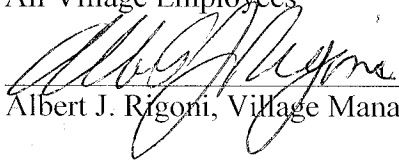


Memorandum

Village Manager's Office

TO: All Village Employees

FROM: 
Albert J. Rigoni, Village Manager

DATE: November 14, 2006

SUBJECT: 2006 CITIZEN SURVEY RESULTS

Attached for your information is a memo from John Lockerby and Ann Tennes summarizing the results of the Village's 2006 National Citizen Survey. As in 2003, the Village contracted with the National Research Center, Boulder, Colorado, to conduct a written citizen survey to gauge resident satisfaction with Skokie as a place to live.

I am pleased to report that the 2006 survey findings are, once again, overwhelmingly positive for the Village of Skokie. Of particular note are the high ratings that Village employees received in all areas of customer service. Ratings for employee knowledge, responsiveness, courtesy and overall impression were each higher than the 2003 ratings, with Skokie's national ranking in these areas close to or above the 90th percentile. I wish to extend my gratitude to every employee for your hard work on behalf of the Village and for clearly making customer service excellence a top priority.

Plans are underway for some employee celebration activities to recognize this outstanding customer service achievement, with details announced soon. The full results of the 2006 Citizen Survey is available via a new icon on the Novell-delivered applications window, and hard copies of the survey results will be placed in the literature rack in every Village building.

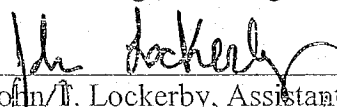
Thank you again for your outstanding efforts on behalf of the Village of Skokie.

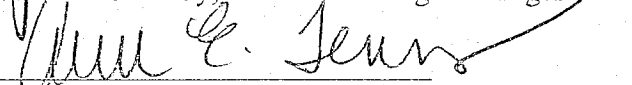
Memorandum

Village Manager's Office and Marketing Division

TO: Albert J. Rigoni, Village Manager

FROM:


John T. Lockerby, Assistant Village Manager


Ann E. Tennes, Director of Marketing and Communications

DATE: October 27, 2006

SUBJECT: 2006 CITIZEN SURVEY

This memorandum and the accompanying attachments provide significant details on resident responses to the Village's citizen survey administered in late summer 2006. The survey asked residents to rate life in the community and specific Village programs and services. As with the 2003 citizen survey, the Village contracted with the National Research Center (NRC), Boulder, Colorado, to conduct the mail survey. A total 1,200 surveys were mailed to randomly selected Skokie single- and multi-family households. The map included in this packet shows the geographic dispersion of selected households. A total 480 surveys were returned, for a 40% response rate.

Once again, the survey revealed that Skokie residents are, overall, highly satisfied with quality of life in the Village and with specific programs and services. Residents' high ratings place Skokie in the 93rd national percentile as a place to work, in the 87th percentile as a place to live and in the 82nd percentile for overall quality of life in the community. Another important normative comparison centers in the Public Trust ratings. Skokie ranks in the 97th national percentile relative to welcoming citizen involvement in government, in the 95th percentile relative to listening to citizens, in the 94th percentile for receiving good value for municipal taxes paid and in the 91st percentile relative to being pleased with the overall direction that the Village is taking.

Virtually all of Skokie's services rank above the norm in comparison to other jurisdictions participating in the NRC survey program. Skokie ranks in the 97th national percentile relative to satisfaction with services provided by the Village. Of the 26 services compared on a national level, 18 or 70% of Skokie's services rated in the 90th percentile or better. Skokie's emergency services received very high approval marks, as did street cleaning, sidewalk maintenance, garbage and yard waste collection, code enforcement, *NewSkokie* and the *SkokieNews* monthly e-newsletter.

