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Results Announced for Community Opinion Survey Cassville's Master Plan

Cassville, MO – July 14, 2009 – The Cassville Community Opinion Survey results have been released. 1,438 surveys were mailed to Cassville residents and businesses in early June to gain their input to the City's 2009 Master Plan for Growth and Development.

A total of 448 surveys were completed by June 30 and tabulated by professional planning consultants Bucher, Willis and Ratliff Corporation (BWR) of Kansas City.

"A 31% response rate is incredibly high and makes the survey data very reliable," stated Scott Michie, Project Manager for BWR. "This is one of the highest response rates we have seen for a survey like this. The good response rate gives us a high degree of confidence that the survey closely matches the opinions of Cassville's citizens. It is commendable that Cassville's residents care so deeply about their community."

The results show that Cassville's citizens support the City taking an active role in community development and job creation, and in promoting the city. 79% of respondents want the city actively involved in economic development efforts, and only 3% said the city should not be involved. Jobs creation is clearly the most popular concern among survey respondents, as the highest-rated statements concerned the creation of employment opportunities. All five of the top-scoring responses were in support of investing in the community's future.

In addressing **quality of life issues**, survey respondents believe that

- Beautification and upkeep will help the City to grow.
- Cassville is a desirable and safe place to live.

- Cassville has small town values (friendly & faith-based), a high quality of life and rural lifestyle.

Respondents want the City to be active, rather than passive, in improving the City's infrastructure and quality of life. Upgrading neighborhood streets to include storm water control was the overwhelming top infrastructure priority. Street maintenance was the second highest priority, with upgrading neighborhood streets to include sidewalks as the third-highest.

The **greatest concerns** – relative to the survey questions – center on:

- The level of weed control, litter and debris on private property;
- Poor street surfaces and street maintenance; and
- Overall upkeep of residential buildings.

Top choices for **improving community attractiveness and appearance**, in order of preference were:

- Attractiveness of the Main Street corridor;
- Appearance of residential neighborhoods; and
- Appearance in commercial areas.

Top choices for **improving City services and programs** included the overall:

- Quantity and quality of services provided by the City;
- Programs and services to children and youth; and
- Programs and services for elderly residents.

Options for community growth:

- More overall employment opportunities;
- More restaurant and eating facilities, and
- More retail options.

Concerns about community growth:

- Increased vehicular traffic or congestion;
- Crime or overall safety (though residents strongly agree that Cassville today is a “safe community”); and
- Loss of small town character.

“I want to thank the citizens who took the time to respond and the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) who helped construct the survey,” said Mayor Tracy Holle. “The community opinion survey is an important part of citizen feedback as we set priorities for growth. The survey confirms that residents want the City to be proactive in building an attractive, safe and economically competitive community.” .

A complete report by BWR and summary of the survey can be found through a link on the City’s website: www.cassvillemo.net.

BWR’s approach to Cassville’s Master Plan stresses a ‘people-driven’ planning process. It was mailed to every household and business in Cassville that pays a water bill. The master planning process began in March, 2009 and will conclude this fall. The public will be invited to participate in the process once again in August; and then at an Open House this fall prior to a final Public Hearing on the final draft of the plan before the City adopts it. Meeting information and date information will be finalized and announced in the next week.

-- End of Release --

Additional information from survey, as accessed at www.cassvillemo.net.

Respondents scored questions on a rating system from 5 (*Strongly Agree*), 4 (*Mildly Agree*), 3 (*Neutral*), 2 (*Mildly Disagree*), to 1 (*Strongly Disagree*)

Areas of Strongest Community Support:

<u>Avg Score</u>	<u>Statement</u>
4.7	It is important to create employment opportunities in Cassville for local residents.
4.6	New job creation should be a priority.
4.5	It is important to promote Cassville as a place to do business.
4.4	Sidewalks should be improved along major streets and highways in Cassville.
4.4	It is important to promote Cassville as a place to live.
4.3	Neighborhood streets should be upgraded to include storm control.
4.2	It is important to promote Cassville as a place to visit
4.2	Downtown improvements should reflect and enhance the city’s historic past.
4.1	More rental housing options are needed for senior (elderly) residents.
4.1	Neighborhood streets should be upgraded to include sidewalks.

5 (Strongly Agree), 4 (Mildly Agree), 3 (Neutral), 2 (Mildly Disagree), to 1 (Strongly Disagree)

Areas Community Concern:

<u>Avg Score</u>	<u>Statement</u>
2.7	The overall condition of street surfaces is adequate.
2.7	The overall upkeep of residential buildings is adequate.
2.6	The overall level of street maintenance is adequate.
2.4	The level of weed control and cleanup of litter and debris on private property is adequate.
2.0	Overall access to public transportation options.