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Results of a Mailed Survey: Priorities for Lamoille and Spring Creek

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Lamoille Canyon, Nevada

The purpose of *Priorities for Lamoille and Spring Creek*, a comprehensive needs assessment, was to identify issues and local needs that the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension might address through educational programs. This publication provides information about Lamoille and Spring Creek citizens' opinions on local issues.

Introduction and Overview of Lamoille and Spring Creek

Results of a Mailed Survey: Priorities for Elko County, Special Publication 12-02 contains combined needs assessment results for all communities in Elko County. This publication focuses on Lamoille, Spring Creek and Pleasant Valley communities located in the southwestern portion of Elko County. Lamoille and Spring Creek are Census Designated Places, and Pleasant Valley is an unincorporated community.

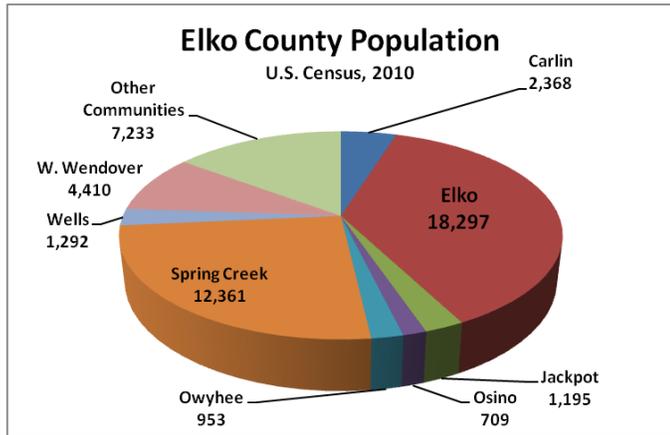


Figure 1. Elko County Population

The population in Lamoille is 105, and the population in Spring Creek and Pleasant Valley is 12,361. The total population for the communities in this study is 12,466 (Nevada State Demographer, 2010). The total population for the county is 48,818 (Figure 1).

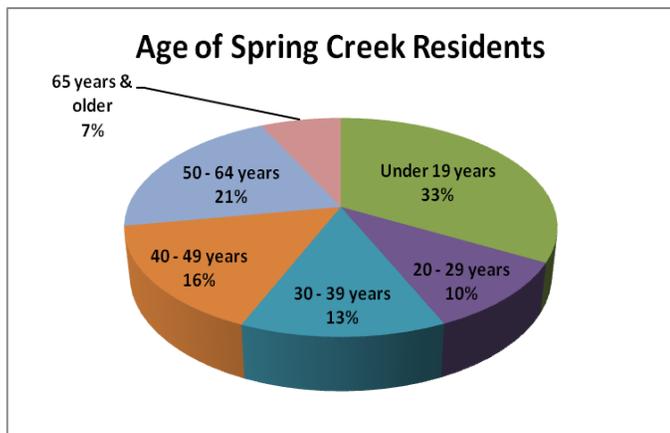


Figure 2. Age of Spring Creek Residents

Young people, under 18 years, number 14,206 or 29 percent of the county’s population, and 27 percent or 13,393 of the county’s residents

are 50 years and older. Children and youth account for the largest age group in Spring Creek, with 33 percent or 4,078 young people under 19 years (Figure 2), while 66 percent of Lamoille’s residents are age 50 and older (Figure 3).

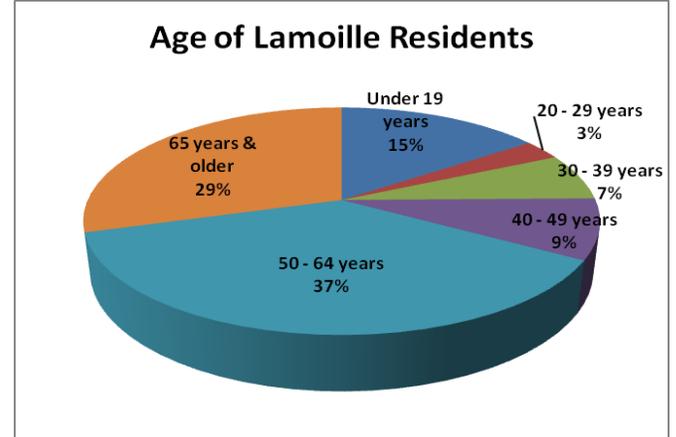


Figure 3. Age of Lamoille Residents

Eighty-eight percent of Spring Creek’s population is White, 8 percent is Hispanic/Latino, 3 percent is American Indian, 2 percent is 2 or more races, 2 percent is African American, 0.4 percent is Asian/Pacific Islander and 0.3 percent is African American (Figure 4). In Lamoille, 98 percent of the population is White (Figure 5).

