



***Marketing Rural Communities  
to Attract and Retain Workers  
in a Changing Economy***

**Part II**  
***Online and Local Focus Groups***












# Rating Pictures

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- Pictures were selected to represent characteristics that were identified by new residents to the communities
  - ✓ Images were unique to each community
- The characteristics represented a combination of the top reasons new residents moved to the community and the top community assets identified by the new residents.
  - ✓ New resident survey conducted in 2009
- Respondents rated level of agreement on how well various characteristics were represented by images
  - ✓ Face-to-face focus groups used *Turning Point* response cards (clickers) to record ratings

# Photo Matrix

- Pictures and rating data were sorted by community characteristics (e.g., safer place to live, quality time with family)
- Only images used in more than one setting were included

1	Survey												
2		A safe place to live	A safe place to live	Safe place to live	Safe place to live	Safe place to live	Safe place to live	Safe place to live	Safe place to live	Safe place to live	Safe place to live	Safe place to live	
129	<b>Sum</b>	34	48	16	16	20	20	26	25	16	23	23	25
130	<b>Mean</b>	3.59	4.00	3.00	3.33	3.75	3.30	3.62	3.68	3.94	3.78	3.65	3.44

# Scale Analysis

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- Mean scores for calculated for each image
  - ✓ Mean scores of 4.0 or higher were determined by researchers to show that the image effectively represented that characteristic
  - ✓ Images with mean score less than 4.0 were categorized as not effectively representing the characteristic
- Images within each category were then analyzed for common attributes and themes

# Advice for Depicting Characteristics

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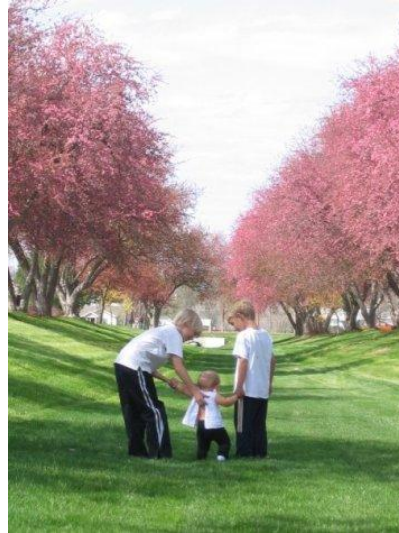
- Respondents were also asked how they would depict various characteristics using pictures
  - ✓ Top pull factors for each community were used (i.e., safer place to live, to obtain a higher paying job)
- These responses were combined with rating data to produce advice for depicting each

# Quality Time with Family Pictures

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**Pictures that effectively depicted quality time with family showed family activities (families doing things together) or community amenities for family outings**



**“I think pictures of families in parks having a picnic. Pictures of families in small town events like parades, county fairs, outside dances, etc.”**

**“Family outings, on the lake, park, bowling, church, golf, birthdays and weddings”**

# Quality Time with Family Pictures

**Pictures that effectively depicted quality time with family showed family activities (families doing things together)**



**“Family picnics with parents interacting with children; family sport outings - biking, fishing, walking, frisbee tossing. Sitting on the front porch together.”**

# Quality Time with Family Pictures

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Pictures that did not effectively depict quality time with family



Potential reasons why:

Did not include family unit (was either kids or adults but not both)



# How to Depict Quality Time with Family

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- Families participating in activities
  - Personal activities like birthday celebrations, family reunions or holiday gatherings
  - Community events like fairs or 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebrations
  - Recreational activities
- Show whole families
  - Make sure Dads are included!
- Quiet family time
  - Community offers possibility of family spending quality time together (eating dinner together, picnic)
- Showcase community amenities
  - Facilities that support families such as swimming pool, modern library, parks, bowling
  - Capture the flavor and feel of the community (agriculture, college town, oilpatch, etc.)
- Overhead macro view of community events/activities/amenities
  - Fair, family neighborhood, recreation complex

**Need pictures that demonstrate the full range of opportunities for quality time with family**

# Less Congested Place to Live Pictures

**Pictures that effectively depicted less congested place to live showed main streets of communities (with minimal traffic or congestion) or outdoor scenery**



**“A street in the town that show Main Street with the businesses and that it is comfortably full, showing ample spots for other cars to pull in and shop or eat.”**

**“Longer panned shot of a main street or street along park that has very few cars and people walking or biking instead.”**

# Less Congested Place to Live Pictures

**Pictures that effectively depicted less congested place to live showed main streets of communities (with minimal traffic or congestion) or outdoor scenery**



**“Open spaces. Not many people or vehicles.”**

**“Main street, photos of the areas’ natural amenities and juxtaposing photos where a sense of place, and its rural nature, can be found as part of any photo, of any place, building or activity.”**

# Less Congested Place to Live Pictures

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Pictures that did not effectively depict less congested place to live



Possible reasons why:  
Need a wide angle perspective

# How to Depict Less Congested Place to Live

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- Images with macro aerial views of street views and/or open spaces
- Show families participating in activities without major congestion
- Images of kids playing in the park, walking to the swimming pool by themselves
- Images that illustrate a pedestrian friendly environment

**Panoramic perspective rather than telescopic perspective**

# Job Opportunities Pictures

Neither of these pictures was effective at depicting job opportunities



“Show a variety of jobs that are in the manufacturing, high tech, or oil and gas fields”

“Your picture of the varied industries was good or pictures of laborers in a succession of ever-increasing skilled working positions.”

# How to Depict Jobs

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- Images of workplaces not just people
- Show diversity of employment options and ranges of occupations
- Images of residential neighborhoods that demonstrate that good jobs are available, economic prosperity
  - How to depict “jobs in line with my skills” depends on the individual

**The study did not clearly illustrate examples of images that effectively portray job opportunities. More research is needed in this area.**

# Simpler Pace of Life Pictures

Pictures that effectively depicted simpler pace of life showed scenery and time for family and friends



“The biking trails, parks, and low density neighborhoods”

“Smaller community. Opportunities for outdoor activities. Less concrete.”



# Simpler Pace of Life Pictures

Pictures that effectively depicted simpler pace of life showed time for family and friends



“A community lunch, picnic, pot luck.”

“Happy community members gathering and talking amongst each other after church.”

# Simpler Pace of Life Pictures

Pictures that did not effectively depict simpler pace of life



Not clear why these pictures did not rate high.

# How to Depict Simpler Pace of Life

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**Pictures that were effective at showing simpler pace of life seemed to show the following elements:**

- No or little traffic
- Scenery
- Time with family or friends

**Wide variety of images were rated positively.**

**This may be a function of the phrase “simpler pace of life” being so broad and perhaps vague.**

**Not clear why some images that would intuitively do well were not rated higher.**

# Advice for Attracting New Workers and Residents

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- Illustrate diversity of employment opportunities (agriculture, blue collar, professional, health care, etc.)
- Available services and amenities such as recreation facilities, health care, schools
- Illustrate range of available housing
- Images that illustrate multi-generational and inter-generational interaction
- Images that capture local flavor, landscape and surrounding area

# Advice for All Pictures (All Themes)

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- Images must be authentic!
- Demonstrate full range options regardless of the theme.
- Images of families doing things.
- Use images that people can relate to such as everyday activities like grocery shopping, kids walking to parks, dad mowing the yard

# ***Overall Observations***

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- Age, gender and ethnic diversity are noticed.
- Photo captions could help guide the viewer to the desired meaning of the photo.
- Need a well designed, well defined message of the concept you are trying to portray with the image and your image needs to be equally well defined and tested

**Pictures might say a thousand words, but not necessarily the same thousand words.**