



## SOCIAL RESEARCH LABORATORY

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### ***FLAGSTAFF REPORT CARD:***

## **PUBLIC MOOD TAKES NEGATIVE TURN; CONCERN ABOUT HOUSING PRICES HITS NEW HIGH; RATINGS OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONS REMAIN CONSISTENT**

Each year the *Flagstaff Report Card* asks local residents to evaluate how things are going in the area, and to rate the quality of six local institutions and the economic health of the area. This year's results are in and the overall mood in the area is slightly more negative than last year. Twenty-eight percent of local residents say they are unsatisfied with the way things are going in the area, compared with 23 percent who were unsatisfied last year. Almost one-third of residents (32%) think the Flagstaff area will become a worse place to live in the future, compared to 27 percent who thought likewise last year. More than three-quarters of people living in the Flagstaff area say the economy is unaffordable, with housing costs as the number one concern.

When it comes to assigning report card grades to the performance of local institutions, this year's grades are consistent with last year's: "B" for Coconino Community College and Northern Arizona University, "B-" for the Flagstaff Public Schools, "C+" for Coconino

### **2006 Grade**

Coconino Community College	B
Northern Arizona University	B
Flagstaff Public Schools	B -
Coconino County Government	C+
Local Media	C+
Economic Health	C
Flagstaff City Council	C

County Government and the Local Media, and “C” for the local economy and the Flagstaff City Council.

The *Flagstaff Report Card* has been conducted by the Social Research Laboratory since 2001. Data collection for this year’s study was completed from April 7 to April 10. A random sample of 606 Flagstaff-area residents was asked to grade the quality of six city and county institutions and the economic health of the area. A sample of this size is associated with a margin of error of +/- 4.0 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. Smaller samples of people living inside and outside the Flagstaff city boundaries are associated with larger margins of error. Report card ratings are determined according to a standard school report card format with A being “Excellent,” B “Good,” C “Average,” D “Below Average,” and F “Failure.”

### **SATISFACTION RATES DIP SLIGHTLY**

Overall, more than two-thirds of Flagstaff-area residents are feeling satisfied with the way things are going in the area compared with last year. This year, 69 percent of respondents to the *Flagstaff Report Card* say they are “satisfied” with the way things are going and 28 percent are “unsatisfied.” Last year, three-quarters (75%) of area residents said they were “satisfied” and less than one-quarter (23%) said they were “unsatisfied.”

Local residents were asked to think about the future and say if they expect the Flagstaff area to become a better or worse place to live. For the first three years this study was conducted, more people thought the Flagstaff area would become a “better place” to live than a “worse place.” Today, the results have reversed. Twenty-two percent of area residents believe the Flagstaff area will become a “better place” to live and 32 percent say it will become a “worse place” to live in the future. Forty-one percent of respondents to this study say the area will “stay the same.”

Slightly more than three-quarters of study respondents (77%) find the area to be “unaffordable,” compared with 23 percent who say they area is “affordable.” Although these figures are consistent with previous years, the proportion of people saying the area is “very unaffordable” today is higher than in previous studies. Today, 36 percent say the area is “very unaffordable” compared to 32 percent finding the area “very unaffordable” last year. In 2001, when the study was first conducted, just 23 percent of area residents found the area to be “very unaffordable.”

## **COST OF HOUSING IS THE NUMBER ONE ISSUE**

Study respondents were asked to define the most important issue facing the Flagstaff area today. This year, 26 percent of respondents say “cost of housing” is the most important issue. This compares with 17 percent who answered similarly in 2005. In 2001, only six percent of respondents offered this answer.

Sixteen percent of Flagstaff-area residents say “growth and development” is the most important issue facing the Flagstaff area today. Eleven percent of residents say the most important issue is “jobs and the economy” and another 11 percent say “cost of living.” In 2003 and 2004, area residents said “jobs and the economy” were the number one issue. “Traffic” was the number one concern in 2001.

Fred Solop, director of the *Flagstaff Report Card*, commented on the results, “Our local community is a bit more dissatisfied this year than in years past. ‘Housing costs’ may be the major concern for a quarter of our neighbors, but when considered along with ‘jobs and the economy’ and ‘cost of living,’ nearly half of area residents say the economy is getting too expensive for the employment base. The community is not going to be more optimistic about the future of the area until something is done to address these concerns.”

## **GRADES FOR LOCAL INSTITUTIONS**

The *Flagstaff Report Card* asks local residents to rate the performance of six institutions and the local economy by assigning report card-type grades to each. This year’s report card is similar to last year’s. Coconino Community College and Northern Arizona University each earn a “B” for their respective performances. The Flagstaff Public Schools earn a “B-”, up from a “C” in 2003 and 2004. Coconino County Government and the Local Media each earn a “C+.” These grades have been consistent each year the *Flagstaff Report Card* has been conducted. The Economic Health of the area and the Flagstaff City Council each earn a “C.”



**SOCIAL RESEARCH LABORATORY**

April 18, 2006

**FLAGSTAFF REPORT CARD  
BACKGROUND MEMO**

The *Flagstaff Report Card* was conducted from April 7 through April 10, 2006. A random sample of 606 Flagstaff-area residents was asked questions about the local community. Survey questions addressed to Flagstaff-area residents are subject to a sampling error of +/- 4.0 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. Survey results broken out for respondents living within the Flagstaff city boundaries (N=458) are subject to a sampling error of +/- 4.6 percent at a 95 percent confidence level and results for respondents living outside Flagstaff city boundaries (N=142) are subject to a sampling error of +/- 8.2 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.

