

# **The Social Research Laboratory**

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For Immediate Release  
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## **ARIZONANS SUPPORT PROPOSALS TO REDUCE TRAFFIC IN GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK**

A new poll shows that Arizonans support proposals to reduce automobile traffic in Grand Canyon National Park. According to a recent telephone survey conducted by Northern Arizona University's Social Research Laboratory, Arizonans also support increasing park entrance fees, but have mixed feelings about proposed development outside the park entrance.

The Grand Canyon is an important attraction for Arizona with 23 percent of Arizonans reported to have visited the Grand Canyon in the past twelve months. Arizonans utilized the Park for a range of activities the most popular attraction at the park was sightseeing. Other outdoor activities included hiking, camping and river rafting. The telephone survey was conducted between October 24 and October 28 and included 527 respondents for a margin of error of +/- 4.4 percent

### **ARIZONANS SUPPORT TRAFFIC REDUCTION**

With 5.5 million people visiting the Grand Canyon each year, concern for traffic congestion in the park has emerged. Respondents in the NAU survey were asked if they support or oppose a proposal that would require people to leave their vehicles outside the Park entrance and take provided transportation into the Park. Three quarters of Arizonans (74%) favor this proposal - forty percent said they strongly support the proposal and 35% said they somewhat support it. Sixteen percent of respondents somewhat or strongly oppose the proposal.

Respondents were also asked whether they would prefer to leave their vehicles in Tusayan, the town just outside the Grand Canyon's south entrance or take a train into the Grand Canyon Village and to scenic view points, or to drive their own vehicles into the Park. Fifty eight percent of respondents said they would prefer to leave their vehicles and take the train, while one quarter (26%) stated they would prefer to drive their own vehicles. Three percent of those polled said they would prefer to be able to do both, while 6% opted for some other alternative. Seven percent didn't know which option they preferred.

Teri Bray, Associate Director of the survey said, "Many Arizonans express concern and support for reducing traffic congestion in the park, but some are still hesitant to give up the luxury of driving their own vehicles into the park. However, as more and more people come to visit the park each year, problems with traffic congestion will worsen."

#### FEE INCREASE RECEIVES PARTIAL SUPPORT

The telephone survey also asked Arizonans about a bill Congress is considering that would authorize the Grand Canyon National Park to increase the current entrance fee from \$10 a carload to \$6 a person. Eighty percent of the increase would be kept by the park system. Respondents were asked if they favored or opposed this proposal, a majority of Arizonans support the bill. One fourth (20%) of those polled strongly support the proposal and 33 percent somewhat support the bill. On the other side, 42 percent oppose the bill, 23 percent strongly oppose it and 19 percent somewhat oppose it. Six percent of respondents didn't know if they support or oppose the bill.

"It's wonderful that a majority of Arizonans are willing to pay more to see the park. These fee increases will be used to help maintain Park features", said Bray.

#### FAMILIARITY AND SUPPORT OF CANYON FOREST VILLAGE UNCERTAIN

The poll also asked Arizonans about the proposal to develop land near the Grand Canyon. The proposed development called Canyon Forest Village would provide employee housing, parking lots, hotel rooms and 500,000 square feet of retail space near Tusayan, Arizona. Eighty one percent of all respondents indicated that they were not at all familiar with the proposal. While 13 percent were somewhat familiar with the proposed development, only 3% were very familiar with the proposed development. Three percent were unsure of their level of familiarity. After receiving basic information about the proposal, respondents were asked whether they support or oppose the development. Respondents were split on their answers. Thirty eight percent stated they favor the development of Canyon Forest Village, while 37% indicated they oppose the proposal. Over one quarter (26%) said they didn't know or had no opinion about supporting or opposing the development.

Among Northern Arizonans who constitute just 13 percent of the survey population, there was more familiarity with the proposed development. Thirty two percent of Northern Arizonans were familiar with the proposal while only 16 percent of other Arizonans express familiarity with the Tusayan development. Levels of support remain the same across Arizona, however, with 36% of Northern Arizonans favoring the development and 38% of the rest of Arizonans supporting the development.

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