

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



SANTO CRISTO 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: 3,844**
- **Heads of Household registered to vote in Fall River: 1,690 (44% of all parishioners)**
- **Heads of Household registered to vote in Bristol County: 1,976**
- **All Household Members registered to vote in Fall River: 2,085**
- **All Household Members registered to vote in Bristol County: 2,573**
- **Heads of Household voter turnout* in February 2008 – 60% (citywide turnout 37%)**
- **Heads of Household voter turnout in September 2008 – 36% (citywide turnout 23%)**
- **Heads of Household voter turnout in November 2008 – 80% (citywide turnout 68%)**

SUMMARY OF WORK

Santo Cristo has been an active participant in the Portuguese American Citizenship Project since the Summer of 2000.

For the 2008 February, September, and November 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.

RESULTS

The Santo Cristo 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 60%, as compared to the city turnout of 37%. The Santo Cristo heads of household turnout for the September State Primary Elections was 36%, as compared to the city turnout of 23%. Heads of household turnout for the November 2008 Presidential Elections was 80%, as compared to the city turnout of 68%.

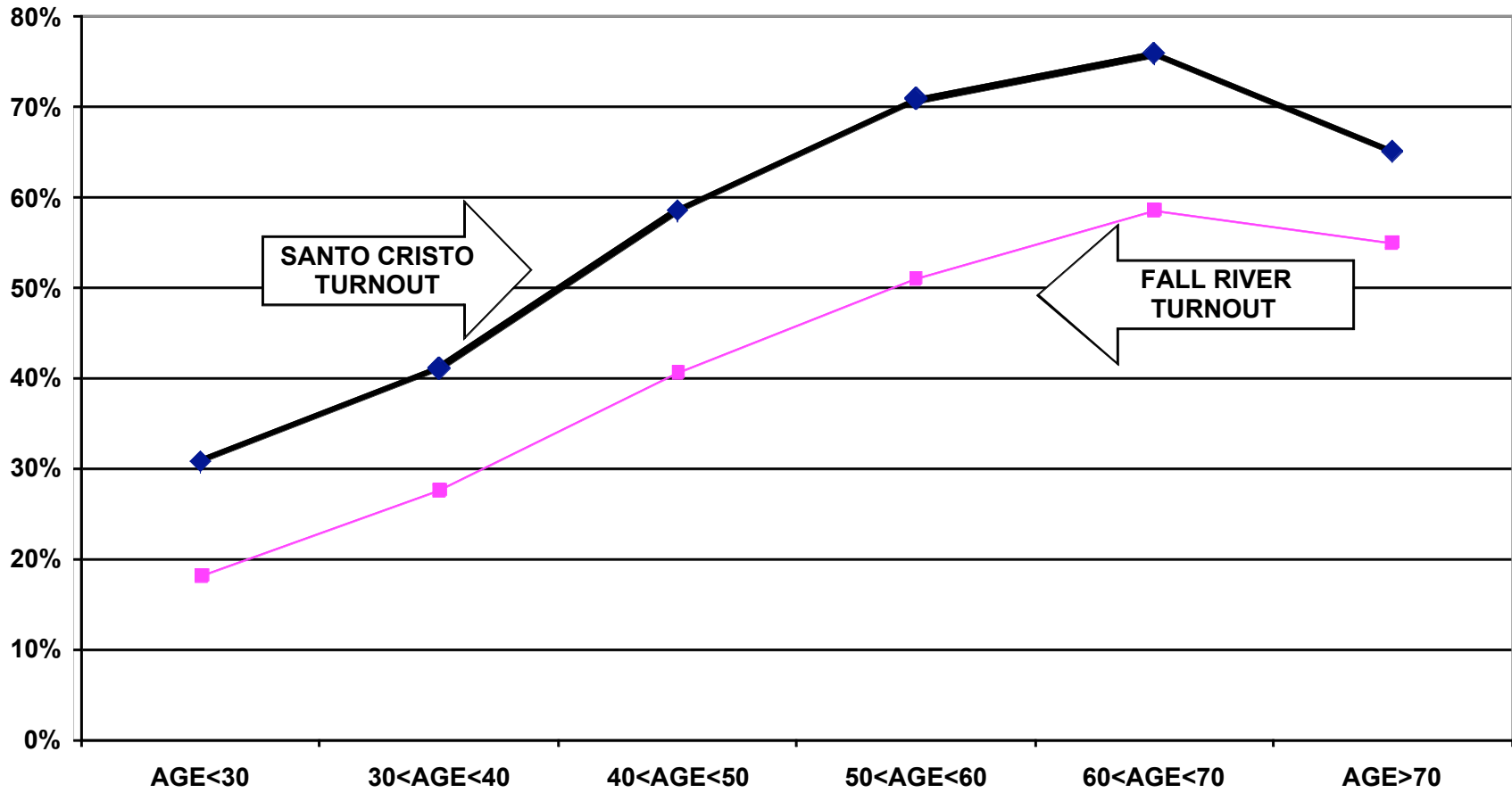
Voter turnout is not uniform across age groups. Voters under 30 years of age and even those between 30 and 40 years old had lower turnout rates than the older voters. This is true for the registered voters in the parish and true for the registered voters in the community at large.

