

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



**ESPIRITO SANTO 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: 4,363**
- **Heads of Household registered to vote in Fall River: 1,894 (43% of all parishioners)**
- **Heads of Household registered to vote in Bristol County: 2,281**
- **All Household Members registered to vote in Fall River: 2,185**
- **All Household Member registered to vote in Bristol County: 2,607**
- **Heads of Household voter turnout* in February 2008 – 50% (citywide turnout 37%)**
- **Heads of Household voter turnout in September 2008 – 31% (citywide turnout 23%)**
- **Heads of Household voter turnout in November 2008 – 79% (citywide turnout 68%)**

SUMMARY OF WORK

Espirito Santo has been an active participant in the Portuguese American Citizenship Project since the very beginning in 1999.

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 the election. Cards were not sent out for February 2008 Presidential Primary Elections.

* Voter turnout is the number of citizens voting in an election divided by the total number of citizens registered to vote. Voter turnout statistics are for Fall River residents only.

RESULTS

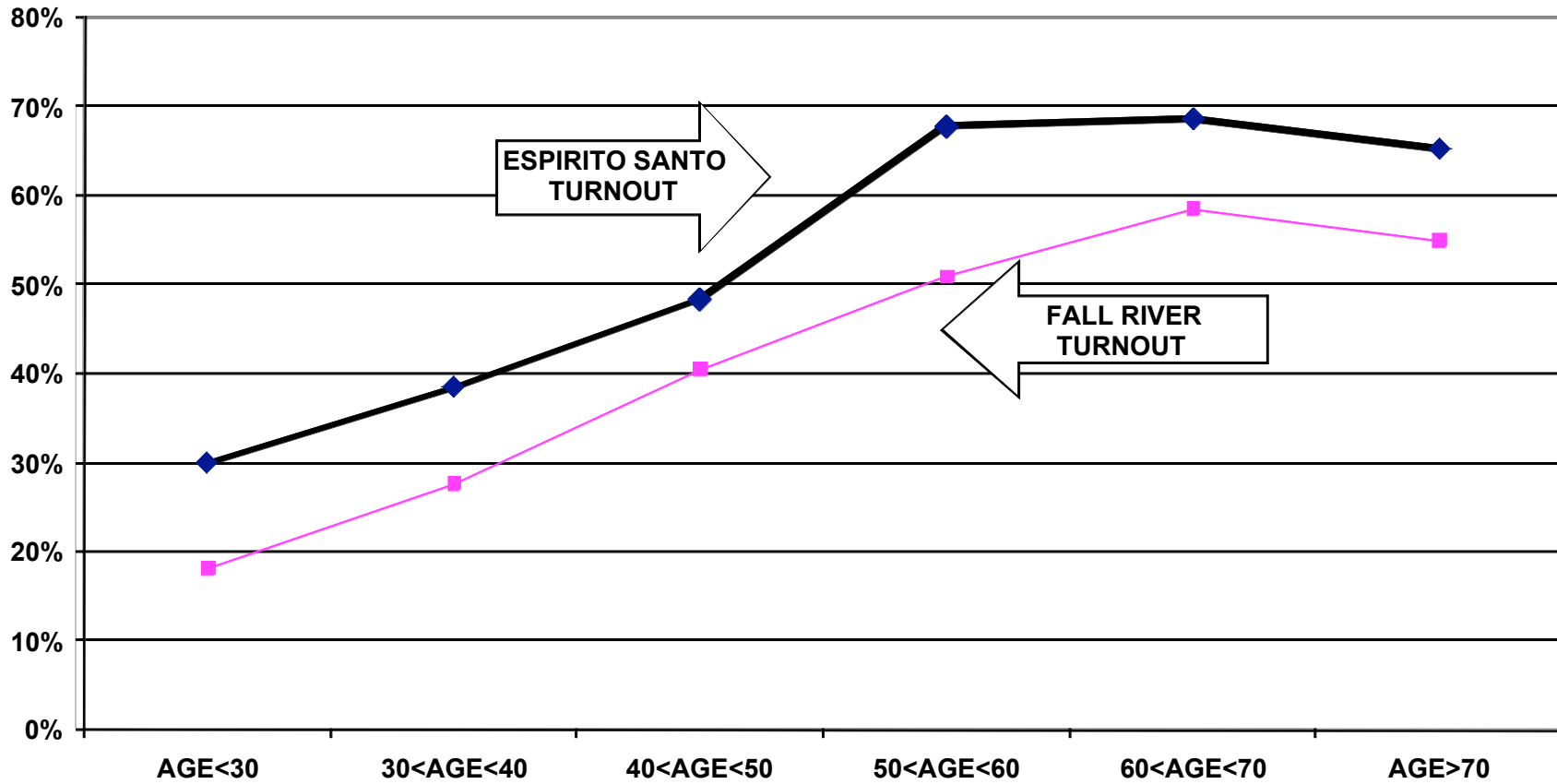
The Espirito Santo voter turnout for the February, September, and November 2008 elections was consistently higher than citywide turnout. Heads of household turnout for the February Presidential Primary Elections was 50%, as compared to the city turnout of 37%. The Espirito Santo heads of household turnout for the September State Primary Elections was 31%, as compared to the city turnout of 23%. Heads of household turnout for the November 2008 Presidential Elections was 79%, 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.

