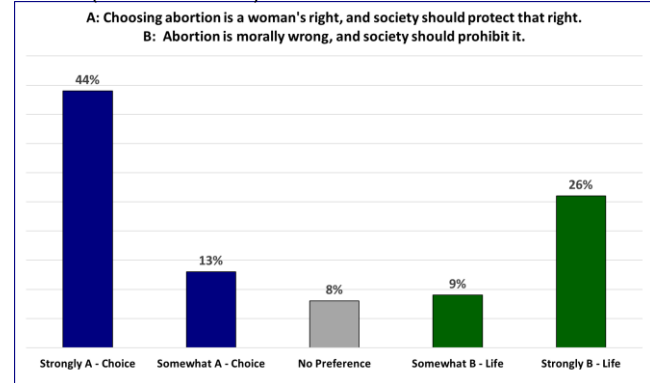
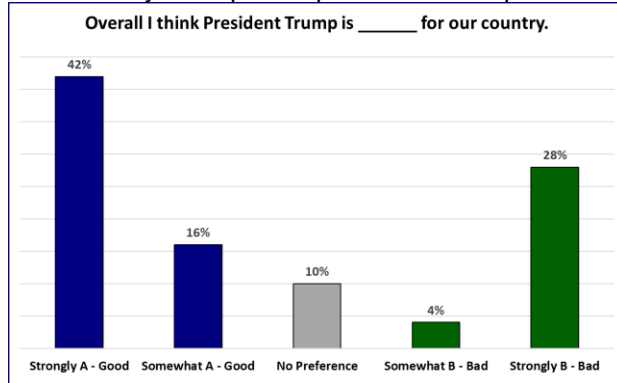
A section of twelve survey items that relates to personal opinions of residents **regarding issues that typically are of great importance to residents of any community and society** was included in this annual survey in 2018 and 2019. The issues studied ranged from healthcare funding, to social security, to the role of government, to Presidential approval, to gun control and rights, to abortion, to same-sex relationships, as well as other issues/topics that are typically commonly discussed and debated in our society. The goal was to learn what the overall predominate opinions are among the Lewis County adult community. No political stance or objective was or will be taken, of course, by the independent and unbiased researchers at the *Center for Community Studies*. The results in 2019 are summarized in the table below, with very interesting themes of what is typically considered as conservative stances being dominant among county adult residents at times, while what is typically considered as moderate or somewhat liberal stances being dominant among county adult residents at other times. (Tables 28-41)

Table 5 – Topline Summary of opinions regarding various societal issues

	Statement “A” (% Agree)		Statement “B” (% Agree)	
Small Farm Protection	Small farms are important to the local economy and should be protected by government.	74%	Small farms are small businesses and should be subject to market conditions and not protected by government.	22%
Gun Control and Rights	The Second Amendment of the US Constitution protects an individual’s right to own guns, and that should not be compromised by laws such as the NYS Safe Act.	68%	Gun violence in the US is out of control and some gun regulation similar to the NYS Safe Act is necessary.	28%
Climate Change	Climate change is pretty much exaggerated speculation.	32%	Climate change is pretty much a proven scientific conclusion.	62%
Presidential Approval	Overall I think President Trump is good for our country.	59%	Overall I think President Trump is bad for our country.	31%
Abortion	Choosing abortion is a woman’s right, and society should protect that right.	57%	Abortion is morally wrong, and society should prohibit it.	35%
Federal Income Tax Cuts	Only significantly benefited the very rich US residents.	52%	Significantly benefited all US residents.	32%
Free State College Tuition	Providing free tuition for state college education for all state residents up through a bachelor’s degree is a good idea.	58%	Providing free tuition for state college education for all state residents up through a bachelor’s degree is a bad idea.	37%
Same-sex Relationships	Wrong for adults to be romantically involved with other adults of the same sex.	36%	All right for adults to be romantically involved with other adults of the same sex.	52%
Globalism vs. Nationalism	The US needs to maintain its strong leadership role in the world political and economic order.	38%	The US needs to refocus its attention on our own people and problems and let the rest of the world take care of itself.	54%
Responsibility for Healthcare	Societal responsibility and government should ensure that good healthcare is available to all people.	53%	Individual responsibility and government should stay out of it.	44%
Physical Wall on US-Mexico Border	To maintain and improve border security - our country should build a physical wall along the entire US-Mexico border.	42%	To maintain and improve border security - our country should use other available technological methods and not build a physical wall along the entire US-Mexico border.	50%
Legal Immigration	The amount of legal immigration allowed currently in our country is too high and should be reduced.	50%	The amount of legal immigration allowed currently in our country is not too high and should be not reduced.	42%

3. Polarization – Intensity of Opinion

When studying the twelve community and societal issues described on the preceding page each participant was provided the opportunity to report the *intensity* of their agreement with either of the posed Statements A and B. They were further probed to determine the strength of their agreement – *Strongly* or *Somewhat*. It is apparent that for most, if not all, of the twelve issues when a Lewis County resident forms their position or opinion ... they feel *strongly* in their conviction. Responses very commonly are dominated by either Strongly A or Strongly B, with relatively few participants responding in between. The community appears to be polarized on the extremes regarding these issues. The two graphs below illustrate two of the many examples of polarization of opinion distribution. (Tables 28-41)



