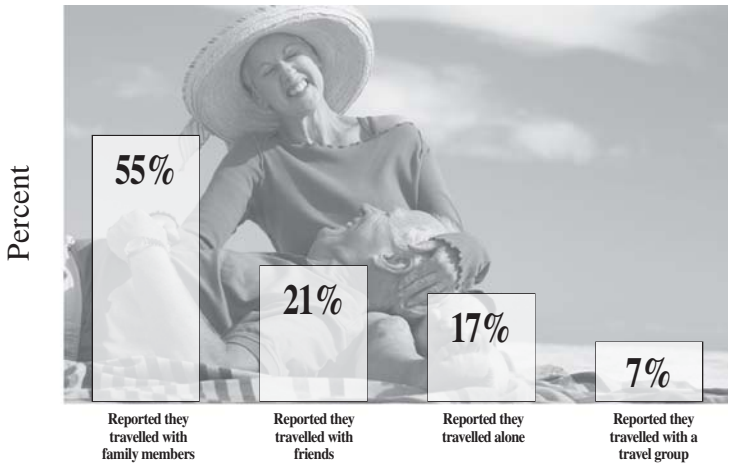
Poll STATION

With Linda Banister

As winter sets in, many Edmontonians dream of traveling south to exchange the ice and snow for the sun and the sand. However, this year's top newsmakers are sure to influence the choices of many eager adventurers. For this month's *Poll Station,* we asked Edmontonians whether security concerns, the global H1N1 scare, or the continuing economic downturn has had an influence on their travel plans.

HAVE YOU TRAVELED OUTSIDE CANADA IN THE PAST YEAR?



To begin the survey, respondents were asked whether they, or someone in their household, had traveled outside Canada within the past year. More than half (58 percent) of all respondents reported they had, while 42 percent indicated they had not. Those who traveled outside of Canada most frequently indicated they went with family (55 percent) or friends (21 percent). Of the remaining 24 percent, seven percent left the country with a travel group, while the remainder traveled alone (17 percent).

DO YOU PLAN TO TRAVEL OUTSIDE CANADA IN THE NEXT YEAR?

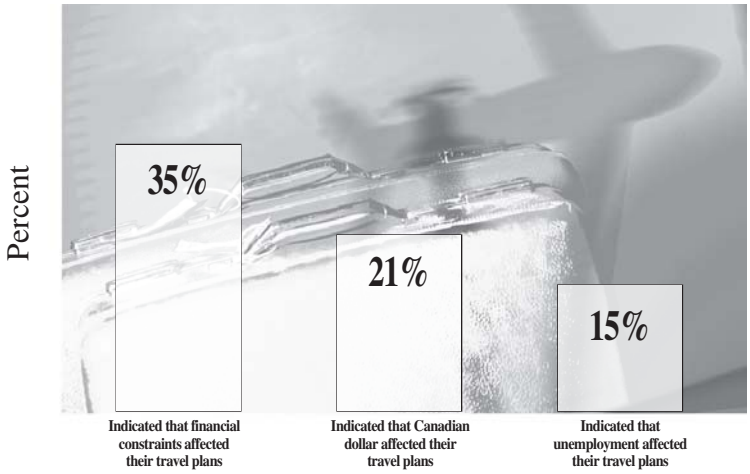
Next, respondents were asked whether they or someone in their household is planning to travel outside of the country within the next year. The majority (59 percent) indicated they are, while 39 percent are not, and two percent are unsure.

Of those planning to travel abroad, 83 percent considered health issues (i.e. H1N1 virus) in destination countries an important consideration when making their travel plans. Seventy-seven percent of those planning to travel also considered security issues (i.e. political unrest, crime, etc.) an important factor when deciding whether or not to travel.

WHERE DO YOU GET INFORMATION?

When asked where they would turn for information about passports, travel visas, currency rates, and other related issues before leaving on their trip, the majority of respondents reported they would use the Internet (59 percent). Respondents also frequently said they would use the Government of Canada website (17 percent), a travel agent or agency (15 percent), AMA Travel Services (nine percent), newspapers/TV (seven percent), or find out by word of mouth (five percent).

HAS THE ECONOMIC RECESSION AFFECTED YOUR TRAVEL PLANS?



One-third of respondents (34 percent) indicated the global economic recession has had an effect on their travel plans. Of these respondents, financial constraints (35 percent) and reduced income due to unemployment (15 percent) were most frequently mentioned as ways in which the economic recession has affected travel. Twenty-one percent of total respondents also indicated the value of the Canadian dollar has affected their plans. When asked how the value of the Loonie has impacted their travel plans, the strong dollar was most frequently mentioned as being a travel incentive (38 percent), followed by exchange rates being a factor in general (24 percent).

Finally, respondents were asked if any other factors have impacted their travel plans. While 24 percent indicated no, nine percent cited being too busy, six percent mentioned the general expense of travel, five percent stated personal health issues, four percent indicated having young children, and three percent referred to their age as other factors that have impacted their travel plans. √

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
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