

**THE NORTHEAST OHIO BAROMETER  
OF  
ECONOMIC ATTITUDES**

**February 3, 2004**

*Conducted by:*  
**The Gallup Organization**

*In Partnership with:*  
**The Center for Regional Economic Issues, Weatherhead School of Management  
Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University  
The Cleveland Foundation  
The Greater Cleveland Growth Association  
Kleinhenz & Associates  
The GAR Foundation**

## **Background**

The Northeast Ohio Barometer of Economic Attitudes (NEO Barometer) is an annual opinion survey of residents from Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage, Stark and Summit counties, measuring the public's perception of the region's general economic development progress, as well as their opinions on regionalism and economic development initiatives. The initial NEO Barometer was conducted in 2002. Due to methodological changes, precise comparisons of results between the 2002 and 2003 surveys are difficult to make. Going forward, the 2003 Barometer data will serve as the baseline for tracking changes in attitudes over time.

The primary goal of the NEO Barometer is to provide meaningful information to civic leaders regarding what the public knows and perceives. The Barometer is designed to provide a reliable and objective opinion-gauge of the people in this region.

The 2003 NEO Barometer was conducted by The Gallup Organization in partnership with the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at Cleveland State University, the Center for Regional Economic Issues at Case Western Reserve University, the Greater Cleveland Growth Association, Kleinhenz & Associates, The Cleveland Foundation, and the GAR Foundation, and in consultation with the Stark Development Board, the Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce, the Lorain County Chamber of Commerce, the Akron Community Foundation, and The Community Foundation of Greater Lorain County.

## **Methodology**

The Gallup Organization conducted 2,015 interviews in Northeast Ohio from November to December 2003. Roughly 200 interviews were conducted in each of 8 counties in the region<sup>1</sup>, including Cuyahoga, Lorain, Medina, Summit, Portage, Geauga, Lake, and Stark counties. An additional 203 interviews were conducted among residents of the city of Cleveland and 204 among Akron residents. The data were weighted to reflect Census estimates for the region, based on county, gender, age, and race.

All sample surveys are subject to the potential effects of sampling error, a divergence between the survey results based on a selected sample and the results that would be obtained by interviewing the entire population in the same way. The chance that sampling error will affect a percentage based on survey results is mainly dependent upon the number of interviews on which the percentage is based. In ninety-five out of 100 cases, results based on national samples of 2,000 interviews can be expected to vary by no more than 2.2 percentage points (plus or minus the figure obtained) from the results that would be obtained if all qualified adults were interviewed in the same way. For results based on counties, city of Cleveland, or city of Akron, where the sample size was n=200, the results can be expected to vary by no more than 6.9 percentage points (plus or minus the figure obtained).

The Gallup Organization recommends and performs all of its analysis on "top box" scores only. Instead of analyzing mean scores, or percent saying 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale, this analysis just looks at the top score (that is, the "very good," "top priority," or "significant impact" responses). Gallup has found through millions of interviews that these "top box" scores are much better predictors of real outcomes than are mean scores or "top two" boxes.

Several of the analyses that follow compare Northeast Ohio data to the largest 50 U.S. cities with populations over 340,000.<sup>2</sup> In August-September 2002, Gallup conducted a survey called "Soul of the City" to understand how residents of these 50 largest cities feel about their cities. A total of 2,581 interviews were completed, with 40 to 100 interviews completed in each of the 50 cities. The reader should use caution when making comparisons between the NEO Barometer data and the Soul of the City data for two important reasons. First, the Soul of the City data was collected a full year before the NEO Barometer survey, when economic conditions across the country were quite different. Second, Soul of the City was designed to collect only data on cities. NEO Barometer results closely approximate the Cleveland-Akron Combined Statistical Area and thus are broader in geographic reach. Despite these differences, the Soul of the City data is included in this analysis to help put the NEO Barometer results in a broader context and to better enable users to interpret the Barometer results. While the Cleveland metro area was included in Soul of the City, comparisons cannot be made between the NEO Barometer data and the Soul of the City data for Cleveland, as only 40 interviews were completed in Cleveland for Soul of the City.

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<sup>1</sup> The NEO Barometer research group selected eight counties to survey, chosen using the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standards for Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) as a guide. They include the Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor MSA and the Akron MSA. Stark County, which represents only part of the Canton-Massillon MSA, was also surveyed.

<sup>2</sup> The 50 largest cities in terms of population size based on the 2000 Census included in the Soul of the City are: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego, Dallas, San Antonio, Detroit, San Jose, Indianapolis, San Francisco, Jacksonville, Columbus, Austin, Baltimore, Memphis, Milwaukee, Boston, Washington, D.C., Nashville-Davidson, El Paso, Seattle, Denver, Charlotte, Fort Worth, Portland, Oklahoma City, Tucson, New Orleans, Las Vegas, Cleveland, Long Beach, Albuquerque, Kansas City, Fresno, Virginia Beach, Atlanta, Sacramento, Oakland, Mesa, Tulsa, Omaha, Minneapolis, Honolulu, Miami, Colorado Springs, St. Louis, and Wichita.

## **Key Findings**

- ***Northeast Ohio thinks regionally, but there are differences in how residents identify themselves.*** Although Northeast Ohio residents identify themselves with a larger community, there are sharp differences across the region in how people describe where they live. This is largely dependent on geography.
- ***Regionalism has a role to play in Northeast Ohio.*** Northeast Ohioans embrace the idea of shifting responsibility from local government to a regional government agency when it comes to promoting tourism, developing a plan for economic growth, and attracting businesses to the area. This is true across almost all demographic groups including the urban core. Except for land use planning, support for regional governance approaches increases with income. African American residents are split evenly with a high degree of uncertainty on the issue. Other minorities strongly support a regional role.
- ***Overall, regional loyalty in Northeast Ohio only slightly lags national averages, but significant vulnerability exists among young people.*** Based on their satisfaction with Northeast Ohio as a place to live, intention to remain in the area, and likelihood to recommend the area to a friend or associate, 18% of Northeast Ohio residents are loyal to the region<sup>3</sup>. This compares to 24% very loyal in the top 50 US cities. Loyalty correlates closely with age; 4% of 18 to 24 year olds are very loyal, increasing to 30% of senior citizens.
- ***Perceptions of the economy continue to be weak, but there is guarded optimism for the future.*** Only 19% describe the economy in Northeast Ohio in positive terms (5% very good). As a point of comparison, 40% of residents of the top 50 U.S. cities rate their local economy in positive terms (8% very good). Nearly six in ten (59%) Northeast Ohioans believe the economy has decayed in the past five years, primarily due to job loss. Northeast Ohioans are just as likely to believe the economy will improve in five years, as they are to believe it will be stagnant.
- ***Regional efforts to retain the young and the talented are not broadly recognized.*** Approximately 39% of Northeast Ohio residents believe Northeast Ohio offers the kind of advantages and opportunities that will keep young people and the most talented people from leaving the area for other places. This is much lower than the national average of 63%, measured in the largest 50 US cities by Gallup in 2002. Northeast Ohio residents of all ages share this concern.
- ***Job creation is seen as a top priority and a key to the region's economic future. Attracting new businesses is a close second.*** Job creation is the biggest economic concern of Northeast Ohioans and the best proposal for reviving the regional economy. Half (49%) of residents feel job creation should be a top priority for economic development activities; 42% named attracting new businesses a top priority.
- ***Northeast Ohioans see the need to create technology jobs in health sciences and to attract international companies.*** Across the region, creating new technology jobs in the health sciences and attracting international companies to Northeast Ohio are seen as two activities that could

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<sup>3</sup> “Loyalty” is measured as an indexed score of three questions: (1) satisfaction with Northeast Ohio as a place to live, (2) intention to remain in the area, and (3) likelihood to recommend the area to a friend or associate. Respondents are considered very loyal if they responded to all three questions at the 5 level (i.e. “very satisfied” and “very likely”).

have a significant impact on the region's economy.

- ***Northeast Ohioans are proud of the arts and health care.*** In defining the region's attributes, the availability of cultural opportunities and access to quality health care rate highest, according to Northeast Ohioans. Residents are also pleased with the quality of higher education, the region being a good place to live for minorities, and the region being a good place to raise children. Residents provided lower scores to Northeast Ohio's highway system, its desirability as a tourist destination, the leadership of the business community, quality of public schools, and public transportation.
- ***Political leadership and business leadership are neither great nor poor in Northeast Ohio.*** Northeast Ohioans do not hold strong views on the leadership of the elected officials in their city. Just one in ten (10%) rated elected officials as very good, and 13% rate them as very bad. This data is roughly similar to findings across the top 50 US cities, though nationally, people are more likely to be positive about their elected officials (45%) than they are in Northeast Ohio (31%). A similar portrait of low-intensity opinions emerges with business leadership. Just 8% rate the business leadership in Northeast Ohio as very good, and 7% rate it as very bad. Northeast Ohioans' ratings of business leadership are very similar to ratings in the top 50 US cities.
- ***A strong relationship exists between knowledge of economic development and overall satisfaction with the region, suggesting the value of communication and education.*** Northeast Ohioans profess limited knowledge of economic development in the region and are neutral or unsure of how the region is faring. Those who know a great deal about economic development are split over how the region is doing. However, knowledge of economic development is tied to loyalty to the region. Those who know a great deal about economic development are more likely to be satisfied with the region (39% vs. 30% overall), more likely to recommend the area to a friend or associate (39% vs. 31%), and to feel the region is doing better economically.
- ***Knowledge of economic development initiatives in Cuyahoga County is high. Lakefront development is seen as the best bet for economic impact, though it was receiving high media attention at the time of the survey.*** In Cuyahoga County, six in ten know a great deal or some about Lakefront development and about discussions to build a new Convention Center. Cleveland residents tend to be less informed about these economic development activities than non-Cleveland residents of the county. Roughly half of Cuyahoga residents know about efforts to beautify and revitalize the Cuyahoga riverfront or about the revitalization of the Euclid Corridor, with no differences by urban area. Among these county initiatives, more Cuyahoga residents feel Lakefront development will have a significant impact on the economy (47% significant impact) than the other initiatives. Only one-third believe a new Convention Center will have a significant impact (including 21% of non-Cleveland Cuyahoga residents).
- ***Notable issues recognized in other Northeast Ohio counties as having a significant impact on economy included:***
  - Lorain County: The move of the Ford assembly plant from Lorain to the Ohio plant in Avon (73% significant impact on the economy, though this may be a negative impact).
  - Lorain County: Riverfront development at the mouth of the Black River (46% significant impact).

- Lake/Geauga Counties: Moving Lake East Hospital closer to Geauga County (25% significant impact in Geauga County, 40% significant impact in Lake County).
- Stark County: Building a new Convention Center in Stark County (25% significant impact).

## **2002 Northeast Ohio Barometer**

This year's survey is the second annual Barometer of economic opinions of Northeast Ohio residents. The data for the 2002 survey was collected by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research, Inc. of Washington DC under contract to the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. A total of 629 adults were interviewed in September-October 2002, with a margin of error of +/-4%. Counties included in the 2002 survey included Cuyahoga, Lorain, Medina, Summit, Portage, Geauga, and Lake, with no over-sampling in Cleveland or Akron.

In an effort to better reflect and understand the Northeast Ohio region, the 2003 Barometer greatly increased the sample size, enlarged the region covered, and standardized certain questions to match Gallup's "Soul of the City" national data. These changes make it impossible to accurately compare the 2002 data to 2003. However, the overall findings can be compared and trends identified.

