

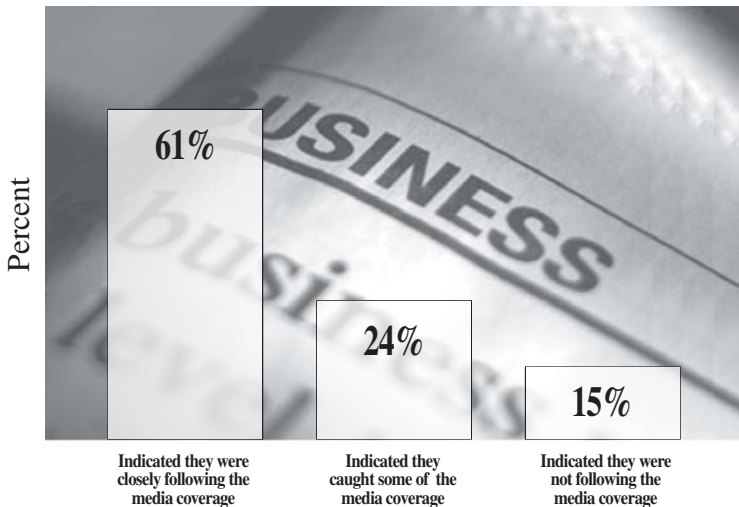


Poll STATION

With Linda Banister

In the fall of 2008, countries around the world experienced an economic downturn, which continued to decline at an alarming rate through the first half of 2009. The current economic recession has not only impacted Canada's neighbours and foreign counterparts, it has been felt by many Canadians including those living in Edmonton. This month's *Poll Station* focused on Edmontonians' perceptions of the current economic recession, their level of concern, and their opinions regarding the stimulus packages implemented by the provincial and federal governments to help boost the economy.

HAVE YOU BEEN FOLLOWING COVERAGE OF THE RECESSION?



To begin the survey, respondents were asked if they had been following the media coverage of the current economic recession. Sixty-one percent indicated they were closely following the coverage, while 24 percent caught some coverage, and 15 percent were not following the story.

HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED AND HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU?

Half (49 percent) of the respondents reported they had personally been affected by the current economic conditions. When asked to identify how they had been affected, employment issues such as job loss, reduced hours and lower income were mentioned by 41 percent of them, followed by a loss in investments (31 percent), a significant impact on retirement funds or pensions (14 percent), and increased cost of living (10 percent).

When asked how concerned they were about the current economic downturn, 61 percent of respondent were highly concerned, while approximately one quarter (22 percent) were moderately concerned, and 16 percent were not at all concerned. Those that were concerned most frequently referred to the high unemployment rate and job security (61 percent), followed by financial concerns such as inflation and less household income (21 percent), and government mismanagement (15 percent). Respondents who were not concerned about the economic recession mentioned the current downturn had not affected them, or felt the situation is part of the natural economic cycle and the economy will eventually recover.

ARE YOU AWARE OF GOVERNMENTS' STIMULUS PACKAGES

Next, respondents were asked if they were aware of the stimulus package that was implemented by the provincial government to help jumpstart the economy. Almost two-thirds (63 percent) were aware of the provincial stimulus plan, while 36 percent were not. Of those who were aware, over half (56 percent) felt these policies would help boost the economy, citing the creation of jobs and the government addressing the appropriate economic areas as reasons. Those who believed the stimulus package would not have an effect on the economy felt that the package was only a temporary solution, that there is lack of government planning, and that more help is needed.

Respondents were then asked if there was anything else that the provincial government could do to address the current economic recession. Creation of jobs (11 percent) and an increased focus on Albertan's needs such as financial support, incentives or rebates (seven percent) were suggested.

Two-thirds of respondents were aware of the federal government's stimulus plan implemented to jumpstart the Canadian economy. More than half (53 percent) of them felt that the federal package would boost the current economic downturn, most frequently stating it would increase the number of current jobs available. Respondents that mentioned the stimulus package would not help indicated that the federal plan was only a short term solution, and the package was too focused on business and not enough on Canadian citizens. When asked what else the federal government could do to address the recession, respondents suggested an increased focus on citizens (nine percent), more employment opportunities (seven percent), careful government spending (five percent), and a decrease in politicians' salaries (five percent). ✓

Monthly Poll Station Online Question

Visit www.edmontonians.com to register your opinion

Want a question included in the Edmontonians Poll?

Contact Linda at 780.451.4444 or e-mail lbanister@edmontonians.com.

Linda Banister is a certified management consultant and the owner of Banister Research and Consulting Inc., a full service provider of market research and program evaluation services. Visit www.banister.ab.ca.