



The Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri thanks the many volunteers working through the Maximize NWMO Communications CollaborACTION Team, the MU Extension Exceed Team of Dr. Mallory L. Rahe, Dr. Sarah A. Low, and Ms. Jamee Searce, Communities of Excellence 2026 Coach Dr. Sandra Potthoff, Christel Gollnick of JUPER Communications, LLC. This Pubic Private Partnership project was made possible through the financial support of the Missouri Department of Economic Development, United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development, and several private donors. ©2021, The Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri. All rights reserved.



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POPULATION PARALLELS ARE URGENT



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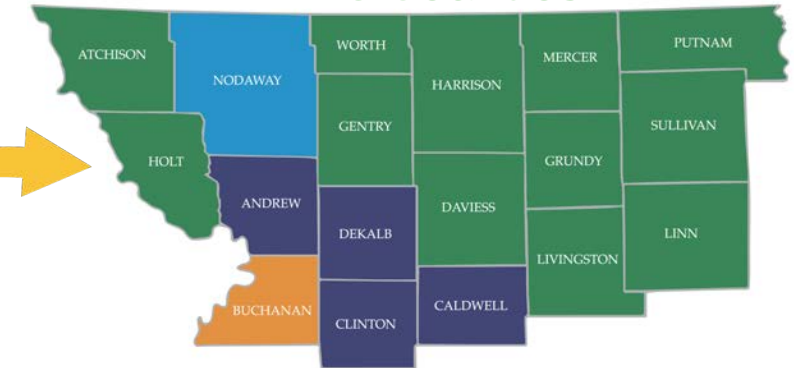
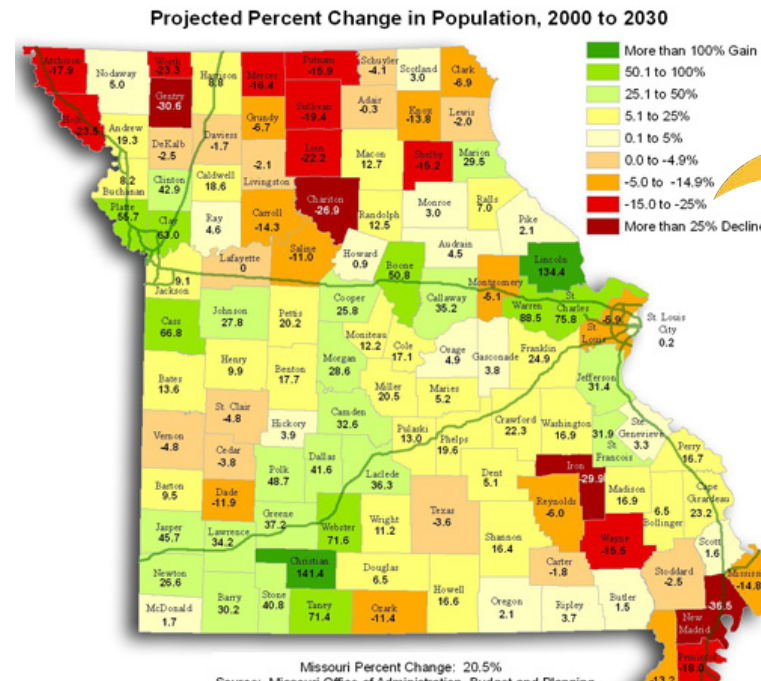
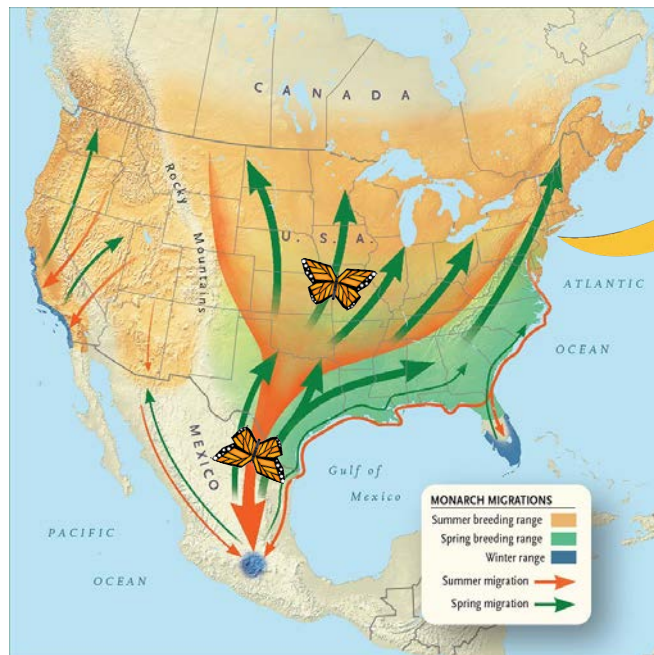
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The prosperity and vitality of America, the Midwest, and Northwest Missouri is at stake as many rural regions continue to experience population loss.

The monarch butterflies inspiring the Maximize NWMO regional vitality initiative that migrate through the region are experiencing similar population decline.

Our big opportunity is to turn this story around and ensure that we keep and attract needed talent within the region!