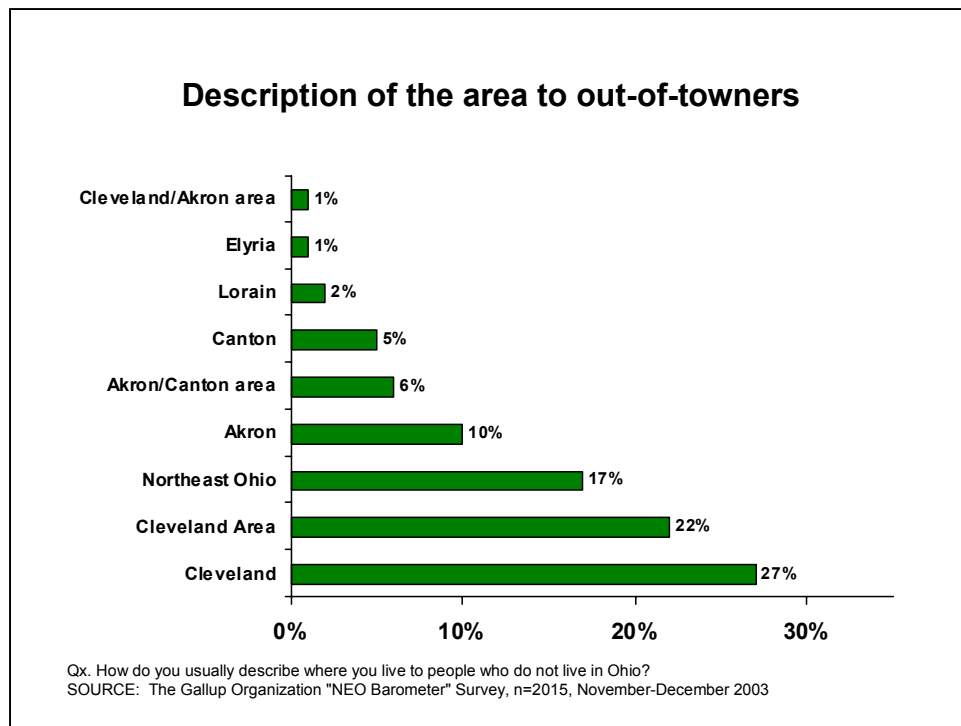
Some key trends from 2002 to 2003 include:

- Regionalism remains a popular concept. In 2002, residents expressed strong interest in the idea of a regional economic planning board. In 2003, they supported the concept of a regional government agency to promote tourism, to develop an economic growth plan, and to attract businesses to the region.
- Northeast Ohio residents appear to be increasingly pessimistic about the economy; however, they have maintained cautious optimism about the future.
- Residents have a less positive view of the region as a place to live in 2003 than in 2002 and are less likely to recommend it to others.
- Both surveys' findings highlight doubts about the region's ability to retain young people and stress the importance of improving the region's ability to attract new businesses and create jobs.
- Finally both surveys demonstrate a clear positive correlation between knowledge of economic development initiatives and support for those initiatives. In addition, the 2003 survey found that those who were best informed were also the most satisfied with the region as a place to live.

## Detailed Findings

### **1. Northeast Ohio thinks regionally, but there are differences in how residents identify themselves.**

While residents around Northeast Ohio identify themselves as a part of a larger community, there are sharp differences across the region in how people describe where they live. When given a list of choices for how they usually describe where they live to people who are not from Ohio, there was no agreement on regional identity.



#### “Northeast Ohio”

Overall, just 17% would describe themselves to an out-of-towner as living in Northeast Ohio. Residents of Portage County are most likely to self-identify with Northeast Ohio (42%), followed by Geauga (36%) and Lake (35%) residents. Just 12% of Cuyahoga residents think of themselves as living in Northeast Ohio.

#### “Cleveland” or “The Cleveland Area”

Roughly half (49%) of Northeast Ohio residents would describe themselves to an out-of-towner as living in Cleveland or the Cleveland area. Eight in ten Cuyahoga residents identify themselves with the Cleveland area (79%), as do over half of Lake (61%), Geauga (58%), and Medina (54%) residents. Yet fewer than half of Lorain residents (48%), one in four Portage residents (26%), and just 8% of Summit and 4% of Stark residents would describe themselves as living in the Cleveland area.

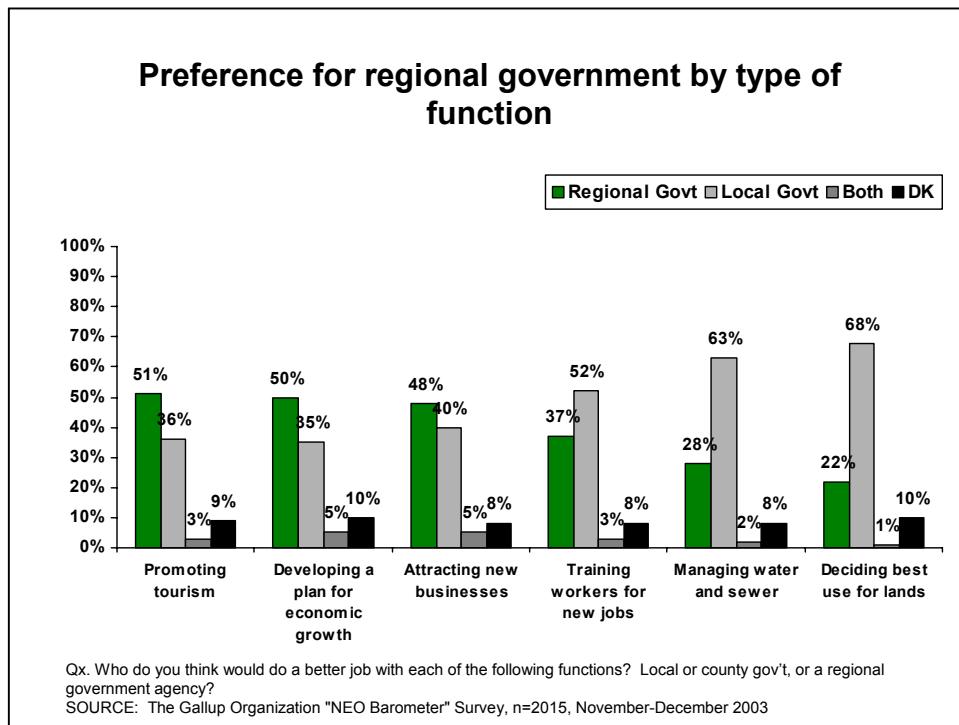
#### Akron/Canton

Across the region, 21% of residents identify themselves as living in Akron, Canton, or the Akron/Canton area. They are primarily those living in Stark (73%) and Summit (68%) counties. The rest of the region does not identify with the Akron/Canton area.

## 2. Regionalism has a role to play in Northeast Ohio.

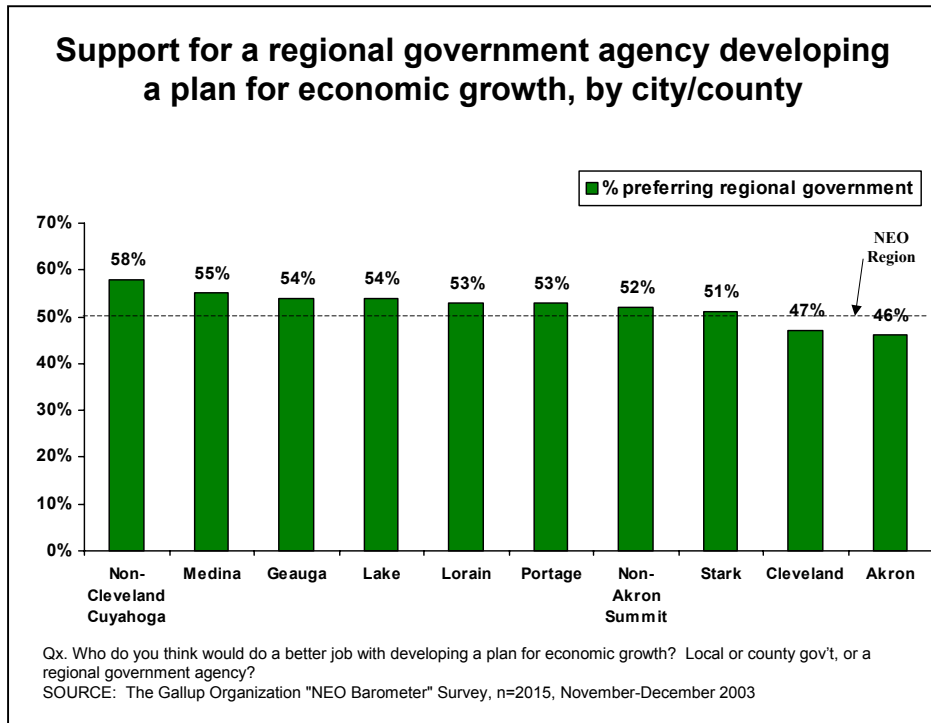
Northeast Ohioans embrace the idea of shifting responsibility from local government to a regional government agency when it comes to promoting tourism, developing a plan for economic growth, and attracting businesses to the area. This is true across almost all demographic groups including the urban core. Except for land use planning, support for regional governance approaches increases with income. African American residents are split evenly with a high degree of uncertainty on the issue. Other minorities strongly support a regional role.

Northeast Ohio residents were asked about who would do a better job handling various government functions, local or county government, or a regional government agency. Support is higher for a regional government agency handling promotion of tourism than a local or county agency by a 15-point margin (51% regional vs. 40% local). Similarly, by a 15-point margin, residents favor a regional government agency to develop a plan for economic growth (50% vs. 35%). By an 8-point margin, they support a regional agency to attract new businesses to the region (48% vs. 40%). Northeast Ohio residents feel that local or county government is better equipped to decide how land is used (by a 46 point margin), to manage water and sewer delivery (35 point margin), and training workers for new job opportunities (15 point margin).

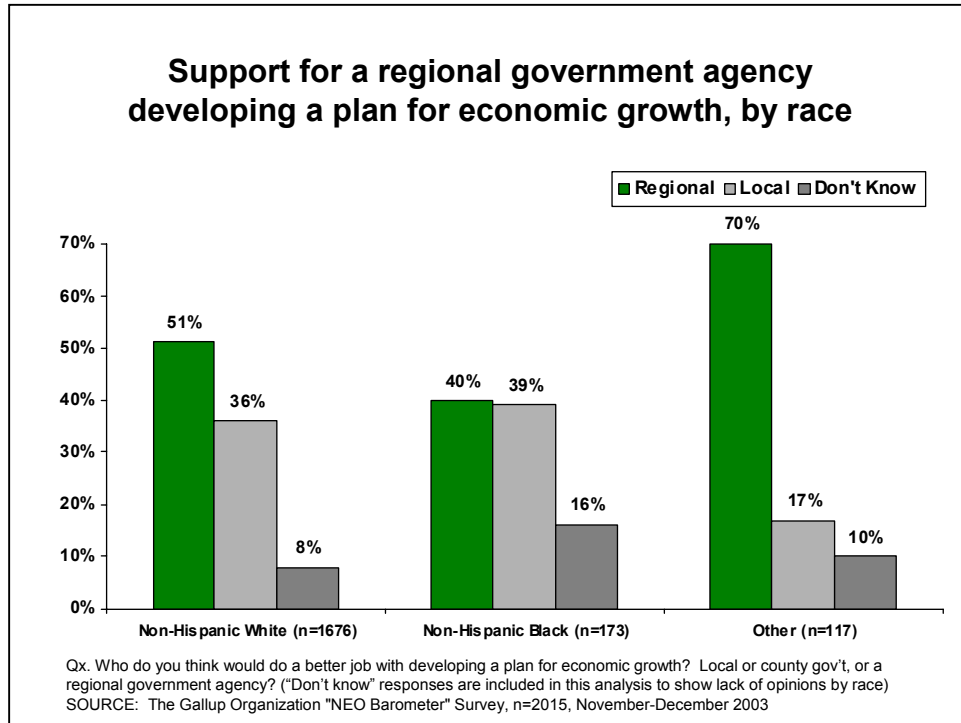




Residents of Cuyahoga county (not in Cleveland) are more supportive of a regional agency developing a plan for economic growth (58%) than those in the city of Cleveland (47%) and Akron (46%).