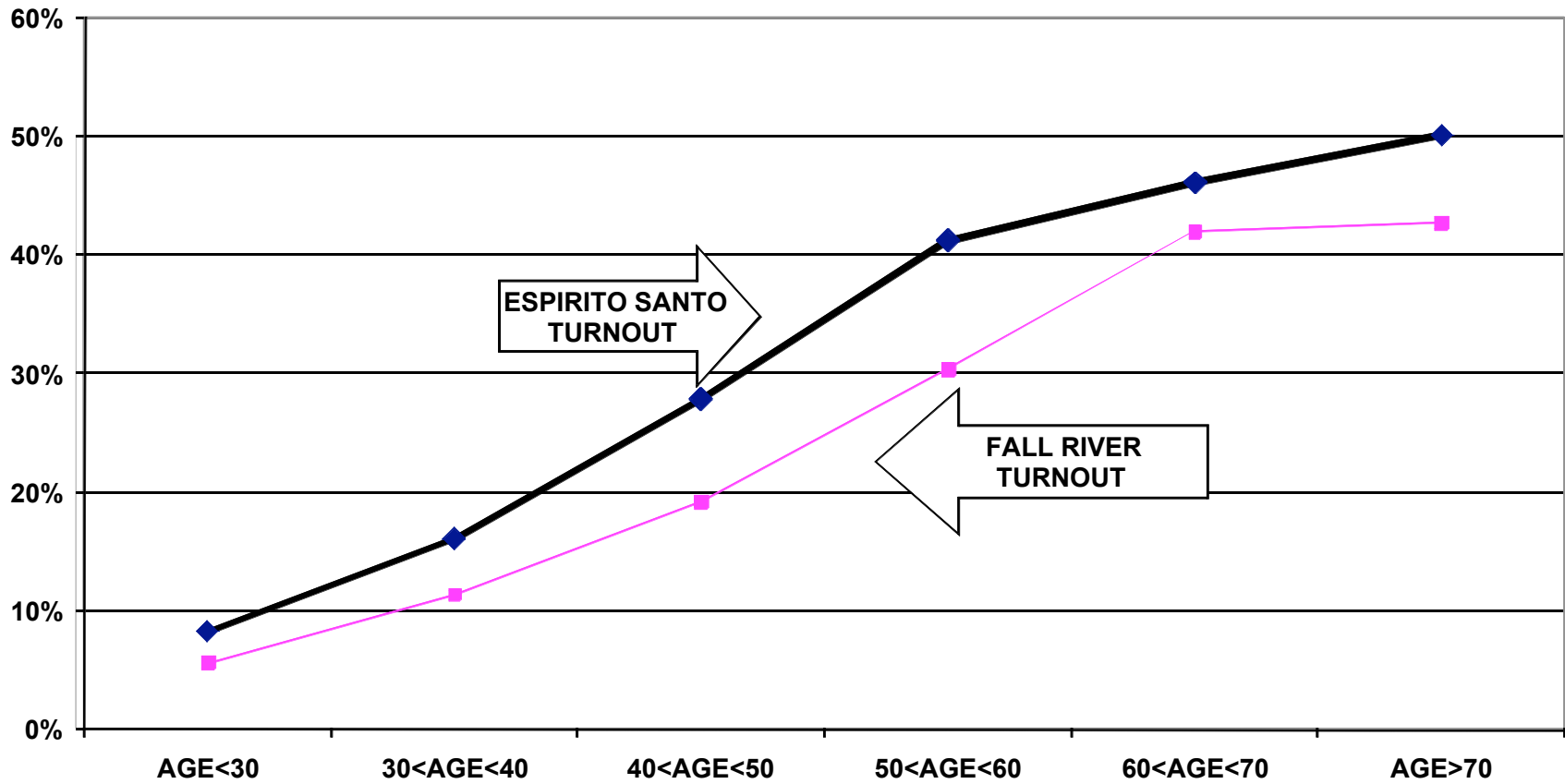
For example, voters under 30 years old associated with the parish had a 30% turnout rate in the February elections, while voters between 60 and 70 years old had a 69% turnout rate. For the September elections, the under 30 year old associated parishioners had an 8% turnout rate compared to a 46% turnout 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 63% turnout rate while voters between 60 and 70 years old had a 87% turnout rate.

