

## QUESTIONS TWO, THREE AND FOUR COMBINED THEMES IN PRIORITY ORDER

Category	Q-2 Theme What do you like most about living in the Koochiching County area?	Q-3 Theme What don't you want to lose as Koochiching County changes over time?	Q-4 Theme If you were in charge, what would you do to improve the Koochiching County area?	Total Comments	Q-4 Total Comments
<b>Recreation</b>		The County wants to maintain and grow programs and recreational activities for youth and adults. (41)	Both variety and choices indoor and outdoor throughout the county. Most desired included trails, campgrounds, rock wall, water access, YMCA/recreation center, community pool. We need to better promote, support and expand opportunities already in place e.g. expand offerings (concessions) at City Beach. (236)	277	236
<b>Employment</b>			Overwhelming need for more good living wage jobs with benefits, especially for young and families. Diversification of jobs, skill levels and union/non-union jobs. Suggestions included casino and prisons. There is also a need for job skills training. (195)	195	195
<b>Retail</b>			There is a strong desire for better local shopping opportunities. This includes national retailers such as Target, Kohl's, Sam's Club, Walmart and Cabela's. There was also mention of a wide variety of specialty shops/mom and pop stores. People do not want any more dollar stores (192)	192	192

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<b>Government</b>			Citizens expect governmental entities and officials at all levels to cooperate, be transparent and work together for the benefit of our county. A broad dissatisfaction was specifically expressed with International Falls city council and mayor. Citizens expressed their awareness and dissatisfaction with the continuing conflict and dysfunction. Zoning and regulations are an issue. Government at all levels need to support and encourage collaborations between existing economic development organizations (186)	186	186
<b>Business</b>	Koochiching County has a resource based economy supporting a wide variety of businesses. (24)	Koochiching County wants to maintain and grow local businesses. Small businesses are an important aspect of our local flavor. (150)	Overall we would really like to see diversification and more innovative businesses for the county. Some suggestions included brewery, outfitters, water bottling, and Internet cafes for outlying areas, aquaponics, cold weather businesses, data entry centers, and spa. A need was also expressed for improved customer service and general business and employee training (148)	322	148
<b>Services/Social Issues (Q4)</b>		We don't want to lose the level of human services available for those in need. The volunteer services	A need was expressed for more social programs that would help with childcare including after hour care, drug/alcohol abuse and welfare. The communities need to involve more members, promote open-	168	146

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		such as fire fighters, first responders, and the humane society are valued. (22)	mindfulness and inclusiveness. (146)		
<b>Education</b>	Respondents feel there is a strong educational systems with varied learning options. (23)	Communities value their own independent school districts as a valuable resource both to individuals and to the area as a whole. (139)	<p>Increase programs at RRCC, especially Vo-Tech, such as law enforcement, cosmetology, and welding and explore the possibility of four year programs. Improve facilities and explore addition of daycare. Encourage better collaboration between school districts and RRCC.</p> <p>Expand and improve educational/extra-curricular opportunities for k-12 learning particularly in ISD 361. Improve and update facilities especially Bronco Arena. Increase expectations and standards for graduates (124) (Two major themes in this category)</p>	286	124
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Respondents feel that residents have access to public services and infrastructure. (22)	Our transportation connections such as the airport and highways are important. The public and historic buildings along with infrastructure services such as water, sewer,	<p>Fix, improve and maintain roads, highways, sidewalks throughout county. Highway 53 should become 4 lanes. Sewer should be extended. A boardwalk should be created along the riverfront. (80)</p> <p>Develop a transportation system county-wide and to surrounding areas. (15)</p>	186	120

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		internet, cellular, and electric are all valued. (44)	High speed Internet and cell phone service need to be improved and expanded throughout the county. (25) (original category: Technology)		
<b>Tourism</b>		We value the bass tournament, VNP, State, and County parks as important contributors to tourism. (46)	Better and increased promotion of VNP and the other great resources already available, summer and winter. Lodging with amenities is needed and waterside RV/camping. There is a desire for high-end lodging as well as a hotel with a waterpark/pool. Expand water access, provide family vacation opportunities. Re- open Grand Mound. (120)	166	120
<b>Entertainment</b>			A need for increased entertainment options for all ages, including youth, families, young adults and seniors. Specific requests included: casino, amusement park, splashpark, waterpark, music and theater, nightclub (104)	104	104
<b>Economy</b>	Respondents feel Koochiching County has a low cost of living. (23) (original category: Cost of Living)	We support all economic development efforts to diversify our economy. Responsible leadership needs to maintain a tax structure that will not force people out of	Diversify economic base by being open to innovative business ideas as well as supporting existing local businesses. Desire for competitive pricing for goods and services (36)  Technology related business opportunities should be encouraged (25) (original category: Technology)	222	98

