CLOSE MAJORITY OF COBB COUNTY VOTERS SUPPORT BALLPARK PLAN; VAST MAJORITY ENDORSE REFERENDUM

Gainesville, FL — An independent poll of registered voters in Cobb County, Georgia, found that a small majority of citizens support the public-financing plan for the baseball stadium being constructed for the Atlanta Braves. Specifically, 55% of respondents indicated that they would vote in favor of the Cobb County ballpark plan if a referendum were held today.

The poll was conducted as part of a study led by Tim Kellison, Assistant Professor in the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management at the University of Florida. The study is aimed at identifying local perceptions of the public financing plan, the anticipated economic impact of the ballpark, the favorability of Cobb County commissioners, and the desire for a public vote on the issue. Surveys were mailed in late August to randomly selected registered voters in Cobb County, 385 of which were returned.

Other findings of note include:

- **Respondents are largely cynical regarding local decision-makers.** More than half of the sample disagreed with the contention that local leaders act in the best interests of citizens. Additionally, disapproval scores exceeded approval scores for two commissioners (Tim Lee and Helen Goreham).

- **The financing plan is viewed as an important public issue that most respondents have watched closely.** 90% of respondents agreed that the Cobb ballpark plan is an important community issue, 98% were aware of the plan, and 95% indicated that they had followed the issue at least to some extent.

- **While most respondents agreed with the public-financing plan, a public vote on the issue remains highly desirable.** 78% of surveyed voters supported the statement that a public vote should have been held before an agreement was made.

- **Most respondents expect the ballpark to benefit the Cobb economy.** A majority of study participants agreed that the new stadium will enhance the county’s national visibility (58%), create local jobs (77%), bring new business to the area (79%), and generate more excitement among Cobb County residents (60%). Respondents mostly disagreed with the contention that Cobb’s economic success depended on the new ballpark, suggesting that most believe the stadium will complement—rather than drive—the local economy.

The margin of sampling error for the overall survey is 5.0 percentage points, although the margin of error for subgroups may be greater. Current poll statistics are provided below:
About the sample:

Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as...?
Republican          45%
Democrat            19%
Independent         28%
Something else      8%

In the past five years, about how many Braves games have you attended?
None                26%
1-5                 41%
6-10                18%
11-15               7%
16 or more          8%

Prior to taking this survey, I was aware that a new ballpark was going to be built in Cobb County to replace Turner Field.
Yes                 98%
Somewhat            1%
No                  1%

I have followed the Cobb County ballpark issue in the news.
Yes                 67%
Sometimes           28%
No                  5%

Community relevance:

I care about the Cobb County ballpark plan.
Agree               Disagree         Neither agree nor disagree
80%                 10%             10%

The Cobb ballpark plan is an important community issue.
Agree               Disagree         Neither agree nor disagree
90%                 7%              3%

Attitudes toward the public-financing plan and public voting:

The public financing of a new ballpark is something that most people in Cobb County wanted.
Agree               Disagree         Neither agree nor disagree
22%                 58%             20%

I think Cobb County voters should have had a say before the new ballpark deal was made.
Agree               Disagree         Neither agree nor disagree
78%                 11%             11%

Before the new ballpark received public money, there should have been a public vote.
Agree               Disagree         Neither agree nor disagree
78%                 11%             11%

If a referendum on the Cobb County ballpark occurred today, how would you vote?
For                  Against
55%                  45%
Perceived impact of the ballpark:

Cobb County's economic success depends on the new ballpark.
Agree          Disagree      Neither agree nor disagree
9%            78%            13%

The new ballpark will give Cobb County national exposure compared to its status before the ballpark.
Agree          Disagree      Neither agree nor disagree
58%            26%            16%

The new ballpark will create jobs for the community.
Agree          Disagree      Neither agree nor disagree
77%            12%            11%

There will be more excitement in Cobb County because of the new ballpark.
Agree          Disagree      Neither agree nor disagree
60%            24%            16%

The new ballpark will bring business to the county.
Agree          Disagree      Neither agree nor disagree
79%            11%            10%

Attitudes toward Cobb County policymakers:

I think local leaders act in the best interests of the people.
Agree          Disagree      Neither agree nor disagree
34%            52%            14%

In general, rate the extent to which you approve or disapprove of the way each Cobb County commissioner has been handling her or his job.

Tim Lee:
Approve       Disapprove   Neither approve nor disapprove Don't know or no opinion
26%            32%            20%            22%

Helen Goreham:
Approve       Disapprove   Neither approve nor disapprove Don't know or no opinion
20%            21%            28%            31%

Bob Ott:
Approve       Disapprove   Neither approve nor disapprove Don't know or no opinion
25%            18%            28%            29%

JoAnn Birrell:
Approve       Disapprove   Neither approve nor disapprove Don't know or no opinion
22%            17%            31%            30%

Lisa Cupid:
Approve       Disapprove   Neither approve nor disapprove Don't know or no opinion
22%            16%            28%            34%
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The Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management is committed to national and international excellence in the generation, dissemination, and communication of knowledge in tourism, recreation and sport management. The Department is also dedicated to excellence in the preparation and training of future industry and academic professionals, and providing relevant outreach to stakeholders.

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