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 76% turnout rate. For the September elections, the under 30 year old associated parishioners had a 11% turnout rate compared to a 51% 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 62% turnout rate while voters between 60 and 70 years old had a 87% turnout rate.

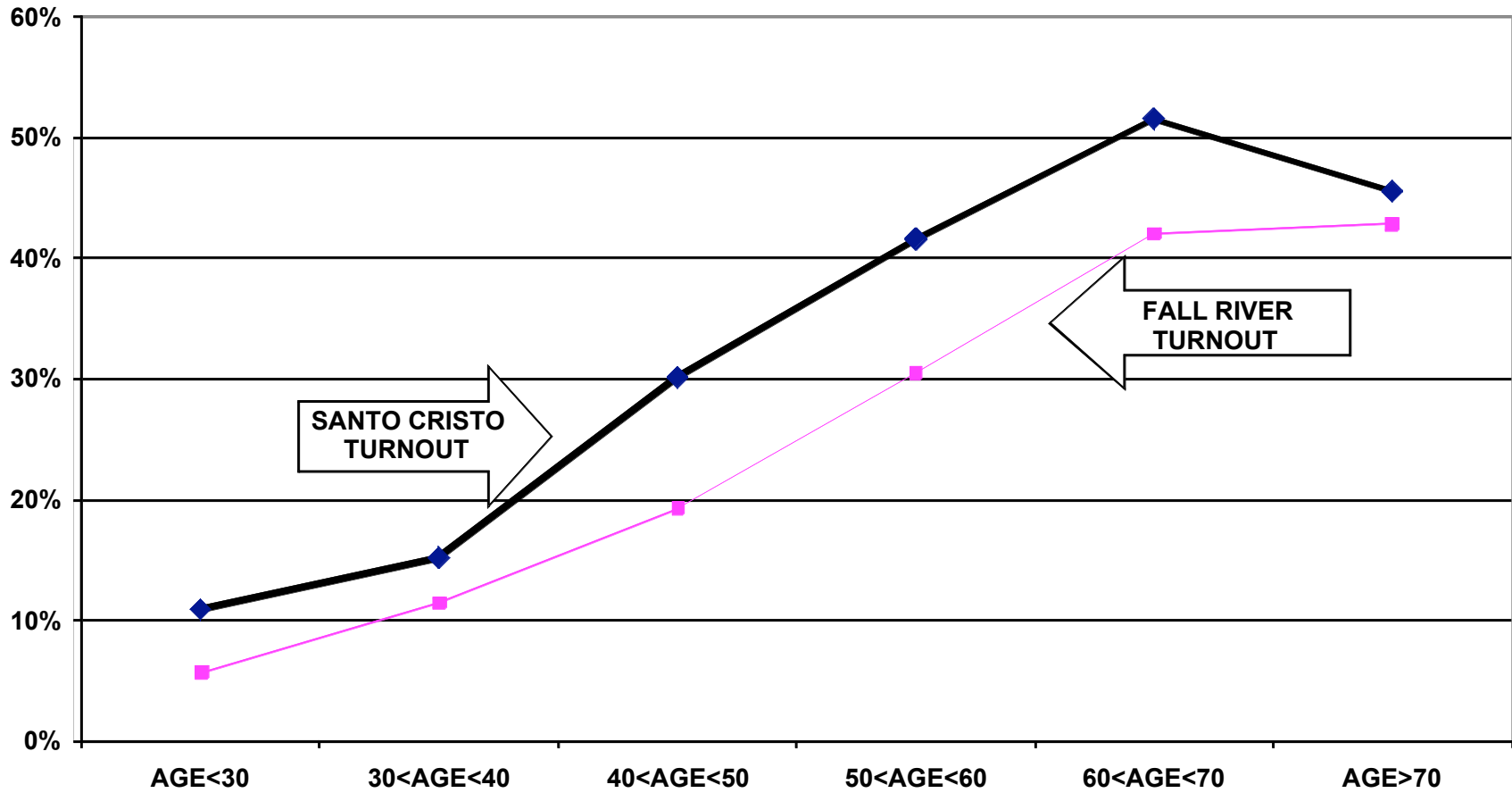
The following graphs for the February, September and November 2008 elections, illustrate the relationship between turnout rates and age. These graphs are for all voters associated with the parish, not just the heads of household.

