



**THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER**  
For The People & The Press

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**Tuesday, December 13, 2011**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**  
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**Michael Remez, Senior Writer**

## Public Focuses on Elections, Economy and Penn State

The latest allegations in the child sex abuse scandal at Penn State University rivaled news about the 2012 elections and the economy for the public's attention last week.

About two-in-ten (19%) say news about the candidates for the 2012 presidential elections was their top story, while 18% each say they followed news about the economy or the Penn State scandal most closely, according to the latest weekly

News Interest Index survey, conducted Dec. 8-11 by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press among 1,008 adults.

With Newt Gingrich's rise to the top of the Republican field and the Iowa caucuses just weeks away, the 2012 presidential campaign received more coverage than any other story. The campaign accounted for 24% of the newshole last week, according to a separate analysis by the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ).

### News Interest vs. News Coverage

|                         | News Interest | News Coverage |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 2012 elections          | 19            | 24            |
| Penn State scandal      | 18            | 2             |
| Economy                 | 18            | 13            |
| Virginia Tech shootings | 10            | 2             |
| Anti-Wall St. protests  | 6             | 1             |
| European debt crisis    | 6             | 9             |

News interest shows the percentage of people who say they followed this story most closely, Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, Dec. 8-11, 2011. News coverage shows the percentage of news coverage devoted to each story, Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, Dec. 5-11, 2011.

News about the economy, including the debate in Washington over whether to extend a payroll tax break as a way to spur economic growth, accounted for 13% of coverage. That rises to 14% if news about the Occupy Wall Street protests is included. Efforts to deal with the credit crisis in Europe accounted for a separate 9% of coverage.

Compared to the week's other top stories, the new sex abuse charges against former Penn State assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky received modest coverage, accounting for 2% of the newshole, according to PEJ.

### Steady Watch on Economic News

About four-in-ten (41%) say they followed news about the nation's economy very closely, just about matching the 40% that said they were following economic news this closely one week earlier.

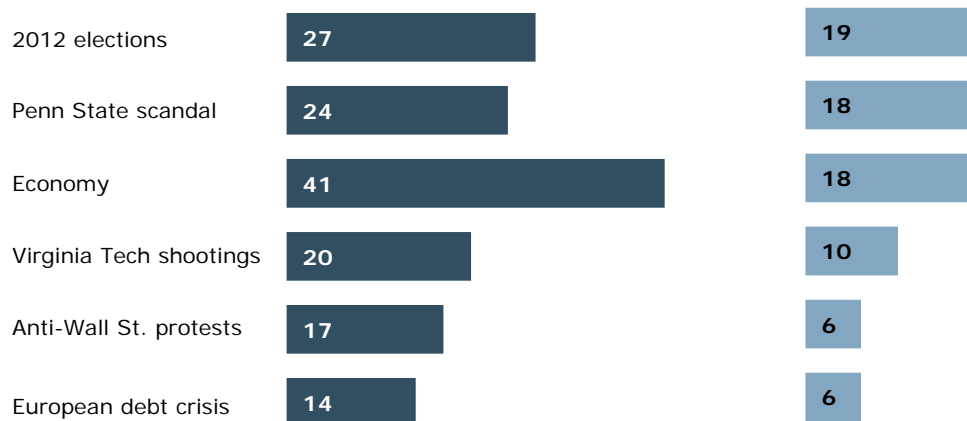
Just more than a quarter (27%) say they followed news about the candidates for president in 2012 very closely. Republicans and Democrats are about as likely to say they followed campaign news very closely (34% and 29%, respectively), but Republicans are more likely to say this was their top story of the week. Three-in-ten Republicans (30%) say this, compared with 19% of Democrats and 13% of independents.

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### News Interest

*% following each story very closely*

*Which one story did you follow most closely?*



PEW RESEARCH CENTER Dec. 8-11, 2011.

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About a quarter (24%) say they followed news about the Penn State sex abuse scandal very closely. Meanwhile, two-in-ten (20%) say they very closely followed news about the deadly shootings at Virginia Tech University. In April 2007, when a student went on a shooting rampage that left 33 dead on the Blacksburg campus, 45% said they followed that news very closely. One-in-ten (10%) say the new incident was their top story of the week. The story accounted for 2% of coverage, according to PEJ.

