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For Immediate Release

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**ARIZONANS PREFER MASS TRANSIT AT GRAND CANYON;
STATE SUPPORTS PARK FEE INCREASE;
CONFLICT EXISTS OVER CANYON FOREST VILLAGE**

Arizonans strongly prefer replacing automobile traffic with mass transit in Grand Canyon National Park, according to a recent statewide telephone survey. Most people would like to see an electric light-rail train system established at the Park rather than have access limited to a bus system. Additionally, the survey found a strong majority of Arizonans to be supportive of fee increases recently instituted at Grand Canyon National Park. When asked about the proposal to develop Canyon Forest Village in Tusayan, just outside Grand Canyon National Park, state residents expressed divided attitudes. Opposition to Canyon Forest Village has grown slightly over time.

The telephone survey was conducted between February 20 and March 1, 1997 by the Social Research Laboratory at Northern Arizona University. Four hundred and two randomly

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1

selected Arizonans participated in the survey and the results are accurate at a 5 percent margin of error with a 95% confidence level.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS SUPPORTED

Arizonans strongly support replacing automobile traffic with mass transit in Grand Canyon National Park, according to a recent statewide survey. Two-thirds of survey respondents (68%) agree with the proposal now on the table to replace cars with an unspecified alternative transportation system in Grand Canyon National Park. Forty-two percent of all respondents to the survey said they strongly support this proposal. Only a quarter of respondents said they oppose the proposal.

When asked to elaborate on the type of transportation alternative they prefer, a clear majority of respondents (62%) said they prefer an electric light-rail train system for getting into the Park. Nineteen percent of respondents said they prefer riding in buses powered by liquid natural gas. Eight percent said they would like both transportation systems made available to Park visitors.

The Grand Canyon National Park management plan calls for not allowing cars into the Park by the year 2000 except for people staying at Park hotels. Automobile traffic would be replaced by a mass transit alternative. Policy-makers are now debating whether that mass transit alternative should be an electric light-rail train system or a liquid natural gas bus system.

According to Fred Solop, director of the survey, "Arizonans clearly support banning cars from Grand Canyon National Park except for certain exceptions. They are very supportive of protecting Park resources and they believe an electric light-rail system is the best way to go."

Park officials are also thinking about protecting Grand Canyon National Park resources by creating an extensive bicycle and walking trail system within the Park. This proposal is supported by 8-out-of-10 adults in Arizona and opposed by only 13 percent of Arizonans.

FEE INCREASES SUPPORTED

In January, Grand Canyon National Park increased its entrance fees. Eighty percent of all money generated from these fee increases will stay in the Park to help maintain Park facilities. Entrance fees were raised from \$10 per private vehicle to \$20 and from \$4 for individuals entering the Park (on charter buses, for example) to \$10.

Two-thirds of Arizonans (64%) said they support these recent fee increases according to the telephone survey. More than a third of all respondents said they strongly support the fee increases.

STATE DIVIDED OVER CANYON FOREST VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT

The Northern Arizona University telephone survey asked Arizonans what they think about the Canyon Forest Village development proposal for Tusayan, just 7 miles from the entrance to Grand Canyon National Park. This proposal would provide as many as 3,000 hotel rooms and up to 300,000 square feet of retail space. The proposal also calls for developing a regional transportation hub, an experimental education center, a school, and other community services in Tusayan.

Awareness levels of this proposal are low in Arizona. Less than a quarter of respondents (23%) said they are either very familiar or somewhat familiar with the proposal. Three quarters

of respondents (76%) said they are not at all familiar with the Canyon Forest Village proposal. Though low, these awareness levels are slightly higher than awareness levels registered in a Fall 1995 survey conducted by NAU's Social Research Laboratory. At that time, 16 percent of Arizonans were either very familiar or somewhat familiar with the Canyon Forest Village proposal, and 81% were not at all familiar with these plans for development.

Among those familiar with the proposal, half (51%) have seen or heard media advertisements either supporting or opposing Canyon Forest Village.

