

ALBERTA'S CONSERVATIVE PARTY LEADERSHIP RACE

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Ipsos Reid

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Calgary, AB – With the dog days of summer just around the corner, an Ipsos Reid/Calgary Herald poll (taken prior to the recent policy announcements) shows that the race continues to be competitive. Among Albertans, Jim Dinning currently leads the pack of hopefuls, with 54% saying they have a favourable impression of him. Lyle Oberg places a close second with 48% saying they have a favourable impression of him, and Dave Hancock places third, with 39% favourability.

But when it comes to who Albertans think would do the best job as the next Premier of Alberta it is a clear two-way race. At 29%, Jim Dinning also places first but, Lyle Oberg is not far behind at 22%. Hancock is a distant third at 9%.

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll fielded between May 17 -21, 2006 and is based on a randomly selected sample of 802 adult Albertans. Results based on a sample size of 802 are considered accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Albertan population been polled. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Alberta population according to the 2001 Census data.

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Although party members will ultimately decide who gets to be leader of the Progressive Conservatives once Ralph Klein retires, each candidate's appeal to Albertans will definitely be on their minds. When it comes to favourability, former provincial Finance Minister Jim Dinning comes out on top with 54% of Albertans giving him a favourable rating. This is a slight, 5-point increase from March 2005 (50%), and unchanged from this time last year (54%). Conversely, Lyle Oberg, the former Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, receives a 48% favourability rating, which is consistent with the ratings he received in March 2005 (49%), and June 2005 (44%). Behind the front-runners are Dave Hancock (39%) former Minister of Advanced Education, Ed Stelmach (34%) current Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations. Current MLA Ted Morton (32%), and Mark Norris (31%) former Minister of Economic Development.

Those more likely to give Jim Dinning a favourable rating include:

- Albertans 35 – 54 years of age (59%) and 55 years of age and over (57%) compared to 18-34 year olds (47%);
- Residents of Calgary (60%) compared to residents of Edmonton (50%); and,
- Albertans with a university degree (59%) compared to those with less formal education (high school or less 49%).

Those more likely to give Lyle Oberg a favourable rating include:

- Middle income earners (\$30,000 to \$50,000 annually, 54%) and high income earners (more than \$70,000 annually, 51%) compared to low income earners (less than \$30,000 annually, 39%); and,
- Albertans with some postsecondary education (51%) versus those with a university degree (43%).

Those more likely to give Dave Hancock a favourable rating include:

- Residents of Edmonton (46%) and Northern Alberta (46%) compared to residents of Calgary (33%).

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When it comes to who, among the list of potential candidates, Albertans think would do the best job as the next Premier of Alberta, it is essentially a two-way race between Dinning and Oberg. Jim Dinning places first, with three-in-ten (29%) thinking he would be the best replacement for Ralph Klein while Lyle Oberg, hot on Dinning's trail, places second, with slightly less than one-quarter (22%) believing that he would do the best job, as the next Premier. Conversely, Dave Hancock trails in third place, at less than one-in-ten (9%), with Mark Norris (4%), Ted Morton (4%), and Ed Stelmach (4%) at the bottom of the list and locked in a race for fourth place. However, the poll shows that almost one-in-five (17%) Albertans have not yet made up their minds as to whom they think would make the best Premier of Alberta.

- Dinning support is higher among 35 to 54 year olds (31%) and older Albertans (37% of those aged 55 and over), and residents of Calgary (35%).
- Oberg support is higher among younger Albertans (26% among 18-34 year olds) residents of Northern Alberta (27%) and Southern Alberta (33%).
- Those currently undecided in their preference for who would make the best Premier of Alberta are more likely to be women (20%), to earn less than \$30,000 annually (30%), and to be residents of Central Alberta 24%).

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For more information on this news release, please contact:

*Peter Weylie
Vice-President
Public Affairs Alberta
Ipsos Reid
(403) 237-0066*

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