Fewer than two-in-ten (17%) say they very closely followed news about the anti-Wall Street protests in several cities around the country; 6% say this was the news they followed most closely. News about the protests accounted for 1% coverage.

Just 14% say they very closely followed news about efforts to deal with the debt crisis in Europe; 6% say this was the news they followed most closely. News about the debt crisis accounted for 9% of coverage.

These findings are based on the most recent installment of the weekly News Interest Index, an ongoing project of the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. The index, building on the Center's longstanding research into public attentiveness to major news stories, examines news interest as it relates to the news media's coverage. The weekly survey is conducted in conjunction with The Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, which monitors the news reported by major newspaper, television, radio and online news outlets on an ongoing basis. In the most recent week, data relating to news coverage were collected Dec. 5-11, and survey data measuring public interest in the top news stories of the week were collected Dec. 8-11 from a nationally representative sample of 1,008 adults.

## About the News Interest Index

The *News Interest Index* is a weekly survey conducted by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press aimed at gauging the public's interest in and reaction to major news events. This project has been undertaken in conjunction with the Project for Excellence in Journalism's *News Coverage Index*, an ongoing content analysis of the news. The News Coverage Index catalogues the news from top news organizations across five major sectors of the media: newspapers, network television, cable television, radio and the internet. Each week (from Monday through Sunday) PEJ compiles this data to identify the top stories for the week. (For more information about the Project for Excellence in Journalism's News Coverage Index, go to [www.journalism.org](http://www.journalism.org).) The News Interest Index survey collects data from Thursday through Sunday to gauge public interest in the most covered stories of the week.

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted Dec. 8-11, 2011, among a national sample of 1,008 adults 18 years of age or older living in the continental United States (608 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 400 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 188 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older.

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region, and population density to parameters from the March 2010 Census Bureau's Current Population Survey. The sample is also weighted to match current patterns of telephone status based on extrapolations from the 2010 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size within the landline sample. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting. The following table shows the sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

| Group        | Sample Size | Plus or minus ...     |
|--------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Total sample | 1,008       | 4.0 percentage points |
| Republicans  | 283         | 7.0 percentage points |
| Democrats    | 318         | 7.0 percentage points |
| Independents | 313         | 7.0 percentage points |

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER NEWS INTEREST INDEX  
DECEMBER 8-11, 2011 OMNIBUS  
FINAL TOPLINE  
N=1,008**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE;] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]**