Northwest Missouri's
18 Counties



URBAN, Metro County

Has a densely-settled urban entity with 50K+ people

RURAL, Metro County

All urban clusters are less than 10K and tied to urban core with 25%+ workers commuting to or from

RURAL, Non-metro Micropolitan County

Has an urban cluster of 10K-49,999K people

RURAL, Non-metro, Noncore County

All urban clusters are less than 10K and urban core commuters at less than 25%

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Census Bureau with definitions based on the Office of Management and Budget

ANSWERING WHY POPULATION SHIFTS



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2020 ALUMNI & RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

- Open from July 14-September 30, 2020
- Open to residents and former residents of the **18-county region**
- Counties with the most respondents were Linn, Buchanan, Gentry, and Livingston

GOAL

To better understand how to retain and attract talent to our region.

ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. Why do people who grew up in this region stay?
2. How can we attract people who grew up here, but left, to move back?
3. How can we attract new residents to our region?

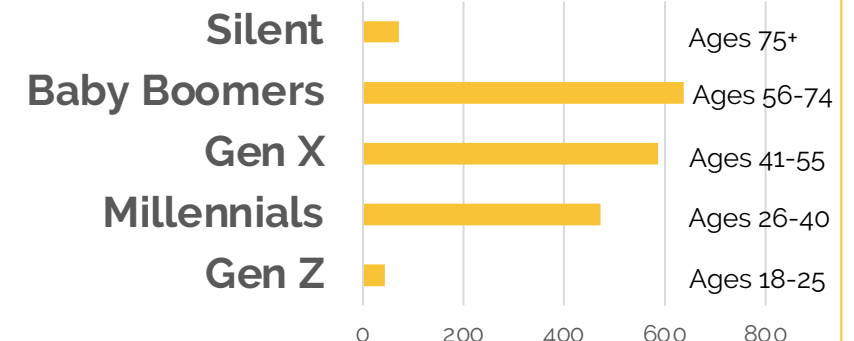
PARTNERS

- Maximize NWMO's Volunteer Communications CollaborACTION Team
- Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri
- University of Missouri Extension Exceed

PARTICIPANTS

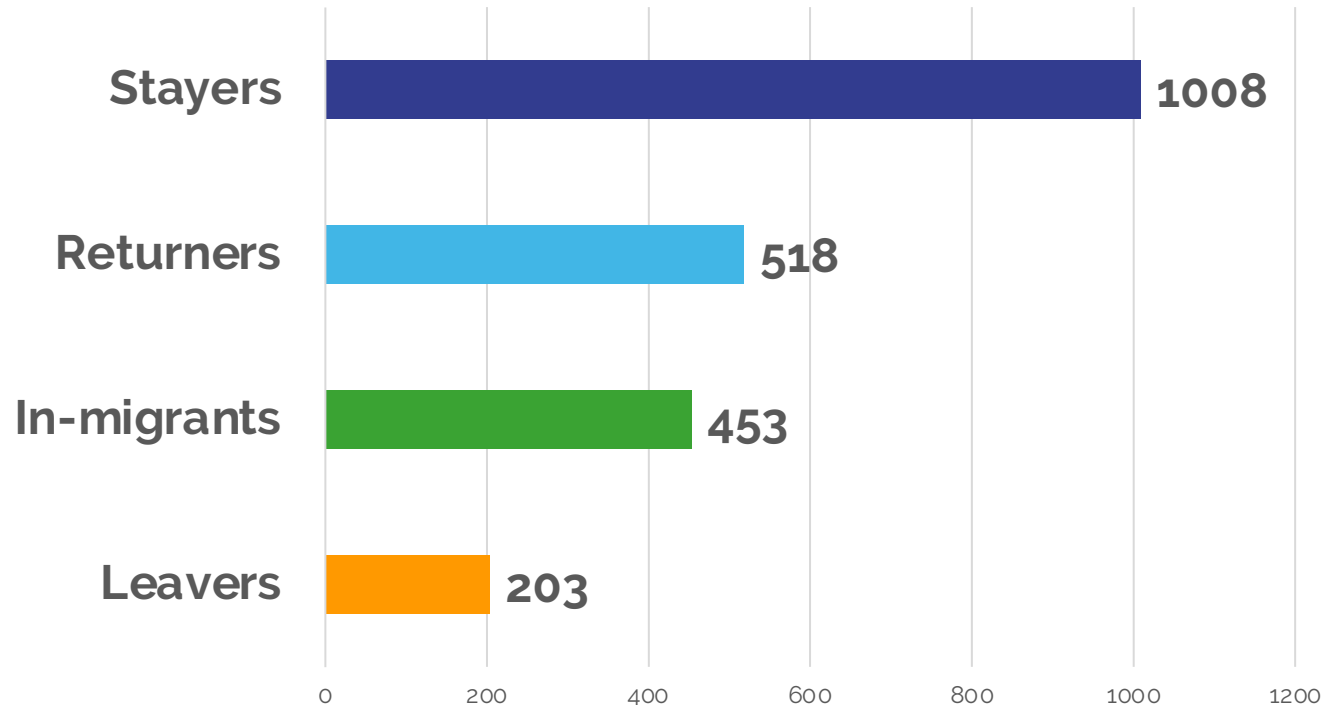
2,504 people participated

- **2,182** people responded with migration info and are reflected in this summary
- **75% were females** (Consistent with most public surveys)
- **4% live in another state**





The survey answers were split into 4 groups for analysis:



46% Grew up in NWMO and have always lived here

24% Grew up in NWMO, moved away, and moved back

21% Did not grow up in NWMO, but live here now

9% Grew up in NWMO, but have left



% in Each Group Who Chose That Reason

(Respondents could choose more than one reason)