* 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 based on Fall River residents only.

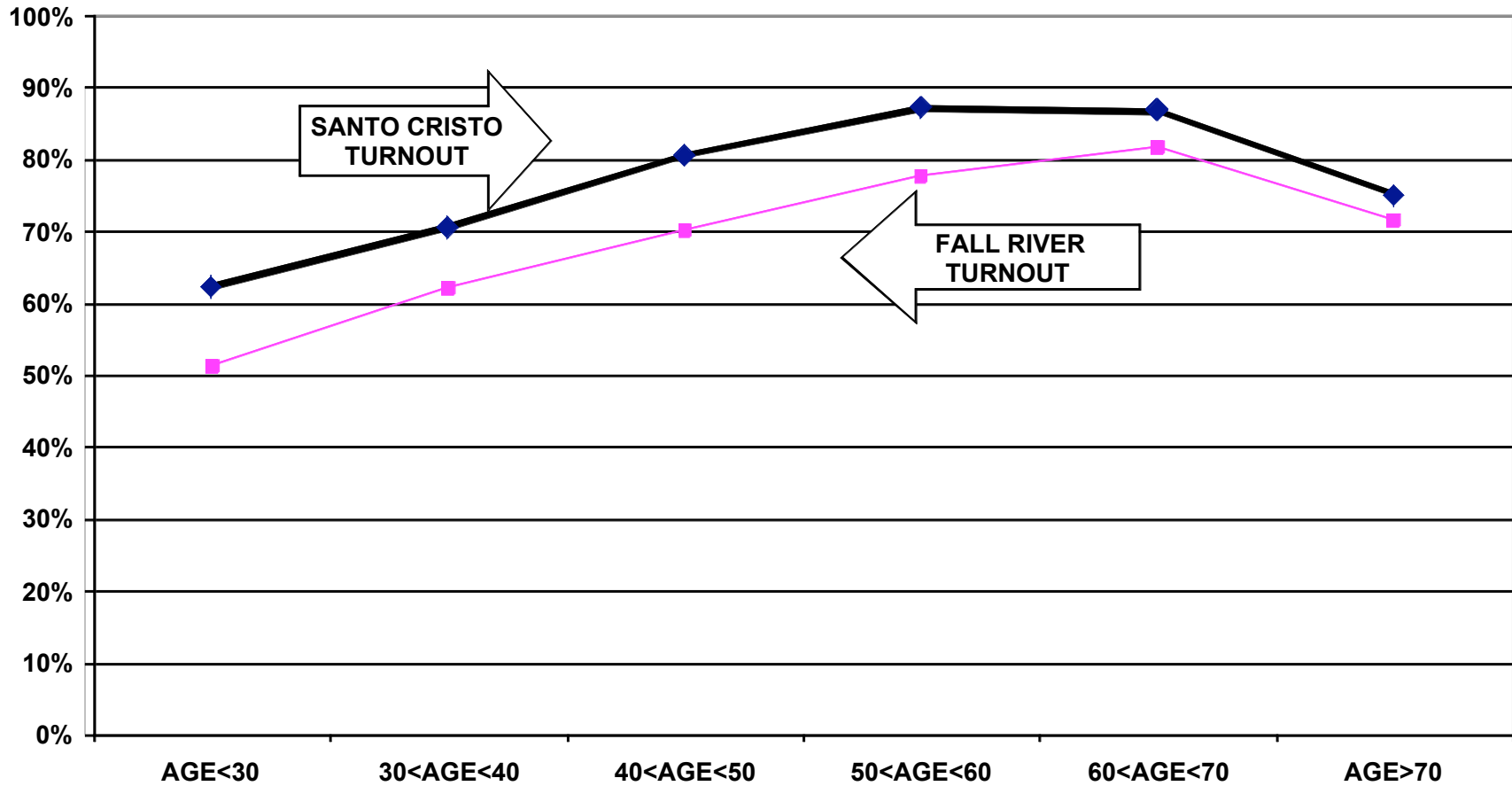
TURNOUT BY AGE FEBRUARY 2008 SANTO CRISTO PARISH ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



