

## **Compass 3.0 Executive Summary Vernon County**

A household survey was conducted in the spring of 2007 to gather input from community members from the five counties in the United Way service area on their perceived needs for their community across several dimensions. The dimensions assessed included: health, public safety, lifelong learning and enrichment, quality of life and living, care for families across the generations, self-sufficiency, community traits, and overall issues. Overall, 75 households in Vernon County completed the survey. Strengths, weaknesses, and important issues or concerns were identified based on their average response compared to other items within the same general categories.

### Community Strengths: (on a scale from 1 to 4, 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=excellent)

Air quality (3.22)

Safety of neighborhoods (3.23)

Quality of emergency services (3.17)

Safety of schools (3.15)

Availability of preschools (3.04)

K-12 schools (3.01)

Library services (2.93)

### Community Weaknesses: (on a scale from 1 to 4, 1=poor, 2=fair, 3=good, 4=excellent)

Access to mental healthcare (2.38)

Emphasis on prevention (2.35)

Affordable health care (1.98)

Affordable dental care (1.90)

Affordable mental care (1.84)

Community resources to learn new skills or hobbies (2.22)

Availability of jobs that offer enrichment and advancement (2.01)

Opportunities for youth (2.27)

Fine arts & cultural opportunities (2.14)

Affordable day care for young (2.37)

Inclusion of diverse populations in decisions (2.35)

Meeting the needs of persons with disabilities (2.22)

Available services for people who need help (2.33)

Meeting basic needs for low income (2.31)

Affordable education (2.12)

Affordable personal transportation (2.12)

Ensuring a strong economic future (2.07)

Efforts in the community to reduce poverty (1.98)

Jobs that offer health insurance (1.93)

Jobs that offer a good standard of living (1.92)

Affordable and accessible public transportation (1.75)

Community Concerns/Issues: (on a scale from 1 to 4, where 4 is a high/serious concern)

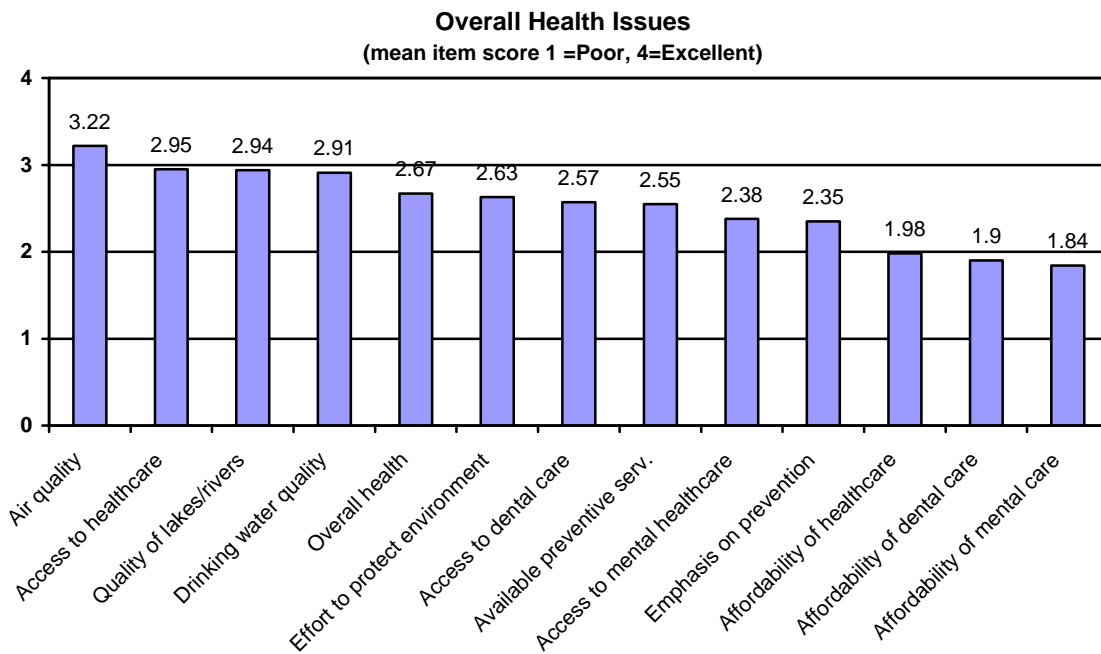
Illegal drug use (2.69)