REASON	Stayers	Returners		In-Migrants	Leavers
	Why Stay	Why Left	Why Return	Why Came	Why Left
To be near family and friends	87%	6%	81%	30%	10%
Want my kids to grow up like I did (If stay/return/come)					
Provide certain quality of life for my children (If leave)	47%	5%	33%	8%	13%
Engagement in my community	27%	1%	14%	6%	0%
Support my spouse	24%	19%	13%	40%	24%
Always knew I wanted to stay/leave/come back	23%	11%	20%	2%	15%
Support a family business	16%	1%	8%	6%	1%
Wage and salary job opportunities	15%	57%	20%	28%	69%
Faith-based opportunities	9%	0%	2%	7%	2%
Educational opportunities	9%	38%	4%	9%	37%
Entrepreneurship or business ownership opportunities	8%	3%	5%	9%	5%
Climate and geography	6%	5%	3%	7%	5%
Diversity and inclusiveness of many perspectives/people	1%	9%	1%	1%	20%
Other	3%	11%	7%	15%	10%

What reasons were given for their decision to stay, leave & return, move to, or leave and not return?



MAJOR REASONS

STAYING, RETURNING, or MOVING HERE:

- #1** To be near family and friends.
+
- #2** Want kids to grow up in an environment like they did
- #3** Engage in community
- #4** Support spouse

People are here, or not here, for love, acceptance, and opportunities to live their definition of a quality life.

LEAVING:

- #1** Wage and job opportunities
- #2** Educational opportunities
- #3** Support spouse
- #4** Diversity and inclusiveness of many perspectives/people

} 1 in 5 people
who left

So what for NWMO?

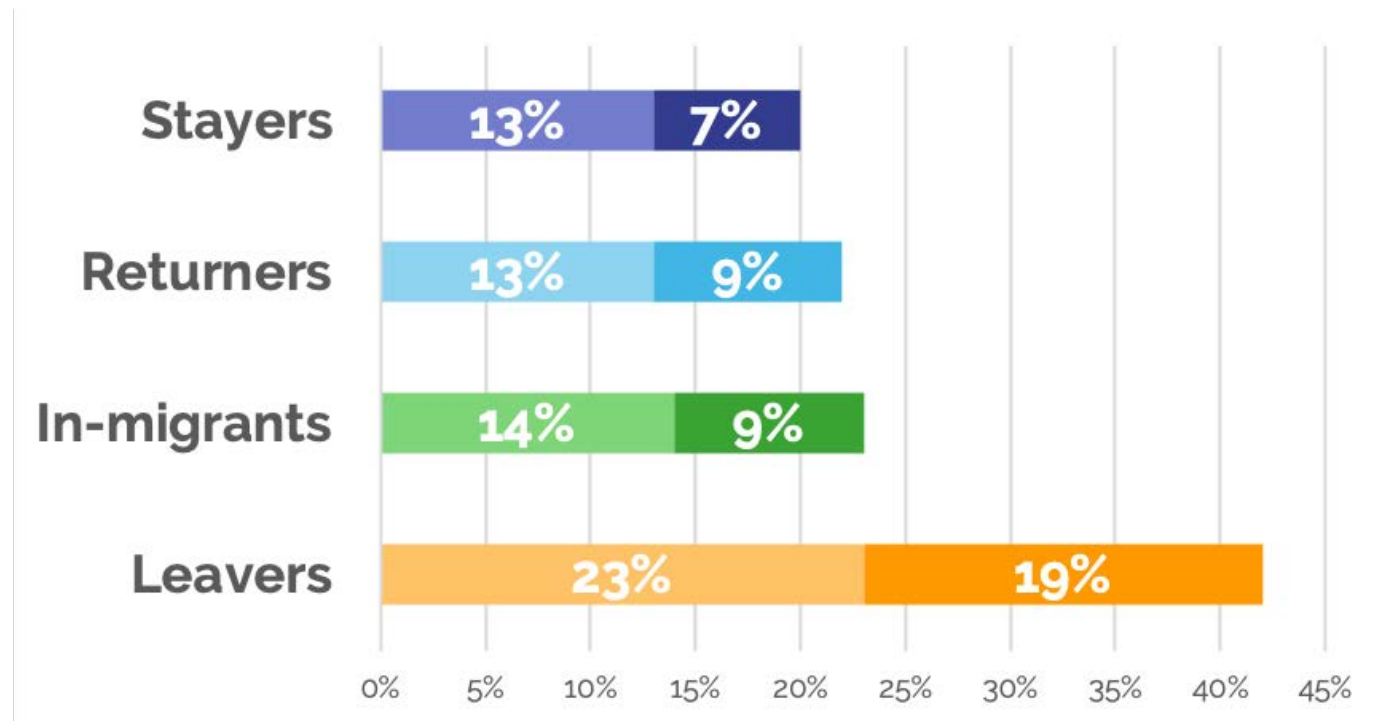
- Promoting opportunities to engage in the community are key to support people's decisions to live in NWMO among their family and friends.
- Creating jobs and growing educational opportunities are key drivers to retain population in the NWMO Region.



