By Colleen Jaycox, Christine Bauer, Sara Hahn, & Christina Perrino

The League of Women Voters of St. Louis Integrated Communication Campaign 5/8/07

Situation Analysis

A comprehensive situational analysis of the League of Women Voters of St. Louis was performed so that a clear understanding of the membership problem and opportunity could be gained. In-depth research about the national League of Women Voters and the local St. Louis chapter follows.

The League of Women Voters' Mission

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

It does not support or oppose any political party or any candidate but does take action on selected government issues in the public interest.

Principles are concepts of government, supported by the League as a whole, which constitute the authorization for adoption of national, state and local Program.

Vision, Beliefs, and Intentions

A nonpartisan political membership organization, which:

- acts after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels
- builds citizen participation in the democratic process
- engages communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy

Believes in:

- respect for individuals
- the value of diversity
- the empowerment of the grassroots, both within the League and in communities
- the power of collective decision making for the common good

That will:

- act with trust, integrity and professionalism
- operate in an open and effective manner to meet the needs of those we serve, both members and the public
- take the initiative in seeking diversity in membership
- acknowledge our heritage as we seek out path to the future.

About the League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, has fought since 1920 to improve our systems of government and impact public policies through citizen education and advocacy. The League's enduring vitality and resonance comes from its unique decentralized structure. The League is a grassroots organization, working at the national, state and local levels.

There are Leagues in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Hong Kong, in addition to the hundreds of local Leagues nationwide. The League of Women Voters of the United States and the League of Women Voters Education Fund operate at the national level with grassroots support from state and local Leagues.

The League of Women Voters is strictly nonpartisan; it neither supports nor opposes candidates for office at any level of government. At the same time, the League is wholeheartedly political and works to influence policy through advocacy. It is the original grassroots citizen network, directed by the consensus of its members nationwide. The 900 state and local Leagues – comprising a vast grassroots lobby corps that can be mobilized when necessary.

Over time, the League's legislative priorities change to reflect the needs of society and critical issues of concern. The organization remains true to its basic purpose: to make democracy work for all citizens. The League of Women Voters makes a difference in the lives of citizens because of the energy and passion of thousands of committed members.

League of Women Voters of St. Louis

The St. Louis City and St. Louis County League of Women Voters came together at the St. Louis Women's Club to form one united league, the League of Women Voters of St. Louis, thus marking a truly historic moment in the life of one of the oldest Leagues in the country.

Issues Addressed by the League

For more than 80 years, the League has helped to improve the general welfare of Americans. Some of the League's earliest causes included support for child labor laws, minimum wage, compulsory education and equal opportunity for women. Some of these issues affected the creation of laws that are still in force today.

A brief review of some other issues in which the League took a leadership role reads like a historical summary of our nation. The League has been involved in environmental issues, the fight against poverty and discrimination, the civil rights movement, reproductive freedom, health care reform and became a major advocate for campaign finance reform.

In addition, the St. Louis chapter takes on a number of local government issues each year. The members attend lectures, develop study groups and lobby for change.

Roles

The League has two separate and distinct roles.

First, there is the Education Fund, which conducts voter service and citizen education activities. The Education Fund is a 501(c) (3) corporation, a nonprofit tax-deductible educational

organization. Established in 1957, the Education Fund provides research, publications and forums on public policy issues and disseminates information and training that helps citizens be thoughtfully engaged in the democratic process.

In communities across the nation, Leagues are well known for providing voters with factual, nonpartisan information on candidates and ballot issues. State and local Leagues are also known for hosting citizen educational forums on critical public policy issues of the day. In short, the League is well recognized for its ability to make complex and controversial issues accessible to the non-expert citizen in a balanced manner, for its ability to gather citizens with diverse views and for its expertise as a trainer of community leaders and activists.

Secondly, there is the League of Women Voters, a membership organization, which conducts action and advocacy and is a nonprofit 501(c) (4) corporation.

The League of Women Voters believes...

