

Winter *Texan*



**2013 -2014
SURVEY**

**Business and Tourism Research Center
The University of Texas-Pan American**



2013 - 2014



Winter *Texan*

Winter *Texan* 2013-2014 REPORT

July 2014

The University of Texas-Pan American

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Each year, retirees from all over the U.S and Canada venture to the Rio Grande Valley area to spend the winter. These retirees, known as Winter Texans, provide a substantial boost to the region's economy. In an effort to better understand their activities, interests and impact on the region, the Business and Tourism Research Center in the College of Business Administration at The University of Texas-Pan American has conducted research on this market over the past 25 years.

This year's study included 1,394 Winter Texans respondents and 88 RV and mobile home park manager/owner respondents. Most of the Winter Texan participants submitted their response to the study questionnaire by mail (53.8%) while the remainder (46.2%) completed a very similar survey online. The results of both the Winter Texan and the park surveys are summarized here in six sections: demographic characteristics, stay characteristics, health care, expenditures in Mexico, expenditures in the Valley, and the Park Study.

Demographic Characteristics

The average Winter Texan participating in this year's study:

- is female (57.2%),
- is 71.7 years of age,
- is married (85.9%),
- is white (99.3%),
- has been retired for more than a year (89.2%),
- has some college (35.9%) or a bachelor's, graduate or professional degree (31.5%),
- is in a 2-person household (87.6%),
- has an annual household income of \$59,000 with 63.0% of Winter Texans having an income between \$30,000 to \$70,000, and
- comes from Minnesota (16.9%), Canada (14.4%), Iowa (13.1%), Wisconsin (7.5%), Illinois (6.9%), Missouri (6.6%) or Michigan (5.6%).

Further, Winter Texans 65 years of age and older participating in this study are, on average, younger, more educated and have a higher household income level than their counterparts in the U.S. population in general.

Stay Characteristics

Knowing where Winter Texans live while in the Valley, how long they stay, why they come and what they do while in the Valley is crucial to providing for their needs so they will continue to come and significantly impact the region's economy. During their stay in the Rio Grande Valley, the typical Winter Texan in this study:

- has come to the Valley for 11.2 years,
- stayed in the Valley for 133 days, and
- owns a Valley residence (91.0%)
 - 50.7% own a mobile home/park model
 - 34.0% own an RV
 - 6.3% own a house or condo.

As in past years, most Winter Texans come to the Valley because of:

- the climate (92.3%),
- friendly people (66.4%),
- the social activities (55.7%), and
- a winter vacation (51.9%).

The most popular Valley activities for this year's study participants include:

- visiting flea markets,
- attending festivals,
- visiting historical sites ,
- attending music or jam sessions, and
- going to the beach.

Overwhelmingly, the Winter Texan study participants plan to return to the Valley next year (96.6%), suggesting their satisfaction with the area. They reported that poor health (62.7%) or family reasons (37.0%) would be the most likely reasons to prevent them from returning.

Health

This year's Winter Texan study respondents were asked a question about their health and the number of visits they made to doctors in the past year. Most rated their health as good to excellent (93%) and the average number of doctors' visits in the past year was six.

Economic Impact

Included in this year's report is a study of RV and mobile home parks where most Winter Texans typically stay. Using a listing of parks and information from questionnaires completed by park managers or owners, an estimated 99,500 Winter Texans or 53,000 households were in the Valley during the 2013-2014 winter season.

On average, Winter Texans visited Mexico (86.8%) for an average of 5.3 trips during their stay in the Valley. They spent an average of \$92 to \$170 per trip, depending on the method used for estimation. With about 53,000 Winter Texan households in the Valley, the average, direct economic impact of Winter Texans on Mexico border towns is about \$31.4 million.

On the U.S. side, Winter Texan households spent an average of approximately \$9,640 on routine, monthly purchases and about \$3,730 on major, one-time purchases. This represents an average expenditure in the Valley of about \$13,400 per household. Combining household expenditures with the approximate 53,000 Winter Texan households in the Valley, the estimated direct economic impact of Winter Texans on the Valley economy for 2013-2014 is \$710 million.

Winter
Texan

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THE WINTER TEXAN 2014 STUDY

For more than 40 years, retirees from the northern parts of the United States and Canada have traveled to the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) to spend their winters in the temperate climate of South Texas. The RGV or “Valley” region spans the area from South Padre Island to Rio Grande City. This 110-mile region borders on Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico and offers visitors of all ages a wide variety of activities throughout the year.

The combination of warm winter weather, numerous outdoor activities, numerous RV and mobile home parks, friendly people, and a low cost of living are powerful incentives in attracting wintering visitors. Since 1987, the Business and Tourism Research Center in the College of Business Administration at The University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) has conducted research on these winter visitors to the Valley to examine their opinions, activities, expenditure patterns, and especially, their economic impact on the region. Prior studies indicated the retired winter visitors to the Valley, dubbed “Winter Texans,” typically stay anywhere from 3 weeks to 6 months and have had a direct impact on the regional economy of \$92 million in 1987 to more than \$803 million in 2010.

This report presents the results of two different studies, both studies essential to estimating the number of *Winter Texans Times* in the RGV region. The first study was conducted among Winter Texans whereby a questionnaire was distributed to Winter Texans via an insert in a Winter Texan newspaper and made available online. The results from this study are presented in this report in five sections. The first section details the demographic characteristics of the Winter Texan study respondents. The second section presents respondents’ stay characteristics (length of stay, type of housing, etc.), activities engaged in while in the RGV and the likelihood of returning to the RGV next year. The third section reveals the self-reported health condition of the study respondents, reported doctor visits and the type of health insurance held. The last two sections itemize Winter Texan expenditures by spending category first in Mexico border towns and then in the RGV. Most of the results are shown along with results from past Winter Texan reports since 2006 to better understand changes in the Winter Texan market over the time period.

The second section of the report presents the results of the Winter Texan Park Study. Because most Winter Texans live in RV/mobile home parks, the RGV park managers/owners were sent a questionnaire designed to determine the number of Winter Texans living in the parks during the Winter Texan season. An estimate of the number of Winter Texans in the RGV may then be drawn by generalizing responding park Winter Texan numbers to the population of Winter Texan parks. Results from both studies are then used to estimate the number of Winter Texans in the RGV during 2013-2014 and their economic impact on the region’s economy. The next section explains the methodology used in the Winter Texan study.

WINTER TEXAN STUDY: METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

A questionnaire designed to determine the demographic and stay characteristics of Winter Texans and their spending while in the RGV was developed a number of years ago. Much of this original questionnaire was used in this year's study for consistency purposes. The main sections of the questionnaire, as shown in Appendix A, contain questions about home state, Valley stay characteristics (length of stay, type of housing, etc.), and participation in various activities while in the Valley. The questionnaire also asks respondents to report their monthly and one-time expenditures while in the Valley as well as their travel to and expenditures in Mexico border towns. This year's survey also included questions about health condition, visits to doctors and types of insurance held.

As in the prior three studies, this year's questionnaire was inserted into 25,000 copies of the *Winter Texan Times* (January 30, 2014 issue). This seasonal publication that specifically targets Winter Texans is free and distributed to RV and mobile home parks, restaurants and other venues frequented by Winter Texans throughout the RGV. A link to the questionnaire along with an invitation to participate in the survey was also placed on the *Welcome Home Rio Grande Valley* web site (<http://welcomehomergv.com>), a Winter Texan community website and the home pages of seven RGV RV/mobile home parks.

Participants were asked to either complete the questionnaire online at <http://coba.utpa.edu/wintertexan> or to send the completed hard copy to the Business and Tourism Research Center by mail before February 26, 2014. No envelopes or prepaid stamps were provided. Participating respondents were promised the chance to enter a drawing for a \$100 prize or a Kindle Fire.

STUDY LIMITATIONS

This study is subject to limitations that should be taken into account when interpreting the results, as are all studies. For example, participants in the research were self-selected and may not represent the Winter Texan population as a whole. Further, the respondents may have answered survey questions incorrectly by intent, by failure to remember correctly or simply by data entry error. When obvious, these errors were deleted from consideration. Finally, respondents may not have understood the questions correctly and thus responded erroneously. These types of errors are present in almost all survey research and should be considered when interpreting the results. For this study, the results should be interpreted within a large margin of error — about plus or minus 10 percent — to account for survey and sampling error.

Note: Due to rounding, percentages in the tables and figures provided in the narrative of the study results may not sum to exactly 100%. Note also, that all dollar figures provided are in current, nominal U.S. dollars and have not been manipulated to be adjusted to real dollars.



STUDY RESULTS

SURVEY RETURNS AND RETURN METHOD

A total of 1,394 useable questionnaires were received for the 2014 Winter Texan study. While 790 respondents began the study online, a total of 644 provided sufficiently complete responses to retain in the analysis. In total, 1,394 Winter Texans responded to the survey with 750 responses submitted by mail (53.8%) and 644 submitted online (46.2%). The results, shown in Figure 1, indicate that Winter Texans are increasingly online, reflecting the national trends in increased computer and Internet use among older adults.

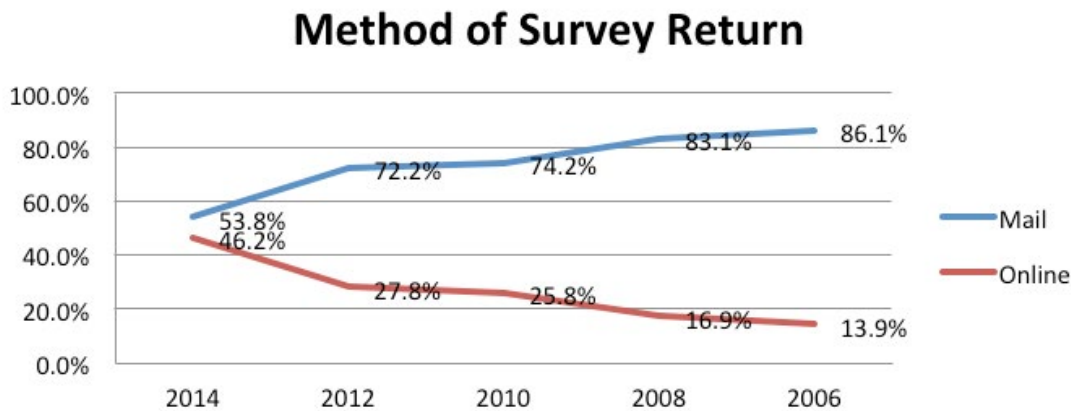


Figure 1. Method of survey return

RESULTS: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

On average, Winter Texans participating in the 2014 study are 71.7 years of age, married (85.9%), Caucasian (99.3%), and have been retired for more than one year (87.5%). Most respondents are female (57.2%) and 63.0% have an annual household income between \$30,000 and \$70,000, with an average income of \$59,000.

The following section details the demographic characteristics of Winter Texans in this year's survey and compares the results with the demographic characteristics of Winter Texans in the past four studies to better understand the changing demographic profile of Winter Texans. This section also compares this year's demographic results with those of the 65 year and older age group according to the U.S. Census data.

The census data is extracted from the 2010 American Community Survey data available online at www.census.gov. This age group is used for comparison purposes because most Winter Texans (86.9%) are in that age group. This comparison allows a better understanding of the demographic profile of Valley Winter Texans as compared to that of the U. S. population in general.

The demographic characteristics examined in this study include age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, education level, household income, employment status and home state. Each of these characteristics and the relevant comparisons are presented next.

Age

The average age of Winter Texans participating in the 2014 study is 71.7 years of age, with respondents' ages ranging from 34 to 93. Figure 2 shows the average age of Winter Texans participating in the current and past four surveys and shows that the average age has increased by about 4.4% since 2006.

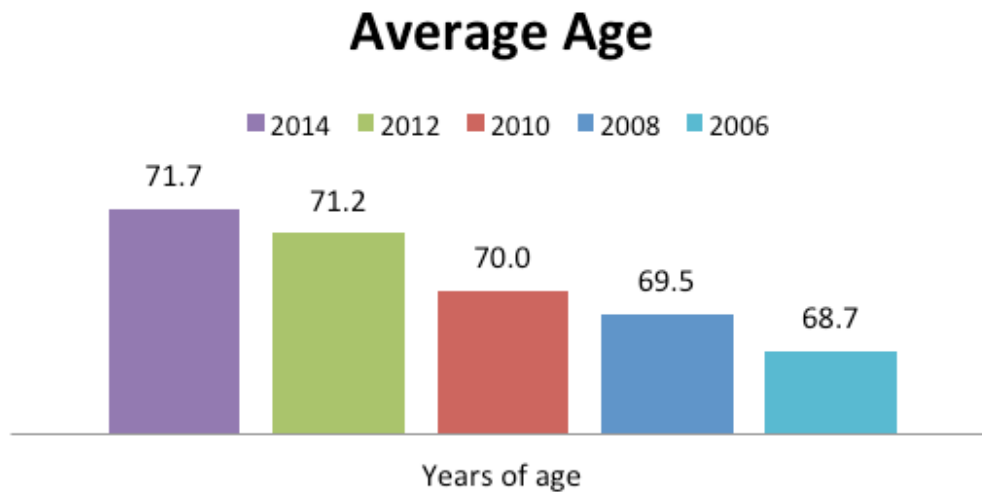


Figure 2. Average age

The age distribution of Winter Texans participating in this year's study is reported in Figure 3. By far, most Winter Texans are 65 years of age or older (86.9%). In comparison to prior years, more Winter Texans are 65 years of age or older and fewer are under 65 years of age. For example, in 2006, 9.8% of Winter Texans were younger than 60 years of age, but in 2014, 3.7% are younger than 60. This suggests the Winter Texan population in the Valley, as a whole, is aging. Several reasons may account for this finding.

First, fewer new "young" (under 60 years of age) Winter Texans may be coming to the Valley or they may be deferring retirement for economic or other reasons.

Second, some "young" Winter Texans from prior years may be staying home or trying new places instead of returning to the Valley.

Third, more new, older Winter Texans may be coming to the Valley. Fourth, the regular, returning Winter Texans may be staying healthier longer and continuing to return to the Valley. Thus, the percentage of older Winter Texans to younger ones would increase. Traditionally, health is the primary reason that Winter Texans give for not returning to the Valley, so if they stay healthy, they return.

Finally, the younger Winter Texans may not be participating in this study while the older ones are participating.

Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Distribution of Respondents by Year

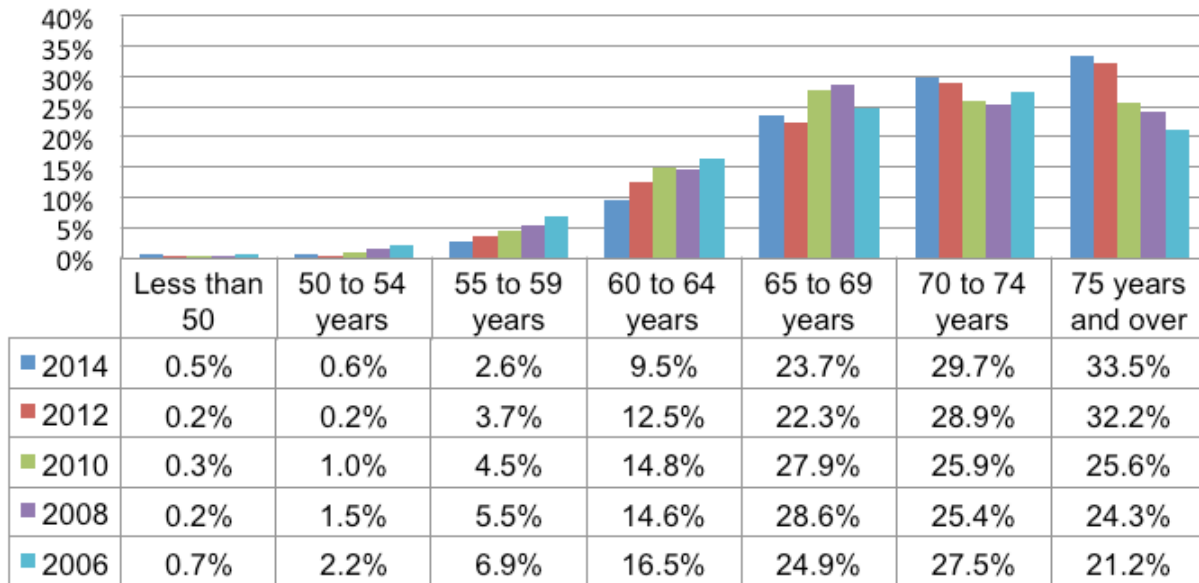


Figure 3. Age distribution

Figure 4 is a comparison of the age distribution of Winter Texans who are 65 years and older to that of the corresponding age group in the U.S. population. The U.S. 65 and over population data used in this study for comparison purposes were obtained from the American Community Survey available online at www.census.gov. For the purposes of this analysis, only Winter Texans in the 65 and older age group are considered.

The 2014 study indicates that there are more 70 to 74 year-old Winter Texans in the RGV than in the U.S. population in general but fewer Winter Texans in the other over 65 age categories than in the U.S. population. That there are fewer 75 year old and older Winter Texans is not surprising given that seniors are less likely to travel as they become older because of health or mobility issues.

Age: Winter Texans vs U.S. Population (65 years and older age group)

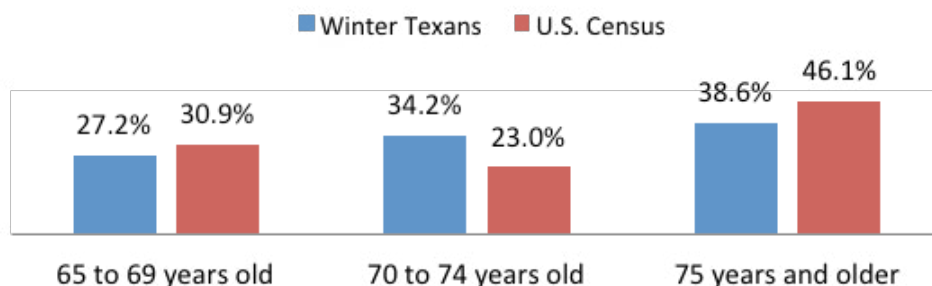


Figure 4. Age comparison

Gender

Figure 5 shows that most 2014 Winter Texan study respondents are female (57.2%). Females continuously participate in the survey in greater proportion than males throughout the years of the study.

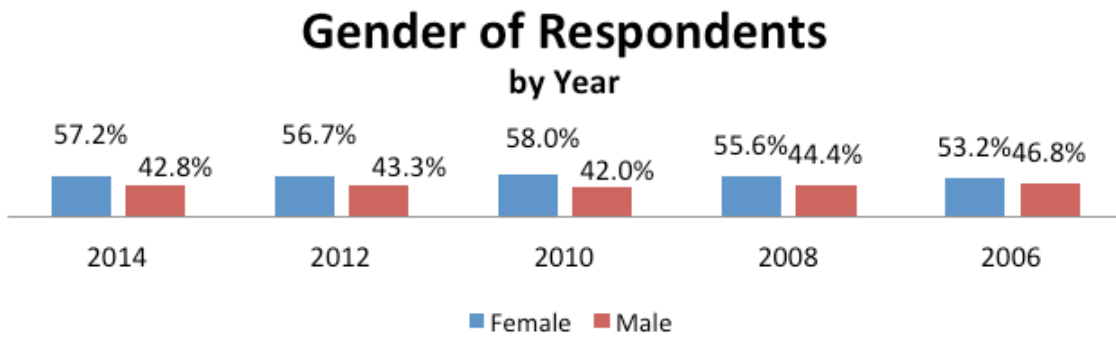


Figure 5. Gender

The higher representation of females in the study sample, however, mirrors the U.S. population where 56.9% of the 65 and older group are female, as illustrated in Figure 6.

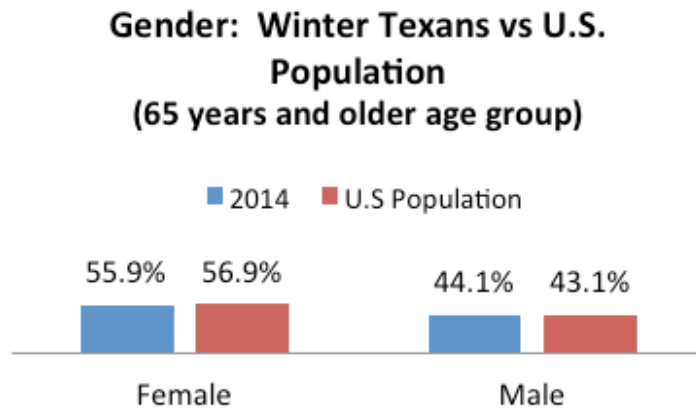


Figure 6. Gender comparison



Race

As Figure 7 shows, Winter Texans almost exclusively consider themselves white. The figure also shows that Winter Texans have been predominantly white over the past years of study. In the general U.S. 65 and over population, 85.1% are considered white, according to U.S. census data.

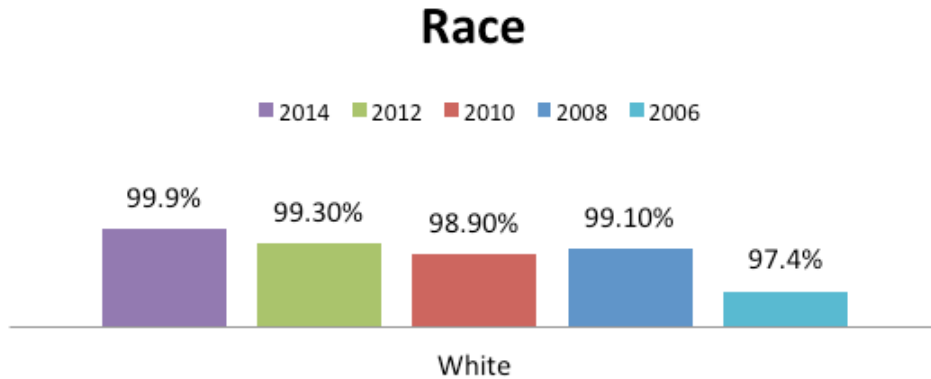


Figure 7. Percent of white respondents

Marital status

As in prior years, most Winter Texans are married as seen in Figure 8. The trends for the marital status of Winter Texans have stayed relatively consistent with prior years' studies although more respondents in 2014 are widowed than in prior years. This finding is consistent with the finding that Winter Texans are increasingly older.

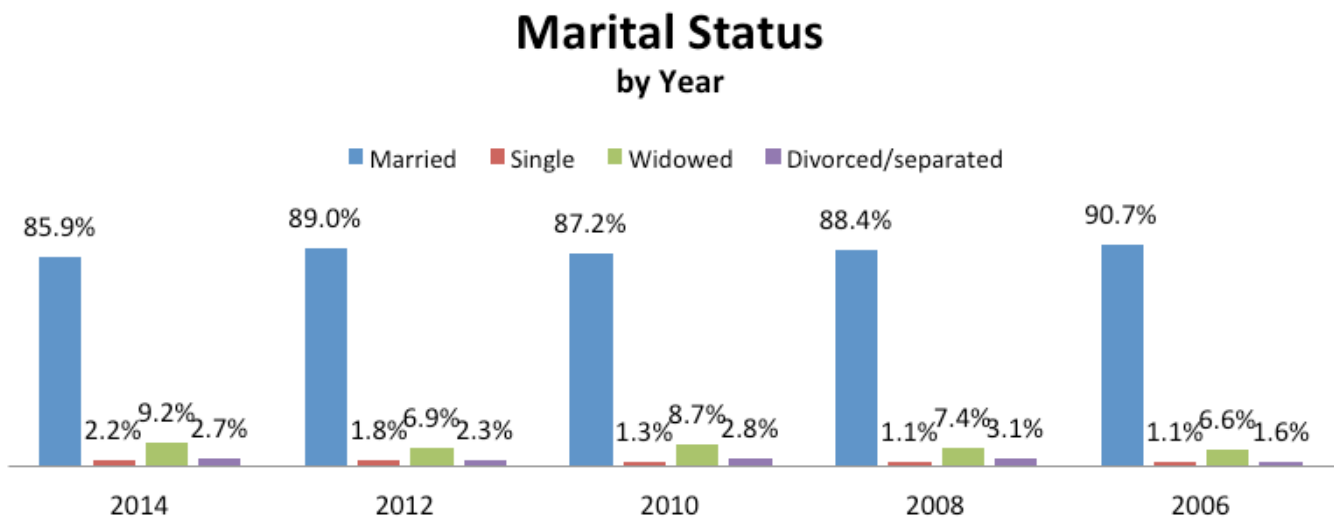


Figure 8. Marital status

Figure 9 compares the marital status of this year's Winter Texan respondents to that of the 65 and older U.S. population group. A far greater percentage of this year's Winter Texans are married compared to that of the general U.S. 65 years and older population.

Marital Status: Winter Texans vs U.S. Population (65 years and older age group)

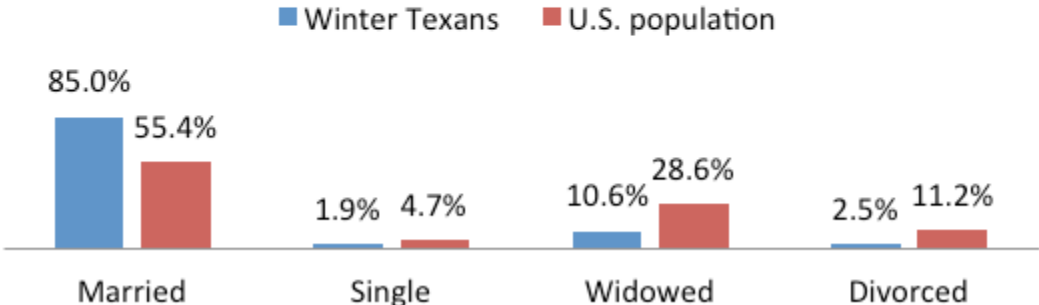


Figure 9. Marital status comparison

Despite the fact that about 2.2% of Winter Texan respondents in the 2014 survey are single, 10.9% report having only one person in their household. Most Winter Texans, 87.6%, have two people in their household and 1.1% report having a three-person household as shown in Figure 10.

Number of People in Household

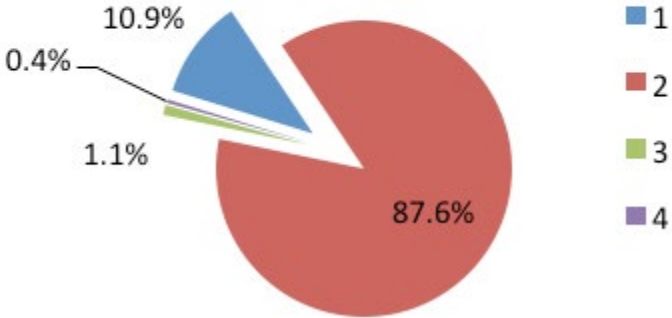


Figure 10. Number of people in Winter Texans' households

Education

Figure 11 shows that in 2014, an increasing number of Winter Texans attended college. While more Winter Texans indicated not having a high school diploma than in the past two studies, 67.4% of Winter Texans reported having a graduate/professional degree, a Bachelor's degree, or some college credit. More Winter Texans than ever reported having a graduate or professional degree.

Education Level by Year

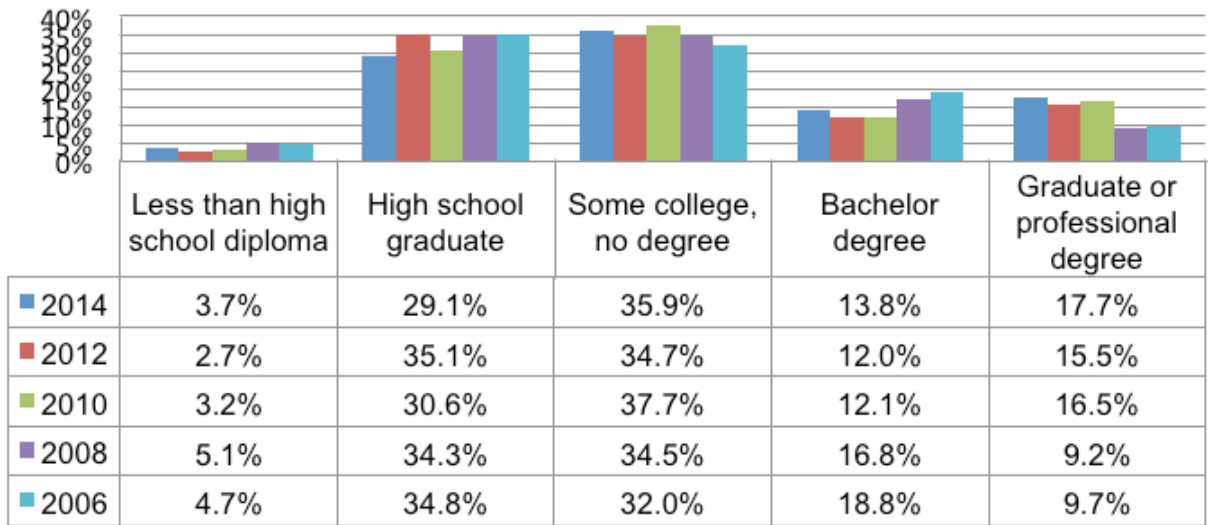


Figure 11. Education level

In general, Winter Texans are more educated than their counterparts in the general U.S. population. Figure 12 shows the comparison of the education level of the 2014 study sample with that of the U.S. 65 years and older population. As shown, only 3.6% of the Winter Texans do not have a high school diploma as compared to 22.1% of the general population.