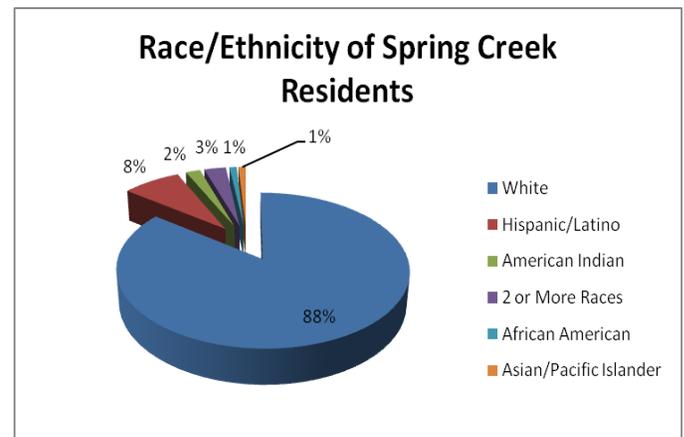


Figure 4. Race/Ethnic Origin of Spring Creek Residents

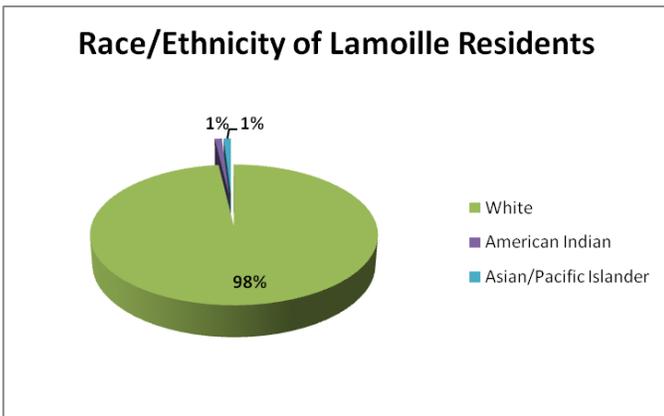


Figure 5. Race/Ethnic Origin of Lamoille Residents

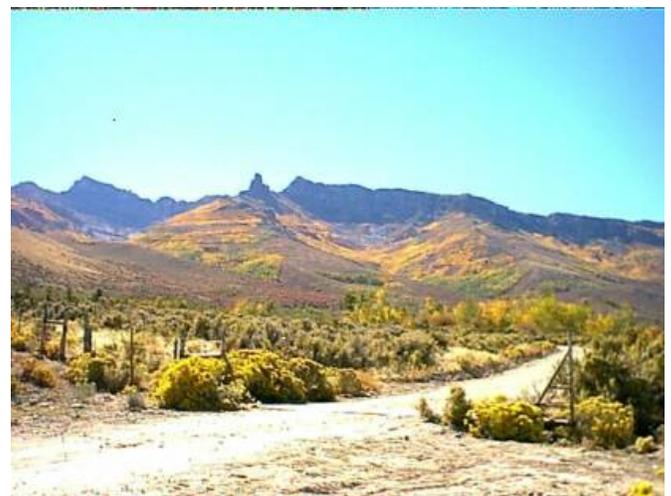
Elko County and Eureka, Humboldt and Lander Counties, surrounding gold-mining counties, have a 6.3 percent unemployment rate compared to the overall Nevada unemployment rate of 11.6 percent (Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation, 2012). Median household income for Spring Creek is \$85,951, with a per capita income of \$29,640. Income data is not available for Lamoille. The U.S. Census Bureau (2010) reports that 87 percent of adults 25 years and older living in Spring Creek are high school graduates, and 16 percent attained a bachelor’s degree or higher.

Methods

In 2010, the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension conducted a local comprehensive needs assessment: *Results of a Mailed Survey: Priorities for Elko County*. The purpose of the assessment was to identify high-priority issues that Extension could address through targeted educational programs. Information obtained through interviews, published reports and public meetings helped determine the questions used in the mailed survey. Specific survey topics related to agriculture, child and family development, community development, health and nutrition, horticulture, and natural resources. These six topic areas are outlined in the Nevada Revised Statute 549.010 and guide Extension’s educational programming.