4. Trail Development in Lewis County

To assist local county leadership in best strategically planning for the future of Lewis County, in 2019 current levels of support and opposition to **development of three potential types of trail initiatives** were studied. In summary, a large level of support was found for all studied types of trails, with support for further development of non-motorized walking, hiking, and bicycling trails (87% support) significantly greater than support for further development of ATV and snowmobile trails (74% support), and level of support for the conversion of existing railroad beds or tracks in the county to public recreational multi-use trails in Lewis County (for both motorized and non-motorized use) at 82%. (Tables 46-49)

5. Agriculture in Lewis County

Lewis County residents overwhelmingly support agriculture. A very large majority express belief that agriculture has a positive impact on the local economy in the county (89%), and they are far more likely to believe that the use of farmland for solar energy systems in Lewis County is a positive or good thing (67%) rather than a negative or bad thing (22%). By a four-to-one ratio, Lewis County residents express willingness to pay a premium, or slightly higher prices, for locally produced agricultural products (71% indicate willingness, while only 18% do not). Finally, perceptions regarding six separate potential threats to agriculture in Lewis County were investigated and the two overwhelmingly most feared are “Too expensive to farm now, because of things like taxes and small profit margins” and “Lack of new or young farmers that will replace existing farmers” – each with 76% of residents indicating belief that they are a major threat, and only 3%-5% feeling that they are not at all a threat. (Tables 56-65)

6. Local Government Services

A group of five separate survey items that have been tracked for several years that each have interesting changes or trends found in 2019 and all relate to local government services are:

1. Results for *Access to Higher Education* in the county are the most positive ever found in eleven years of study with 56% currently rating as “Excellent or Good”. (Table 17)
2. Rating *Policing and Crime Control* in the county has risen from 64% “Excellent or Good” in 2017 to a current 74% in the county. (Table 20)
3. Rating of *Availability of Care for the Elderly* is the lowest measured in 13 years of study in Lewis County (was 54% “Excellent or Good” in 2017, currently this rate is only 46%). (Table 24)
4. More dramatically, the rating of *Availability of Childcare* is by far the lowest measured in five years of study in Lewis County (was 42% “Excellent or Good” in 2017, currently this rate is only 27%). The rate of evaluating *Availability of Childcare* as “Poor” in the county has almost tripled from 8% in 2016 to the current rate of 22%. (Table 25)
5. Finally, residents continue to be much more likely than not to believe that *local elected county officials represent their concerns effectively* – 55% agree with this statement (this rate was only 44% in 2013) while only 22% disagree with this statement in 2019. (Table 50)

Section 2.1 – Quality of Life in Lewis County (Tables 12-27)

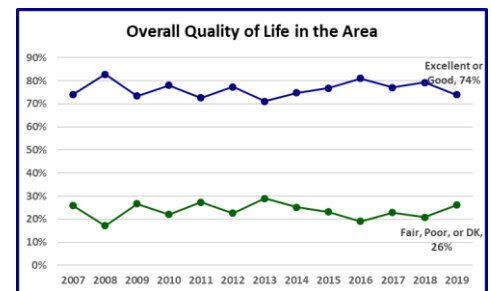
Summary of 2019 Quality-of-Life Indicators Results:

- In an attempt to gauge the current satisfaction with the quality of life in Lewis County, participants were provided a list of **13 key community characteristics, or indicators**. For each of these characteristics, the participants reported whether they feel that the characteristic in the county is “Excellent,” “Good,” “Fair,” or “Poor.” Table 6 summarizes the results with the percentage that indicated that each indicator is “Excellent or Good” reported, as well as the percentage who report that it is “Excellent,” and finally, the percentage that indicated that each indicator is “Poor.” The list of indicators in Table 6 is sorted from highest to lowest according to the percentage who replied “Excellent or Good” in 2019. The indicators whose results are in **green** shaded cells show significant recent improvement between the most recent past measurement (in either 2017 or 2018) and the current 2019 result (either an *increase* in “Excellent” or the combined “Excellent or Good”, or a *decrease* in “Poor”). The indicators whose results are in **gray** shaded cells show a trend toward more negative perceptions over this time frame (either a *decrease* in “Excellent” or the combined “Excellent or Good”, or an *increase* in “Poor”). *All green or gray shaded changes over the past year are of size at least ±5%.* The indicators whose results are in **white** shaded cells show no significant trend toward either more negative and positive perceptions between 2017 or 2018, and 2019. (Tables 6, 12, 13)

Table 6 – Summary of 13 Key Quality of Life Indicators (2019 Results sorted by “Excellent + Good”)

