



behavior research center's

Rocky Mountain Poll

NEWS RELEASE
RMP 2004-I-05

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AIR POLLUTION IMPACTS ON ARIZONA FAMILIES EASING IN RURAL AREAS AND PIMA COUNTY

Phoenix, Arizona, January 26, 2004. After peaking in the 1996 to 2000 period, the proportion of Arizona families reporting that one or more members of the household have suffered adverse reactions to air pollution, is lessening. Today, 45 percent say at least one member of the household suffered problems they attribute to air pollution. This is down from 46 percent last year, 47 percent in 2001 and the peak reading of 59 percent in 2000.

Family complaints about air pollution affecting the health of members of the household are highest in Maricopa County (49%) and are noticeably lower in Pima County (43%) and in the rural areas of the state (36%). The readings in rural Arizona are the lowest we have recorded since 1997 and the Maricopa readings, although currently the highest in the state, are well below the readings registered throughout most of the late 1990s.

The greatest volume of complaints come from two populous communities in Maricopa County, residents of Phoenix and residents of Tempe. The readings in Tempe are unusually strong – hitting 65 percent – and we wonder if this may trace, in part, to the number of freeways that border or bisect the community, the downtown area becoming a magnet for major regional events that draw traffic and crowds and, as well, the volume of air traffic that crosses over Tempe.

This year's survey also finds a pattern we have seen in prior years in which complaints about air pollution's adverse impacts on the family increase among younger adults and among lower income families. This may in turn trace to these groups having occupations or lifestyles that get them more involved in outdoor activities than their older or white collar counterparts.

While the decline in complaints of air pollution's impact on personal health is encouraging, the fact remains that nearly half of all families in Arizona report some problems. Further, many identify respiratory or eye impacts as more than minor inconveniences: one in five families report "major" eye irritation they believe is traceable to air pollution. Thirteen percent report "major" breathing difficulties and 17 percent report aggravation of existing lung disease such as asthma and emphysema.

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The findings outlined in this report are based on a survey of 704 adults across Arizona conducted between January 6th and January 12th, 2004, by the Behavior Research Center of Arizona as part of the Center's independent and non-partisan Rocky Mountain Poll series. The public is welcome to visit www.brcpolls.com to read this and other recent polls.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This Rocky Mountain Poll Arizona (2004-I-05) is based on 704 telephone interviews with adults, conducted from January 6th through January 12th, 2004 throughout Arizona. In the overall sample, one may say with 95 percent certainty that the results have a statistical precision of plus or minus 3.7 percent of what they would have been had the entire adult 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.

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

ENCLOSED: Statistical data for reference.

STATISTICAL DATA

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"In the past several years, air pollution in some areas of Arizona reached the alert level. During the past several months, did you or other members of your household experience any of the following kinds of problems which you felt were directly the result of the air pollution?"

STATEWIDE

PERCENT OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH
ONE OR MORE PERSONS EXPERIENCING
ADVERSE REACTION TO AIR POLLUTION

	2004	2003	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994
<u>VISION</u>										
Minor eye irritations	32%	31%	33%	44%	37%	37%	32%	38%	26%	29%
Major eye irritations (Any vision problems)	18 (34%)	15 (34%)	16 (35%)	25 (46%)	22 (40%)	22 (41%)	18 (35%)	7 (39%)	6 (27%)	7 (30%)
<u>RESPIRATORY</u>										
Minor breathing difficulty	24	22	22	35	27	32	27	33	21	24
Sore or irritated throat not attributed to a cold or other illness	29	24	23	35	29	30	28	33	25	24
Aggravation of an existing lung disease such as asthma or emphysema	17	17	14	24	21	21	17	19	14	13
Major breathing difficulty (Any respiratory prob lems)	13 (38%)	14 (36%)	11 (35%)	20 (50%)	17 (42%)	19 (45%)	16 (40%)	11 (44%)	8 (34%)	10 (34%)
<u>(ANY VISION OR RESPIRATORY PROBLEMS)</u>	(45%)	(46%)	(47%)	(59%)	(51%)	(53%)	(48%)	(54%)	(39%)	(41%)

