

JACK WEBSTER AWARDS 2003
BC'S & CANADA'S TOP NEWS STORIES OF THE YEAR

British Columbians Select Forest Fires (43%) as BC's Top News Story of the Year

SARS (29%) Top Choice for Canadian News Story of the Year



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British Columbians Select Forest Fires (43%) as BC's Top News Story of the Year

SARS (29%) Top Choice for Canadian News Story of the Year

Ipsos-Reid has once again joined with the Jack Webster Foundation to conduct this public opinion poll in British Columbia. The poll is launched in conjunction with the 2003 Jack Webster Awards Dinner taking place on Thursday, October 23rd at the Westin Bayshore Resort and Marina in Vancouver. The Jack Webster Foundation was formed in 1986 to recognize excellence in journalism in British Columbia.

Vancouver, BC – An Ipsos-Reid public opinion poll, conducted in partnership with the Jack Webster Foundation, reveals that British Columbians consider this summer's forest fire battle (43% selected) to be the top BC news story of the year. The forest fire story smokes all competitors, including the continuing story of Robert Pickton and the missing women of the downtown eastside (15%), Vancouver's successful Olympic bid (12%) and the ongoing softwood lumber dispute (12%).

The complete list of BC news stories is as follows:

1. Forest fires in the Interior of BC (43%)
2. The ongoing investigation of accused murderer Robert Pickton and the missing women of Vancouver's downtown eastside (15%)
3. Vancouver winning the right to host the 2010 Olympic Winter Games (12%)
4. The ongoing softwood lumber dispute with the United States (12%)
5. Gordon Campbell's drunk driving arrest in Maui (6%)
6. Late summer water shortage in the Lower Mainland and Southern BC (3%)
7. Air India bombing trial (3%)
8. The trial and conviction of Vancouver Island child killer Jay Handel (2%)



9. The BC Liberal scheme and eventual reversal of plans to privatize the Coquihalla Highway (2%)
10. The Vancouver Canucks' in the 2003 playoffs (1%)
11. Alleged incidents of police brutality and misconduct in the City of Vancouver (1%)

When it comes to national stories, British Columbians look beyond the provincial forest fire situation. SARS (29%) is the top choice of British Columbians for Canadian news story of the year. Canada's position on the Iraq war (20%) is the second biggest story, followed by the forest fires in BC (17%). Other contenders for top story include mad cow disease (11%) and the same-sex marriage debate (9%).

The complete list of Canadian news stories is as follows:

1. SARS (29%)
2. Canada's position on the war on Iraq (20%)
3. Forest fires in the Interior of BC (17%)
4. Mad cow disease (11%)
5. The same-sex marriage debate (9%)
6. The power blackout in Eastern Canada (4%)
7. The fight to lead the Federal Liberal Party (3%)
8. Air Canada's bankruptcy announcement (3%)
9. Bill Sampson's release and stories of torture while imprisoned in Saudi Arabia (1%)

Poll respondents were asked to select the top news stories from a list of 11 prominent BC news stories and 9 prominent Canadian news stories from the past year.

These are the findings of a BC Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between October 7th and 14th, 2003 among a representative cross-section of 800 British Columbian adults. These data are statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional, age and sex composition reflects that of the actual BC population according to 2001 Census data. With a provincial sample of 800, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the overall results are within ± 3.5 percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult BC population been polled. The margin of error will be larger for population sub-groups.



Ipsos Reid

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