WE ASKED ABOUT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, HERE'S WHAT YOU SAID:

62
INTERVIEWS

6
RURAL TOWNS

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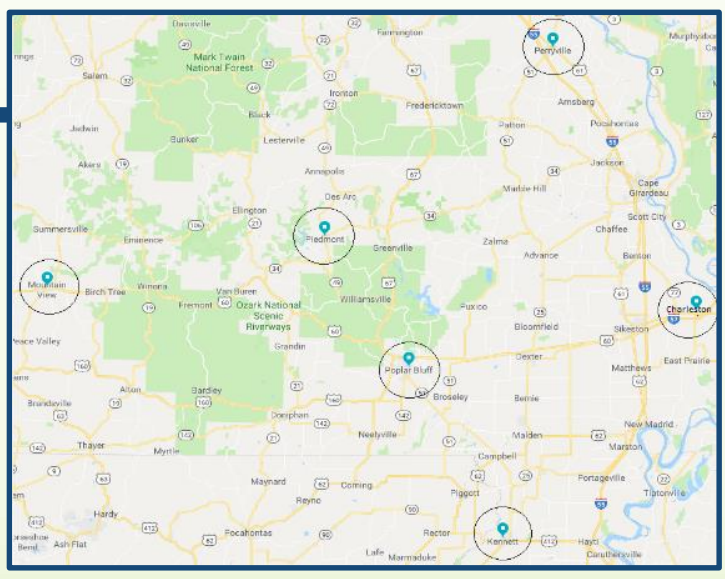
PURPOSE

We spoke to 62 adults living in Charleston, Kennett, Mountain View, Perryville, Piedmont, and Poplar Bluff about the resources available for exercise in their towns, what motivates them to be active, how they like to be active, and how we can do a better job of promoting physical activity for everyone. These phone calls were recorded, transcribed, and qualitatively analyzed. Here is what we found out.

- Piedmont, population 1,951
- Mountain View, population 2,655
- Charleston, population 5,636
- Perryville, population 8,460
- Kennett, population 10,399
- Poplar Bluff, population 17,070



RESOURCES IN RURAL MISSOURI

Overall, people living in rural Missouri had someplace in their town or city where they could walk and exercise. Towns with more people and less poverty tended to have more places for physical activity, and more organizations promoting exercise for residents. Popular places for physical activity include:

- Recreation centers
- Gyms
- School tracks
- Health centers
- Parks and walking paths
- Neighborhood sidewalks

WHAT MOVES SOUTHEAST MISSOURI?

Different motives for exercise

As seen in the quotes below, people are motivated to exercise for many different reasons that include weight loss, health, stress relief, to be social, or just to keep up with the kids. People walking on trails more often said social and mental wellbeing were reasons to exercise. Those who get their exercise in other ways were more likely to be motivated by weight loss and physical health. What motivates you to exercise?

"It relieves a lot of stress for your mind. It gives you time to think about stuff and it's something to do. I do it a lot because it clears my mind."

"Well me I have to do it every day because I'm a diabetic and I don't take the medicine so I have to do exercise every day."

"We're not fanatics or anything by any means, but we really do like being active, just to ... for social reasons also, but we want to try to stay as healthy as we can."

Different ways to be physically active

We heard from people who were physically active in all kinds of ways! Some preferred to work out in a gym, some went for walks in the neighborhood or on trails, and others got their exercise in by doing yard work or chores around the house. While some people liked to exercise alone, others got active in groups with friends and family. We found that people who were walking on the trails preferred to walk with others, while people usually went to the gym to exercise on their own.

PROMOTING COMMUNITY FITNESS

1. **Enjoyment**

Time is precious, and no one wants to waste it on something boring. Making exercise enjoyable by including friends, listening to music, or appreciating the scenery adds more value to this time.

2. **Convenience**

When resources for physical activity are close by, accessible, and Indoors, making exercise part of a regular routine is easier to manage.

3. **Education**

Most community stakeholders agreed that educating the community on the physical and mental health benefits of exercise is key to increasing physical activity.

4. **Events**

People love family focused fairs with competitions, community wellness resources, and food. Rural communities come out to support one another, so events with social causes are a particularly good way to engage everyone in physical activity.