The University of Nevada, Reno Office of Human Research Protection approved the survey instrument and documents. Multiple

mailings were used to encourage survey completion (Dillman, Smyth and Christian, 2009; Salant and Dillman, 1994). A letter mailed to randomly selected Elko County voters, 2,020 total, explained that they had been chosen to participate in the mail-out survey. Two weeks later, recipients were mailed the three-page questionnaire, along with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. Participants were asked to rate the 83 topics from low (1) to high (5) priority. A reminder postcard was mailed 10 days later. In order to increase response rate, a complete survey packet was again mailed to all 2,020 individuals 10 days following the postcard. Survey participation was voluntary, and individuals remained anonymous and their responses confidential. Eight hundred forty-two surveys were returned for a 42 percent response rate. Each completed questionnaire was assigned a unique identification number. Data was entered into statistical analysis software. A limitation to the study was that the questionnaires and return envelopes were not precoded; thereby prohibiting the author from determining if survey participants’ responded twice, and thus potentially conflating the response rate.



Ruby Mountains, Lamoille, Nevada

Results

Certain statistical methods can indicate how well the survey questions measure what they are supposed to measure. These statistics are called internal consistency or reliability statistics. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is the most appropriate statistical method to measure

Likert-type scale reliability, a 1 to 5 scale, showing the average correlation between the items in a scale. Correlations range from 0.0 (nonexistent correlation) to 1.0 (perfect correlation). A score of 0.7 or higher is considered reliable (Nunnally, 1978). For this survey, an estimate of reliability of the 83 items was calculated and found to be high ($r = 0.955$). Further analysis ranked issues that are of concern for Elko County residents. In the tables on pages 5 - 9, "N" refers to the number of respondents for that particular question, ranked mean, "Ranked M" scores, indicate the average response on the Likert-type scale.

Demographics of Respondents Living in Lamoille and Spring Creek

Twenty percent of the respondents indicated they live in or near Lamoille, Pleasant Valley or Spring Creek. Forty-four percent of the Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents have lived in the community for more than 16 years, 14 percent have lived in the community for 11 - 15 years, 15 percent for 6 – 10 years and 27 percent for five years or less (Figure 6).

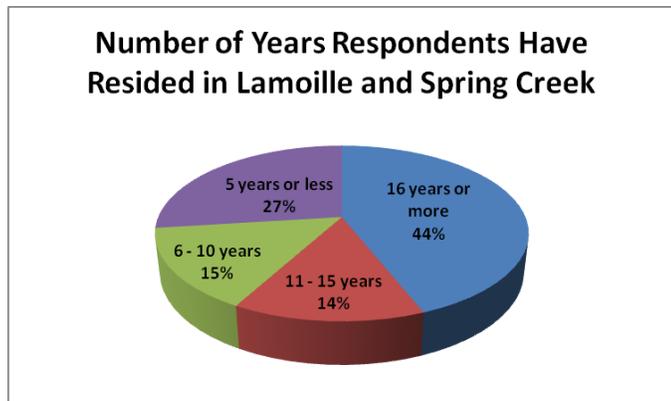


Figure 6. Number of Years Respondents Have Resided in Lamoille and Spring Creek

As referenced in Figure 7, 53 percent of the respondents indicated that they were 56 years or older. Three percent of the respondents were under the age of 25. The study sample (people randomly selected to participate) may have been skewed toward an older demographic, since only 15 percent of the

respondents were 35 years old or younger, which could account for some of the results. Approximately 50 percent of Spring Creek residents and 20 percent of Lamoille residents are 35 years old or younger (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

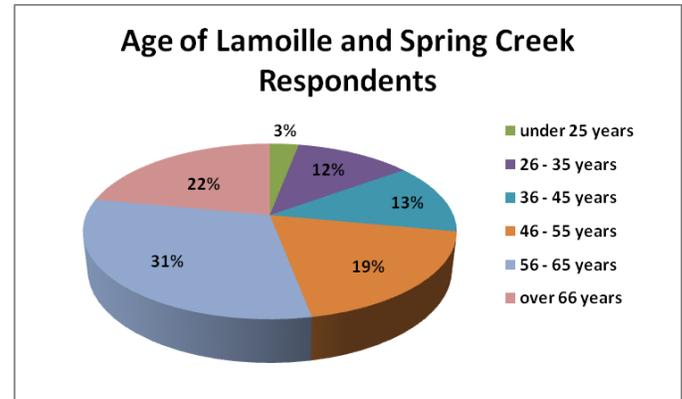


Figure 7. Age of Lamoille and Spring Creek Respondents

Sixty-two percent of the respondents were female, 38 percent were male. Ethnicity of respondents was 96 percent White, 0.8 percent Hispanic/Latino, 0.8 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 0.8 American Indian and 2 percent 2 or more races. Employment status indicated that 55 percent of respondents were employed, 32 percent were retired and 13 percent were unemployed. As referenced in Figure 8 below, annual income indicated a dispersed range (Figure 8).

