

# Life in the Heartland and Alberta Environment

## **Public Attitudes** In Edmonton and the Heartland Region

March 2011

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# Background

Janet Brown Consulting was retained by Woodbridge Communications (on behalf of Life in the Heartland and Alberta Environment as a co-funded initiative) to conduct a survey with residents of Edmonton and the Heartland Region in order to better understand the following:

- Top provincial and local issues of concern (to determine relative importance of the environment),
- Extent to which residents follow environmental issues facing the local community,
- Extent to which residents follow the progress of local industrial development,
- Whether concern for the quality of the environment in their local area is growing, lessening or staying the same,
- Perceived credibility of various spokespeople on environmental issues impacting the local area (i.e., government, media, industry, environmentalists, etc.),
- Sources of information about industrial development in the local area,
- Awareness and understanding of the term “cumulative effects management”,
- Satisfaction with the performance of provincial and local authorities in the area of “cumulative effects management”,
- Awareness of “Life in the Heartland” among Heartland residents (including what they know about and where they heard about “Life in the Heartland”),
- Relative importance of priority issues for “Life in the Heartland” (air, water, and land quality updates; transportation; emergency response, etc.) among Heartland residents.

# Methodology

The results of the survey are based on a probability sample of 300 residents of Greater Edmonton and 300 residents of the Heartland region (for a total of 600 surveys). The survey was conducted by telephone between February 23 and March 18, 2011.

All interviews were conducted by qualified interviewing staff working out of Trend Research's centralized CATI (computer-assisted telephone interviewing) facility in Edmonton. Field supervisors were present at all times to ensure accurate interviewing and recording of responses.

All interviewing staff at Trend receives extensive training on the proper administration of interviews and are closely monitored by supervisors. For this project, staff members were given a thorough briefing on things such as the flow of the survey, the manner in which open-ended questions should be probed, and how to handle respondent questions.

A minimum of 10 percent of each interviewer's work was unobtrusively monitored for quality control in accordance with the standards set out by the Canadian Marketing Research and Intelligence Association. A minimum of five calls were made to a household before classifying it as a "no answer."

The margin of error for a probability sample of 600 people within the population produces results which are statistically reliable to within plus or minus 4.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20 (i.e., at a 95% confidence interval). The margin of error for a sample of 300 people is plus or minus 5.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Significance testing is included in the data tables. Each column is labeled by a letter (a, b, c, d, etc.). Letters within the tables indicate where there are statistically significant differences. A letter next to a finding indicates that this finding is significantly higher than the comparable finding in the column designated by that letter. A lower case letter (a, b, c, d, etc.) indicates that this finding is significantly higher at the 90% confidence level. An upper case letter (A, B, C, D, etc.) indicates the finding is significantly higher at the 95% confidence level.

# Key Findings

- Health care is the top provincial and local concern of residents in Edmonton and the Heartland region.
- A majority of residents in both regions say they follow local environmental issues somewhat closely and that, compared to one year ago, their person concern for local environmental issues is staying the same.
- Television news is the main source of information on local environmental issues for Edmonton residents, while newspaper is the main source for Heartland residents.
- Scientists and academics are the most trusted source of information on local environmental issues.
- Residents of both Edmonton and the Heartland region tend to follow local industrial development more closely than they follow local environmental issues.
- Newspaper is the main source of information on local industrial development in both Edmonton and the Heartland region.
- The term “cumulative effects management” is familiar to 25 percent of Heartland residents and 18 percent of Edmonton residents.
- After hearing the definition of “cumulative effects management”, majorities say they are satisfied with the efforts of the provincial government, their municipal government and local industry in this regard.
- Of note is the fact that residents of the Heartland region are more satisfied with the “cumulative effects management” efforts of their municipal government than residents of Edmonton.
- When presented with a list of nine local issues, Heartland residents are most likely to express concern with air quality, water quality and land use planning.
- Three in ten (30%) Heartland residents have heard of the “Life in the Heartland” initiative, although most of these people are unable to articulate its role.

# Important Issues Facing Alberta

When asked what they believe is the most important issue facing Alberta today, residents of Edmonton and the Heartland Region are most likely to mention health care on both a top-of-mind and total mention basis. Next in importance are job-related issues such as employment, oil sands development and unemployment.

Although education and the environment do not register highly as top-of-mind issues, they are both in the top five when total responses are considered.

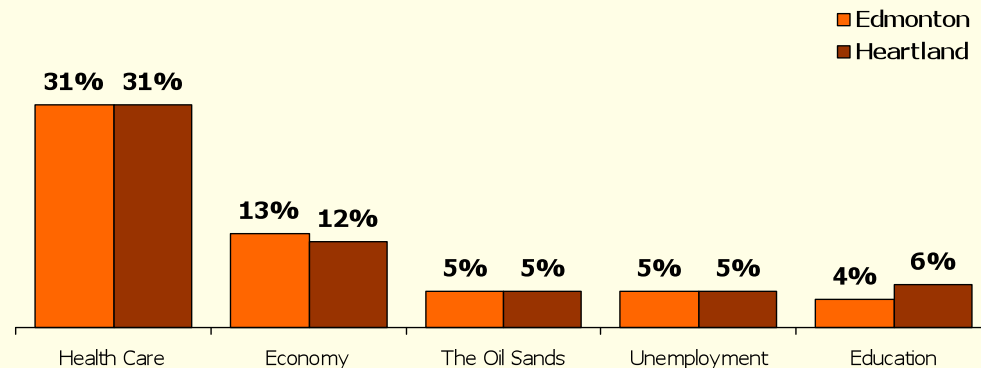
**Health care** is of particular concern to:

- The university educated (58% mention it as one of their issues of concern versus 42% of those with high school or less),
- 45 to 64 year olds (55% versus 34% of 18 to 24 year olds), and
- Homeowners (50% versus 31% of renters).