On the other hand, 35.1% of the Winter Texans have some college education as compared to 22.2% of the general population. Following a similar pattern, a greater number of the Winter Texans have bachelor's or higher degrees (30.4%) than that of the general over-65 population (21.3%).

Education: Winter Texans vs U.S. Population (65 years and older age group)

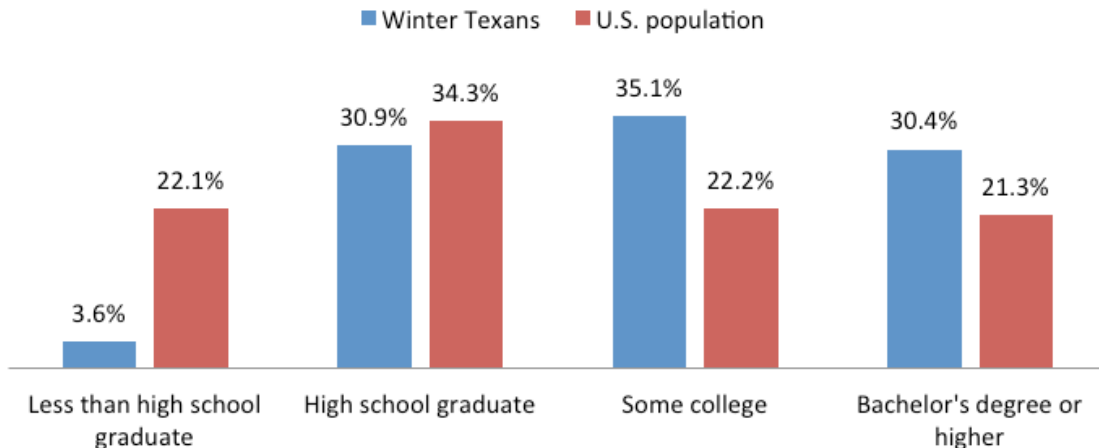


Figure 12. Education level comparison

Income

The average annual household income for Winter Texans participating in the 2014 study is about \$59,000. This income level represents an increase in nominal household income from the prior study of 9.3%, as indicated in Figure 13.

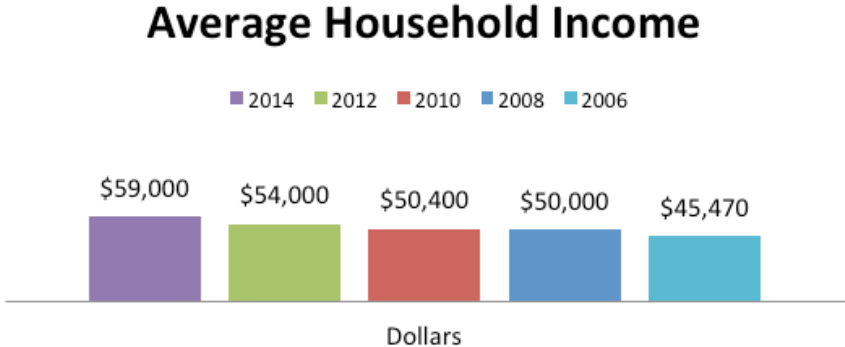


Figure 13. Annual household income

The distribution of income by income category has changed since 2006 as well. As seen in Figure 14, the household income of Winter Texans has increased; with fewer 2014 Winter Texans reporting nominal income levels in the low range and more in the higher income range. About 38.8% of 2014 Winter Texans were in the \$60,000 or higher income category whereas 31.6% were in the same category in the 2012 study, 26.8% in the 2010 study, 24.4% in the 2008 study, and 18.2% in the 2006 study of Winter Texans.

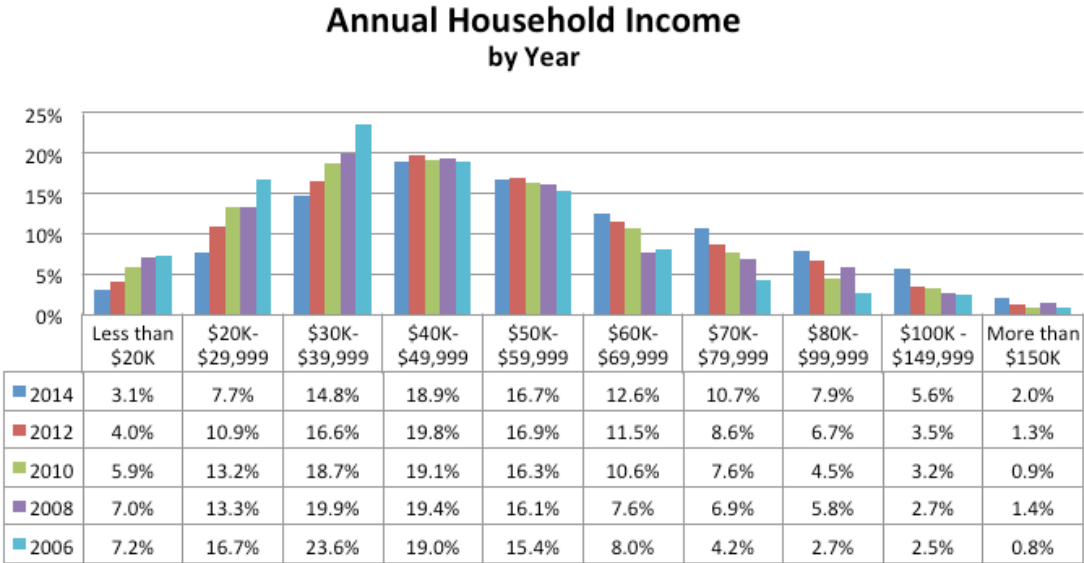


Figure 14. Income level

Figure 15 compares the income distribution of Winter Texans to the 65 years and above age group nationally. A higher percentage of Winter Texans (81.6%) report having incomes in the \$30,000 to \$100,000 range relative to their counterparts in the general population (44%). On the other hand, a much smaller percentage of Winter Texans report having an income of less than \$20,000 (3.1% for Winter Texans versus 29.4% nationwide) and fewer Winter Texans have incomes greater than \$100,000 (7.6% versus 11.0%).

Income: Winter Texans vs U.S. Population (65 years and older age group)

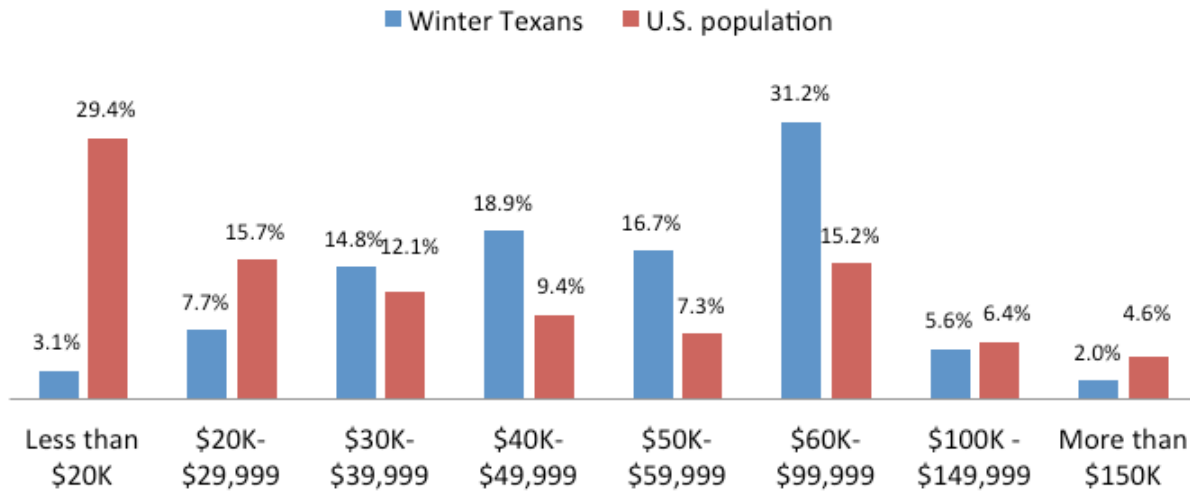


Figure 15. Household income comparison

Employment status

The majority of Winter Texans (89.6%) are retired (see Figure 16) with only 2.1% of those retiring in the past year. There are fewer retirees, however, in 2014 than in prior years with slightly more Winter Texans reporting that they work either full time or part time. This may mean that fewer recent retirees are wintering in the Valley than in years past, which is consistent with the aging Winter Texan population in the Valley. It may also mean that more people are delaying retirement.

Employment Status by Year

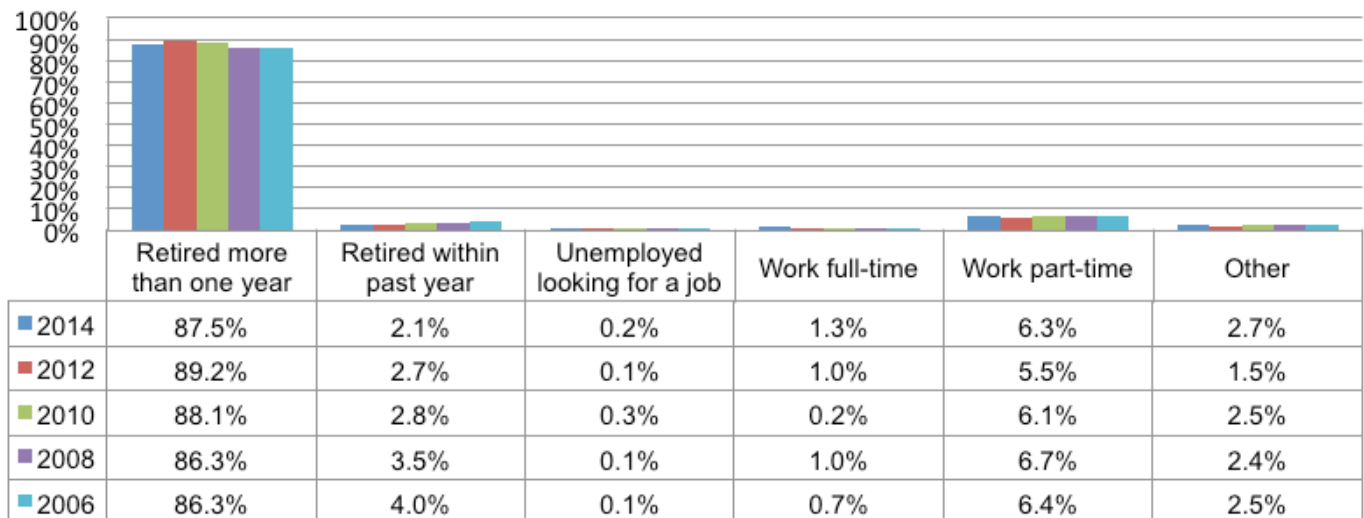


Figure 16. Employment status

The employment status of Winter Texans is compared to the employment status of the U.S. 65 year olds and over population in Figure 17. The graph shows that a greater percentage of Winter Texans (93.6%) are retired or are not in the work force as compared to 84.0% of the general U.S. population of the same age group. A slightly smaller percentage of Winter Texans (0.2%) is unemployed as compared to the general U.S. 65 years and over population (1.3%).

Employment: Winter Texans vs U.S. Population (65 years and older age group)

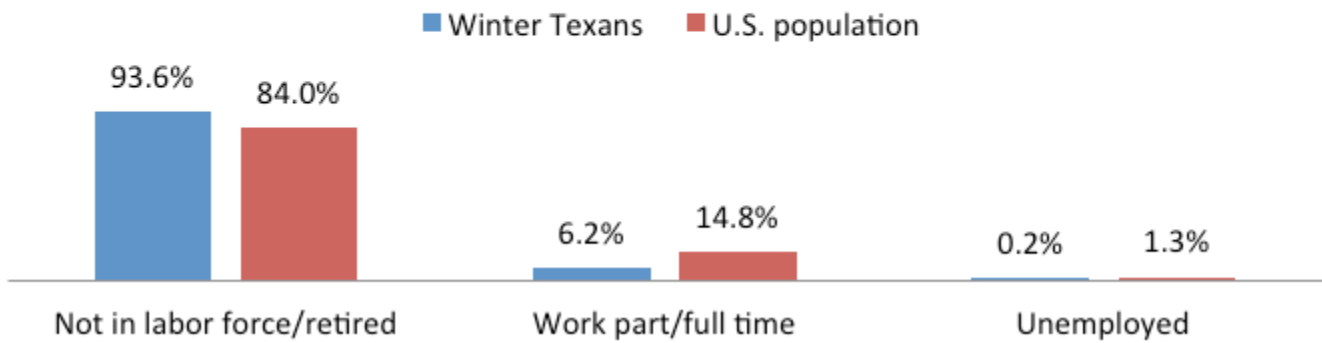


Figure 17. Employment status comparison

Home state

The top 10 home states/country of Winter Texans are shown in Figure 18. In 2014, most Winter Texans came from states within the U.S. although 14.4% came from Canada. The state with the largest share of Winter Texans is Minnesota (16.9%), followed by Iowa (13.1%), Wisconsin (7.5%), Illinois (6.9%), Missouri (6.6%), Michigan (5.6%), and Nebraska (3.2%). Other states in the 2014 survey are grouped together into the “Other” category which accounts for just over a quarter of this year’s total survey respondents. Of the 14.4% of Winter Texans from Canada, most are from Ontario (49.5%), followed by Manitoba (30.1%), Saskatchewan (8.2%), then Quebec (6.1%).

The proportion of Winter Texans by state appears fairly stable over time. However, in this year’s study, proportionately more Winter Texans are from Canada and from Minnesota than in any other prior survey.