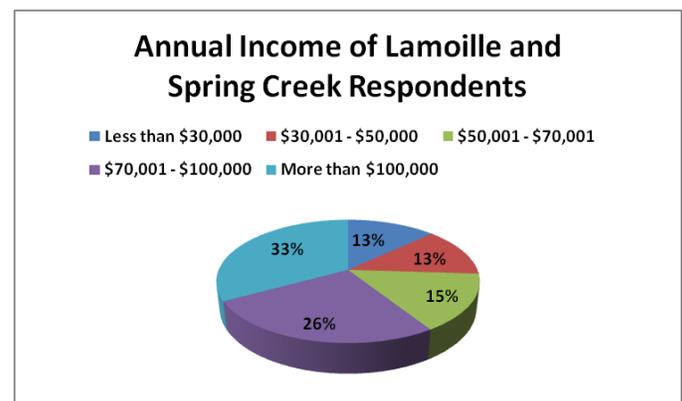


Figure 8. Annual Income of Lamoille and Spring Creek Respondents

Table 1. Ranked Mean Scores* for Lamoille and Spring Creek Respondents' Opinions about Elko County

Elko County Residents:	Lamoille Spring Creek		Elko County	
	N	Ranked M	N	Ranked M
1. Work together to get things done for the community	169	4.04	812	4.02
2. Enjoy a growing economy that provides good jobs	168	4.02	808	3.94
3. Want to maintain a small town/rural feeling	167	4.01	809	4.04
4. Have access to affordable food	168	3.79	806	3.77
5. Have adequate Internet service coverage	167	3.77	807	3.67
6. Want taxes to remain the same/not increase or decrease	169	3.76	801	3.84
7. Have adequate cell phone coverage	167	3.75	803	3.63
8. Have a commute to work that is not a problem for workers	165	3.70	806	3.73
9. Have opportunities for jobs that fit their skills	167	3.69	809	3.70
10. Have effective community leadership	169	3.67	806	3.76
11. Can get plenty of fresh foods in their community	167	3.63	804	3.58
12. Have affordable Internet service	168	3.62	799	3.58
13. Have the opportunity to participate in decisions that influence their future	166	3.61	805	3.65
14. Have affordable housing available	168	3.12	803	3.27
15. Enjoy a variety of good restaurants	165	3.06	803	3.32
16. Trust local government to do what is right	167	3.01	801	3.04
17. Have clothing and shoe stores to meet their needs	168	2.95	806	3.15
18. Have access to public transportation	168	2.77	802	2.84

*Ranked Mean Scores indicate the average response on a 1 to 5 scale.

The rankings shown in Table 1 indicate respondents' opinions about living in Elko County. The table further compares the results of residents who live in Lamoille or Spring Creek and all Elko County respondents. While "Elko County residents work together to get things done for the community" was the most important issue for Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents, it was ranked as the second-highest priority for county residents. "Elko County residents enjoy a growing economy that provides good jobs" was the second most important issue for Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents. Elko County respondents ranked it the third-highest priority. The third-highest priority for Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents was "Elko County residents want to maintain a small town/rural feeling." Countywide, respondents ranked the item as the highest priority. The lowest-ranking priority for Lamoille/Spring Creek and County respondents was "Elko County residents have access to public transportation."



