

March 24, 2009

SUBJECT: Survey of 600 Registered Voters in Kansas Regarding the
Proposed Power Plant

Cole Hargrave Snodgrass & Associates is pleased to present this executive summary of survey findings in its recent survey of registered voters. **This survey reveals that almost twice as many Kansans support the construction of the new power plant (51%) as oppose it.** In addition, it shows that 56% of voters believe that their legislator should vote to overturn an expected gubernatorial veto, while only 25% believe it should be sustained.

While men (63% favor vs. 22% oppose) and registered Republicans (61% favor vs. 19% oppose) are among the most supportive of building a new power plant, at least pluralities of most every major demographic group are also supportive, including women (41% favor vs. 28% oppose) and registered Democrats (40% favor vs. 38% oppose). **More important to politicians, however, should be the fact that unaffiliated voters break decisively in favor of construction (46% favor vs. 23% oppose) as do those who regularly vote in primary elections (57% favor vs. 22% oppose).** Also important is that among the 42% of voters currently undecided in a mock gubernatorial 2010 ballot test between unnamed partisans, support for the power plant is also solid (44% favor vs. 28% opposed).

Support for the construction of the power plant is not only broad, but has also developed depth. In fact, support for construction increases among those most informed. Fully 64% of Kansas voters are aware of this ongoing debate prior to any discussion of it in the poll. Among this group, support is higher (53%) than among the 34% who are unfamiliar with the issue (49%).

It is also apparent in the survey that voters see the power plant as primarily an issue about job creation and economic development. Toward the end of the survey, fully 40% of all voters and 56% of supporters indicate that their reason for support deals either with the expected private investment in the state or that it will create jobs. In addition, the power plant construction is overwhelmingly supported by those who cited the poor economy (55% favor vs. 25% oppose), or the need for job creation (52% favor vs. 20% oppose) on an open-ended question at the start of the survey. Combined, these groups represent almost half (49%) of all voters. (It is important to note that less than 1% of voters mentioned the environment as their top concern.) Especially **if the expected veto is sustained, the construction of the power plant will be remembered as a jobs issues and it is not difficult to see that voters will be inclined to hold opponents of the construction responsible.** This is especially true given the status of both the state and national economy.

Not only do voters want a power plant to be built in western Kansas, but they want their own legislator to take action on the issue. Fully 56% of all voters believe that the legislature should overturn any gubernatorial veto of this issue. As might be expected, there is a partisan difference on this issue, with Republicans overwhelmingly in favor of the overriding of a veto (66% overturn veto vs. 18% sustain) and registered Democrats evenly split (42% overturn veto vs. 37% sustain), but still in favor of overturning the veto.

More important in an electoral sense however, is that swing groups such as unaffiliated voters (53% overturn veto vs. 23% sustain), those undecided on a generic gubernatorial ballot (48% overturn veto vs. 27% sustain) and self-described “somewhat conservative” voters (60% overturn veto vs. 17% sustain) all break decisively in favor of overturning the expected veto. From a fundraising perspective, political candidates should also be aware that upper-income voters are the most supportive of an override. Among the 20% of voters in households with incomes in excess of \$80,000, support of an override reaches 70%.

Voters in Kansas are clearly becoming set in their beliefs on the power plant issue. The vast majority are familiar with the issue and they have established a personal viewpoint in favor of its construction. In addition, the unique confluence of heightened concerns about jobs and the economy with the change in Governor, lends itself to voters being in favor of overriding a veto.