|  | <u>Very<br/>closely</u> | <u>Fairly<br/>closely</u> | <u>Not too<br/>closely</u> | <u>Not at all<br/>closely</u> | <b>(VOL.)<br/>DK/Ref</b> |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy |                         |                           |                            |                               |                          |
| December 8-11, 2011                                | 41                      | 29                        | 13                         | 16                            | 1                        |
| December 1-4, 2011                                 | 40                      | 33                        | 13                         | 13                            | 1                        |
| November 17-20, 2011                               | 35                      | 33                        | 16                         | 15                            | 1                        |
| November 10-13, 2011                               | 39                      | 31                        | 15                         | 14                            | *                        |
| November 3-6, 2011                                 | 37                      | 31                        | 15                         | 17                            | 1                        |
| October 27-30, 2011                                | 38                      | 33                        | 14                         | 15                            | 1                        |
| October 20-23, 2011                                | 38                      | 32                        | 14                         | 16                            | 1                        |
| October 13-16, 2011                                | 39                      | 32                        | 14                         | 14                            | *                        |
| October 6-9, 2011                                  | 43                      | 28                        | 14                         | 14                            | 1                        |
| September 29-October 2, 2011                       | 46                      | 26                        | 14                         | 14                            | *                        |
| September 22-25, 2011                              | 44                      | 33                        | 11                         | 11                            | *                        |
| September 8-11, 2011                               | 40                      | 30                        | 15                         | 14                            | 1                        |
| September 1-4, 2011                                | 44                      | 30                        | 11                         | 15                            | *                        |
| August 25-28, 2011                                 | 44                      | 28                        | 14                         | 13                            | 1                        |
| August 18-21, 2011                                 | 44                      | 29                        | 12                         | 14                            | 1                        |
| August 4-7, 2011                                   | 46                      | 30                        | 11                         | 13                            | 1                        |
| July 28-31, 2011                                   | 43                      | 30                        | 13                         | 13                            | *                        |
| July 21-24, 2011                                   | 41                      | 32                        | 13                         | 13                            | 1                        |
| July 14-17, 2011                                   | 41                      | 30                        | 14                         | 14                            | 1                        |
| July 7-10, 2011                                    | 36                      | 30                        | 15                         | 18                            | 1                        |
| June 30-July 3, 2011                               | 38                      | 32                        | 13                         | 16                            | 1                        |
| June 23-26, 2011                                   | 37                      | 29                        | 15                         | 19                            | *                        |
| June 16-19, 2011                                   | 39                      | 33                        | 14                         | 13                            | *                        |
| June 9-12, 2011                                    | 39                      | 30                        | 15                         | 16                            | 1                        |
| June 2-5, 2011                                     | 35                      | 34                        | 17                         | 14                            | *                        |
| May 19-22, 2011                                    | 33                      | 34                        | 17                         | 16                            | *                        |
| May 12-15, 2011                                    | 32                      | 32                        | 17                         | 18                            | 2                        |
| May 5-8, 2011                                      | 40                      | 35                        | 15                         | 9                             | 1                        |
| April 21-25, 2011                                  | 41                      | 33                        | 12                         | 14                            | *                        |
| April 14-17, 2011                                  | 44                      | 30                        | 14                         | 12                            | 1                        |
| April 7-10, 2011                                   | 46                      | 30                        | 14                         | 10                            | *                        |
| March 31-April 3, 2011                             | 42                      | 31                        | 16                         | 11                            | 0                        |
| March 24-27, 2011                                  | 36                      | 32                        | 17                         | 15                            | *                        |
| March 17-20, 2011                                  | 38                      | 32                        | 17                         | 13                            | *                        |
| March 10-13, 2011                                  | 40                      | 30                        | 16                         | 13                            | *                        |
| March 3-6, 2011                                    | 37                      | 31                        | 17                         | 13                            | 1                        |
| February 24-27, 2011                               | 49                      | 29                        | 11                         | 10                            | *                        |
| February 17-20, 2011                               | 35                      | 33                        | 14                         | 17                            | *                        |
| February 10-13, 2011                               | 36                      | 34                        | 13                         | 16                            | *                        |
| February 3-6, 2011                                 | 35                      | 37                        | 14                         | 14                            | *                        |
| January 20-23, 2011                                | 37                      | 33                        | 14                         | 15                            | 1                        |
| January 13-16, 2011                                | 37                      | 29                        | 15                         | 18                            | 1                        |
| January 6-9, 2011                                  | 39                      | 37                        | 11                         | 12                            | 1                        |

