25th Annual National Conference
San Diego, California

2009 Professional Practices Program
Henrico Voter Outreach
County of Henrico, VA

Submitted by:
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HENRICO COUNTY VOTER OUTREACH

The excitement of the November 2008 Presidential Election in Virginia became evident eight months earlier during the statewide Virginia Presidential Primary held on February 12, 2008. Henrico County experienced an unprecedented 38% voter turnout. Like all jurisdictions we began to consider how we needed to prepare for the November general election. Presidential elections occur every four years but they bring very high voter turnout and voters that are unfamiliar to the process. The impact of so many new voters attempting to register to vote, cast ballots and find their polling places could be overwhelming on the system. Our staff posed the question, “How do we communicate important information related to this election to the maximum number of Henrico County residents?”

Residents wishing to vote in a general election or a primary in the Commonwealth of Virginia must be registered 29 days in advance of that election. In accordance with Virginia Code section 24.2-416 the registration books shall be closed during the 28 days before a primary or general election. The imposed deadline is nearly a month from the election. There would undoubtedly be those left out of the process because the deadline information didn’t reach them. More than likely those voters would impact our office either before Election Day or on Election Day. In either case way they would be disgruntled.

Our office continues to use traditional advertising methods such as television, county cable television, newspapers and radio outlets to communicate information to the public. A direct mailing would get voter registration and election information into every household with a mailbox. We envisioned an eye catching flyer to communicate registration deadlines, absentee voting information, county website, and contact information. Directing voters to these sources of information would provide an immeasurable customer service to the community. However, a direct mailing would be cost prohibitive in the economic downturn we were in and continue to experience even at the bulk mailing price.

The Henrico County Voter Registration Office partnered with Valpak Marketing to provide a direct mailing to 140,000 Henrico County households. The attached map shows the mailing area for Henrico County. Valpak promotions are mailed monthly and typically include coupons to local restaurants, pizza delivery, automotive services, etc. A voter registration flyer was created and included in the Valpak mailing at the end of September. The mailing was timed to reach residents as close to the deadline to register to vote on October 6th.

Valpak placed our flyer in the top 1/3 tier that would maximize viewership. A national readership study conducted in March, 2008 by Directions in Research, revealed 90% of residents open and looks through Valpak.
**Budget:**
1 Panel Flyer, 1 sided, 4 color (3.5 x 8.5)
140,000 Households at regular rate, $6,056
County of Henrico Special Rate, $4576

**Results:**

**Voter Registration**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2008</td>
<td>185,678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2008</td>
<td>195,501</td>
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</tbody>
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**Absentee Voting**

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presidential Election 2004</td>
<td>7,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidential Election 2008</td>
<td>17,071</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Along with our outreach efforts we know that other groups were communicating voter registration information to the public, and holding voter drives. Henrico County experienced an increase of over 10,000 voters in one month and an increase of 10,000 absentee ballots. It’s unclear whether the mailing directly impacted the surge in registration and absentee voters. We are certain, that Valpak promotions afforded our office a cost effective method to provide voter outreach. Henrico County was the first in Virginia to utilize Valpak promotions to provide voter registration and election messages. Three neighboring jurisdictions signed on to work with Valpak after hearing about our efforts.
Commonwealth of Virginia
County of Henrico
VOTER REGISTRATION & ELECTIONS
Mark Coakley, General Registrar
4301 E. Parham Road, Richmond, VA 23228
P.O. Box 27032, Richmond, VA 23273-7032
Telephone Number: (804) 501-4347 Fax Number: (804) 501-5081

HENRICO COUNTY RESIDENTS
Important Voting Information
Not Registered? Last date to register for November’s Election is October 6, 2008.
Already Registered? Update your registration information if you have moved or
changed your name. Changes must be made by October 6, 2008.
Unable to vote on election day? Absentee voting begins Sept. 22, 2008
Election Day Is November 4, 2008

Don’t be caught in the wrong line this November - Know before you go:
1.) Check your voter registration ID card to determine your polling
location.
Be informed:
2.) Learn about the candidates before Election Day.
Website: www.co.henrico.va.us/registrar

Contact your local General Registrar for more information
Mailing Address: PO BOX 27032, Richmond, VA 23273
Physical Address: Western Govt. Center, 4301 E. Parham Rd.
Physical Address: Eastern Govt. Center, 3820 Nine Mile Rd.
Phone: 804-501-4347 Fax: 804-501-5081
Email: registerandvote@co.henrico.va.us
Awareness Advertising
Valpak® Is Unsurpassed!

Let's look at a hypothetical situation where a business wants to create awareness for a certain product and has no interest in using a discount or incentive. Let's take the case of a video store that is receiving a large shipment of a hot new release. They realize their competitors will have difficulty getting their hands on many copies of this new release and simply want to inform the public that they have it in stock. Let's examine some of their advertising options. Using the options below, we'll chart the number of households out of 10 that will get their message.

1. **Cable TV**
   - On average, less than one out of ten households will be watching a particular cable station.

2. **Radio**
   - On average, one out of ten households that was listening to the radio would be listening to Richmond's top ranked station.

3. **Network TV**
   - On average, between one and two households might be watching the top ranked network at any given time. Cable and satellite TV are constantly eroding this number.

4. **Newspaper**
   - About one half of Richmond's households subscribe to the Richmond Times Dispatch. Their market penetration has declined steadily over recent years while ad rates have increased consistently.

5. **Direct Mail**
   - Virtually everyone has a mailbox and studies indicate that nine out of ten pieces of direct mail get opened and read by someone in the household.