Home State by Year

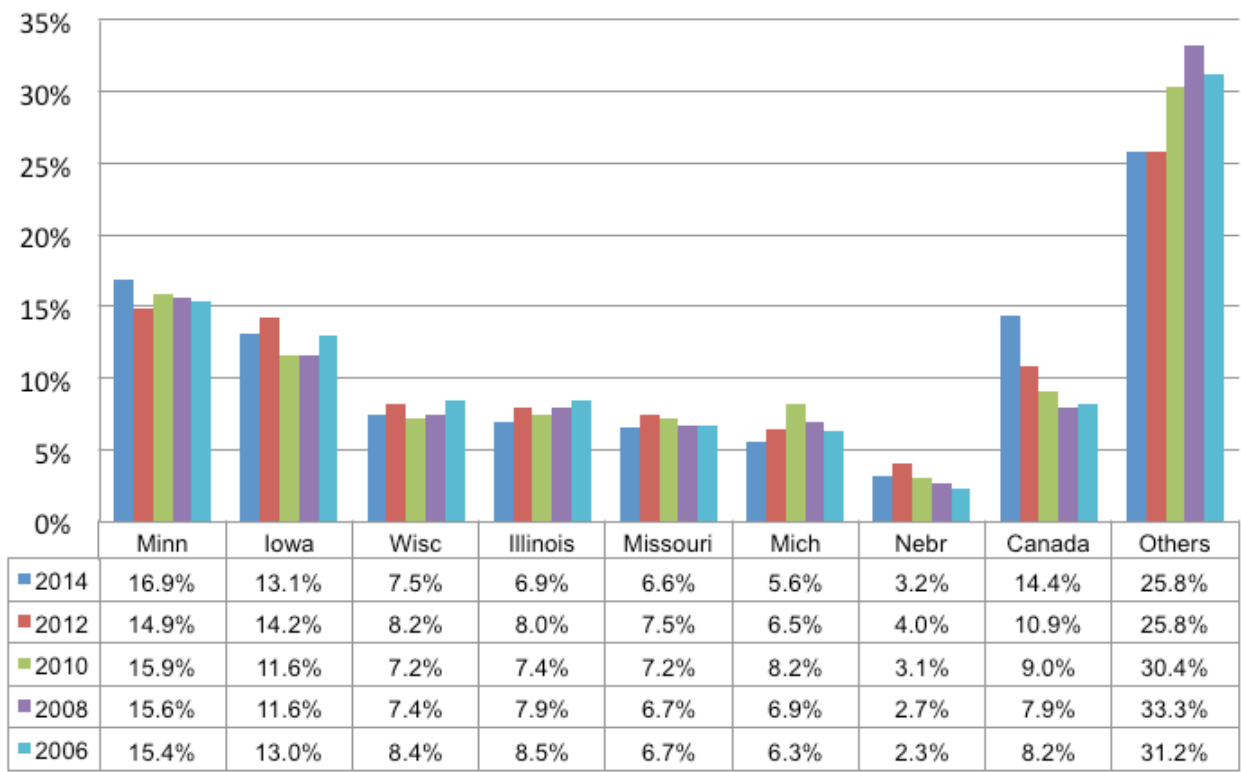


Figure 18. Home state

The top permanent residency of this year’s Winter Texans is compared to the U.S. Census figures on state residency for the general 65 years and older population as seen in Figure 19. According to Census data, the top states for residency of those 65 years of age and older are California, Florida, New York, Texas, and Pennsylvania. However, the highest proportions of Winter Texans come from midwestern states.

Winter Texan Origins vs U.S. Population Residency (65 years of age and older)

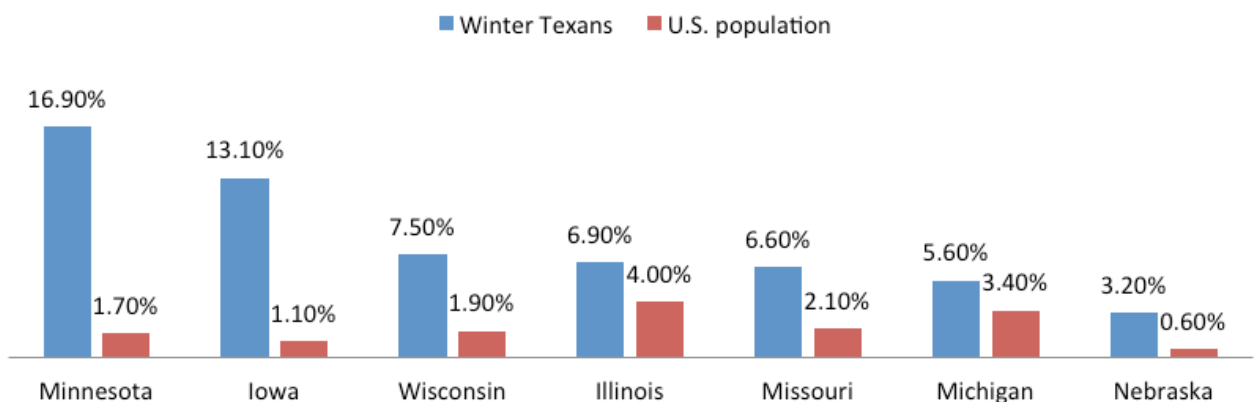


Figure 19. Winter Texan home state vs U.S. population state of residency

RESULTS: STAY CHARACTERISTICS

The primary purpose of the biennium Winter Texan studies is to determine the economic impact of Winter Texans on the Valley economy. An understanding of each component of Winter Texans’ visit is needed to accomplish this goal. For example, factors such as how long Winter Texans stay in the area, the types of housing they live in while in the RGV and the types of activities as well as attractions they participate in while in the Valley all impact the region. This section details those Valley stay components.

Days spent in the Valley

Figure 20 reports that the average stay of the 2014 Winter Texans in the RGV is 133 days. The largest proportion of survey respondents reported staying 120 days (13.9%). About 13.1% reported staying 90 days, 12.8% stayed 150 days and 12.2% stayed 180 days. In all 55.9% of study respondents reported staying between three to six months.

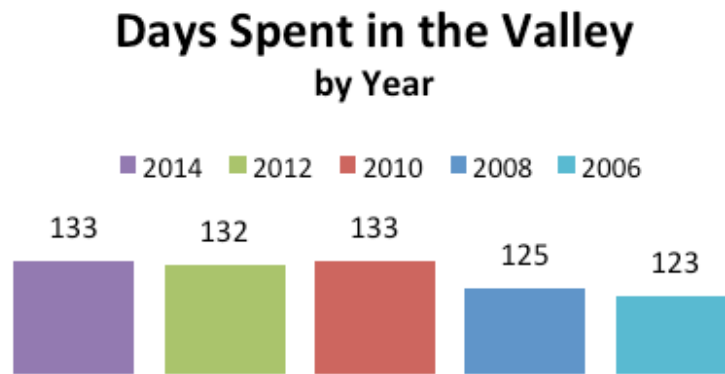


Figure 20. Days spent in the Valley

Years coming to the Valley

Including the current trip, this year’s respondents indicated having come to the Valley an average of 11.2 years. As shown in Figure 21, this year’s Winter Texans have come to the Valley for slightly more years than Winter Texans in the past. About 3.1% of the study respondents reported coming to the Valley for only one year and the largest percentage of respondents, 7.2%, reported coming for eight years. A total of 49.1% of respondents had come to the Valley for 9 years or less.

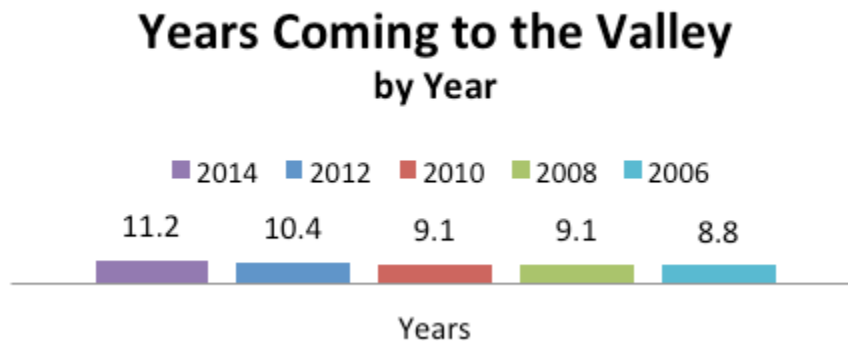


Figure 21. Years coming to the Valley

Housing type

While in the Valley, the housing types most often used by Winter Texans are shown in Figure 22. As in prior years, most Winter Texans own a local place of residence. A total of 50.7% of Winter Texan respondents live in their own mobile home/park model while 34.0% live in their own recreational vehicle (RV) during their stay in the Valley. A total of 90% of all Winter Texan respondents live in RVs or mobile homes/park models. The graph also shows that more Winter Texans are choosing to own their residence of any type, with proportionately more owning their own home — house/condo or mobile home. In 2014, 57.0% of Winter Texans owned their RGV property (house, condo or mobile home) as compared to 38.0% in 2006. While the largest increase is seen in mobile home ownership, Winter Texan respondents have also increased their ownership of houses in the RGV.

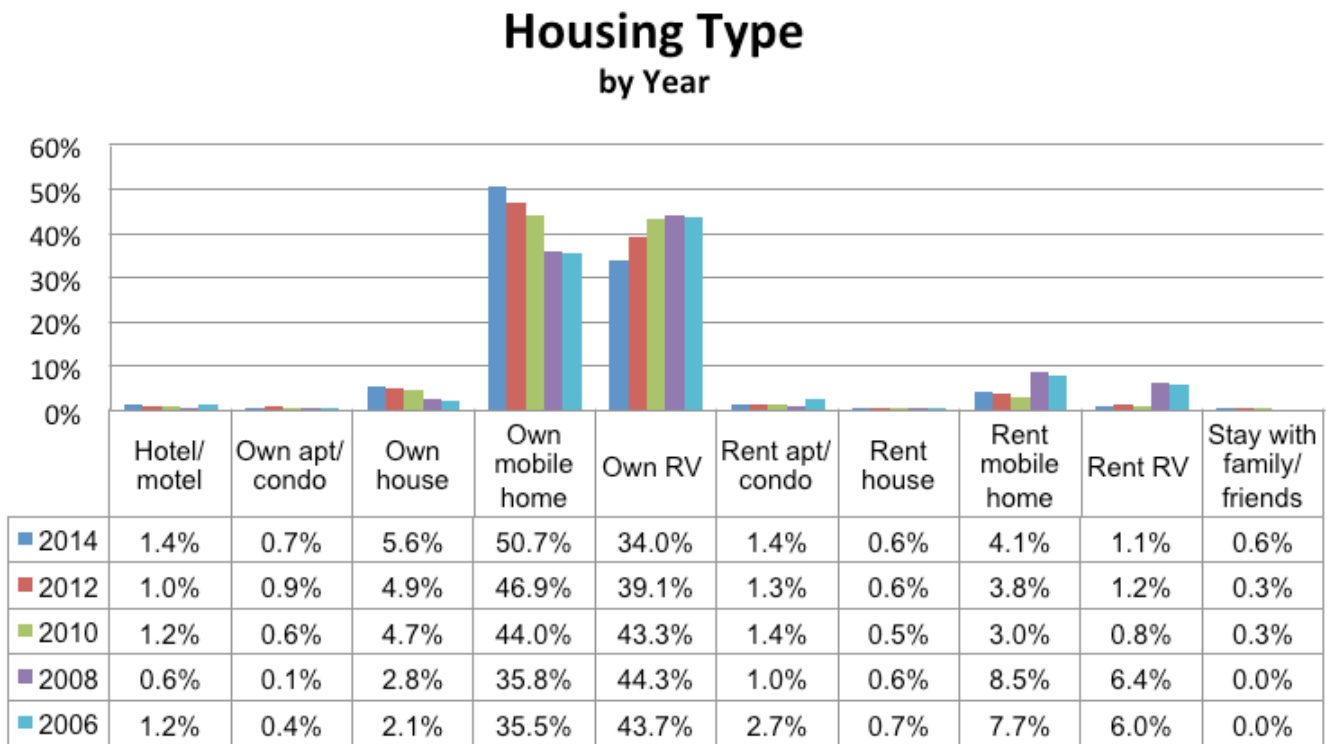


Figure 22. Housing Type

Why visit the Valley

The climate, friendly people and social activities are primary reasons that Winter Texans come to the Valley each year, as seen in Figure 23. Also important to many Winter Texans are taking a winter vacation, the cost of living, and visiting Mexico. Several changes in the importance of Valley attractions over the years studied are notable. This year’s study respondents were more inclined to visit the RGV to visit Mexico than in the last study and to come to the RGV for social activities and for nature activities.

Why Winter Texans Come to the Valley by Year

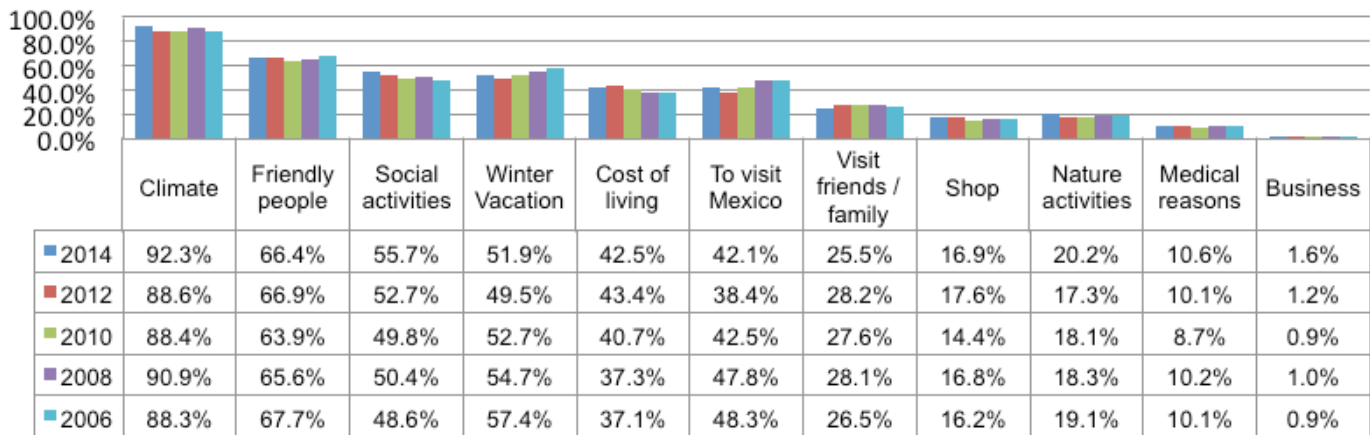


Figure 23. Reasons why Winter Texans come to the Valley

Attractions

This year’s survey asked respondents how frequently they participated in various listed activities while in the RGV. As Table 1 shows, the activities attended, at least some, include visiting flea markets (97.9%), festivals (89.6%), a historical site (89.5%), musical productions or jam sessions (89.2%), and the beach (89.3%). Activities that Winter Texan respondents were least likely to participate in, at all, include softball (92.8%), fishing (65.1%) and golf (61.3%).

