

Marketing for Rural Communities

Initial Focus Groups

Strategies to Belong

Actions and strategies used by new residents to learn about their community included newcomer welcome programs, local media and community involvement. Getting involved is the primary way that individuals become connected in the communities. Welcome programs were not offered in every community and many new residents did not receive information. This resulted in participants trying to figure out the reasons why one person received the information and others did not. When communities had a local radio station or newspaper, praise was given for the efforts.

During the interview sessions, the new residents were also given the opportunity to share advice on strategies to retain new residents. An interesting finding in the study was that nearly 75% of the new residents indicated that a clear positive community vision for the future was important to long term retention. When the new residents were asked to further describe what they meant, one person shared, "Get aggressive about your vision for the future." An overwhelming majority (86%) of new residents would also like to see an open minded attitude toward new resident ideas.