

**THE PORTUGUESE AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP PROJECT**  
A NON-PARTISAN INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC INVOLVEMENT



**ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH  
FALL RIVER, MA**

**EVALUATION  
OF  
THE 2008 ELECTIONS**

**June 19, 2009**

**SUPPORTED BY THE**  
**LUSO-AMERICAN**  
**FOUNDATION**

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## KEY STATISTICS

- **Number of Parishioners: 1,616**
- **Heads of Household registered to vote in Fall River: 637 (39% of all parishioners)**
- **Heads of Household registered to vote in Bristol County: 784**
- **All Household Members registered to vote in Fall River: 950**
- **All Household Members registered to vote in Bristol County: 1,148**
- **Voter Turnout\* in February 2008 – 54% (citywide turnout 37%)**
- **Voter Turnout in September 2008 – 44% (citywide turnout 23%)**
- **Voter Turnout in November 2008 – 84% (citywide turnout 68%)**

## SUMMARY OF WORK

St. Michael's Parish has been an active participant in the Portuguese American Citizenship Project since 2002.

For the 2008 elections, postcards in Portuguese and English were sent to every registered parish voter reminding them of the date, polling hours, and location of the assigned polling station for each election. Cards were not sent out for February 2008 Presidential Primary Elections.

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\* Voter turnout is the number of citizens voting in an election divided by the total number of citizens registered to vote

## RESULTS

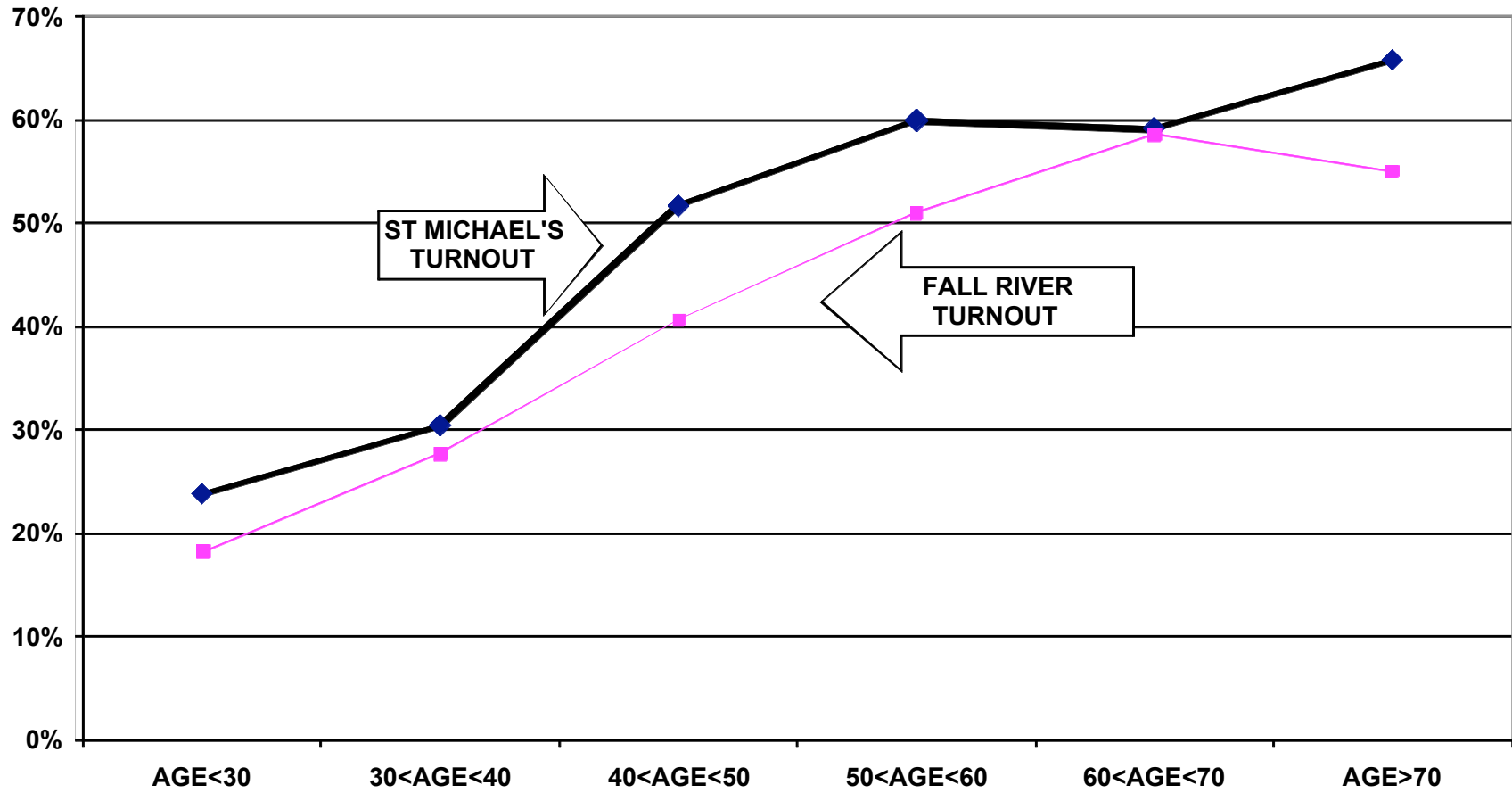
St. Michael's voter turnout for the February, September, and November 2008 elections was consistently higher than citywide turnout. Heads of household turnout for the February Presidential Primary Elections was 54%, as compared to the city turnout of 37%. The St. Michael heads of household turnout for the September State Primary Elections was 44%, as compared to the city turnout of 23%. Heads of household turnout for the November 2008 Presidential Elections was 84%, as compared to the city turnout of 68%.

