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**For Immediate Release**

### **Johnson County Survey Verifies Long-Held Community Priorities**

The Overland Park Chamber Foundation has released results of a community scan of Johnson County voters and businesses that indicate priorities are closely aligned.

Steve Smith, 2011 Chamber Chairman of the Board, said, "The Overland Park Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors initiated the survey project in the fall of 2010, raising the money to support the survey throughout 2011. The goal was to determine if the changing demographics and growth of Johnson County have changed our community's long-standing quality of life priorities."

The survey was conducted by Neil Newhouse, Public Opinion Strategies and utilized a double sample of registered voters through phone interviews, followed by an on-line survey of business representatives of the following chambers of commerce: Overland Park, Shawnee, Leawood, Northeast Johnson, De Soto and Spring Hill.

Major themes emerged from the survey, indicating that despite the difficult economy of the past several years, Johnson Countians still believe quality of life issues are important to our success. K-12 Education, job creation and public safety emerged as clear priorities for both voters and businesses when asked to prioritize limited resources for public officials. Voters ranked K-12 first as a top priority, and economic development second; while the business community switched the priority order. Both groups expressed great confidence in local officials and the value they find in the taxes they pay.

Highlights of tax questions revealed the following opinions:

- An overwhelming majority of Johnson County voters believe that for the services they receive the level of taxes they pay is "about right". Voters – 70%, Businesses – 64%;
- Voters overwhelmingly would support a tax increase for K-12 education (80%); somewhat less (63%) for higher education;
- There is support for a tax increase dedicated specifically for social services, such as senior citizen and disability services (77%)

- Increased taxes for infrastructure (aging sewer/stormwater) are supported (70%), as are roads and highways (67%);
- Voters are divided on questions of libraries, public transportation, arts and parks, but were clearly opposed (78%) to raising taxes to build a new Johnson County Courthouse;
- There was strong sentiment that there should be local control over public education decisions (voters – 90%, businesses – 83%);
- On the issue of state tax levels, voters felt sales, income and property tax levels should remain “about the same.”

Rick Worrel, the Chamber’s 2012 Chairman, noted that the last time the organization conducted such a survey was 1985. At that time, the voter and business communities were also in agreement on community priorities. He said, “It’s gratifying that the results of this survey confirm that our community’s priorities and remain steadfast to those that have made Johnson County strong: commitment to educational excellence, economic development, public safety, transportation infrastructure and other quality of life initiatives. The Chamber will continue its advocacy of such initiatives in the knowledge that we represent not only our members, but the will of our larger community.”

To view full results of the survey, scan this code:



or visit: [www.opchamber.org/general.asp?id=191](http://www.opchamber.org/general.asp?id=191)

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