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UCSB Releases Findings of 'Central Coast Survey' Based on Poll of Santa Barbara, Ventura Residents

Researchers at the University of California, Santa Barbara today released the findings of a large-scale public-opinion poll of residents in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties on a variety of issues affecting life in the region.

Conducted by the Social Science Survey Center/Benton Survey Research Lab at UC Santa Barbara, the Central Coast Survey featured telephone interviews with members of more than 1,000 households in the two counties.

The results of the survey tap the public's attitudes on a wide range of important issues, from jobs, housing, traffic, and health care to the pace of growth and development, immigration, and the quality of public schools.

Among its many conclusions, the survey found that:

- Regardless of their income or education, most respondents are relatively

optimistic about their financial prospects.

- Despite that optimism, residents complain about the job market on the Central Coast and, in particular, the lack of well-paying jobs.
- While the region's residents view the high cost of housing as a problem, they generally do not view increased growth and development as a solution.
- Although survey respondents indicated concerns about population growth, they generally expressed a positive view about the effects of immigration.

The full text of the 38-page report is available on the Social Science Survey Center's Web site: <http://www.survey.ucsb.edu/ccs/>

The survey was directed and the report written by Jon Sonstelie, a professor of economics and the survey center's director; Paolo Gardinali, associate director of the center; and Jonathan Cowden, a visiting assistant professor in the Department of Political Science.

"The findings of this survey will, we feel, be very helpful to community and government officials as well as business leaders as they make decisions and shape policies in these two counties," said Sonstelie.

"The responses to many of the questions confirmed what I believed people thought, but the responses to some questions surprised me," added Sonstelie. "For example, not surprisingly, most people said that the lack of affordable housing was a big problem for the region. Yet, most people reported that the cost of their own housing did not place a financial strain on them. A big problem for the region, but no problem for them. Length of time in the region may partly explain that.

Almost half of the respondents have been living in the county more than 20 years."

The interviews for the survey were conducted in English or Spanish and lasted an average of 11 minutes. All survey respondents were at least 18 years old. A total of 2,103 households were contacted, and 1,008 interviews were completed.

The Social Science Survey Center plans to conduct this survey annually, so that the results can be tracked over time. Funding for the survey was provided by the Division of Social Sciences at UCSB.

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