

## 'Jersey Shore' Helps Perceptions of Garden State

Despite [concerns expressed](#) by members of the New Jersey state Legislature, the MTV show "Jersey Shore" does not appear to hurt Americans' perceptions of the Garden State. According to the most recent national poll by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind™, respondents who have seen the show actually have a more positive view of New Jersey than those who haven't seen it.

Three of five (59%) of respondents who have seen the show have a favorable view of New Jersey, compared to just 44% of those who have not seen the show. One in five people who have seen the show (20%) has an unfavorable view of New Jersey and about one in five who has not see the show (18%) has an unfavorable view of the state.

"While we can't be sure that 'Jersey Shore' is making people like New Jersey more, it certainly doesn't seem to be hurting," said Dan Cassino, a professor of political science at Fairleigh Dickinson University and a survey analyst for PublicMind. "It could be that people who already have a favorable view of New Jersey are simply more likely to watch the show, while those who don't like Jersey aren't going to watch the show anyway."

A clue to what underlies this difference may come from what people say comes to mind when they think of New Jersey. While responses like proximity to New York (8 percent of respondents) or Atlantic City and casinos (7 percent) are equally common among those who have and have not seen the show, people who say that they have seen the show are more likely to mention the shore, the ocean, the boardwalk, or related concepts (13 percent, versus 8 percent of non-viewers).

"New Jersey has been using ad campaigns to build awareness of the shore for years," said Cassino. "Legislators may not be happy with how the state is being portrayed, but the show links New Jersey to its beaches, which is a much better focus than the turnpike."

The survey does not, however, address other concerns about the program, such as the portrayal of ethnic stereotypes, the frequent use of the term "guido," which some Italian-Americans find offensive, or the portrayal of life in New Jersey.

"I don't think anyone would claim that the TV show has anything to do with the real New Jersey," said Cassino. "Still, the image it portrays doesn't seem to be hurting the state as some have feared."

Fairleigh Dickinson University's independent survey research group PublicMind conducted the poll of 1001 adults nationwide by telephone from Jan. 22, 2010, through Feb. 4, 2010. It has a margin of error of +/- 3 percentage points.

**Methodology, questions, and tables are available on the web at: <http://publicmind.fdu.edu>**  
Radio actualities at 201.692.2846 For more information, please call 201.692.7032.

## Methodology, Questions, and Tables

The most recent survey by Fairleigh Dickinson University's PublicMind was conducted by telephone from Jan. 22, 2010, through Feb. 4, 2010, with a randomly selected sample of 1001 permanently resident adults nationwide. The margin of error for a sample of 1001 randomly selected respondents is +/- 3 percentage points. Random selection is achieved by computerized random-digit dialing. This random selection process gives every person with a land-line phone number (including those with unlisted numbers) an equal chance of being selected. RDD samples are typically purchased from Survey Sample International. Non-responding residential numbers and residential numbers with automated answering devices are called back up to a limit of six times and interviews are conducted over a length of time calculated to facilitate maximum coverage. All PublicMind interviews are conducted by professionally trained interviewers with a full complement of supervisors using a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. The survey sample may be mathematically weighted to match known demographics such as gender, age, and race. Survey results are also subject to non-sampling error. This kind of error, which cannot be measured, arises from a number of factors including, but not limited to, non-response (eligible individuals refusing to be interviewed), question wording, the order in which questions are asked, and variations among interviewers.

**Table 1**

| Question (open ended): What comes to mind when you think of New Jersey? |                                 |      |                              |      |                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------|------------------------------|------|------------------------------|
| 2010                                                                    |                                 | 2007 |                              | 2001 |                              |
| Rank                                                                    | Comes to Mind                   | Rank | Comes to Mind                | Rank | Comes to Mind                |
| 1                                                                       | Shore/coast/ocean               | 1    | Next to New York/New York    | 1    | Next to New York/New York    |
| 2                                                                       | Corruption/crime/Sopranos/Mafia | 1    | Shore/coast/ocean            | 2    | Pollution/bad smell/industry |
| 3                                                                       | Casinos/Atlantic City           | 3    | Casinos/Atlantic City        | 3    | Shore/coast/ocean            |
| 4                                                                       | Next to New York/New York       | 4    | Farming/Garden State         | 4    | Nice state to live in        |
| 5                                                                       | Pollution/bad smell/industry    | 5    | Overpopulated/crowded        | 5    | Casinos/Atlantic City        |
| 6                                                                       | Farming/vegetable/Garden State  | 6    | Turnpike/highways            | 6    | Overpopulated/crowded/       |
| 7                                                                       | Various sports teams*           | 7    | Pollution/bad smell/industry | 7    | Farming/Garden State         |
| 8                                                                       | Nice state to live in           | 8    | Various sports teams*        | 8    | Various sports teams*        |

Note: Only the 8 most frequent responses included for each sample. "Nothing" and "don't know" excluded from count.

