During the 2019 KACo Annual Conference, county elected officials in attendance were asked to answer a series of policy-focused questions.*

**HIGHLIGHTS**

A majority of county officials voting support...

- Gas tax increase
- Lower the income tax, raise the sales tax
- Preserving pension benefits
- Local sales tax option
- Ability to control special taxing district rates
- Medicinal marijuana legalization

106 Counties represented

38% serving in first term

*Percentages may add up to more than 100% due to rounding.*
2019 Survey of County Elected Officials

**Rocks**

Q: Estimate the percentage of county roads in need of moderate to significant repair in your county.

- None: 1%
- 1-20%: 8%
- 21-40%: 31%
- 41-60%: 35%
- 61-80%: 19%
- 81-100%: 6%
- Don’t Know: 1%

A majority indicated that more than 40 percent of county roads are in need of repair and one-quarter of voters said that more than 60 percent of their roads need repair.

**Gas Tax**

Q: Do you support raising the gas tax to increase funding for local roads and bridges?

- An overwhelming majority – 93 percent – support a gas tax increase with nearly half supporting at least a 10-cent increase in the gas tax.

**Gas Tax Increase**

- 1-4 cents: 26%
- 5-9 cents: 17%
- 10-14 cents: 27%
- 15-20 cents: 9%
- 20+ cents: 13%
- Don’t Support: 7%

*Percentages may add up to more than 100% due to rounding.*
Local Sales Tax

**Q:** If made available as an option, would you vote to levy a local sales tax of up to 1 percent in your county if there were no restrictions on the use of that revenue?

62 percent said they would be somewhat or very likely to levy a local sales tax in their county while 38 percent indicated they were somewhat or very unlikely to support such a tax.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Unlikely</th>
<th>Somewhat Unlikely</th>
<th>Somewhat likely</th>
<th>Very likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Special Taxing Districts

**Q:** Would you like your fiscal court to have the ability to approve special district tax rates (e.g. libraries, extension, health, etc.)?

A strong majority – 76 percent – indicated that they would like the ability to approve special district tax rates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages may add up to more than 100% due to rounding.
**Pensions**

Q: When it comes to public pensions, which is more important to you – preserving the level of benefits for employees or how much those benefits cost the county to maintain (i.e. contribution rates)?

A majority – 61 percent – indicated that preserving employee benefit levels is somewhat or far more important than cost when it comes to public pensions.

**State Tax Reform**

Q: Which of the following changes to state tax rates do you support?

A strong majority – 69 percent – indicated that they support lowering the state income tax rate and raising the sales tax rate among the tax reform options listed.

More than two-thirds of participants support lowering the income tax rate and raising the sales tax rate.
### Budgets

**Q:** Which of the following is putting the most pressure on your county’s budget?

A majority indicated that jail costs are the biggest pressure on county budgets — 53 percent — followed by employee pensions (19 percent), road maintenance (11 percent), employee health care (7 percent), ambulance service (7 percent), other (2 percent) and law enforcement (2 percent).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Pressures</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jails</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensions</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Health Care</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Marijuana

**Q:** What level of legalization of marijuana would you support?

A significant majority — 73 percent — supported some form of legalization of marijuana with more than half (56 percent) supporting legalization of medicinal marijuana only.

**Marijuana Legalization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legalization Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreational</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages may add up to more than 100% due to rounding.*