There appear to be strong differences by race/ethnicity on support for a regional government agency developing a plan for economic growth. White residents of Northeast Ohio support a regional effort by a 15 point margin; African American residents of Northeast Ohio are evenly split (and 16% are unsure of how they feel); other minorities including Hispanics support a regional effort at developing a plan economic growth by a 53 point margin.

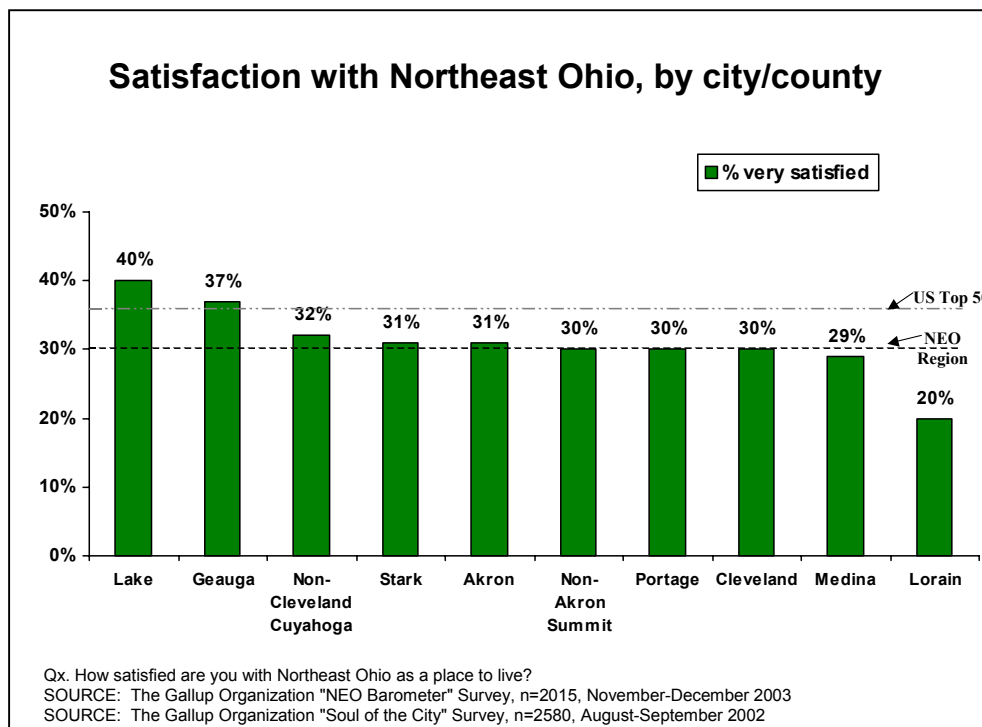


**3. Overall, regional loyalty in Northeast Ohio only slightly lags national averages, but significant vulnerability exists among young people.**

Based on their satisfaction with Northeast Ohio as a place to live, intention to remain in the area, and likelihood to recommend the area to a friend or associate, 18% of Northeast Ohio residents are loyal to the region<sup>4</sup>, though more than half say they are extremely likely to continue living in the area. This compares to 24% very loyal in the top 50 US cities. Loyalty is closely intertwined with age, with just 4% of 18 to 24 year olds being very loyal, rising to 30% of senior citizens.

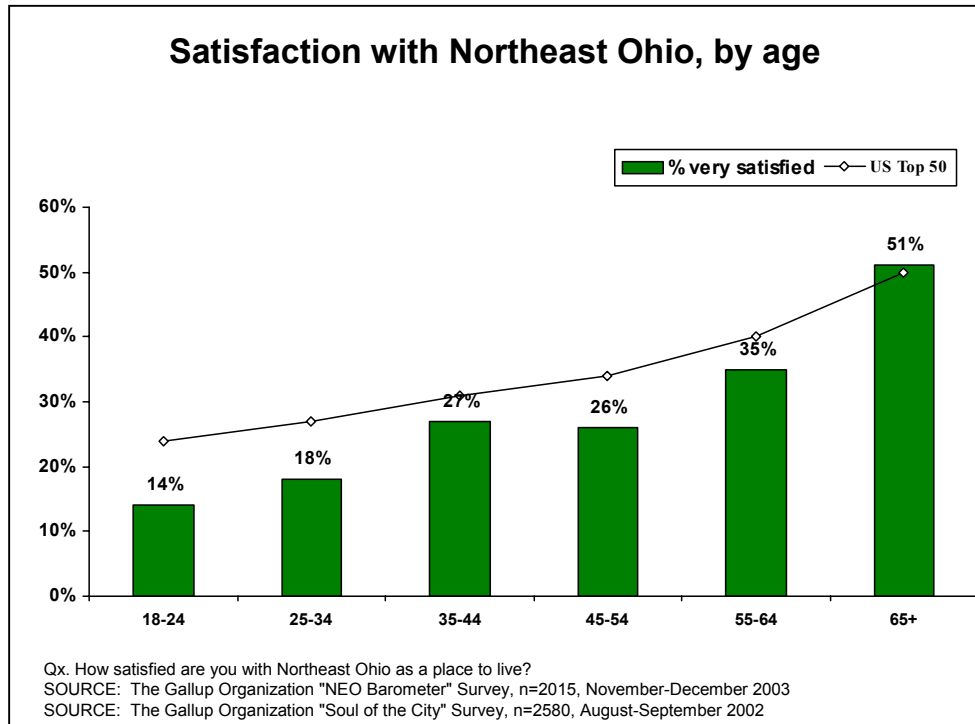
Satisfaction with Northeast Ohio

Overall, three in ten (30%) are extremely satisfied with living in Northeast Ohio. This level of satisfaction lags only slightly behind the national average of 36% extremely satisfied, as measured by Gallup in 2002 in the top U.S. 50 cities. Across the Northeast Ohio region, those who are most satisfied live in Lake (40% extremely satisfied) and Geauga (37%) counties. Lorain county residents report lower levels of satisfaction (20% extremely satisfied).



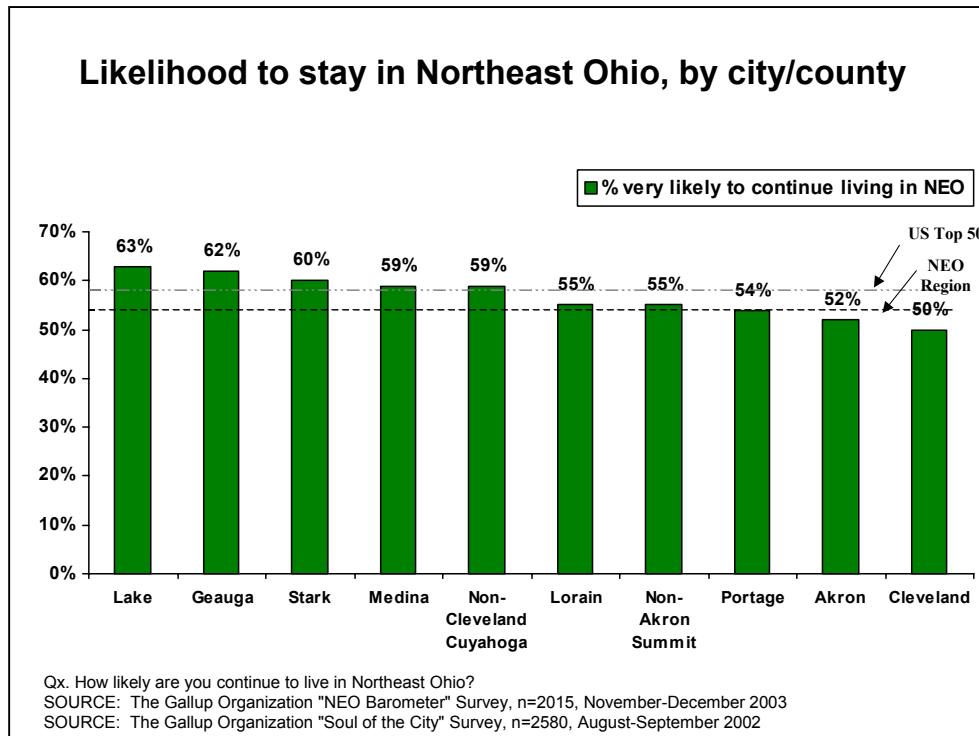
<sup>4</sup> “Loyalty” is measured as an indexed score of three questions: (1) satisfaction with Northeast Ohio as a place to live, (2) intention to remain in the area, and (3) likelihood to recommend the area to a friend or associate. Respondents are considered very loyal if they responded to all three questions at the 5 level (i.e. “very satisfied” and “very likely”).

Satisfaction with Northeast Ohio increases with age, with just 14% of those age 18 to 24 feeling extremely satisfied with the region, compared to 51% of those age 65 or older. The gap between Northeast Ohio residents and residents of the top 50 US cities on satisfaction levels is greatest among 18 to 24 year olds, whereas senior citizens in Northeast Ohio are equally satisfied with their locale as are seniors nationally. White and African American residents are equally satisfied, but those of other races are less satisfied (20%). As education levels increase, satisfaction with the region decreases, with 27% of those with a college degree feeling extremely satisfied, compared to 42% of those with less than a high school diploma.

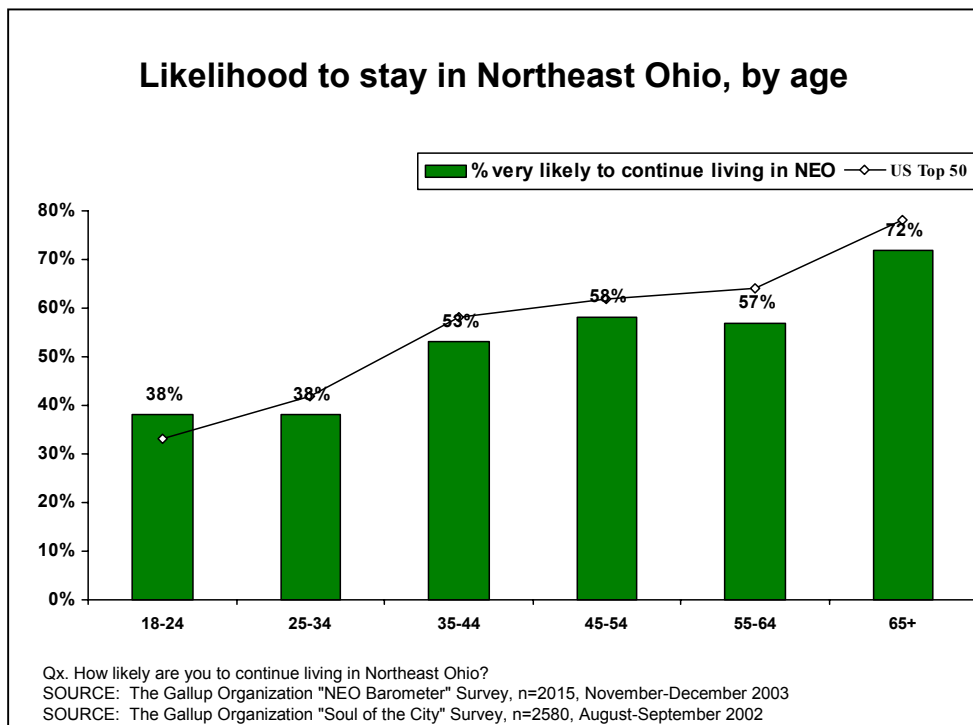


## Likelihood to continue living in Northeast Ohio

Over half of Northeast Ohio residents are committed to staying in the region (54% extremely likely). This statistic is only slightly lower than the average of 59% in the top 50 U.S. cities, as measured by Gallup. Lake (63%) and Geauga (62%) residents are more likely to stay here than others in the region. Half of the city of Cleveland residents (50%) say they are extremely likely to continue living here, as well as 52% of Akron residents.



