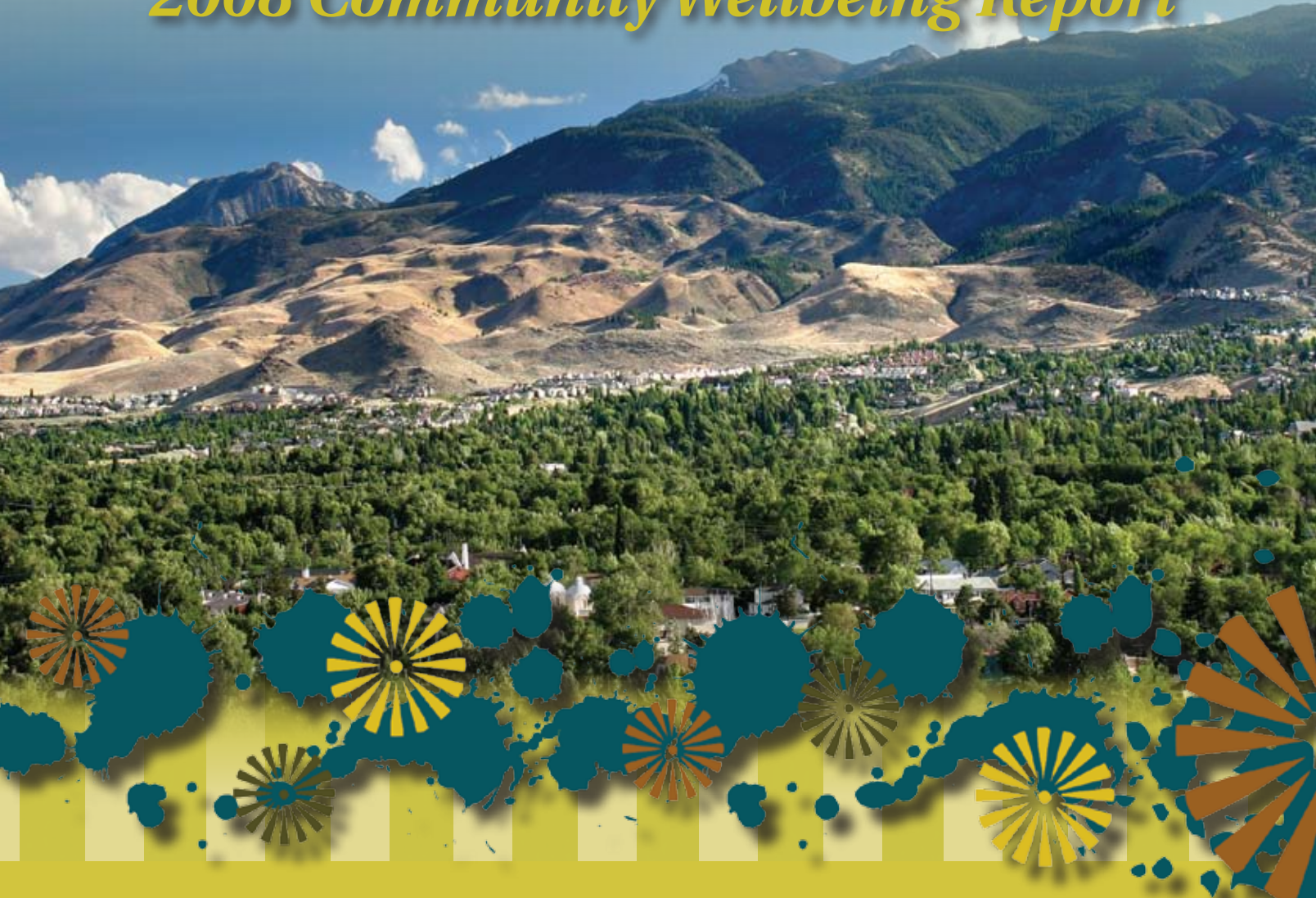


# *Truckee Meadows*

# **TOMORROW**

*2008 Community Wellbeing Report*



*Engaging The Community. Measuring Our Progress.*



# Truckee Meadows Tomorrow 2008 Community Wellbeing Report

Truckee Meadows Tomorrow (TMT) exists to enhance our community's ability to continually improve our quality of life. There are amazing changes taking place our community. Whether you have lived in the Truckee Meadows for a brief time, or many years, only you can appreciate how the nature of "change" influences personal perceptions of our community's quality of life. So, we asked you, in community conversations, surveys, and phone and personal interviews. Your feedback described the importance of values and which issues matter most. It is our honor and pleasure to present TMT's first Community Well-being Report using new quality of life indicators that you reviewed and updated.

