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# 2011 Results of Community Needs Survey Southern Clark County (Cal-Nev-Ari, Laughlin, Searchlight)

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## **ABSTRACT:**

This report summarizes the results of a community survey conducted in southern Clark County. University of Nevada Cooperative Extension (UNCE) conducted a community needs assessment in the form of a survey in early 2011. A needs assessment is accomplished by “Gathering information to help isolate key program topics and is a critical step in developing meaningful programs with measurable impacts” (Singletary, Powell, 2003). The purpose of this report was to provide a summary of the issues and concerns that were important to the citizens in southern Clark County. UNCE uses the information to design and implement programs that are important to people in the communities. University of Nevada Cooperative Extension’s mission is “to discover, develop, disseminate, preserve and use knowledge to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of people.” In 2010, UNCE opened an Extension office in Laughlin to more directly and personally serve citizens in southern Clark County. The results of this survey revealed issues that were important to citizens. In general terms, health, water, community development and senior citizen issues were the most important concerns.

## **Introduction:**

The southern Clark County region of Nevada encompasses the communities of Cal-Nev-Ari, Laughlin, Palm Gardens and Searchlight. The southern Clark County region is at the southernmost region of Nevada and borders the states of Arizona and California. The environment in this southern area of

Nevada brings 300 days of sunshine per a year. On average, the town of Laughlin has an average high temperature of 109°F in the summer and an average high of 65°F during the winter. Searchlight and Cal-Nev-Ari share an average high temperature in the summer of 97°F and 53°F during the winter (The Weather Channel, 2011).

According to the 2010 demographic profile from the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of Laughlin was 7,323 with a median age of 55.2. Searchlight had a population of 539 with a median age of 58.3. Cal-Nev-Ari, which includes Palm Gardens, had a population of 244 with a median age of 63.9 (US Census Bureau, 2010).

During that time, southern Clark County’s economy was dependent on tourism and had a significantly large retirement community. Casinos located along the Colorado River were and still are the primary employer in this region, employing people from southern Clark County and bordering states.

## **Assessment Process**

A community needs survey was sent to all 5,776 deliverable addresses within southern Clark County. Surveys were also available at the Clark County Library-Laughlin, Clark County Government Center-Laughlin, Spirit Mountain Activity Center-Laughlin and Searchlight Community Center.

The survey consisted of 67 questions in four subject areas. Respondents answered questions using the Likert scale. The Likert scale is commonly used in research that employs a questionnaire, uses a fixed choice response format, and is designed to

measure attitudes or opinions. In this survey, the five-point Likert scale measured levels of concern for each question: “1= not a concern” to “5= major concern” as well as demographic questions and written comments. Returned surveys represented 616 households and 1,609 people equaling 20 percent of the population in southern Clark County. Information and data was compiled and analyzed by UNCE Extension Educator Debbie Marcusson using the SPSS statistic data program.

## Results and Conclusions:

### Demographics of Respondents located in Southern Clark County

As indicated in Figure 1, 85 percent of respondents were located in Laughlin, which correlates to the population distribution of the towns located in southern Clark County.

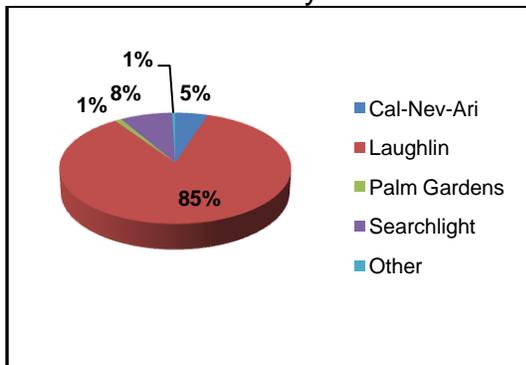


Figure 1. Respondents by Community

Sixty percent of respondents were 60 years of age or older (Figure 2). Representation of gender indicated 52 percent female and 48 percent male. Sixty-three percent of respondents own a home or condo/townhouse. Eighty-eight percent indicated year-round residency. Fifty-seven percent of respondents were married and 52 percent were retired (Figure 3). Ethnicity of respondents was 86 percent

white/Caucasian, 4 percent Hispanic/Latino, 3 percent mixed, 3 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 2 percent Black/African American, 1 percent Native American Indian/Alaskan Native and 1 percent other.