The survey included many economic development-related questions and, overall, residents strongly favor Downtown Skokie redevelopment. In total, 86% of respondents said that investment in revitalizing Downtown Skokie is important, very important or essential

(32% ranked it essential). Some 88% rated having unique retail stores and restaurants as essential, very important and important – this category also received the lowest “not very important” rating at only 3%. Having a variety of housing options and national retail stores in Downtown Skokie also received high essential, very important and important ratings at 76% and 73%, respectively.

The 2006 survey responses do not evidence significantly increased interest in e-government services. While there was slight increased interest in a few of the five e-government questions, some questions also had increases to “very unlikely” responses. Of the five questions asked in this category, respondents only showed small increased interest in online payment for vehicle stickers and online request for service to report a problem.

In both 2003 and 2006, residents were asked to rate the success of various developments. Overall, 2006 respondents tended to rate developments lower than in 2003. For example, Westfield Old Orchard received an 85% very to somewhat successful rating in 2006, compared to a 96% very to somewhat successful 2003 rating. Downtown Skokie is a significant exception, receiving a 54% very to somewhat successful rating in 2006 and a 42% very to somewhat successful rating in 2003.

Relative to recycling services, some 58% of those polled said that changing recycling collection to once per week was essential, very important or important with 29% rating it as not very important. Conversely, changing garbage collection to once per week received a 28% essential, very important or important rating and a 62% not very important rating.

Finally, a few problem areas identified in 2003 remain issues of concern. For example, in 2006, 33% rated property taxes as a major problem, with only 22% giving this rating in 2003. By contrast, though, 67% of 2006 respondents strongly or somewhat agree that they receive good value for their Village property taxes. Unsupervised youth and traffic congestion showed small increases as “major problems”. Relative to service delivery, street repair received a 56% excellent/good rating in 2006, compared to a 59% excellent/good rating in 2003. Storm drainage excellent/good ratings showed significant improvement, receiving a 62% excellent/good rating in 2006 compared with a 52% excellent/good rating in 2003. Street cleaning received a 79% excellent/good rating in 2006, placing Skokie in the 95th national percentile for this service.

The following narrative summary and attachments provide much detail on the survey results. As in 2003, staff plans to utilize the data in developing strategic program and communications initiatives.

Survey question summary

The following summarizes the most significant survey findings:

Quality of life in Skokie – pages nine through 11

When asked to rate Skokie as a place to live, 92% gave the Village excellent or good marks. This equates to a 78 on the 100-point scale used by the NCS. No respondents gave Skokie poor ratings as a place to live or for overall quality of life in the community. Respondents gave Skokie an 87% excellent or good rating for overall quality of life. Nationally, Skokie ranks well above the norm in all Quality of Life ratings except for the question of rating your neighborhood as a place to live. In this instance, Skokie's 81% excellent or good rating, or 70 on the 100-point scale, is similar to the national norm. A total 89% of respondents rated Skokie as an excellent/good place to raise children. This represents a 10% increase from 2003.

Community characteristics ratings – pages 12 through 16

All of Skokie's community characteristics ratings are above the national norm. Openness and acceptance towards people of diverse backgrounds is in the 97th national percentile, followed closely by opportunities to attend cultural activities in the 93rd percentile and recreational opportunities in the 92nd percentile. The most significant shift is found in job opportunities ratings, which received a 45 on the 100-point scale compared with a 41 in 2003. In 2006, 44% of residents rated Skokie's job opportunities as excellent/good, compared with a 37% similar 2003 rating. Access to affordable quality housing also received greater positive ratings in 2006, with a 49 on the 100-point scale, which is up from the 46 received in 2003.

