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For Immediate Release

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**ROAD RAGE WIDESPREAD IN ARIZONA;
BEWARE: MANY DRIVERS ARE ARMED (OFTEN WITH LOADED WEAPONS)**

Road rage is widespread in Arizona, with most drivers experiencing some form of rage from other drivers during the past year. Arizonans spend a lot of time in their cars and although Arizona drivers tend to rate their own driving skills quite highly, they generally have little confidence in the skill of others on the road. In fact, two out of three Arizona drivers admit to expressing their own rage at other drivers recently. But, Arizonans should be cautious when driving. A significant number of drivers in Arizona have guns in their cars, and these guns are loaded.

The *Grand Canyon State Poll* was conducted by the Social Research Laboratory at Northern Arizona University, from October 2 to October 10, 1999. A random sample of 799 licensed drivers in Arizona was asked questions about their driving behavior. A sample of this size is associated with a margin of error of +/- 3.5 percent at a 95% confidence level.

ROAD RAGE TAKING PLACE IN EPIDEMIC PROPORTIONS

Most Arizonans rate their driving skills quite highly. Half of all licensed drivers in Arizona said they are excellent drivers. Forty-five percent rate their driving skills as good. But, when thinking about other drivers on the road, 60 percent said other drivers only deserve a rating of fair or poor for their driving skill. Only 2 percent of licensed drivers said others on the road have excellent driving skills.

The *Grand Canyon State Poll* presented licensed drivers in Arizona with a list of 7 driving behaviors often associated with road rage and asked if they experienced any of these during the past year. Most licensed drivers in Arizona (91%) reported experiencing at least one of these driving behaviors during the past year. A majority of licensed drivers experienced 3 or more different types of behaviors during this period.

Four out of five drivers (80%) said another driver had followed them too closely during the past year. Half (53%) were honked at by another driver in an unfriendly way. Almost half (45%) of licensed drivers said another driver shouted, yelled or cursed at them in anger. An equal proportion (44%) said another driver made a rude gesture at them such as “giving them the finger” during the past year. Thirty-nine percent of drivers reported having had their progress blocked by another drivers’ vehicle and 29 percent experienced another driver flashing their headlights when they were annoyed. Three percent said another driver threatened them with a gun during the past year.

While practically every Arizona driver has been victimized by an act of road rage during the past year, two-thirds of drivers (64%) reported being so annoyed or frustrated with another driver that they committed their own acts of road rage. In fact, a majority of drivers reported

committing two or more different types of road rage behaviors against another driver during the past year.

The most frequently reported driving behavior is honking at another driver in an unfriendly way. Thirty-eight percent of drivers in Arizona reported doing this during the past year. Another 30 percent of drivers said they shouted, yelled or cursed at another driver in anger. Almost a quarter (23%) said they are responsible for following another driver too closely. Sixteen percent said they flashed their headlights at another driver when they were annoyed recently and another 16 percent made a rude gesture at another driver such as “giving them the finger.” Ten percent reported that they blocked another driver’s progress with their own vehicle. One percent said they threatened another driver with a gun.

According to Fred Solop, director of the *Grand Canyon State Poll*, “Driving in Arizona can be a tense experience. Practically everyone has been victimized by another driver’s anger and frustration. But, it seems that we can only blame ourselves. People think others on the road don’t drive very well and survey results show that two-thirds of drivers have directed their own anger and frustration at other drivers on the road during the last year.”

GUNS ARE PREVALENT IN CARS

Road rage is a large problem in Arizona, but the consequences are heightened when firearms are brought into the picture. According to *Grand Canyon State Poll* survey results, many people carry guns in their cars. Five percent of licensed drivers in Arizona reported always carrying a gun in their car. Another 7 percent said they sometimes carry a gun. Most often, people with guns are carrying pistols. Eighty-three percent of drivers carrying guns in

their cars are carrying a pistol, 10 percent have a rifle in their car and 6 percent said they carry both a pistol and a rifle in the car. For those with weapons in the car, three-quarters (73%) reported that these weapons are always loaded. Twelve percent said their weapon is sometimes loaded. Only fourteen percent of drivers with weapons in their car said their weapon is always unloaded.

“The message behind these survey findings is that drivers in Arizona should be cautious,” said Solop. “People are easily angered and frustration on the road can lead to dangerous situations,” Solop continued.