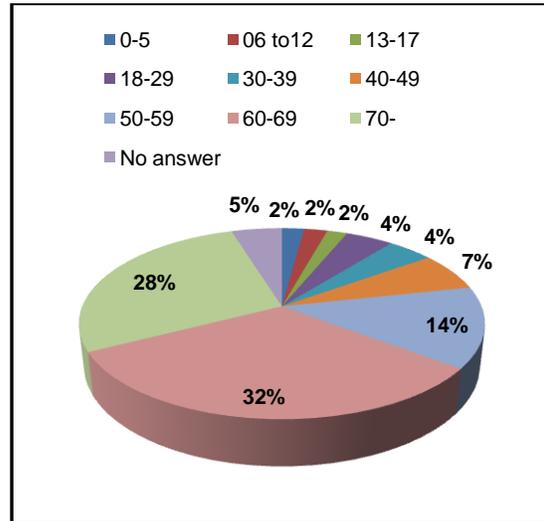


Figure 2. Age Demographics of Households

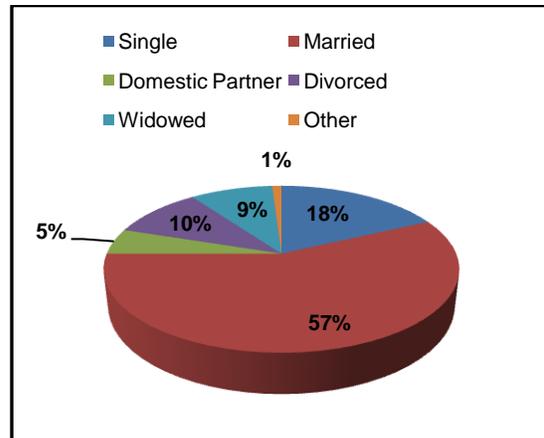


Figure 3. Marital Status

As shown in Figure 4, annual income for respondents indicated a dispersed range: 26 percent \$10,000 to \$30,000; 22 percent \$31,000 to \$50,000; 16 percent \$51,000 to \$75,000; 8 percent 76,000 to \$100,000; 8 percent less than \$10,000; 6 percent over \$100,000; and 14 percent preferred not to answer.

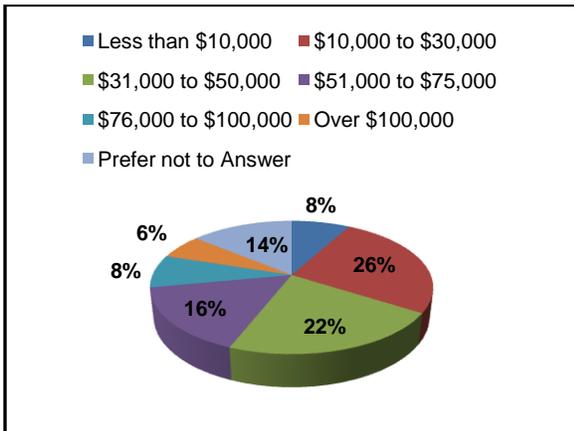


Figure 4. Annual Income

Employment status indicated 52 percent of respondents were retired and 18 percent employed full-time (Figure 5).

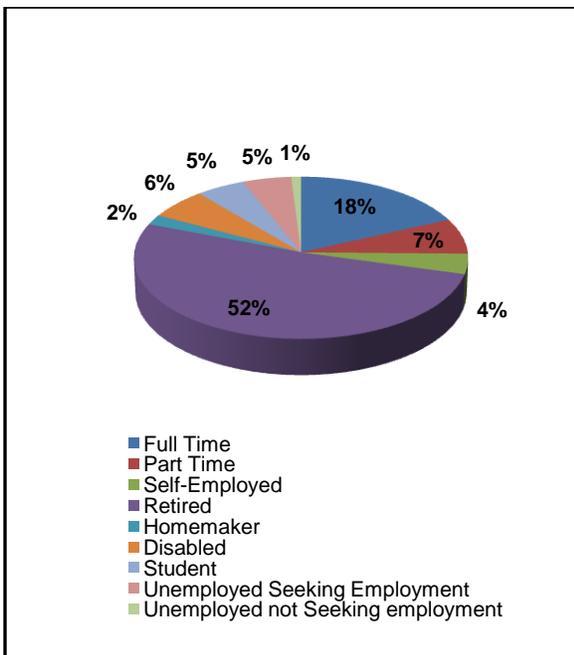


Figure 5. Employment Status

### Health and Nutrition

Health and nutrition had 17 questions pertaining to personal health, health of others and medical care. Sixty-six percent of respondents indicated a “major concern” for local medical services and 54 percent for local dental

