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Input sought on life in Fox Cities

Post-Crescent, The (Appleton, WI) - October 10, 2005

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A survey gauging the quality of life in the Fox Cities is on its way to the randomly selected homes of 2,000 residents and 550 community leaders by week's end.

The goal of the L.I.F.E. (Leading Indicators for Excellence) study is to gauge how people perceive the quality of life in the Fox Cities today and compare how their perceptions have changed since 2000 -- the last time the survey was conducted.

A good response is critical to assess the community's state, officials say.

"We really need to hear what people think so that decisions can be made in the future," said Lora Warner, president of Planning & Evaluation Associates Inc., a Green Bay research company.

The survey must be returned by the last week of October.

"This whole L.I.F.E. survey isn't just to see what the needs are in the area, but also to understand some of the strengths in the area and to tell others the good way of life. It's very much about documenting, getting evidence that the area is good," she said.

The L.I.F.E. study is a joint effort of United Way Fox Cities, Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region Inc., the Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Fox Cities Economic Development Partnership.

It evaluates the area in nine categories: community profile, economy and employment, basic needs, relationships, education, safety, health care, natural environment and entertainment venues. The survey's findings will be released to the public in June.

The last time the L.I.F.E. study was commissioned was in 2000. Its results, released the following year, led to the creation of Harmony Cafe, the Fox Cities Rotary Multicultural Center and the Tri-Community Dental Clinic.

Warner said the information collected is valuable to promote the area to new employees and to rally groups to "say we need something to do about this."

Margie Weiss, chairwoman of the L.I.F.E in the Fox Cities steering and advisory committees, said the group would watch issues that relate to health care and transportation, especially for the elderly.

With the quick mobilization, evidenced by the creation of three new centers to meet the needs of the population, last time around the study was released, Weiss said the community is poised for more self-examination and action.

"The whole process of the **life study** has just improved the quality of life in our community," she said.

Community leaders tapped for the survey include those from churches, schools, government, media, business, nonprofits, foundations and health care.

Following the survey, focus groups will be brought together in the winter months to

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review the information, Warner said.

Residents who are not part of the survey but are interested in providing input can do so by requesting a copy of the survey from United Way. Their answers will be taken into consideration, but kept separate from the random sample.

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On the Web

United Way Fox Cities:

www.unitedwayfoxcities.org

Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce & Industry

www.foxcitieschamber.com

Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region Inc.

www.cffoxvalley.org

Fox Cities Economic Development Partnership

www.foxcities-marketing.org

L.I.F.E. (Leading Indicators for Excellence) in the Fox Cities 2000-01 is available online at www.foxcitieslifestudy.org.

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