- in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States
- that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible
- that responsible government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems which affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy, and adopt domestic policies which facilitate the solution of international problems
- that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing, and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government
- that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems, and that the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace
- that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic, or administrative discrimination

History

The League of Women Voters was formed in 1920 as an outgrowth of the movement to give women the right to vote following the passage of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution. That amendment was ratified in 1920, after a 57-year struggle. The League was characterized as a "mighty political experiment" designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters. It encouraged them to use their new power to participate in shaping public policy.

Carrie Chapman Catt is generally credited as being the founder of the League. When she first wrote of how she envisioned the League in April 1919, she wrote, "The politicians used to ask

why we wanted to vote. They seemed to think we want to do something particular with it, something we were not telling about. They did not understand that women wanted to help improve the general welfare of the people."

One of the first local chapters of the League of Women Voters began in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1926, the League had more than 300,000 members nationwide and nearly 3,000 members in St. Louis. Today nationwide membership is less than 100,000 and the St. Louis chapter has about 500 members. The average St. Louis Leaguer is 65 years old. The League wants to recruit new and active members to the organization at national and local levels.

The League remains committed to voter registration and education as well as lobbying efforts on its varying issues at every level of government.

League of Women Voters of St. Louis Board of Directors

President: Jeanne Morrel-Franklin

1st V. P. Dev.: vacant

Acting Development Chair:

2nd V. P. Membership:

3rd V. P. Program:

Secretary:

MaryBeth Reynolds

Treasurer:

Betty Ann Gilbert

Enid Tennenbaum

MaryBeth Reynolds

Becky Clausen

Benefits of Membership

The League of Women Voters states that the benefits of membership in the group include receiving information on local, state and national political issues. This information comes in the form of newsletters for each level of government. Other indirect benefits include education in public affairs, participation in lobbying, influence on policy-making and social networking.

Membership Demographics

Market Analysis

Currently the members of the LWV participate in politics in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Hong Kong. There are over 900 Leagues in the United States. Membership is open to both men and women 18 years old or older, but the average age of the members is 65 years.

Audience Political Involvement

Although people are becoming more involved in politics than ever, they want to join partisan groups and support their political party. The country is becoming more politically segmented, and the topic of politics is becoming less taboo. Therefore, people want to show that they belong to a party and that they actively support it.

According to The Health Communication Unit (THCU) at the Center for Health Promotion, University of Toronto, the "baby boomer" group has been divided into two different segments:

early and late boomers. The early boomers (individuals born between 1946 and 1956) are more likely to be involved in politics than their late counterparts. When asked, "In general would you say you follow politics and public issues very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely or not at all," 70% of people between the ages of 45 and 54 said they followed very closely or somewhat closely. THCU infers that it may be easier to engage this group in political issues.

Audience Volunteering

According to the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, members of the "baby boom" generation (individuals born between the years 1946 and 1964) generally join non-profit groups that they believe can make a difference. This is influenced by the time period when they were raised. They were coming of age in a radical era, so they continue to want to make changes in the country.

In a survey completed in 2005 by the Corporation for National and Community Service, baby boomers volunteer more than any other age group. Nearly one third of all boomers volunteered for formal groups in the year the survey was conduced. Although individuals 65 years or older volunteer more hours yearly, the boomers ranked second with an average of 51 hours of volunteering a year. If this group follows the pattern of the age group ahead of them, they will continue to volunteer more hours as they grow older and reach retirement age.

Promotion

Value of League Membership

The League of Women Voters is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Join LWV and be directly involved in shaping the important issues to keep our community strong, safe and vibrant. As an LWV member, you are a part of an organization where smart, active leaders work to create change in their communities.

Current National Recruitment Efforts

Currently, the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) has launched a nationwide Membership Recruitment Initiative (MRI). In the past 10 years, the league's membership has declined by 16.7 percent, and between 2005 and 2006, the League lost over 3,500 members. Without new members, the LWV cannot fulfill its mission. Therefore, the LWVUS has developed this recruitment initiative to bring a diverse group of new members into the League. Right now, the initiative is in its one-year pilot phase, in which five pilot Leagues across the country are being tested. As the pilot develops, the League will measure what is most successful and put out a final report that shares lessons learned and provides all Leagues with a new way to look at membership recruitment. The pilot MRI is targeting women ages 50-65 who have expressed some interest in civic affairs.

