



Informed, Connected, Engaged: Does it Matter?

2016 Tribune Participation Survey Snapshot

In March 2016, Network Impact administered a survey to 480 residents of south Wood County who actively participated in community meetings and opportunities connected with the Tribune Building Project. In all, 226 residents responded (47% response rate) to the online survey.

This snapshot presents highlights of the survey results, and demonstrates the impact of the Tribune process to date. Detailed findings are available online at incouragetcf.org. To request a copy, call 715.423.3863 or email hello@incouragetcf.org.

Informed & Engaged

In order to fully engage in their community, residents need access to relevant, creditable and timely information. As The Knight Commission’s *Informing Communities: Sustaining Democracy in the Digital Age* report² shared, information is as vital to the healthy functioning of communities as clean air, safe streets, good schools, and public health. Further, informed communities can effectively create connections, coordinate activities, and solve problems.



What did the survey reveal?

Residents reported that as a result of their participation in the Tribune process:

- 75% shared news or other information with another resident
- 70% are more informed about opportunities to become engaged in the community
- 68% are more informed about issues that affect the community³
- 51% received or accessed more local information
- 25% researched, shared knowledge about, or implemented environmental sustainability practices
- 13% researched, supported or started a new business or business-related initiative





Become Informed. Get Engaged.

Stay up-to-date on upcoming opportunities and the latest information at incouragecf.org. Email us at hello@incouragecf.org or call 715.423.3863 to be added to our email list. Your participation is important to our community's future. Together, we will realize a community that works well for all people.



About Network Impact

Network Impact provides strategy, tools, research and consulting expertise to accelerate and spread the development and use of networks to support positive social change.

Optimism for the Future of South Wood County

As findings of the Knight Foundation's 2010 *Soul of the Community*⁴ study show, there is a significant positive correlation between community attachment and economic growth. The more people are connected and attached to their place, the more invested they become in its future and the stronger their economies become, as a result.

What did the survey reveal?

Residents were asked to respond to a series of statements about how their participation in the Tribune process affected their view of, and connection to, their community:

78% are more optimistic about the future of their community³

77% have an increased sense of pride in their community³

72% have an increased sense of responsibility to do their part to make their community a better place to live³

Strengthened Social Capital & Networks

Social capital describes the different types of social connections in our lives and the benefits they bring. Research on social capital¹, led by Robert Putnam, Professor of Public Policy at Harvard University, shows that communities with higher levels of social capital are more likely to have positive outcomes in areas ranging from education to economic growth. And, the people living in these communities are likely to be happier, healthier and have a longer life expectancy.

What did the survey reveal?

A large share of residents reported that, because of their involvement in the Tribune process:

86% met another resident for the first time

63% strengthened a connection/made a new friend in the community

65% have an increased overall sense of connection to other residents³

Obstacles to Engagement

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of a number of obstacles that keep them from being as involved in their community as they would like. The top three obstacles people cited as most significant to their participation were:

46% time

28% lack of trust in 'business as usual' community decision-making processes

24% lack of information or not knowing how to begin

Why does this matter?

Beyond a common barrier of time, these findings invite inquiry and examination of how we address community issues and take action. How do individuals participate in decisions that affect their lives? How do institutions receive input from the broader community and make decisions? What barriers have been encountered, and do they still exist today?

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¹ <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/programs/saguaro/>

² The Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy *Informing Communities: Sustaining Democracy in the Digital Age* report, accessed at http://www.knightfoundation.org/media/uploads/publication_pdfs/Knight_Commission_Report_-_Informing_Communities.pdf.

³ Percentage total based on responses of 'agree' or 'strongly agree'

⁴ John S. and James L. Knight Foundation *Soul of the Community* report, accessed at <http://www.knightfoundation.org/sotc/>.