



Magellan Strategies

Montezuma County Voter Opinion Survey Topline Results

Magellan Strategies is pleased to present the topline results of a survey of 588 voters in the Montezuma County, CO. The interviews were conducted from May 26th to 28th, 2026. This survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.99% at the 95% confidence level. The survey data were weighted to represent the voter turnout demographics of a mid-term election for Montezuma County.

T1. First, could you please verify that you are registered to vote in Montezuma County, Colorado?

Yes 100%

T2. How likely are you to vote in the November general election for Governor, Senate, and local ballot measures?

Extremely Likely 86%
Very Likely 10%
Somewhat Likely 4%
Unlikely to Vote 0%

T3. Do you approve or disapprove of the job Montezuma County is doing to provide public services, projects, and programs for county residents?

Total Approve 54%
Total Disapprove 35%
Unsure or No Opinion 11%

Strongly Approve 9%
Somewhat Approve 45%

Strongly Disapprove 12%
Somewhat Disapprove 23%

T4. Do you think Montezuma County has the financial resources to provide an acceptable level of county services, projects, and programs to county residents?

Total Yes	53%
Total No.....	36%
Unsure or No Opinion	11%
Yes, Definitely	17%
Yes, Probably	35%
No, Definitely Not.....	7%
No, Probably Not.....	29%

T5. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? *"Montezuma County is fiscally responsible and spends taxpayer money wisely."*

Total Agree.....	43%
Total Disagree.....	42%
Unsure or No Opinion	15%
Strongly Agree	7%
Somewhat Agree	36%
Strongly Disagree	15%
Somewhat Disagree	27%

T6. Being as descriptive as possible, please describe why you disagree with the statement, "Montezuma County is fiscally responsible and spends taxpayer money wisely."

Lack of Trust in County Commissioners and Concerns About Favoritism: The most common theme was distrust of county leadership, particularly the County Commissioners. Many respondents alleged that decisions are driven by personal interests, favoritism, "good old boy" politics, or pet projects rather than community needs. Several specifically referenced perceived conflicts of interest, self-enrichment, or projects benefiting commissioners, friends, or preferred groups.

Roads, Infrastructure, and Maintenance Are Not Meeting Expectations: A large number of respondents pointed to poor road conditions, inadequate road maintenance, lack of paving, weed control issues, and unfinished infrastructure projects as evidence that tax dollars are not being spent effectively. Many questioned where increased property tax revenue has gone when roads and public infrastructure remain in poor condition.

Spending Priorities Are Misaligned with Community Needs: Many residents believe county funds are being directed toward lower-priority projects while essential services are neglected. Respondents frequently mentioned concerns about public safety, law enforcement, roads, economic development, housing, youth programs, social services, and weed control receiving insufficient attention compared to projects they viewed as unnecessary.

Government Waste, High Administrative Costs, and Excessive Reserves

Another recurring theme was the perception that the county spends too much on administration, salaries, vehicles, buildings, consultants, and other overhead costs. Some respondents also criticized what they viewed as excessively large reserve balances, arguing that taxpayers are paying more while services and infrastructure needs remain unmet.

Transparency and Accountability Concerns: Many respondents indicated they do not understand how county funds are spent and would like greater transparency. Some questioned budget oversight cited past reports of fraud, embezzlement, or financial mismanagement, and expressed frustration that county officials do not adequately communicate priorities or justify spending decisions.

**Verbatim responses in separate document.*

T7. How would you rate the condition of the major roads, streets, and bridges in Montezuma County?

Excellent & Good Combined	46%
Excellent.....	5%
Good	41%
Fair.....	35%
Poor	19%
Unsure or No Opinion	0%

T8. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Montezuma County Roads and Bridge Department is doing to maintain the county's roads, streets, and bridges?

Total Approve	64%
Total Disapprove	31%
Unsure or No Opinion	5%
Strongly Approve	11%
Somewhat Approve	53%
Strongly Disapprove	12%
Somewhat Disapprove	19%

T9. Do you think Montezuma County has the financial resources needed to adequately maintain, repair, and improve the county's roads, streets, and bridges?