Table 1. Level of Participation in Selected Activities

Activity	Never	Rarely or sometimes	Often or a lot
Music/jams	10.7%	48.6%	40.6%
Flea markets	2.1%	59.6%	38.3%
Exercising	19.3%	44.8%	35.9%
Dancing	32.9%	36.4%	30.7%
Golf	61.3%	14.8%	23.9%
Volunteering	28.1%	48.9%	23.0%
Bicycling	45.7%	34.9%	19.4%
Festivals	10.4%	72.3%	17.3%
Crafting	37.9%	45.0%	17.1%
Sight-seeing in Mexico	25.4%	60.0%	14.6%
Beach	10.7%	76.6%	12.7%
Wildlife/nature refuges	20.0%	67.7%	12.3%
Historical sights	10.5%	78.2%	11.3%
Libraries	36.3%	52.5%	11.2%
Birding	48.8%	44.0%	7.2%
Museums	23.6%	70.9%	5.5%
Fishing	65.1%	30.5%	4.4%
Travel tours	34.1%	63.6%	2.2%
Softball	92.8%	5.0%	2.2%
Zoo	45.1%	52.7%	2.2%

Why not return

When asked, an overwhelming majority of 2014 Winter Texans (96.6%) plan to return to the Valley next year. If they could not return, however, the most likely reasons given were related to health (62.7%), family issues (37.0%), terrorism or threat of violence (27.2%), and increased costs in the Valley (20.7%) as depicted in Figure 24.

Compared to Winter Texan respondents in the 2012 study, this year’s Winter Texans are much less concerned about terrorism or threat of violence and gas prices as reasons for not returning to the Valley but are more concerned about health, family reasons, a decrease in income and trying new places. These findings suggest that Mexico violence is not as big a concern as it was in the last study. The concern of Winter Texans about not returning because of health and family is consistent with the trend that the Winter Texan population is aging.

Reasons Winter Texans May Not Return by year

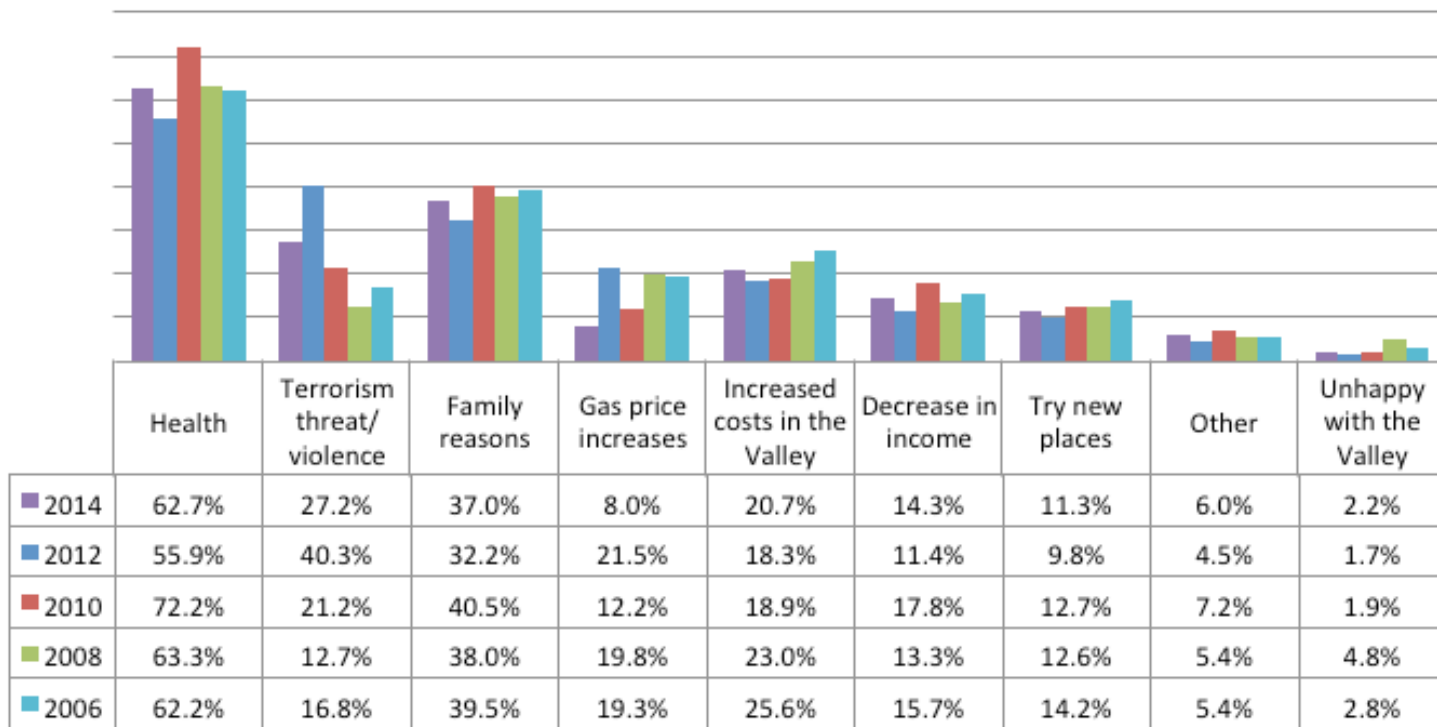


Figure 24. Reasons Winter Texans may not return to the Valley

This year’s study also asked respondents to indicate where they would go next winter if they did not return to the Valley. Only 10 respondents indicated that they would spend next winter in a place other than the Valley. Of those 10, three of those stated that they would be staying home next year.

RESULTS: HEALTH

The 2014 Winter Texan study asked respondents how many times they had been to a doctor in the past year. About 6.2% of respondents reported not having gone to see a doctor in the past year. The average number of visits to a doctor for those who had been to see one in the past year was 6 visits. The mode number of visits to the doctor was 2 (20.1%) and the number of visits ranged from 0 to 200.

Respondents in this year's study were also asked to rate their health. Despite going to the doctor an average of 6 times in the past year, or perhaps because of the frequent doctors' visits, most Winter Texans reported being in excellent to very good health (54%). Only 7% of respondents rated their health as fair or poor as shown in Figure 25.

Health Rating



Figure 25. Self-reported health rating

Respondents were also asked to indicate the type of health insurance they have. All respondents (100%) had some type of health insurance with most having Medicare (73.3%) or a private insurance plan as seen in Figure 26.

Type of Health Insurance

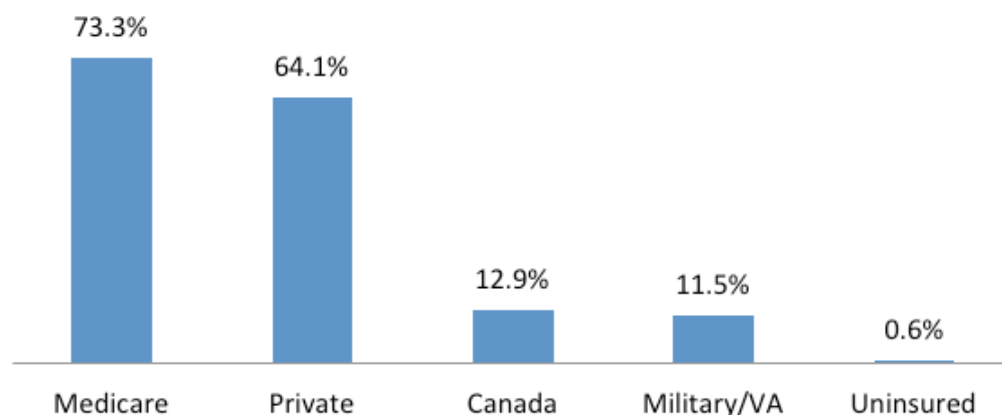


Figure 26. Types of insurance

RESULTS: EXPENDITURE PATTERNS IN MEXICO

Most Winter Texans (86.6%) reported making one or more trips to Mexico as shown in Figure 27. The average number of trips was 5.3. Figure 27 also shows Winter Texan visits to Mexico border towns since 2006. Both the number of Winter Texans visiting Mexico border towns and the number of trips taken have declined since 2006, reaching a low in 2012, which corresponds to heightened drug violence in Mexico beginning in spring of 2010. This year's study's respondents, however, have returned to 2010 levels in terms of percentage of respondents visiting Mexico but the percentage visiting is still much less than in 2008.

Percentage Traveling to a Mexico Border Town and Average Number of Trips per Year

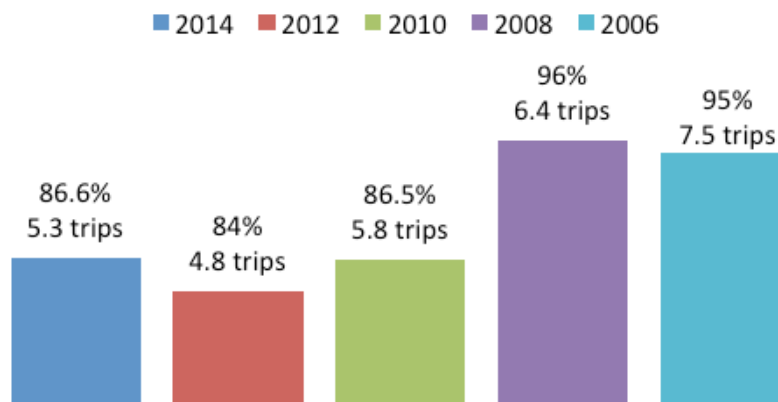


Figure 27. Winter Texan travel to Mexico border towns

Winter Texan spending in Mexico border towns is estimated in two ways. First, respondents were asked to indicate about how much they spent per trip to Mexico, on average. A total of 85.2% of the Winter Texans reported making a purchase in a Mexico border town, with those purchases averaging \$92 per trip to Mexico, up from \$72 in 2012. Respondents were then asked to estimate how much they spent in Mexico, on an average trip, in one of seven different spending categories. Using this method, Winter Texans spent an average of \$170 per trip to Mexico as shown in Table 2. The difference between the two spending methods is likely attributable to large purchases made during one trip that are not made

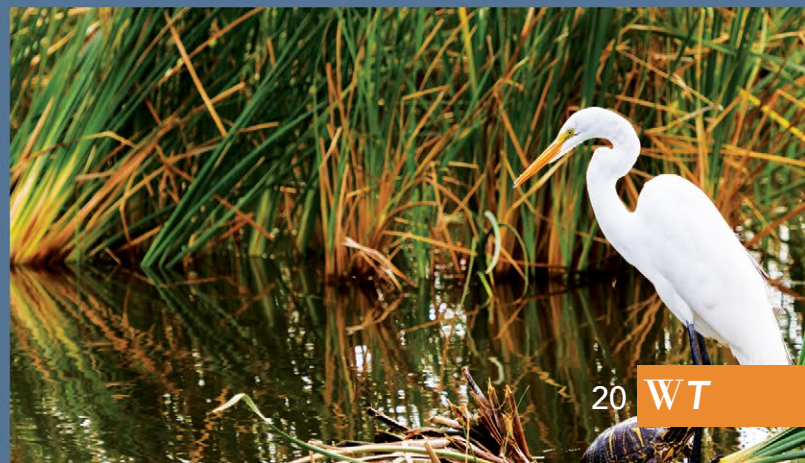
during other trips. For example, a respondent reported spending an average of \$25 on each trip to Mexico but then indicated spending \$2,000 on dental expenses per trip. The Table 2 results show that in 2014, Winter Texans' average nominal spending in Mexico had increased slightly from prior years.

While in Mexico, most Winter Texans spent money on shopping items (75.8% spent an average of \$38.74), on dining (68.2% spent an average of \$25.86) on prescriptions (49.5% spent an average of \$64.07) and on dental (40.9% spent an average of \$197.08) as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Average Spending in Mexico Border Towns

	Percent making a purchase	Average \$ purchase	2014 Weighted spending	Percent making a purchase	Average \$ purchase	2012 Weighted spending
Shopping	75.8%	\$ 38.74	\$ 29.36	74.3%	\$ 37.96	\$ 28.20
Dining	68.2%	\$ 25.86	\$ 17.64	64.5%	\$ 27.76	\$ 17.91
Prescriptions	49.5%	\$ 64.07	\$ 31.71	49.4%	\$ 80.62	\$ 39.83
Dental	40.9%	\$ 197.08	\$ 80.61	37.8%	\$ 185.41	\$ 70.08
Sightseeing	3.1%	\$ 37.91	\$ 1.18	3.4%	\$ 61.35	\$ 2.09
Doctor	1.4%	\$ 179.90	\$ 2.52	1.8%	\$ 123.89	\$ 2.23
Other	9.5%	\$ 75.43	\$ 7.17	8.8%	\$ 49.78	\$ 4.38
Total weighted avg spending			\$ 170.18			\$ 164.72
	Percent making a purchase	Average \$ purchase	2010 Weighted spending	Percent making a purchase	Average \$ purchase	2008 Weighted spending
Shopping	74.8%	\$37.63	\$28.15	88.0%	\$45.00	\$39.60
Dining	70.0%	\$28.13	\$19.69	77.0%	\$29.00	\$22.33
Prescriptions	54.7%	\$83.17	\$45.49	51.0%	\$81.00	\$41.31
Dental	37.3%	\$148.31	\$55.32	36.0%	\$138.00	\$49.68
Sightseeing	9.8%	\$36.79	\$3.61	9.0%	\$31.00	\$2.79
Doctor	7.6%	\$11.62	\$0.88	6.0%	\$103.00	\$6.18
Other	12.1%	\$84.91	\$10.27	10.0%	\$41.00	\$4.10
Total weighted avg spending			\$163.41			\$165.99

The total, direct economic impact of Winter Texan spending in Mexico border towns is calculated by multiplying the average expenditure per trip by the total number of trips to Mexico. Using both the reported average expenditure amount and the calculated amount, the estimated direct economic impact of each Winter Texan household in Mexico border towns ranges from \$488 (or \$92/trip x 5.3 trips) to \$901 (\$170 x 5.3 trips) per household, with a midpoint of \$695. If the total number of Winter Texan households in the Valley is 53,000 and 85.2% visited Mexico 5.3 times, then the estimated direct economic impact of Winter Texans in Mexico during 2013-2014 is \$31.4 million, with the range from \$22 million to \$40.7 million.



RESULTS: EXPENDITURE PATTERNS IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

While in the Valley, Winter Texans spent money on both routine, monthly purchases, such as groceries and housing, and on one-time major expenditures, such as furniture. Graphs comparing nominal monthly expenditures and one-time purchases from 2006 to 2014 are provided in Figures 28 and 29. Figure 28 shows that for monthly purchases, Winter Texans, on average, spent more in 2014 than in prior years, in nominal dollars, on housing, groceries, eating out, utilities and entertainment. Expenditures on medical and transportation expenses were below similar expenditures as reported in 2012. In all, monthly expenditures are up by 3.1% over monthly spending in 2012 and up by 11.0% over monthly spending in 2006.