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STATISTICAL DATA

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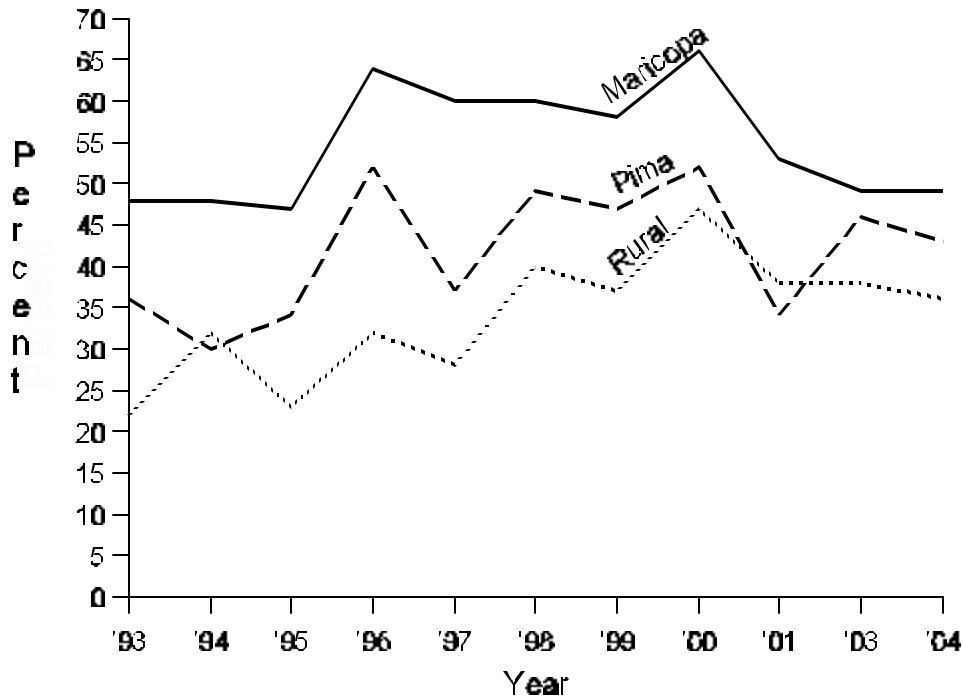
For this and other polls, see [www.brcpolls.com/results](http://www.brcpolls.com/results).

ANY RESPIRATORY OR VISION PROBLEMS

|      | STATE<br>TOTAL | MARICOPA | PIMA | RURAL |
|------|----------------|----------|------|-------|
| 2004 | 45%            | 49%      | 43%  | 36%   |
| 2003 | 46             | 49       | 46   | 38    |
| 2001 | 47             | 53       | 34   | 38    |
| 2000 | 59             | 66       | 52   | 47    |
| 1999 | 51             | 58       | 47   | 37    |
| 1998 | 53             | 60       | 49   | 40    |
| 1997 | 48             | 60       | 37   | 28    |
| 1996 | 54             | 64       | 52   | 32    |
| 1995 | 39             | 47       | 34   | 23    |
| 1994 | 41             | 48       | 30   | 32    |
| 1993 | 39             | 48       | 36   | 22    |

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ANY RESPIRATORY  
OR VISION PROBLEM



**STATISTICAL DATA**

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| <u>SPECIAL GROUPS</u>   | <u>ANY VISION OR<br/>RESPIRATORY<br/>PROBLEMS</u> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Overall                 | 45%                                               |
| <u>AGE</u>              |                                                   |
| Under 35                | 50                                                |
| 35 to 54                | 46                                                |
| 55+                     | 42                                                |
| Retirees                | 43                                                |
| <u>INCOME</u>           |                                                   |
| Under \$25,000          | 59                                                |
| \$25,000 to \$44,999    | 46                                                |
| \$45,000 to \$64,999    | 48                                                |
| \$65,000 +              | 34                                                |
| <u>VALLEY RESIDENTS</u> |                                                   |
| Tempe                   | 65                                                |
| Phoenix                 | 56                                                |
| West Valley             | 47                                                |
| Southeast Valley        | 45                                                |
| Scottsdale              | 40                                                |
| Mesa                    | 38                                                |

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