After hearing a description of the development proposal, survey respondents were asked if they favor or oppose Canyon Forest Village. Statewide opinion is divided over this issue. Forty-one percent of respondents said they favor the proposal and forty-three percent of respondents said they oppose the proposal. Opposition to the plan is more vehement, however. One-in-five respondents (21%) said they strongly oppose the Canyon Forest Village proposal, while 8 percent strongly favor the proposal. Seventeen percent of respondents have yet to form an opinion on the topic.

“While there is considerable disagreement over the merits of the Canyon Forest Village proposal, there appears to be more intense opposition to the development plan in Arizona with a large number of people strongly opposed to the plan,” said Solop.

Levels of support for Canyon Forest Village are very consistent today with levels of support expressed a year and a half ago (41% today versus 38% in the previous survey). Opposition to Canyon Forest Village has grown during this period, however. Thirty-seven percent of Arizonans opposed the plan in the previous survey while 43 percent of Arizonans oppose the plan today.



March 6, 1997

STATEWIDE TELEPHONE POLL

**Social Research Laboratory
Northern Arizona University**

BACKGROUND MEMO

1-NAU010/Spring

The statewide telephone poll was conducted between February 20 and March 1, 1997. A random sample of 402 Arizonans was interviewed by telephone. Figures of this sampling size are subject to a sampling error of about +/- 5 percent at a 95 percent confidence interval. 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 the Grand Canyon.

First, the Grand Canyon is a popular tourist attraction in Arizona. Have you visited the Grand Canyon within the past 12 months?

	Yes	No	Don't Know	(N)
Total	16%	83%	1%	402

To protect Grand Canyon National Park, by the year 2000 officials are proposing that no cars be allowed into the Park except for people staying at Park hotels. Automobile traffic will be replaced by mass transit.

Do you agree or disagree with the proposal to replace automobile traffic with mass transit in Grand Canyon National Park? Is that strongly (agree/disagree) or somewhat (agree/disagree)?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	DK/Refused	(N)
Total	42%	26%	13%	11%	8%	402

If you could only get into Grand Canyon National Park using public transportation, would you prefer traveling in a bus powered by liquid natural gas or in an electric light-rail train system?

	Bus	Train	Both	DK/No Answer	Refused	(N)
Total	19%	62%	8%	10%	2%	402

Do you support creation of an extensive bike and walking trail system within the Park?

	Yes	No	DK/Refused	(N)
Total	82%	13%	6%	402

Last month Grand Canyon National Park entrance fees were raised from \$10.00 per private vehicle to \$20.00 and from \$4.00 for individuals entering the Park to \$10.00. Eighty percent (80%) of these fee increases stay in the Park to help maintain Park facilities. Do you support or oppose this fee increase? Is that strongly (support/oppose) or somewhat (support/oppose)?

	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Refused	(N)
Total	36%	28%	15%	17%	4%	402

A proposal is being considered to develop land near Tusayan, 7 miles south of Grand Canyon National Park. This development is called Canyon Forest Village and it would provide as many as 3,000 hotel rooms and up to 300,000 square feet of retail space. The proposal also calls for developing a regional transportation hub, an experimental education center, a school and other community services in Tusayan.

How familiar are you with this proposal? Are you very familiar, somewhat familiar, or not at all familiar with this proposal?

	Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not At All Familiar	DK/Refused	(N)
Winter 1997	3%	20%	76%	1%	402
Fall 1995	3%	13%	81%	3%	527

Have you seen or heard any TV, newspaper or radio advertisements either supporting or opposing this proposal? Was that supporting or opposing? [Asked only of those familiar with the proposal.]

	Yes-Supporting	Yes-Opposing	Yes-Both Supporting and Opposing	Yes-Don't Know	No	(N)
Total	10%	12%	14%	15%	49	93

Considering the information you now know about the proposal, do you strongly favor, somewhat favor, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose development of Canyon Forest Village?

	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	DK/Refused	(N)
Winter 1997	8%*	32%*	22%	21%	17%	402
Fall 1995	10%	28%	20%	17%	26%	527

* Due to rounding differences, total support levels equal 41%.