Monthly Expenditures by Category and Year

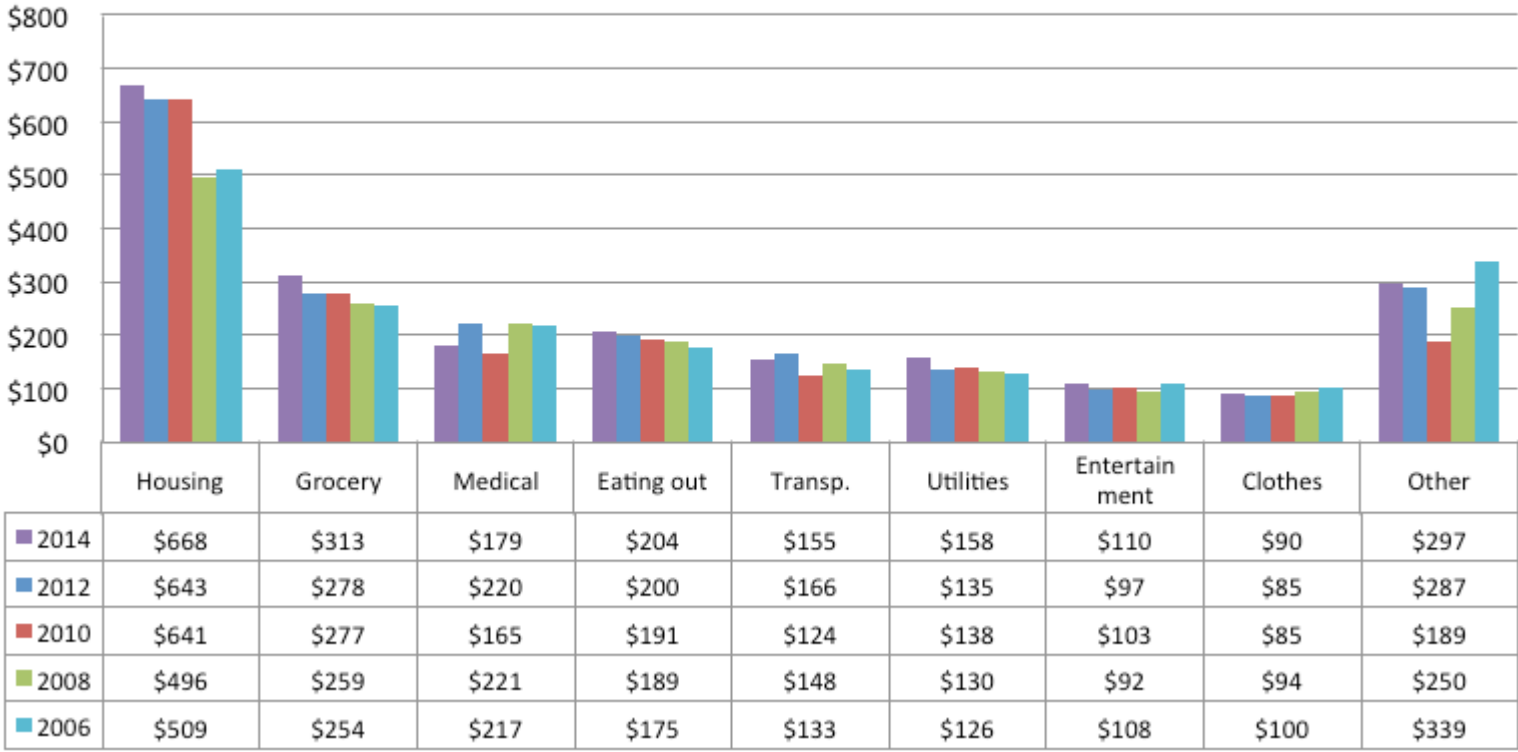


Figure 28. Average monthly expenditures by spending category

The 2014 Winter Texans also spent more on major, one-time purchases while in the Valley by 8.1% over 2012 as seen in Figure 29. They spent more in 2014 on their automobiles, house/condos, furniture, RVs and other major purchases but spent less on their mobile home, medical, property, appliances, electronics and travel tours. Overall, the 2014 Winter Texan study respondents spent 4.6% less on major purchases in the Valley than did respondents in 2006.

Weighted Average of Spending on Major Purchases by Category and Year

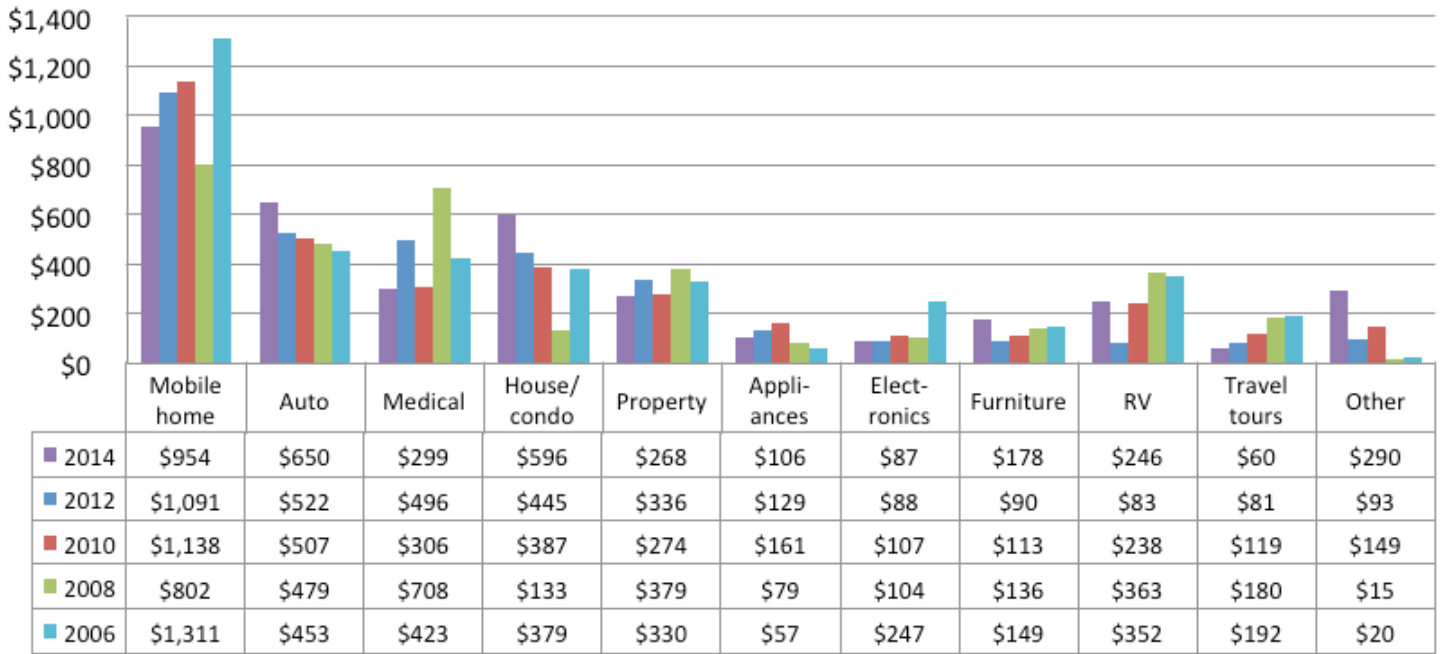


Figure 29. Weighted average spending on major purchases

The average estimated expenditures of a Winter Texan household by category are shown in Table 3, first by monthly spending categories then by major purchase categories.



Table 3. Winter Texan Household Spending in the Valley by Expenditure Category for 2006-2012¹

Category	2014	2014 Weights	2014					2012					2006				
			2014	2012	2010	2008	2006	2014	2012	2010	2008	2006	2014	2012	2010	2008	2006
Groceries	\$313	1	\$313	\$271	\$277	\$259	\$254	\$1,387	\$1,190	\$1,229	\$1,076	\$1,040					
Eating out	\$204	1	\$204	\$196	\$191	\$189	\$175	\$906	\$863	\$845	\$782	\$719					
Housing	\$668	1	\$668	\$653	\$641	\$496	\$509	\$2,961	\$2,873	\$2,840	\$2,059	\$2,087					
Utilities	\$158	1	\$158	\$134	\$138	\$130	\$126	\$701	\$591	\$610	\$541	\$516					
Transportation	\$155	1	\$155	\$161	\$124	\$148	\$133	\$688	\$710	\$551	\$613	\$546					
Entertainment	\$110	0.78	\$86	\$79	\$60	\$72	\$80	\$488	\$348	\$366	\$300	\$441					
Clothing	\$90	0.68	\$61	\$62	\$34	\$70	\$69	\$400	\$273	\$265	\$291	\$284					
Medical	\$179	0.31	\$54	\$75	\$83	\$87	\$69	\$791	\$331	\$345	\$360	\$284					
Other	\$297	0.13	\$37	\$46	\$78	\$37	\$35	\$1,317	\$203	\$149	\$154	\$145					
Average monthly spending/household			\$1,739	\$1,677	\$1,625	\$1,488	\$1,451	\$9,639	\$7,383	\$7,198	\$6,177	\$6,063					
Major Purchases:																	
Electronics	\$307	0.28						\$87	\$88	\$107	\$104	\$247					
Automobile	\$2,999	0.22						\$650	\$522	\$507	\$479	\$453					
Appliances	\$570	0.19						\$106	\$129	\$161	\$79	\$57					
Medical	\$1,413	0.21						\$299	\$496	\$306	\$708	\$423					
Travel tours	\$348	0.17						\$60	\$81	\$119	\$180	\$192					
Furniture	\$951	0.19						\$178	\$90	\$113	\$136	\$149					
Mobile home	\$6,615	0.14						\$954	\$1,091	\$1,138	\$802	\$1,311					
Property	\$2,455	0.11						\$268	\$336	\$274	\$379	\$330					
RV	\$2,704	0.09						\$246	\$83	\$238	\$363	\$352					
House/condo	\$14,578	0.04						\$596	\$445	\$387	\$133	\$379					
Other	\$3,087	0.09						\$290	\$93	\$149	\$15	\$20					
Average one-time purchases per household								\$3,733	\$3,454	\$3,501	\$3,378	\$3,913					
Total spending per household during stay on all items								\$13,372	\$10,837	\$10,699	\$9,555	\$9,976					

The table shows that Winter Texans spent more on routine purchases this season — approximately \$9,600 — as compared to prior seasons — a nominal percentage growth of 30.6% from 2012 and 59.0% from 2006. Considering both monthly and one-time expenditures, in 2014 Winter Texans spent \$13,370 while in the Valley, a 23.4% increase over the 2012-2013 Winter Texan season, as seen in Figure 30.

RGV Spending per WT Household

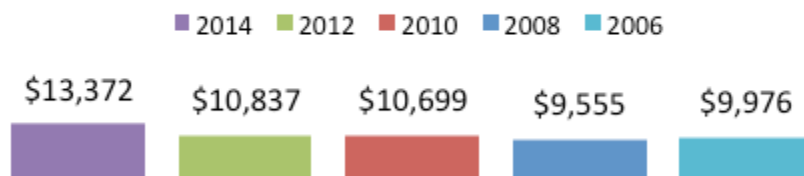


Figure 30. RGV spending

THE 2014 PARK STUDY

INTRODUCTION

To estimate the total number of Winter Texans who stayed in the Valley during the year, survey questionnaires were mailed or faxed to local recreational vehicle (RV) and mobile home (MH) parks. The results from this survey and those from the survey of Winter Texans are used to estimate the total number of Winter Texans in the Valley during 2013-2014 as well as the direct, economic impact that the Winter Texans have on the region.

Estimating the number of Winter Texans in the Valley is extremely difficult for a number of reasons. First, many Winter Texans own their own residence as shown previously in this study. Time actually spent at an owned residence is difficult, if not impossible, to determine. These residents come and go without any way of tracking their presence. Second, often the RV and MH parks do not track the numbers and turnover of Winter Texans in their parks. The park may not know if a particular visitor is a Winter Texan or a transitory tourist. Third, some parks

likely track occupancy of sites but not necessarily turnover with respect to different Winter Texans. Additionally, the parks have no real way of keeping track of Winter Texan visitors when the visitors own their own mobile home/park model in the park. Fifth, many parks do not participate in the study, perhaps skewing the results. Finally, an accurate tally of the population of parks — the number of parks and sites in the park — is a critical component of the estimation process but is virtually impossible to confirm. For example, different respondents from the same park replied to this year's questionnaire, each with a different site and Winter Texan numbers. Despite these challenges, information from a directory of parks and from the park respondents willing to provide information about their experiences with Winter Texans allows an estimate of the number of Winter Texans in the Valley during the 2014 season, bearing in mind the flaws with obtaining the estimate.



PARK STUDY METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire designed to determine the number of Winter Texans staying in mobile home and RV parks was developed based on the questionnaire used in prior Winter Texan studies. The questionnaire, shown in Appendix A, asked park manager/owners to indicate how many RV and mobile home/park model sites are in their park, how many of the sites are owned by Winter Texans, how many were rented by Winter Texans and what percent of the park was occupied by Winter Texans during the peak time of the season. Park owners/managers were also asked to estimate how many total Winter Texan households were in their park during the season and if this number was less or more than the number of Winter Texans last year, two years ago

and more or less than five years ago. Finally, park owners/managers were asked to indicate what changes or trends they experienced with Winter Texans this year.

All Rio Grande Valley Mobile Home and RV parks are listed in the Park Directory 2013-2014 Edition published by the *Winter Texan Times* and available at <http://wintertexan-times.com>. Each of these parks listed in the directory was sent a questionnaire by mail and then twice by fax if the fax number was known and most were called by phone. Respondents were asked to either fax the questionnaire to the Business and Tourism Research Center or to return the questionnaire in an enclosed, self-addressed envelope with postage paid.



RESULTS: PARK POPULATION

The Park Directory 2013-2014 Edition lists 318 RV/mobile home parks and subdivisions in the Rio Grande Valley region. About 289 of these listings are RV or mobile home parks that are considered viable for Winter Texans. Of those parks, 248 are listed as having 35,156 RV sites with the number of sites ranging from 2 to 1,269 RV sites for an average of 141.76 RV sites per park. The directory lists 217 parks as having a total of 22,453 MH sites with the number of sites ranging from 2 to 700 with an average of 103.47 MH sites per park. Taken together, the directory reports a total of 57,609 RV and MH sites with an average of 193 sites per park. RV sites represent 61.0% of all sites in Valley parks while 39.0% of sites are MH sites as shown in Figure 31.

