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**For more information or to interview CEO Suzanne Shelton, contact:**  
Mary Beth West, (865) 982-6626, cell: (865) 388-1565 or [mb@marybethwest.com](mailto:mb@marybethwest.com)

## **National Survey: 61% Say Presidential Candidates' Energy Plans Will Impact Voting Decision**

*Consumers United in Blame of Government for High Energy Costs and in Demand for Government to Reduce Dependence on Fossil Fuels; But Divided on McCain or Obama Energy Plans*

**Knoxville, Tenn.** – In national survey data just obtained for a full study to be released October 24, the fourth annual **Shelton Group Energy Pulse 2008** survey reports that 61 percent of registered voters say the U.S. presidential candidates' energy plans would affect their voting decision somewhat to very much.

Energy Pulse tested the reaction to both Barack Obama's and John McCain's energy platforms, as stated on both candidates' websites. Respondents heard each candidate's plans and were asked which they thought was the best. The result was a statistical dead heat: 41.6 percent preferred McCain's plan, while 38.5 percent preferred Obama's plan.

For three previous years (2005-2007), Energy Pulse has found that Americans primarily blame the U.S. government for high energy prices. In response to this finding, Shelton Group expanded this area of the Energy Pulse 2008 study by dividing this query into two different questions: "Who is most to blame for home energy costs?" and "Who is most to blame for rising gasoline costs?"

These dual questions resulted in very different answers. Americans still primarily blame the U.S. government for high home energy costs (27 percent), followed by U.S. consumer demand (22 percent). Interestingly, utilities registered far down the list, at 5 percent.

However, the oil companies were thought to be the primary culprits for rising gasoline costs (27 percent). Even so, the U.S. government was the second most common answer, at 24 percent.

Energy Pulse further asked, "Should the government be doing more to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels?" The overwhelming answer – by 90 percent – was "yes."

Those who responded affirmatively were then asked "What should the government be doing?" The top answers were "should invest more in research to find alternatives" (29 percent), "should be more proactive and develop a plan" (16 percent), and "should allow drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and / or off the U.S. coast" (13 percent).

Consumers reported much higher increases in home utility costs than in previous years. 44 percent of consumers said their energy bills had gone up by 10 to 30 percent. 22 percent reported their bills had gone up more than 30 percent.

### **ABOUT SHELTON GROUP:**

Based in Knoxville, Tenn., Shelton Group is an advertising agency entirely focused on energy, energy efficiency and sustainability. Founded more than 17 years ago by CEO Suzanne Shelton, Shelton Group uniquely understands the consumer mindset as it relates to energy, energy efficiency, conservation and green marketing – based on its portfolio that includes a multi-year range of original consumer research (Energy Pulse, Eco Pulse) and client work for such accounts as BP Solar, Andersen Windows, Vectren Energy, Knauf Insulation and the American Institute of Architects. **Energy Pulse 2008 methodology and other details available upon request.**