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# ***Rocky Mountain Poll***

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NEWS RELEASE [RMP 2008-III-02]

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## **SHERIFF ARPAIO POPULARITY SHRINKING BUT HAS 14-POINT LEAD OVER DAN SABAN**

Phoenix, Arizona. August 6, 2008. The popularity of Sheriff Joe Arpaio continues to shrink in his home base of Maricopa County and now stands at 54 percent – down from 64 percent in March 2007 and 59 percent in November 2007. This decline is driven largely by growth in negative public assessment of his job performance among Phoenix residents (43%) and among registered Democrats in the county, 53 percent of whom today rate his job performance as "poor or very poor."

Although his popularity is on the wane from its heyday, Arpaio nonetheless currently holds a 14-point lead over Democrat challenger Dan Saban (52% to 38%), and he enjoys strong popularity among both Republican and Independent voters. On the other hand, Arpaio amassed nearly 57 percent of the vote four years ago. Additionally, recent news stories critical of the Sheriff Department's budget deficits and slow response time to serious emergency calls may have taken some of the blush off the sheriff's 'I enforce the laws image.'

It also appears that Arpaio's public and political persona is so large and focused entirely on him that the rise or fall in his popularity has neither helped nor hurt political allies such as County Attorney Andrew Thomas. Thomas is only modestly well-known and his job performance ratings from the public remain basically unchanged over the past 16 months. Similarly, the Sheriff's running feud with other elected public officials, such as the Mayor of Phoenix, has had little negative impact on the Mayor's stock in trade with his own constituency. Fifty-three percent of Phoenicians rate Mayor Phil Gordon's performance favorably compared to only 14 percent who have a negative view. The balance either have no opinion of the Mayor or rate his performance as fair.

What is clear, however, is that the Sheriff's numbers continue to slide and do so principally because of his alienation of Democratic and Phoenix voters.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona (2008-III-02), is based on 401 interviews with Maricopa County voters, conducted between July 18 and 24, 2008. Where necessary, figures for age, sex, race and political party were weighted to bring them into line with their actual proportion in the population. In a sample of this size, one can say with a 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 5.0 percent of what they would have been had the entire population been surveyed. The Rocky Mountain Poll is conducted by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona and is an independent and non-partisan research program sponsored by the Center.

This statement conforms to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

ENCLOSED: Statistical tables.

**STATISTICAL DATA**

Behavior Research Center  
 Rocky Mountain Poll - Arizona  
 RMP (2008-III-02)

For this and other polls, see [www.brcpolls.com/results](http://www.brcpolls.com/results).

*“If the election for Maricopa County Sheriff were being held today, and the candidates were Joe Arpaio, the Republican, and Dan Saban, the Democrat, which one would you vote for? (Names Rotated)”*

MARICOPA COUNTY RESIDENTS ONLY

	COUNTY WIDE	DEMOCRATS	REPUBLICANS	INDEPENDENTS
Joe Arpaio (GOP)	52%	24%	65%	53%
Dan Saban (DEM)	38	55	22	32
Uncommitted	10	21	13	15

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STATISTICAL DATA

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RMP (2008-III-02)

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*“Next, would you say the following public officials are doing an excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor job in office? (Names Rotated)”*

(COUNTY WIDE)

|                                  | EXCELLENT/<br>GOOD | FAIR | POOR/<br>VERY POOR | NET TO<br>POSITIVE |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>SHERIFF JOE ARPAIO</b>        |                    |      |                    |                    |
| July 29, 2008                    | 54%                | 14%  | 28%                | +26                |
| November 2007                    | 59                 | 16   | 22                 | +37                |
| March 2007                       | 64                 | 13   | 16                 | +48                |
| <b>COUNTY ATTORNEY</b>           |                    |      |                    |                    |
| Andrew Thomas                    | 33                 | 24   | 11                 | +22                |
| November 2007                    | 29                 | 23   | 11                 | +18                |
| March 2007                       | 27                 | 12   | 5                  | +22                |
| <b>PHOENIX MAYOR</b>             |                    |      |                    |                    |
| Phil Gordon                      | 53                 | 18   | 14                 | +39                |
| <b>DETAIL ARPAIO - JULY 2008</b> |                    |      |                    |                    |
|                                  | (COUNTY WIDE)      |      |                    |                    |
| Democrats                        | 31                 | 13   | 53                 | - 22               |
| Independents                     | 62                 | 12   | 24                 | +38                |
| Republicans                      | 66                 | 15   | 14                 | +52                |
| Phoenicians                      | 46                 | 10   | 43                 | + 3                |

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