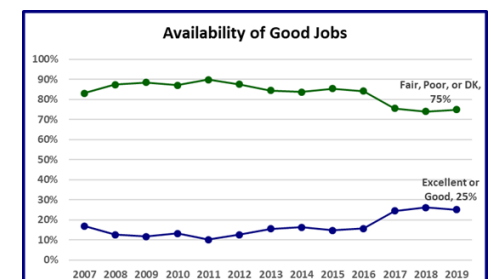
Quality of Life Indicator:	% “Excellent” + % “Good”	% “Excellent”	% “Poor”
	(2017 or 2018 result in parentheses – most recent)	(2017 or 2018 result in parentheses – most recent)	(2017 or 2018 result in parentheses – most recent)
1. The overall quality of life in the area	73.9% (79.2%)	13.9% (19.0%)	3.2% (3.3%)
2. Policing and crime control	73.8% (63.8%)	14.9% (17.7%)	7.8% (6.7%)
3. Public outdoor recreational opportunities	70.3% (74.3%)	31.6% (38.2%)	9.4% (7.2%)
4. Health care access	67.5% (72.2%)	12.7% (19.0%)	8.5% (7.0%)
5. Access to Higher Education	56.1% (46.4%)	10.2% (6.1%)	18.3% (24.0%)
6. Town and village government	55.3% (49.1%)	4.2% (6.5%)	9.9% (8.7%)
7. Availability of care for the elderly	46.1% (53.7%)	8.1% (8.7%)	16.1% (10.2%)
8. The overall state of the local economy	34.9% (44.9%)	2.2% (2.3%)	15.2% (20.0%)
9. Availability of behavioral health services	34.7% (41.1%)	4.0% (6.5%)	18.5% (16.6%)
10. Cost of energy	34.7% (42.9%)	2.4% (5.2%)	22.2% (13.6%)
11. Shopping opportunities	34.1% (38.6%)	6.7% (5.5%)	23.9% (21.4%)
12. Availability of childcare	27.2% (42.3%)	3.2% (5.2%)	21.7% (11.4%)
13. Availability of good jobs	25.1% (26.1%)	3.6% (1.0%)	28.7% (32.2%)

- Most Lewis County adult residents **continue to view the overall quality of life in the region as very positive**, 74% of the surveyed residents in 2019 report that the overall quality of life in the area is “Excellent or Good” (was 79% in 2018, 77% in 2017, 81% in 2016, 77% in 2015, 75% in 2014), while only 3% currently believe the overall quality of life in the area is “Poor” (was 3% also in 2018). (Tables 6, 12, 13, and 27)



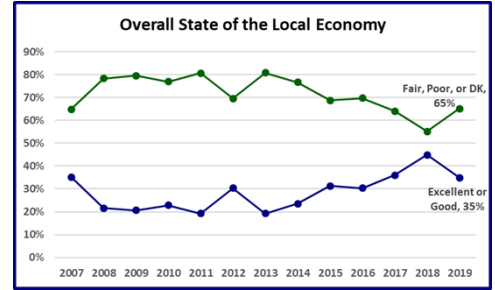
- Availability of Good Jobs**

“Availability of Good Jobs” continues to be one of the most negatively-perceived community characteristics from the 13 indicators measured among adult residents of Lewis County in 2019; however, in the first 10 years of completing this study the most common response always was “Poor” while since 2017 the most common response has improved to “Fair” (in 2016 the most common response with 43% was “Poor”, while in 2019 the most common response with 43% is “Fair”). The rate of responding “Poor” has decreased dramatically and significantly from the all-time high of 57% found in 2011, and more recently from a rate of 53% found in the county in 2014, to the current 2019 all-time low rate of 29%; while at the same time “Excellent or Good” has reached an all-time high in the county of 25%-26% in the past two years (was only 10% in 2011). (Table 21)



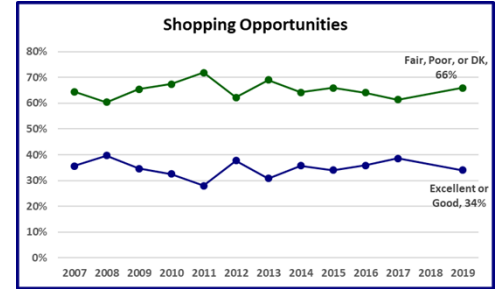
4. Overall State of the Local Economy

Satisfaction with the “Overall State of the Local Economy” in Lewis County in 2018 was at the highest level ever measured. Very significant improvement was found between 2013-2018, The 2018 “Poor” rate of 20% was the lowest found between 2008-2018 (was only 19% in 2007), and the rate of “Excellent or Good” then reached the all-time high of 45% (more than double earlier rates that have been as low as 19% in 2013). Results in 2019 have remained comparably high over the 13 year study span (2019 rate of 15% responding “Poor” is the lowest ever measured), but have now returned to a bit less positive distribution with a most common response of “Fair” (48% in 2019). (Table 23)



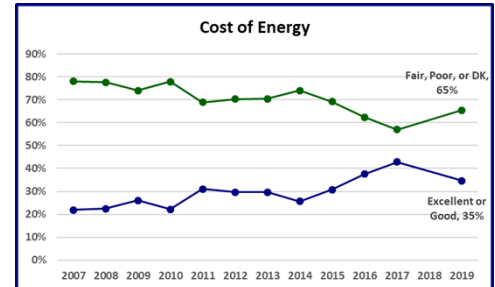
5. Shopping Opportunities

Levels of satisfaction with “Shopping Opportunities” in the county have remained quite consistent throughout the thirteen years of study. The 2019 results of 34% rating as “Excellent or Good” and 64% rating as “Fair or Poor” are very similar to past results (“Excellent or Good” has ranged between 28%-40% in all 13 years of study). (Table 22)