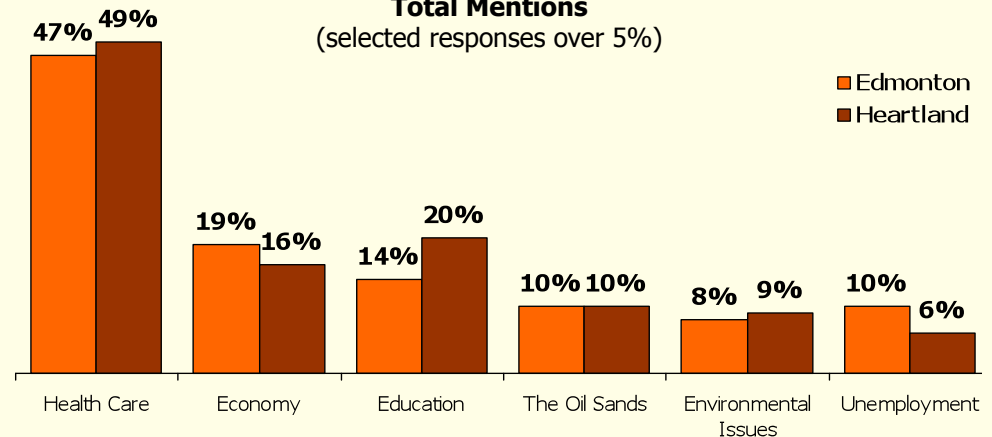
The **economy** is of particular concern to homeowners (19% versus 4% of renters).

**Environmental issues** are of particular concern to those with a post-graduate education (20% versus 6% of those with high school or less).

**Top-of-Mind**  
(selected responses over 3%)



**Total Mentions**  
(selected responses over 5%)



- 1a. What in your opinion is the single most important issue facing Alberta today?  
1b. What other important issues are facing Alberta right now? Anything else?

# Important Issues Facing Region

Thinking specifically about their own region, residents of both Edmonton and the Heartland region again mention health care as their most important concern.

In the Heartland region, power lines are the second most important issues of concern, whereas snow removal is the second most important issue in Edmonton (no doubt driven by record snowfalls this past winter).

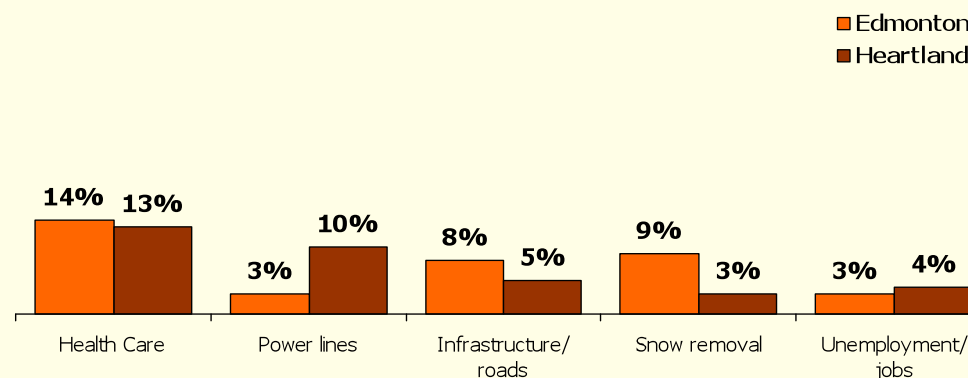
Infrastructure and roads, unemployment and education round out the top concerns in both regions.

Health care is of particular concern to 45 to 64 year olds (22% versus 10% of 18 to 24 year olds).

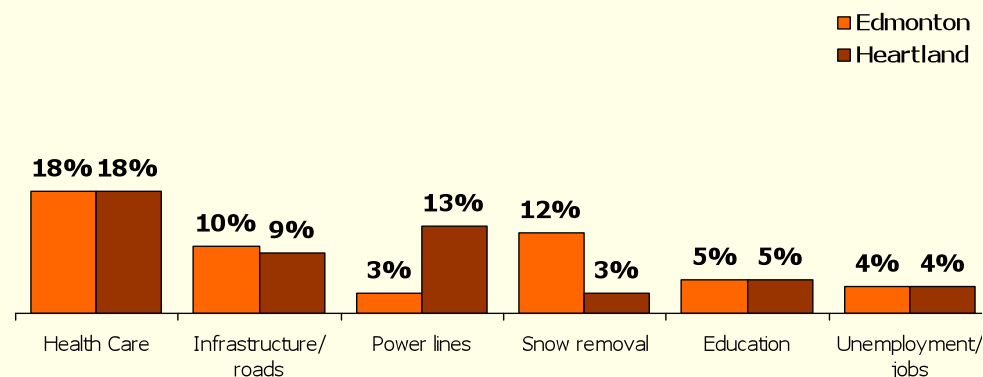
Power lines are of particular concern to Heartland residents who have heard of "Life in the Heartland" (20% versus 10%).

Education is of particular concern to women (7% versus 3% of men).