Alcohol use (2.69)

Obesity (2.62)

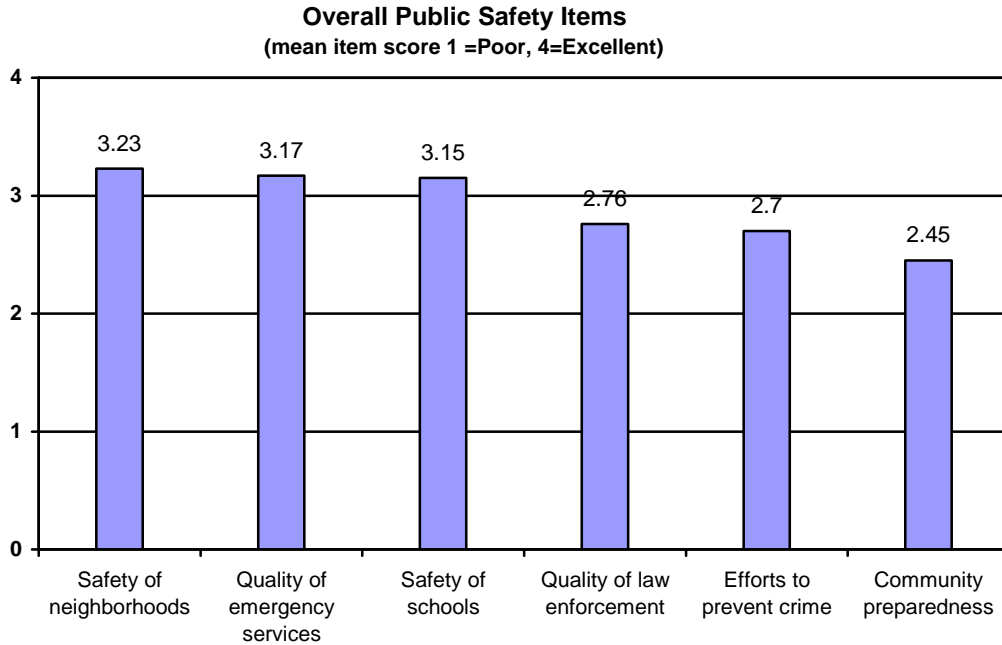
### **Health Item results**

Vernon County residents rated the quality of air as the highest of all the health items asked. 92% rated the air quality as good or excellent. Access to quality healthcare was rated second highest of the items with 76% indicating access to healthcare was good or excellent. The quality of water in the rivers and lakes in the community was ranked third highest by Vernon County residents with 74% rating the county good or excellent. Overall, 70% rated the health of people in the community as good or excellent. Residents in Vernon County rated the overall health of the people in the community the second poorest of the five counties. 77% of respondents indicated affordability of health care was fair or poor. A majority of Trempealeau County residents indicated affordability of dental care (83%) and mental health care (84%) was fair or poor. Residents also rated the emphasis the community places on prevention of health problems lower than the region overall and near the bottom of the health items.