services. Ability to pay for medical care and prescriptions were a “major concern” at 52 percent and 51 percent respectively. Within personal health, 40 percent of respondents had a “major concern” for cardiovascular disease, 39 percent “major concern for healthy living for seniors and food safety, 34 percent “major concern” for diabetes, and 31 percent “major concern” for adult obesity. (Figure 6)

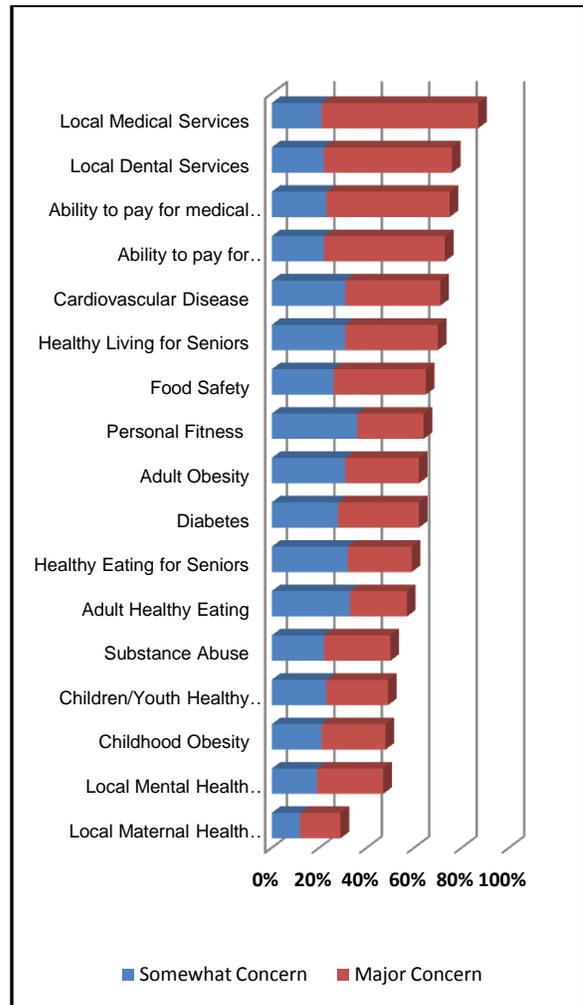


Figure 6. Health and Nutrition

### Children Youth and Family

The 22 questions in this section related to resources for children, adults, and senior citizens. In 14 of the 22 questions, 50 percent of respondents

indicated having a “somewhat” or “major” concern. Senior citizen issues led this category with 38 percent of respondents indicating a “major concern” and 31 percent indicating “somewhat concern.” Thirty-seven percent of respondents indicated a “major concern” for senior citizen personal safety and 34 percent “major concern” for senior citizens programs/activities. Respondents indicated a “major concern” and “somewhat concern” for illegal drug use by youth and underage drinking. Forty-five percent indicated a “major concern” for illegal drug use by youth and 37 percent for underage drinking. Twenty-one percent were “somewhat concerned” about illegal drug use by youth and 25 percent for underage drinking. (Figure 7)

### Community Development

Community development is “...a process of building and strengthening the community. Accordingly, community development refers to the creation and maintenance of community as a social characteristic of a local population” (Theodori, 2005, p. 665). There were 11 questions within community development. Fifty percent of respondents indicated a “major concern” or “somewhat concern” for each question within community development. New retail, professional and business services, broad range of employment opportunities, resources for unemployed and new job skills training were the top issues within this category (Figure 8)