**Top-of-Mind**  
(selected responses over 3%)



**Total Mentions**  
(selected responses over 3%)



- 2a. Now, thinking specifically of where you live, what in your opinion is the single most important issue facing your region.
- 2b. What other important issues are facing your region right now? Anything else?

# Important Environmental Issues Facing Region

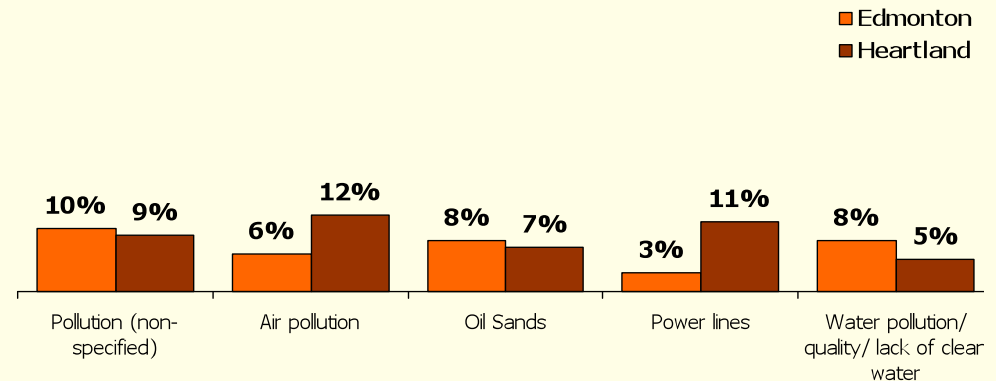
When asked to think specifically about environmental issues facing their community, no clear consensus emerges.

Looking at total mentions, residents of the Heartland region most frequently mention power lines (16%), air pollution (14%) and pollution in general (11%).

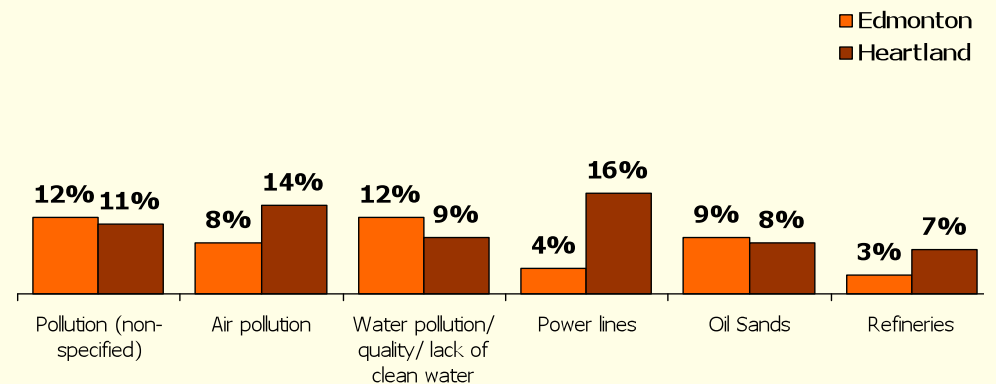
Residents of Edmonton most frequently mention water pollution (12%), pollution in general (12%), and the oil sands (9%).

Oil sands is of particular importance to those with a post-graduate education (20% versus 4% of those with a high school education or less).

**Top-of-Mind**



**Total Mentions**



- 3a. Thinking specifically about environmental issues, what would you say is the single most important issue facing your region?
- 3b. What other important environmental issues are facing your region right now? Anything else?



# Interest in and Concern for Local Environment

Residents of Edmonton and the Heartland region express similar views in terms of how closely they follow and how personally concerned they are about environmental issues in their local area.

Majorities in both regions say they “somewhat closely” follow environmental issues in their local area, and that, compared to one year ago, their level of concern is staying the same.

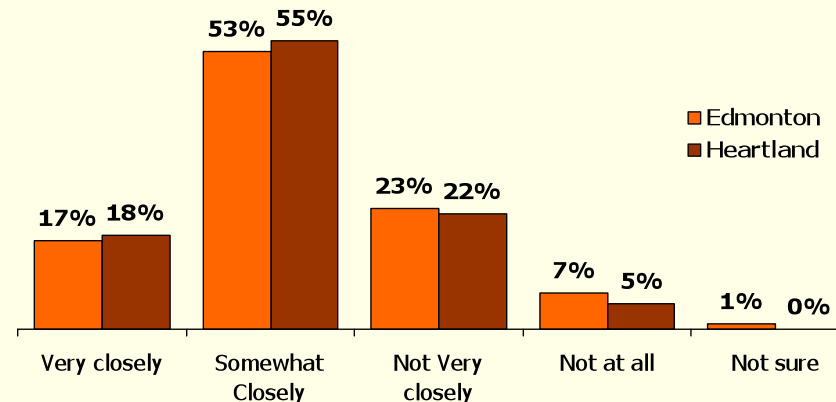
Those most likely to say they very or somewhat closely follow environmental issues include:

- Those who very closely follow local industrial development (88% versus 53% who say not very or not at all closely),
- Heartland residents who have heard of “Life in the Heartland: (88% versus 67% who have not),
- Seniors (86% versus 66% of 18 to 24 year olds), and
- The university educated (81% versus 66% of those with high school or less).