The pilot Leagues are implementing the following communications strategies:

- <u>Direct outreach</u> to the media and community to raise the profile of the League (e.g. creating a spokesperson pool and story bank of League members, establishing a "signature" award program, and enhancing voters service activities)
- Outreach to allies and groups that are already interacting with members of the target demographic
- Ongoing outreach to help ensure that every activity is a membership growth opportunity

Also, given that the LWV is well known for its work on election related issues, the League strongly recommends that recruiting is something that can and should be done around League's voters' service efforts. In developing the LWV Membership Recruitment Initiative, research found that LWV media coverage peaked around the 2004 elections. A significant amount of that coverage surrounded the local League election related activities, such as voters' guides and candidate forums. With this in mind, the MRI looked to the 2006 elections as a similar period of heightened visibility. To help maximize this, the MRI recommended Leagues incorporating membership recruitment messages into election activities. In order to best leverage existing outreach opportunities, the MRI suggested conducting an assessment of the opportunities that are already planned where League members will communicate with potential new members. Once Leagues have identified the opportunities, Leagues were encouraged to promote the benefits of membership and ways to join in their election activities.

Outside of the Membership Recruitment Initiative, there are already national recruitment efforts being made. On the national website, there is a "Join us" link, where visitors can learn about what League members do and what the League offers to members. There is also a link to apply for membership. Also, there is a link called "The League Story bank," which contains stories of success and triumph from members across the country. Stories highlight the value of membership, particularly personal stories of achievement and leadership. The posted stories are a means of encouraging nonmembers to join.

Current Chapter Recruitment Efforts

While the national League is carrying out its Membership Recruitment Initiative, local Leagues also have or are currently pursing their own membership drives.

- LWV of the San Juans: Kicked off its 2006 Membership Drive at the Island Women's Summit at Rosario Resort. The League had a vendor table at the summit with information on the League, new member brochures and a sign-up sheet for people interested in being invited to a League function. Also at the summit, the League hosted a networking table on "Women and Leadership."
- LWV of the Upper Valley: Will be hosting a "Leadership Training" seminar for the Presidents of the Quad States (ME, NH, RI and VT) in June 2007. At the event, there will be a presentation on "Membership Strategies- What Works," which will touch in subjects such as recruitment, member and leadership development and member retention.
- LWV of Johnson County: Developed a Membership and Fundraising Plan, with the objective to increase membership in and funding for the Johnson County League of Women Voters. With 171 members, the League would like to increase that base to 200. As part of the plan, the League has identified target groups and described the win of each target group. They also assigned a budget and created a tactical plan to raise awareness.
- LWV of the Greater Dayton Area: The LWV of Ohio called for a membership drive, so do their part, the Greater Dayton area League plans to increase membership from 315

to 339 members in one year. The League has called upon its members to help increase membership, challenging them to commit to recruitment ideas that the League offered.

Related Activist Groups

FOCUS St. Louis

FOCUS St. Louis is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a thriving, cooperative region by engaging citizens to participate in active leadership roles and to influence positive community change. The organization also functions as the region's citizen's league. They promote good government, racial equality and social justice, educational opportunities, and sustainable infrastructure. They value citizen involvement, diversity, quality leadership, regional perspective, community consensus, and focused outcomes.

The Junior League of St. Louis

The Junior League of St. Louis (JLSL) is an organization of women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. With a focus on strengthening families, the JLSL provides volunteers, program funding and technical assistance to the community within its focus and areas of concentration: protecting and empowering children and women's health and well being.