**How likely did
survey respondents
say they are to
move in the next
5 years?**

**What factors are
important to them?**

**% Saying How Likely They Are
to Move in the Next 5 Years**



LIGHTER Color – Somewhat likely
DARKER Color – Extremely likely

MANY VERY IMPORTANT DECISION FACTORS



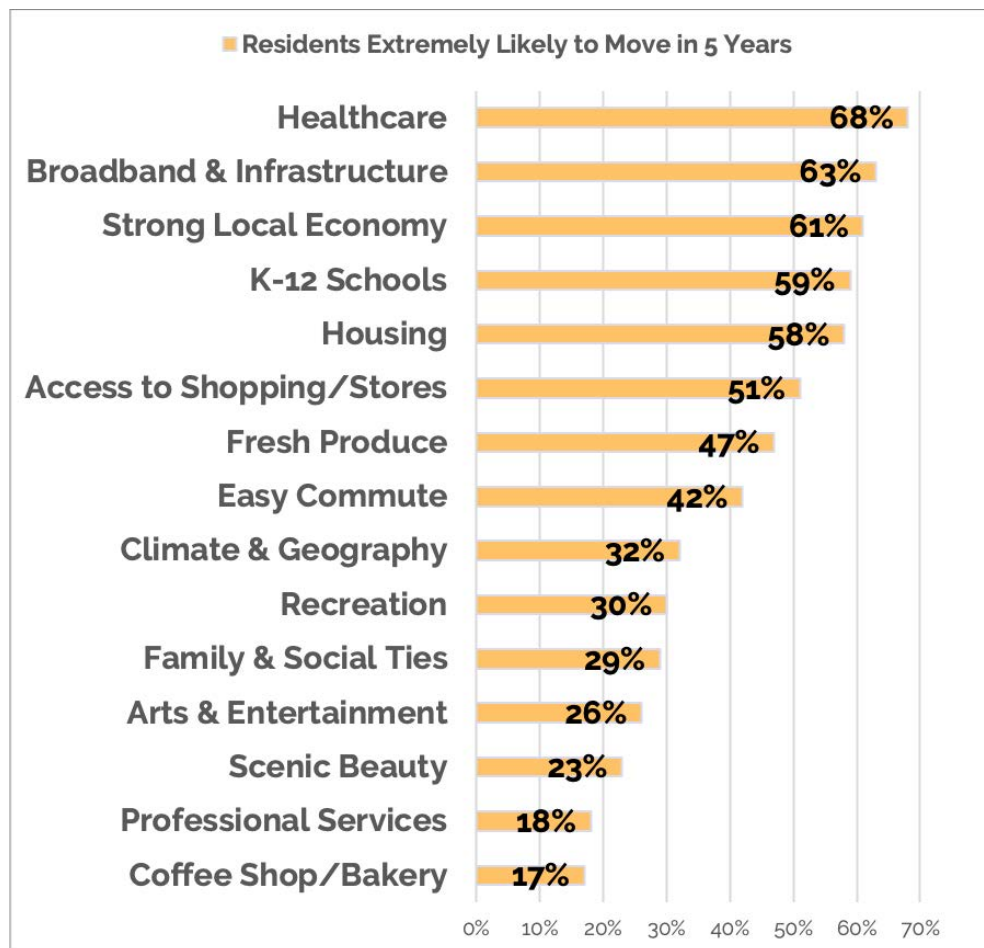
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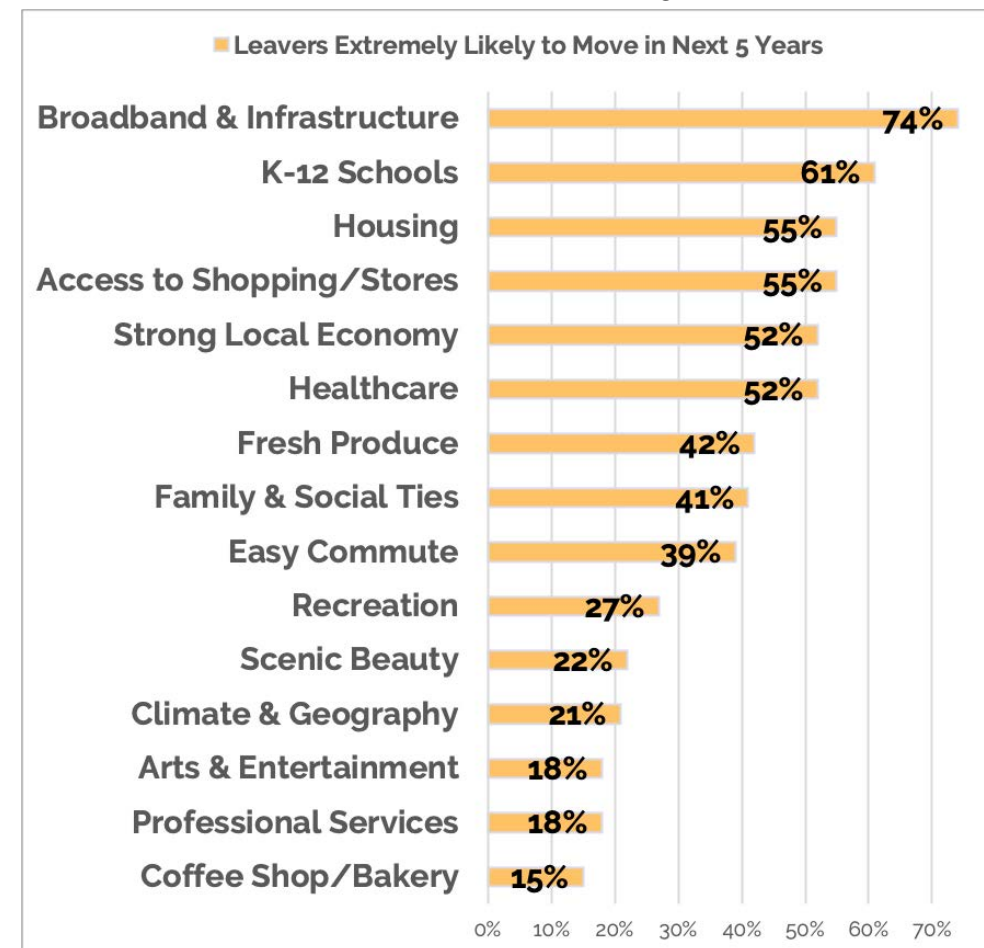
RESIDENTS