Total Yes	55%
Total No.....	32%
Unsure or No Opinion	13%
Yes, Definitely	16%
Yes, Probably	39%
No, Definitely Not.....	4%
No, Probably Not.....	28%

T10. Do you approve or disapprove of the job the Montezuma County Sheriff's Office is doing to address county public safety needs and provide services?

Total Approve	68%
Total Disapprove	24%
Unsure or No Opinion	8%
Strongly Approve	25%
Somewhat Approve	43%
Strongly Disapprove	10%
Somewhat Disapprove	14%

T11. Has crime in Montezuma County increased, stayed about the same, or decreased in the past few years?

Total Increased.....	47%
About the Same	29%
Total Decreased	7%
Unsure or No Opinion	17%
Definitely Increased.....	18%
Probably Increased.....	29%
Definitely Decreased	1%
Probably Decreased	6%

Before we continue, it is important to know that no decisions have been made by Montezuma County to put a sales tax ballot measure before voters this November. Your participation in this survey and sharing your honest opinions will influence those decisions. Let’s continue the survey now.

T12. Montezuma County is considering the following ballot measure this November. After reading it, please indicate if you would vote yes and approve it or if you would vote no and reject it. The potential ballot measure reads as follows:

SHALL MONTEZUMA COUNTY TAXES BE INCREASED \$8,123,002 IN THE FIRST FULL YEAR (2027) AND BY WHATEVER ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS ARE RAISED ANNUALLY THEREAFTER BY THE IMPOSITION OF A 1.0 PERCENT COUNTY SALES TAX, BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2027, WITH THE REVENUE FROM SUCH TAX TO BE USED TO SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS OF THE COUNTY, AS FOLLOWS:

- SUPPORTING LAW ENFORCEMENT AND OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY FUNCTIONS (60%)
- CONSTRUCTING, MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING COUNTY ROADS THROUGH HARD SURFACING, ALSO KNOWN AS ROAD PAVING WITH HOT MIX ASPHALT (30%)
- CLEANING UP RUBBISH IN THE COUNTY

AND SHALL THE COUNTY BE AUTHORIZED TO COLLECT, RETAIN AND SPEND ALL PROCEEDS OF SUCH TAX WITHOUT LIMITATION BY ARTICLE X, SECTION 20 OF THE COLORADO CONSTITUTION, ALL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS.

Now that you have read the ballot language, if an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve the ballot measure, or would you vote no and reject it?

Total Yes, Approve	42%
Total No, Reject	48%
Undecided	10%
Definitely Yes, Approve	16%
Probably Yes, Approve	26%
Definitely No, Reject	28%
Probably No, Reject	20%

We will now share information on the reasons why Montezuma County is considering a ballot measure in November. After reading the information, please indicate if you are more likely to vote yes and approve a ballot measure generating new revenue for the county or if you are more likely to vote no and reject it. Let's get started:

T13. In the early 2000's, the Montezuma County Sheriff's Office and the Cortez Police Department created the Montezuma/Cortez Narcotics Investigations Team (MCNIT) to investigate drug trafficking in the Four Corners region. The team works with federal agencies, including the DEA (Drug enforcement Administration) and BIA (Bureau of Indian Affairs), to seize illegal drugs and firearms. If the ballot measure passes, funding would continue to support MCNIT. Knowing this information, are you:

Total More Likely to Approve.....	56%
Total More Likely to Reject	18%
No Difference.....	22%
Unsure	4%
Much More Likely to Approve.....	24%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	32%
Much More Likely to Reject	8%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject.....	10%

T14. In 2025, the MCNIT seized more than 88 pounds of crystal meth compared to approximately 57 pounds in 2024. They also saw increases of other narcotics like fentanyl and cocaine. Knowing this information, are you:

Total More Likely to Approve.....	60%
Total More Likely to Reject	13%
No Difference.....	22%
Unsure	5%
Much More Likely to Approve.....	27%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	33%
Much More Likely to Reject	6%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject.....	7%

T15. In 2025 alone, the total value of seized illegal narcotics was estimated to be over \$13 million in street value. Knowing this information, are you:

Total More Likely to Approve.....	55%
Total More Likely to Reject	13%
No Difference.....	27%
Unsure	5%
Much More Likely to Approve.....	25%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	30%
Much More Likely to Reject	6%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject.....	7%