In general, how satisfied are you with the way things are going in Flagstaff area? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat unsatisfied, or very unsatisfied?

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2001</b>
<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>79%</b>
Very satisfied	17%	21%	14%	12%	16%	20%
Somewhat satisfied	52%	54%	58%	61%	58%	59%
<b>Unsatisfied</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>21%</b>
Somewhat unsatisfied	21%	17%	21%	20%	17%	17%
Very unsatisfied	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	4%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>100%</b>

In the future, do you think the Flagstaff area will generally become a better place to live, a worse place to live, or will it stay about the same?

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2001</b>
<b>Better place</b>	22%	26%	26%	26%	29%	33%
<b>Worse place</b>	32%	27%	26%	25%	24%	26%
<b>Stay about the same</b>	41%	39%	43%	44%	43%	38%
<b>Don't know</b>	5%	8%	5%	5%	4%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>101%</b>

Overall, do you find the Flagstaff area economy to be very affordable, somewhat affordable, somewhat unaffordable, or very unaffordable?

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2001</b>
<b>Affordable</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>26%</b>
Very affordable	3%	3%	2%	2%	4%	3%
Somewhat affordable	20%	20%	19%	21%	21%	23%
<b>Unaffordable</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>73%</b>
Somewhat unaffordable	41%	45%	45%	48%	46%	50%
Very unaffordable	36%	32%	33%	28%	29%	23%
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>99%</b>

In your opinion, what is the **most** important issue facing the Flagstaff area today?

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2001</b>
<b>Cost of housing</b>	26%	17%	14%	9%	9%	6%
<b>Growth / development</b>	16%	16%	10%	11%	11%	18%
<b>Jobs / economy</b>	11%	13%	23%	20%	3%	7%
<b>Cost of living</b>	11%	12%	11%	9%	9%	6%
<b>Rate of population growth</b>	9%	11%	9%	8%	10%	18%
<b>Drought / water issues</b>	6%	3%	6%	15%	1%	3%
<b>Traffic issues</b>	6%	5%	5%	7%	9%	22%
<b>Education</b>	3%	1%	7%	5%	5%	4%
<b>Crime</b>	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
<b>Environmental protection</b>	2%	2%	3%	5%	2%	4%
<b>Forest fires</b>	2%	--	3%	5%	1%	--
<b>Lack of social services</b>	2%	1%	--	1%	--	--
<b>Snowmaking</b>	1%	2%	2%	1%	--	--
<b>Other</b>	3%	16%	5%	3%	39%	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and F to rate the quality of their work. Now, thinking of a report card from school, with “A” being the highest grade and “F” a failing grade...

Now suppose the Flagstaff Public Schools were graded in the same way.

- a) What grade would you give the public schools in Flagstaff...an A, B, C, D, or F?
- b) What grade would you give to the overall performance of the Flagstaff City Council?
- c) If you were to grade the overall performance of the Coconino County government, what grade would you give it?
- d) What grade would you give the Flagstaff media for their coverage of local and state issues?
- e) How would you grade the health of the economy in Flagstaff?
- f) What about Coconino Community College? What grade would you give them?
- g) What about Northern Arizona University? What grade would you give them?

	Grade					
	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Coconino Community College	B (86.04)	B (86.12)	B (85.37)	B (84.43)	B (84.36)	B (84.78)
Northern Arizona University	B (83.60)	B (83.87)	B- (81.11)	B (83.29)	B (84.32)	B (85.30)
Flagstaff Public Schools	B- (80.32)	B- (80.59)	C (77.30)	C (77.29)	B- (80.06)	C+ (79.88)
Coconino County Government	C+ (78.48)	C+ (79.29)	C+ (78.09)	C+ (78.29)	C+ (78.98)	C+ (78.66)
Local Media	C+ (78.41)	C+ (79.53)	C+ (79.16)	C+ (79.23)	C+ (79.07)	C+ (78.54)
Economic Health	C (76.28)	C (76.15)	C (73.69)	C (73.61)	C (74.35)	C (77.22)
Flagstaff City Council	C (74.57)	C (77.40)	C (76.01)	C (76.93)	C (76.69)	C+ (78.28)

	<b>Inside City Limits</b>					
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2001</b>
Coconino Community College	86.06	86.25	85.22	84.90	84.75	84.55
Northern Arizona University	83.49	83.80	81.15	83.45	84.72	85.02
Flagstaff Public Schools	80.68	81.11	77.33	78.11	80.74	80.14
Coconino County Government	78.63	79.45	78.74	78.86	79.73	79.06
Local Media	78.41	79.41	79.58	79.46	79.68	78.77
Economic Health	76.49	76.57	73.86	74.01	74.65	77.41
Flagstaff City Council	75.12	77.70	76.58	77.30	77.17	78.44

	<b>Outside City Limits</b>					
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2001</b>
Coconino Community College	85.95	85.63	85.58	82.51	83.00	85.68
Northern Arizona University	84.01	84.13	81.07	82.51	82.75	86.39
Flagstaff Public Schools	79.22	78.61	77.27	74.09	77.93	78.92
Local Media	78.37	79.80	77.83	78.31	77.27	77.50
Coconino County Government	77.90	78.74	76.61	76.45	76.87	77.21
Economic Health	75.58	74.76	73.34	72.10	73.43	76.18
Flagstaff City Council	72.82	76.50	74.62	75.53	75.04	77.69

Grade Assignments	92.50 – 97.49	A
	90.00 – 92.49	A-
	87.50 - 89.99	B+
	82.50 – 87.49	B
	80.00 – 82.49	B-
	77.50 – 79.99	C+
	72.50 – 77.49	C
	70.00 – 72.49	C-