Media Coverage

On the local level, there is very little media coverage for the league. On the national level, however, there are several press releases, testimonies, and news clips released about the national league. The national president, Mary G. Wilson, testified before the Committee on House Administration on securing the vote in August 2006. Several press releases highlighting national-level league events are featured on the website, such as hosting Kenyan civic visitors and the "Women in the Americas: Paths to Political Power" event in March 2007. Some examples of news clips featured on the website include an article about the League celebrating 50 years from the Daily Review Online in February 2007, and a feature about voter education from the Enterprise-Record, also in February 2007.

In-House Media

The league has an in-house newsletter called the In League Reporter. It begins with a letter from the chapter president, followed by a calendar of upcoming meetings, and announcements. Then there is a brief description of the different units of the league and updates on what each unit is doing to promote their issues. Next there is a section of news from any unit or study group that is relevant to their topic of discussion. Finally, there is a section about membership updates; i.e., change of addresses/phone numbers, new members, and tributes and memorials.

There are also several publications posted on the league's website relevant to the league's issues. Such publications are brochures, note cards, local, state and national government information, and election resources

An in-house survey has also been conducted in the past to determine members' stances on certain political issues. This survey is made available to members and is used to determine their thoughts on critical issues our nation was facing in the 2006 election year.

Current Messaging

- Citizen-powered democracy
- Reforming the system, protecting our freedoms, engaging the public, promoting global democracy

Corporate Sponsorship

In the past, Harrah's has given the League of Women Voters a grant to produce voters' guides. Harrah's is also committed to informing voters about civic issues and has been identified as a potential donor for financial support for the member drive.

In addition, Macy's has helped the league with fundraising efforts and is also a possible contributor for financial support.

Individual Donations

The St. Louis Chapter of the League of Women Voters only received half of their expected dollar amount through donations in 2005.

Politician Involvement

Given that it is a non-partisan organization, political candidates do not have any direct effect on promotion for the league and its causes. However, politicians are greatly involved in the league in that the league hosts community forums, speaker series, and study groups in which politicians tend to come to. Political figures are also very important and active members of the league itself.

Voting Trends

The following are voting trends that were taken from the U.S. Census Bureau.

- 65% of women citizens reported voting in the 2004 presidential election
- 30% of eligible women are not registered to vote
- Almost half of registered unmarried women do not vote
- Married people, veterans, people with more education, and people with higher incomes are more likely to vote
- Non-Hispanic white citizens have the highest level of voter turnout with 67%, followed by black citizens with 60%, Hispanic with 47%, and Asian 44%
- Rate for naturalized citizens voting is 54%, whereas native-born is 65%
- Citizens in the Midwest are more likely to register to vote than those in other regions; 68% in the Midwest
- Older citizens more likely to vote than younger ones; 72% of those 55+, only 47% of those 18-24
- Of the registered non-voters, 20% said they were too busy or had conflicting work or school schedule so they didn't' vote; 15% said they were ill, disabled or family emergency; 11% said they were not interested in election or felt vote wouldn't matter

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Only non-partisan group
- St. Louis chapter has a very rich local history within the league
- National organization with chapters in every state
- Aforementioned benefits offered to members

Weaknesses

- Although they claim non-partisan, they take stances on issues that tend to fall within political party lines
- The word women is used in the title, and although men are welcome it may limit the participation of males
- Weekday morning meeting times
- Lack of diversity in membership roles
- Inactivity of current members
- Lack of external communication (PSA's, features, op-eds, etc.)

Opportunities

- Women are becoming politically involved
- Can use internet to inform about issues
- Hillary Clinton's push to get women to register to vote
- Close-knit St. Louis community
- Growing baby boomer/empty nester population

Threats

- Private interests such as career development, family, religion
- Political beliefs or involvement with other partisan organizations

Timing of Campaign

Months of the year:

- August-October: strongest recruiting months
- December-January: not a good time due to holidays
- Focus strongest on months before major elections, avoid holidays

Publics

Primary

- Early baby boomers interested in civic affairs
- Current members

Secondary

- Media
- Other related political organizations and individuals

Goal

Launch the St. Louis chapter member drive to increase by 25% in two years to attract new, younger, more active members.