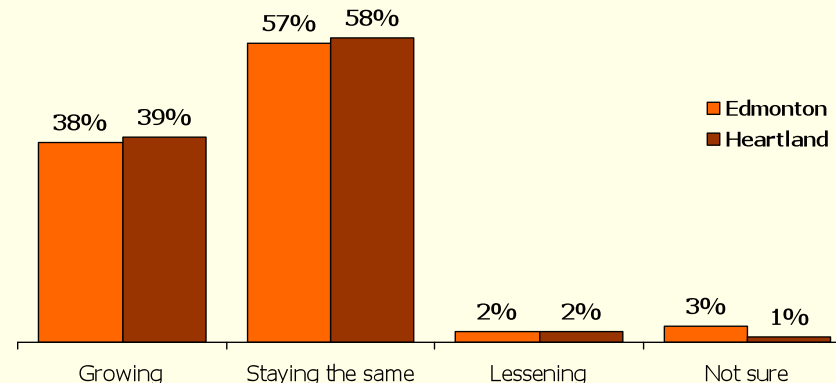
Those most likely to say their level of concern in staying the same include:

- Those who not very closely or not at all follow local environmental issues (67% versus 42% who say very closely), and
- Homeowners (59% versus 42% of renters).

**How closely do you follow environmental issues facing local area?**



**Personal Concern is ...**



4. How closely would you say you follow environmental issues facing your local area? Would you say you follow them ...

5. Compared to one year ago, would you say your personal concern for the environmental issues facing your local area are ...

# Sources of Information about Local Environmental Issues

Edmonton residents most frequently indicate that the television news (42%) is their most important source for information about environmental issues in their local community, followed by the newspaper (34%).

In the Heartland region, this is reversed, as the newspaper (42%) is most frequently mentioned, followed by television news (34%).

In both regions, approximately ten percent of the population says the internet is their most important source of information.

**Television news** is of particular importance to:

- Renters (53% versus 36% of homeowners),
- Those who not very closely or not at all follow local environmental issues in their local area (52% versus 48% who say very closely),
- Those with a high school education or less (50% versus 24% with a post-graduate education),
- Lower income earners (47% of those with an annual household income under \$60,000 versus 32% of those with an income over \$100,000), and
- Those who have not heard of “cumulative effects management” (40% versus 29% who have).

**Newspaper** is of particular importance to:

- Those with a university education (49% versus 29% of those with high school or less),
- 45 to 64 year olds (44% versus 26% of 18 to 24 year olds), and
- Those who very or somewhat closely follow local environmental issues (44% versus 23% who say not very closely or not at all).

The **internet** is of particular importance to:

- 18 to 24 year olds (27% versus 2% of seniors),
- Heartland residents who have heard of “Life in the Heartland” (18% versus 8%),
- Those with a university education (16% versus 6% of those with high school or less),
- Those who say their concern for local environmental issues is growing (15% versus 0% who say it is lessening), and
- Higher income earners (14% of those with an annual household income over \$100,000 versus 6% of those with an income under \$60,000).

<i>Selected Responses</i>		
	<b>Edmonton</b>	<b>Heartland</b>
Television news	<b>42%</b>	<b>34%</b>
Newspaper	<b>34%</b>	<b>42%</b>
The Internet	<b>10%</b>	<b>11%</b>
Radio	<b>5%</b>	<b>3%</b>
Family, friends and acquaintances	<b>4%</b>	<b>4%</b>
My employer	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Brochures/ printed information	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Other	<b>2%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Don't know	<b>2%</b>	<b>1%</b>

6. *Where does most of the information you get about environmental issues facing your local area come from?*

# Believability of Sources of Information

When presented with a list of people or organizations who may express views about environmental issues, residents of Edmonton and the Heartland region are most likely to indicate that they find scientists and academics to be most believable, followed by environmental groups and local news.

Those most likely to find **scientists and academics** to be very believable include:

- Those with a post-graduate education (76% versus 32% with high school or less),
- Those who have heard of “cumulative effects management” (48% versus 34% who have not),
- Those who very closely follow local environmental issues (47% versus 31% who say not very closely or not at all), and
- Higher income earners (46% of those with an annual household income over \$100,000 versus 29% of those with an annual income under \$60,000).

Those most likely to find **environment groups** to be very believable include:

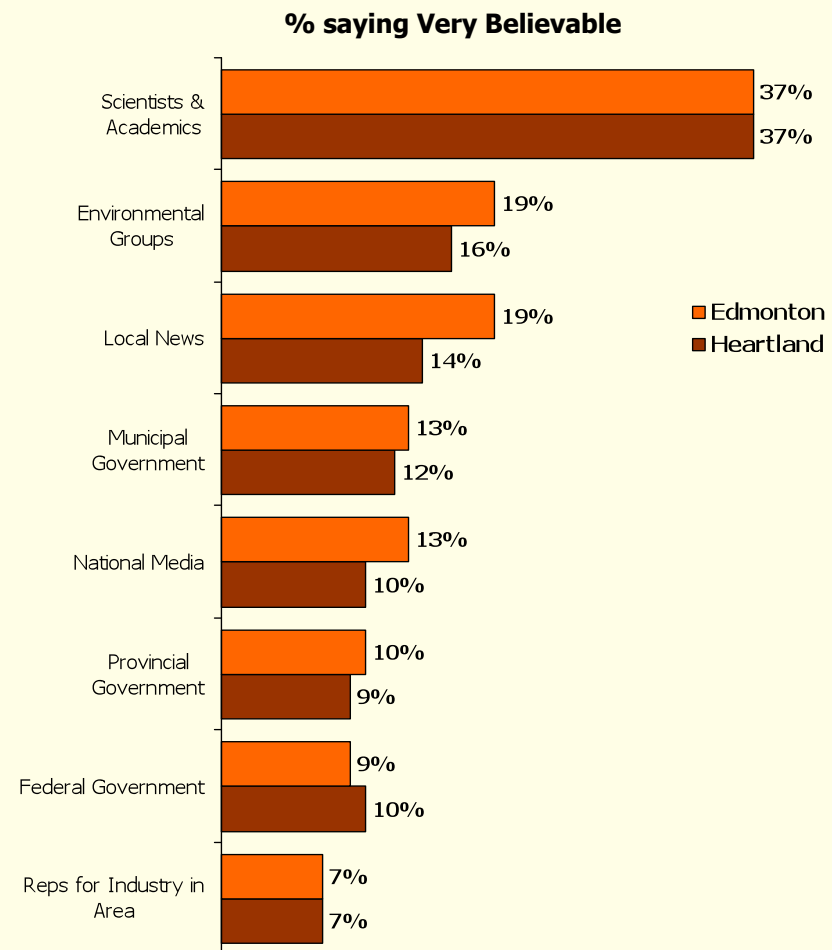
- Those who very closely follow local environmental issues (27% versus 11% who say not very closely or not at all), and
- Those who say their concern for local environmental issues is growing (25% versus 0% who say it is lessening).

Those most likely to find **local news** to be very believable include:

- Renters (29% versus 16% of home owners), and
- Those who very closely follow local environmental issues (29% versus 12% who say not very closely or not at all).

Those most likely to find their **municipal government** to be very believable include:

- Those who very closely follow local industrial development (17% versus 8% who say not very closely or not at all).



7. *I'm going to read you a list of people or organizations who may express opinions about environmental issues facing your local area. Please tell me whether you find each to be very, somewhat, not very or not at all believable when it comes to environmental issues facing your local area.*

# Believability of Sources of Information

(continued from previous pages)

Those most likely to find **national media** to be very believable include:

- Those who very closely follow local environmental issues (19% versus 11% who say not very closely or not at all).

Those most likely to find the **provincial government** to be very believable include:

- Those who very closely follow local industrial development (14% versus 6% who say not very closely or not at all).

Those most likely to find **industry** to be very believable include:

- Those who very closely follow local industrial development (13% versus 4% who say not very closely or not at all).

# Interest in Local Industrial Development

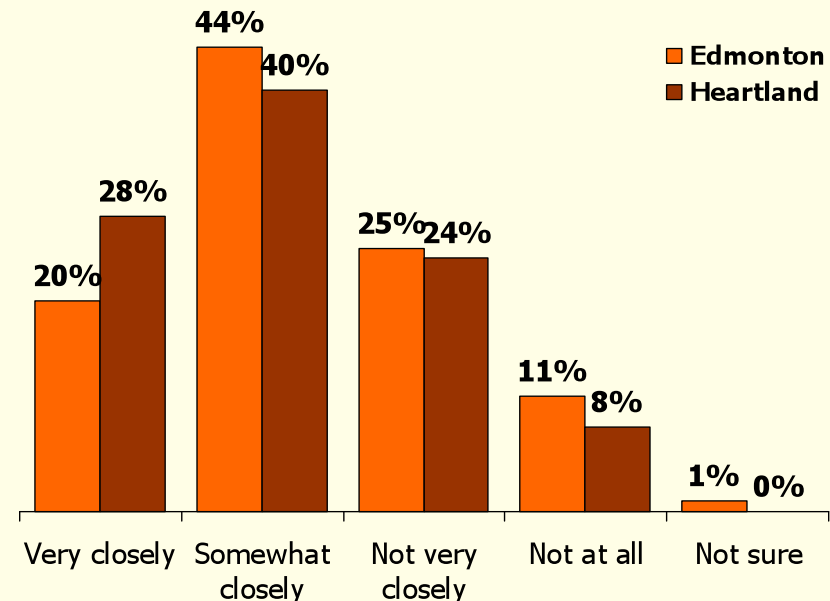
When asked how closely they follow industrial development in their local area, the most frequently given answer is “somewhat closely”.

Interestingly, residents of both Edmonton and the Heartland region are more likely to say they very closely follow local industrial development than follow local environmental issues (see page 8).

Those most likely to say they very or somewhat closely follow industrial development in their local area include:

- Those who very closely follow local environmental issues (87% versus 43% who say not very closely or not at all),
- Higher income earners (78% of those with an annual income over \$100,000 versus 58% of those with an annual income below \$60,000),
- Those with a post-graduate education (76% versus 51% of those with high school or less),
- Men (74% versus 58% of women), and
- Homeowners (69% versus 44% of renters).

How closely do you follow industrial development in local area?



8. Thinking specifically about industrial development, how closely would you say you follow the progress of industrial development in your local area? Would you say you follow it ...

# Sources of Information about Local Industrial Development

Residents of both Edmonton and the Heartland region most frequently mention the newspaper as their most important source of information about local industrial development, followed by television news.

The **newspaper** is of particular importance to:

- Seniors (53% versus 35% of 18 to 24 year olds), and
- Homeowners (44% versus 22% of renters).

**Television news** is of particular importance to:

- Lower income earners (37% of those with an annual household income under \$60,000 versus 21% with an annual income over \$100,000), and
- The less well educated (34% of those with high school or less versus 20% of those with a post-graduate education).