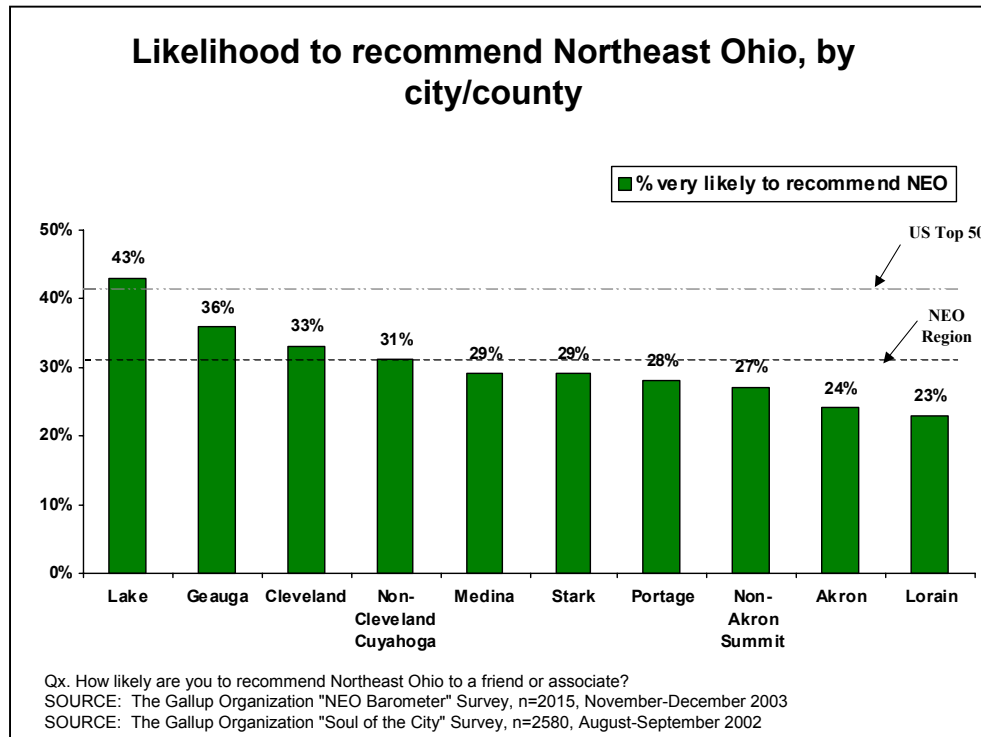
Likelihood to continue living in NEO increases with age, with just 38% of those under age 34 being extremely likely to keep living in NEO, rising to a full 72% of those age 65 and older. In contrast to the findings on satisfaction with the region, 18 to 24 year olds in Northeast Ohio are more likely than those in the top 50 US cities to say they intend to remain in the area, though trends in Northeast Ohio match national figures very closely.



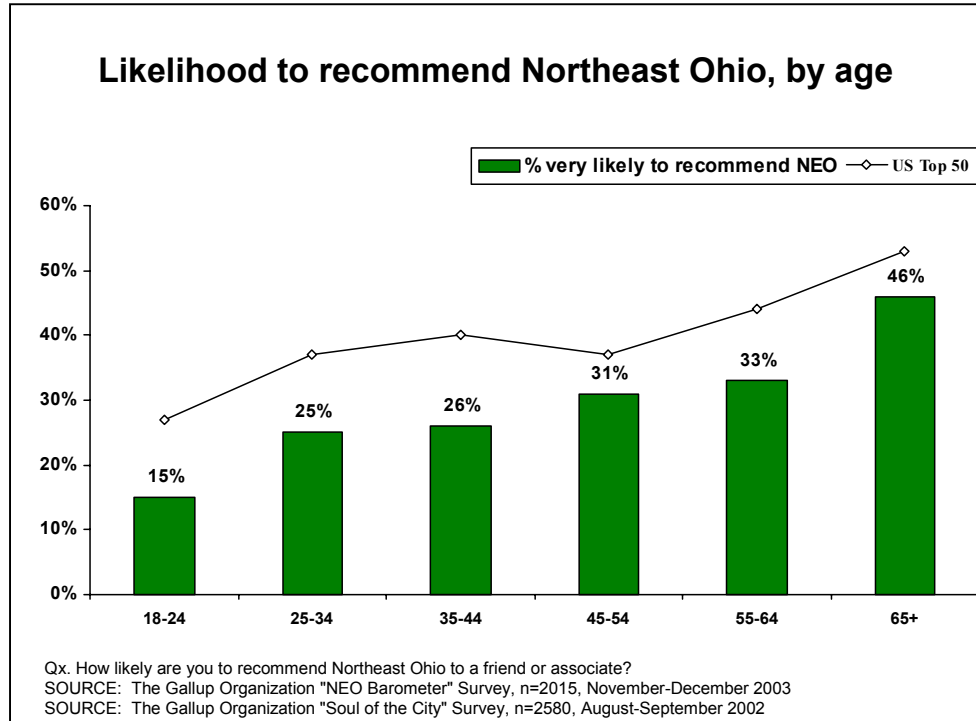
White residents are more apt to say they are extremely likely to stay in Northeast Ohio (58%) than are African American residents (43%). College graduates are less likely to say they plan to stay in NEO (49% extremely likely) than are those with some college (59%) or those with less than a high school degree (62%).

## Likelihood to recommend NEO

While over half of Northeast Ohio residents are extremely likely to continue living in the region, just 31% would recommend the area to a friend or colleague. This is 10 percentage points lower than the average in the top 50 U.S. cities of 41% extremely likely. There are large differences across the region, with Lake county residents almost twice as likely to recommend the area (43% extremely likely) as Lorain (23%) and Akron (24%) residents.



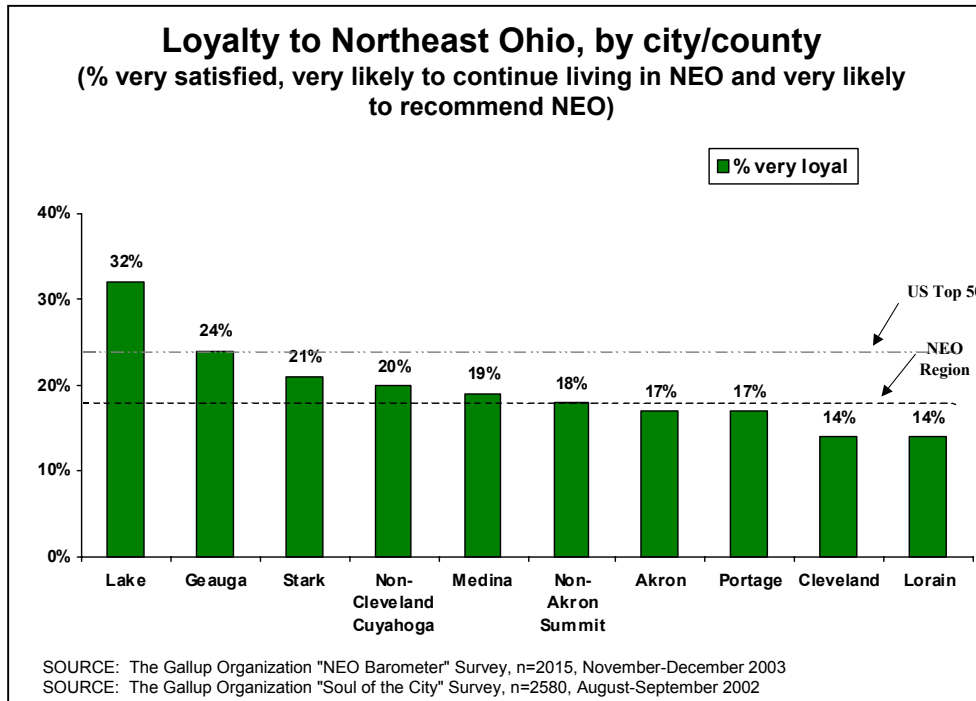
Likelihood to recommend Northeast Ohio to a friend or associate is closely tied to age. The youngest residents of the area are least apt to say they are very likely to recommend the region (15%), and senior citizens are most likely (46%). When comparing Northeast Ohio data to the top 50 US cities, 18 to 24 year olds in Northeast Ohio are less likely to recommend the area than those in the top 50 US cities by a 12-point margin. There is a 14-point gap in being very likely to recommend among 35 to 44 year olds.



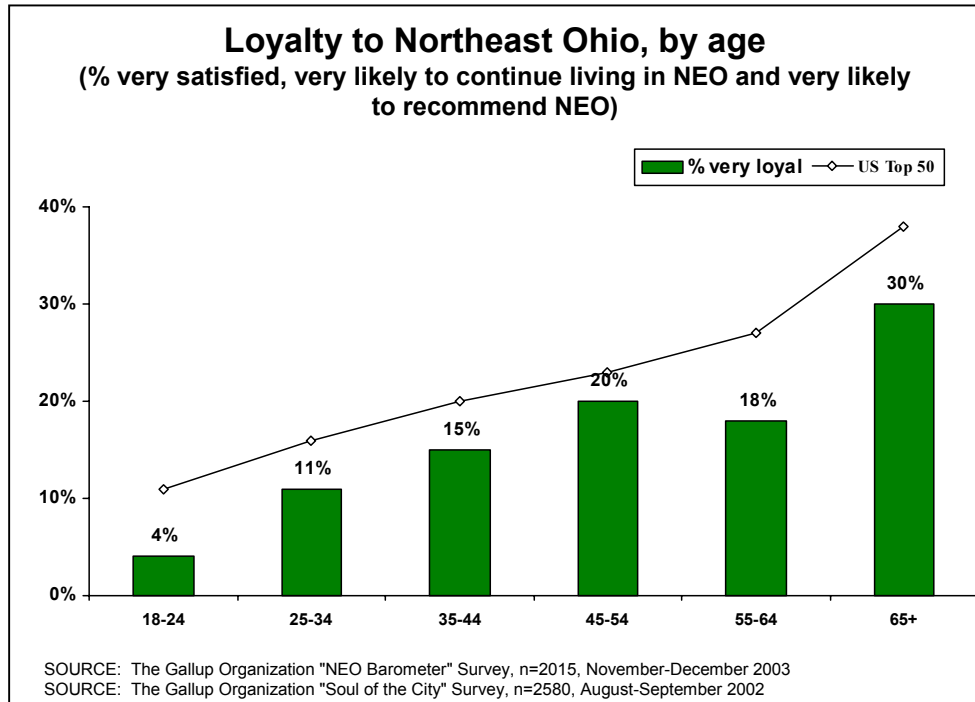


## Loyalty summary measure

Combining overall satisfaction results, likelihood to continue living in NEO, and likelihood to recommend NEO to a friend or colleague, 18% of Northeast Ohio residents can be described as “very loyal” to the region (providing a score of 5 to all three items), compared to 24% who are very loyal in the top 50 US cities. Most loyal to the Northeast Ohio region include Lake residents (32% rate 5 on all three measures) and Geauga residents (24%). Lorain residents and residents of the city of Cleveland are least likely to provide a 5 on all three measures (14%).



Loyalty to the region increases with age. Just 4% of 18-24 year olds are very loyal, rising linearly up to 30% very loyal among those ages 65 or older. Those with less than a high school education are more loyal (25% very loyal) than those with a college degree or beyond (16%). Loyalty does not vary by income levels; those with household incomes under \$25,000 are just as loyal (17% very loyal) as those with incomes over \$75,000 (16%).