You'll notice some new things in this year's report:

- ✓ There's greater emphasis on arts and culture, innovation, personal enrichment, and engagement. We've described the vision for quality of life categories using your words at the beginning of each category. This makes both the process and the outcome easier to understand and to apply each day in your life, work, recreation, and family.
- ✓ The indicators have evolved from strictly measurable to significant and meaningful.
- ✓ We've brought back TMT's community survey, conducted by MarkeTec — a local market research firm — in December 2007. We added new questions for new values-based indicators. The valid phone survey included 500 residents of Reno, Sparks, and the unincorporated areas of Washoe County with a 95% confidence level.

The report is still published in a familiar format that instantly identifies the criteria that establishes what "good" indicators look like:

- Actionable — Our collaborative efforts deliver results; even so, there is room for improvement.
- Meaningful, valuable, and important — Indicators reflect success or serve as an early warning system to redouble our efforts.
- Measurable — Data must be reliable and consistent, and encourage tracking over time.

The data that is published in this report are topical, timely, and current. TMT is continually identifying key community priorities for improvement and inviting collaborations — supported by action plans — that deliver the results you want to see in your community.

We have redesigned the TMT Web site to encourage interactivity, and we think you'll be impressed. Visit the "Quality of Life Indicators" page at [www.truckeemeadowstomorrow.org](http://www.truckeemeadowstomorrow.org) for full data tables, additional data, and a trove of valuable information. And if necessary, corrections to data will be posted on-line.

The new Indicators offer a place to begin. Meaningful change begins with you. We hope that you'll take this report personally. Visit TMT's Web site to adopt an Indicator. Collaborate. Get involved on a TMT committee. Recycle your newspaper. Invest in your community. Walk or bicycle to the store. Volunteer. Join Truckee Meadows Tomorrow. Let's improve quality of life in our community together.

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Cover photo by Jeff Dow



Courtesy A.V.A. Ballet Theatre

## Take quality of life personally. Here's how:

Quality of life isn't a slogan, phrase, or ideal. It is a measurable, movable concept that you can influence throughout your personal and professional life. In the following pages, you'll read about our community's Quality of Life Indicators. Help us move them from good to great. It's as easy as 1-2-3!

- 1. Adopt an Indicator:** Identify which Indicators resonate with you, and talk about your commitment to quality of life with your family, your co-workers and your friends. Inspire others to join you in an activity that seeks to improve it. Then tell others by adopting the Indicator in TMT's on-line Indicator program.
- 2. Create a Community Compact:** Want to collaborate to accomplish more? Take it personally by getting involved in a community project that is actively moving Indicators. Need ideas? Visit TMT's Web site collaboration page for more information and ideas. The online Community Forum is also a terrific place to find others who wish to improve the community's quality of life.
- 3. Toot your own horn and join TMT:** Share your efforts with the entire community using TMT's Web site. Nothing is as contagious as success, and your efforts have the potential to influence thousands of people in our community.

Your commitment to quality of life will make a difference. **Are you ready to take it personally?** Visit [www.truckeemeadowstomorrow.org](http://www.truckeemeadowstomorrow.org) today!



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# Quality of Life Executive Summary

## ARTS & CULTURAL VITALITY

### 1. Expression of culture through the arts

### 2. Participation in the arts & cultural activities ✓

If you've ever been to another community our size, you understand just how amazing the depth and breadth of our cultural community is in northern Nevada. Reno Little Theater is Nevada's oldest community theater; the Nevada Museum of Art is the only accredited fine arts museum in Nevada. The community's long standing arts institutions are regularly joined by new arts organizations ranging from the Holland Project to the Nevada Rock Art Foundation.

Investment and participation in the arts is high. According to the National Endowment for the Arts, 4,573 arts-related businesses in Nevada employ 20,302 people in the state. We'll achieve our vision when the arts are embraced even in tough economic times because they are a valued investment in our community.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

### 3. Voter turnout ✗

### 4. Effective government engagement ✗

### 5. Civility & neighborhood pride

### 6. Emergency preparedness

As one of the fastest growing states, lower levels of community involvement might be expected until new residents really make our state their home. In 2008, Nevada will have its first ever Presidential Caucuses giving Nevadans the opportunity to participate in the nomination of the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates. Voter turnout is always higher in Presidential years; Nevada's new place as one of the early states may drive participation to new heights.

On other fronts, civic engagement is alive and well. Many groups and individuals are working to make this a better place. Truckee Meadows Tomorrow recognizes many of them at Accentuate the Positive. To truly achieve our vision in this area, the Truckee Meadows has to have a clearer sense of identity that can bring us together, despite our growing diversity.

## ECONOMIC WELLBEING

### 7. Individual & family economic wellbeing •

### 8. Economic vitality •

### 9. Workforce development

### 10. Entrepreneurship

Our region has experienced decades of growth. Job creation is strong and unemployment is low. In this situation, it may be easy to feel that even the poorest families have the opportunity to get ahead. This may be true for most. The poverty rate for all families in Washoe County is lower than the national rate.

Still, 31% of women-headed households with children under



Courtesy J. Kyle Dalpe, TMCC

age 18 and 41% of those with children under age 5 live in poverty. As the challenges of health insurance, housing costs, and child care compound, these women and their children find it increasingly difficult to achieve self-sufficiency. Giving these families the tools they need is a community priority.

## EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING

### 11. Educational infrastructure to meet community needs ✗

### 12. Educational success ✓

### 13. Community-wide involvement in education •

### 14. Literate community

Education is fundamental to our ability to function in the world. Over the years, we're doing a much better job keeping kids in school. Washoe County School District's drop out rate is at 2.7% compared to the national rate of 4.6%. This represents a significant improvement over the high of 8.6% for the 1993-94 school year.

UNR has made great strides, too. In 1985, almost 40% of the freshman class did not return for their sophomore year. By 2006, that statistic dropped to 21%. However, for those who don't stay in school, and those who need to get a GED or career training, the situation can be challenging.

## ENRICHMENT

### 15. Recreation •

### 16. Philanthropy •

### 17. Access to faith communities & spiritual wellbeing

Washoe County is enjoying a growing mosaic of cultures. The growing diversity of the workforce, our religious and cultural institutions, and recreational offerings are indicators of helping the people in our community achieve their best.

At the same time, difference can bring tensions and challenges. An in-depth look at our education and health indicators shows that different communities achieve differing levels of success here. Finding ways for the most vulnerable populations to achieve enriches us all.

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

### 18. Access to healthcare X

### 19. Wellness & preventative healthcare X

### 20. Mental health & social wellbeing X

Washoe County — still pretty much at the bottom or top of every list — can be frustrating for those making a difference. For example, Nevada has come from an immunization rate of 13.1% of 2 year olds immunized, to a rate of 73.7% immunized. However, Nevada still has the lowest immunization rate in the country.

Nevada funds Medicaid less than any other state in the country, and we have one of the highest rates of uninsured in America. A lot of the people who live here fall into the gap between qualifying for Medicaid and having private health insurance. These folks have a difficult time accessing basic and preventative care as well as early treatment. Innovative approaches like the Health Access Washoe County Clinic and Access to Healthcare Network for the uninsured are a great start. Individuals also have to take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing.

## INNOVATION

### 21. Renewable energy ✓

### 22. Technology infrastructure & engagement

### 23. Transformative community initiatives

The people who live here recognize that innovation does not always include technology. The white-water park in downtown Reno is a commonly cited example of a positive community development. "The Big Read" and Chautauqua create rich shared learning experiences every year.

To blow our own horn, just for a moment, TMT's enduring quality of life process is perhaps a classic example. TMT began by working with the community to identify what's important to your quality of life from a community perspective. Over the years, TMT has refined the process to encourage individuals and businesses to take an active role by Adopting an Indicator. Taking the idea further, we developed Quality of Life Compacts to work collaboratively to impact the community on a greater level.

## LAND USE & INFRASTRUCTURE

### 24. Affordable housing X

### 25. Land use balance & sensitivity

### 26. Mobility & convenience •

### 27. Development that encourages healthy lifestyles & neighborhood livability

While housing prices were once a bright light in our economic picture, in recent years the cost of housing has been a huge challenge for many families. Local housing prices now far exceed the national average.

The tax system in Nevada isn't structured to keep pace with growth. While new residential development pays for itself, the depreciation schedule on the taxed value of a home means that in about 7 years, taxes no longer keep pace with the ongoing operation and

maintenance costs of the infrastructure. In addition, while the state contributes a large share of the per pupil costs for education, no state funds are dedicated for new schools.

Depreciation ensures that our infrastructure won't keep pace whether we grow or not. We know that we'll go from traffic jams at rush hour on 20% of our roads today, to about 50% of our roads by 2030. How we choose to grow can add to these problems or help minimize them. Our individual choices have an impact as well.

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### 28. Air quality ✓

### 29. Clean & available water ✓

### 30. Open space access & connectivity •

Air quality has improved dramatically in the past two decades thanks to technology and laws to protect the environment. Those gains will be challenged by increasing numbers of cars, longer commutes, and greater congestion in our community. More stringent standards regulating arsenic will ensure that we invest in our water quality.

Several local government open space planning efforts are under way. Citizens have a chance to tell local governments which natural resources are the most important to them, and to help protect those resources for generations to come.

## PUBLIC WELLBEING

### 31. Perception of safety •

### 32. Secure families •

### 33. Community responsiveness to its most vulnerable populations •

People generally feel good about living in the Truckee Meadows. High profile criminal cases undermine our sense of security. There are some signs for concern. Possession of controlled substances and alcohol were up significantly in the Washoe County School District for 2006-07.

Fire safety and emergency preparedness have come to the fore in recent years. Disaster planning and training have increased, though many are concerned we are still behind. Again, as in so many other aspects of quality of life, this is an area individuals can address themselves with their own disaster plans and emergency supply kits.

#### KEY

- ✓ Improving or positive indicator
- Stable indicator or little change over time
- X Declining or indicator needs improvement
- New indicator baseline



Courtesy Sierra Pacific Power