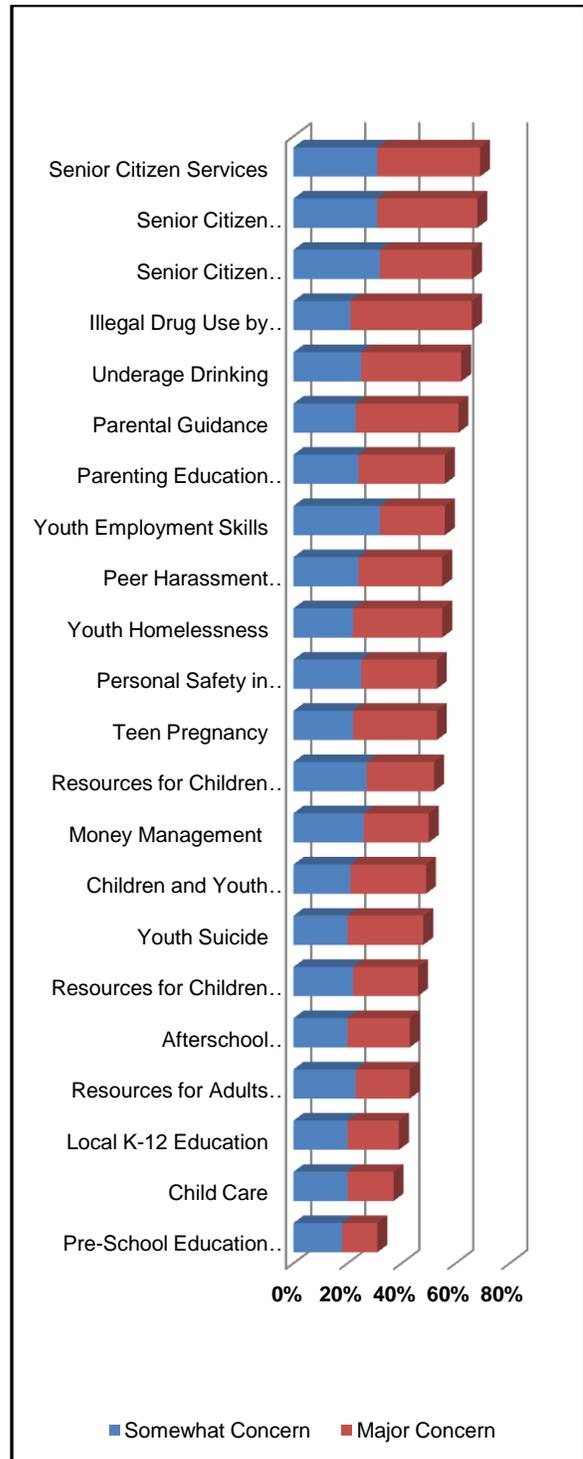


Figure 7. Children, Youth and Family

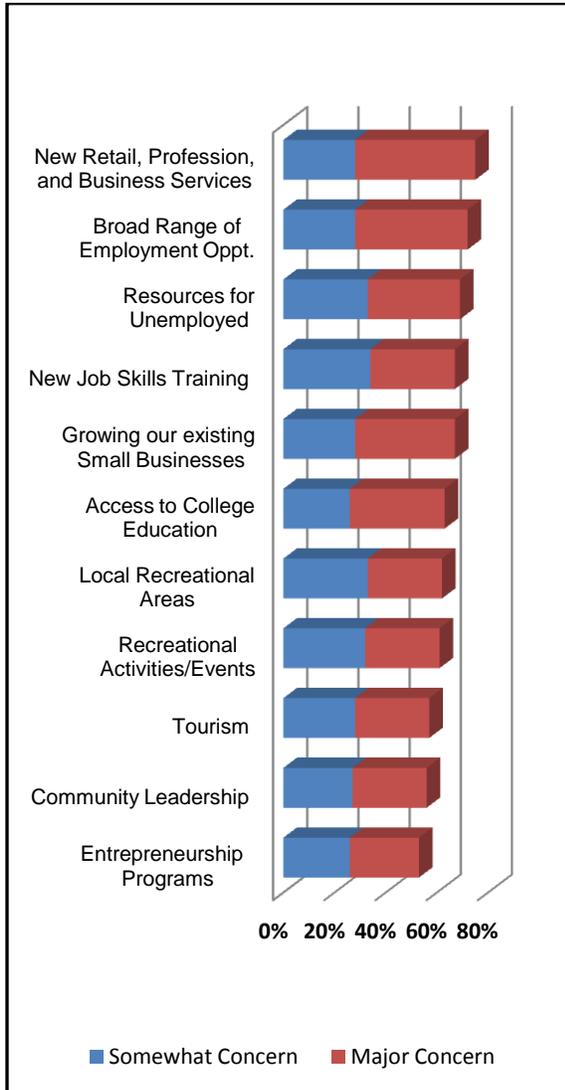


Figure 8. Community Development

### Agriculture, Horticulture, Natural Resources, Water, Environment

Within this category, respondents were mainly concerned with water issues. Seventy-nine percent of respondents indicated that the possibility of future water shortages was a “somewhat” concern or “major” concern with 72 percent concerned with quality of the local water supply. Developing commercial renewable energy and natural resources were the next concerns at 71 percent and 70 percent respectively. (Figure 9)

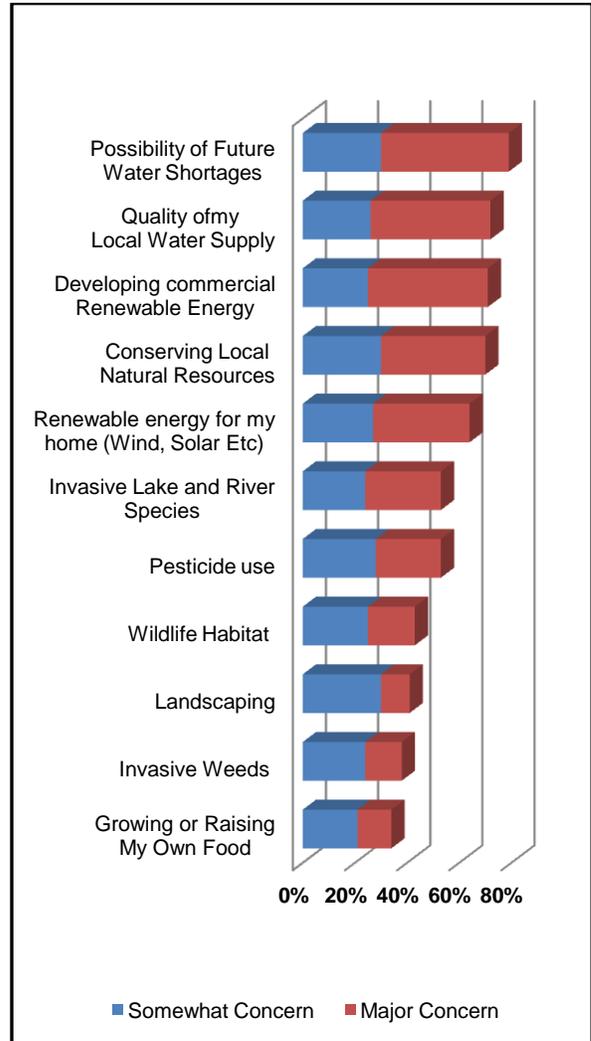
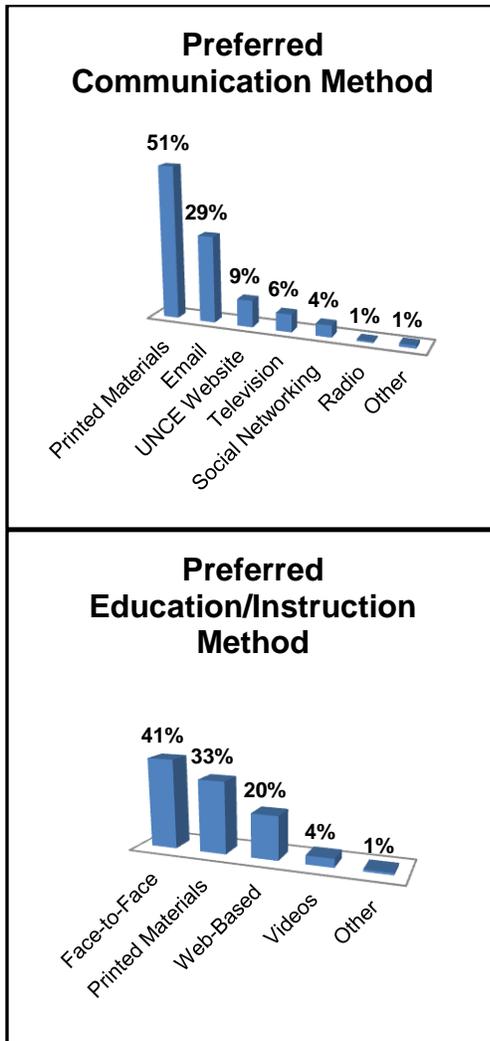


