

## Survey says: Vermontes prize working landscape

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BURLINGTON, Vt. --A new survey conducted under the auspices of the Council on the Future of Vermont says Vermonters prize independence, community and a working landscape and that the most important challenges facing them are affordability and the economy, officials said Monday.

The telephone poll, commissioned by the Vermont Council on Rural Development and conducted by the University of Vermont's Center for Rural Studies, surveyed people over 18 years of age in 699 randomly-selected households across the state in March.

It found:

--97 percent value Vermont's working landscape and the heritage around it.

--94 percent take pride in being from or living in Vermont.

--93 percent valued the state's spirit of independence.

Also high on the priorities list: privacy, trust in neighbors and valuing the size and scale of Vermont.

The results reinforce much of what's been said by people to the Council on the Future of Vermont as it travels the state soliciting input, according to Sarah Waring, project manager for the Vermont Council on Rural Development

The Council is engaged in an 18-month effort that will culminate with a report to the Vermont Legislature next year.

"These results, for us, really verify a lot of what we've been hearing anecdotally from community members as we travel," Waring said Monday. "This is a halfway point for the Future of Vermont program and gives us a clear sense of what Vermonters value, what they think our biggest challenges are and where they'd like us to take action on."

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On the Net:

Council on the Future of Vermont: <http://www.futureofvermont.org> ■