T16. Since 2022, total arrests have decreased by 33, from 260 to 227 (about a 13% decline). Knowing this information, are you:

Total More Likely to Approve.....	42%
Total More Likely to Reject	19%
No Difference.....	30%
Unsure	9%
Much More Likely to Approve.....	19%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	23%
Much More Likely to Reject	7%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject.....	12%

T17. If the ballot measure were to pass, funding would also go towards maintaining and upgrading approximately 700 miles of roads and bridges. Knowing this information, are you:

Total More Likely to Approve.....	56%
Total More Likely to Reject	15%
No Difference.....	24%
Unsure	5%
Much More Likely to Approve.....	21%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	35%
Much More Likely to Reject	7%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject.....	8%

T18. Montezuma County uses equipment like pavers, rollers, bulldozers, and backhoes to repair and improve roads and bridges, but much of this equipment is outdated and needs to be replaced. Knowing this information, are you:

Total More Likely to Approve.....	52%
Total More Likely to Reject	17%
No Difference.....	25%
Unsure	6%
Much More Likely to Approve.....	19%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	33%
Much More Likely to Reject	8%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject	9%

T19. If the ballot measure were to pass, 60% of the funding would go towards the Sheriff's Department and 40% would go towards road and bridge maintenance. Knowing this information, are you:

Total More Likely to Approve.....	40%
Total More Likely to Reject	29%
No Difference.....	23%
Unsure	8%
Much More Likely to Approve.....	15%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	25%
Much More Likely to Reject	14%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject	15%

T20. A sales tax allows the cost of maintaining roads, public safety, and other services to be shared between residents and visitors. Tourists and out-of-town visitors who use local roads and services would help pay for them. Knowing this information, are you:

Total More Likely to Approve.....	54%
Total More Likely to Reject	15%
No Difference.....	24%
Unsure	7%
Much More Likely to Approve.....	23%
Somewhat More Likely to Approve	31%
Much More Likely to Reject	8%
Somewhat More Likely to Reject	7%

T21. Thank you for reading and learning the reasons why Montezuma County is considering a ballot measure in November. We now ask you to read the ballot language again and indicate if you would vote yes and approve it or if you would vote no and reject it. The potential ballot measure reads:

SHALL MONTEZUMA COUNTY TAXES BE INCREASED \$8,123,002 IN THE FIRST FULL YEAR (2027) AND BY WHATEVER ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS ARE RAISED ANNUALLY THEREAFTER BY THE IMPOSITION OF A 1.0 PERCENT COUNTY SALES TAX, BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2027, WITH THE REVENUE FROM SUCH TAX TO BE USED TO SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS OF THE COUNTY, AS FOLLOWS:

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If an election were being held today, would you vote yes and approve the ballot measure, or would you vote no and reject it?

Total Yes, Approve	47%
Total No, Reject	41%
Undecided	12%
Definitely Yes, Approve	17%
Probably Yes, Approve	30%
Definitely No, Reject	22%
Probably No, Reject	19%

T22. Please describe why you would vote yes and approve a sales tax ballot measure in Montezuma County.

Strong Support for Funding Law Enforcement and Public Safety: The dominant reason for supporting the measure was the belief that the Sheriff’s Office needs additional funding for staffing, equipment, recruitment, retention, drug interdiction, and overall public safety. Many respondents specifically cited concerns about drug trafficking, crime, and the need to maintain or improve law enforcement services.

Roads, Bridges, and Infrastructure Need Additional Investment: A second major theme was the need to improve county roads, bridges, and other infrastructure. Respondents frequently mentioned deteriorating roads, maintenance backlogs, paving needs, and the importance of keeping transportation infrastructure safe and reliable as the county grows.

Sales Tax Is Viewed as a Fair Revenue Source Because Visitors Help Pay: Many supporters favored a sales tax because it spreads the cost beyond property owners and allows tourists, visitors, and non-residents to contribute to county services they use. Respondents often described a sales tax as a more equitable funding source than relying solely on property taxes.