Directory: % Distribution and Average Number of RV and Mobile Home Sites per Park

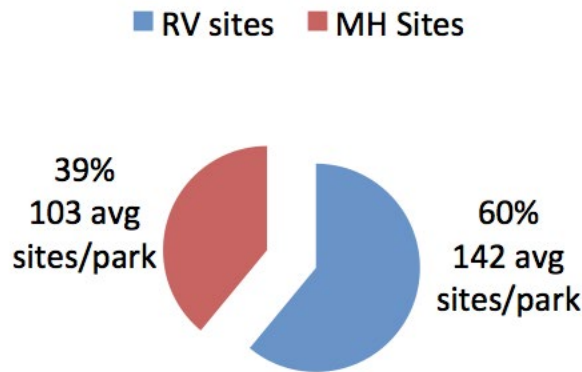


Figure 31. Directory: RV and mobile home sites per park

RESULTS: PARK SURVEY

Questionnaires were mailed or faxed to about 287 of the RV and MH parks listed in the Park Directory 2013-2014 Edition and 22 questionnaires were returned as undeliverable. After mailing, faxing and calling parks, 88 surveys were returned and considered useable in the park study (30.6% response rate). Some surveys were not used because the parks were reported as closed, as not having Winter Texans in the park or did not have information about Winter Texans in the park.



From the 88 at least partially completed park survey responses, 84 parks reported having a total of 16,378 RV sites and 66 parks reported having 11,175 MH sites. Of all parks sites reported, 40.6% are RV sites while 59.4% are MH sites as seen in Figure 32. The average number of RV sites for all reporting parks is 195 per park and the average number of MH sites is 169 (see Figure 32) for an average of 313 total sites per park. The proportion breakdown of RV sites and MH sites in all Valley parks as reported in the park survey is consistent with that of the Park Directory although the average number of sites reported in the survey is substantially more than the average reported in the Park Directory.

Park Survey: Percentage Distribution and Average Number of RV and Mobile Home Sites per Park

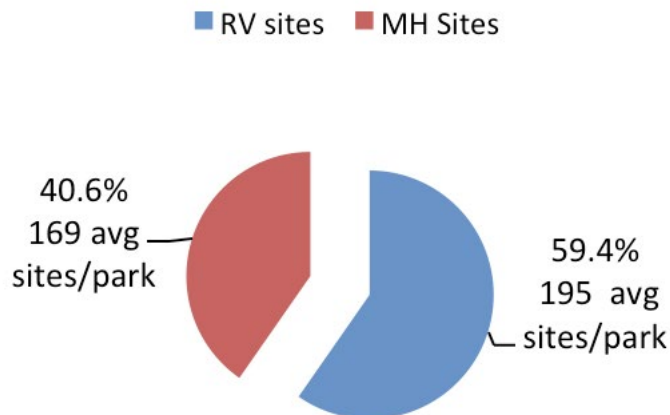


Figure 32. Park survey: RV and MH sites/park



PARK SITE OWNERSHIP

Park survey participants were asked to indicate how many RV sites and MH sites were owned by Winter Texans and how many were rented by Winter Texans during the season. On average, 13.8% of all RV sites are owned by Winter Texans and 48.3% of all RV sites are rented by Winter Texans. As seen in Figure 33, park survey respondents indicated that 40.4% of all mobile homes sites were owned by Winter Texans while 37.6% of all park mobile homes sites were rented by Winter Texans during 2014.

In terms of actual numbers, 20 parks reported having RV sites owned by Winter Texans — a total of 2,256 sites — and 29 parks reported having a total of 4,516 MH sites with Winter Texans owners. In total, 73 parks reported renting 7,915 RV sites to Winter Texans and 51 parks rented a total of 4,201 MH sites to Winter Texans.

Percent of Park Sites Owned and Rented by Winter Texans

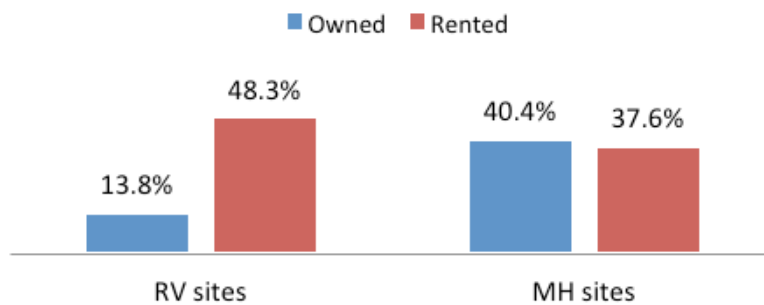


Figure 33. Percent of park sites owned and rented by Winter Texans



CHANGE IN PARK OCCUPANCY

As an additional check on the number of Winter Texans staying in the parks, park owners/managers were asked to indicate whether or not they had more or fewer Winter Texans in their parks this year as compared to last year, two years ago and five years ago.

A total of 79 park survey respondents reported the change in Winter Texans occupancy in their park from last year, with 23 parks reporting more Winter Texans, 22 parks reporting fewer and 34 parks reporting no change. As shown in Figure 34, the net change in Winter Texans from the prior year is 187 fewer Winter Texans for an average of 2.4 more Winter Texans per park. Similarly, 17 of 45 parks reported having more Winter Texans this year than two years ago, 18 reported having the same number of Winter Texans as two years ago and 20 reported having fewer Winter Texans for a net average change of 2 fewer Winter Texans per park. A total of 49 park survey respondents reported the change in Winter Texans occupancy in their park from five years ago, with 14 parks reporting more Winter Texans, 24 parks reporting fewer, and 11 parks reporting no change. The net change per park from five years ago was 14 Winter Texans per park.

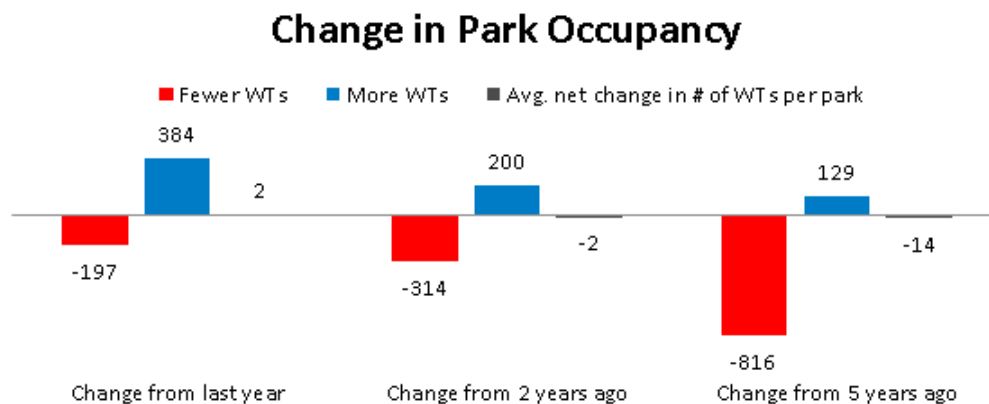


Figure 34. Changes in the number of Winter Texans in parks

In summary, park survey respondents reported having a per park average of two more Winter Texans during 2014 than in 2013, two fewer Winter Texans per park on average than in 2012 and 14 fewer Winter Texans on average per park than in 2009. In general, these study findings suggests that the number of Winter Texans has declined significantly over the last five years. The decline in the number of Winter Texans in RV/MH parks over the last few years is substantiated by a number of comments about trends made by park owner/managers. A listing of all comments about Winter Texan trends is provided in Appendix B.

RESULTS: ESTIMATING THE NUMBER OF WINTER TEXANS IN THE VALLEY

An estimate of the number of Winter Texans in the Valley during the 2013-2014 season may be determined by combining the results of the park survey with the results of the Winter Texan survey. The estimate should be considered with a wide margin of error, however, because the estimate depends on a number of assumptions as follows:

- 90% of Winter Texans households consist of two people (from the WT Survey results),
- 90% of Winter Texans stay in RVs or MH parks (from the WT Survey results),
- Average number of Winter Texans in parks as determined by the Park Survey is 206.
- Parks have an average of 199 sites/per park according to the directory or 313 sites/park according to the Park Survey,
- Average Winter Texan park occupancy rate ranges from 68.6% to 74.5% considering the calculation method used:

(1) Divide the total number of RV and MH sites rented and owned by Winter Texans by the total number of RV/MH sites in parks. This calculation as derived from the 2014 park survey data yields an average Winter Texan park occupancy rate of 68.6%.

(2) Average the survey responses to the question that specifically asks the Winter Texan occupancy rate in the park. The 2014 Park Survey respondents reported an average Winter Texan occupancy rate of 74.5%.

Three different estimates of Winter Texans in the Valley for 2013-2014 are shown in Table 4 using the information provided previously:

Table 4. Estimations of Winter Texans in the Valley for 2013-2014

Method	Park sites	Park HHs	Non Park HHs	Total WT HHs	Total WTs
Method 1: Avg. No. WT in survey x number of parks	206 x289	59,505	6,612	66,117	125,622
Method 2: 68.6% Calculated occupancy rate	57,609	39,492	4,388	43,880	83,372
Method 3: 74.5% Reported occupancy rate	57,609	42,929	4,770	47,699	90,628
Average		47,309	5,257	52,565	99,874

As shown in Table 4, the number of Winter Texans in the Valley may range from 125,000 to 82,000 depending on how the number is calculated. An average of the three different methods yields an average estimate of the number of Winter Texan households in the Valley during 2013-2014 of about 53,000 or 100,000 total Winter Texans.

DIRECT IMPACT OF WINTER TEXANS ON THE VALLEY ECONOMY

With the estimate of the number of Winter Texans in the Valley determined, the impact that Winter Texans have on the region’s economy can thus be derived. About 53,000 Winter Texan households were in the Valley during the 2013-2014 season and spent an average of \$13,400 per household (from Table 2). This means that Winter Texans made a direct economic contribution of \$710 million to the Valley’s economy during the 2013-2014 season. This result, along with results from prior studies, is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Direct Impact of Winter Texans on Valley Economy

Year	Number of WTs	Average expenditure per household per visit	Direct Dollar contributions (in millions)
1986-87	71,000	\$ 2,592	\$ 92
1987-88	76,000	\$ 4,053	\$ 154
1988-89	79,000	\$ 4,051	\$ 160
1989-90	81,000	\$ 4,765	\$ 193
1990-91	79,000	\$ -	-
1991-92	84,000	\$ 4,762	\$ 200
1992-93	87,000	\$ 5,103	\$ 222
1994-95	97,000	\$ 5,155	\$ 250
1996-97	120,000	\$ 5,317	\$ 319
1998-99	124,000	\$ 5,306	\$ 329
2000-01	143,000	\$ 4,601	\$ 329
2002-03	123,000	\$ 4,065	\$ 250
2004-05	127,000	\$ 6,614	\$ 420
2005-06	127,000	\$ 9,976	\$ 634
2007-08	127,000	\$ 9,555	\$ 607
2009-10	144,000	\$ 10,700	\$ 803
2011-12	133,400	\$ 10,800	\$ 751
2013-14	100,000	\$ 13,400	\$ 710



CONCLUSION

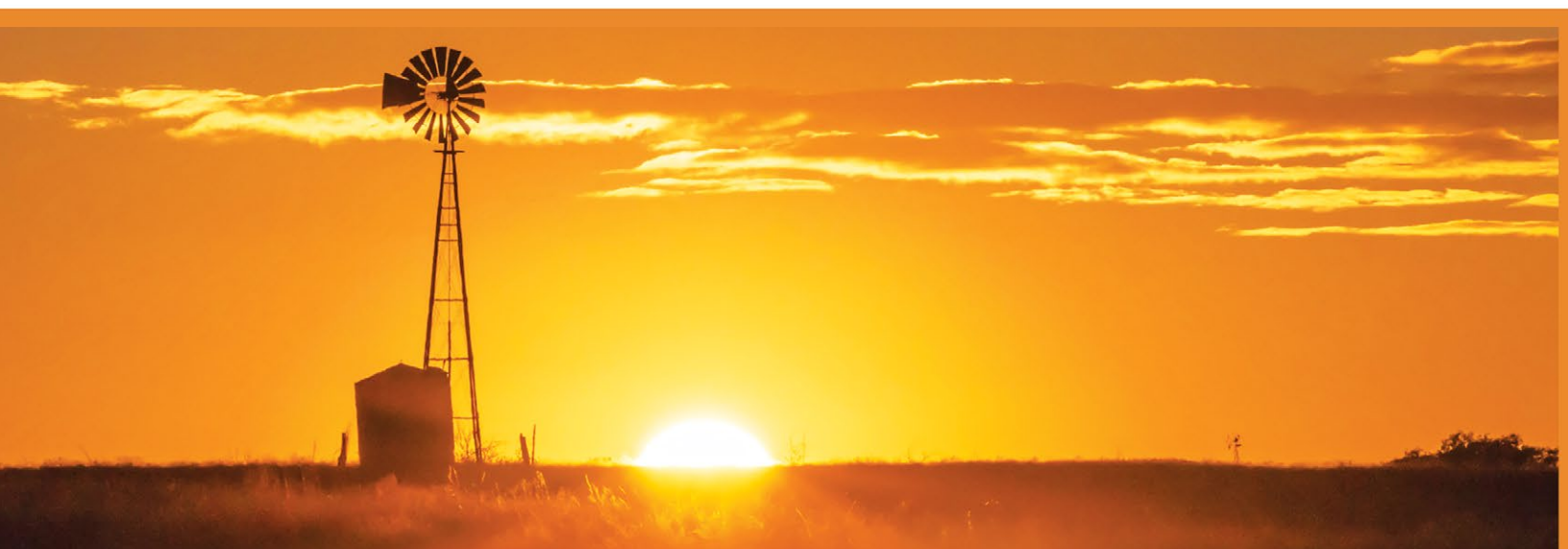
The 2013-2014 Winter Texan study reports the demographic characteristics, stay characteristics, and expenditure patterns of 1,394 Winter Texans who participated in the study. This report also shows a comparison of responses from this year's Winter Texans to answers from Winter Texans as reported in Winter Texan studies since 2006.

In general, most characteristics of this year's study participants are similar to respondents from past studies. For example, as in past years, this year's average study respondent is a married, white female, with at least some college education, is in a two-person household and has been retired for more than one year. This year, Winter Texan households had an average income level of about \$59,000, up from prior years.

This year's study participants have come to the Valley for 11.2 years, stayed in the Valley for 133 days and generally own their Valley residence, usually a mobile home/park model or a RV. The period of time Winter Texans stay in the Valley remained relatively consistent with the prior studies, but the proportion of Winter Texans who own their own residence has increased over time while the ownership of RVs has declined.

The demographic and stay comparison of Winter Texans over the past five years suggests a trend of an aging Winter Texan population which is not being replaced by a younger Winter Texan retiree group. This finding could be a warning call for the area tourism industry to focus more efforts on attracting younger travelers to replace aging Winter Texans as their health and travel to the Valley declines. The trend could be explained by factors not related to age, however. For example, Winter Texans who participate in the study may not be representative of nonparticipants. Without definitive evidence either way about the number of younger Winter Texans coming to the Valley to replace their older counterparts, this possible trend should be monitored closely each season so that action may be taken if needed.