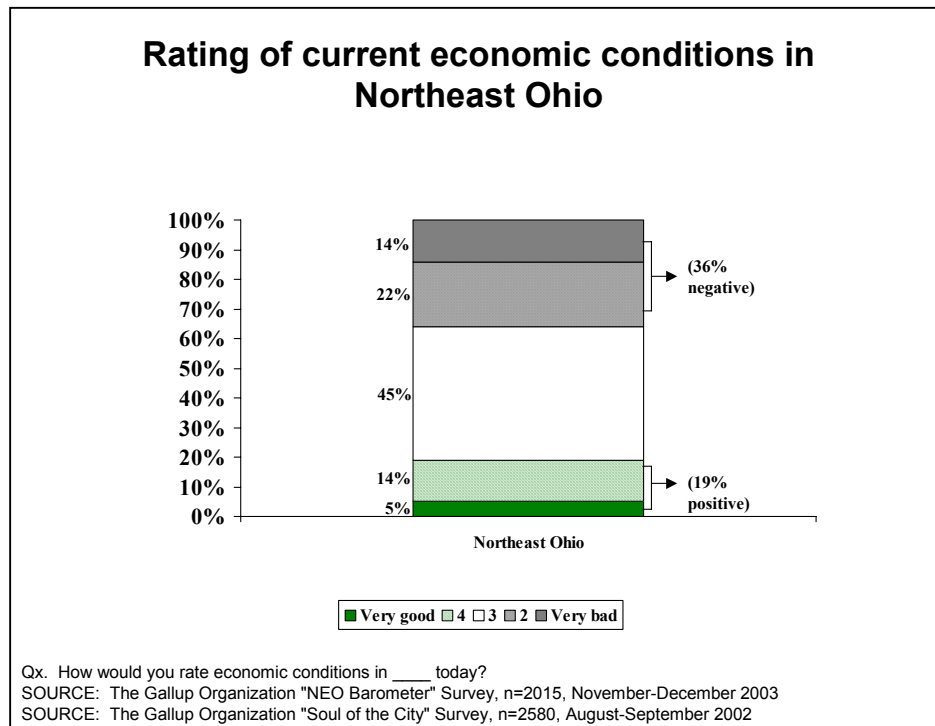
**4. Perceptions of the economy continue to be weak, but there is guarded optimism for the future.**

Only one in five describe the economy in Northeast Ohio in positive terms, and six out of ten feel it has declined in the past 5 years, mainly due to job loss. Northeast Ohioans are just as likely to believe the economy will improve in 5 years as they are to believe it will not improve.

Rating of today's economy

One in five (19%) Northeast Ohio residents rate the local economy positively, with just 5% rating it as very good. Nearly half (45%) rate it as neutral, and 36% rate it negatively. Slightly more optimistic about the economy are those living in Geauga (29% rate it positively) and Lake (26%).

Across the top 50 U.S. cities, 8% rate their local economy as very good, with 40% rating the economy in positive terms. Keep in mind the data for the top 50 U.S. cities was collected in August-September, 2002, when economic conditions were quite different than in November-December, 2003.

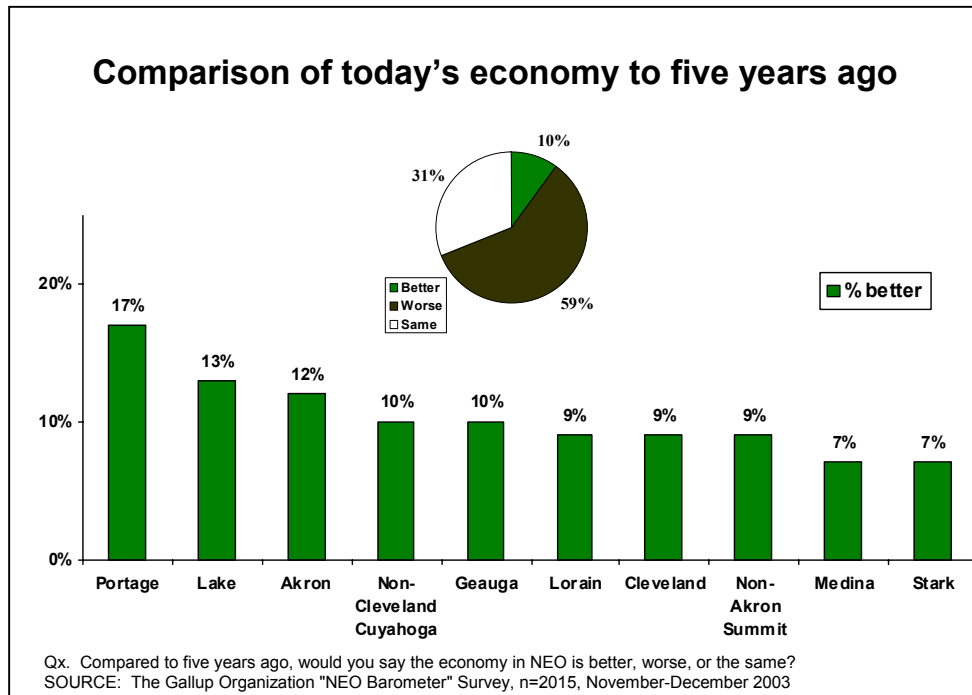


Senior citizens are more positive about the economy (27%) than younger residents of the region. Those with less than a high school diploma are much more positive about the economy (44%) than those with a college degree (16%).

Those who describe themselves as knowing a great deal about economic development in Northeast Ohio are more optimistic about the economy, with 24% rating it as good, compared to 17% of those who know some about economic development.

## Economy compared to 5 years ago

Six in ten residents of Northeast Ohio (59%) believe the economy is worse off today than it was five years ago. Just 10% feel it is better, and an additional 31% feel it is the same as five years ago. Portage county residents are most optimistic about the direction of the economy (17% better).



Those who feel optimistic about today's economy are more likely to say the economy has improved in the past five years (21% say it is better) than those who say today's economy is neutral (8% better) or bad (5% better). Eight in ten (81%) of those who say the economy is bad also feel it has gotten worse in the past 5 years.

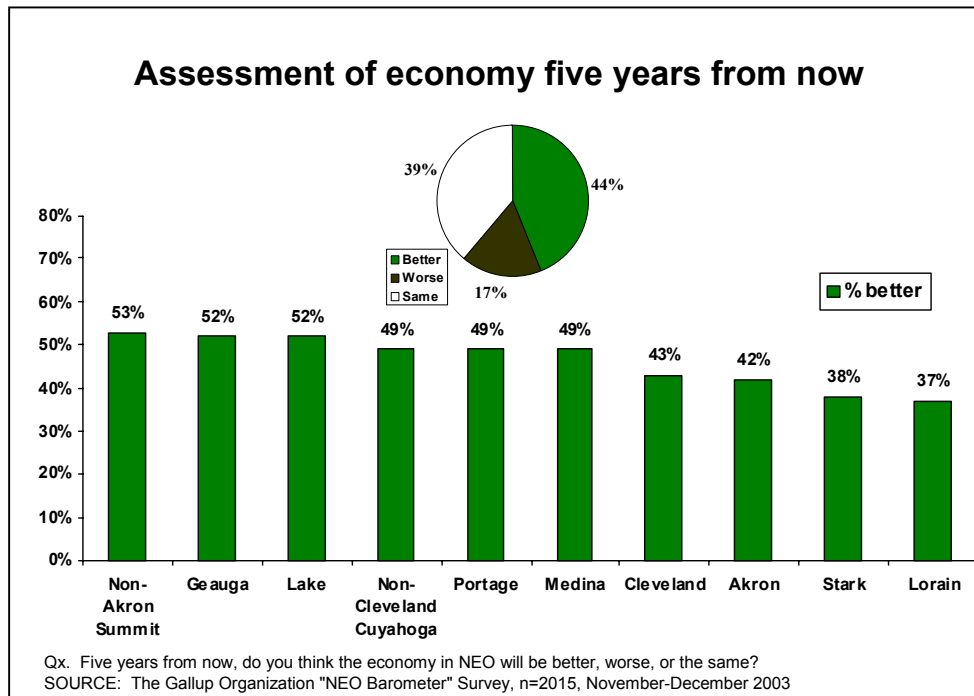
Those who describe themselves as knowing a great deal about economic development in Northeast Ohio are more likely to say the economy has improved in the past 5 years (17%) than those who know some or not much (9%).

## Why economy has gotten worse

The reason mentioned most by Northeast Ohio residents for the economy getting worse in the past five years is fewer jobs or job opportunities (mentioned by 54% of those who say the economy has gotten worse). Fewer mention the loss of manufacturing (14%), that the economy is worse everywhere (7%) and poor political leadership (5%). Portage residents were more acutely aware of the lack of job opportunities (63%), and Lorain residents were more attuned to the loss of manufacturing (28%) than those in other counties.

Economy five years from now

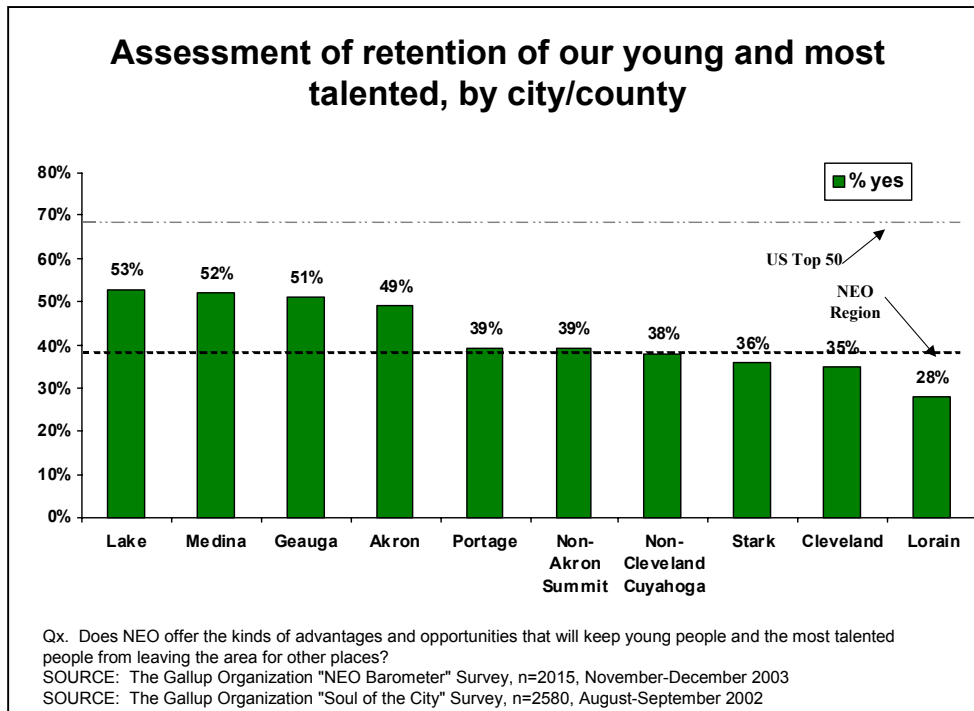
Northeast Ohioans express guarded optimism about the future economy. Roughly equal numbers believe the economy will be better (44%) as see the economy performing as it is now (39%). Just 17% feel it will be worse. Those who are most optimistic about the economy live in non-Akron Summit County (53%), Geauga (52%), and Lake (52%). Those more likely to believe it will get worse include those in Lorain (24%) and Stark (24%).