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

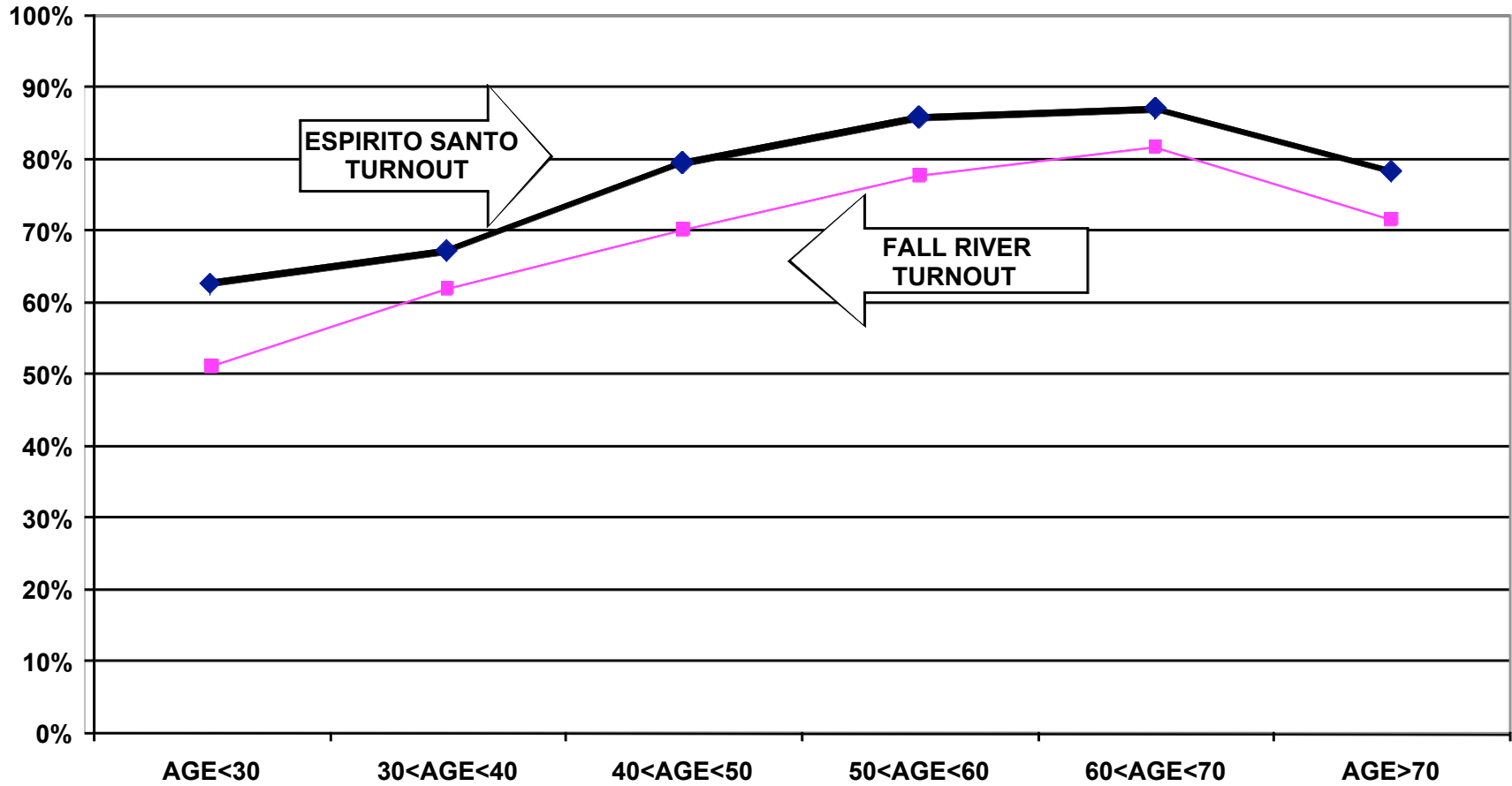
TURNOUT BY AGE FEBRUARY 2008 ESPIRITO SANTO ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