### **Public Safety results:**

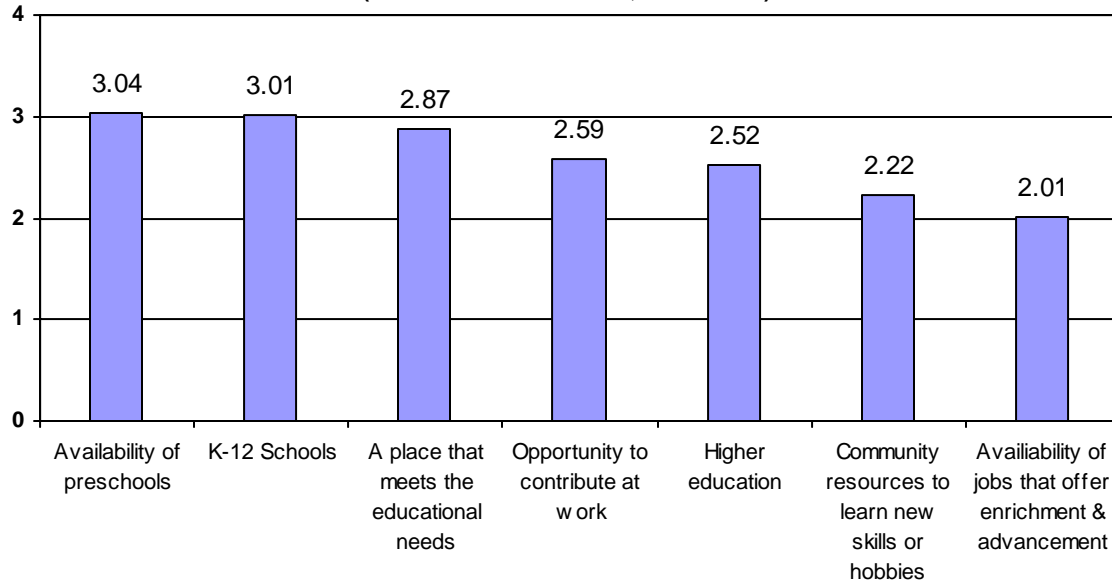
Vernon County residents rated the safety of its neighborhoods as the highest of all the public safety items asked. 29% rated the safety of their neighborhoods as excellent, and 65% rated it as good. Vernon County was the only county out of the five regional counties to not receive a poor marking in the item of neighborhood safety. The overall quality of your community's emergency services was rated second highest in Vernon County. 27% rated their community's emergency services as excellent and 63% as good. The safety of the schools in the community was the third highest ranked item in the public safety section with a total of 90% reported excellent or good ratings. Of all the items included in the public safety section, Vernon County residents gave their community the lowest score in its preparedness for major safety threats. 50% of Vernon County residents gave either poor (9%) or fair (41%) ratings according to their perception of the community preparedness for safety threats.



**Lifelong Learning and Enrichment results**

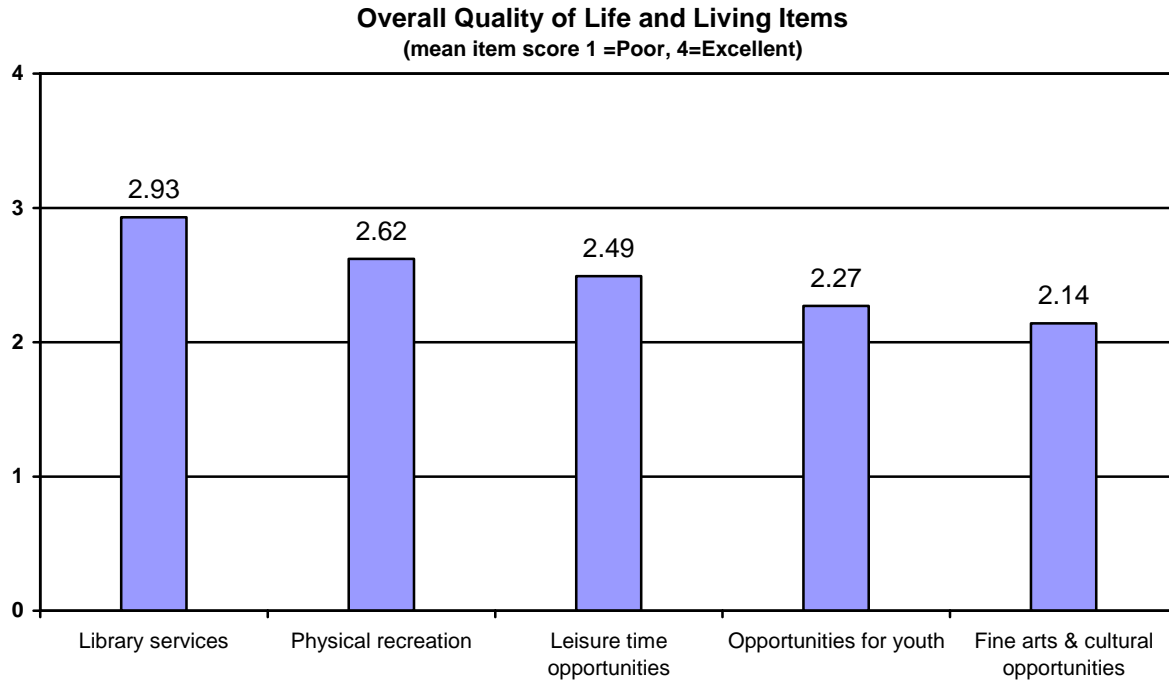
Vernon County residents ranked the lifelong learning and enrichment items similarly to the region in general. Their ratings on each item were almost always in the middle rating for all counties, except Vernon county residents scored “schools grades K-12 in your community” as the lowest of all 5 counties. Vernon county residents rated the availability of preschool opportunities higher than K-12 education in their community. Overall, between 82 and 84% indicated that preschool and K-12 schools were good or excellent in their community. Among those residents responding from Vernon County, 44% rated the availability of jobs that offer enrichment and advancement opportunities as fair, and 29% rated it as poor.

