

# SAN DIEGO OPINION BARAMOTER JANUARY 2007 PART 1

## City’s Fiscal Situation Dire, But Citizens Place Hope in Mayor Sanders Analysis by John E. Nienstedt, Sr., President Competitive Edge Research and Communication

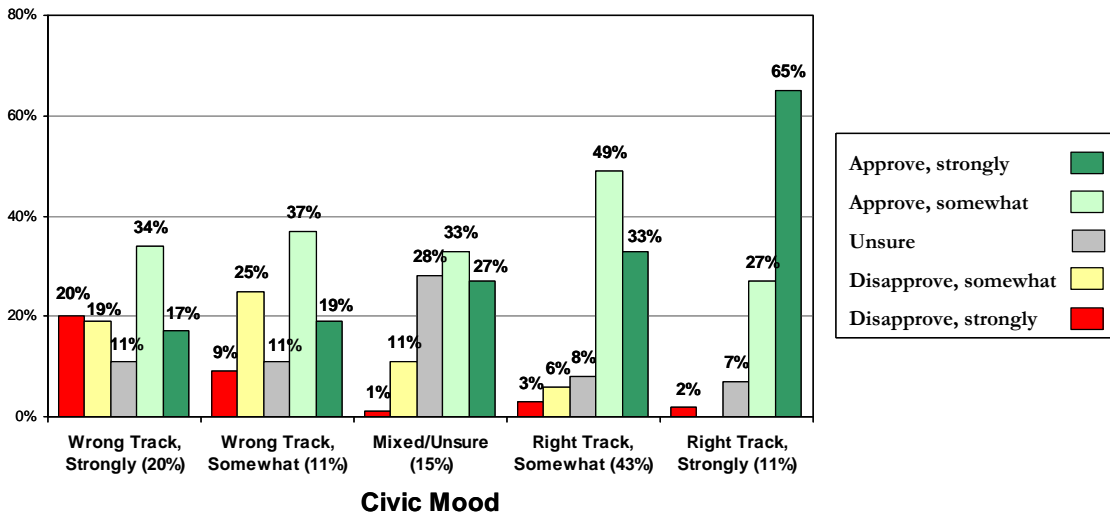
### San Diegan’s Mood Unsettled

Most San Diegans believe the City is in bad financial shape. Fifty-eight percent think things are looking gloomy -- 32% term the fiscal situation “very bad” -- and a whopping 77% do not believe things on the financial front are improving. And yet despite that pessimism about the City’s fiscal situation, more than half are optimistic about the City’s future. That paradox is driven by their high approval of the job Mayor Sanders is doing.

### Sanders Continues to be San Diego’s Feel-good Story

Seventy-one percent approve of the way Mayor Jerry Sanders is doing his job -- a percentage this City has not seen since early in Mayor Dick Murphy’s first term. While residents who think the City is headed in the right direction tend to strongly approve of Sanders’ performance, even those who are grumpy say Sanders is going a good job.

**Civic Mood by Approval of Jerry Sanders**



Support for Sanders is also much stronger among Republicans and conservatives than it is among Democrats and liberals. But even residents in the latter groups do not come close to outright disapproval of the Mayor and this demonstrates his crossover appeal which is at the heart of his popularity.

### **Approval of Aguirre**

City Attorney Mike Aguirre continues to have two fans for every one that he rubs the wrong way. Fifty-two percent approve of the job he is doing. On the other hand 26% disapprove and 21% are unsure how Aguirre is doing.

### **City Council Gets Mixed Reviews**

It is always harder for an elected body to achieve the same level of popularity as the elected officials which sit on those bodies. In this case, the San Diego City Council has taken some lumps. Though 50% think the Council is doing a good job, only 7% strongly approve of the job it is doing while 19% strongly disapprove.

### **Schwarzenegger Shines on California's Stage**

The Governor gets high marks from San Diegans with two-thirds currently giving him the thumbs-up on job performance. Unlike Sanders, Schwarzenegger's appeal is highly partisan in nature and his crossover appeal is less strong. Over half of those who say they are "strong" Republicans strongly approve of the Governor's performance while only 9% of strong Democrats agree with that assessment and 29% of them register strong disapproval. Another interesting aspect to Schwarzenegger's approval ratings: he generates much more satisfaction from seniors and the elderly, while 18 to 34 years-olds – a presumably movie-goer packed segment – give former movie star decidedly mixed grades. For example, 24% of those between the ages of 18 and 24 strongly disapprove of the Governor's job performance while 16% strongly approve.

### **San Diegans Pessimistic about the City's Current Fiscal Situation**

The perception that San Diego is in bad financial shape and the widespread feeling that the City's fiscal situation is not improving is a nasty public opinion cocktail. There is no getting around the fact that, when it comes to financial matters, San Diegans generally believe the City is in dire straits. Republicans are a little more inclined to be optimistic about the fiscal situation while Democrats are a little more pessimistic, but most in each party believe things simply have not changed.

### **Residents Upbeat about Local Economy**

Our initial gauge of consumer confidence shows that it is currently positive. The composite score for economic indicators contained in questions six through nine stands at **+24.1**. Our index ranges from a maximum score of +200.0 to a minimum of -200.0 and a score of zero indicates confidence in the local economy is neither positive or negative. How will this number change in March?

## About the SDIPR/Competitive Edge Opinion Barometer

This survey was conducted by Competitive Edge Research & Communication (CERC) in conjunction with the San Diego Institute for Policy Research (SDIPR). SDIPR jointly determined the issues to be covered in this survey. SDIPR provided CERC with background information on the issues contained in the questionnaire and both entities discussed the topics in order to produce an effective questionnaire. Final responsibility for all questions, the data collection and the analysis presented herein rests with CERC.

These findings are based on a random sample of 503 City of San Diego residents. The interviewing was conducted January 3<sup>rd</sup> through the 6<sup>th</sup> in English and Spanish from CERC's San Diego facility. Professional interviewers were trained for this specific project. The duration of the average interview was 16 minutes. The random digit dial sample was provided by Scientific Telephone Samples of Foothill Ranch, CA. After completing collecting the data, results were weighted on the voter registration, gender and age variables to CERC's estimates of the overall San Diego City population gathered from the US Census and the San Diego County Registrar of Voters.

### Sampling Error

According to statistical theory, the confidence level associated with a sample of this type is such that, with a question where the respondents answer 50% "yes" and 50% "no," 95% of the time the results are within plus or minus  $\pm 4.4\%$  of the *true value*, where true value refers to the results obtained if it were possible to interview every possible qualified respondent. The degree of error is reduced when responses have larger (e.g. 60%-40%, 70%-30%) percentage differences. Conversely, the margin of error increases when a subset of the entire 503 responses is analyzed.

In addition to error introduced by sampling variability, there are many other possible sources of bias such as how a question is worded, the question sequence, or individual interviewer techniques. Competitive Edge does everything in its power to minimize these potential sources of bias.

A survey of this type is a good measure of current attitudes that may change over time. This survey should not necessarily serve as an unqualified predictor of events, but, as an indicator to the situation in early January, 2007.

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SURVEY RESULTS ATTACHED