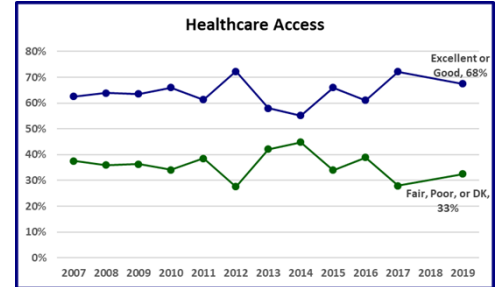
6. Cost of Energy

Residents of Lewis County continue to be more dissatisfied than satisfied with the “Cost of Energy”, however, the level of discontent has diminished tremendously over the past six years with the current 2019 rate of perceiving as “Excellent or Good” at a comparably high rate of 35% (was only 22% in 2010) and the 22% rate of responding “Poor” is currently less than one-half of the rate found in 2008 (48%). (Table 15)



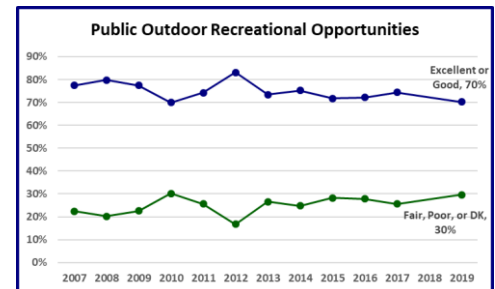
7. Healthcare Access

Residents of Lewis County continue to report a high satisfaction level with “Access to Healthcare” in the county. Satisfaction with healthcare access has increased over the past six years from the 2014 rate of 55% responding “Excellent or Good” to the current rate of 68% (only two years have been higher – 72% in 2012, and 72% in 2017). (Table 16)



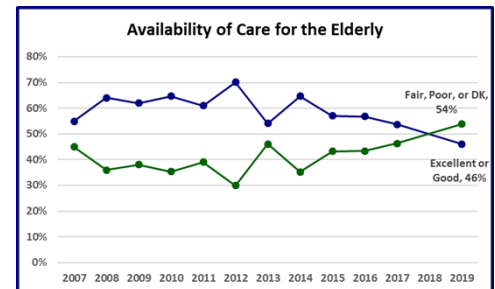
8. Public Outdoor Recreational Opportunities

In 2019, “Public Outdoor Recreational Opportunities” continues to be among the most positively rated of the studied community characteristics in Lewis County with almost three-fourths of participants (70%) rating as “Excellent or Good” (a significantly lower rate, however, than the all-time high of 83% found in 2012, but not changed from the 2016 and 2017 rates of 72% and 74%, respectively), while in 2019 only 9% of participants rate this indicator as “Poor” (was 7% in 2017). (Table 18)



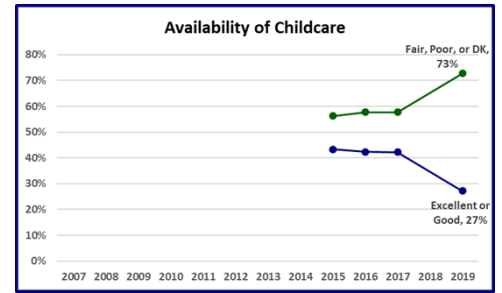
9. Availability of Care for the Elderly

Attitudes among residents of Lewis County regarding the “Availability of Care for the Elderly” in the county in 2019 are less positive than ever measured in the past. In 2019, only 46% rate as “Excellent or Good” (was 70% in 2012), while in 2019 the “Poor” rate is 16% (was as low as 6% in 2014). The most common response every year of study has been “Good”, however, this rate in 2019 (38%) is the lowest ever found. (Table 24)



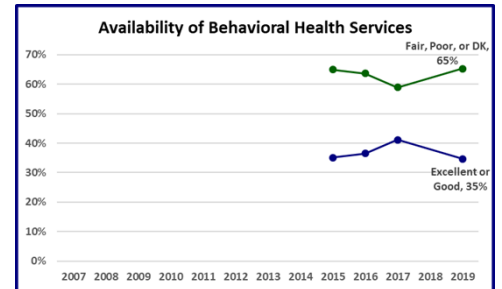
10. Availability of Childcare

“Availability of Childcare” in Lewis County has been studied for the past five years, and perceptions preceding 2019 tended to be more positive than negative – 42% of participants responded with “Excellent or “Good” in 2017, while only 11% rated as “Poor”. In 2019, however, this availability of childcare indicator has shown the largest decrease in satisfaction among the 13 studied community indicators, with current levels of only 27% responding “Excellent or “Good” (rate was 43% in 2015), and 22% responding “Poor” (which is double any largest previous “Poor” rate, and was only 8% in 2016). (Table 25)



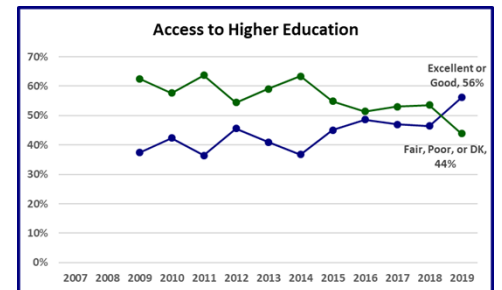
11. Availability of Behavioral Health Services

“Availability of Behavioral Health Services” in Lewis County has been studied for the past five years, and perceptions have tended to be more negative than positive – in 2019, only 35% of participants respond with “Excellent or “Good”, while 45% rate as “Fair or Poor”. (Table 26)