Voter turnout is not uniform across age groups. Voters under 30 years of age and even those between 30 and 40 years old had lower turnout rates than the older voters. This is true for the registered voters in the parish and true for the registered voters in the community at large.

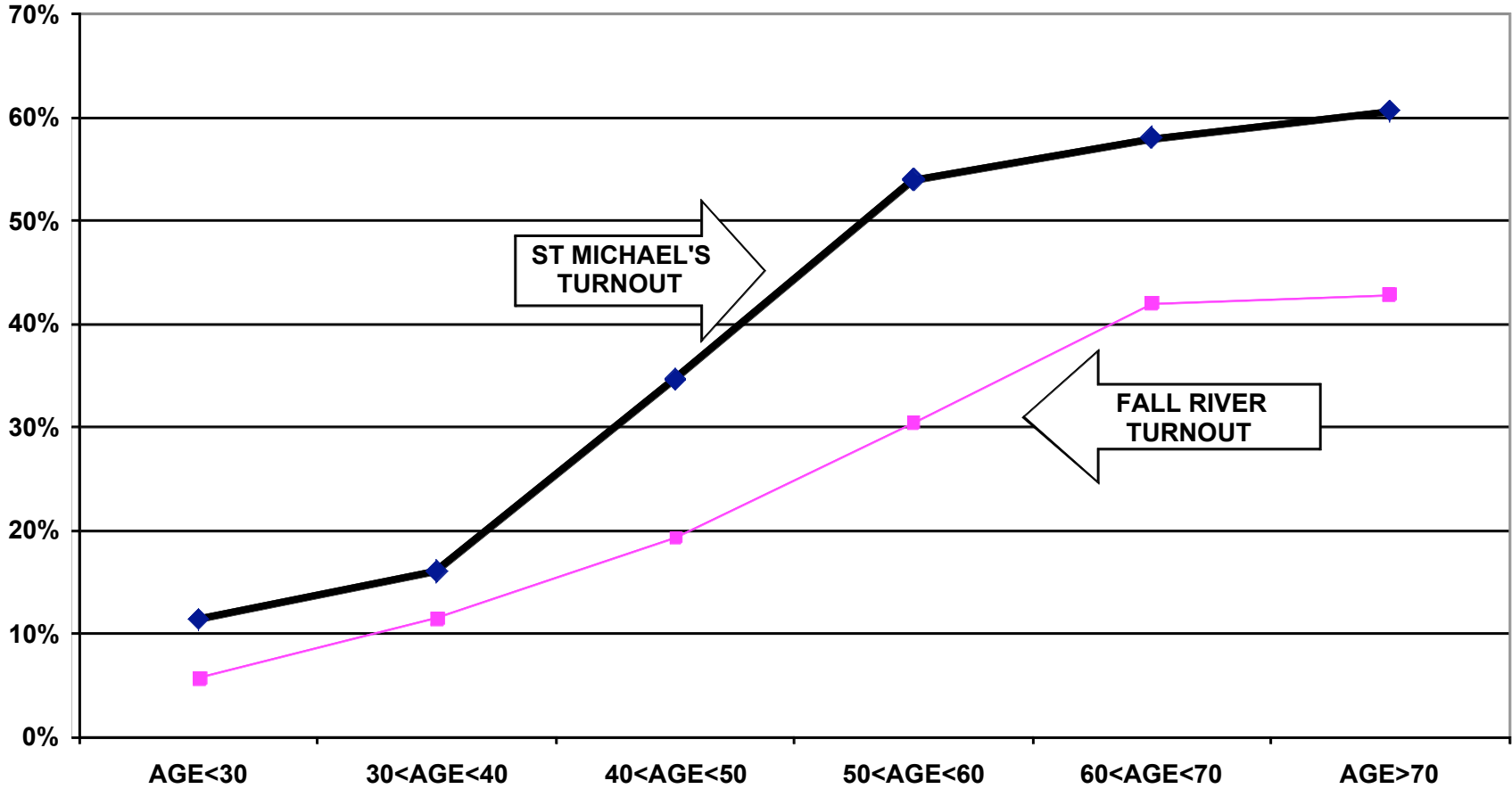
For example, voters associated with the parish under 30 years old had a 24% turnout rate in the February elections, while voters between 60 and 70 years old had a 59% turnout rate. For the September elections, the under 30 year old associated parishioners had a 11% turnout rate compared to a 58% turnout rate for voters between 60 and 70 years old. For the November Presidential elections, voters under 30 years old associated with the parish had a 64% turnout rate while voters between 60 and 70 years old had a 88% turnout rate.

