



Social Research Laboratory, PO Box 15301, Flagstaff, AZ 86011 (928) 523-1515

Tuesday, April 6, 2004

For More Information:
Fred Solop, Director
NAU Social Research Laboratory
(928) 607-0488 -- cell phone

**THE FLAGSTAFF ELECTION:
DONALDSON WITH SUBSTANTIAL LEAD;
INCUMBENTS COOPER, KELTY AND WHITE HOLD ADVANTAGE;
BOND ELECTION IS ABOUT THE CITY'S FUTURE**

Joe Donaldson holds a substantial lead over Rick Lopez in the Flagstaff mayoral race, according to results from a recent telephone survey of likely voters conducted by the Social Research Laboratory at Northern Arizona University. Incumbents Al White, Karen Cooper, and Kara Kelty lead all challengers in the City Council race. Bond voters are divided in their preferences, but are most concerned with knowing the impact of projects for the future of Flagstaff. Most voters are willing to accept tax increases to pay for projects they support. The Social Research Laboratory survey was conducted with 356 likely Flagstaff voters. Calling took place between March 26 and April 5, 2004. Results are accurate with a ± 5.18 percent margin of error, at a 95 percent confidence level.

DONALDSON IN SAFE POSITION

Voters are tuning in to the Flagstaff mayoral election. Eighty percent of likely voters say they are paying "a lot" or "some" attention to the upcoming mayoral contest. This high level of knowledge follows the recent mayoral primary election held on March 9th.

When voters are asked which candidate they would vote for if the mayoral election was held today, Joe Donaldson emerges as the overwhelming favorite. Fifty-nine percent of likely

voters say they would vote for Joe Donaldson and 22 percent would vote for challenger Rick Lopez. Eighteen percent of voters say they do not know who they would vote for.

INCUMBENTS FAVORED IN CITY COUNCIL RACE

Fewer voters are paying attention to Flagstaff's City Council race, as compared to the mayoral race. Fifty-five percent of likely voters say they are paying "a lot" or "some" attention to the City Council election. When asked to name any of the six candidates running for City Council, 59 percent of likely voters were unable to name one candidate. Among the six candidates, incumbent Kara Kely is the most familiar to voters, with 25 percent of likely voters able to name her. Karen Cooper and Al White, the other two incumbents, were both named by 18 percent of likely voters. Rick Krug was named by 14 percent of voters, Eldon Kramer by 13 percent, and David Maurer by 11 percent.

Incumbents White, Cooper and Kely are favored at this time to win the City Council election. When asked who they would vote for if the election was today, 26 percent of likely voters say they would vote for White. Karen Cooper and Kara Kely are both supported by 25 percent of voters. Among the challengers, David Maurer has the most support with 14 percent of likely voters saying they would vote for him. Eldon Kramer and Rick Krug are both supported by 11 percent of voters.

As in the election, this survey allowed likely voters to support up to three candidates. More than half of likely voters (51%) said they were "undecided" about whom to vote for.

Fred Solop, director of the Social Research Laboratory, commented, "While the incumbent candidates are well positioned in the City Council election, the race is still fluid. When half the electorate has little knowledge about the race and almost half are 'undecided,' anything can happen. All of the candidates need to ramp up their campaigns between now and the May election if they are serious about winning a City Council seat."

BOND ELECTION IS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF FLAGSTAFF

Most voters have little knowledge about the May bond election. Forty-four percent of voters say they have seen or heard "a lot" or "some" about this election and 57 percent have heard "a little" or "nothing at all". These figures are consistent with results from an October

2003 survey conducted by the Social Research Laboratory. In that survey, forty-three percent of voters said they had seen or heard “a lot” or “some” about the bond election and 57 percent have heard “a little” or “nothing at all.”

When probed about broad categories of projects that will be on the ballot, voters were divided in their interests. Thirty-two percent of voters say they are most interested in supporting water and sewer projects, 29 percent of voters are most interested in supporting open space projects, and 26 percent are most interested in supporting parks and recreation projects. Only eight percent of voters are most interested in supporting public building and facility projects.

When deciding which bond projects to support, the majority of voters say they are most interested in knowing the impact of the project on the future of Flagstaff (66%). Eighteen percent of voters say they are most concerned with the financial impact of projects. Fourteen percent of voters are equally concerned with both future and financial impacts. When these results are combined, 80 percent of voters say they will make decisions based on the future of Flagstaff and 32 percent say they will make decisions based on financial impacts.