Lamoille Presbyterian Church, Lamoille, Nevada

Table 2. Ranked Mean Scores* for Lamoille and Spring Creek Respondents' Opinions about Elko County Leaders

Elko County Leaders Should:	Lamoille Spring Creek		Elko County	
	N	Ranked M	N	Ranked M
1. Protect drinking water quality as a priority	169	4.34	806	4.41
2. Provide improvements to roads and traffic-related issues	165	4.21	805	4.20
3. Adequately prepare to respond to disasters/emergencies	168	4.18	808	4.23
4. Help the mining industry continue to grow	167	4.09	807	3.99
5. Work with tourism to help develop new jobs	167	4.05	805	3.93
6. Bring new industries and businesses to our community	167	4.04	808	4.06
7. Maintain quality parks	169	4.01	807	4.06
7. Encourage job growth to help create new tax resources	168	4.01	808	4.00
8. Provide tax incentives to encourage businesses to move here	165	3.95	799	3.88
9. Provide recreational facilities	166	3.94	805	3.96
10. Have adequate resources to develop new jobs	168	3.87	800	3.89
11. Beautify the community	168	3.80	807	3.88

*Ranked Mean Scores indicate the average response on a 1 to 5 scale.

Table 2 illustrates the ranked mean scores for Lamoille/Spring Creek and Elko County respondents' opinions about actions Elko County leaders should take. "N" refers to the number of respondents for that particular question. Ranked mean, "Ranked M" scores, indicate the average response on a 1 to 5 scale.



Lamoille Grove, Lamoille, Nevada

Both Lamoille/Spring Creek and Elko County survey respondents identified "protecting drinking water quality" as the number-one priority for Elko County leaders. "Elko County

leaders should provide improvements to roads and traffic-related issues" was the second-highest priority for Lamoille/Spring Creek respondents and third-highest countywide. Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents rated "adequately prepare to respond to disasters/emergencies" as the third-highest priority for Elko County leaders, and countywide it was rated second highest. "Help the mining industry continue to grow" ranked fourth highest for Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents, while countywide it ranked seventh. The fifth-highest priority Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents identified for Elko County leaders was "work with tourism to help develop new jobs." Countywide, this item ranked ninth. Lower on Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents' list of actions for Elko County leaders were "encourage job growth to help create new tax resources," "provide tax incentives to encourage businesses to move here," "provide recreational facilities," "have adequate resources to develop new jobs" and "beautify the community."

Table 3. Ranked Mean Scores* for Community Assets in Elko County

	Lamoille Spring Creek		Elko County	
	N	Ranked M	N	Ranked M
1. Many scenic views	167	4.22	805	3.99
2. I feel safe in my community	169	3.96	810	3.96
3. I am proud to tell others where I live	169	3.91	809	3.82
4. There are good jobs here	169	3.83	806	3.45
5. Lots of parks and open space	167	3.74	807	3.56
6. I think this is an ideal place to live	168	3.68	809	3.67
7. Many recreational opportunities	167	3.62	802	3.43
8. The proximity to my family is important	169	3.56	804	3.78
9. People come together to help one another	166	3.55	800	3.58
10. I feel emotionally attached to my community	167	3.45	809	3.56
11. Colleges and vocational schools are excellent	166	3.40	801	3.22
12. I feel respect from ALL cultures	166	3.17	803	3.18
12. The quality of K-12 schools is excellent	165	3.17	799	3.00
13. There are lots of clubs/organizations to join	166	3.16	801	2.85
14. This is a good place for senior citizens to live	169	3.09	803	3.19
15. Organized activities for youth are available	165	3.08	805	2.99
16. There are many activities for families	166	2.96	798	2.83
17. The cost of living is reasonable	169	2.95	801	2.99
18. Many opportunities to enjoy music and the arts	167	2.92	801	2.79

*Ranked Mean Scores indicate the average response on a 1 to 5 scale.



Spring Creek Marina, Spring Creek, Nevada

Table 3 lists the ranked mean scores for community assets or reasons people like living in Elko County and its quality of life. “N” refers to the number of respondents for that particular question. Ranked mean, “Ranked M” scores, indicate the average response on a 1 to 5 scale. Elko County and Lamoille and Spring

Creek respondents ranked “many scenic views” as their top community asset. The second-highest asset for Elko County, Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents was “I feel safe in my community.” “I am proud to tell others where I live” was ranked third by Elko County, Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents. The fourth-highest quality of life indicator for Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents was “there are good jobs here,” while countywide the item ranked ninth. The fifth-highest community asset for Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents was “lots of parks and open space.” Countywide, it ranked seventh. The lowest-ranked community asset by Elko County, Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents was “many opportunities to enjoy music and the arts.”

