

Media Relations & Events

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UNF Poll Shows Clay County Voters Want Government Changes

Contact: Joanna Norris
Department of Media Relations and Events
(904) 620-2102

A new University of North Florida poll shows Clay County voters are open to the idea of changing the structure of their county government.

The purpose of the study is to assess public opinion about the structure of Clay County government because of three factors: the ongoing illegal dumping investigation, population growth and the county's insufficient tax base.

The poll, conducted between July 10 and July 19 by Dr. Matthew Corrigan and Dr. Henry Thomas of the Public Opinion Research Laboratory at UNF, was performed through the use of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing at a supervised polling laboratory at the University.

The survey includes 542 registered Clay County voters who voted in the 2004 presidential election. The margin of error is 4.2 percent with a 95 percent confidence interval.

Among the findings:

--Sixty-five percent of voters said that the structure of the Clay County government should be changed.

--On a number of questions, Clay County voters support an elected executive authority in the county. Seventy-four percent said they wanted to elect the county manager, while 56 percent said they might support an elected county mayor.

--The current county commission has about a 30 percent approval rating. Forty-four percent disapprove and 18 percent neither approves nor disapproves.

--When asked whether they would re-elect their district commissioner or vote for someone else, 52 percent said they would vote for someone else, and 25 percent said they would re-elect their current commissioner.

--Clay County voters are paying attention to the illegal dumping investigation. Sixty-six percent of respondents are paying either a lot of attention or some attention to this issue.

--Clay residents don't support increasing sales property taxes or sales taxes but would favor an increase for impact fees to pay for county growth.

--Sixty-five percent of Clay County residents indicated a desire to establish a blue ribbon committee to investigate the possibility of changing Clay County government.

For complete results or more information regarding survey methodology, go to <http://www.unf.edu/development/news/mediarelations/content/clay-survey.pdf>.

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