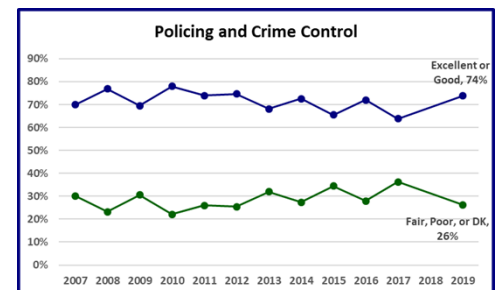
12. Access to Higher Education

“Access to Higher Education” as a community indicator has been measured since 2009 in Lewis County. For the recent four years of 2015-2018, residents were more positive than measured previously about these opportunities. In 2019, this positive trend continued, and this community indicator showed the greatest improvement over the past year among the 13 studied indicators. The 2019 “Excellent or Good” rate of 56% is the highest ever measured (was as low as 36% in 2011), and the 2019 “Poor” rate of 18% is the lowest ever measured (was as high as 37% in 2011). However, Lewis County 2019 satisfaction (56%) continues to lag well below each of Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties (rates of 80% and 66%, respectively, responding “Excellent or Good” in these counties in 2019). (Table 17)



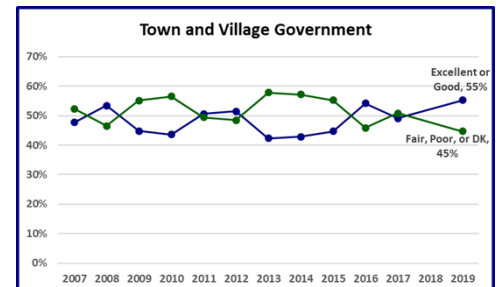
13. Policing and Crime Control

Residents of Lewis County continue to be more satisfied than dissatisfied with “Policing and Crime Control in the Area”, with 74% rating it as either “Excellent or Good” (a significant increase from 64% in 2017), and only 8% rating it as “Poor” in 2019 (was as high as 12% in 2015). Satisfaction with “Policing and Crime Control” in the county has been one of the most consistent community indicators studied each year, and there has been very little change between 2007-2019 with “Good” always the most common rating reported. (Table 20)



14. Town and Village Government

A very positive trend was found in satisfaction with “Town and Village Government” among Lewis County residents between 2013-2016 as the “Excellent or Good” rate in the county increased from 44% to 54%, and in 2019 this rate has remained at 55%. Note that the rate of “Poor” in the county in 2019 (9.9%) is the third lowest ever measured, and the third study in a row of “under 10%”. (Table 19)



Section 2.2 – Personal Opinions – Issues in Our Society and Communities

(Tables 28-43)

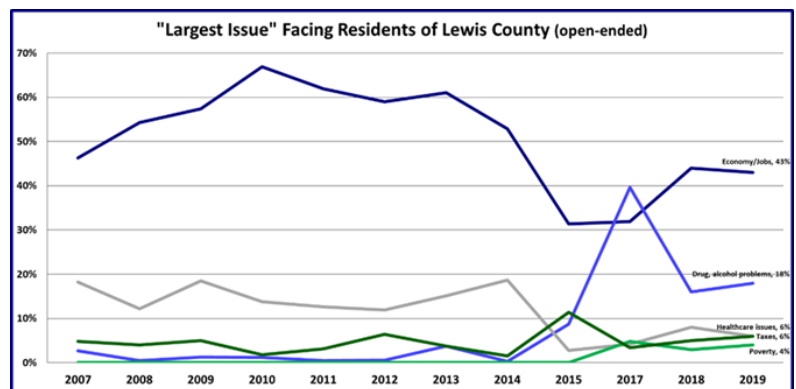
15. In 2018, for the first time in 12 years of surveying quality-of-life and local governance issues in Lewis County, **the Center for Community Studies included a section of survey items that related to personal opinions of residents regarding issues that typically are of great importance to residents of any community and society.** The issues studied ranged from healthcare funding, to social security, to the role of government, to Presidential approval, to gun

control and rights, to abortion, to same-sex relationships, as well as other issues/topics that are typically commonly discussed and debated in our society. The goal was to learn what the overall predominate opinions are of the Lewis County adult community. No political stance or objective was or will be taken, of course, by the independent and unbiased researchers at the *Center for Community Studies*. The results of these items in 2018 shed a great deal of light on understanding the majority opinions among adults in the county at that time. In 2019 a few slight changes and additions to these community issue survey items were made, but for the most part, an attempt has been made to replicate and validate the opinion results, and of course, potentially measure any changes in the past year. The question phrasing is detailed in the exact format used in the telephone and online interviews later in Section 3.4 of this report. The results in 2019 are summarized in the table below, with very interesting themes of what is typically considered as conservative stances being dominant among county adult residents at times, while what is typically considered as moderate or somewhat liberal stances being dominant among county adult residents at other times. In Section 3.4 a thorough data analytics exercise, deeper-diving into relative dominance of most commonly held personal opinions, key drivers of opinion, and inter-correlations between opinions/issues is presented. (Tables 28-41)

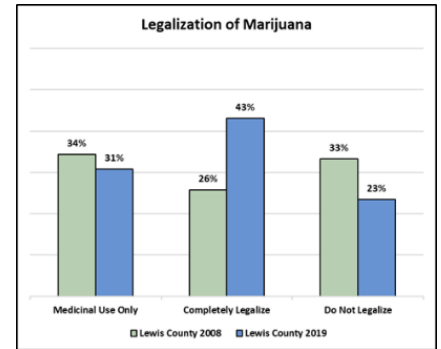
Table 7 – More detailed summary of opinions regarding various societal issues