TURNOUT BY AGE SEPTEMBER 2008 ESPIRITO SANTO ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



TURNOUT BY AGE NOVEMBER 2008 ESPIRITO SANTO 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 cards for a September Primary, and November City elections is approximately \$1,400.
- 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 determine how to build on these achievements using alternative methods of promoting civic participation.
- The parish has over 2,100 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. Espirito Santo's work with Santo Cristo and St Michael in staging the October 2007 Candidate Night for Mayor was an excellent example 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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- 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

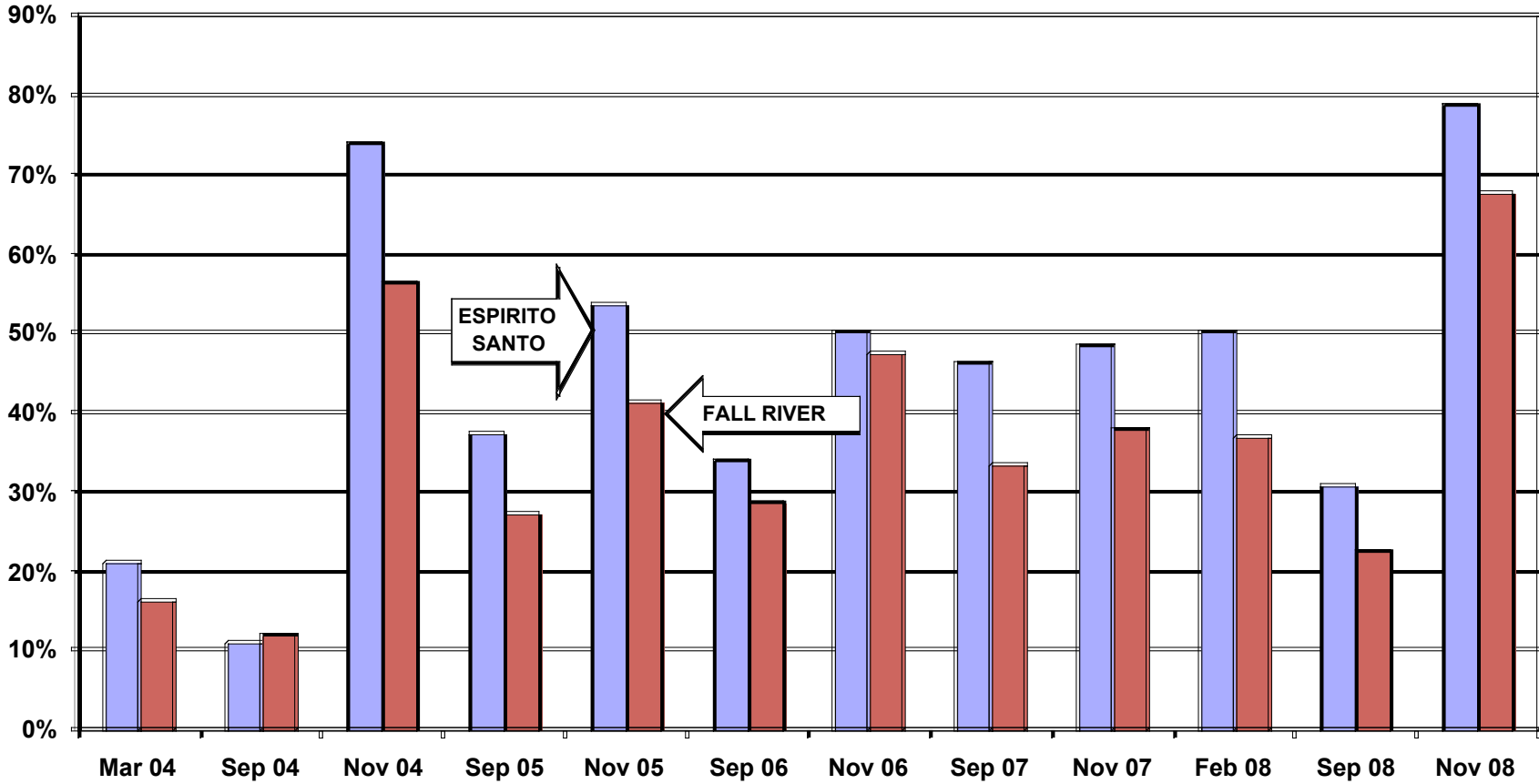
**HISTORICAL DATA: ESPIRITO SANTO
REGISTRATION - VOTING**