The **internet** is of particular importance to:

- 18 to 24 year olds (26% versus 0% of seniors), and
- High income earners (9% of those with an annual household income over \$100,000 versus 2% of those with an income under \$60,000).

<i>Selected Responses</i>		
	<b>Edmonton</b>	<b>Heartland</b>
Newspaper	<b>39%</b>	<b>45%</b>
Television news	<b>31%</b>	<b>28%</b>
Family, friends and acquaintances	<b>7%</b>	<b>10%</b>
The Internet	<b>7%</b>	<b>6%</b>
My employer	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>
Brochures/ printed information	<b>3%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Radio	<b>3%</b>	<b>1%</b>
Other	<b>3%</b>	<b>2%</b>
Don't know	<b>3%</b>	<b>2%</b>

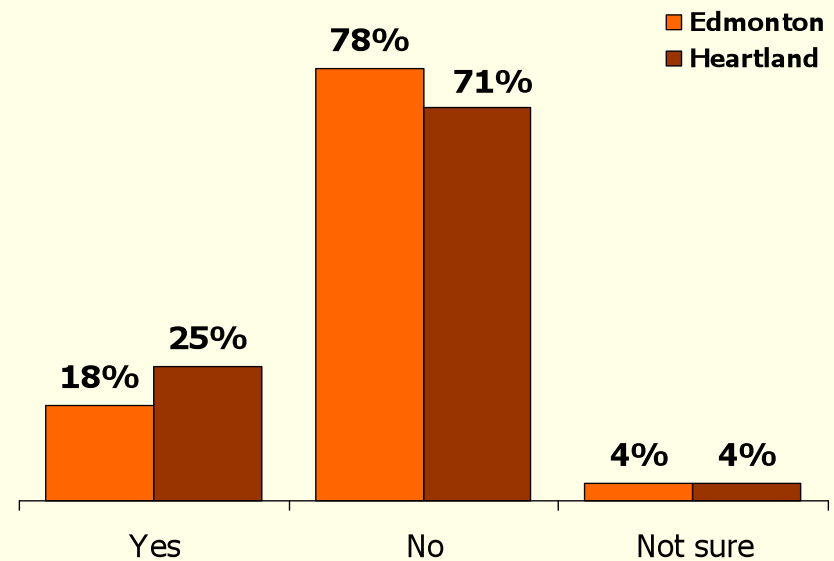
9. *Where does most of the information you get about industrial development in your local area come from?*

# Awareness of “Cumulative Effects Management”

The term “cumulative effects management” is familiar to 18 percent of Edmonton residents and 25 percent of Heartland region residents.

Those who are most likely to be familiar with the term include:

- Those with a post-graduate education (37% versus 10% of those with high school or less),
- Those who very closely follow local industrial development (36% versus 7% who say not very closely or not at all),
- Heartland residents who have heard of “Life in the Heartland” (35% versus 21% who have not),
- Those who very closely follow local environmental issues (34% versus 9% who say not very closely or not at all), and
- Higher income earners (29% of those with an annual household income over \$100,000 versus 15% of those with an income under \$60,000).



10. Have you ever heard the term “cumulative effects management” used in association with the environmental impact of industrial development?

# Satisfaction With "Cumulative Effects Management" Efforts

In order to ensure that all survey respondents had a common understanding of the term "cumulative effects management", a short definition was read to them (see below).

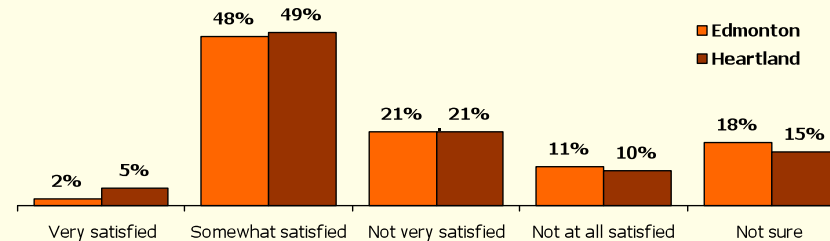
After hearing this definition, respondents were then asked to rate how satisfied they are with the "cumulative effects management" efforts of the provincial government, their municipal government and local industry.

Only a small number indicate that they are very satisfied with the efforts of each. And, in each case, most are somewhat satisfied.

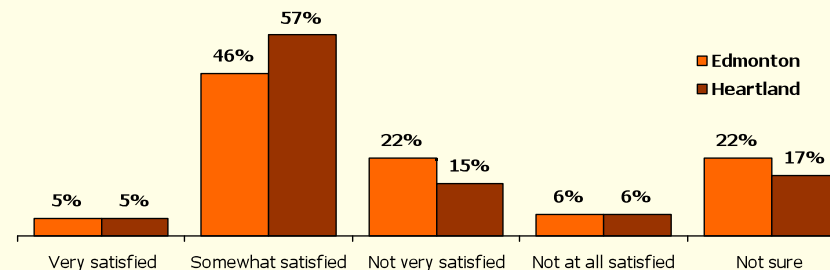
Of note is the fact that residents of the Heartland region are more likely to be very or somewhat satisfied with the efforts of their **municipal government** in this regard than residents of Edmonton (62% versus 51%).

Those who closely follow local industrial development are more likely to be very satisfied with the efforts of both the **provincial government** (62% versus 47%) and **local industry** (61% versus 45%) than those who say they do not very closely or not at all follow local industrial development.

