

# Survey reveals thoughts about Tillamook County

**Most saw value in tourism, farmland, and saw need for control of land use and development**

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**TILLAMOOK COUNTY —** It may come as little surprise that Tillamook County residents have a wide range of opinion on the social, economic and environmental issues of today and the way forward to the future, but a survey released last week by the University of Oregon for the Tillamook County Futures Council found areas of broad consensus, as well.

Respondents were enthusiastic about the value of tourism, with 67 percent saying that

tourism should be planned for and expanded and 51 percent arguing that marketing strategies to promote tourism should be improved. Encouraging nature-based tourism was important to 71 percent of respondents, even though 85 percent acknowledged that improving the appearance of the towns is important to bringing in business.

Second-home owners were also considered important to the economy by 60 percent of the survey-takers, but many called for tough restrictions on development.

Stricter control is needed on land use and development, said 51 percent, and 83 percent said there should be more restriction of development in areas vulnerable to natural disaster. Development should also be confined to established towns to protect rural areas, 70 percent said.

Protecting farmland is important to a vast majority of

respondents, with 81 percent saying it is important to the local economy and 76 percent saying it is important to the quality of life in Tillamook County. Though, 59 percent said they would like to see more sustainable agriculture, such as methane harvesting and organic produce.

The county's wildlife and fisheries were also at the top of the list for many, but respondents were divided or unsure about water and air quality. Conserving the area's abundance of wildlife was important to 89 percent and 74 percent said sustaining the salmon runs should be a priority.

But 41 percent of respondents said river water quality was satisfactory and 33 percent said it wasn't, with 25 percent unsure or undecided. Respondents were also divided on whether the agricultural industry does an adequate job of protecting water quality and

whether current ordinances are enough, although 58 percent said more needs to be done to manage urban water runoff.

The county was also evenly divided on air quality with 39 percent agreeing that air quality should improve while 28 percent said no and 34 percent were unsure or undecided.

The purpose of public forests and logging were also contentious issues as survey participants split 38 percent to 34 percent on the statement "The primary purpose of publicly owned forest lands is to generate revenue from the harvest of forest products." However, earlier in the survey, 59 percent agreed with the statement that the primary purpose of forests was for recreation and protection of fish and wildlife.

Results of the survey came out strong in favor of education, with a majority of people agreeing that there should be more educational opportunities

for people of all ages and more recreational opportunities for youth in particular. But opinions were split on whether county schools are well funded, with 25 percent saying yes, 46 percent saying no and 30 percent unsure or indifferent.

In some homes, a majority said funds were also tight, as 83 percent responded that some children and families in the county struggle to meet their basic needs. Respondents weren't sure about the availability of services to help those in need, with 50 percent unsure or undecided and 24 percent saying there weren't enough.

Teen pregnancy was a problem for 51 percent and 49 percent said alcohol abuse was an important social issue.

Forty-six percent of respondents feel that the local health care system meets their needs and 54 percent said it was accessible, but 57 percent said they go outside of the county for some

health needs.

Similarly, 59 percent of people agreed that they "often purchase basic goods and services in communities outside of the County."

Over the summer, graduate students from the University of Oregon Community Planning Workshop will process the survey data. The information gleaned from the three county workshops held this month and a Web survey to be posted in June. The Web address for the survey is not yet available, but check [www.tillamook-futures.org](http://www.tillamook-futures.org) for more information.

The University students will then compare the results of their research to the benchmarks and strategies developed by the Futures Council. The Council will then work to develop new goals and strategies to create a 20-year vision shaped by Tillamook residents input.