As in prior years, typical respondents come to the Valley for the climate, the friendly people, the social activities, and as a winter vacation. While here, most Winter Texans visited flea markets and historical sites, attended musical performances and jam sessions, attended festivals, and went to the beach.



This year's study also asked participants about their level of participation in selected activities. The activities most enjoyed by Winter Texans, indicated by their responses of "often" or "a lot" for participation level, include music jams (40.6%), flea markets (38.3%), and exercising (35.9%). As in previous years, most Winter Texan study participants plan to return to the Valley next year.

The 2013-2014 Winter Texan respondents spent an estimated \$31.4 million in Mexico border towns during their stay in the Valley. They also report spending less on an average trip to Mexico than in past years, but more than last year. The proportion of Winter Texans who reported making at least one trip to Mexico as well as the average number of trips was also up from the prior survey year. This year's increase in visits to Mexico may mean that Winter Texans are less concerned about perceived violence on the Mexican border than in the previous study.

Finally, and most importantly, this year's study estimated the economic impact of Winter Texans on the Valley economy.

Winter Texans reported spending an average of approximately \$13,400 per household while in the Valley. With an estimated 53,000 Winter Texan households, their total spending in the Valley during the 2013-2014 season is estimated at \$710 million.

Taken together, results from this study suggest the substantial influence that Winter Texans have on the Valley and the Valley economy. Given this considerable influence, Valley residents, business and governmental officials should continue to make Winter Texans feel welcome to the area and continue outreach efforts to ensure that younger, baby boomer Winter Texans are coming to the Valley to replace their aging predecessors. These baby boomers may have different needs and interests which should be examined in future studies and addressed to continue the trend of an ever increasing positive impact of Winter Texans on the Valley economy.



Winter Texan Survey

Thank you for providing your responses to this important research. Please answer each question in this survey then return by mail or complete online by **February 26** for a chance to win a cash prizes or a Kindle Fire.

Mail to Tourism Research Center

UTPA – College of Business
1201 West University Dr., Edinburg, TX 78539

OR

COMPLETE SURVEY ONLINE AT:

<http://utpa.edu/wintertexan>

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT Dr. Penny Simpson at 956.665.3311

**All surveys are confidential **

- Are you a Winter Texan? Yes No
- What is your home state or province?
- What is your home zip code/postal code?
- How many days will you most likely be in the Valley?
- Counting this trip, how many years have you been coming to the Valley?
- What type of housing do you use while in the Valley? (select one)
 - Stay with family/friends Hotel/motel
 - Own RV Rent RV
 - Own mobile home Rent mobile home
 - Own apartment/condo Rent apartment/condo
 - Own house Rent house
- What are your reasons for coming to the Valley? (check all that apply)
 - Winter vacation Friendly people
 - Shopping To visit Mexico
 - Medical reasons Social activities
 - Climate Nature activities
 - Business Cost of living
 - Visit friends/family Other _____

8. How often do you visit or participate in the following activities while you are in the Valley?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	A lot
Sight-seeing in Mexico	1	2	3	4	5
Travel tours	1	2	3	4	5
Flea markets	1	2	3	4	5
Historical sites	1	2	3	4	5
Beach	1	2	3	4	5
Wildlife/nature refuges	1	2	3	4	5
Fishing	1	2	3	4	5
Museums	1	2	3	4	5
Golf	1	2	3	4	5
Festivals	1	2	3	4	5
Music/jams	1	2	3	4	5
Libraries	1	2	3	4	5
Birding	1	2	3	4	5
Bicycling	1	2	3	4	5
Zoo	1	2	3	4	5
Volunteering	1	2	3	4	5
Softball	1	2	3	4	5
Exercising	1	2	3	4	5
Crafting	1	2	3	4	5
Dancing	1	2	3	4	5

- List any other activities you enjoy _____
- IN MEXICO BORDER TOWNS:
- About how many trips will you make to a Mexico BORDER town this visit to the Valley?
- On average, how much do you spend, in dollars, ON EACH TRIP to a Mexico BORDER town?
 Dollars spent each trip

- In dollars (no cents), please estimate how much you spend, on average, per trip to a Mexico BORDER town on the following: (round to nearest dollar)
 - \$ Shopping \$ Sight-seeing
 - \$ Dining \$ Prescriptions
 - \$ Dental \$ Doctor
 - \$ Other _____
- IN THE VALLEY: Please estimate the average MONTHLY amount your household spends on the following while you are IN THE VALLEY (round to nearest dollar--no cents):
 - \$ Groceries \$ Medical
 - \$ Eating out \$ Housing
 - \$ Entertainment \$ Clothing
 - \$ Transportation \$ Utilities
 - \$ Other _____

- Please estimate your TOTAL expenditures on the following MAJOR PURCHASES while in the Valley this visit:
 - \$ Appliances \$ Auto
 - \$ Electronics \$ RV
 - \$ Mobile home \$ Property
 - \$ House/condo \$ Medical
 - \$ Travel tours \$ Furniture
 - \$ Other _____

- Do you plan to return to the Valley next year? Yes No
- If not, where will you go next Winter? _____
- Why would you NOT return to the Valley (check all that apply)
 - Health Increased costs in the Valley
 - Family reasons Try new places
 - Gas price increases Violence or terrorism
 - Decrease in income Unhappy with the Valley
 - Other (specify) _____

- In general, how would you rate your health?
 - Poor Fair Good Very good Excellent
- Are you covered by a health insurance plan? (check all that apply)
 - Medicare Military/VA Canada insurance
 - Private insurance Uninsured
- About how many times in the past year have you been to see a doctor?
- What are your thoughts and feelings about the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare?



22. How strongly do you agree, in general, that the doctors you have seen in the past year...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
...are less courteous to you than they are to patients who are younger.	1	2	3	4	5
...treat you with less respect than they treat younger patients.	1	2	3	4	5
...provide you with poorer service because of your age.	1	2	3	4	5
...act as if you are not smart.	1	2	3	4	5
...spend a great deal of time with you.	1	2	3	4	5
...show interest in your ideas about your health.	1	2	3	4	5
...understand your health concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
...look at you and listen carefully to what you say.	1	2	3	4	5
...encourage you to ask questions.	1	2	3	4	5
...show care and concern about you.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:					
When I'm sick, I try to cure myself rather than go to the doctor.	1	2	3	4	5
I rely more on home remedies than on doctors.	1	2	3	4	5
If I feel healthy, I do not go to the doctor for a routine check-up.	1	2	3	4	5
I keep a record so that I know when to schedule my next doctor's appointment.	1	2	3	4	5
I have a hard time doing what the doctor suggests I do.	1	2	3	4	5
I am usually unable to do what is necessary to follow my doctor's treatment plans	1	2	3	4	5
I try to follow my doctor's suggestions exactly.	1	2	3	4	5
Since my last visit to my doctor, I have done exactly what my doctor told me to do.	1	2	3	4	5
In most ways my life is close to my ideal.	1	2	3	4	5
The conditions of my life are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5
I am satisfied with my life.	1	2	3	4	5
So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.	1	2	3	4	5
If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	1	2	3	4	5
I will be able to achieve most of the goals that I have set for myself.	1	2	3	4	5
When facing difficult tasks, I am certain that I will accomplish them.	1	2	3	4	5
In general, I think that I can obtain outcomes that are important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
I believe I can succeed at most any endeavor to which I set my mind.	1	2	3	4	5
I will be able to successfully overcome many challenges.	1	2	3	4	5
I am confident that I can perform effectively on many different tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
Compared to other people, I can do most tasks very well.	1	2	3	4	5
Even when things are tough, I can perform quite well.	1	2	3	4	5
I have high self-esteem	1	2	3	4	5
I feel like I am personally a victim of society because of my age.	1	2	3	4	5
I consider myself a person who has been deprived of the opportunities that are available to others because of age.	1	2	3	4	5
Older adults as a group have been victimized by society	1	2	3	4	5
Historically, members of my age group have been discriminated against more than members of other age groups.	1	2	3	4	5

24. How often have you felt or thought the following in the LAST MONTH?	Never	Almost never	Sometimes	Fairly often
That you were unable to control the important things in your life?	1	2	3	4
You felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	1	2	3	4
You felt that things were going your way?	1	2	3	4
You felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	1	2	3	4

25. Including yourself, how many people are in your household while in the Valley? # of people in household

26. What is your age? years old

27. What is your gender? Male Female

28. What is your ethnicity?
 White Hispanic
 Black Asian Other _____

29. What is your marital status?
 Married Single Widowed Divorced/separated

30. What is your highest educational attainment?
 Less than high school High school graduate
 Some college, no degree Associate's degree
 Bachelor's degree Graduate/professional degree

31. What is your current employment status?
 Work full-time Retired within past year
 Work part-time Retired more than one year
 Unemployed (looking for a job)
 Other _____

32. What is your combined annual household income?
 less than \$20,000 \$60K-\$69,999
 \$20K-\$29,999 \$70K-\$79,999
 \$30K-\$39,999 \$80K-\$99,999
 \$40K-\$49,999 \$100K-\$149,999
 \$50K-\$59,999 more than \$150,000

33. Would you agree to serve on a consumer panel? This means that you may be contacted up to three times a year and asked for your opinion about various issues or products. Yes No

ENTRY FORM for PRIZES.

Name _____

Valley address _____

City: _____ Phone Number _____

e-mail address _____

All information is **confidential**. Winners will be notified no later than March 12.

MAIL TO: Tourism Research Center
 UTPA – College of Business
 1201 W. University Blvd
 Edinburg, TX 78539

OR
 COMPLETE ONLINE AT www.UTPA.edu/WinterTexan

This research has been reviewed by the UTPA Institutional Review Board (IRB). Please contact the IRB if you have questions about your rights as a research subject (956-665-2889 or irb@utpa.edu).

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!

Rio Grande Valley RV & MH Park Occupancy Study

Please help us determine how many Winter Texans came to the Valley this year by completing this short survey. The survey is conducted by The University of Texas-Pan American Valley Markets and Tourism Research Center in conjunction with the Winter Texan Times and all information is confidential. In return for your cooperation, we will provide you a summary of the results when they are available.

Park Name _____ **Park Manager** _____

RV occupancy questions about THIS WINTER SEASON:

1. How many total RV sites are in your park?
_____ sites
2. How many total RV sites are owned by Winter Texans?
_____ sites
3. How many different Winter Texans households rented an RV site in your park:
This year? # _____
Last year? # _____
4. What percent of all RV spaces in your park was occupied by Winter Texans at the peak time this winter?
_____ %

Mobile home/park model occupancy questions about THIS WINTER SEASON:

1. How many total mobile home and park model sites are in your park?
_____ sites
2. How many total mobile home and park model sites are owned by Winter Texans?
_____ sites
3. How many different Winter Texan households rented a mobile home/park model space in your park:
This year? # _____
Last year? # _____
4. What percent of all mobile home and park model spaces in your park was occupied by Winter Texans at the peak time this winter?
_____ %

How many different Winter Texan households were in your park this year? _____ # of households

Compared to last year, about how many more or less Winter Texans did you have?
_____ # more Winter Texans _____ # less Winter Texans or _____ about the same

Compared to two years ago, about how many more or less Winter Texans did you have?
_____ # more Winter Texans _____ # less Winter Texans or _____ about the same

Compared to five years ago, about how many more or less Winter Texans did you have?
_____ # more Winter Texans _____ # less Winter Texans or _____ about the same

What changes or trends did your park experience with Winter Texans this year?

Other Comments?

To get a summary of the results when available, please check the box and provide your address

Address: _____ City _____ Zip _____
Name: _____ e-mail address: _____

Ways to return this survey:

Fax to: (956) 665-2407

Mail to: Tourism Research Center
UTPA – College of Business
1201 W. University Blvd
Edinburg, TX 78539

E-mail: cobainfo@utpa.edu

Questions? Call Dr. Penny Simpson at (956) 665-3311.

APPENDIX B: PARK MANAGER/OWNER COMMENTS

- Heard that parks in Corpus were full-seems Border is keeping people away from the Valley
- 8 new annuals this season and 7 new park models
- A lot less
- About the same, friendly
- Age
- And is all owned by the Winter Texans, and rented out independently; they buy land and bring whatever they want, no distinction between mobile home and RV sites
- Change in park manager, indoor pickleball, small upgrades
- Decrease over last five years
- Different activities
- Different people were at the park, some people were unable to travel but others replaced them
- Lake is down - poor fishing
- Fear of border problems, later arriving
- Fewer months occupancy
- Fewer RVs, more renting mobile homes & park models
- Getting older (80+), health problems, next generation won't be "Winter Texans"
- Had 6 Winter Texan HH rent apartments, other RV sites permanent residents
- In decline
- Lack of interest in park rec hall - stick with friends from home area
- Less are coming. Older generation not returning due to health & economy
- Less numbers but those who came stayed longer
- Less Winter Texans, more locals
- Less winter Texans, most at our park has local residents
- Losing older people, more RVs who buy units
- Lots of new people, coming in earlier, staying longer
- More interest in wider variety of music
- More interested in music, less in activities, more interested in serving others
- More interested in renting than buying, younger generation
- More new French Canadian household
- More people buying mobiles instead of bringing RVs
- More people looking for units to rent, less bringing RVs, more looking for permanent units
- More people moving around checking out different parks & areas of the country some short stays, others staying longer in our park
- More WTs are starting to rent mobile homes as opposed to travelling with their RV. They find it more convenient to fly down to Texas and rent a mobile home once they are here.
- Mostly returners, but more new comers this year than before
- No new clients, more local people
- Not as many people are coming down, its going to be a terrible year next year
- Not geared towards winter texans
- Older generation are now selling
- People are renting units
- Requesting WIFI, which has not been available; Texas is not as heavily advertised!!! Media portrayal of border violence deters people, but people have never had a problem; people are getting older/sicker and not coming back
- Residents have passed away or can't travel, large turnover
- Seems more people are not using or attending park functions
- Several first-timers, less afraid of Mexico, 75% experienced breathing problems
- Shut down of Falcon Lake means fewer people come
- Slow due to age
- Some did not come, one came and sold
- Some have passed and sold their RVs
- Some older occupants did not return but were filled up by new occupants
- Steady decline
- They are younger & more active, buy park models/mobile homes
- We are a home owners association not a typical RV Park
- We had an increase in # of Canadians
- We had none
- Well a lot cannot travel too old or some passed away so they sell their MH and it a senior park so if underage move out.
- Plus what's happening in Mexico they think its the same here
- Winter Texas are younger than 5 years ago
- Younger retirees

Winter Texan Survey

Winter 2014