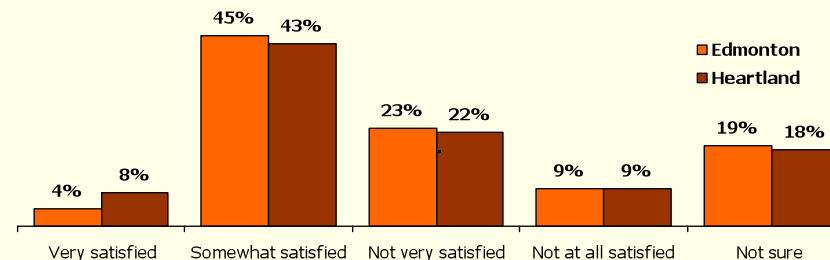
**Provincial Government**



**Municipal Government**



**Local Industry**



- In fact, cumulative effects management is a system or process that looks at the total impact of development including air, water and land, in an area over time. Based on what you have read or heard, please tell me whether you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the "cumulative effects management efforts" of ...



# Concern for Various Heartland Issues

At the end of the survey, a series of questions were asked to Heartland residents only. The first of these questions was designed to assess local concern about various issues.

Of nine issues presented, a majority of Heartland residents indicate they are very or somewhat concerned about all of them. However, air quality, water quality and land use planning emerge as the greatest concerns.

Those most likely to be very or somewhat concerned about **air quality** include:

- Those who say their concern for local environmental issues is growing (95% versus 43% whose concern is lessening),
- Those who have heard of “cumulative effects management” (93% versus 82% who have not), and
- Heartland residents who have heard of “Life in the Heartland” (92% versus 82% of those who have not).

Those most likely to be very or somewhat concerned about **water quality** include:

- Those who say their concern for local environmental issues is growing (91% versus 43%),
- Those who have heard of “cumulative effects management” (90% versus 76% who have not), and
- 18 to 24 year olds (86% versus 63% of seniors).

Those most likely to be very or somewhat concerned about **land use planning** include:

- Those who very closely follow local environmental issues (86% versus 64% who say not very closely or not at all).

	Very Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Not very Concerned	Not at all Concerned	Not Sure
Air quality	53%	32%	8%	6%	1%
Water quality	51%	29%	11%	7%	2%
Land use planning	40%	36%	13%	7%	3%
Public safety & emergency response	38%	31%	22%	7%	1%
Roads & transportation (traffic)	38%	39%	15%	7%	1%
Industrial Development	31%	42%	17%	9%	1%
Resident relocation out of industrially zoned areas	28%	33%	17%	12%	10%
Light pollution	26%	30%	21%	21%	2%
Noise levels	24%	28%	23%	23%	2%

12. Please tell me whether you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned or not at all concerned about the following issues affecting your area.

# Concern for Various Heartland Issues

(continued from previous pages)

Those most likely to be very or somewhat concerned about **public safety and emergency response** include:

- Those who say their concern for local environmental issues is growing (82% versus 29% who say they are lessening).

Those most likely to be very or somewhat concerned about **roads and transportation** include:

- Those who say their concern for local environmental issues is growing (90% versus 43% who say they are lessening).

Those most likely to be very or somewhat concerned about **industrial development** include:

- Those who say their concern for local environmental issues is growing (91% versus 57% who say they are lessening),
- Those who very closely follow local environmental issues (87% versus 52% who say not very closely or not at all),
- Women (79% versus 66% of men),
- Those who very or somewhat closely follow local industrial development (78% versus 63% who say not very closely or not at all).

Those most likely to be very or somewhat concerned about **residential relocation** include:

- Those who say their concern for local environmental issues is growing (85% versus 43% who say they are lessening).

Those most likely to be very or somewhat concerned about **light pollution** include:

- Those who say their concern for local environmental issues is growing (76% versus 43% who say they are lessening), and
- 25 to 44 year olds (68% versus 33% of seniors).

Those most likely to be very or somewhat concerned about **noise pollution** include:

- Those who say their concern for local environmental issues is growing (71% versus 14% who say they are lessening).

# Awareness of "Life in the Heartland"

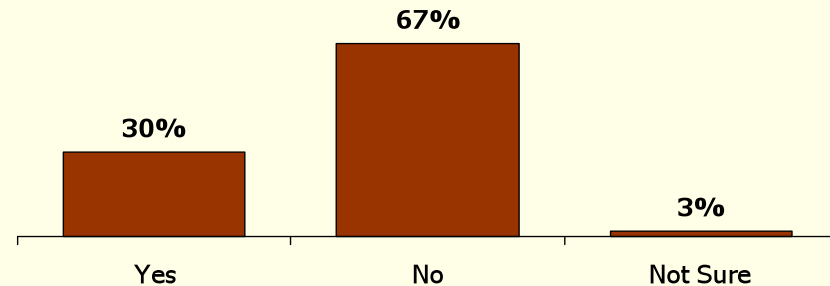
When asked if they had heard of the "Life in the Heartland" initiative, three in ten (30%) of Heartland residents said they had.

Awareness of "Life in the Heartland" is particularly high among:

- Those who very closely follow local environmental issues (53% versus 14% saying not very closely or not at all).
- Those who follow local industrial development very closely (45% versus 23% saying not very closely or not at all).
- Those who have heard of "cumulative effects management" (41% versus 26% who have not).