**Overall Lifelong Learning and Enrichment Items**  
(mean item score 1 =Poor, 4=Excellent)



**Quality of Life and Living results**

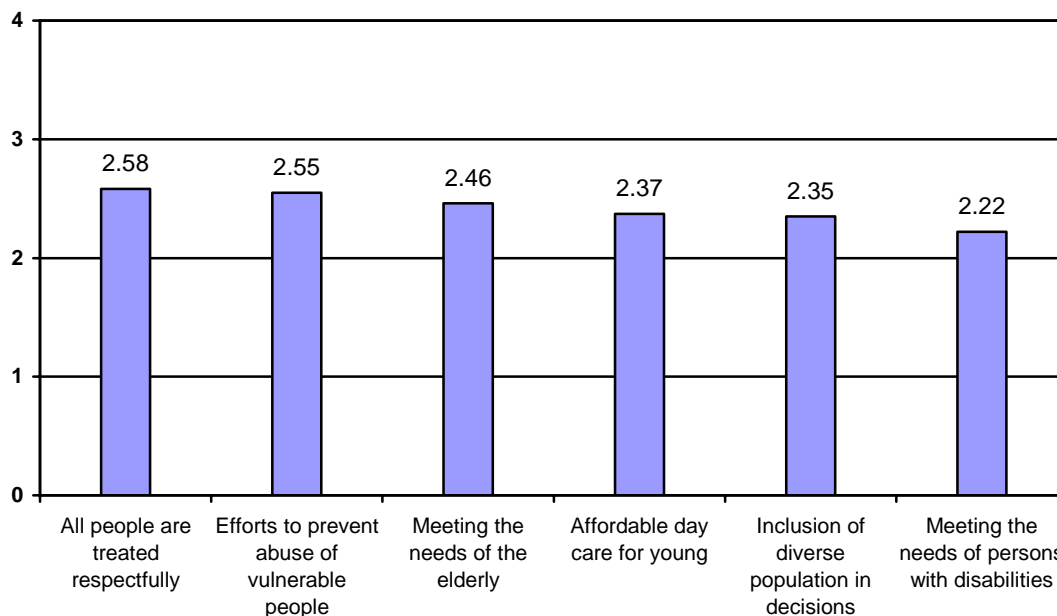
Again, as with all counties, Vernon County residents also rated the quality of library services as the highest of all the quality of life items asked. 75% rated the library services as good or excellent. In terms of library services, both Vernon County and Trempealeau County respondents both ranked library services somewhat lower than the other three counties. Physical recreation for young and old was the next ranked issue with 57% rating these opportunities as either good or excellent and 40% rating this area as fair or poor. Very closely matching Trempealeau County, Vernon County had nearly 51% felt that the availability of appealing leisure time opportunities that meet the interests of you and/or your family were good or excellent and 48% rating them as fair or poor. 56% felt that opportunities for youth to explore interest and positive activities were fair or poor and 43% felt that the these opportunities were good or excellent. Again, the last item in the ranking was arts and culture issue where 62% of respondents felt that opportunities were fair or poor, 37% felt that they were good and excellent.



