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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2002 State Fair Poll Results

[St. Paul] — Minnesotans support a state investment in commuter rail systems, such as the Northstar Commuter rail line, constitutionally dedicating sales tax proceeds for the environment, and tax breaks or funding assistance for construction of affordable housing. They oppose using tobacco endowment funds to balance state budgets, and they don't think the state flag needs to be changed. But fairgoers are largely divided over whether to require students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance in schools, whether to institute an Initiative and Referendum process in Minnesota, whether fireworks sales should be legal in the state, and whether auto glass repair companies ought to offer free gifts for service. Those were among the findings of an unofficial opinion poll conducted by the Minnesota House of Representatives during the 2002 Minnesota State Fair.

In addition, a majority of fairgoers who took the poll indicated support for increasing the state's gas tax to fund both transportation and transit projects.

An overwhelming majority (75.3 percent) of poll takers indicated they live in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Another 17.9 percent said they live in Greater Minnesota and the remaining 3 percent live in other metropolitan areas, such as St. Cloud, Duluth, or Rochester. The 2002 poll was the first time fairgoers were asked where they live.

Fairgoers also indicated that constitutional officers (including the governor, Lt. governor, attorney general, secretary of state, and state auditor), all considered full-time employees, should be required to disclose their outside income. They also agreed that legislators, considered part-time employees, should disclose their outside sources of income.

While most poll takers indicated support for legalizing the sale of novelty fireworks in Minnesota, they do not support legalizing additional fireworks in the state.

A total of 7,201 fairgoers participated in the unscientific 2002 State Fair poll, slightly fewer than in previous years, but consistent with the 10-year average. The House booth is located in the fair's Education Building. The results were electronically calculated after the fair concluded Sept. 2. Here's a look at the poll questions with fairgoers' responses:

1. Should the state require public and charter school students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance at least once per week?

Yes	49.3%	(3,554)
No	42.9%	(3,088)
Undecided/No Opinion	7.0%	(505)
Left blank/vote not tallied	--.--	(54)

2. Should the state invest in commuter rail systems (different from local, light-rail transit) such as the Northstar

Corridor line and others?

Yes	64.1%	(4,615)
No	25.2%	(1,814)
Undecided/ No Opinion	9.9%	(713)
Left blank/vote not tallied	---	(59)

3. A proposal during the 2002 session would have proposed an amendment to the state constitution to dedicate three-sixteenths of 1 percent of sales tax receipts to the environment. Do you support a constitutionally dedicated funding source for the environment?

Yes	61.3%	(4,418)
No	29.8%	(2,147)
Undecided/No Opinion	8.1%	(583)
Left blank/vote not tallied	---	(53)

4. Should the state's tobacco endowment funds be used to help balance the state's budget during times when officials are projecting a deficit?

Yes	35.1%	(2,529)
No	55.8%	(4,020)
Undecided/No opinion	8.3%	(597)
Left blank/vote not tallied	---	(55)

5. During the 2002 session, legislators passed a new law allowing the sale and use of novelty fireworks, such as sparklers, snakes, and glowworms. The law specifies that only people older than 18 may purchase fireworks. Do you support making fireworks legal in Minnesota?

Yes	50.1%	(3,610)
No	43.9%	(3,158)
Undecided/No Opinion	5.5%	(398)
Left blank/vote not tallied	---	(35)

5a. Would you support legalizing additional kinds of fireworks in the state?

Yes	37.2%	(2,677)
No	55.5%	(3,999)
Undecided/No Opinion	5.7%	(411)
Left blank/vote not tallied	1.6%	(114)

6. Should Minnesota adopt an initiative and referendum process whereby voters adopt laws or amend the constitution directly on the general election ballot, without first getting legislative approval?

Yes	40.0%	(2,880)
No	45.5%	(3,280)
Undecided/No Opinion	13.1%	(943)
Left blank/vote not tallied	1.4%	(98)

7. A bill was heard in 2002 to create a task force to study the form, style, and design of the state flag. Do you think the state flag needs to be changed?

Yes	7.7%	(554)
No	82.8%	(5,966)
Undecided/ No Opinion	8.4%	(611)
Left blank/vote not tallied	1.0%	(70)

8. Legislators proposed an increase in the state's gas tax for transportation and transit during the 2002 session, but they were unable to reach an agreement on transportation funding. Do you support increasing the gas tax to fund road and transit projects?

Yes	54.2%	(3,903)
No	40.0%	(2,880)
Undecided/ No Opinion	4.8%	(348)
Left blank/vote not tallied	1.0%	(70)

9. Do you support tax breaks or other funding assistance for individuals (contractors, property owners, etc.) to encourage the construction of affordable housing?

Yes	57.6%	(4,159)
No	31.6%	(2,273)
Undecided/ No Opinion	9.9%	(710)
Left blank/vote not tallied	--.--	(59)

10. Should auto glass replacement companies be allowed to offer free gifts and other incentives for using their services?

Yes	42.5%	(3,060)
No	45.5%	(3,278)
Undecided/ No Opinion	11.1%	(796)
Left blank/vote not tallied	--.--	(67)

11. Should Minnesota's constitutional officers (considered full-time positions) be required to disclose their outside income?

Yes	67.7%	(4,877)
No	23.1%	(1,669)
Undecided/ No Opinion	7.9%	(569)
Left blank/vote not tallied	1.2%	(86)

11a. Should legislators (considered part-time positions) be required to disclose their outside income?

Yes	57.7%	(4,154)
No	33.4%	(2,407)
Undecided/ No Opinion	8.1%	(584)
Left blank/vote not tallied	--.--	(56)

(All percentages are rounded off to the nearest one-tenth. Percent total votes left blank or not tallied are included for those above 1 percent.)

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Please Note: The Minnesota House of Representatives' survey is informal and unscientific. It is simply a measurement of the opinions expressed by those who took the time to complete the poll while visiting our booth at the fair. Our main purpose in conducting this opinion poll was to familiarize fairgoers with some of the issues that have recently been discussed by the Legislature and issues that may be debated during the upcoming legislative session.