**[SEE TRENDS FOR PREVIOUS YEARS](#)**

## PEW.1 CONTINUED...

|  | Very<br><u>closely</u> | Fairly<br><u>closely</u> | Not too<br><u>closely</u> | Not at all<br><u>closely</u> | (VOL.)<br>DK/Ref |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| b. Efforts to deal with the debt crisis in Europe  |                        |                          |                           |                              |                  |
| December 8-11, 2011  | 14                     | 22                       | 27                        | 37                           | 1                |
| December 1-4, 2011   | 14                     | 24                       | 25                        | 36                           | 1                |
| <b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>  |                        |                          |                           |                              |                  |
| November 10-13, 2011: <i>Efforts to deal with the debt crisis in Greece and Italy</i>                              | 15                     | 23                       | 23                        | 38                           | 1                |
| November 3-6, 2011: <i>Efforts to deal with the debt crisis in Greece and other European countries</i>             | 18                     | 26                       | 21                        | 34                           | 1                |
| October 27-30, 2011  | 12                     | 27                       | 24                        | 36                           | *                |
| September 29-October 2, 2011: <i>The debt crisis in Greece and other European countries</i>                        | 15                     | 21                       | 24                        | 39                           | 1                |
| September 15-18, 2011  | 16                     | 23                       | 24                        | 37                           | 1                |
| August 18-21, 2011: <i>The debate among European leaders on how to address the region's debt crisis</i>            | 12                     | 21                       | 22                        | 44                           | 1                |
| August 11-14, 2011: <i>Riots in London and other parts of Britain</i>  | 17                     | 28                       | 21                        | 32                           | 1                |
| June 30-July 3, 2011: <i>The financial crisis and violent protests in Greece</i>                                   | 14                     | 22                       | 23                        | 39                           | 1                |
| June 16-19, 2011   | 10                     | 20                       | 25                        | 45                           | 1                |
| May 13-16, 2010: <i>A trillion-dollar bailout package for European governments facing debt problems</i>            | 21                     | 26                       | 24                        | 28                           | 2                |
| May 7-10, 2010: <i>The financial crisis in Greece and violent protests there</i>                                   | 19                     | 23                       | 26                        | 31                           | *                |
| April 30-May 3, 2010: <i>The financial crisis in Greece</i>  | 6                      | 15                       | 28                        | 51                           | 1                |
| October, 1998: <i>Financial instability around the world</i>   | 32                     | 40                       | 19                        | 9                            | *                |
| September, 1998: <i>Economic and political instability in Russia</i>   | 18                     | 30                       | 28                        | 24                           | *                |
| Late August, 1998: <i>Economic problems in Russia</i>  | 8                      | 22                       | 29                        | 41                           | *                |
| January, 1998: <i>The deepening financial crisis in many Asian countries</i>                                       | 15                     | 25                       | 27                        | 33                           | *                |
| March, 1995: <i>The financial and political instability in Mexico</i>  | 12                     | 28                       | 30                        | 29                           | 1                |
| c. Deadly shootings at Virginia Tech University  |                        |                          |                           |                              |                  |
| December 8-11, 2011  | 20                     | 27                       | 29                        | 24                           | 1                |
| <b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>  |                        |                          |                           |                              |                  |
| August 7-10, 2011: <i>A shooting at a fitness club in Pennsylvania</i>   | 13                     | 28                       | 25                        | 34                           | 1                |
| June 12-15, 2009: <i>A deadly shooting at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.</i>                    | 26                     | 34                       | 17                        | 23                           | *                |
| April 3-6, 2009: <i>A shooter killing several people at an immigration services center in Binghamton, New York</i> | 26                     | 32                       | 19                        | 23                           | *                |
| March 13-16, 2009: <i>A shooting spree in Alabama that resulted in the death of 11 people</i>                      | 18                     | 33                       | 24                        | 25                           | *                |
| February 15-18, 2008: <i>The shootings at Northern Illinois University that resulted in the death of 7 people</i>  | 26                     | 40                       | 19                        | 15                           | 0                |