The following graphs for the February, September, and November 2008 elections illustrate the relationship between turnout rates and age. These graphs refer to all family members associated with the parish, not just heads of household.

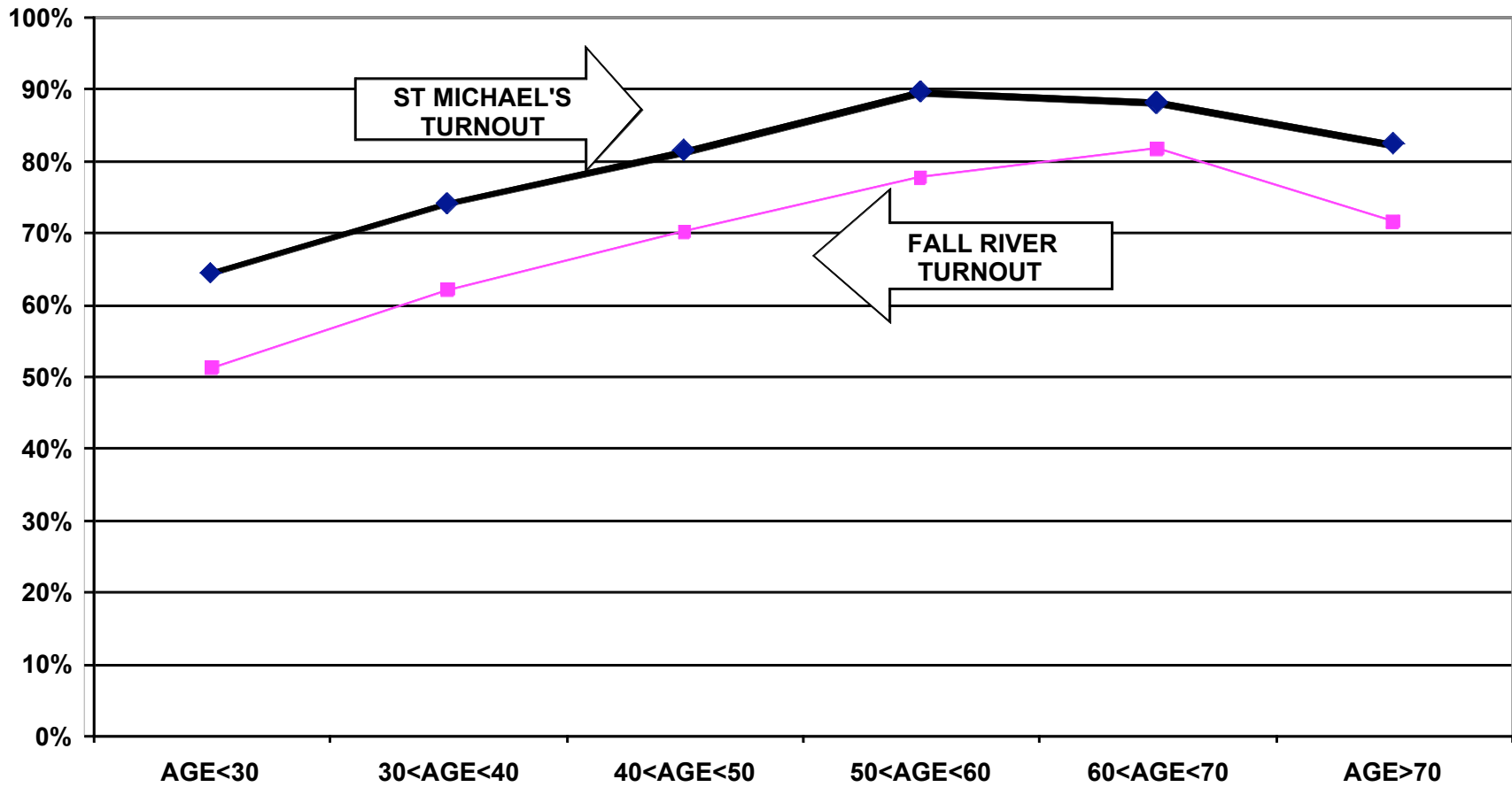
### TURNOUT BY AGE FEBRUARY 2008 SAINT MICHAEL PARISH ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