Where to Live in Next 5 Years



NON-RESIDENTS

Where to Live in Next 5 Years



What people want in the place they live.

7 MOST IMPORTANT DECISION FACTORS



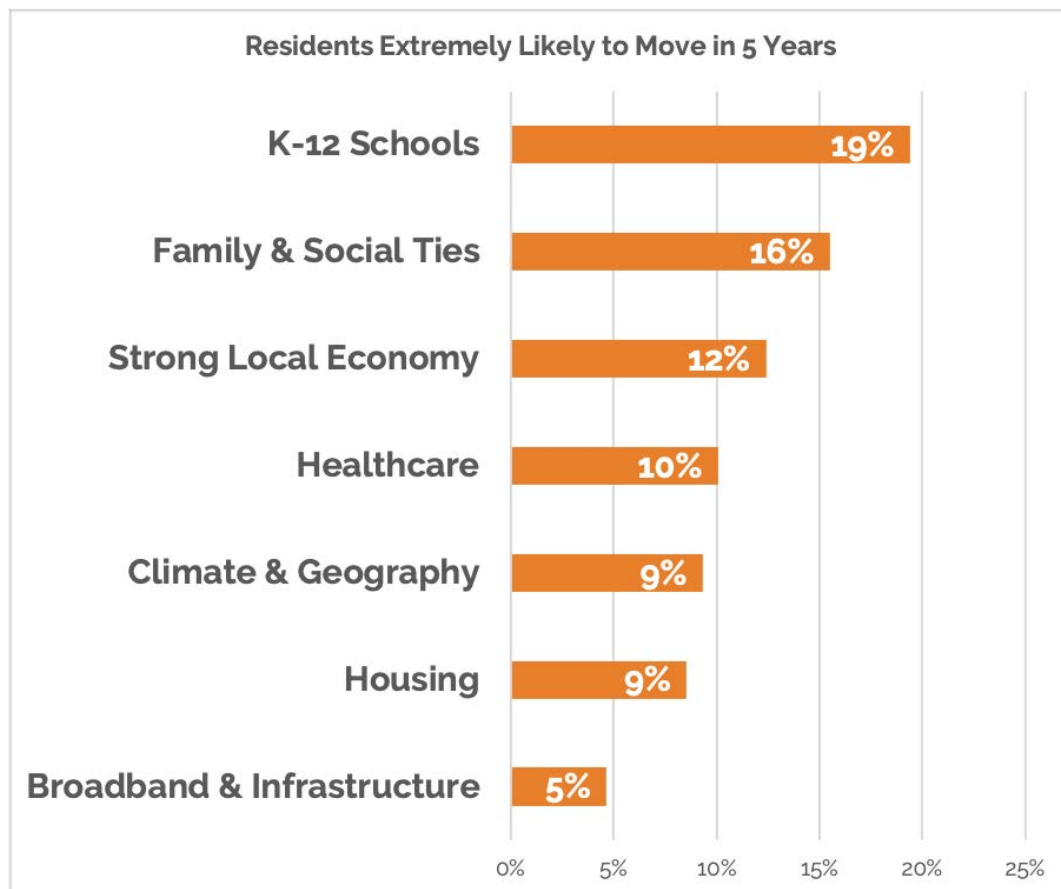
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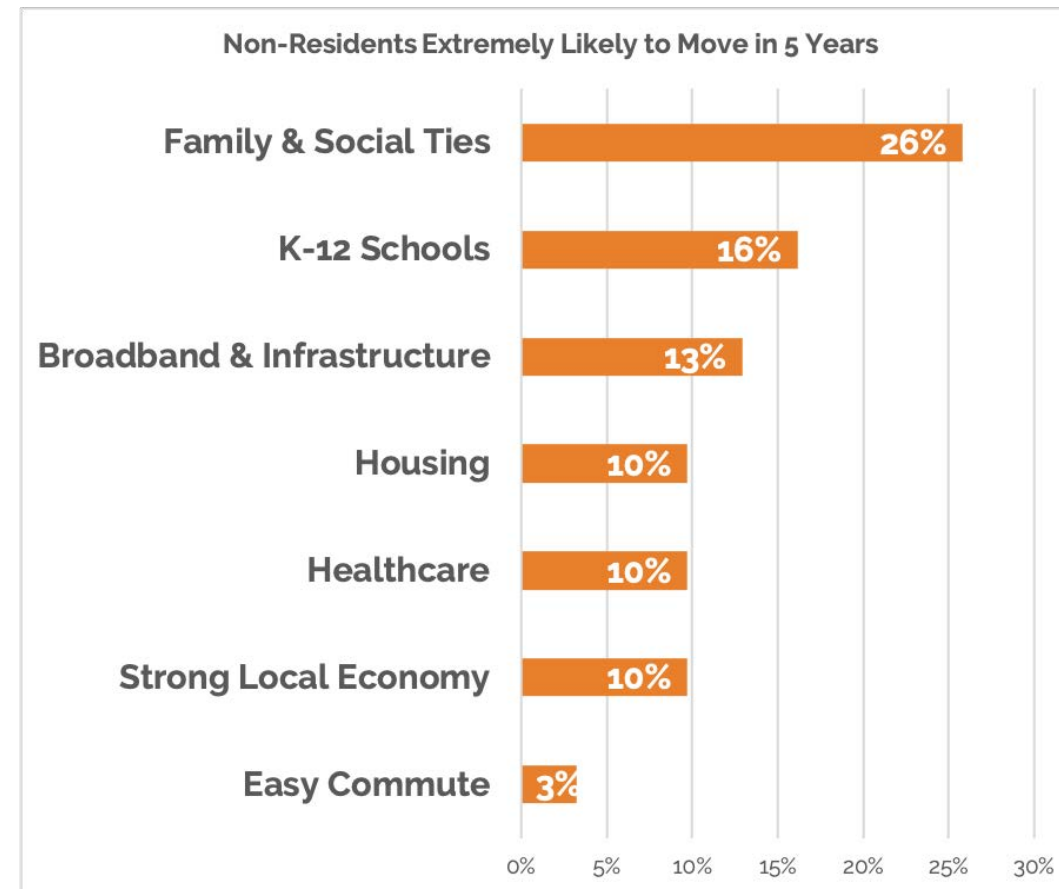
RESIDENTS