2019 Results	Statement "A"	% Agree "A"	Statement "B"	% Agree "B"	Difference in %	Ratio (A:B or B:A)
Small Farm Protection	Small farms are important to the local economy and should be protected by government.	74%	Small farms are small businesses and should be subject to market conditions and not protected by government.	22%	52%	3.4
Gun Control and Rights	The Second Amendment of the US Constitution protects an individual's right to own guns, and that should not be compromised by laws such as the NYS Safe Act.	68%	Gun violence in the US is out of control and some gun regulation similar to the NYS Safe Act is necessary.	28%	40%	2.4
Climate Change	Climate change is pretty much exaggerated speculation.	32%	Climate change is pretty much a proven scientific conclusion.	62%	30%	1.9
Presidential Approval	Overall I think President Trump is good for our country.	59%	Overall I think President Trump is bad for our country.	31%	28%	1.9
Abortion	Choosing abortion is a woman's right, and society should protect that right.	57%	Abortion is morally wrong, and society should prohibit it.	35%	22%	1.6
Federal Income Tax Cuts	Only significantly benefited the very rich US residents.	52%	Significantly benefited all US residents.	32%	20%	1.6
Free State College Tuition	Providing free tuition for state college education for all state residents up through a bachelor's degree is a good idea.	58%	Providing free tuition for state college education for all state residents up through a bachelor's degree is a bad idea.	37%	21%	1.6
Same-sex Relationships	Wrong for adults to be romantically involved with other adults of the same sex.	36%	All right for adults to be romantically involved with other adults of the same sex.	52%	16%	1.4
Globalism vs. Nationalism	The US needs to maintain its strong leadership role in the world political and economic order.	38%	The US needs to refocus its attention on our own people and problems and let the rest of the world take care of itself.	54%	16%	1.4
Responsibility for Healthcare	Societal responsibility and government should ensure that good healthcare is available to all people.	53%	Individual responsibility and government should stay out of it.	44%	9%	1.4
Physical Wall on US-Mexico Border	To maintain and improve border security - our country should build a physical wall along the entire US-Mexico border.	42%	To maintain and improve border security - our country should use other available technological methods and not build a physical wall along the entire US-Mexico border.	50%	8%	1.2
Legal Immigration	The amount of legal immigration allowed currently in our country is too high and should be reduced.	50%	The amount of legal immigration allowed currently in our country is not too high and should be not reduced.	42%	8%	1.2

16. For twelve of the thirteen years of surveying in Lewis County (only exception being 2016) the question **“What is the single largest issue facing residents of Lewis County right now?”** has been included in this annual survey. This question is open-ended, giving the residents the opportunity to specify the primary issue, while they may earlier have identified several issues as “Poor” via responses to the preceding community indicators, or potentially strongly agreed with one of the personal opinion statements, or potentially a “largest issue” does not happen to be included in the earlier survey script. In 2019, clearly **“Economy/Jobs”** is commonly perceived as the largest issue (43%), however, this rate is significantly and dramatically lower than 67% in 2010; while **“Drug/Alcohol Problems”** is second most common in 2019 at 18% (was 40% in 2017, has been as low as 0% as recently as 2014). (Table 42)

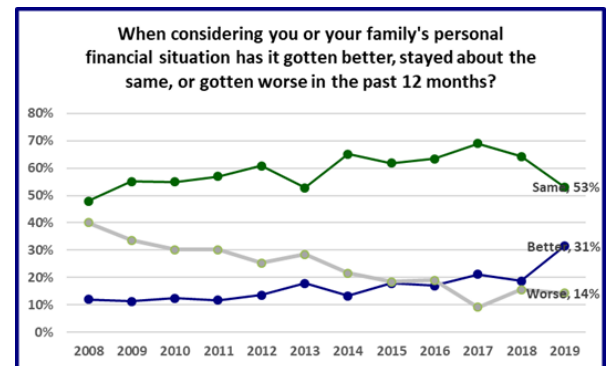


17. When last studied in October 2008 in Lewis County, adults were asked opinions regarding legalizing marijuana for medicinal use, or even possibly, complete legalization and regulation of the substance, and **in 2008 only about one-in-four Lewis County adults (26%) indicated that they believed that marijuana should be legal for both recreational and medicinal purposes – this rate has increased significantly to being the most common response in 2019 (43%)**. Currently approximately three-fourths of local adults (74% in 2019, was only 60% in 2008) support legalization of marijuana for medicinal purposes. Less than one-fourth of Lewis County adults (23%) in 2019 believe that marijuana should not be legalized at all for either medicinal or recreational purposes (was 33% in 2008). (Table 43)



Section 2.3 – Personal Financial and Employment Situation (Tables 44-45)

18. In 2017-2018, for the first time residents of Lewis County were more likely to indicate that their **families' personal financial situations had gotten better over the past 12 months** than they were to indicate that it had gotten worse (2017 rates of 21% "gotten better" versus 9% "gotten worse"), and in 2019 this better-larger-than-worse scenario has continued and the most positive results ever have been found – with 2019 rates of 31% "gotten better", and only 14% "gotten worse". As a comparison, in 2008 the rates were – 12% "gotten better", and a huge 40% "gotten worse". A dramatic positive trend in families' financial situations has occurred in the county since 2013. (Table 44)