Key Messages

- I. The League of Women Voters makes a difference in civic affairs.
- II. The League is an excellent vehicle for community interaction and advocacy in municipal affairs.
- III. The League is an ideal organization for early baby boomers who demonstrated political activism in the 1960s and 1970s.

Objectives

- I. To increase awareness of the St. Louis League of Women Voters among publics by the end of 2008
- II. To recruit 80 new members from the early baby boomer age via outside means of communication by the end of 2009
- III. To use current members and internal communication to recruit 20 new members by the end of 2009

Strategies and Tactics

Objective I

To increase awareness of the St. Louis League of Women Voters among publics by the end of 2008

Strategy

Increase local media coverage of the St. Louis chapter

Tactics

- Write radio PSA's informing potential members about the League and its upcoming events
- Develop feature story about the local chapter and its contributions to local voting efforts and submit it to local newspapers
- Create a list of local media contacts that may be interested in news about the League and consistently update it
- Implement a press release and letter to the editor template to be used for informing the media about future events
- Design a phone campaign where current members can call radio shows to discuss League events
- Create a space-available ad for print media
- Pitch the media about League accomplishments and activities
- Submit information about all League events and meetings to community event calendars in local news media
- Provide photographs of noteworthy events to local media to garner pictorial publicity

Strategy

Develop communication and publicity materials to inform potential members

Tactics

- Revamp the local chapter Web site to include more detailed information about the league, prior media placements, events, etc. as demonstrated by the national website
- Create a brochure outlining the details and benefits of membership to be distributed at events and at related business and organizational offices
- Create materials providing the details and benefits of membership to present to potential members, such as PowerPoint, fact sheet, talking points, etc.
- Post notices for meetings and events on community bulletin boards at area grocery stores, coffee shops, book stores, businesses, community centers, libraries, etc.
- Design a traveling exhibit about the League to travel to places such as:
 - o St. Louis libraries
 - o St. Louis Art Museum
 - o St. Louis History Museum
 - Area campuses
 - o The JCC
 - o St. Louis YMCAs and YWCAs
 - Community centers
- Design a commemorative stamp for the League

Strategy

Expand partnership with related activist group FOCUS St. Louis and establish partnerships with other related activist groups, such as the Junior League of St. Louis

Tactics

- Send direct communication, such as brochures and fact sheets, about the League to FOCUS St. Louis and Junior League St. Louis for special events
- Ask groups to include information about the League in their respective newsletters, mailings and Web sites
- Host a joint voters' forum with FOCUS St. Louis and/or Junior League of St. Louis
- Compel League representatives to visit the groups' meetings and give presentations about the League

Objective II

To recruit 80 new members from the early baby boomer age via outside means of communication by the end of 2009

Strategy

Incorporate recruitment of new members into existing League events

Tactics

- Invite non-members to League events and have a sign-in sheet at every meeting and event, and follow up with call or letter to each new attendee
- Allow non-members to join the League for a discounted, trialmembership price and then ask them to renew at full-price for the next year
- Distribute information regarding League and membership benefits at candidate forums
- Give gift memberships to guest speakers

Strategy Creating

Creating new events for recruitment of members

Tactics

- Host evening socials at St. Louis landmarks, such as:
 - o St. Louis History Museum
 - o Missouri Botanical Garden
 - o St. Louis Art Museum
 - Old Courthouse
- Hold a one-day educational forum to introduce non-members to the League, to learn about benefits of membership and provide information about basic politics and issues
- Invite potential members to a politically-themed film series
- Create a "Retrospective Night" event to discuss civic activism from the 1960s and 1970s. Invite speakers and encourage discussion about the Vietnam War, the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Rights Movement to re-energize participants' sense of civic duty.

