"Because Knowing Beats Guessing"

To: Board of County Commissioners
From: Tollie Mitchell, Insight Research

RE: Citizen Survey Results

In December of 2012, Insight Research mailed 4000 surveys to randomly selected citizens of New Hanover County. Of the 3600 surveys that were delivered, 567 (or ~16%) were returned.
The survey included questions related to respondent demographics, and attempted to measure citizen opinions regarding:

- Living in New Hanover County;

- Effectiveness of New Hanover County government;

- Customer service given by various County department; and

- Citizens' priorities for the future

I have included a few items of note on the next page. The attached report summarizes the responses received in more detail. When reading the results, it is important to bear in mind that the survey utilizes a 7 point scale where 1= Strongly Disagree and 7=Strongly Agree (You might think of the as 1= Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Slightly Disagree, 4= Neutral or Ambivalent, 5= Slightly Agree, 6= Agree, 7= Strongly Agree).

A "good" score for a local government on a general question would be an average rating at or above a 5.2. For specific questions / experiences, we like to see an average score of 5.5 or greater. Typically, we see higher averages for safety and law enforcement related questions, and would like to see closer to an average score of 6.0 or above.

Ideally, we would like to also see a high degree of similarity in response (a low standard deviation). A "good" standard deviation would be approximately 1.2 units on a 7 point scale.
In addition to the actual responses, we also examined ratings differences between subpopulations or groups. In this case, only those differences that are meaningful ("statistically significant") are identified.

Finally, when you see questions that are highly correlated or are predictive of other questions (regression), it is important to understand that this **does not** imply actual causality. It would be more accurate to say that as one question changes, the other changes similarly.

Sincerely yours,
Insight Research, Inc.

Tollie L. Mitchell
Program Director

SUMMING UP – AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although this list is not exhaustive, here are some of the items from your recent survey that we thought were interesting and/or important. Please review the entire report, and read from your many written comments to gain additional insight.

Items of Note:

➢ Of about 3600 surveys delivered to citizens in New Hanover County, we received 567 completed surveys for a response rate of 16%. This is more than enough surveys to achieve the goals of this project. However, the return rate might have been higher had the survey not been conducted during the holiday season

➢ About 80% of respondents use the internet at least once daily (p. 7).

➢ 74% or respondents use the Web; 46% use text; 33% use Facebook (p. 9).

➢ 12% of respondents have lived in the County under 5 years; 56% for over 15 years (p. 10).

➢ 39% of respondents do not live in a town or city limit. 54% live in Wilmington. (p. 11)

➢ 52% of respondents are female and 48% are male.

➢ About 29% of respondents are under age 50; 35% are 50-64; 37% are over age 65 (p. 13).

➢ 17% of respondents rent their home while 83% own their home.

➢ 21% of respondents are business owners or self-employed.

➢ 59% of respondents have a BA/BS degree or higher (p. 17).

➢ 6% of respondents are black; 92% are white (p. 18).

➢ 17% of respondents have a household income under 30K; 22% were 30-49K; 22% were 50-74K; 14% were 97-99K; 26% were over 75K (p. 19).

➢ The respondents generally enjoy living in New Hanover County and would recommend it to others as a great place to visit or live. They do not however feel as positively about the services provide by the County (p. 22).

➢ Customers of the County's departments generally felt good about their most recent experience (p. 28). Satisfaction ratings naturally varied by department (p. 30).

➢ For most services, the respondents who had actually used that particular service gave higher ratings than those who not had used it (p. 44).

➢ When asked to check their one top priority from a list of nine subject areas, the items checked most often were: (Please see page 48 for the actual wording.)

> - Strong economy
> - Planned environment
> - Safety, secure community
> - Prepare all students for success

- We found a number of differences in responses for various groups of respondents beginning on page 49. Just two examples among many …

  - Longer time residents gave higher ratings than did newer residents for the quality of the libraries.
  - Renters rated social services and land use planning higher than did homeowners.

- While conducting multiple regression analysis, we discovered that a prime predictor of whether or not someone would recommend the County as a great place to live was *their rating of the Senior Resource Center*.

- You received hundreds of comments that should help you as you interpret the information in this report.

We hope this information will help you make good decisions. If you have any questions at any time, please let me know. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Tollie Mitchell, Program Director
Insight Research, Inc.