How Do We Educate Them? Pineville, LA: A Case Study

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Background

- 80% of U.S. population live in cities
- Southeastern U.S. experiencing rapid population growth
  - Land is plentiful
  - Taxes and cost of living are low
  - Weather is temperate
- 33% increase in urban area growth from 1990-2000
- Increase predicted for next 50 years

Ultimate Outcome

- Avoid problems associated with urbanization before they are evident
  - Heat island effect
  - Stormwater run-off
  - Air pollution
- Educate citizens about benefits of natural resources in the urban environment

Objectives

- Develop U.F. surveying protocol
    - For educators, extension agents, non-profits
- Assess need for natural resource education
- Know what needs to be stressed and how to best get the message across

Welcome to
City of
PINEVILLE
Louisiana

TREE CITY USA

LOUISIANA'S CLEANEST CITY
2003-2004

BIRD SANCTUARY

EXXON

Pineville Study Interests

- Understand what Pineville residents think about their urban forest
  - Are their natural resources highly regarded?
- Where do they get their information?
- How do they best learn and understand this information?
- What motivates them to action?
- What prevents them from getting info?

Methodology

- Telephone survey of Pineville residents
- N = 300 adults (18 years and older)
- Tree Board interests:
  - Thoughts about land development in city
  - Importance of urban forest in Pineville
  - Level of awareness of tree benefits
  - How to best market the information
- Interview conducted by MRI Research

Methodology

- Demographics
  - Gender
  - Ethnicity
  - Education level
  - Number of people in household
  - Section of town they reside
  - Length of time lived in Pineville

Methodology

- Survey: 6 sections

  - Sections 1-4
    - Importance/condition of city services
    - Rate level of land development in city
    - Role of tree preservation in land development
    - Importance/condition of landscaping in parking lots
    - Citizen's knowledge of tree benefits

Methodology

- Survey: 6 sections
  - Section 5: Technology Transfer
    - Where do you find your information?
    - What is the best method for you to understand?
    - What motivates you to get information?
    - What prevents you from getting information?
  - Section 6
    - Tree Board knowledge and projects
    - Volunteer interests

Technology Transfer Questions

- 1. Which of the following sources of information about trees and tree care is most important to you?
  - Internet
  - Talking with family and friends
  - Local extension agent
  - Local workshops
  - Tree trimming company
  - Other (please specify)

Technology Transfer Questions

- 2. Which of the following items is the most preferred method for you to understand about trees and tree care?
  - Written words (i.e. brochures, periodicals, etc)
  - Video (i.e. cassettes, TV, DVD, etc)
  - Hands-on exercises (i.e. workshops or volunteer activities)
  - Combination of the three
  - Other (please specify)

Technology Transfer Questions

- 3. What is the primary motivational factor for you in obtaining information about trees and tree care?
  - You desire a prettier space
  - You have environmental concerns
  - You want to lower utility bills
  - Your neighbors are planting trees
  - Other (please specify)

Technology Transfer Questions

- 4. What is the primary factor preventing you from gaining information about trees and tree care?
    - You are not interested in the subject
    - You do not have the time
    - You do not have the money
    - You do not know where to find the information
    - You have no way to get the information
    - Other (please specify)

Expected Results

- Based on Knoxville, TN survey and local knowledge
- City trees and tree maintenance is of less importance than other city services and land development
- Level of economic development tends toward not being enough
- Citizens would support regulating land development for tree conservation

Expected Results

- Trees and landscaping around city is generally important
- Trees mainly contribute to Pineville's aesthetic beauty
- The internet and talking with friends is the main method of information gathering
- Prettier space motivates information needs
- No time and not knowing where to find information prevents information gathering

Questions and Discussion

- How do we improve this survey to get the information we need?

- What other questions need to be asked so we can better serve the urban public?

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