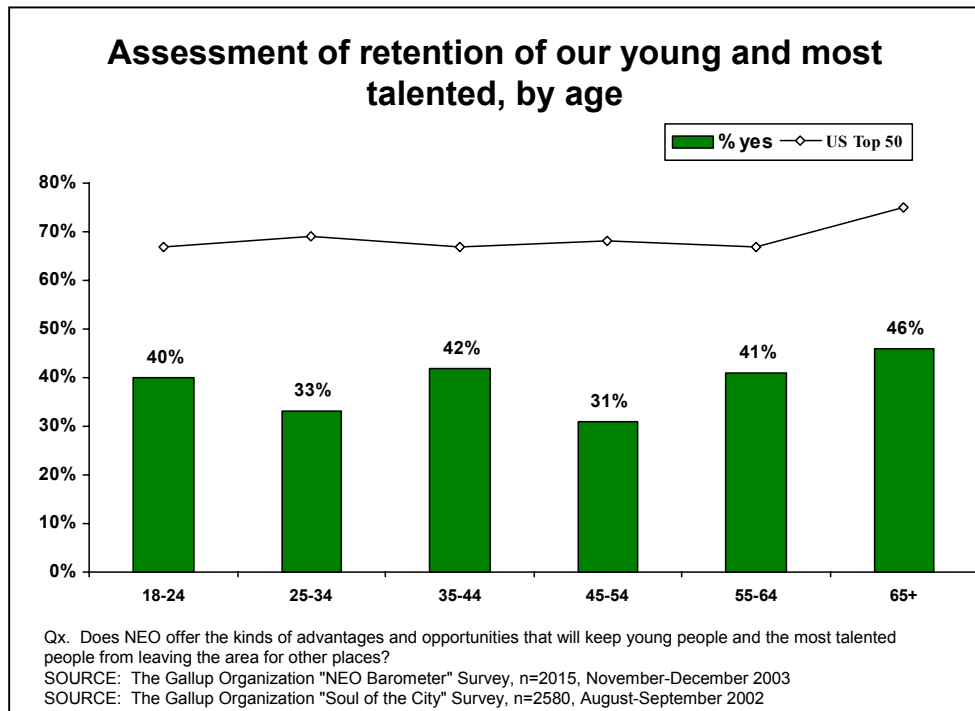
Minority residents of NEO are more likely to see the economy as becoming worse in 5 years (23% of African American residents and 30% of other minorities) compared to White residents (15% worse). College graduates are more optimistic about the economy (56% better) than those with less than a high school diploma (30%).

**5. Regional efforts to retain the young and the talented are not broadly recognized.**

Just 39% of those surveyed believe Northeast Ohio offers the kind of advantages and opportunities that will keep young people and the most talented people from leaving the area for other places. This expectation is much lower than the national average of 69%, measured in the largest 50 US cities by Gallup in 2002. Lake (53%), Medina (52%), and Geauga (51%) are more likely to feel the region is doing well at retaining talent than those in other parts of the region. Lorain residents are least likely to agree (28%).



Age does not appear to be related to whether one feels Northeast Ohio is doing a good job at retaining young people and talent. This pattern is consistent with national data.



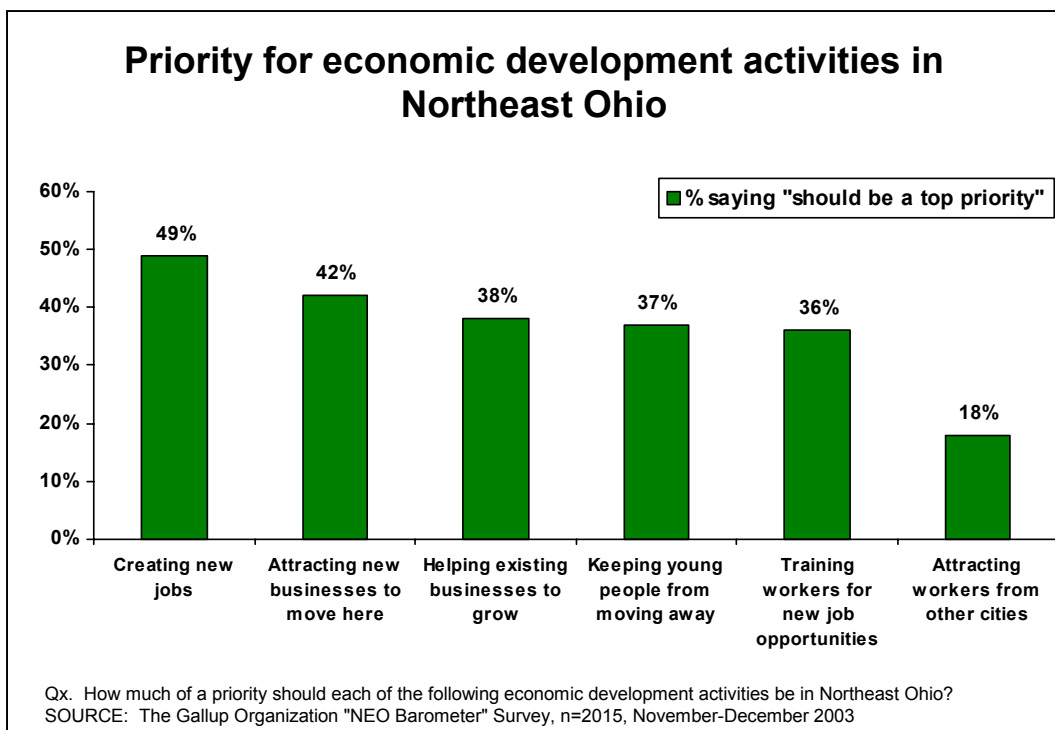
College graduates are less likely to feel Northeast Ohio is doing a good job at retaining young people and talent (36%) than are those with less than a high school diploma (49%). Those who feel the economy is good are more likely to agree with this (63%) than those who feel it is neutral (46%) or bad (16%).

**6. Job creation is seen as a top priority and a key to the region's economic future. Attracting new businesses is a close second.**

Job creation is the biggest economic concern of Northeast Ohioans and the best proposal for reviving the regional economy. Residents feel job creation should be a top priority for economic development activities.

Priorities for economic development

When asked about how high a priority various economic development activities should be in Northeast Ohio, the top rated option was to focus on creating new jobs (49% say it should be a top priority). A second tier of priorities includes attracting new businesses (42%), helping existing businesses grow (38%), keeping young people from moving away (37%), and training workers for new opportunities (36%). Few felt it should be a top priority to attract workers from other cities to move here (18%).





### Best idea for improving NEO economy

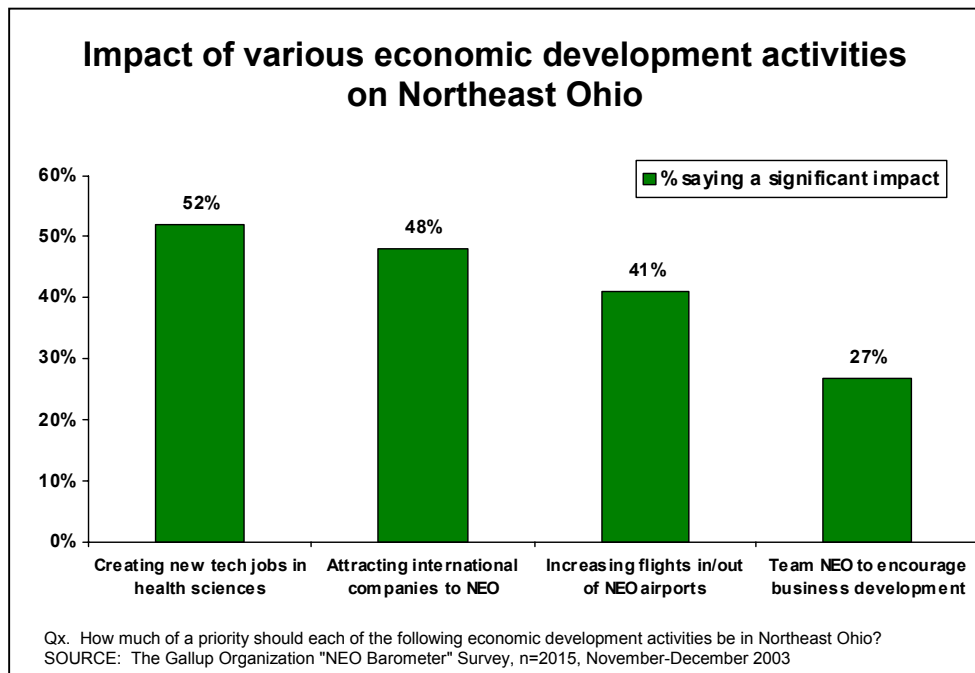
When asked what they felt the best remedy would be for the Northeast Ohio economy, residents of the region provided a variety of responses in an open-ended format. Most often mentioned was to improve efforts to attract and keep jobs here (34%). An additional 20% mentioned attracting or keeping businesses in the region. Many other ideas were mentioned, including developing the lakefront or downtown area (6%), improving education (5%), having better leaders/government (4%), job training (2%), keeping people from leaving the area (2%), and lowering taxes (2%).

City of Akron residents were more likely to mention jobs as the top way of improving the economy than were those in other parts of the region (47%), especially those in non-Akron Summit County (26%). While most Northeast Ohio residents placed a higher priority on job creation than on attracting businesses to the region, Stark and Lorain residents placed equal priorities on jobs and business attraction.

**7. Northeast Ohioans see the need to create technology jobs in health sciences and to attract international companies.**

Across the region, creating new technology jobs in the health sciences and attracting international companies to Northeast Ohio are seen as activities that could have a more significant impact on the region's economy than other initiatives tested.

While knowledge of regional economic development activities is low, Northeast Ohio residents do feel that creating new technology jobs in the health sciences and attracting international companies to Northeast Ohio could have a significant impact on the region's economy (52% and 48%, respectively).



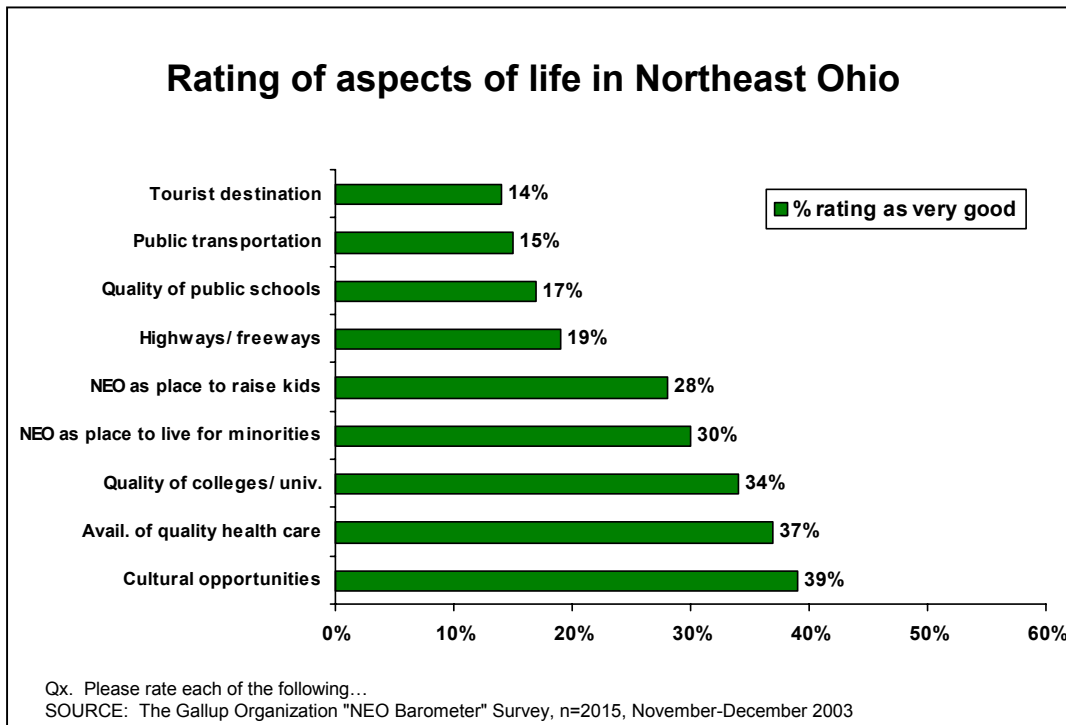
Cuyahoga and Geauga residents are most likely to feel that creating technology jobs in the health sciences would have a significant impact on the economy (59%). Those who say they know a great deal about economic development in Northeast Ohio are particularly optimistic about the economic impact of technology jobs in health sciences to the region (62% say it would have a significant impact).

