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GNO, Inc. Releases Study on National Public Perception of New Orleans Funded by Chevron

NEW ORLEANS, LA — Today, Greater New Orleans, Inc. (GNO, Inc.) released Bridging the Perception Gap: Results of National Opinion Survey. GNO, Inc. commissioned Lake Research Partners to conduct the study in late 2014 to understand how the rest of America views New Orleans, through their thoughts on doing business here, moving here, and quality of life. The results provide solid information on if and how our vast improvements since Katrina are resonating around the country. This biennial study, which has been conducted since 2010, allows for analysis of perception trends over time.

“Bridging the gap between perception and reality is one of our greatest challenge in the region,” said Michael Hecht, President & CEO of Greater New Orleans, Inc. “The ‘new’ New Orleans is now objectively one of the best places in the country to live and work, but our brand has not yet caught up with this new reality. With this challenge in mind, this original research will help us identify key messages to communicate to the public, especially as we approach the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.”

The survey was conducted in November 2014 in six target media markets – Atlanta, Austin, Chicago, Los Angeles/San Francisco, New York, and Washington, D.C. Over 1,800 registered voters were surveyed around the country. A survey of over 400 voters in the New Orleans media market were also polled to gauge local impressions on business conditions and quality of life.

Funding for this study was generously provided by Chevron. “Chevron is proud to have been a part of New Orleans’ revitalization and renaissance in the ten years since Katrina,” said Mike Illanne, Chevron’s Gulf of Mexico Business Unit Vice President. “It’s our hope that this study will further guide Greater New Orleans, Inc. in their on-going outreach efforts, helping companies and communities across the country

understand that New Orleans is a great place to live, pursue a career, and base a business.”

Key findings of the study include:

- Respondents across the country’s seven major media markets have strong and deeply rooted positive perceptions of New Orleans as a center of unusual culture and diversity, as well as having impressive resilience and strength of character.
- These associations transcend geography and are durable; the positive images of the city are only growing from previous years.
- For a significant number of respondents (more than four-in-ten), these perceptions are informed in part by first-hand experiences gleaned from visits to New Orleans.
- Respondents’ positive associations with New Orleans outweigh the negative, translating into a real willingness to consider relocating under the right circumstances. Fully four-in-ten voters in these media markets would consider moving to New Orleans.
- New Orleans struggles with the perception that the city has fewer job opportunities compared to the rest of the country, especially among respondents with college degrees. 42% of respondents say there are fewer opportunities in New Orleans than in other places around the country, up from 38% in 2012.
- However, the impact of recent tragedies on New Orleans’ image has been profound, elevating concerns about susceptibility to disaster and subpar quality of life. Moreover, significant perceptions gaps exist around the economic climate and the abundance of quality jobs and business opportunities. However, strategic messaging shows the potential to neutralize these concerns and make real gains across the board.
 - Crime and corruption are concerns for local residents, but are far less pronounced associations outside of New Orleans
 - Respondents with young children had higher negative perceptions about quality of life than those without; Locals had a much brighter outlook on quality of life

The results of this study will guide GNO, Inc.’s regional public relations committee as it works to prepare for the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

To view the full study, visit gnoinc.org/perceptionstudy.

About Greater New Orleans, Inc.

GNO, Inc. is the regional economic development organization, serving to coordinate, consolidate, and catalyze economic development activity. The GNO, Inc. mission is to create jobs and wealth in the Greater New Orleans community. The GNO, Inc. vision is for the Greater New Orleans region to fulfill its potential as one of the best places in the country to grow a company, and raise a family. More information is available at www.gnoinc.org.

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