

## **Yukoners Cautiously Optimistic**

While Yukoners are feeling a bit more optimistic towards the economy, they continue to express disappointment with the current government. Fewer Yukoners feel that the Yukon economy is in critical or serious condition compared to a year ago. In the Spring of 2009 33% of Yukoners diagnosed the Yukon economy as critical or serious condition, when giving it a health check-up. This has dropped to 24% in March of 2010. The majority of that change places the economy in stable condition, up to 64%, from 56% in 2009. Even compared to ratings in October of 2009, Yukoners show growing optimism with critical or serious ratings dropping from 29% in October to 24% in March.

Another change from last spring to now is that few Yukoners are rating the economy as the number one issue facing the Yukon. In 2009 this reached 25% of Yukoners rating it the number one issue, compared to only 11% in March 2010. Combining the economy and unemployment, shows that 16% of Yukoners place this as the top issue. Similarly 16% place environment issues at the top, and 16% also place poor government at the top. The environment jumped from 13% in Spring of 2009, and poor government jumped from 8%. In October poor government was at an all time high of 19%, and has dropped slightly to 16% this spring.

However, compared to last spring, Yukoners are not any more likely to feel they are personally better off than they were a year ago. In Spring 2009 16% of Yukoners responded they were somewhat or much better off than a year ago, and that is fairly stable at 18% this Spring. This continues to be lower than seen in the Spring of 2001

when 37% of Yukoners felt better off, and in the Summer of 2006 when this was still higher at 27%.

“So, while Yukoners are feeling better about the economic picture in the Yukon, they have not seen this really hit home yet to improve their household situation” comments Donna Larsen, partner at DataPath Systems. “And this optimism in the economy is also not helping the Yukon Party” she adds. If the election was held today, the Liberal Party would lead the way. Among decided voters, 36% say they would vote Liberal, compared to 25% voting for the Yukon Party and 23% voting NDP. (16% would vote for Other). This compares nearly exactly to the results seen in October of 2009. The Yukon Party had reached a high of 46% support in the winter and summer of 2008. Both the Liberal Party and the NDP were able to capitalize on the drops seen for the Yukon Party starting in June of 2009. While 55% of the voters responded they selected their party based on that party’s policies, 27% responded it was mainly due to not liking the current government. This is up from 20% in October 2009 and 22% in Spring 2009.

However, satisfactions rating for all three parties have not shifted from October 2009. The Yukon Party, even with a drop in support, continues to have the highest satisfaction ratings, with 16% of Yukoners rating them a 4 or 5 on a 5 point scale. This compares to 10% for the Liberal Party and 13% for the NDP. “Perhaps Yukoners are not actually impressed with any party, but are looking for alternatives to a party they have lost faith in” Ms. Larsen suggests.

The survey was conducted by DataPath Systems; an independent Yukon-based market research company. Telephone surveys were conducted with 189 Whitehorse residents

and 150 non-Whitehorse residents between March 1 and March 12, 2010. The data is weighted to accurately represent Yukoners based on the community they live in, their age and gender. Percentages are statistically valid to +/- 5.5%, 19 times out of 20 (95% confidence). This section was a non-commissioned study, paid for by DataPath Systems.

For more detailed information contact Donna Larsen at 867.660-4600.