Cuyahoga residents are most optimistic about the economic impact of attracting international companies to the region (56%), while Summit (36%) and Stark (36%) are least hopeful about this initiative. Those who say they know a great deal about economic development in Northeast Ohio are particularly optimistic about the economic impact of an influx of international businesses to the region (65% say it would have a significant impact).

**8. Northeast Ohioans are proud of the arts and health care.**

In defining the region’s attributes, the availability of cultural opportunities and access to quality health care rate highest, according to Northeast Ohioans. Northeast Ohioans provide the highest ratings for the region’s cultural opportunities (39% rate it as very good) and availability of quality health care (37%). In a second tier, residents rate NEO well at having good colleges and universities (34% very good), being a good place to live for minorities (30%), and being a good place to raise children (28%). Fewer think the region excels at having a good highway/freeway system (19%), having good public schools (17%), having good public transportation (15%), being a tourist destination (14%), or leadership of the business community (8%).

Comparing Northeast Ohio to the largest 50 US cities on some of these measures, Northeast Ohio is rated as high as those cities on quality of health care (37% in NEO vs. 39% in top 50 cities), and being a good place to live for minorities (30% vs. 29% in top 50 cities). Northeast Ohio lags behind the benchmark cities on public transportation (15% vs. 22% in top 50 cities). (Other items in this series were not asked nationally.)



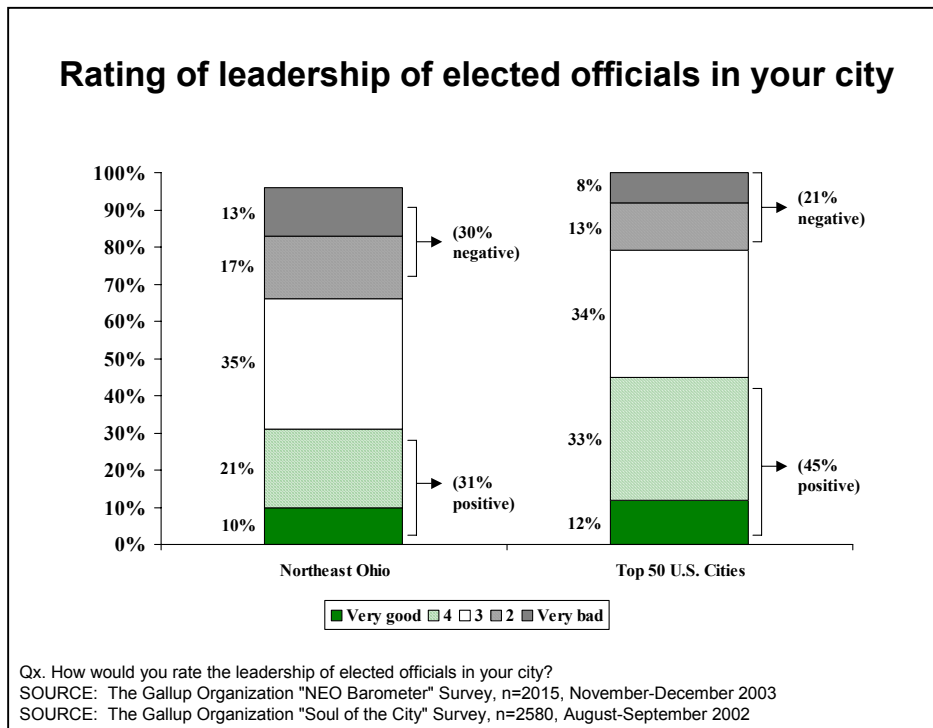
Cleveland and outer Cuyahoga county residents provide especially high ratings on the region for having cultural opportunities (44% and 54% very good, respectively), as do those living in Lake (45%) and Geauga (44%) counties. Geauga residents provide the highest ratings on quality of health care available in the region (50% very good). In terms of being a good place to raise children, those in Medina (41%), Geauga (41%) and Lake (42%) are most positive about the region. Residents of the city of Cleveland are the least positive on this measure (19%). Geauga residents also provide the highest ratings on the quality of their public schools (37% very good) while residents of Cleveland are the least approving of their schools (6% very good).

**9. Political and business leadership are neither great nor poor in Northeast Ohio.**

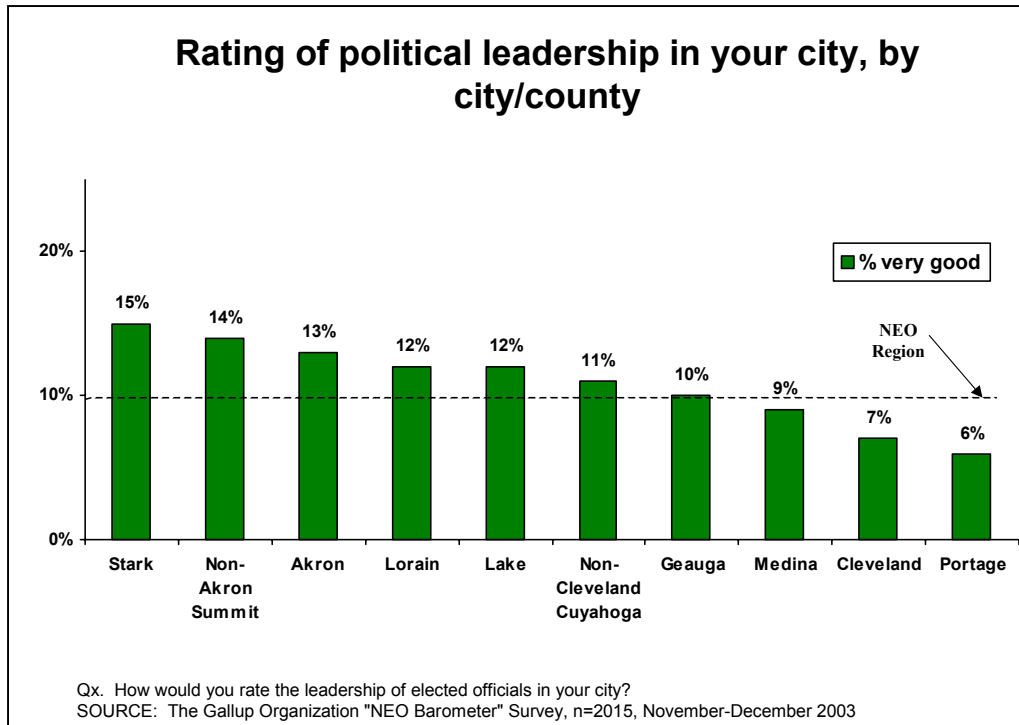
Northeast Ohioans are not highly critical or highly complimentary of the leadership of the elected officials in their city. Just one in ten (10%) rate them as very good, and 13% rate them as very bad. This data is roughly similar to findings across the top 50 US cities, though nationally, people are more likely to be positive about their elected officials (45%) than they are in Northeast Ohio (31%). A similar portrait of low-intensity opinions emerges with business leadership. Just 8% rate the business leadership in Northeast Ohio as very good, and 7% rate it as very bad. Northeast Ohioans' ratings of business leadership are very similar to ratings in the top 50 US cities.

One-third (31%) of Northeast Ohioans rate the leadership of elected officials in their city positively, with just 10% rating the leadership as very good. Not surprisingly, those who rate the economy positively are more likely to give positive marks to their political leaders (50% positive ratings) than those who describe the economy in negative terms (19% positive).

Using 2002 data collected by Gallup in the largest 50 U.S. cities as a benchmark, 12% rate their elected officials as very good, with 45% rating them positively.

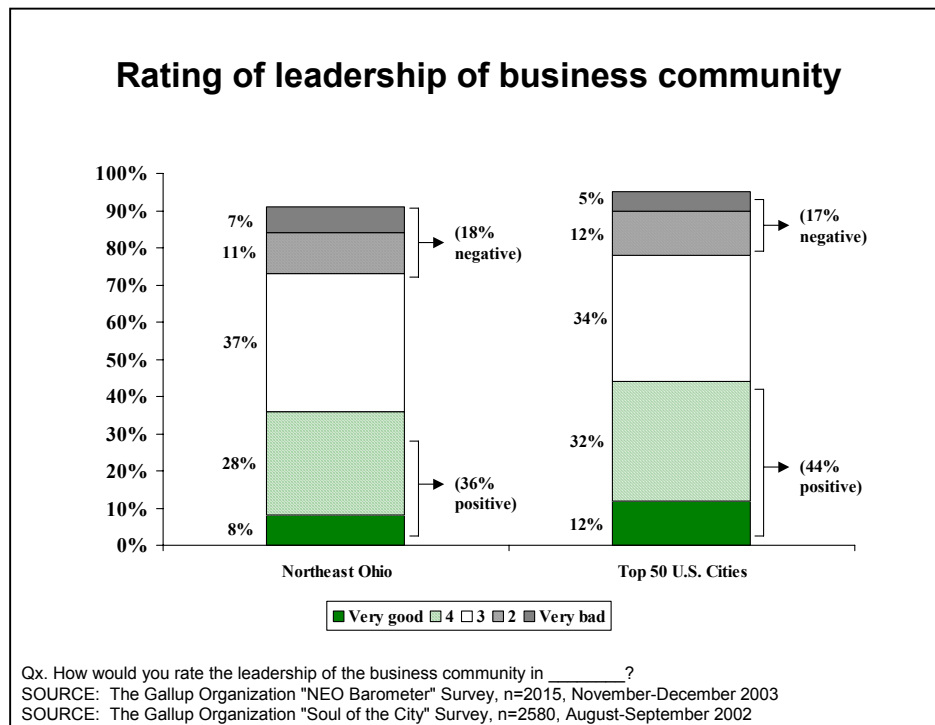


Residents of Stark and Summit Counties provide higher ratings of their elected officials than those elsewhere. Residents of the city of Cleveland and Portage provide the lowest ratings.

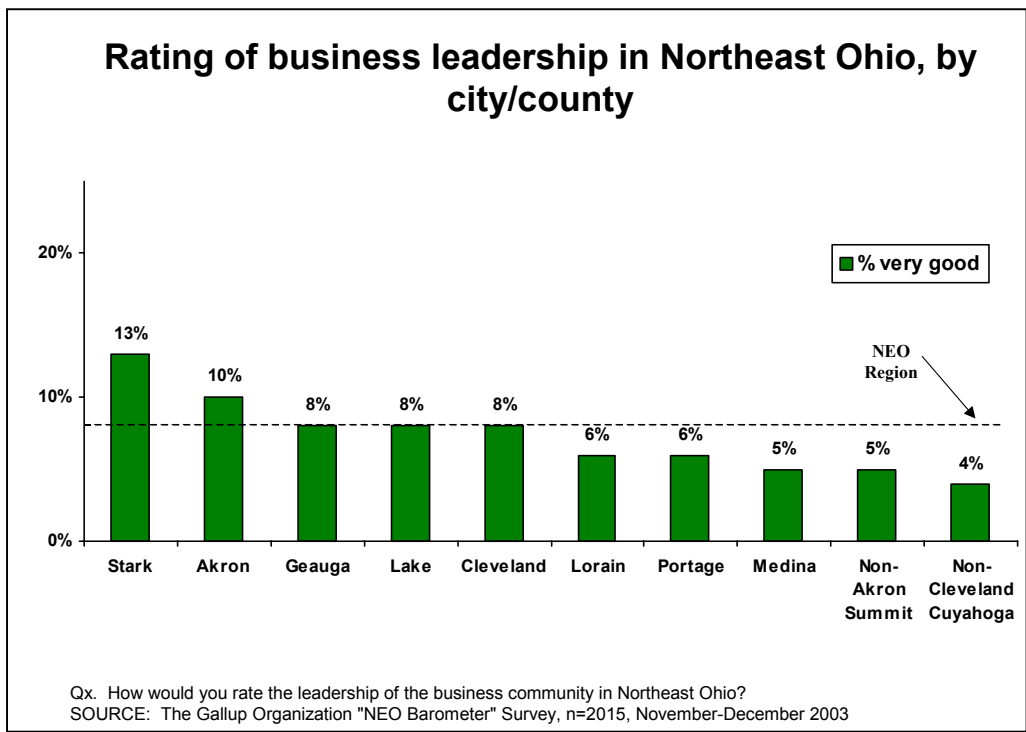


Over one-third (36%) of Northeast Ohioans rate the region's business leadership positively, with just 8% rating business leadership as very good. Senior citizens age 65 and older are more upbeat about business leadership, with 15% rating them as very good. Ratings of business leadership decline as education levels increase, with 16% of high school graduates rating business leadership positively, compared to just 6% of college graduates. Those who are upbeat about the economy are much more positive about the region's business leadership (21%) than those who feel the economy is faring poorly (3%).