Ratings of potential problems – page 17

Property taxes, teardown of single-family homes, homelessness, unsupervised youth and drugs all had increases in "major problem" ratings in 2006. Property taxes had the highest increase, with a 33% 2006 "major problem" rating compared to a 22% rating in 2003. It is noteworthy, though, that 67% of 2006 respondents strongly or somewhat agree that they receive good value for their Village property taxes. Unsupervised youth had a 21% "major problem" 2006 rating, contrasted with 19% in 2003. Teardowns follow, with a 16% "major problem" 2006 rating compared to an 11% rating in 2003. Drugs received a 13% 2006 "major problem" rating and a 9% 2003 rating.

Growth ratings – page 18

The 2006 survey shows a decrease in the perception that Skokie's population is growing too fast, with 38% of respondents rating it as such as compared to a 41% "too fast" rating in 2003. In 2006, 37% rated retail growth as too slow, compared with a 33% 2003 rating. Finally, 62% of 2006 respondents rated jobs growth as too slow, compared to 70% who rated it such in 2003.

Overall sense of community safety – pages 20 and 21

Skokie residents' ratings of overall community safety relative to violent crime, property crime and fire are all above the national norm.

Sense of safety in specific areas – pages 22 and 23

A total 94% of 2006 survey respondents said they feel very to somewhat safe in their Skokie neighborhood during the day with 0% saying they feel very unsafe. This rating and those regarding daytime and after-dark safety in Downtown Skokie and in Skokie parks are all above the national norms. Relative to safety in their neighborhood after dark, 75% said they feel very to somewhat safe. This translates to a 72 rating on the 100-point scale, which is similar to the national norm.

Percentage of crime victims – page 24

Some 87% of those surveyed said they had not been a victim of a crime in Skokie during the past twelve months, the identical response received to the same question in 2003.

Community participation – page 25

This question assesses resident participation in specific Village of Skokie programs and services as well as some offered by other Skokie organizations, including the Library and Park District, and others that are more general, such as purchasing goods over the Internet. *NewSkokie* readership remains high, with 90% saying they or someone in their household read the newsletter at least once during the past year. While the 12% who said they attended a Village Board meeting marks a 4% decrease from 2003, 30% of the 2006 respondents report watching Village Board meetings on cable television, a 5% increase from 2003. An astounding 96% of 2006 survey respondents report visiting Downtown Skokie at least once during the past twelve months.

Public trust ratings – pages 27 through 29

All of the Village's public trust ratings are well above the national norm, with an average 94th percentile across all four question categories in 2006. Relative to welcoming citizen involvement in government, Skokie ranks 5th, or in the 97th percentile, out of a total 118 jurisdictions nationally.

Overall service quality ratings – pages 30 to 32

Skokie ranks in the 97th percentile nationally relative to quality of services provided by the Village. Some 89% of respondents rated Skokie's services as excellent or good, as compared with a 37% excellent or good rating for the federal government and a 50% excellent or good rating for the State of Illinois government.

Quality of services to special populations and other services ratings -- pages 33 to 42

All of Skokie's service ratings fall above the national norm. Particular areas of strength include emergency services, with Fire and Ambulance/Emergency Medical services in the 98th national percentile, Police services in the 92nd national percentile and Crime Prevention in the 92nd national percentile. Traffic enforcement rated in the 97th national percentile. Relative to Public Works services, street sweeping ranks in the 95th national percentile. This is consistent with APWA naming Skokie's street sweeping program as a national model. Garbage collection ranks in the 93rd national percentile, recycling ranks at 91% and yard waste pick up ranks in the 95th national percentile. Storm drainage continues to rank lower, as was consistent with 2003, in the 82nd national percentile (out of 160 jurisdictions). This is up considerably, though, from the 2003 38th national percentile ranking (out of 94 jurisdictions). Code enforcement ranks in the 93rd national percentile. Residents are also pleased with the quality of Skokie's drinking water and the amount of public parking, both of which rank in the 96th national percentile. Skokie's social services rank high relative to national norms, with services in to low-income people in the 97th national percentile.