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		<p>their homes. (16)</p> <p>We don't want to lose any more jobs or career opportunities; keeping the young people in our community is important. (85)</p>	<p>Incentives need to be provided to attract and retain businesses and young people. (37) (original category: Incentives)</p>		
<b>Restaurants</b>			<p>There is a desire for more and varied dining opportunities, many franchise restaurants were named (91)</p>	91	91
<b>Industry</b>		<p>The communities do not want to lose Boise and the associated satellite industries. The Family-sustaining, well-paying jobs are important to the county (49) (original category: Boise)</p>	<p>Explore all potential industries to diversify and increase our area's job base. We need to work at changing the perception among both residents and industries that the area will only support unionized industry. Industries suggested include plasma gasification, skidoo, greenhouses, Polaris, fisheries and water bottling. FTZ or Tax-free zone needs to be ready for development. Establish a fair and transparent process for new business opportunities that avoids local protectionism (87)</p>	136	87
<b>Aesthetics</b>			<p>People felt a need for improved aesthetics and general appearance throughout the county. Cleanup of blight, beautification of Hwy 53, and by adding</p>	80	80

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			plantings, benches, signage etc. Overall, a more welcoming, pleasant appearance. (80)		
<b>Health Care</b>	Respondents have access to health care services (5) (original category: Medical Services)	Koochiching county does not want to lose its health care services and facilities. (56)	Improvement is needed in facilities and availability of services such as orthodontics, dialysis, dermatology, mental health, obstetrics, radiation and cardiology. Nursing home/dementia care is needed throughout the county, with specific concerns expressed about the closing of Northome's facility. Cooperation is needed among all healthcare institutions (80)	141	80
<b>Youth Activities</b>		School and community activities and events, especially for children are an important part of our lifestyle (16) (original category: Activities)	Provide teen centers, under 21 club, Boys & Girls clubs, additional programs for teens and kids. Provide more opportunities for youth and young people to participate in the community, give youth a voice (66)	82	66
<b>Environment</b>		We do not want to lose the pristine beauty and serenity of the natural environment. The continued good management of wildlife and fish will protect our future.	Definite concern about eliminating the mill smell. Wetlands are an issue, with varied views. Strong desire to preserve and protect the natural resources we have and utilize them in a sustainable manner. (38)	91	38

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		(19)  Preserve a healthy environment of good water quality and clean air. (34) (original category: Pollution)			
<b>Safety</b>	Residents feel Koochiching County is a safe place. (62)	We appreciate our law enforcement entities. We feel that we live in a low crime area that is safe and secure and is a good environment for raising children. (44)	Better snow removal on streets and sidewalks. Stricter enforcement of drug and alcohol issues in public areas. Better outdoor lighting throughout the county (35)	141	35
<b>Identity</b>			Some feel our area is not viewed as very welcoming to outsiders. We need to learn to embrace both union and non-union employers. We need to promote, capitalize upon and be proud of what we have and can offer. We need to embrace the future and be open-minded to change. We need to better support our communities within our county (31)	31	31
<b>Arts and Culture</b>		We do not want to lose the Backus Community Center and RRCC and their	People really value Backus and arts in general and would like to see more attention and funding provided to area arts and culture.	79	30

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		support of arts and cultural activities. (49)	Such as music, theater, artists' colony, sculpture and area-focused museums (30)		
<b>Population</b>		A strong growth pattern to increase our population and offer opportunities for our young people to remain in or return to our communities. (23)	We need to stop the decline in population. We need to initiate growth by attracting the younger generation with jobs and opportunities, as well as making the area a desirable place to live. The senior population need to be kept by providing additional services (30)	53	30
<b>Housing</b>			Countywide there is a need for more quality and affordable housing choices for all. Convert AB into housing. Add waterfront and golf course options such as condos (24)	24	24
<b>Border Issues</b>			Streamline border crossing process and ease regulations. Advocate for the inclusion and cooperation of cross border activities. Pursue a new port of entry. (13)	13	13
<b>Access/Rights</b>		Northhome doesn't want to lose the local representation and rights including convenient access to public land and water, and existing private property rights (Combine theme?) The county		89	0



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		<p>communities do not want to lose public access to lands and waters. (43)</p> <p>We don't want to lose our rights to use public land and waters. We do not want any additional restrictions or regulations on our freedom. (46)</p>			
<b>Community</b>	Respondents have a strong sense of community, family and friends. (214)	Our communities do not want to lose our caring, close-knit small town atmosphere. We want to maintain our volunteerism, camaraderie, and grassroots community efforts for those in need. (101)		315	0
<b>Nature</b>	Access to nature and outdoor activities are extremely important to residents of Koochiching County	The natural beauty of the area with its pristine and unspoiled up-north feel is an important aspect of		926	0

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	(768)	our lifestyle. (142)  The slow-paced, close to nature lifestyle that we enjoy in this county is important to us. (16) (original category: Lifestyle)			
<b>Outdoors</b>		We do not want to lose hunting and fishing as well as other opportunities for outdoor recreation. (60)		60	0
<b>Pride/Proximity</b>	Respondents appreciate having a variety of experiences including going to Canada within a short commute (35) (original category: Proximity)	We take pride in our unique historic order location and our national notoriety as the Icebox of the Nation. (18)		53	0
<b>Rural Area</b>	Residents like living in a small town rural area (232)	We want to preserve the quiet, peaceful small town feel of our communities. (87)		319	0