Where to Live in Next 5 Years



NON-RESIDENTS

Where to Live in Next 5 Years



What people most want in the place they live.



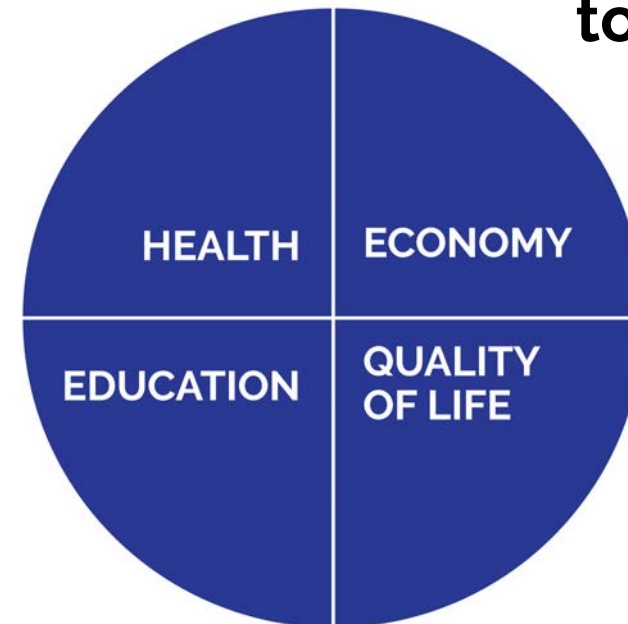
Factors that drive decisions to move, beyond “Strong Ties with Family and Friends,” are things we can do something about if we dream big and grow together!

- Quality of K-12 Schools
- Healthcare
- Strong Economy
- Broadband/High Speed Internet
- Amenities: Fresh Produce, Bakeries & Coffee Shops, Professional Services, Arts, Entertainment & Recreation

The actionable factors are aligned with the four broad core areas of communities and the region.

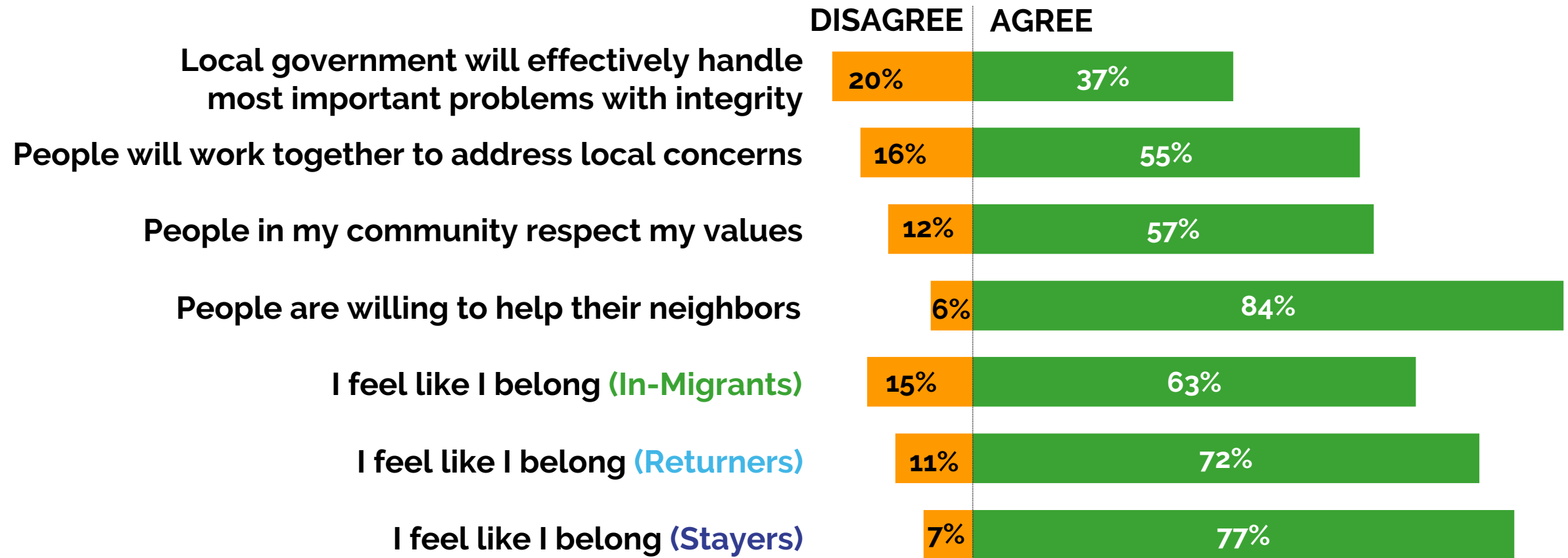
SO WHAT FOR NWMO?

