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CONTACT:

Dennis Denno, Denno-Noor Research President

Cell: 517-402-2453

Chuck Perricone, Perricone Group President

Cell: 269 758-3480

Mark Pischea, Rossman Group President

Cell: 517-927-1090

Poll: Hope Springs Eternal, Voters Optimistic about Tigers

Favorite to toss out ceremonial 1st pitch – MSU's Tom Izzo

LANSING, Mich. — Despite last fall's heart wrenching Motor City Meltdown, Michigan residents believe the Detroit Tigers will turn it around, make the playoffs and may even have a decent shot at winning the World Series, according to results from a new statewide poll.

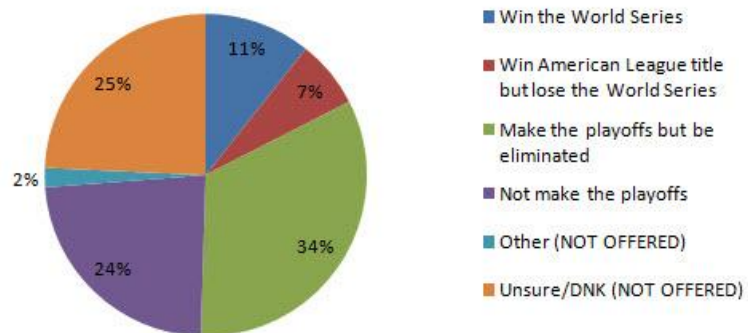
More than half (52 percent) of those surveyed believe the Tigers will make the playoffs. Nearly one in five (18 percent) expect the team to win the American League crown. And 11 percent predict the Tigers will win the World Series for the 5th time in team history.

According to the survey conducted by Denno-Noor Research in partnership with The Rossman Group and The Perricone Group, only a quarter (24 percent) of Michigan voters think the

Tigers will watch post-season play from their living rooms.

“Hope always springs eternal, but this is a pretty heady stuff considering how the Tigers crashed and burned last year,” said Denno-Noor Research President Dennis Denno. “It still hurts just to think about it.”

How do you think the Detroit Tigers will do this year?



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Last season the Tigers led or shared the American League Central division lead from May 10 until the 163rd game of the season. The club had a seven-game lead on Labor Day. Then, in a choke heard round the major leagues, the Tigers blew a three-game lead in the final four games before losing a one-game playoff to the Minnesota Twins in 12 innings.

If the Tigers mount the comeback Michigan residents expect, they'll do so without the services of a few popular players who headed elsewhere in the off-season, including center fielder Curtis Granderson (now a New York Yankee), Gold Glove Award second baseman Placido Polanco (Philadelphia Phillies), and closer Fernando Rodney (Los Angeles Angels) who earned an astonishing 37 saves in 38 tries.

"The fans must believe Hall of Famer Al Kaline who says he's never seen the Tigers with this much talent on their roster," said Perricone Group CEO and former Michigan Speaker of the House Chuck Perricone. "And the bullpen is deep and strong with the likes of Justin Verlander, who led the league in strikeouts and tied for tops with 19 wins, and Rick Porcello, who won 14 games last season as a 20-year-old rookie."

With such great expectations, who would fans like to see toss out the ceremonial opening pitch? Michigan State University basketball coach Tom Izzo was the choice of 20 percent of those surveyed. Tying for second at 15 percent each were: Award-winning actor/playwright Jeff Daniels; and Detroit Mayor Dave Bing, who earned a spot in the NBA Hall of Fame while starring for the Detroit Pistons.

Others mentioned as honorary pitchers were Roger Penske (10 percent), the billionaire businessman who chaired Detroit's successful 2006 Super Bowl festivities; Ryan Miller (8 percent), former MSU standout and Team USA goaltender who was MVP of the Olympic hockey tournament in Vancouver; Robert Bobb (6 percent), emergency financial manager for Detroit Public Schools; and Former Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick (2 percent), who resigned after sentencing on felony convictions stemming from a sex-messaging scandal.

"It's pretty clear from the poll that Tom Izzo enjoys rock star status in Michigan," said Kelly Rossman-McKinney, ASPR, CEO and founder of The Rossman Group. "In just 15 years as head coach he's won a national title, appeared in 5 Final Fours, and been named National Coach of the Year four times. No wonder former Gov. Jim Blanchard recently joked that he was glad he never had to run against Tom Izzo."

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Methodology: This survey was part of the Rossman Group/Perricone Group/Denno Noor Polling Quarterly Survey of the Michigan electorate. 600 likely voters were interviewed from March 3 through March 5, 2010, with a margin of error of plus/minus 4%, and the participation was stratified based on census data and past voter behavior. A screen was used to include only those participants who said they would vote, either at the polls or by absentee ballot, in the November 2010 General Election. All numbers are rounded and may exceed 100%.

Attention Media: For attribution purposes, please recognize all three organizations that partnered in the poll:

- The Rossman Group
- Denno-Noor Research
- The Perricone Group.