TURNOUT BY AGE SEPTEMBER 2008 SANTO CRISTO PARISH ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



TURNOUT BY AGE NOVEMBER 2008 SANTO CRISTO 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 cards for a September Primary and November City election is approximately \$1,300.
- 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 2,000 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. The October 2007 Candidate Night for Mayor at Santo Cristo 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
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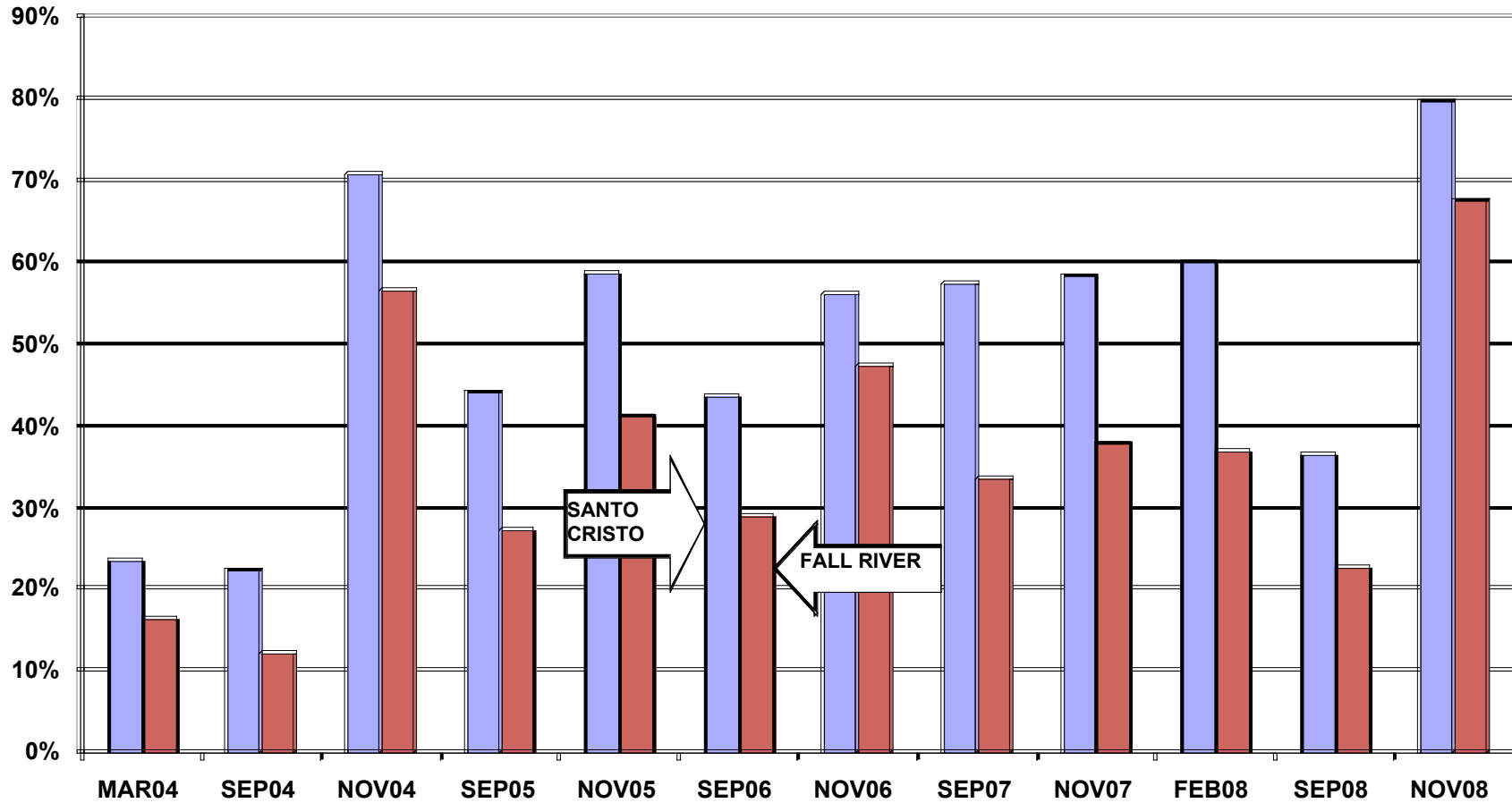
**HISTORICAL DATA: SANTO CRISTO PARISH
REGISTRATION - VOTING**

