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UVM Poll Finds Vermonters Share Values

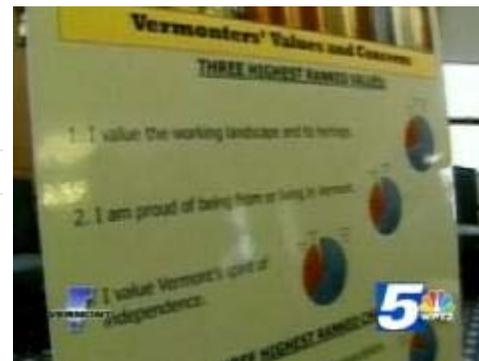
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Rising Cost Of Living A Major Concern

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BURLINGTON, Vt. -- Researchers at the University of Vermont released a survey Monday showing many residents share a common vision of their state.



[Economy On Minds Of Vermonters](#)

The random sample poll of 699 Vermont residents was conducted last spring, part of an 18-month UVM project to identify state goals and priorities for the years ahead.

Virtually all of those responding - 97 percent - said they value Vermont's "working landscape and its heritage" - a term researchers said refers to a strong agriculture and forestry economy. Ninety-four percent expressed pride in being from or living in Vermont. And 93 percent said they value the state's "spirit of independence."

"When asked to think beyond day-to-day politics, Vermonters share a high level of agreement in terms of values and concerns," said Sarah Waring of the Council on the Future of Vermont.

The poll also identified strong support for the state's small size and scale, the privacy it affords residents, and trust in neighbors. The findings serve to quantify attitudes long associated with Vermont.

Many survey findings were consistent across age groups and years of residency. That in itself is often considered a badge of honor, said Paul Costello of the Vermont Council on Rural Development. "It's the first thing people say," Costello noted.

The survey also asked respondents to identify top challenges facing the state.

Again, virtually all -- 96 percent - expressed moderate or high levels of concern over the increasing cost of living, including transportation, heat and electricity. Ninety-two percent worried about the health of Vermont farms, while 85 percent expressed concern with tax rates.

Vermont's system for financing public education, a shortage of affordable housing, and development of an adequate workforce for the future round out the list of Vermont's top challenges, the poll found.

The survey compliments a series of public "listening forums" held in each county of Vermont. The final session is scheduled for Thursday at 6 p.m. at the River Garden in Brattleboro.

UVM's Center for Rural Studies expects to release its final report next spring.

[Video: Economy On Minds Of Vermonters](#)

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