**Care for Families Across the Generations results:**

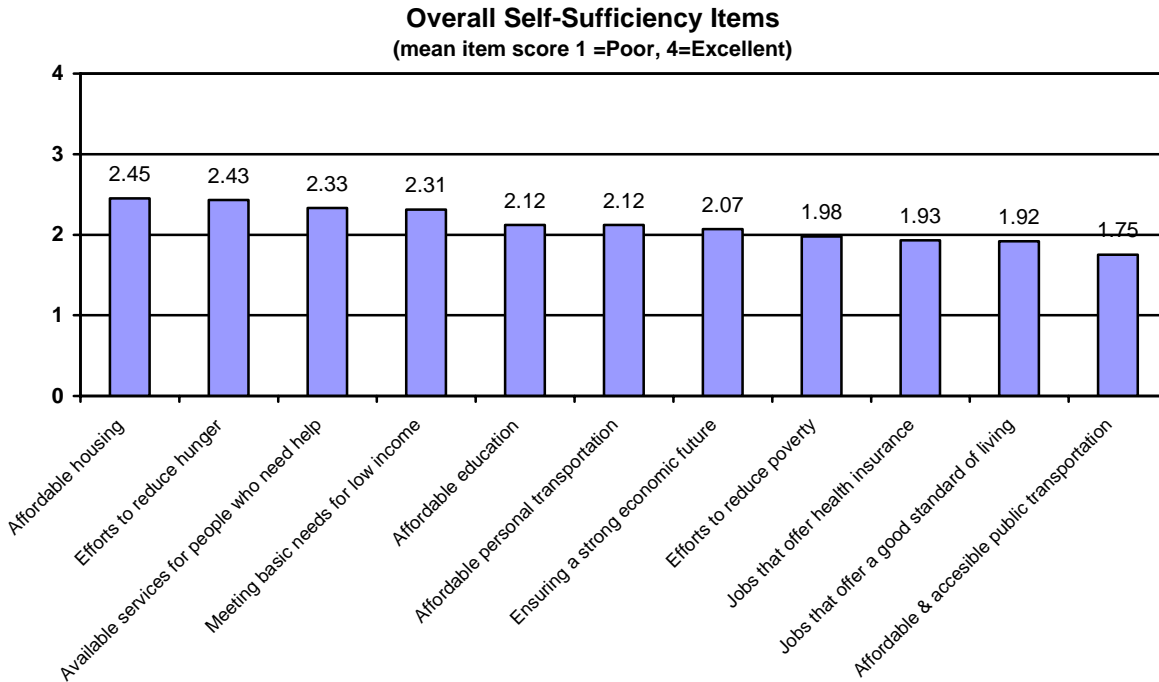
Vernon County respondents indicated that a place where all people are treated respectfully was the highest item; 60% rated this category as good or excellent. Efforts to prevent abuse or neglect of vulnerable people were rated as the second highest item; 56% responded that this item was good or excellent. Vernon County residents responded meeting the needs of persons with disabilities as the lowest rated item; 66% rated it as fair or poor. 54% rated people of different backgrounds being included in decision making as fair or poor. Vernon County residents the availability of affordable and safe day care lower than the region overall.