Strategy

Improve communication with non-member visitors who attend League events

Tactics

• Use sign-in sheets at events to keep track of visitors at events

- Implement follow-up correspondence with non-member visitors after events
- Pass out evaluations to non-member visitors at events to gather outsiders' opinions and feedback
- Disperse board members at events to mingle with non-member visitors
- Require board members to greet those entering at the door

Objective III

To use current members and internal communication to recruit 20 new members by the end of 2009

Strategy

Encourage members to recruit non-members

Tactics

- Designate the kickoff meeting in September as a "Bring a Friend to League Day" and persuade each existing member to bring at least one friend
- Persuade members to pay for and give gift memberships on Father's/Mother's day, holidays or to celebrate a retirement
- Develop mentorship program to match current members with nonmember visitors and foster relationships to encourage transition into League membership
- Use members to target politically active people featured in local media and send them personalized invitations to join the League

Strategy

Utilize internal communication to encourage and support current members in their recruitment efforts

Tactics

- Devote a section of the newsletter, the In League Reporter, to ways to recruit new members. Offer tips and suggestions of where current members can locate potential members and how to encourage them to become members. This section should also encourage positive word-of-mouth discussion about the benefits of League membership.
- Present members with a handout detailing ways to recruit members at League meetings
- Have a "Membership Drive Update" section in the newsletter, where each issue identifies the League's membership goal of 100 new members and the actual number of new members recruited at that point

Budget

To help underwrite the cost of the campaign, the current corporate sponsors, such as Harrah's and Macy's, would help carry the majority of the expenses. In addition, members of the League would be approached to help underwrite the campaign expenses as well. The following components of the campaign require monetary support from corporate sponsors:

- Brochures
- Flyers
- Public service announcements
- Booth materials
- Travel exhibit materials
- Staff to design, create and product media and communication materials and revamp the website
- Politically-based films
- Evening socials
- Direct communication materials
- Advertisements for print media

Evaluation

In order to evaluate the progress and end success of this program, research must be conducted throughout the two-year campaign. The St. Louis Chapter of the League of Women Voters cannot determine if awareness increased unless trends are measured after each step. Although membership numbers can easily be followed, the League needs to know which events and efforts helped generate the results.

Various forms of evaluation could be conducted after the completion of each strategy. The remainder of this paragraph will discuss these forms for the strategies under Objective I. One way to evaluate the success of the media coverage effort is to simply count the number of times radio stations play the public service announcement; newspapers print the advertisement; or stories written about the League. Although this will provide a good set of numbers, it does not tell much more. Instead, attendance at events could be counted to see if radio spots and print articles did increase the number of people. Articles should not only be counted, but also should be studied for their content. Another important element is whether they are positive, correct and informative. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the website, an internal survey could be conducted asking members of the League what could be improved. After the revamp is completed, members should be asked again for their opinions. The success of the traveling exhibit could be determined by calculating the number of people who view it at each sight. Local sales of the commemorative stamp could help establish if it helped raise awareness. The effectiveness of the partnerships with related activist groups could be determined by input from the groups. They could share how the League's information is being accepted at their meetings.

Most of the strategies under Objectives II and III can be evaluated collectively through an increased number of members joining the League. Special attention should be paid to the guests

who attend new or existing meetings or events. Calculations should be kept of the number of people who respond to follow-up efforts after the events. Similarly, research should be conducted to see how many people renew their trial-membership the next year for full-price. The same should be done to see if guest speakers accept their gift membership and continue to attend events. Attendance at each newly created event should be compared to that of existing events. Any new event that greatly increases normal attendance numbers should be duplicated. Evaluations filled out at events should be examined for feed-back in order to continue improving recruitment efforts.

The evaluation for Objective III should follow many of the means established under the previous objective. Calculations should be kept of how many people come back for future events after "Bring a Friend Day." The same should be done to see how many people use their gift memberships and respond to personalized letters following publication in a newspaper. Finally, evaluation should be conducted to determine the effectiveness of internal communication promoting the membership efforts. A survey could be carried out asking leaguers if they followed any of the suggestions presented in the newsletter or handout.

Following these evaluations after the completion of each strategy will confirm whether the communication campaign was a success or not. Areas deemed successful should then be duplicated later or tweaked to create even better results. Any portion that does not deliver desirable results can be eliminated completely.