

2009 Professional Practices Program

“Vote Early” In 2008 Campaign! Martin County, Florida

Submitted by:

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“VOTE EARLY” IN 2008 CAMPAIGN

Research/Situation Analysis: In 2004 Martin County only had one early voting location for all 94,000 voters who wanted to “**vote early**” during the Presidential Election. As a result of having only one early voting location, Martin County had lower voter participation for early voting in 2004. According to Florida law early voting locations can be located in any public library, city hall, or fully staffed elections office. During the 2007 calendar year, local data gathered from the Elections Center voter software indicated that Martin County’s registered voters voted on Election Day or by absentee ballot and turnout was low for the Presidential Election. The elections staff developed a six man focus group that identified voters wanted a convenient method in which to vote and voters lacked knowledge about voting early. As a result of analyzing voter information the “**vote early**” campaign was created.

Statement of Objective: With 2008 being a Presidential Election year and the State of Florida expecting one of the largest Election Day turnouts in history, Vicki Davis, Martin County Supervisor of Elections wanted to drive Martin County voters to “**vote early**” and increase voter turnout. In order to accomplish greater turnout, the Elections Center established three goals: (1) the Supervisor of Elections and her staff wanted to create an educational, Public Service Announcement to raise awareness about early voting and the five early voting locations available to all of Martin County’s registered voters to reduce the number of voters waiting until Election Day to cast a vote; (2) to increase by 25% the number of early voters as compared to the 2004 Presidential Election; (3) to remain within a total budget of \$20,000.

Implementation: The first phase of our campaign included developing a budget and determining how to maximize media impact to reach 102,000 registered voters in Martin County. In past election years radio, newspaper, and online advertising were the only means of advertising used to capture voter’s attention to convey election messages. The staff concluded after brainstorming together that we needed to find a new means to effectively communicate to the voters, therefore, staff decided to create a PSA to educate and encourage voters to “**vote early.**”

The concept of the “**Vote Early in 2008**” PSA was to educate voters with another alternative to voting. The PSA was filmed in the Supervisor of Elections office with the Supervisor of Elections being the narrator. The PSA identified all five early voting locations and hours of operation. During the 2004 Presidential Election, the Elections Center only had one early voting location. Therefore, it was important for voters to know the Elections Center now

had five locations available to registered voters to “**vote early.**” Staff also conducted over fifty awareness presentations for “**voting early**” to educate voters on the hours and locations. Venues included nursing homes, chamber of commerce meetings, town meetings, special events, and assisted living facilities. A door hanger was created that included early voting information. Staff, through a partnership with the local chapter of the NAACP and local political parties, went door-to-door in minority community’s placing door hangers on over 300 doors.

Evaluation: “**Vote Early**” In 2008, PSA campaign exceeded all of its objectives. The 30 second PSA was shown on Comcast TV, starting two weeks prior to early voting and throughout the fifteen days during early voting. In conjunction with the PSA airing on Comcast, the Elections Center also partnered with the Martin County Library System to play the PSA in five of the public libraries. The PSA was also shown on Martin County’s public television station and in the Elections Center. Voters of Martin County overwhelming turned out to “vote early” with 28,203 early votes cast as compared to the 2004 Presidential election where only 11,865 votes were cast early generating a **38% increase**. Since voters turned out in large numbers to vote early on Election Day there were no lines for those who are traditional voters. Comment cards were provided at the early voting locations, where voters overwhelmingly commented on how easy it was to “**vote early.**” One voter commented, “I like being able to vote early, more convenient.” The campaign successfully remained under budget.

Budget: Comcast cable commercial (for a thirty-second PSA spot at buy one get one)-\$8,000; creative and production-\$ 2,000 from a local production company, given to the elections office at reduced rate. Door hangers were \$1,059. Martin County TV did not charge for the airing of the PSA, which was shown day and evening numerous times on the local government access channel. Martin County public library system also did not charge for the PSA being shown everyday in five public libraries for four weeks. The library system placed their televisions next to the check-out counter where residents viewed the TV PSA while waiting to check-out. Through a partnership with the local Stuart Newspaper, early voting hours and locations were run for two weeks at no cost. Total cost of the “**vote early**” campaign was \$ 11,059. Staff time was equal to the supervisor of elections working for one week with a production team to create the PSA.

Vote Early

★ 2008 ★



Martin County Supervisor of Elections

How are we doing?
Please take a moment to fill out this card as we value your opinion.



Precinct: 36

MY EXPERIENCE TODAY WAS: EXCELLENT GOOD FAIR POOR

COMMENTS: Early voting workers are very friendly and helpful!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ADDED TO OUR QUARTERLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER, LIST YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS:

If you are interested in being a poll worker, call us at 772.288.5637 or visit www.MartinVotes.com
Martin County Supervisor of Elections: 135 SE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. • Stuart, FL 34994

How are we doing?
Please take a moment to fill out this card as we value your opinion.



Precinct: F.O.

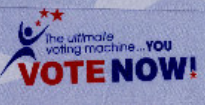
MY EXPERIENCE TODAY WAS: EXCELLENT GOOD FAIR POOR

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: BALLOT WAS EASY TO UNDERSTAND.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ADDED TO OUR QUARTERLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER, LIST YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS:

FMCRAVE@bellsouth.net
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How are we doing?
Please take a moment to fill out this card as we value your opinion.



Precinct: Election Center

MY EXPERIENCE TODAY WAS: EXCELLENT GOOD FAIR POOR

COMMENTS: Very lovely and everyone so helpful and friendly. Thank you!

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How are we doing?
Please take a moment to fill out this card as we value your opinion.



Precinct: 43 Election Center

MY EXPERIENCE TODAY WAS: EXCELLENT GOOD FAIR POOR

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: Early voting is great - We especially appreciate the volunteers who man the voting stations and give generously of their time.

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GET READY Requirements to register to vote:

- Must be US citizen
- 18 years old or 16 years of age with a valid Florida drivers license
- A Florida resident
- Not convicted of a felony or have had your rights restored

GET SET Where do I register:

Applications are available at the following locations:

- Martin County Elections Center
- Public Libraries
- College or University Campuses
- US Post Offices
- Chambers of Commerces
- Online at www.MartinVotes.com

VOTE! Ways to vote:

Aug 26nd & Nov 4th

- Vote on Election Day at your assigned precinct. Polls open 7 am to 7 pm
- Vote early - 15 days prior to Election Day. Call the Martin County Elections Center for exact locations and times
- Vote by Mail - Ballots are mailed approximately 3 weeks prior to Election Day. Request a ballot by calling your Elections Center

*Must have a signed photo ID in order to vote.
Must be registered at least 29 days prior to an election.*

Martin County Elections Center
135 SE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Stuart, FL 34994
772-288-5637