Quality of services specific to Skokie -- pages 43 and 44

Skokie's public information communications continue to receive high marks from residents, with *NewSkokie* receiving a 75 rating on a 100-point scale, the Village web site receiving a 67 on a 100-point scale and *SkokieNews* electronic newsletter receiving a 72 on a 100-point scale. Fire prevention/code enforcement received a 74 and Fire prevention/public education received a 71 on 100-point scale. Residents ranked the overall competence of Police Department employees and Police officers' attitudes and behaviors towards citizens at 67 and 66, respectively. Both obtaining a building permit and communication on construction projects/road closures received 68 rankings.

Contact with the Village over the past year -- page 45

Some 67% of respondents indicated that they had either phone or in-person contact with a Village employee during the past year.

Customer service -- pages 46 and 47

Residents gave Village employees high marks on the 100-point scale in the following four areas: knowledge, 76; responsiveness, 75; courtesy, 74 and overall impression, 73. Each of the four category ratings is higher than the 2003 ratings, with an average increase of 1.75 on the 100-point scale. These very positive employee contact ratings place Skokie high relative to national norms: knowledge, 94th percentile; responsiveness, 96th percentile; courtesy, 87th percentile and overall impression, 91st percentile.

Likelihood of using e-government services – page 48 (Question 16a)

Again, residents expressed relatively neutral opinions about using online options when conducting Village business. For example, 38% of respondents said they are very to somewhat likely to use online payment of water bills, with 51% somewhat to very unlikely. Each of the five question categories had small increases in very to somewhat likely responses over the 2003 survey, with online application for a building permit and online payment of parking tickets receiving the highest increases. The 36% very to somewhat likely rating for online application for a building permit in 2006 is 6% higher than the same 2003 rating, and the 41% very to somewhat likely rating for online payment of parking tickets in 2006 represents a 5% increase from the same 2003 rating.

Importance of community issues or initiatives – page 48 (Question 16b)

Residents were asked to rate the importance of community issues or initiatives, with the scale ranging from “essential” to “not very important”. Redevelopment of the Downtown Skokie former Searle/Pfizer campus received an 83% essential/very important/important rating, with a 9% not very important rating. The next, more general question about Downtown Skokie redevelopment received an 82% essential/very important/important rating, with a 5% not very important rating. Traffic/transportation in the community received a 96% essential/very important/important rating, with a 1% not very important rating. For social issues, elderly care services and at-risk youth received the highest ratings, with 93% and 94% essential/very important/important ratings, respectively.

Success of commercial development – page 49 (Question 16d)

Most of the categories in this question are repeated from the 2003 survey. With exceptions for Downtown Skokie and West Dempster Street, 2006 survey respondents rated commercial developments less successful than did 2003 respondents. Westfield Old Orchard, for example, received an 85% very to somewhat successful rating in 2006, compared to a 96% similar rating in 2003. Rating the success of condominium/town home projects received a 58% very to somewhat successful rating in 2006, contrasting to a 67% similar 2003 rating. Success ratings increased for Downtown Skokie, with a 54% very to somewhat successful 2006 rating. This marks a 12% increase over the 42% very to somewhat successful 2003 rating. West Dempster Street received a 50% very to somewhat successful 2006 rating, up 1% from a 2003 similar rating. Two new 2006 questions rated the Skokie Northshore Sculpture Park and Main Street median enhancements. The sculpture park received an 83% very to somewhat successful rating, with Main Street receiving a 74% similar rating.

Importance of specific amenities or qualities for Downtown Skokie – page 49 (Question 16e)

In 2006, a number of questions were posed relative to specific amenities or qualities for Downtown Skokie. In order, they received the following essential/important/very important ratings:

- ◆ unique retail stores and restaurants, 88% (only 3% rated this not very important);
- ◆ variety of housing options, 76%;
- ◆ national retail stores, 73%;
- ◆ local trolley transportation system, 72%; and
- ◆ tourist destination for people beyond Skokie, 62%

Importance of investments or service changes for the Village of Skokie – page 50 (Question 16f)

The 2006 survey asked respondents to rate the importance of a number of potential investments or service changes. In order, they received the following essential/important/very important ratings:

- ◆ investment in revitalizing Downtown Skokie, 86%;
- ◆ install sidewalks in residential areas without sidewalks, 75%;
- ◆ change recycling service to once per week, 58%;
- ◆ investment in a new or remodeled Police station, 52%; and
- ◆ change garbage collection from twice weekly to once per week, 28%.