## PEW.1 CONTINUED...

|  | <u>Very closely</u> | <u>Fairly closely</u> | <u>Not too closely</u> | <u>Not at all closely</u> | <b>(VOL.)</b><br><u>DK/Ref</u> |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| February 8-11, 2008: <i>A shooting at a city council meeting in Missouri where six people were killed</i>                    | 13                  | 28                    | 25                     | 33                        | 1                              |
| December 14-17, 2007: <i>Shootings at two religious centers in Colorado</i>  | 17                  | 31                    | 24                     | 27                        | 1                              |
| December 7-10, 2007: <i>A shooting at a shopping mall in Omaha, Nebraska where eight people were killed</i>                  | 30                  | 36                    | 18                     | 15                        | 1                              |
| October 12-15, 2007: <i>The shooting at a high school in Cleveland, Ohio</i>   | 22                  | 32                    | 25                     | 20                        | 1                              |
| April 20-23, 2007: <i>The shootings at Virginia Tech University that resulted in the death of 33 people</i>                  | 45                  | 37                    | 13                     | 5                         | *                              |
| October, 2006: <i>Recent shootings at schools in Pennsylvania and other states</i>   | 46                  | 33                    | 12                     | 8                         | 1                              |
| March, 2000: <i>The shooting of a 6-year-old girl at a Michigan school</i>   | 40                  | 38                    | 15                     | 7                         | *                              |
| September, 1999: <i>The shootings in a Jewish community center in Los Angeles</i>  | 29                  | 34                    | 22                     | 14                        | 1                              |
| Late April, 1999: <i>The shooting of students and teachers by two students at a Colorado high school</i>                     | 68                  | 24                    | 6                      | 2                         | *                              |
| June, 1998: <i>The shooting at a high school in Springfield, Oregon</i>  | 46                  | 36                    | 14                     | 4                         | *                              |
| March, 1998: <i>The shooting at a middle school in Jonesboro, Arkansas</i>   | 49                  | 33                    | 12                     | 5                         | 1                              |
| d. Anti-Wall Street protests in several cities around the country  |                     |                       |                        |                           |                                |
| December 8-11, 2011  | 17                  | 27                    | 26                     | 30                        | 1                              |
| November 17-20, 2011   | 20                  | 30                    | 24                     | 25                        | 1                              |
| November 10-13, 2011   | 16                  | 30                    | 24                     | 29                        | 1                              |
| November 3-6, 2011   | 18                  | 29                    | 22                     | 30                        | 1                              |
| October 27-30, 2011: <i>Anti-Wall Street protests in New York and other cities</i>   | 19                  | 27                    | 23                     | 31                        | 1                              |
| October 20-23, 2011  | 19                  | 29                    | 20                     | 31                        | 1                              |
| October 13-16, 2011  | 22                  | 31                    | 21                     | 26                        | 1                              |
| October 6-9, 2011  | 17                  | 25                    | 22                     | 35                        | 1                              |
| <b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>  |                     |                       |                        |                           |                                |
| March 10-13, 2011: <i>Disputes in Wisconsin and other states between state governments and public employee unions</i>        | 30                  | 26                    | 18                     | 25                        | 1                              |
| March 3-6, 2011  | 29                  | 24                    | 19                     | 27                        | 1                              |
| February 24-27, 2011   | 36                  | 22                    | 15                     | 26                        | 1                              |
| April 16-19, 2010: <i>Anti-government protests on April 15</i>   | 16                  | 21                    | 21                     | 41                        | 1                              |
| April 17-20, 2009: <i>Tea party protests against taxes and government spending</i>   | 27                  | 25                    | 22                     | 25                        | 1                              |
| May, 2000: <i>The protests in Washington, D.C., at the annual meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund</i> | 6                   | 18                    | 32                     | 43                        | 1                              |
| December, 1999: <i>The protests in Seattle at the World Trade Organization meeting</i>                                       | 18                  | 30                    | 27                     | 24                        | 1                              |
| e. A sex abuse scandal at Penn State University  |                     |                       |                        |                           |                                |
| December 8-11, 2011  | 24                  | 29                    | 24                     | 22                        | 1                              |
| November 17-20, 2011: <i>A sex abuse scandal at Penn State University</i>  | 28                  | 31                    | 21                     | 18                        | 1                              |