Table 4. Ranked Mean Scores* for Agriculture and Natural Resource Needs in Elko County

	Lamoille Spring Creek		Elko County	
	N	Ranked M	N	Ranked M
1. Maintaining adequate water supply	167	4.53	789	4.52
2. Protecting water quality	167	4.43	802	4.44
3. Controlling wildfires	167	4.34	797	4.29
4. Protecting air quality	169	4.21	807	4.22
5. Maintaining multiple uses of public lands	167	4.14	796	4.15
6. Improving wildlife habitat	169	4.05	802	3.95
7. Rehabilitating land damaged by wildfire	166	4.02	799	4.02
8. Generating electricity from solar, wind, geothermal and other renewable energy sources	167	3.96	804	4.08
9. Maintaining Elko County's ranching heritage	168	3.93	807	3.91
10. Controlling weeds on public lands	167	3.88	794	3.86
11. Controlling weeds on ranches and private property	168	3.73	799	3.67

*Ranked Mean Scores indicate the average response on a 1 to 5 scale.

Table 4 describes the survey respondents' priorities for agriculture and natural resources in Elko County. "N" refers to the number of respondents for that particular question. Ranked mean, "Ranked M" scores, indicate the average response on a 1 to 5 scale. "Maintaining adequate water supply" was the number-one priority for Lamoille/Spring Creek and countywide respondents to agriculture and natural resource questions. "Protecting water quality" was the second-highest priority for both

Lamoille/Spring Creek and countywide respondents. "Controlling wildfires" the third-highest priority for Lamoille/Spring Creek and countywide respondents. "Protecting air quality" was the fifth-highest priority for both groups. "Controlling weeds on ranches and private property" was the lowest ranked item on this portion of the survey for both Lamoille/Spring Creek and countywide respondents.

Table 5. Ranked Mean Scores* for Horticulture and Gardening Needs in Elko County

	Lamoille Spring Creek		Elko County	
	N	Ranked M	N	Ranked M
1. Maintaining water-efficient lawns, trees and home landscapes	166	3.41	798	3.57
2. Growing plants in a short growing season	168	3.43	803	3.49
3. Accessing information to diagnose and address plant problems	169	3.33	798	3.30

*Ranked Mean Scores indicate the average response on a 1 to 5 scale.

Table 5 illustrates the ranked responses for horticulture and gardening needs. "N" refers to the number of respondents for that particular question. Ranked mean, "Ranked M" scores, indicate the average response on a 1 to 5 scale. The highest-ranking gardening need for Lamoille/Spring Creek and countywide

respondents was "maintaining water-efficient lawns, trees and home landscapes." "Growing plants in a short growing season" and "accessing information to diagnose and address plant problems" ranked second and third, respectively.

Table 6. Ranked Mean Scores* for Children, Youth and Families Needs in Elko County

	Lamoille Spring Creek		Elko County	
	N	Ranked M	N	Ranked M
1. Preventing child abuse and neglect	166	4.40	798	4.46
2. Preventing domestic violence and abuse	166	4.30	800	4.34
3. Preventing juvenile crime	167	4.22	800	4.30
4. Preventing drug and alcohol abuse	165	4.19	795	4.26
5. Preparing youth for work or further education after high school	167	4.15	807	4.24
6. Services for senior citizens	161	4.05	779	4.17
7. Organized activities for youth	167	3.85	804	4.00
8. Preventing suicide	167	3.84	801	3.93
9. Before- and after-school programs	168	3.75	806	3.81
10. Child care for working families	168	3.67	798	3.76
11. Preschool education programs	167	3.54	803	3.71
12. Guidance for families managing a tight budget	169	3.47	802	3.60

*Ranked Mean Scores indicate the average response on a 1 to 5 scale.

Table 6 ranks the responses in priority order for the 12 children, youth and family issues asked in the survey. “N” refers to the number of respondents for that particular question. Ranked mean, “Ranked M” scores, indicate the average response on a 1 to 5 scale. Lamoille/Spring Creek and Elko County respondents identified “preventing child abuse and neglect” as the top need for children and families. “Preventing domestic violence and abuse” was the second-highest priority for both Lamoille/Spring Creek and countywide respondents, followed by “preventing juvenile crime.” The fourth-highest children and family

priority for Lamoille/Spring Creek and countywide respondents was “preventing drug and alcohol abuse.” Ranking fifth for Lamoille/Spring Creek respondents was “preparing youth for work or further education after high school.” Lamoille/Spring Creek and countywide respondents’ lowest-ranking children, youth and families needs were “preventing suicide” – eighth, “before- and after-school programs” – ninth, “child care for working families” – 10th, “preschool education programs” – 11th and “guidance for families managing a tight budget” – 12th.

Table 7. Ranked Mean Scores* for Health and Nutrition Needs in Elko County

	Lamoille Spring Creek		Elko County	
	N	Ranked M	N	Ranked M
1. Access to hospitals	166	4.34	800	4.34
2. Access to doctors	169	4.33	806	4.37
3. Ability to pay for medical care	169	4.08	803	4.19
4. Ability to pay for prescription drugs	167	4.05	805	4.18
5. Access to mental health services	166	3.80	801	3.86
6. Preventing childhood obesity	169	3.49	807	3.61
7. Access to exercise facilities	169	3.26	798	3.39
8. Controlling adult obesity	167	3.17	803	3.31

*Ranked Mean Scores indicate the average response on a 1 to 5 scale.

In Table 7, respondents ranked priorities for health and nutrition needs. “N” refers to the

number of respondents for that particular question. Ranked mean, “Ranked M” scores,

indicate the average response on a 1 to 5 scale. “Access to hospitals,” “access to doctors,” “ability to pay for medical care,” “ability to pay for prescription drugs” and “access to mental health services” were the Lamoille/Spring Creek and countywide respondents’ top five priorities for health and nutrition, respectively. Among all age groups

and income levels, “access to doctors and hospitals” and the “ability to pay for medical care and prescription drugs” were high or very high priorities. “Preventing childhood obesity,” “access to exercise facilities” and “controlling adult obesity” were the lowest-ranked health and nutrition needs.

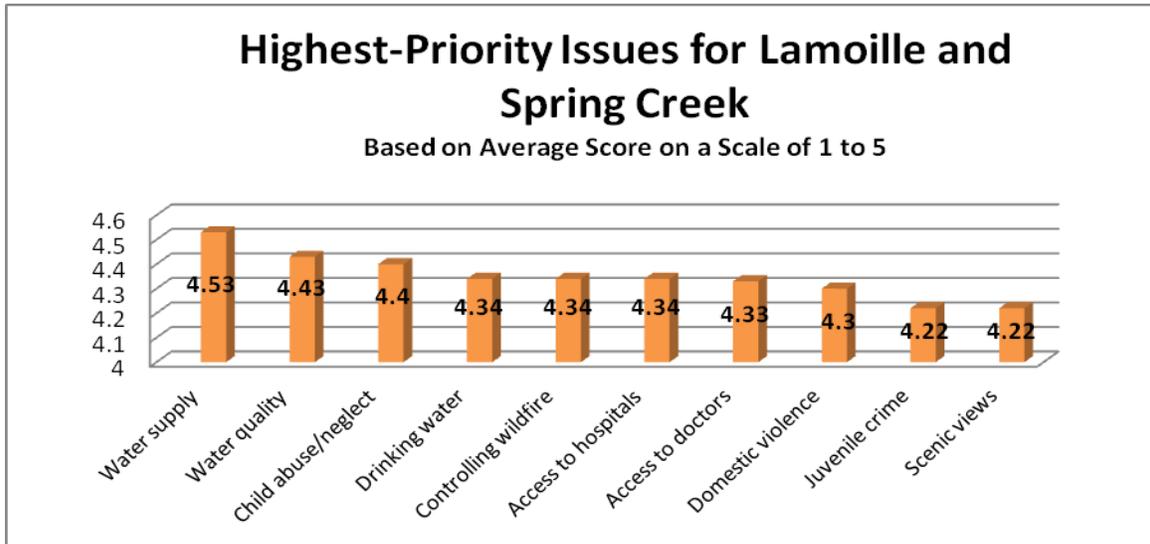


Figure 9. Highest-Priority Needs for Lamoille and Spring Creek Respondents

Summary

Through analysis of each question on the survey instrument, and by comparing ranked mean scores and standard deviation statistics, the most important needs identified in the survey were water, the health and well-being of Elko County citizens and natural resources (Figure 9). “Maintaining adequate water supply” was the highest-ranking item for both Lamoille/Spring Creek and Elko County respondents. Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents ranked “protecting water quality”

as the second-highest priority. “Preventing child abuse and neglect” was ranked as the third-highest priority for Lamoille/Spring Creek respondents. “Protecting drinking water quality,” “controlling wildfires” and “access to hospitals” tied as the fourth-highest priorities. “Access to doctors” and “preventing domestic violence and abuse” ranked fifth and sixth highest, respectively. Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents ranked “preventing juvenile crime” and “many scenic views” as the seventh-highest priorities.