Open-ended Question

To ensure compliance with CALEA accreditation requirements, the Police Department repeated the open-ended question included in the 2003 survey: *In what ways do you think that the Skokie Police Department can improve its practices?* The top three predominant responses in the 2006 survey and a 2003 comparison include:

- ◆ Increased visibility/community policing
 - 31% - 2006
 - 18% - 2003
- ◆ No need to improve/good the way it is
 - 25% - 2006
 - 21% - 2003
- ◆ More polite/courteous
 - 18% - 2006
 - 21% - 2003

Other less predominant responses include enforcing speed limits/traffic violations, and more professional/knowledgeable, both 8%; more responsive to calls, 5% and less tickets/stops, 4%. All survey data is being shared with the Police Department for consideration in training and outreach programs.

Data analysis

Staff continues to analyze all information received in the survey to develop program recommendations, budget requests and other specific courses of action. The information gleaned from the survey is important to continuing the Village's ongoing Marketing and Communications Plan. Information specific to all Village departments will be shared with department and division directors for further consideration. It is likely that FY08 budget requests will include program enhancements resulting from survey data. Survey data also will be shared with appropriate outside agencies such as the Library and Park District.

Of particular interest in the survey response data are resident perceptions of and visions for Downtown Skokie. Responses indicate an anxiousness for and strong support of Downtown redevelopment. Staff is investigating opportunities for additional, issue-specific surveys relative to Downtown Skokie redevelopment.

Other survey follow up priorities include:

- ◆ Continued focus on *NewSkokie* as a primary means of communication to residents. Due to the continued high percentage of resident readership, more special editions and/or topical inserts might be warranted.
- ◆ Continued external outreach, particularly to residential real estate professionals, on how satisfied Skokie residents are with municipal services and quality of life in the community.
- ◆ Continued public education on the Village's long-standing property tax freeze. Public sentiment about property taxes remains somewhat negative, and further education is necessary to bolster understanding of Skokie's efforts to maintain property taxes at 1990 levels.
- ◆ Continued cautious consideration of some e-government programs.
- ◆ Continued public education on the Village's storm water management program.
- ◆ Continued investment in the annual Residential Street Resurfacing program. After results from the 2003 survey, program funding increased \$333,110 from \$1.13 million in Fiscal Year 2003 to \$1.46 million in the current budget.

Skokie residents will be informed of the survey results in the March 2007 edition of *NewSkokie*.

Geographic Subgroup Comparisons

The 2006 survey included a line in which residents indicated their zip code, and this is used as the basis for the Geographic Subgroup Comparisons report.

Demographic Subgroup Comparisons

The 2006 survey answers were cross-tabbed by demographic questions regarding length of residency, housing unit type, annual household income, age of respondent and gender of respondent. This is consistent with crosstabulations from the 2003 survey.

Conclusion

In 2006, as in 2003, Skokie residents report high degrees of satisfaction with their quality of life in the Village and with specific programs and services offered by the Village. Staff will utilize survey information regarding effective communication to bolster communication outreach. Further, staff will analyze programs and services, and corresponding communication outreach that did not receive high marks along with any notable issues found in the demographic and geographic subgroup comparisons. Data will also be shared with the Library and Park District.

Copies of the Report of Results/Normative Comparisons, Open-ended Question Responses, Geographic Subgroup Comparisons (divided by the Village's three zip codes) and Demographic Subgroup Comparisons are attached for your information.