**TURNOUT BY AGE SEPTEMBER 2008  
SAINT MICHAEL PARISH  
ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS**



### TURNOUT BY AGE NOVEMBER 2008 SAINT MICHAEL PARISH ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The parish must determine if and how it will provide funding for the costs of participation in the Citizenship Project. The Luso American Foundation has completed 10 years of financial support for the Project but will terminate this support for 2009 and beyond. In 2009, the Project will continue to provide data processing and assist in the preparation of voter cards. With a mailing permit, the cost of printing and mailing the voter cards for a September Primary and November City election is over \$800.
- If the parish cannot provide the financial support for this mailing and/or cannot accomplish the logistics of printing and mailing the voter cards, interested members of the community should examine the accomplishments of the past ten years and investigate alternative methods of promoting civic participation.
- The parish has over 950 registered voters and an exceptionally high voter turnout rate and is, as a result, a force to be reckoned with in the Bristol Country and Fall River political arena. The local political leadership acknowledges the voting strength of the parish but needs to be unequivocally told what the parishioners want from their government. St Michael's work with Santo Cristo and Espirito Santo staging the October 2007 Candidate Night for Mayor, and its own Candidate Night for City Council staged in 2005 are excellent examples of how best to allow parishioners themselves to determine the key issues of an election. Formal debates and other methods of communication are necessary to allow candidates for public office to know fully what the community wants from their leaders.



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- Difference in Voter Turnout Graph 12
- Voter Registration by Age and Gender Graph 13
- Registered Voters vs. Actual Voters February 2008 Graph 14
- Registered Voters vs. Actual Voters September 2008 Graph 15
- Registered Voters vs. Actual Voters November 2008 Graph 16