MEMBERS RESIDING IN FALL RIVER	4,363
MEMBERS REGISTERED TO VOTE IN FALL RIVER	1,894 HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD
	2,185 ALL FAMILY MEMBERS

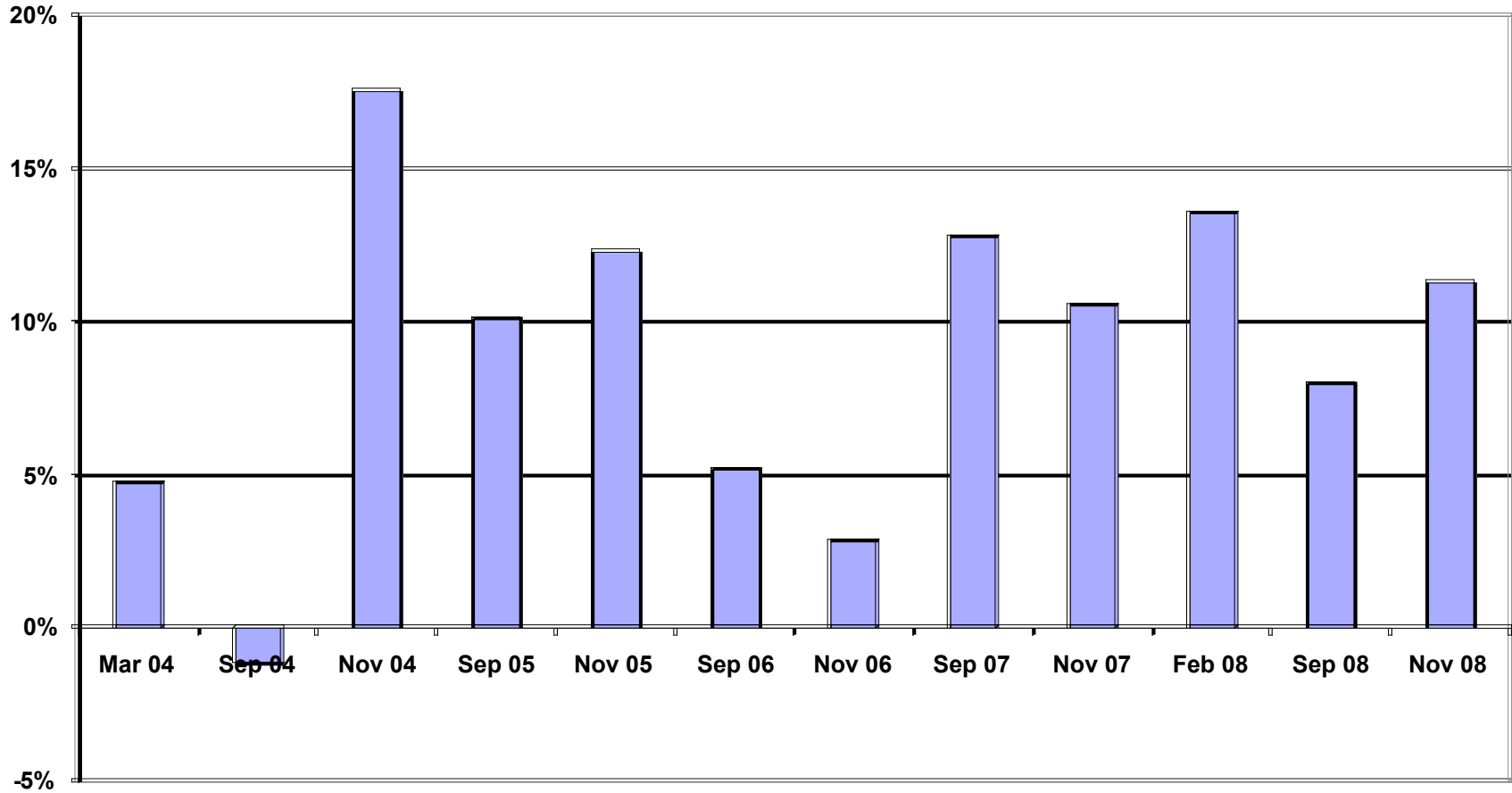
VOTING PERFORMANCE OF FALL RIVER RESIDENTS

	HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD	AS PERCENT OF ALL REGISTERED MEMBERS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE	CITYWIDE VOTING HISTORY AS PERCENT OF ALL REGISTERED VOTERS)
		COMPARABLE STATISTICS	
VOTERS SEP 2003	440	32.0%	22.7%
VOTERS NOV 2003	779	56.6%	38.8%
VOTERS MAR 2004	290	21.1%	16.3%
VOTERS SEP 2004	152	11.0%	12.2%
VOTERS NOV 2004	1018	74.0%	56.4%
VOTERS SEP 2005	585	37.3%	27.1%
VOTERS NOV 2005	839	53.5%	41.2%
VOTERS SEP 2006	633	34.0%	28.8%
VOTERS NOV 2006	958	50.2%	47.3%
VOTERS SEP 2007	872	46.2%	33.4%
VOTERS NOV 2007	914	48.5%	37.9%
VOTERS FEB 2008	954	50.4%	36.8%
VOTERS SEP 2008	582	30.7%	22.7%
VOTERS NOV 2008	1493	78.8%	67.5%

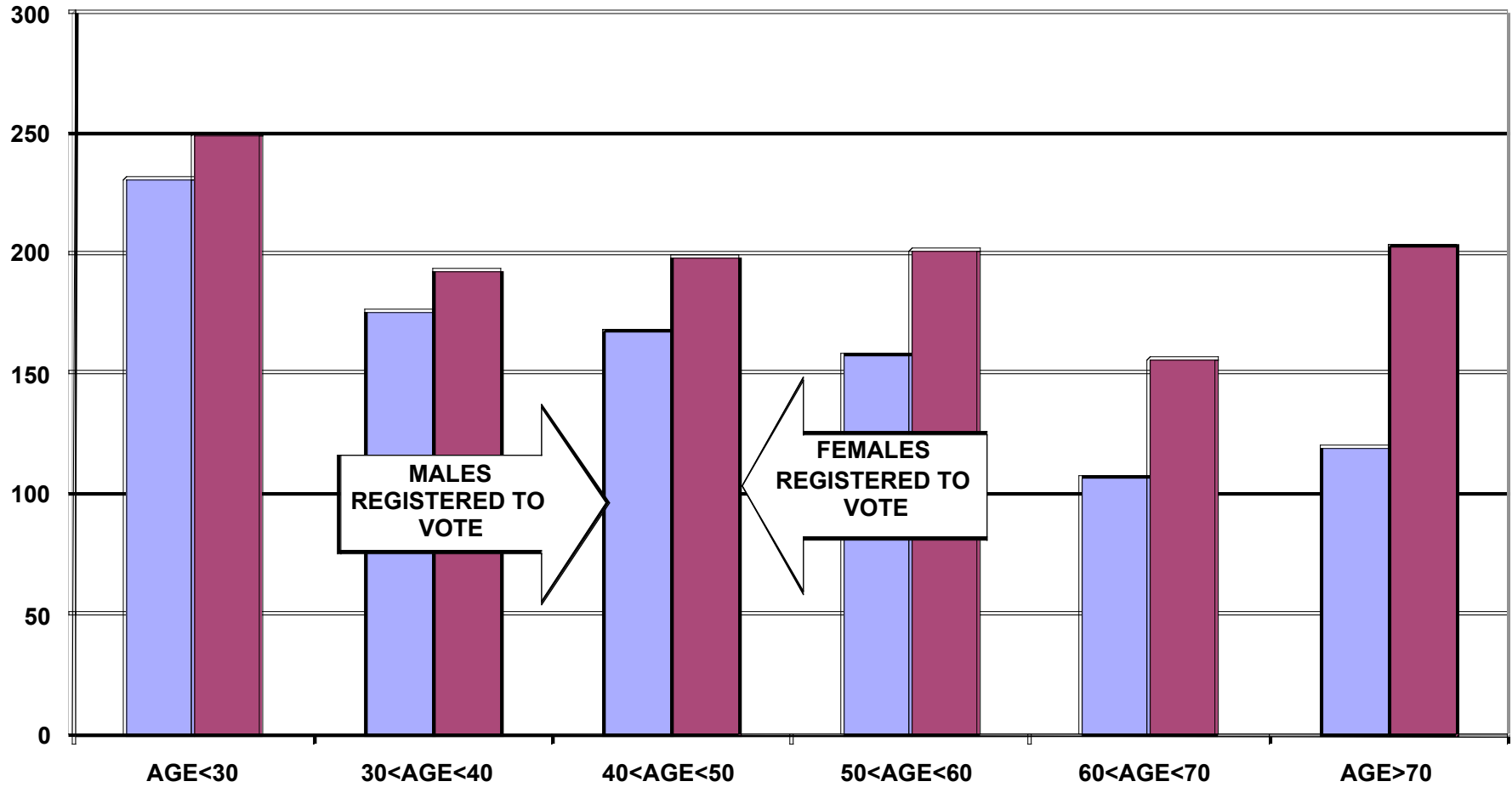
REGISTERED VOTER TURNOUT COMPARISON BETWEEN FALL RIVER AND ESPIRITO SANTO HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD



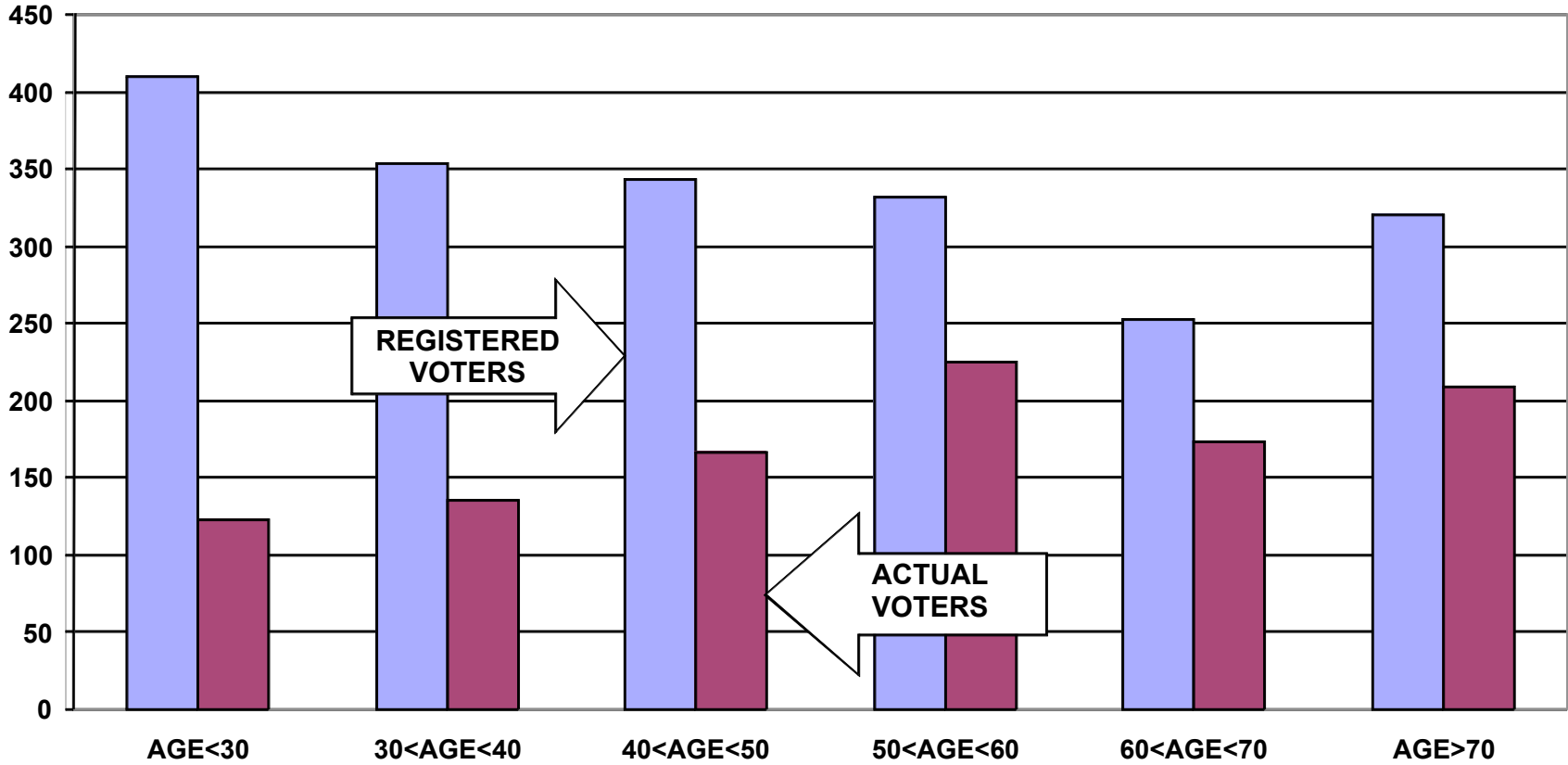
**DIFFERENCE IN VOTER TURNOUT BETWEEN
ESPIRITO SANTO VOTERS AND FALL RIVER VOTERS
HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD**