We need all of these areas to recognize they are interconnected and work together as a system to retain and attract population to keep the NWMO Region vibrant and thriving.





How can the region be strengthened?



*Not sure was the other possible response



Concerns

1st

**Declining economy
& population**

(43% - Nearly 1/2)

2nd

**Future leadership &
youth development**

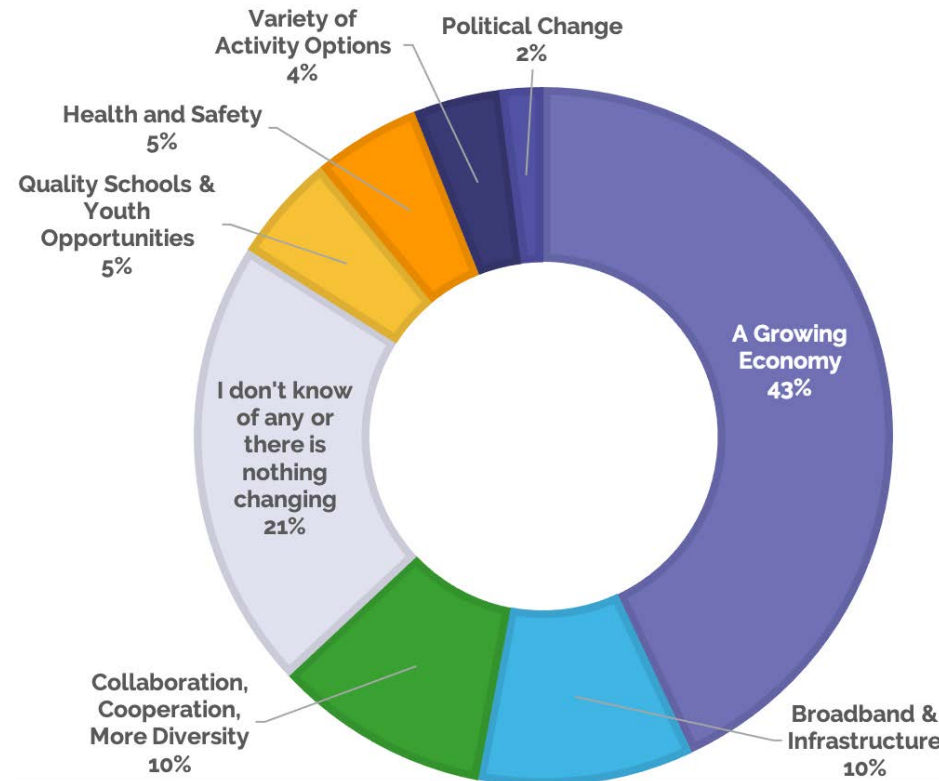
(26% - 1 in 4)

3rd

Health & safety

(18% - 1 in 5)

Hopes and Excitements



1st

Growing economy

(43% - Nearly 1/2)

2nd

**Broadband &
Infrastructure
Improvements**

(10% - 1 in 10)

3rd

**More
Collaboration,
Cooperation, &
Diversity**

(10% - 1 in 10)



What excites you about the future of NWMO?

Growing Economy

- Young adults considering business opportunities and entrepreneurial opportunities in rural areas
- **Downtown revitalization**
- Local employment opportunities, local recreational options, local lodging (cabins and B&B, local community center
- **The growth potential – more families, more businesses, more pride in each city**
- More accepting to new businesses and more activities for parents and children to partake in

More Collaboration, Cooperation, & Diversity

- I think the younger generations are stepping up and we may see more progressive communities
- **New leadership means new opportunities for our town**
- Attracting new people with new ideas to our communities
- **Seeing communities around the area start to show they care about their appearance and friendlier attitudes towards more people. It seems like some communities are starting to understand that the same people can't run things the same way forever or they'll just keep pushing new residents and younger people away.**
- Residents embracing togetherness

Broadband & Infrastructure Improvements

- Increasing ability to telecommute might allow us to keep talented individuals in the community
- **Maintain & upgrade roads and bridges in Northwest Missouri**
- The additional sidewalks are nice and the new shops and restaurants are great too.



Efforts that residents said they would support in their communities:

- #1 Support new businesses**
- #2 Build stronger youth organizations**
- #3 Include a wider range of people & perspectives in local decision-making**
- #4 Build/maintain recreational gathering places**
- #5 Support regional events**
- #6 Champion efforts of people trying new things**
- #7 Involve new residents in groups and communities**



2020
**ALUMNI
& RESIDENT
SURVEY**
 **RESULTS**
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NWMO

**How can NWMO keep
and attract talent to
feed the innovation
and entrepreneurship
needed to build a more
thriving region?**



Foster a greater sense of belonging.