19. The **employment status and occupation** of Lewis County residents has been studied in each of 2008 through 2019 with results remaining quite consistent, with the following two exceptions: the percentage of participants who report to be retired has increased from 21% in 2007 to 33% in 2018 and 29% in 2019, and "blue-collar employment" has decreased from 25% in 2014 to a 2018 rate of 8% and a 2019 rate of 13%. (Table 45)

Section 2.4 – Future Trail Development in Lewis County (Tables 46-49)

20. To assist local county leadership in best strategically planning for the future of Lewis County, in 2019 current levels of support and opposition to development of three types of trail initiatives were studied. **In summary, a large level of support was found for all three types of trails (summarized in Table 8), with support for further development of non-motorized walking, hiking, and bicycling trails (87%) which is significantly greater than for ATV and snowmobile trails (74%)**. (Tables 8, 46-49)

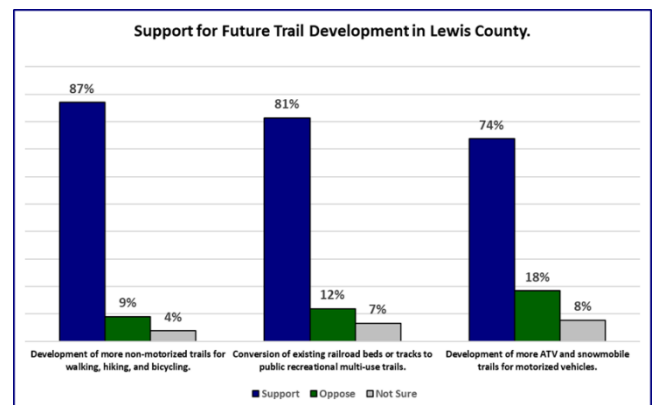


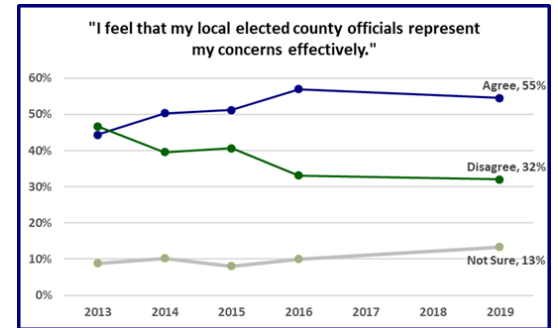
Table 8 – Summary of Attitudes Regarding Trail Development in Lewis County

	Support	Oppose	Not sure	Total
Development of more non-motorized trails for walking, hiking, and bicycling.	87.1%	9.0%	3.9%	100.0%
Conversion of existing railroad beds or tracks to public recreational multi-use trails.	81.5%	11.9%	6.6%	100.0%
Development of more ATV and snowmobile trails for motorized vehicles.	73.8%	18.4%	7.8%	100.0%

Section 2.5 – County Elected Officials – *Effectively represent my concerns?*

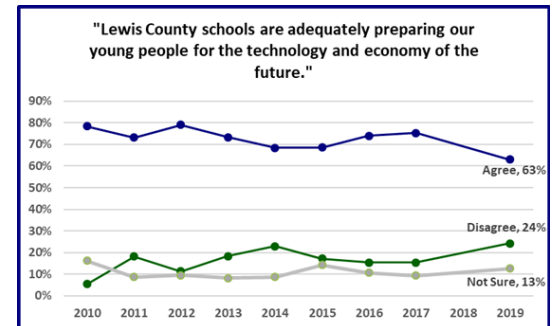
(Table 50)

21. For the four years 2013-2016 residents were posed the statement **"I feel that my local elected county officials represent my concerns effectively."** Over that four-year span there was positive and continuously improving sentiment that local elected county officials were, in fact, effectively representing residents' concerns. After two years of not measuring this item the question was reintroduced in 2019 and results have remained positive 55% agree and only 32% disagree with this statement currently. (Table 50)



Section 2.6 – Satisfaction with K-12 Schools in Lewis County (Table 51)

22. Lewis County adults in 2019 have expressed the sentiment that they are satisfied with the local K-12 school systems. Approximately two-thirds (63%) of Lewis County residents agree with the notion that **"Lewis County schools are adequately preparing our young people for the technology and economy of the future"**, while only 24% disagree. However, these results are a significant negative trend from that which was found when last studied in 2017, when the "Agree" rate was 75% and the "Disagree" rate was only 16%. (Table 51)



Section 2.7 – National News – *Access and Trust* (Tables 52-53)

23. For the first time in 2019, access to national and global news via television was studied among Lewis County adults. Frequency of watching one of the 24-hour cable news channels was inquired and about **one-in-three Lewis County adults (36%) watches cable news channels at least 30 minutes every day with another 9% watching 30+ minutes a day a few days each week.** Frequency of watching is strongly associated with age with only 15% of those age 18-39 watching every day, and 59% of those age 70+ reporting to do so daily. For comparison, Siena College Research Institute asked this same network cable news watching frequency survey question to a sample of n=742 New York State registered voters in October 2019 and the results statewide were that 40% statewide watch at least 30 minutes every day, and among those who live in Upstate New York, Siena found that this rate is 37%. In summary, frequency of watching 24-hour cable news networks in Lewis County appears to be similar to statewide averages. (Table 52)