\*Includes: Jets, Giants, Yankees, Nets, Devils, Big East, etc.

| Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of New Jersey? |       |        |       |            |              |            |       |       |       |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|------------|--------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
|                                                               | Total | Gender |       | Education  |              |            | Age   |       |       |     |
|                                                               |       | Men    | Women | HS or less | Some College | BA or more | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-59 | 60+ |
| Favorable                                                     | 47    | 47     | 48    | 44         | 45           | 51         | 54    | 50    | 49    | 42  |
| Unfavorable                                                   | 18    | 21     | 15    | 13         | 17           | 21         | 15    | 21    | 19    | 16  |
| Mixed                                                         | 7     | 9      | 5     | 2          | 7            | 9          | 6     | 4     | 7     | 9   |
| Don't Know                                                    | 28    | 23     | 31    | 42         | 31           | 19         | 24    | 25    | 24    | 33  |

| Have you ever seen a TV show called "Jersey Shore" or have you not had the chance? |       |                        |             |       |            |       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------------------------|-------------|-------|------------|-------|
|                                                                                    | Total | Opinion of New Jersey? |             |       |            | Total |
|                                                                                    |       | Favorable              | Unfavorable | Mixed | Don't Know |       |
| Seen                                                                               | 22    | 59                     | 20          | 4     | 17         | 100   |
| Not Seen                                                                           | 78    | 44                     | 18          | 7     | 31         | 100   |
| Don't Know                                                                         | 0     | 67                     | 0           | 0     | 33         | 100   |

| Have you ever seen a TV show called "Jersey Shore" or have you not had the chance? |       |                                                  |                       |                       |                          |                      |                         |       |            |       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------|------------|-------|
|                                                                                    | Total | What comes to mind when you think of New Jersey? |                       |                       |                          |                      |                         |       |            | Total |
|                                                                                    |       | Next to NY                                       | Shore/Ocean/Boardwalk | Atlantic City/Casinos | Pollution/Smell/Industry | Farming/Garden State | Nice to live in/Suburbs | Other | Don't Know |       |
| Seen                                                                               | 22    | 6                                                | 13                    | 6                     | 1                        | 2                    | 4                       | 54    | 13         | 100   |
| Not Seen                                                                           | 78    | 8                                                | 8                     | 7                     | 4                        | 2                    | 2                       | 46    | 23         | 100   |

| Have you ever seen a TV show called "Jersey Shore" or have you not had the chance? |       |        |       |            |              |            |       |       |       |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|--------|-------|------------|--------------|------------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
|                                                                                    | Total | Gender |       | Education  |              |            | Age   |       |       |     |
|                                                                                    |       | Men    | Women | HS or less | Some College | BA or more | 18-29 | 30-44 | 45-59 | 60+ |
| Seen                                                                               | 22    | 23     | 20    | 24         | 26           | 19         | 47    | 25    | 17    | 8   |
| Not Seen                                                                           | 78    | 76     | 79    | 75         | 74           | 81         | 53    | 75    | 82    | 91  |
| Don't Know                                                                         | 0     | 0      | 1     | 1          | 0            | 1          | 0     | 1     | 1     | 0   |

###

Question order and wording:

JS1. What comes to mind when you think of New Jersey?

[OPEN ENDED, PRE CODED]

- Corruption
- Cost of living/ Taxes
- Farming/garden state
- Highways/turnpike/exits
- Next to New York
- Nice state to live in/suburbs
- Overpopulated/density/too many people
- Pollution/bad smell/industry/refineries
- Traffic
- Shore/ocean/coast/beaches/boardwalk/boating/fishing
- Atlantic city/casinos
- Sports teams/giants/jets/nets/devils/big east teams
- Other (specify)

[ROTATE ORDER OF JS2, JS3]

JS2. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of New Jersey?

- Fav.
- Unfav.
- Mixed/DK [VOL]

JS3. Have you ever seen a TV show called "Jersey Shore" or have you not had the chance?

- Seen
- Not seen
- DK

Demographics

| Gender |    |
|--------|----|
| Male   | 48 |
| Female | 52 |

| Age   |    |
|-------|----|
| 18-29 | 18 |
| 30-44 | 25 |
| 45-64 | 30 |
| 65+   | 25 |

| In addition to being American, would you say you are...? |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| White                                                    | 71 |
| Black                                                    | 14 |
| Hispanic or Latino                                       | 8  |
| Asian                                                    | 2  |
| Other                                                    | 4  |