As a point of comparison, Gallup's data shows that 12% in the nation's largest 50 cities rate the leadership of their business community as very good (44% positive).

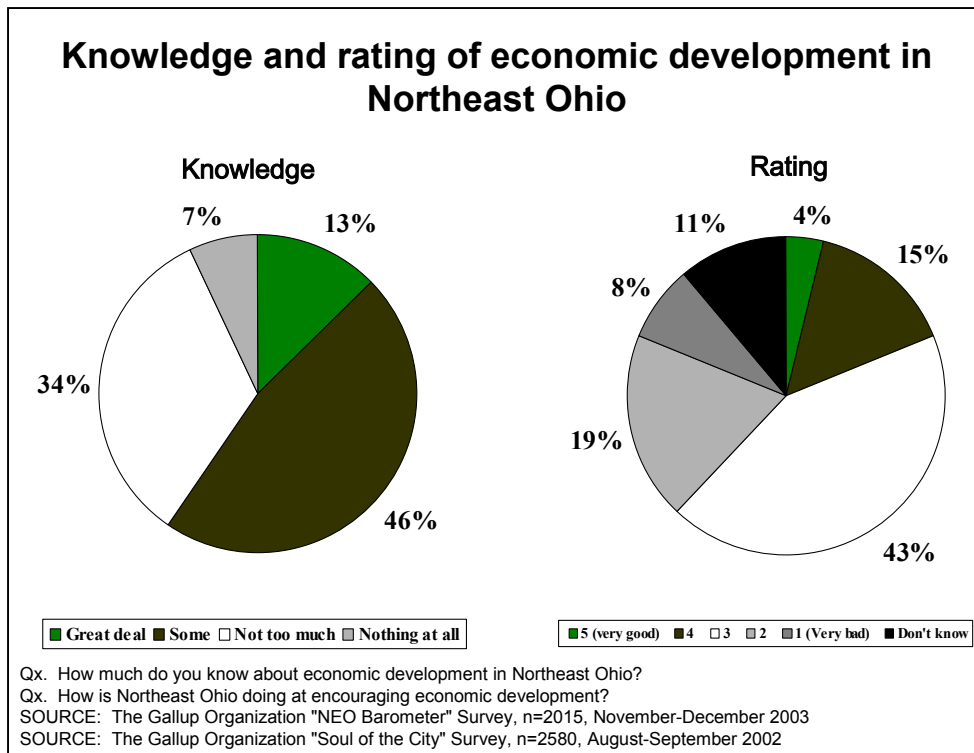


Stark residents provide the highest ratings of their business leaders. Akron residents are also satisfied with the leadership of the business community, but are twice as likely to provide a very good rating as are those living outside of Akron but in Summit. Similarly, Cleveland city residents are twice as likely to say the leadership of the business community in Northeast Ohio is very good (8%) as are residents of Cuyahoga county not living in Cleveland (4%).



**10. Communication and education are needed about economic development issues. There is a strong relationship between knowledge of economic development and overall satisfaction with the region.**

Northeast Ohioans profess limited knowledge of economic development in the region and are neutral or unsure of how the region is faring. Those who know a great deal about it are split over how we're doing. However, knowledge of economic development is tied to loyalty to the region. Those who know a great deal about economic development are more likely to be satisfied with the region (39% vs. 30% overall), more likely to recommend the area to a friend or associate (39% vs. 31%), and to feel the region is doing better economically.



Knowledge of economic development in Northeast Ohio

Six in ten Northeast Ohio residents say they know a great deal (13%) or some (46%) about economic development in the region. Four in ten say they know not much (34%) or nothing at all (7%). Those in non-Akron Summit County are most knowledgeable (67% know a great deal or some), while those in Lorain (55%) and Lake (54%) profess less knowledge.

College graduates are more informed (77%) than high school graduates (50%) or those with less than a high school degree (52%).

Rating of economic development in Northeast Ohio

Just 19% feel the region is doing well at economic development (4% very good). Most (43%) feel neutral about how the region is doing or don't know (11%). More than one-fourth (27%) feel the region

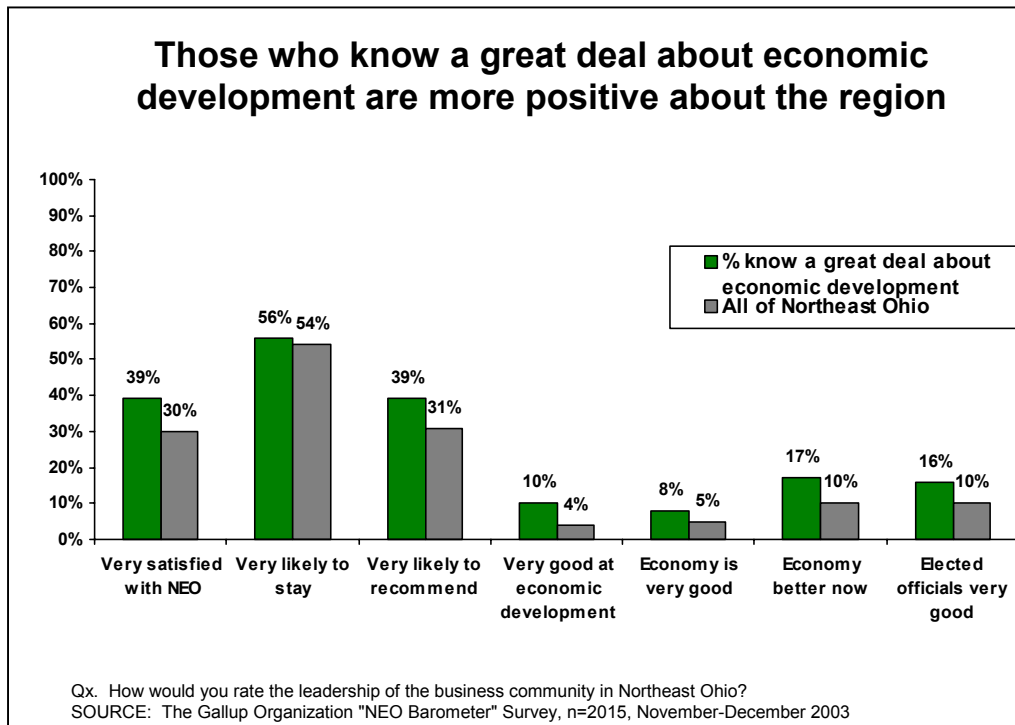


is doing poorly at economic development. There is little variation in this assessment across the region or across demographic subgroups.

Those who say they know a great deal about economic development are more positive about how the region is doing on this (31% good) than those who know some (19%), not much (14%) or nothing at all (19%).

Relationship between economic development and views on Northeast Ohio

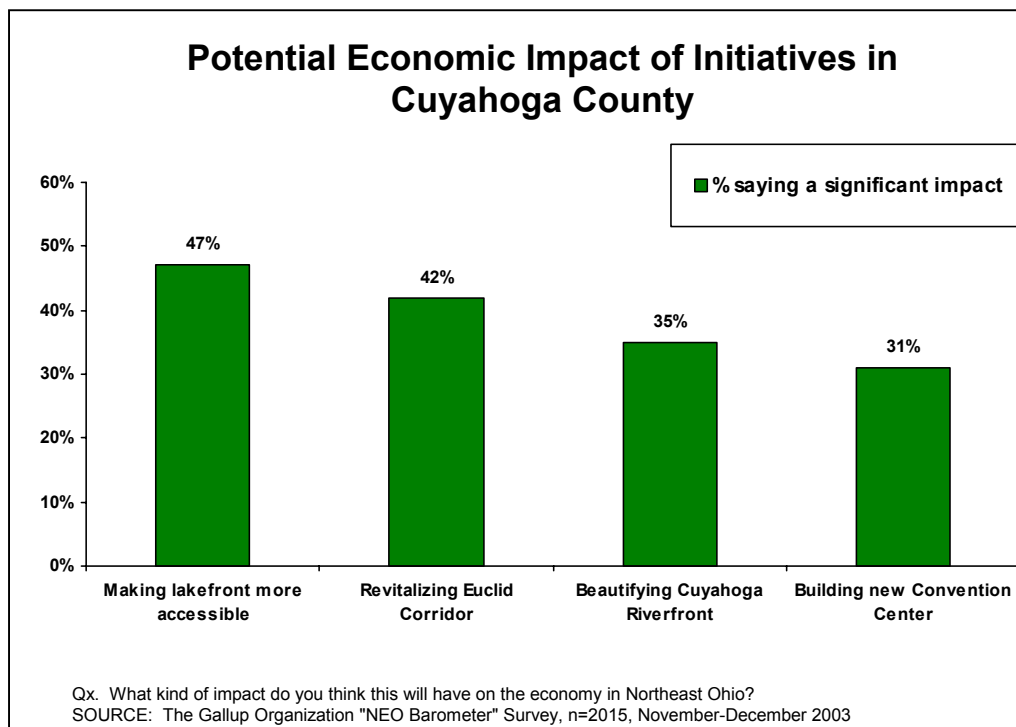
Those who know a great deal about economic development are more likely to be satisfied with the region (39% vs. 30% overall), more likely to recommend the area to a friend or associate (39% vs. 31%), and to feel the region is doing better economically.



**11. Knowledge of economic development initiatives in Cuyahoga County is high. Lakefront development is seen as the best bet for economic impact, though it was receiving high media attention at the time of the survey.**

In Cuyahoga County, 60% know a great deal or some about efforts to build a new Convention Center. Cleveland residents know less (60%) than non-Cleveland Cuyahoga residents (71%). White Cuyahoga residents know more about the Convention Center (64%) than African American residents (51%). Over half know a great deal or some about the Lakefront development discussions (57%). Clevelanders profess less knowledge about this activity (56%) than non-Clevelanders in the county (68%). Half know about efforts to beautify and revitalize the Cuyahoga riverfront (48%), with no differences by area of residence. Similarly, half (47%) know about the revitalization of the Euclid Corridor, with no differences by area.

Among these county initiatives, more Cuyahoga residents feel Lakefront development will have a significant impact on the economy (47% significant impact) than the other initiatives. One-third (31%) believes a new Convention Center will have a significant impact (including 21% of non-Cleveland Cuyahoga residents).



**12. Lorain County residents overwhelmingly believe the move of the Ford assembly plant will have a significant impact on the economy in Northeast Ohio.**

Three out of four residents of Lorain County (73%) say the move of the Ford assembly plant from Lorain to the Ohio plant in Avon will have a significant impact on the economy. Almost half (46%) believe riverfront development at the mouth of the Black River will have a significant impact.

***13. Notable issues recognized in other Northeast Ohio counties as having a significant impact on economy included:***

- Lorain County: The move of the Ford assembly plant from Lorain to the Ohio plant in Avon (73% significant impact on the economy, though this may be a negative impact).
- Lorain County: Riverfront development at the mouth of the Black River (46% significant impact).
- Lake/Geauga Counties: Moving Lake East Hospital closer to Geauga County (25% significant impact in Geauga County, 40% significant impact in Lake County).
- Stark County: Building a new Convention Center in Stark County (25% significant impact).