ARIZONANS SPEND A LOT OF TIME ON THE ROAD

Ninety-four percent of Arizona adults said they are licensed drivers. The average licensed driver in Arizona has 28 years experience on the road. One-quarter of drivers in Arizona have had a license for 15 years or less, one-quarter for 16 to 28 years, one-quarter for 29-40 years, and a quarter have been licensed for more than 41 years. In addition to a large proportion of Arizonans being licensed drivers, most drivers are on the roads quite frequently. Eighty-six percent of licensed drivers in Arizona said they drive every day. Another 9 percent of licensed drivers reported being on the roads 2 to 3 times a week. The average licensed driver in Arizona drives approximately 100 miles in a typical week. Twenty-five percent of drivers, however, said they drive 200 miles or more during an average week.



Social Research Laboratory, Northern Arizona University

October 19, 1999

**GRAND CANYON STATE POLL
BACKGROUND MEMO**

3-NAU015/Fall

The *Grand Canyon State Poll* was conducted between October 2 and October 10, 1999. A random sample of 799 licensed drivers in Arizona were asked questions regarding their driving habits. Survey questions addressed to licensed drivers in Arizona are subject to a sampling error of +/-3.5 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. Sampling error is the probable difference in results between interviewing everyone in the population versus a scientific sample taken from the population. Sampling error does not take into account additional sources of error inherent in any study of public opinion. The data referred to in this release are presented below.

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about driving in Arizona.

First are you a licensed driver?

| | % | |
|-----|----------|-------|
| Yes | 94% | N=851 |
| No | 6% | |

How many years have you been a licensed driver?

Mean = 29 years

Median = 28 years

| | Quartile s | |
|---------------|-----------------------|-------|
| 0 – 15 years | 25% | N=762 |
| 16 – 28 years | 25% | |
| 29 – 40 years | 25% | |
| 41 – 76 years | 25% | |

How often do you drive? Do you drive every day, two to three times a week, once a week, or less than once a week?

| | % |
|-----------------------|----------|
| Every day | 86% |
| 2-3 times a week | 9% |
| Once a week | 1% |
| Less than once a week | 2% |
| Not at all | 1% |

N=801

Approximately how many miles do you drive during an average week?

Mean = 178 miles
Median = 100 miles

| | Quartile s |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 0 – 50 miles | 25% |
| 51 – 100 miles | 25% |
| 100 – 200 miles | 25% |
| 200 – 1700 miles | 25% |

N=702

How would you rate your overall skills a driver? Would you rate yourself as an excellent, good, fair, or poor driver?

Overall, how would you rate the skills of most other drivers on the road – excellent, good, fair, or poor?

| | Rate Your Skills | Rate Skills of Others |
|------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Excellent | 51% | 2% |
| Good | 45% | 37% |
| Fair | 4% | 43% |
| Poor | --- | 17% |
| Don't know | --- | 1% |

Sometimes people react toward other motorists while driving. I am going to read a list of driving behaviors that you may have experienced in the last year. Please tell me if someone has done this to you during that time. During the past year, has another driver ...

Many of us get angry or frustrated ourselves when we are driving. I am going to read through the list of driving behaviors again. This time I'd like you to tell me if you have done any of these things to another motorist during the past year. During the past year, have you ...

| | Has another driver ... | Have you... |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Shouted, yelled or cursed at (you/another driver) in anger? | 45% | 30% |
| Followed (you/another driver) too closely? | 80% | 23% |
| Flashed (their/your) headlights at (you/another driver) when (they/you) were annoyed? | 29% | 16% |
| Made a rude gesture at (you/another driver) such as "giving (you/them) the finger?" | 44% | 16% |
| Blocked (your/another driver's) progress with (their/your) vehicle | 39% | 10% |
| Honked (their/your) horn at (you/another driver) in an unfriendly way? | 53% | 38% |
| Threatened (you/another driver) with a gun? | 3% | 1% |

| | Number of Road Rage Acts Experienced | Number of Road Rage Acts Committed |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 9% | 36% |
| 1 | 17% | 30% |
| 2 | 19% | 16% |
| 3 | 19% | 11% |
| 4 | 16% | 4% |
| 5 | 10% | 2% |
| 6 | 9% | 1% |
| 7 | 1% | --- |

N=799

N=799

Do you carry a gun in your car?

| | % | |
|-----------------|----------|-------|
| Yes – Always | 5% | N=788 |
| Yes – Sometimes | 7% | |
| No | 88% | |
| Maybe | --- | |

Do you carry a pistol or rifle in your car?

| | % | |
|------------|----------|------|
| Pistol | 83% | N=88 |
| Rifle | 10% | |
| Both | 6% | |
| Don't know | 1% | |

Is the gun ever loaded while in your car? Is the gun always loaded or just sometimes loaded?

| | % | |
|------------------------|----------|------|
| Yes – Always Loaded | 73% | N=89 |
| Yes – Sometimes Loaded | 12% | |
| No – Always unloaded | 14% | |
| Don't Know | 1% | |