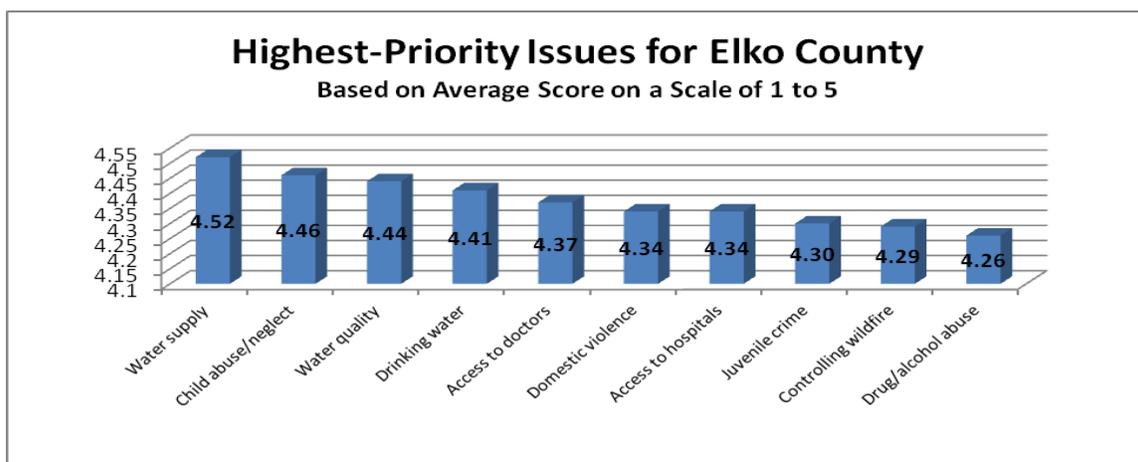


Figure 10. Highest Priority Needs for Elko County Respondents

Some of the highest-priority issues for Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents were different than the highest-priority issues for Elko County overall (Figure 10). Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents ranked “controlling wildfires” as their fourth-highest priority. Overall survey results ranked “controlling wildfires” as the eighth-highest priority. “Protecting air quality” ranked the eighth-highest priority for Lamoille/Spring Creek respondents and twelfth highest for countywide respondents.



Ruby Mountain Balloon Festival, Spring Creek, Nevada

Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents ranked other survey questions as a high priority, with a mean score of 4.0 or higher. “Elko County leaders should provide improvements to roads and traffic-related issues,” “adequately prepare to respond to disasters/emergencies,” “help the mining industry continue to grow,” “work with tourism to help develop new jobs,” “bring new industries and businesses to our community,” “maintain quality parks” and “encourage job growth to help create new tax resources” ranked as high priorities for Elko County leaders. “Preventing drug and alcohol abuse,” “preparing youth for work or further education after high school” and “services for senior citizens” were high-priority children, youth and family issues. Lamoille and Spring Creek respondents indicated that residents share the following opinions about living in Elko County: “work together to get things done for the community,” “enjoy a growing economy that provides good jobs” and “want to maintain a small town/rural feeling.” “Ability to pay for medical care” and “ability to pay for prescription drugs” were high-priority issues for

health and nutrition. High-priority agriculture and natural resource issues for Elko respondents were “protecting air quality,” “maintaining multiple uses of public lands,” “improving wildlife habitat” and “rehabilitating land damaged by wildfire.”

Conclusion

The *Results of a Mailed Survey: Priorities for Elko County* survey was conducted to identify high-priority issues and local needs and to measure quality of life issues and community assets that Extension might address through further research and educational programs. Further research is needed to determine how Extension might provide educational programming on water supply and quality. This analysis, along with existing data, community strengths and challenges, staff expertise and organizational capacity, provides clear direction for the Elko County Extension Educator to focus research and educational programming on preventing domestic violence and child abuse and neglect as a way to address primary county issues. The Committee Against Domestic Violence reported that Elko County had five domestic violence-related deaths in 2011 (Y. Waters, personal communication, May 30, 2012). The impacts on children and youth exposed to domestic violence may include increased emotional and behavioral difficulties, traumatic stress reactions (i.e., sleep disturbances, intensified startle reactions, constant worry about possible danger), increased risk of physical injury or emotional or physical child abuse, imitation and learning the attitudes and behaviors of domestic abuse, and desensitization to aggressive behavior (Baker, Jaffe, Ashbourne, & Carter, 2002). Ongoing needs assessments will be conducted to inform programs and determine if the issues continue to be high-priority needs.

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