Figure 9. Agriculture, Horticulture, Natural Resources, Water, Environment

### Education and Communicating with UNCE

UNCE has a variety of resources to reach the citizens of southern Clark County. Fifty-one percent and 29 percent of respondents indicated that printed materials and email were the preferred method of communication respectively. Further, 41 percent of respondents prefer face-to-face interaction and 33 percent prefer printed materials with UNCE to receive education and/or instruction. (Figure 10)



**Figure 10. Preferred Communication, Education and Instruction Method**

### Conclusions and Direction of Community Needs

The community needs survey conducted in southern Clark County yielded a variety of issues that were concerns to the citizens of this geographic area. The results provided UNCE with a clear direction of programs to offer the citizens in southern Clark County.

As results indicated, 60 percent of respondents were 60 years or older. Further, 40 percent and 39 percent of respondents had a “major concern” for cardiovascular disease and healthy

living for seniors respectively. To meet this need, UNCE will introduce targeted educational programs that address cardiovascular disease, healthy living for seniors, as well as other health-related topics. An educational program to address senior issues will include a healthy living class that will provide educational materials in the form of printed materials, workshops and seminars.

Teenage illegal drug use and underage drinking were concerns for respondents. To address this need, UNCE will seek further insight of this issue by working with the local high school to assess the situation accurately. In addition, educational materials in the form of printed materials can be distributed to the community and local schools.

Community development was another category where respondents had major concerns. Over 50 percent of all questions within this category resulted in a response of “somewhat” concern or “major” concern. The top five issues in this category indicated a need to create programs related to job skills, entrepreneurship and development of businesses. To address these issues, UNCE plans to collaborate with local business leaders and the Laughlin Chamber of Commerce to develop educational programs in the form of printed materials, workshops, and seminars to address these needs. In addition, UNCE will work with business leaders to determine specific employment skills needed then collaborate with other providers to insure appropriate training.

The agriculture, horticulture, natural resources, water and environment

category results indicated a concern for water shortages and quality of the local water supply. In addition, renewable energy and conserving natural resources were a concern. To address these issues, UNCE plans to work with local water authorities and specialists to gain a better understanding of water issues as related to shortages and quality and develop a role where UNCE might appropriately provide research and education in the form of publications, workshops and/or seminars to help insure sustainable, high-quality water supplies. Further, by sharing up-to-date, science-based information, UNCE can play a helpful role in informing citizens and community leaders about renewable energy and conserving natural resources.

The results of this survey provided guiding information not only to UNCE but also to community leaders, partners and stakeholders. As indicated in the results, the respondents had a “major” concern on needs related to medical and dental care as well as ability to pay for medical care and prescriptions. Although UNCE does not have the ability affect these issues, these questions were included in the survey to provide local medical professionals valuable data to assist in planning and serving the medical needs of resident’s in Southern Clark County. In addition, many government leaders, local community leaders, civic groups and businesses have access to the data in this publication to understand the needs of the citizens and develop a strategy to address these issues.

The Southern Clark County Community Needs Assessment was an integral part of the process to assist UNCE in the

development of educational programs. The survey results benefit the citizens of this area as UNCE develops programs as well as other entities using this data to continue to enhance the lives of the citizens. University of Nevada Cooperative Extension’s fundamental purpose is “to discover, develop, disseminate, preserve and use knowledge to strengthen the social, economic and environmental well-being of people.” With the information provided in this publication, UNCE has taken an important first step in fulfilling this mission and will continue to take additional steps to improve the quality of life for southern Clark County citizens.

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