The relationships we have with each other
– at school, work, home, and community organizations –
drive the decision about where we live.

- Be proactive and collaborative
- Help people make strong and trusted connections here beyond welcoming by sharing traditions, opportunities to get involved, and incorporating their new ideas
- Be an attractive place that provides quality essential services and key amenities
- Create jobs by supporting new business entrepreneurs
- Increase leadership development opportunities
- Invest in our youth's education and social connections with people and our place
- Promote what is going on and what is here to enjoy



Focus on...

- 1) Leadership development and community engagement for all ages
- 2) Promote and support entrepreneurship and innovation
- 3) Attract people who are open to returning to NWMO in the next few years
 - After college and a few years of work experience
Bring new ideas & energy
 - Near retirement age
Bring accumulated wisdom and wealth creating demand for services and amenities that create jobs, and they contribute valuable time, talent, and treasure.

**48% of Americans
said they prefer to
live in a small town
or rural area**

as opposed to a city or
suburb in December 2020,
up from 29% in 2018.
- Gallup poll

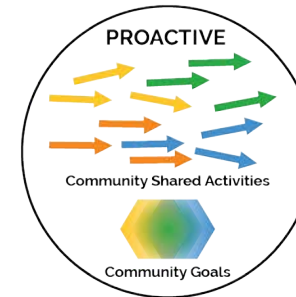
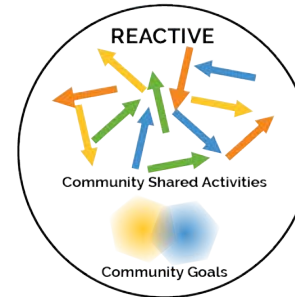


WHAT'S NEXT FOR NWMO?

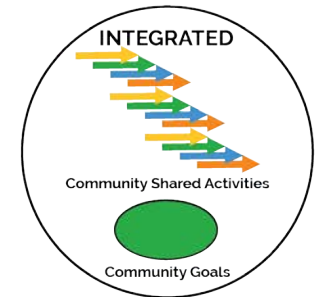
COMMUNITY CORE ELEMENTS & PARTICIPANTS



Many Voices



One Vision



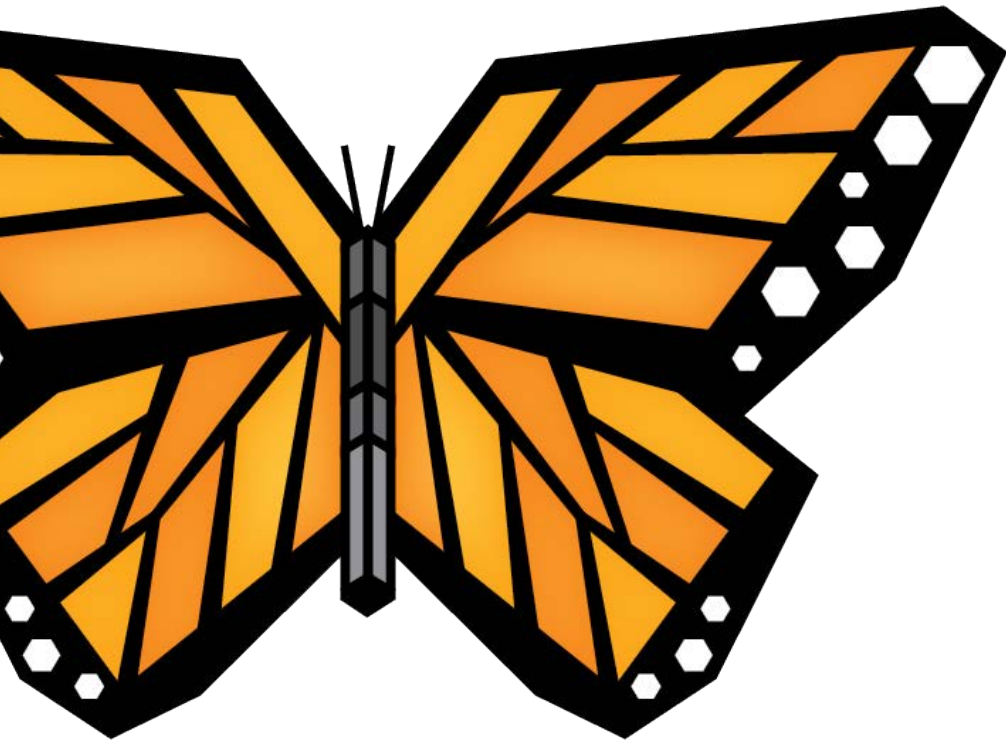
Local and regional communities respecting individual interests while working together on shared needs.

In addition to the survey, we know from experience that this region has a lot going for it thanks to many leaders taking successful steps toward working together over the last two decades. Now, there is support for traveling even farther and involving more regional residents and leaders to dream big and grow together.

The Maximize NWMO regional vitality initiative is offering community development coordination and coaching support within our 18 counties.



Help revitalize the region's population!



Visit www.maximizenwmo.org to learn more and register to receive updates and invitations to online forums, polls, surveys and in-person events and projects!

Send an email to together@maximizenwmo.org with your questions and request a call-back from a Navigation Team member.

Follow the @MaximizeNWMO Facebook page for updates.