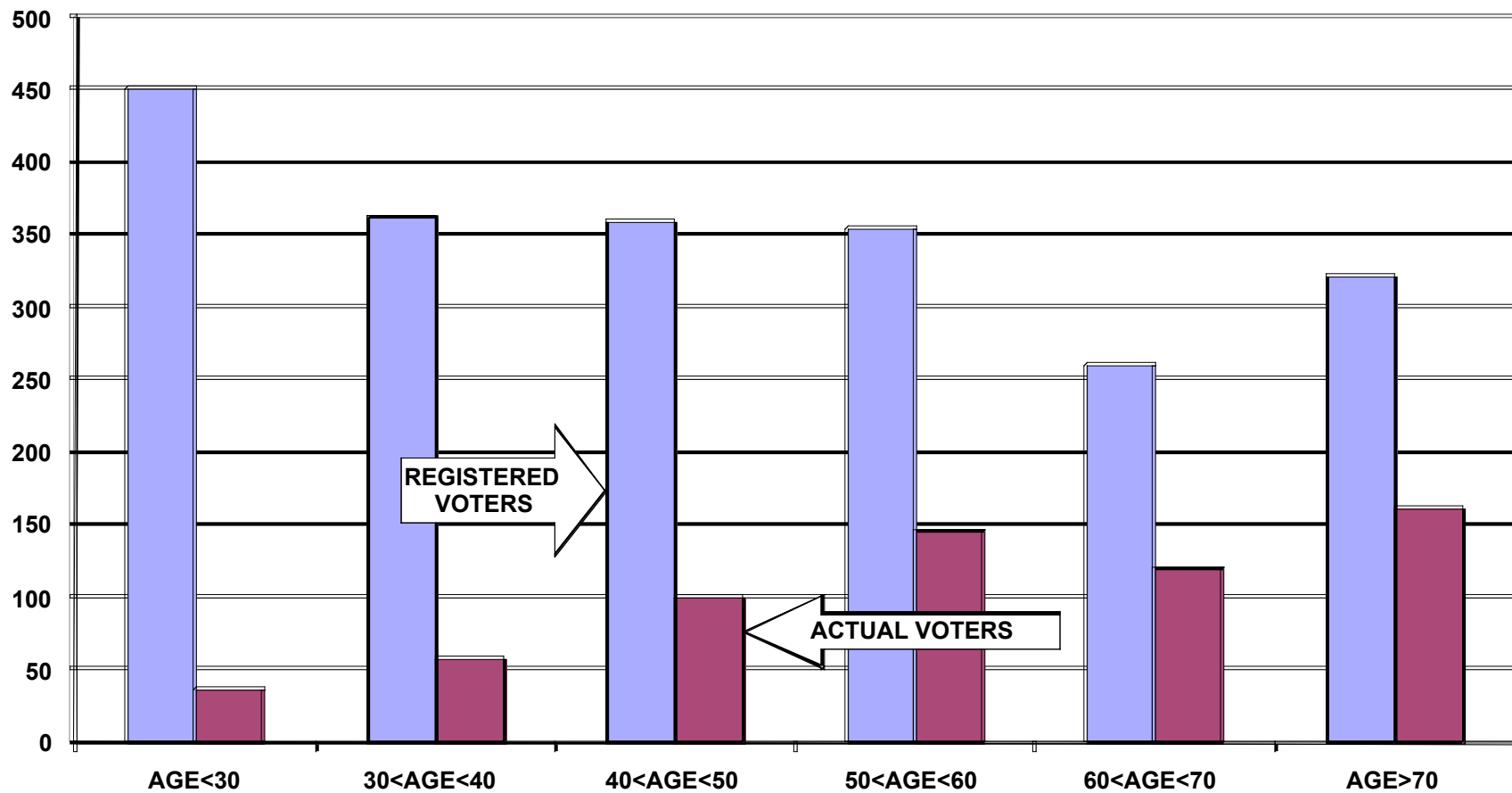
**VOTER REGISTRATION BY AGE AND GENDER
ESPIRITO SANTO
ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS**



**REGISTERED VOTERS VERSUS ACTUAL VOTERS FEBRUARY 2008
ESPIRITO SANTO
ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS**



REGISTERED VOTERS VERSUS ACTUAL VOTERS SEPTEMBER 2008
ESPIRITO SANTO
ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



**REGISTERED VOTERS VERSUS ACTUAL VOTERS NOVEMBER 2008
ESPIRITO SANTO
ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS**