Survey results suggest some tolerance among the voting public for increased property taxes and increased water and sewer rates. Eighty-two percent of likely voters expect their taxes to increase if all bond proposals pass in the May election. Fifty-four percent of voters say they would “strongly support” or “somewhat support” raising property taxes to pay for projects they support. Fifty-six percent “strongly support” or “somewhat support” increasing water and sewer rates to pay for projects they support.

Fred Solop had this to say about the results: “This survey suggests that voters are willing to tolerate modest tax increases to pay for projects they support. Increased taxes will only be supported, however, if voters believe their money is supporting the long-term interest of making Flagstaff a better place to live.”



Social Research Laboratory, Northern Arizona University

April 6, 2004

FLAGSTAFF ELECTION SURVEY
BACKGROUND MEMO

Spring 2004

The *Flagstaff Election Survey* was conducted between March 26 and April 5, 2004. A random sample of 356 likely Flagstaff voters was asked questions regarding elected officials. Survey question results are subject to a sampling error of +/- 5.18 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.

How much attention have you been paying to the mayoral campaigns: a lot, some, a little or none at all?

	Total
A lot	32%
Some	48%
A little	16%
None at all	4%

Two candidates are running for mayor: Joe Donaldson and Rick Lopez. If the mayoral election was being held today would you vote for Joe Donaldson or Rick Lopez?

	Total
Joe Donaldson	59%
Rick Lopez	22%
Someone else	1%
Don't know	18%

How much attention have you been paying to the city council campaigns: a lot, some, a little or none at all?

	<u>Total</u>
A lot	16%
Some	39%
A little	30%
None at all	15%

Can you name any of the candidates running for city council?

	<u>Total</u>
Kara Kelty *	25%
Karen Cooper *	18%
Al White *	18%
Rick Krug	14%
Eldon Kramer	13%
Dave Maurer	11%
Someone else	2%
Could not name any candidate	59%

Six candidates are running for city council: Karen Cooper, Kara Kelty, Eldon Kramer, Rick Krug, Dave Maurer, and Al White. Each voter may vote for up to three candidates. If the city council election was being held today, who would you vote for?
[Up to 3 choices]

	<u>Total</u>
Al White *	26%
Karen Cooper *	25%
Kara Kelty *	25%
David Maurer	14%
Eldon Kramer	11%
Rick Krug	11%
Someone else	1%
Don't know	51%

* Incumbent

Voters will also be able to vote on proposed bond projects in the May election. Thirteen City bond projects and one Flagstaff School District bond project will appear on the ballot. How much have you seen or heard about the bond election or the proposed projects: a lot, some, little, or nothing at all?

	Total	Oct. 2003	Oct. 2002
A lot	16%	17%	8%
Some	28%	26%	27%
A little	33%	26%	34%
Nothing at all	24%	31%	31%
Don't know	1%	1%	---

There are several types of City bond projects on the ballot. Generally speaking, are you more interested in supporting bonds for Parks and Recreation projects, public building and facility projects, water and sewer projects, or open space projects?

	Total
Water and Sewer projects	32%
Open Space projects	29%
Parks and Recreation projects	26%
Public Buildings and Facility projects	8%
Don't know	6%

When considering whether to vote for or against each project, are you more interested in knowing the contributions a project makes to the future of Flagstaff or the financial impact of a project?

	Total	
Future of Flagstaff	66%	(Future + Both = 80%)
Financial Impact	18%	(Financial + Both = 32%)
Both future and financial impact	14%	
Depends/Don't know	2%	

In your opinion, if all 13 City bond projects and the school district bond project passed, would you expect your taxes to increase, decrease, or stay the same?

	Total
Increase	82%
Decrease	1%
Stay the Same	15%
Don't know	2%

Do you support or oppose increasing the property tax rate so that bond projects you support could be undertaken?

Do you support, or oppose increasing water and sewer rates so that bond projects you support could be undertaken?

	Property Taxes	Water Rates
Strongly support	23%	21%
Somewhat support	31%	35%
Somewhat oppose	11%	16%
Strongly oppose	26%	22%
Depends/Don't know	9%	6%