**Overall Care for Families Across the Generations Items**  
(mean item score 1 =Poor, 4=Excellent)



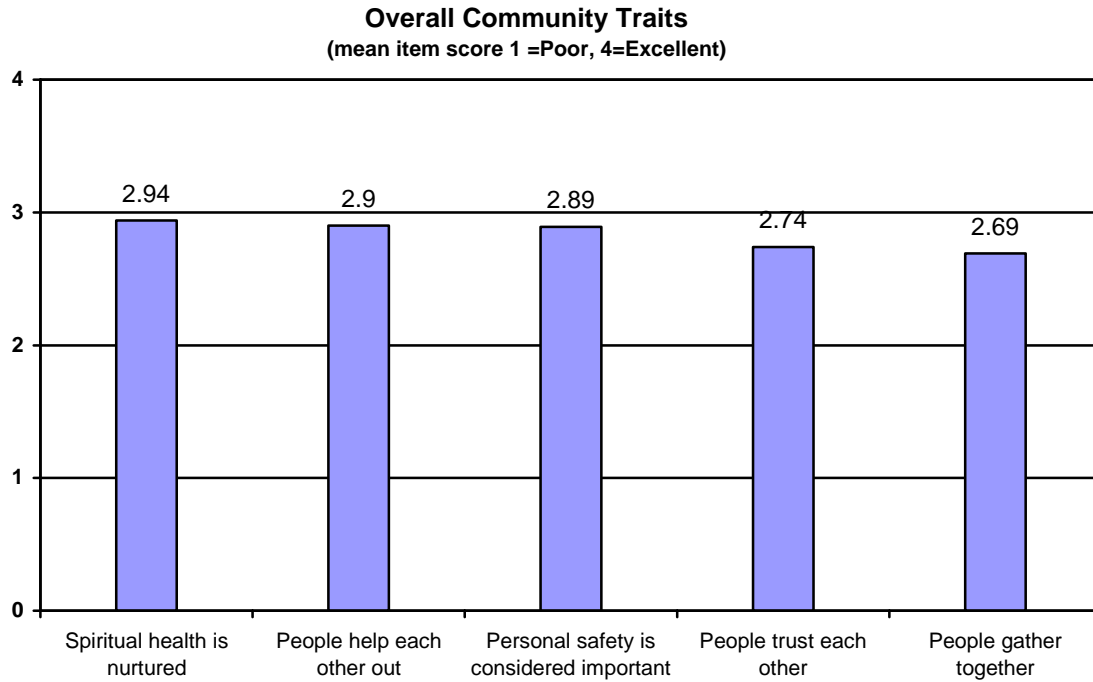
**Self Sufficiency Summary results:**

Vernon County residents rated efforts to reduce hunger as the highest of all the self-sufficiency items asked. 51% rated the efforts to reduce hunger as good or excellent. The availability of affordable, quality housing was rated second highest of the items with 50% indicating this item was good or excellent. The availability of services for people who need extra help (for example, government or non-profit services) in the community was ranked third highest by Vernon County residents with 47% rating this item as good or excellent. Residents in Vernon County rated affordable personal transportation higher than residents of other counties. Of all the items included, availability of jobs that offer health insurance, affordable and accessible public transportation, and your community as a place that provides jobs and career opportunities with wages and benefits that offer a good standard of living were rated the lowest. 82% indicated that the availability of jobs that offer health insurance as fair or poor, 79% of residents indicated affordable and accessible public transportation was fair or poor, and 77% indicated your community as a place that provides jobs and career opportunities with wages and benefits that offer a good standard of living as fair or poor.



**Community Traits results:**

Vernon County residents rated their community as a place where spiritual health of residents is nurtured as the highest of all the community trait items asked. 23% rated the nurturing of their spiritual health as excellent, and 52% rated it as good. A place where people help each other out when they have a problem was rated second highest of all the community trait items with 21.5% rated their community as excellent and 55% as good in the area of people helping each other out. Of the five counties, Vernon County residents had the second highest proportion of residents (following Houston County) reporting excellent ratings of their community being a place where people help each other out when they have a problem. A place where personal safety is considered important was the third highest ranked item under the community traits section. Of all the items included in the community traits section, Vernon County residents gave their community the lowest score in the area of being a place where people gather together as neighbors, friends, and families. 34% of Vernon County residents gave either poor (9%) or fair (25%) ratings to their community under of item. Vernon County was the second highest county to rate their community as a place where people gather together the poorest of all five counties, with the regional average being 8%.



**Issues:**

The highest rated item as a concern in the issues category was illegal drug use. Overall, 20% of respondents indicated this was a high concern (score of 4, out of 4). Alcohol use was the second highest rated item as a concern with 27% rating it as a 4 or high concern. (A larger number of people indicated that it was a low priority, which is why the overall score was lower than illegal drug use.) Tobacco use and obesity were rated a high concern by about 20% of participants. Prescription drug misuse and gambling were seen as the least significant problems with 5% rating prescription misuse and gambling as a high concern.

### Overall Issues

(mean item score 4=high/serious concern, 1 =low concern)