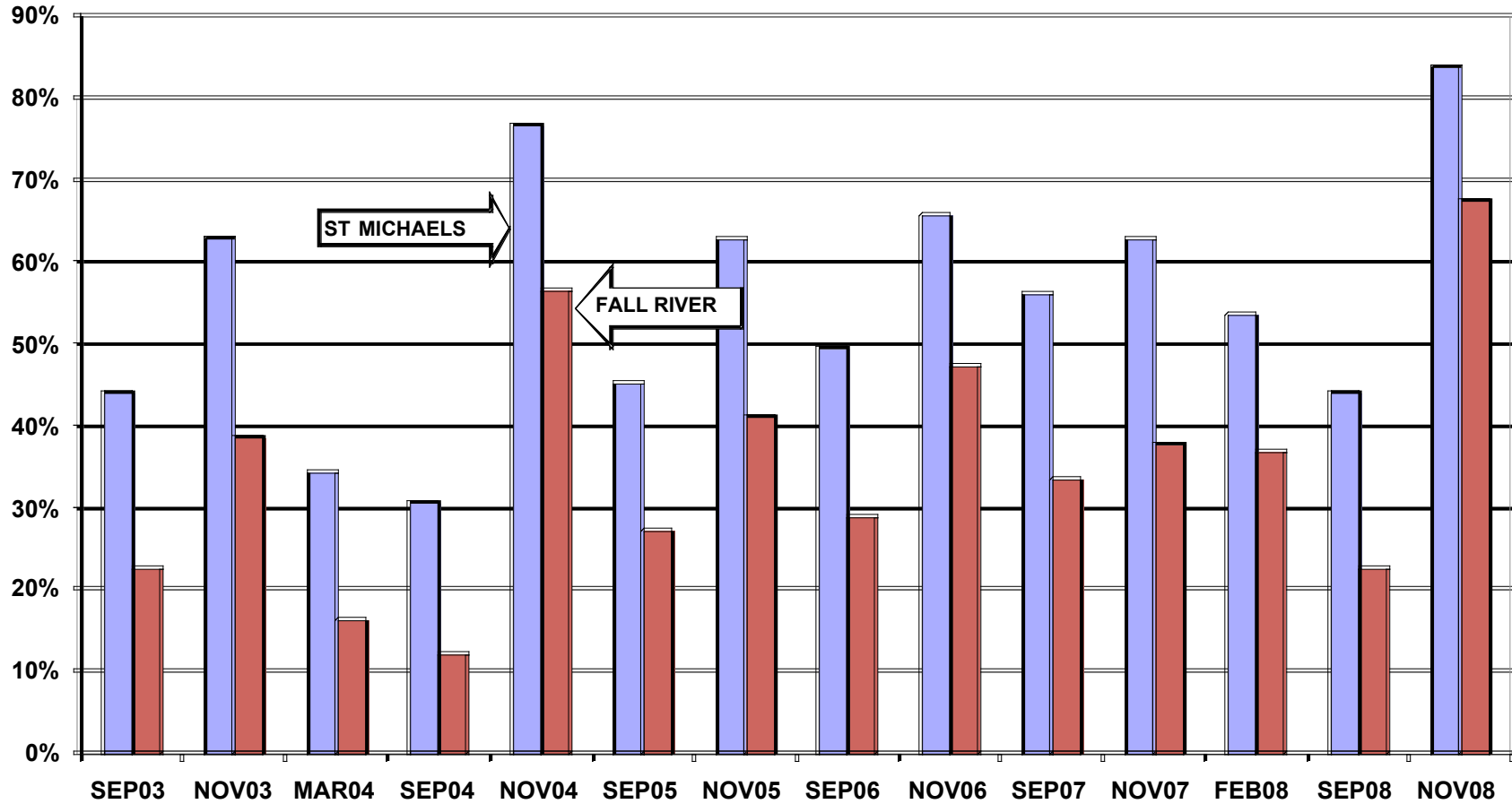
**HISTORICAL DATA: SAINT MICHAEL'S PARISH  
REGISTRATION - VOTING**

<b>MEMBERS RESIDING IN FALL RIVER</b>	<b>1,616</b>	
<b>MEMBERS REGISTERED TO VOTE IN CITY OF FALL RIVER</b>	<b>637</b>	<b>HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD</b>
	<b>950</b>	<b>ALL FAMILY MEMBERS</b>

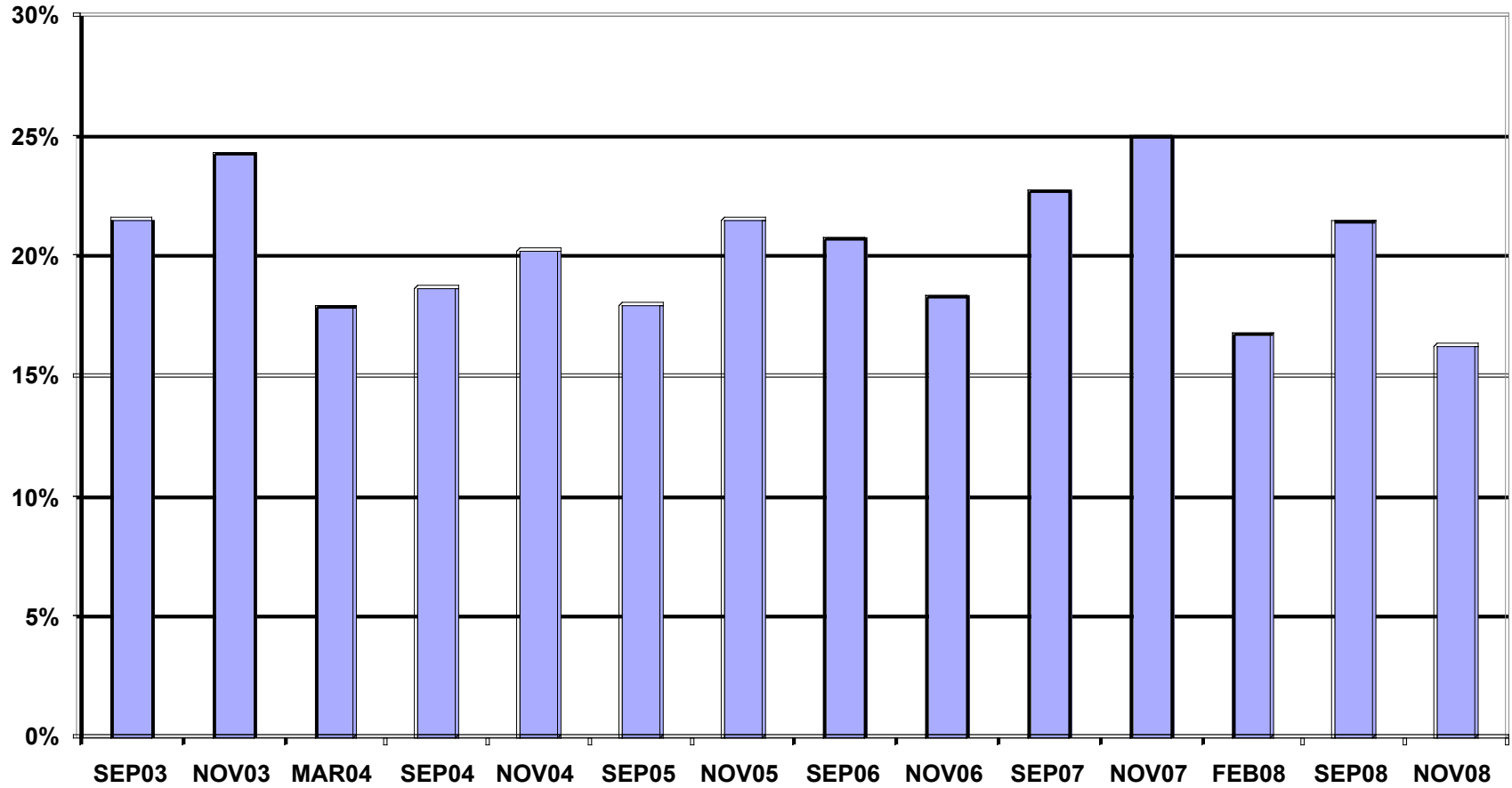
**VOTING PERFORMANCE OF FALL RIVER RESIDENTS**

	<b>HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD</b>	<b>AS PERCENT OF ALL REGISTERED MEMBERS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE</b>	<b>CITYWIDE VOTING HISTORY AS PERCENT OF ALL REGISTERED VOTERS)</b>
		<b>COMPARABLE STATISTICS</b>	
<b>VOTERS SEP 2003</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>44.1%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>
<b>VOTERS NOV 2003</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>63.0%</b>	<b>38.8%</b>
<b>VOTERS MAR 2004</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>34.2%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>
<b>VOTERS SEP 2004</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>30.8%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>
<b>VOTERS NOV 2004</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>76.7%</b>	<b>56.4%</b>
<b>VOTERS SEP 2005</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>45.2%</b>	<b>27.2%</b>
<b>VOTERS NOV 2005</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>62.7%</b>	<b>41.2%</b>
<b>VOTERS SEP 2006</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>49.6%</b>	<b>28.8%</b>
<b>VOTERS NOV 2006</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>65.6%</b>	<b>47.3%</b>
<b>VOTERS SEP 2007</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>56.1%</b>	<b>33.4%</b>
<b>VOTERS NOV 2007</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>62.9%</b>	<b>37.9%</b>
<b>VOTERS FEB 2008</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>53.5%</b>	<b>36.8%</b>
<b>VOTERS SEP 2008</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>44.1%</b>	<b>22.7%</b>
<b>VOTERS NOV 2008</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>83.8%</b>	<b>67.5%</b>

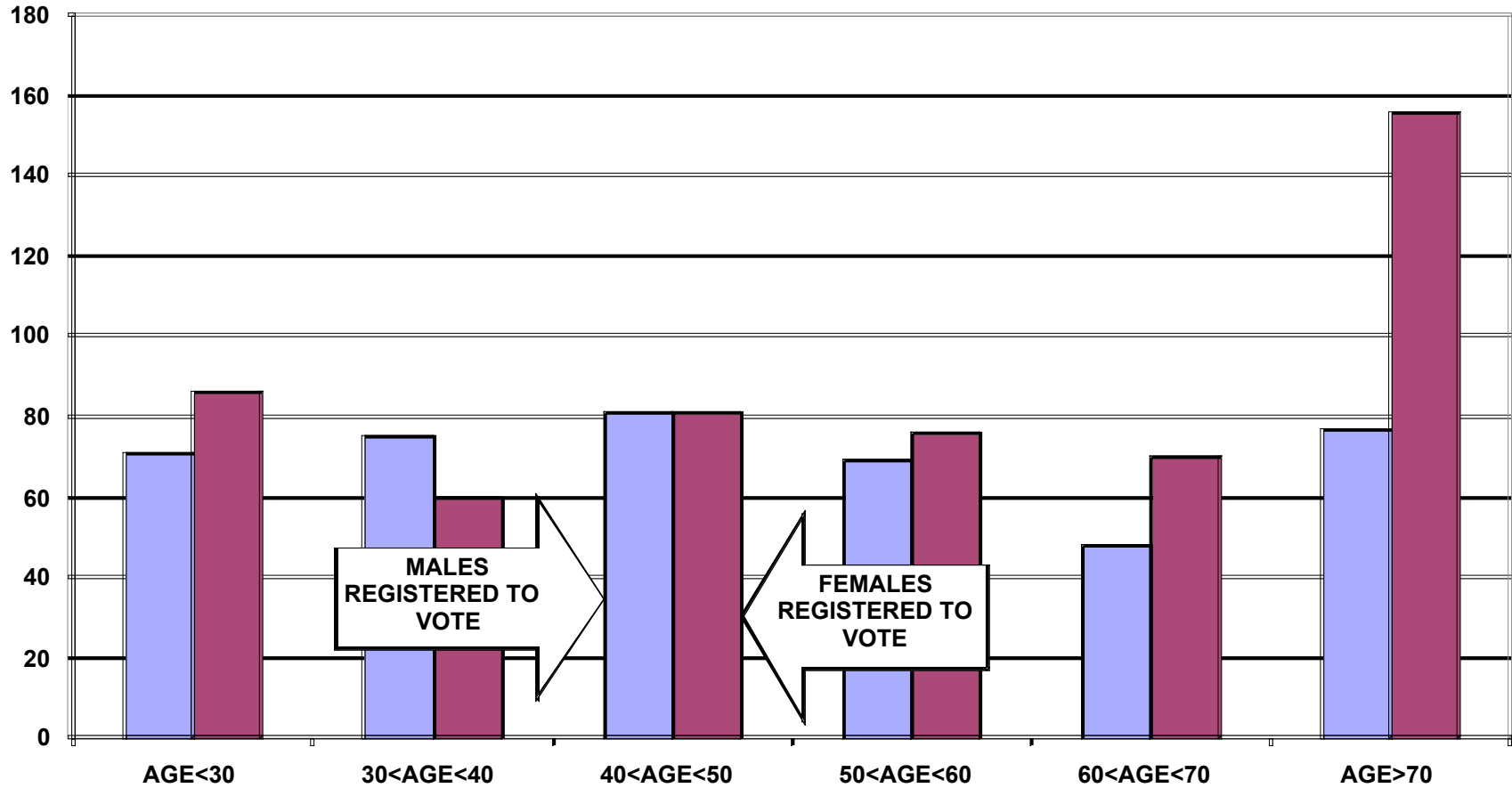
### REGISTERED VOTER TURNOUT COMPARISON BETWEEN FALL RIVER AND ST MICHAEL'S HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD



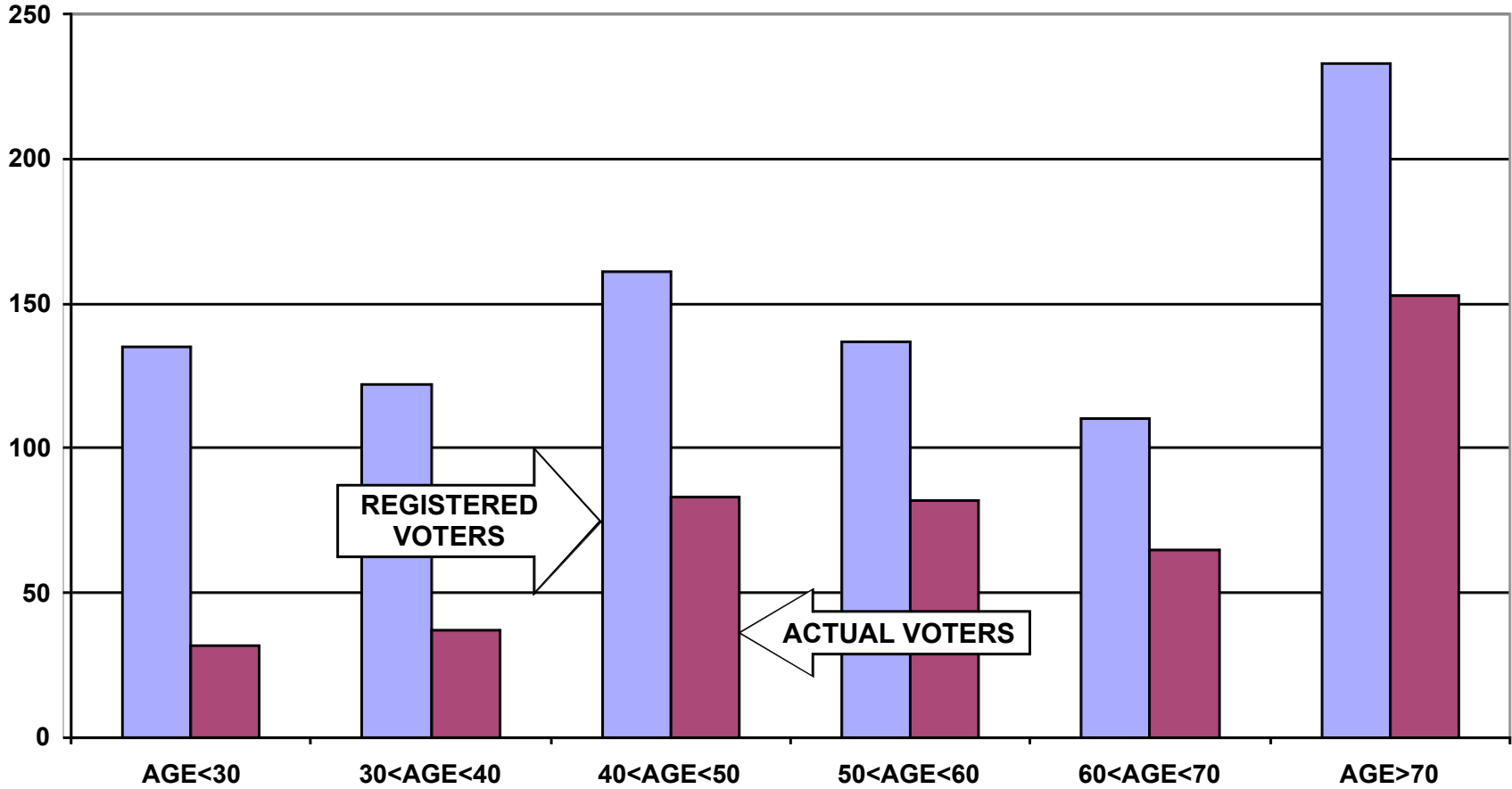
### DIFFERENCE IN VOTER TURNOUT BETWEEN FALL RIVER VOTERS AND ST MICHAEL'S VOTERS HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD



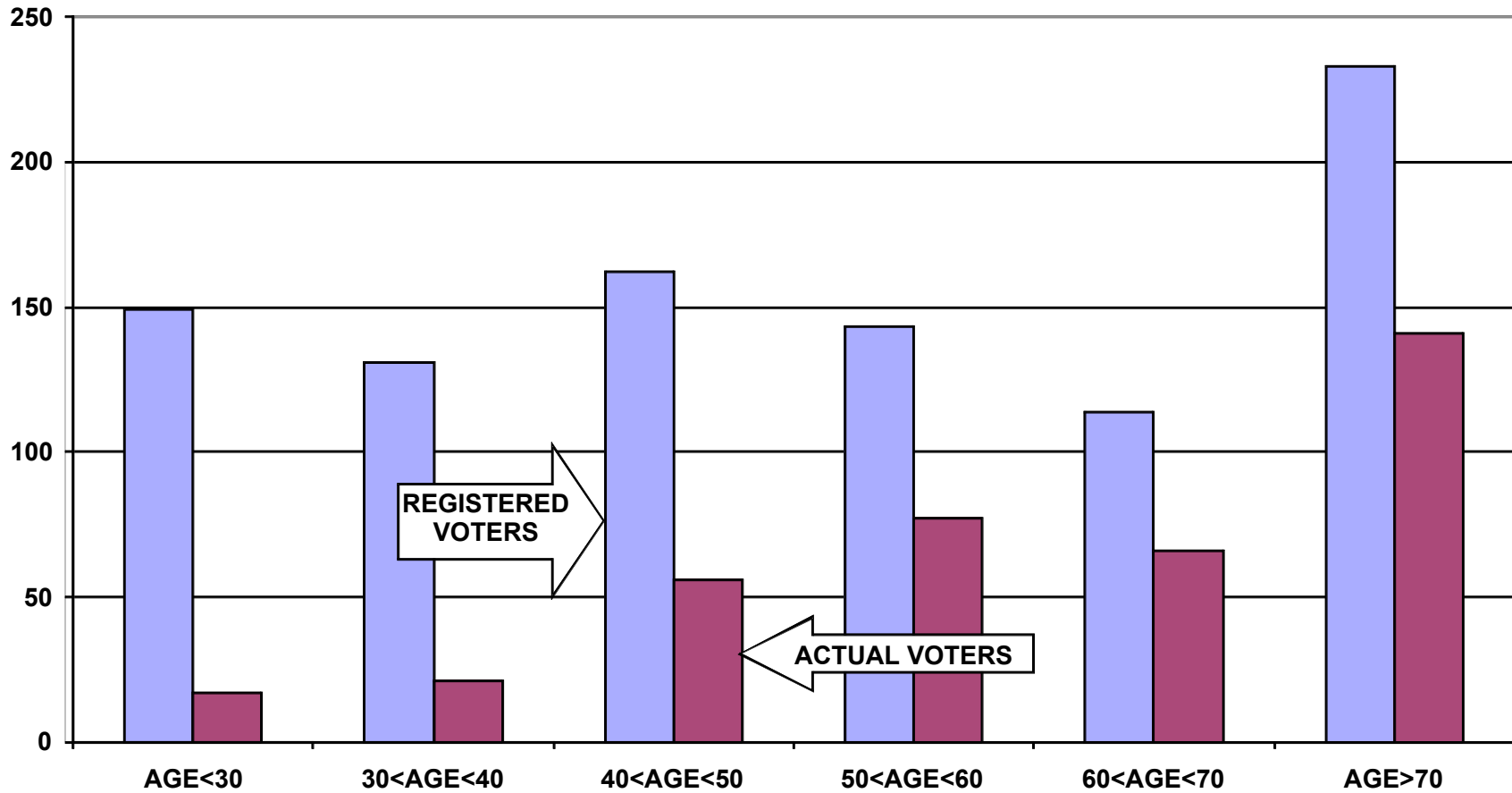
### VOTER REGISTRATION BY AGE AND GENDER ST. MICHAEL ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



**REGISTERED VOTERS VERSUS ACTUAL VOTERS FEBRUARY 2008  
SAINT MICHAEL PARISH  
ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS**



**REGISTERED VOTERS VERSUS ACTUAL VOTERS SEPTEMBER 2008  
SAINT MICHAEL PARISH  
ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS**



**REGISTERED VOTERS VERSUS ACTUAL VOTERS NOVEMBER 2008  
SAINT MICHAEL PARISH  
ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS**