MEMBERS RESIDING IN FALL RIVER	3,844	
MEMBERS REGISTERED TO VOTE IN THE CITY OF FALL RIVER	1,690	HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD
	2,085	ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

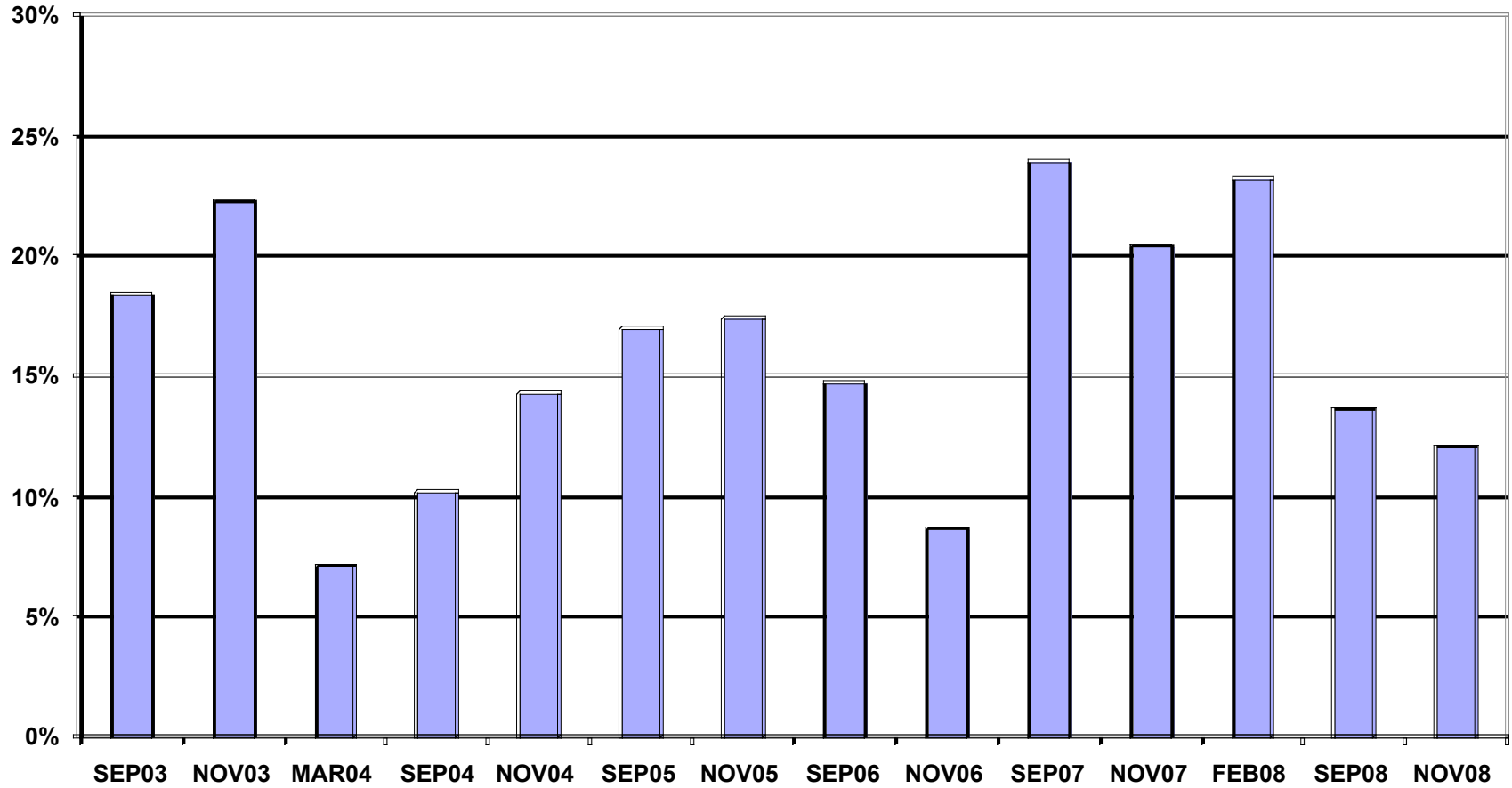
VOTING PERFORMANCE OF FALL RIVER RESIDENTS

	HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD	AS PERCENT OF ALL REGISTERED MEMBERS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE	CITYWIDE VOTING HISTORY AS PERCENT OF ALL REGISTERED VOTERS)
		COMPARABLE STATISTICS	
VOTERS NOV 2003	1071	61.0%	38.8%
VOTERS MAR 2004	412	23.5%	16.3%
VOTERS SEP 2004	393	22.4%	12.2%
VOTERS NOV 2004	1242	70.8%	56.4%
VOTERS SEP 2005	722	44.2%	27.2%
VOTERS NOV 2005	958	58.6%	41.2%
VOTERS SEP 2006	722	43.6%	28.8%
VOTERS NOV 2006	958	56.0%	47.3%
VOTERS SEP 2007	727	57.4%	33.4%
VOTERS NOV 2007	739	58.3%	37.9%
VOTERS FEB 2008	881	60.0%	36.8%
VOTERS SEP 2008	534	36.4%	22.7%
VOTERS NOV 2008	1170	79.6%	67.5%

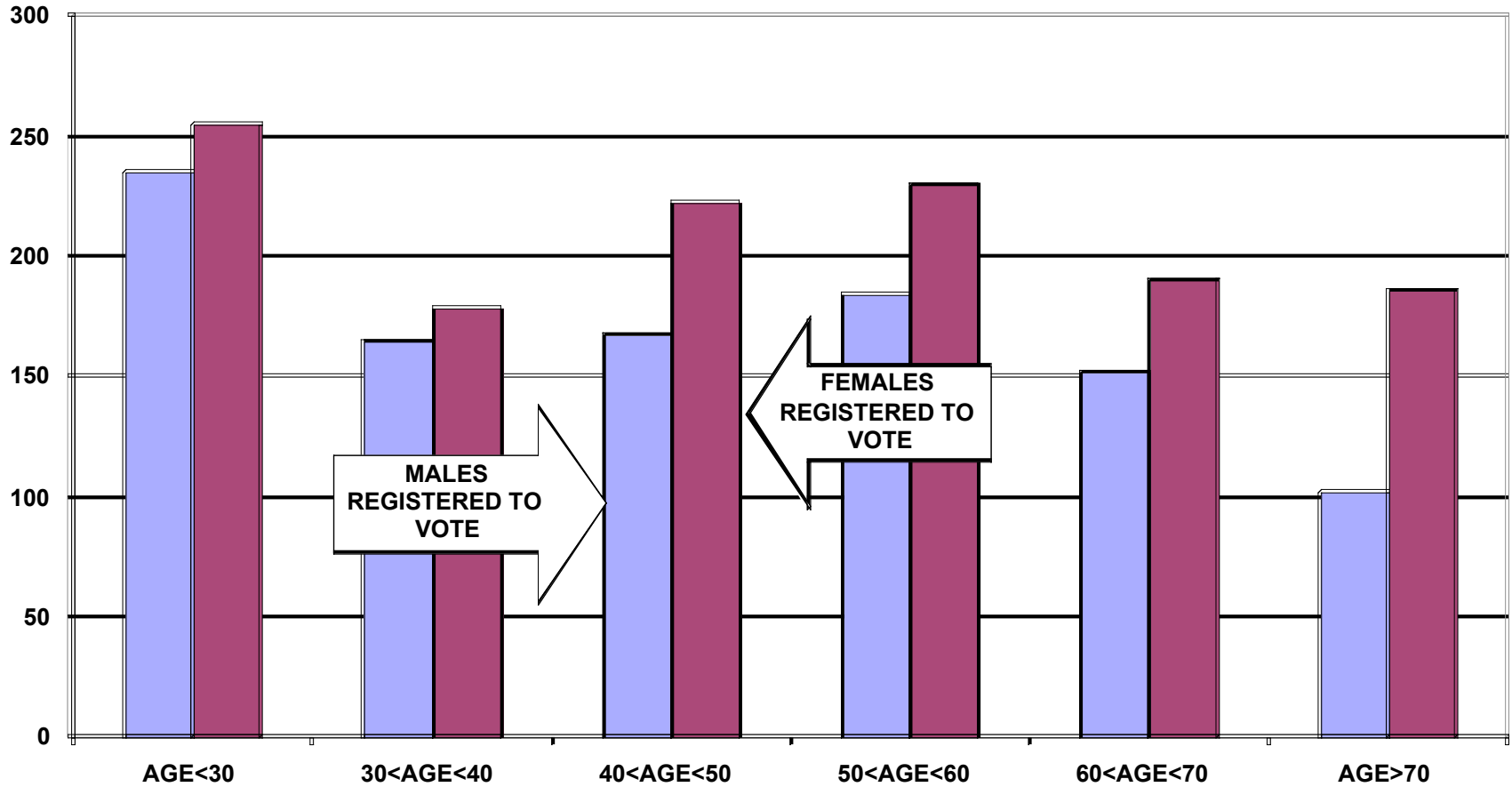
REGISTERED VOTER TURNOUT COMPARISON BETWEEN FALL RIVER AND SANTO CRISTO HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD



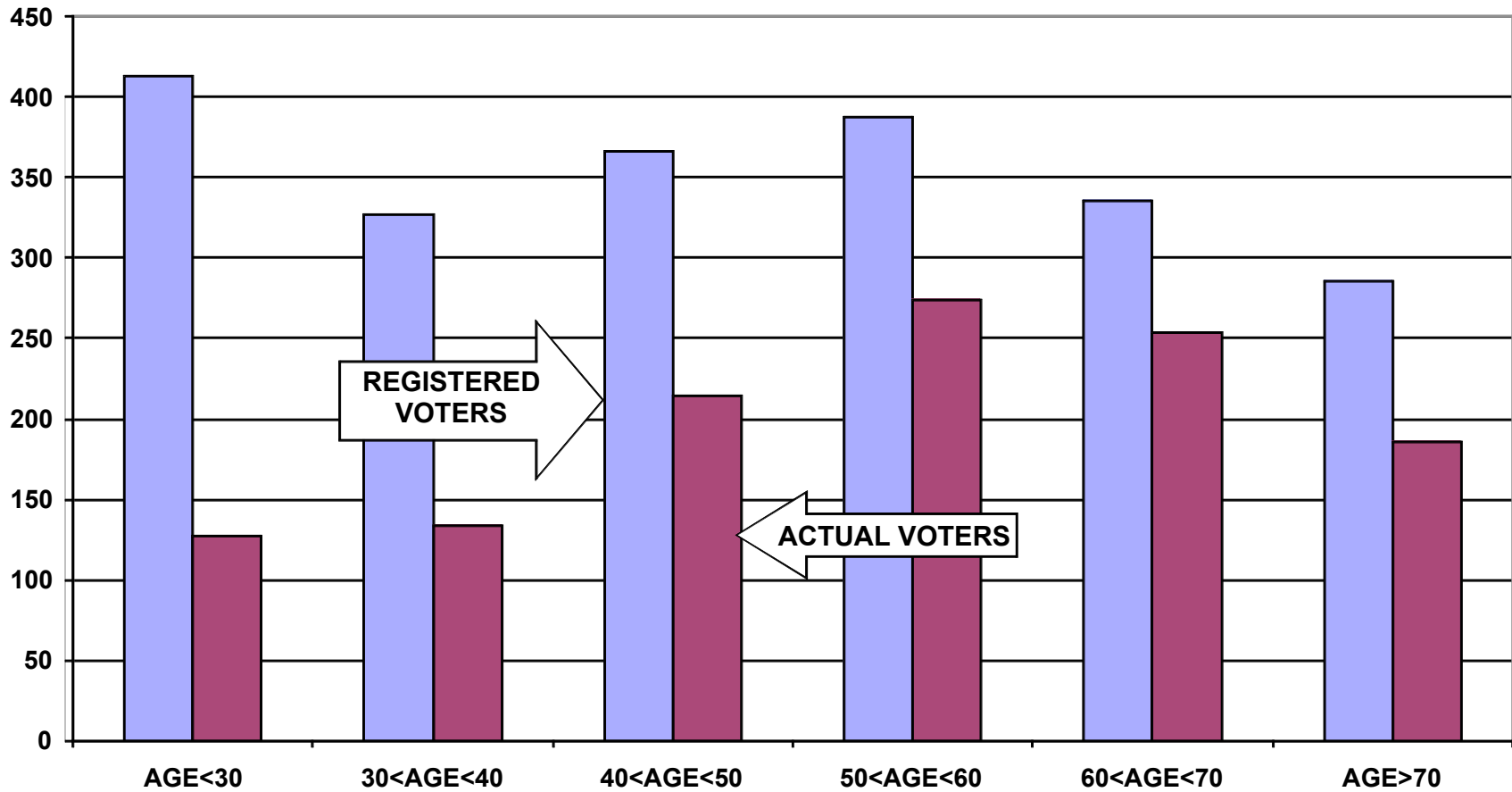
**DIFFERENCE IN VOTER TURNOUT BETWEEN
FALL RIVER VOTERS AND SANTO CRISTO VOTERS
HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD**