24. For the first time in 2019, *trust to deliver unbiased news* among the common 24-hour cable national and global news channels was studied among Lewis County adults. By far, **Lewis County adults trust Fox News more (31%) than either of CNN (13%) or MSNBC (9%). However, quite a large segment of the residents (28%) indicate that they trust none of the 24-hour cable national and global news channels to give them unbiased news.** For comparison, Siena College Research Institute asked this same network cable news watching frequency survey question to a sample of n=742 New York State registered voters in October 2019 and the results statewide were that adults trust CNN more (35%) than either of Fox News (22%) or MSNBC (21%), and 16% trust "none of these". In summary, which cable news networks are perceived as most trusted to deliver unbiased news by Lewis County residents appears to differ dramatically from statewide results. (Table 53)

Section 2.8 – What Direction are Things Heading? – *Lewis County and the Entire Country* (Tables 54-55)

25. On a local basis, Lewis County residents are very optimistic about the direction that things are heading – **61% believe that things in the county are headed in the right direction while only 18% believe that things are headed in the wrong direction.** On a nationwide basis, however, this optimism reduces – **only 42% believe that things in the country are headed in the right direction while 43% believe that things are headed in the wrong direction.** For comparison, Siena College Research Institute asked this same "nationwide direction" survey question to a sample of n=742 New York State registered voters in October 2019 and the results statewide were that 31% statewide felt that

the country is headed in the right direction, and among those who live in Upstate New York, Siena found that this rate is 32%. (Tables 54-55)

Section 2.9 – Agriculture in Lewis County – *Current Impact and Future Barriers* (Tables 56-66)

- 26. **Lewis County residents overwhelmingly believe that the impact that agriculture has on the local economy in the county is more positive than negative** – 89% believe that the impact is more positive, while only 8% believe that the impact is more negative. (Table 56)
- 27. **By a large margin Lewis County residents are much more likely to believe that the use of farmland for solar energy systems in Lewis County is a positive or good thing (67%) rather than a negative or bad thing (22%).** (Table 57)
- 28. **By a four-to-one ratio, Lewis County residents express willingness to pay a premium, or slightly higher prices, for locally produced agricultural products.** (71% indicate willingness, while only 18% do not) (Table 58)
- 29. **Lewis County residents express some level of concern with the safety of eating commercially-grown food that is available at stores**, with 20% being “very concerned”, another 18% being “somewhat concerned”, and only 37% responding with “no concern at all”. (Table 59)

30. To assist local county agriculture leadership in best strategically planning for the future of agriculture in Lewis County, in 2019 current levels of concern with potential threats to agriculture in the county were recorded. Perceptions regarding six separate potential threats were investigated and the two overwhelmingly most feared are **“Too expensive to farm now, because of things like taxes and small profit margins”** and **“Lack of new or young farmers that will replace existing farmers”** – each with 76% of residents indicating belief that they are a *major threat*, and only 3%-5% *feeling that they are not at all a threat*. Results for all six potential threats are summarized below in Table 9. (Tables 60-66)

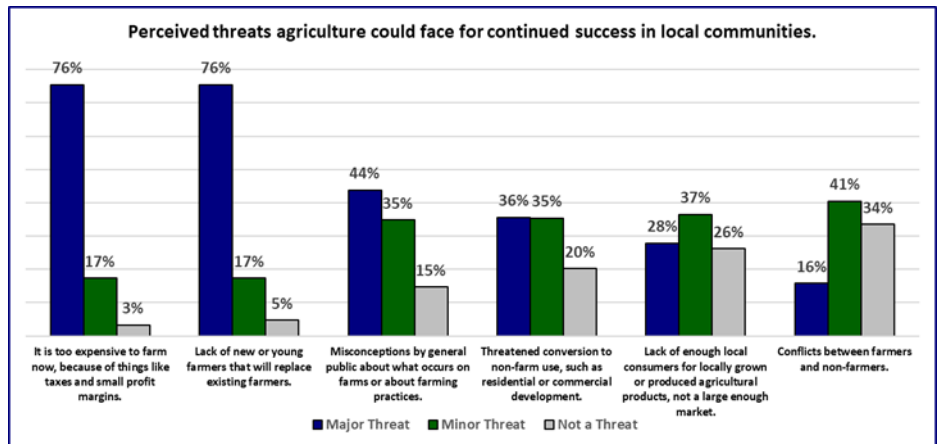


Table 9 – Summary of Perceived Threats to Agriculture in Lewis County

	Major threat	Minor threat	Not at all a threat	Don't know	Total
It is too expensive to farm now, because of things like taxes and small profit margins.	75.5%	17.4%	3.3%	3.8%	100.0%
Lack of new or young farmers that will replace existing farmers.	75.5%	17.4%	4.7%	2.4%	100.0%
Misconceptions by general public about what occurs on farms or about farming practices.	43.8%	34.9%	14.7%	6.6%	100.0%
Threatened conversion to non-farm use, such as residential or commercial development.	35.6%	35.4%	20.3%	8.7%	100.0%
Lack of enough local consumers for locally grown or produced agricultural products, not a large enough market.	27.9%	36.5%	26.3%	9.3%	100.0%
Conflicts between farmers and non-farmers.	15.8%	40.5%	33.6%	10.1%	100.0%