The County Needs New Revenue Due to Declining Kinder Morgan Revenue and Rising Costs: Many respondents recognized that Montezuma County faces financial challenges from declining Kinder Morgan revenues, inflation, rising operating costs, population growth, and increasing service demands. These respondents viewed a sales tax as necessary to maintain existing service levels and avoid future budget shortfalls.

Support Is Often Conditional on Accountability and Dedicated Spending: Even among supporters, many expressed a desire for strict accountability and transparency. Respondents frequently stated they would support the measure only if revenues are spent as promised, dedicated to the stated purposes, and not diverted to unrelated projects or general government spending.

**Verbatim responses in separate document.*

T23. Please describe why you would vote no and reject a sales tax ballot measure in Montezuma County.

Tax Fatigue and Cost-of-Living Concerns Dominate Opposition: The most common reason for opposition is that residents feel they are already paying too much in taxes. Many respondents referenced recent property tax increases, rising grocery and fuel costs, inflation, fixed incomes, and general affordability concerns. A frequent sentiment was that households are struggling financially and cannot absorb another tax increase.

Distrust of County Government and Concerns About Fiscal Responsibility: Many opponents do not believe the County is managing existing revenues effectively. Respondents frequently cited wasteful spending, poor budget management, lack of accountability, political interference, and concerns that the County should better prioritize existing resources before asking taxpayers for more money.

Opposition to the Allocation of Funds Toward Law Enforcement: A significant group of respondents objected to the proposed distribution of funds, particularly the amount dedicated to the Sheriff's Office and drug enforcement efforts. Some believed roads and infrastructure deserve a larger share, while others argued that social services, education, addiction treatment, housing, and prevention programs would be more effective than increasing law enforcement spending.

Desire for Greater Transparency, Accountability, and Specific Spending Plans: Many respondents expressed concern about vague ballot language and a lack of guarantees regarding how revenues would be spent. Opponents repeatedly requested clearer spending plans, oversight mechanisms, audits, and assurances that funds would not be diverted to unrelated purposes.

Preference for Alternative Funding Sources Rather Than a Sales Tax Increase: Many respondents suggested alternatives such as grants, lodging taxes, tourism-related taxes, luxury taxes, economic development, spending cuts, or reducing property taxes before implementing a countywide sales tax. Several argued that visitors should bear more of the cost rather than local residents.

**Verbatim responses in separate document.*

And now, we have a few questions for statistical purposes only.

T24. Are you:

Female.....	52%
Male.....	48%
Identify Differently	<1%

T25. Are you between the ages of:

18 to 34	14%
35 to 44	14%
45 to 54	13%
55 to 64	18%
65 or Older	41%

T26. For statistical purposes only, are you registered to vote as an Unaffiliated voter, a Democrat, a Republican, or another party, or are you not registered to vote?

Republican	43%
Unaffiliated.....	38%
Democrat	17%
Other party	2%

T27. Which race or ethnicity do you most identify with?

White	84%
Hispanic or Latino	8%
Black or African-American	<1%
Asian.....	<1%
Other	7%

T28. Have you earned a four-year college degree?

Yes.....	43%
No	57%

T29. When thinking about fiscal issues such as taxes and government spending, do you consider yourself to be conservative, moderate, or liberal?

Conservative	43%
Moderate.....	32%
Liberal.....	15%
Unsure/No Opinion.....	10%

T30. How long have you lived in Montezuma County?

5 Years or Less	13%
6 to 10 Years.....	19%
11 to 20 Years.....	16%
More Than 20 Years	50%
Prefer Not to Say	2%

T31. How would you describe your annual household income?

Less than \$50,000	19%
\$50,000 to \$74,999.....	22%
\$75,000 to \$99,999.....	15%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	17%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	8%
More than \$200,000	4%
Prefer Not to Say	15%

T32. Where do you live?

Cortez	51%
Dolores	20%
Mancos	19%
Towaoc.....	1%
Other	9%

Survey Methodology

This survey utilized an MMS text survey data collection method to contact Montezuma County voters, inviting them to participate in the survey. The online survey data were weighted to represent the voter turnout demographics of a mid-term election for Montezuma County. The interviews were conducted from May 26th to 28th, 2026. This survey has a margin of error of +/- 3.62% at the 95% confidence interval.