Among those aware of "Life in the Heartland", newspaper is the most common place that residents believe they have heard of it, followed by brochures and television news.

Heard of "Life in the Heartland"



Where did you hear about "Life in the Heartland"

Selected Responses (n=89)	
Newspaper	42%
Brochures/ printed information	15%
Television news	14%
Family, friends and acquaintances	8%
Community events	5%
The Internet	3%
Radio	2%
My employer	2%
Other	3%
Don't know	7%

13. Have you heard of an initiative called "Life in the Heartland"?
14. **IF YES ...** Where did you hear about "Life in the Heartland"?

## Perceived Role of “Life in the Heartland”

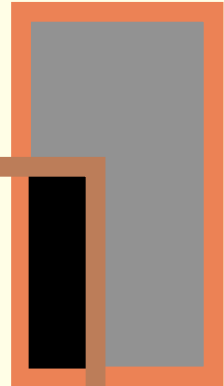
When asked to describe the role of “Life in the Heartland”, more than six in ten (63%) say they don’t know.

Among those who do offer a response, the most common ones are that “Life in the Heartland” is trying to improve the area (12%) or monitor the quality of life in the area (8%).

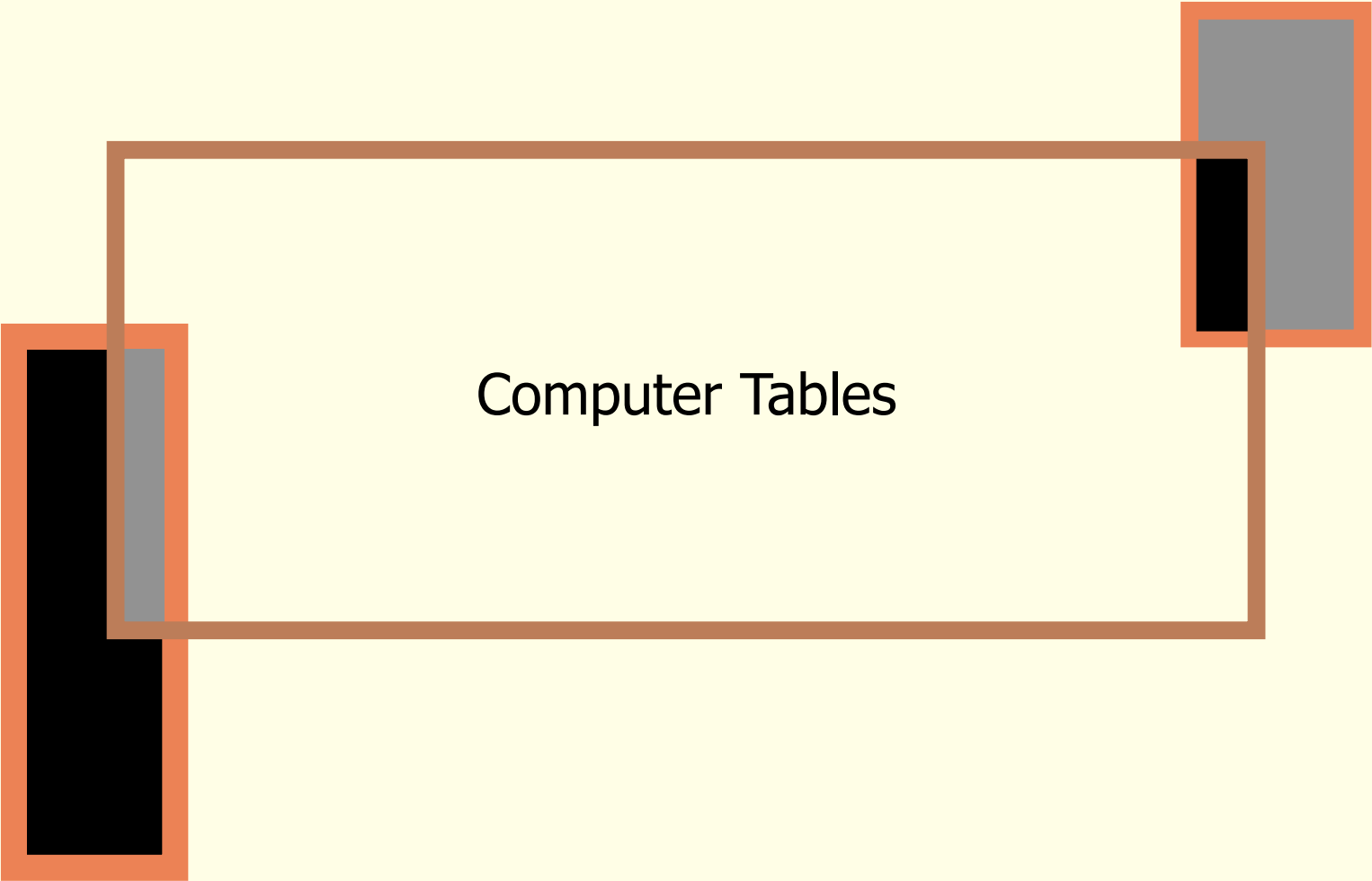
<i>Selected Responses</i>	
Improving the area	<b>12%</b>
Monitoring the quality of life in the area	<b>8%</b>
Other	<b>17%</b>
Don’t know	<b>63%</b>

15. To the best of your knowledge, what is the role of “Life in the Heartland?”

Questionnaire



Computer Tables





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