

Liberals and PCs in statistical tie as election enters the final stretch

Toronto – September 14, 2006 –In a telephone poll of 800 randomly selected New Brunswick voters, the Liberals have a marginal 2 percentage point lead over the PCs among decided voters (45% Liberals – 43% PC – 11% NDP). Just 14% are undecided while 15% say they won't vote or would not answer the question.

The Liberals hold a significant lead in the francophone North and in the south around Saint. John. The Tories hold a large lead in the central area around Fredericton and a smaller lead in the South East around Moncton.

One factor that may be helping the Liberals is the New Brunswick issue matrix. Health dominates the issue agenda with 23% saying health is the most important issue in New Brunswick today. Education is a distant second at 11% followed closely by jobs and unemployment at 10% and gas prices at 8%. Health and education are issues that traditionally favour the Liberals and New Democrats. The second choice preferences show that the Liberals also are well positioned to gain support if either of their rivals stumbles.

One factor still working for the Tories is leadership. Tory leader and Premier Bernard Lord enjoys a 4 point lead as Best Premier. Lord is particularly in strong in the South East around Moncton while Liberal leader Shawn Graham does his best in the North and Alison Brewer in Fredericton.

New Brunswick's debates were not a focal point of the campaign. Most voters have not even heard anything about the debates while just one in five actually watched any of them.

However, among the 39% who have read, seen or heard something about the debates, Lord was judged to have done the best. Graham can take some solace in knowing he did much better among those who viewed the debates compared to those who just heard about them second hand. Graham is the only leader that had more voters saying he did better than expected than said he did not meet expectation.

While the NDP are well behind in this survey, they seem to be doing better than some other polls have suggested with 11 percent of the decided vote. The NDP enjoy the most support around Saint. John and among younger voters. The new NDP leader, Alison Brewer, appears to be having a difficult time breaking through against the two more established leaders.

About This Survey

The **Innovative Research Group**, Inc. (www.innovativeresearch.ca), a national research and strategy firm with offices in Toronto and Vancouver, included a set of basic political question in an omnibus telephone survey of 800 randomly selected New Brunswick residents. The survey was conducted between Friday, September 8th and Sunday, September 10th, and has a margin of error of +/- 3.46%, 19 times out of 20.

Spokesperson

Greg Lyle

Innovative Research Group, Inc.

glyle@innovativeresearch.ca

Office Direct 416-642-6429