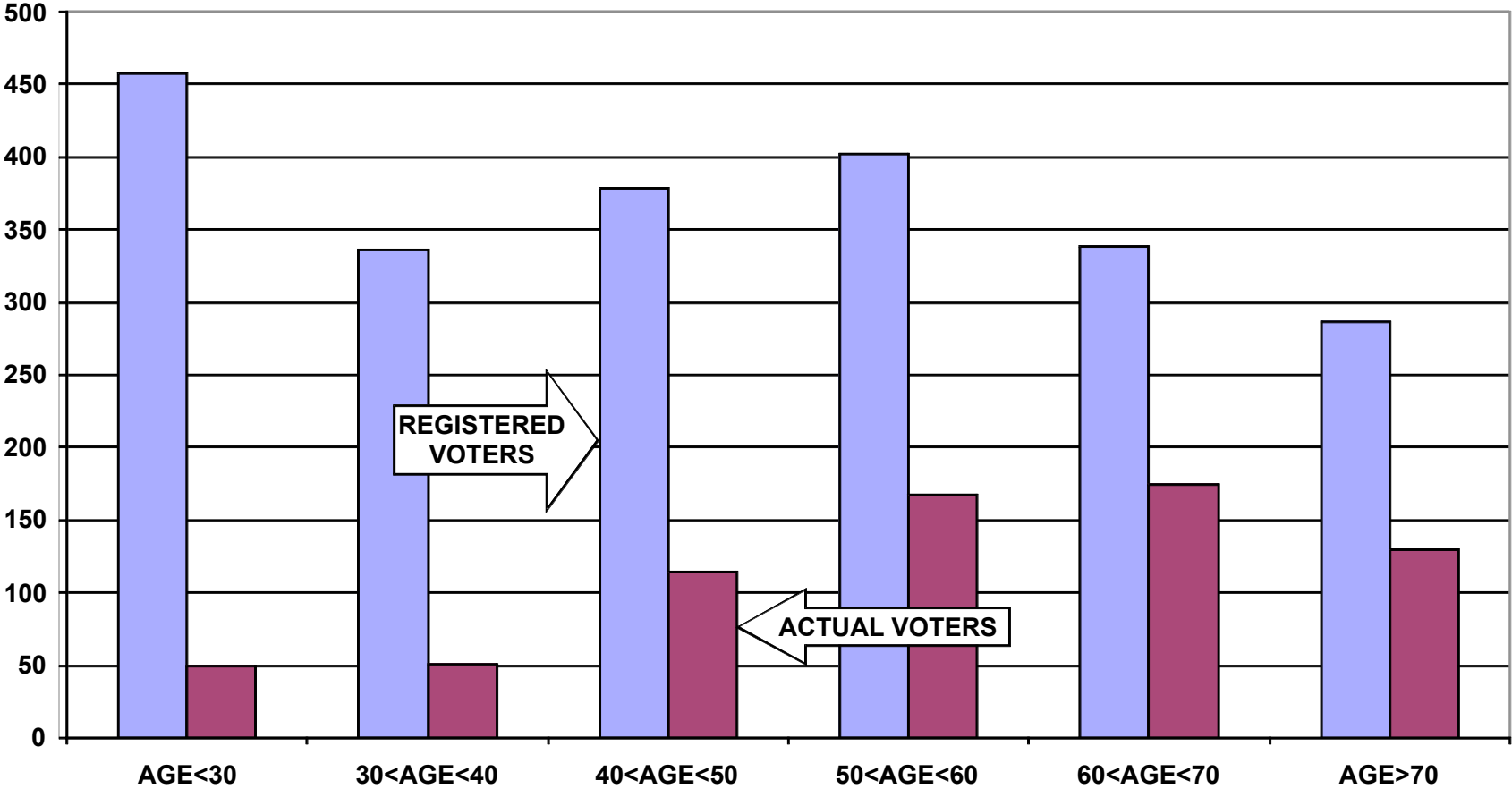
VOTER REGISTRATION BY AGE AND GENDER SANTO CRISTO ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS



**REGISTERED VOTERS VERSUS ACTUAL VOTERS FEBRUARY 2008
SANTO CRISTO PARISH
ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS**



**REGISTERED VOTERS VERSUS ACTUAL VOTERS SEPTEMBER 2008
SANTO CRISTO PARISH
ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS**



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