## PEW.1 CONTINUED...

|  | <u>Very<br/>closely</u> | <u>Fairly<br/>closely</u> | <u>Not too<br/>closely</u> | <u>Not at all<br/>closely</u> | <b>(VOL.)<br/>DK/Ref</b> |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| November 10-13, 2011: <i>A sex abuse scandal at Penn State University resulting in the firing of the school's president and football coach Joe Paterno</i> | 34                      | 29                        | 19                         | 18                            | 1                        |
| <b>TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:</b>  |                         |                           |                            |                               |                          |
| August 18-21, 2011: <i>Recent scandals in college football</i>   | 10                      | 12                        | 17                         | 61                            | *                        |
| September 16-19, 2010: <i>Pope Benedict's visit to Great Britain and his comments on the Catholic Church's handling of sex-abuse scandals</i>              | 10                      | 16                        | 26                         | 47                            | 1                        |
| April 23-26, 2010: <i>Reports about the Vatican's handling of sex-abuse scandals in the Catholic Church</i>  | 14                      | 28                        | 29                         | 29                            | *                        |
| March 26-29, 2010  | 17                      | 24                        | 28                         | 30                            | *                        |
| March 19-22, 2010  | 8                       | 18                        | 31                         | 42                            | 1                        |
| June, 2002: <i>Reports of sexual abuses by Catholic priests</i>  | 38                      | 36                        | 17                         | 8                             | 1                        |
| May, 2002: <i>The Pope and American cardinals meeting in Rome about sexual abuse by Catholic priests</i>   | 27                      | 33                        | 21                         | 18                            | 1                        |
| Early April, 2002: <i>Reports of sexual abuses by Catholic priests</i>   | 27                      | 34                        | 25                         | 13                            | 1                        |
| December, 1993   | 18                      | 32                        | 31                         | 18                            | 1                        |
| f. News about candidates for the 2012 presidential elections   |                         |                           |                            |                               |                          |
| December 8-11, 2011  | 27                      | 27                        | 18                         | 28                            | *                        |
| December 1-4, 2011   | 25                      | 28                        | 20                         | 26                            | 1                        |
| November 17-20, 2011   | 24                      | 31                        | 21                         | 23                            | 1                        |
| November 3-6, 2011   | 22                      | 31                        | 20                         | 26                            | 1                        |
| October 27-30, 2011  | 21                      | 26                        | 21                         | 30                            | 1                        |
| October 20-23, 2011  | 21                      | 28                        | 22                         | 28                            | 1                        |
| October 13-16, 2011  | 26                      | 29                        | 22                         | 23                            | 1                        |
| October 6-9, 2011  | 25                      | 25                        | 23                         | 27                            | 1                        |
| September 29-October 2, 2011   | 27                      | 26                        | 21                         | 25                            | *                        |
| September 22-25, 2011  | 25                      | 26                        | 23                         | 25                            | 1                        |
| September 15-18, 2011  | 24                      | 28                        | 21                         | 27                            | 1                        |
| September 8-11, 2011   | 22                      | 26                        | 21                         | 31                            | *                        |
| September 1-4, 2011  | 22                      | 23                        | 22                         | 32                            | 1                        |
| August 25-28, 2011   | 22                      | 22                        | 22                         | 33                            | 1                        |
| August 18-21, 2011   | 27                      | 26                        | 19                         | 28                            | 1                        |
| August 11-14, 2011   | 19                      | 24                        | 20                         | 36                            | 1                        |
| August 4-7, 2011   | 18                      | 21                        | 22                         | 37                            | 1                        |
| July 28-31, 2011   | 17                      | 27                        | 21                         | 35                            | 1                        |
| July 21-24, 2011   | 17                      | 22                        | 28                         | 32                            | *                        |
| July 14-17, 2011   | 18                      | 26                        | 27                         | 28                            | 1                        |
| July 7-10, 2011  | 16                      | 23                        | 27                         | 33                            | 1                        |
| June 30-July 3, 2011   | 21                      | 28                        | 24                         | 25                            | 2                        |
| June 23-26, 2011   | 19                      | 26                        | 24                         | 31                            | *                        |
| June 16-19, 2011   | 23                      | 29                        | 23                         | 25                            | *                        |
| June 9-12, 2011  | 18                      | 30                        | 22                         | 30                            | 1                        |
| June 2-5, 2011   | 21                      | 31                        | 22                         | 26                            | *                        |
| May 26-29, 2011  | 20                      | 27                        | 24                         | 28                            | *                        |
| May 19-22, 2011  | 15                      | 27                        | 24                         | 32                            | 1                        |
| May 12-15, 2011  | 15                      | 22                        | 26                         | 35                            | 1                        |
| May 5-8, 2011  | 16                      | 24                        | 27                         | 32                            | 1                        |
| April 21-25, 2011  | 18                      | 26                        | 23                         | 32                            | 1                        |
| April 14-17, 2011  | 20                      | 23                        | 29                         | 27                            | 1                        |



**PEW.1 CONTINUED...**

|                      | Very<br><u>closely</u> | Fairly<br><u>closely</u> | Not too<br><u>closely</u> | Not at all<br><u>closely</u> | <b>(VOL.)</b><br><u>DK/Ref</u> |
|----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| March 24-27, 2011    | 13                     | 19                       | 26                        | 41                           | 1                              |
| March 10-13, 2011    | 15                     | 21                       | 26                        | 38                           | 0                              |
| February 10-13, 2011 | 16                     | 19                       | 24                        | 40                           | *                              |
| February 3-6, 2011   | 15                     | 20                       | 23                        | 42                           | *                              |

**SEE TRENDS FOR PREVIOUS YEARS**

**ASK ALL:**

PEW.2 Which ONE of the stories I just mentioned have you followed most closely, or is there another story you've been following MORE closely? **[DO NOT READ LIST. ACCEPT ONLY ONE RESPONSE.]**

Dec 1-4

**2011**

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 19 | News about candidates for the 2012 presidential elections      |
| 18 | A sex abuse scandal at Penn State University                   |
| 18 | Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy                |
| 10 | Deadly shootings at Virginia Tech University                   |
| 6  | Anti-Wall Street protests in several cities around the country |
| 6  | Efforts to deal with the debt crisis in Europe                 |
| 7  | Some other story <b>(VOL.)</b>                                 |
| 16 | Don't know/Refused <b>(VOL.)</b>                               |

**PEWWP.1, PEW.2A-PEW.2B AND PEW.3-PEW.4 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE**