

## CRAFTING A POLITICAL MESSAGE FROM A SCIENTIFIC SURVEY

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CRAFTING A POLITICAL MESSAGE FROM A SCIENTIFIC SURVEY

HONORS THESIS

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores crafting political messages in a local setting through the use of polling data. The merits of polls are often misunderstood in a political campaign. News outlets publish different types of polling results, but less often are polls publicly exposed for their true values—testing language. People may ask why political campaigns run particular TV ads or a direct mail piece about one issue rather than another issue. I will answer this through a detailed description illustrating how to construct a political survey and how to interpret the results.

By using a quantitative method I will show—through concrete examples—how I created a political message in a city council campaign in San Marcos, Texas in the fall of 2009. I will show both the initial poll questionnaire, the survey results, how I interpreted results to develop the message, the final election results, and post election analysis.

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I have had a career in political consulting starting in 2005 and must thank the key candidates that I have had the honor of working for: City Council members Chris Jones and John Thomaides, District Attorney Sherri Tibbe, and a special thanks to State Representative Patrick Rose. My thesis has elements of scientific facts, but the theories and techniques presented in my thesis can be described as the internal conversation that happens during a campaign. This conversation would not be possible without my mentor William Yarnell. I want to give another special thanks to Scott Gregson for all the political opportunities he has given me throughout the years of our friendship.

## **Introduction**

Why conduct a survey to create a political message? The answer is that alternate language can be tested and accurately selected to establish the most effective method in creating political campaign messages. The ill-advised alternative is the consultant's gut instincts that keep the campaign second-guessing itself, often leading to a chaotic situation. This thesis will explain why a survey is the foundation to any political campaign message. In any situation, the campaign can refer to the survey. For example, the survey can show how to create negative or positive messages and how to respond to most political situations.

How a pollster creates detailed survey questions is truly up to the pollster because he or she has a lot of flexibility in writing the survey. The basic goal of a survey is to get an accurate response. To effectively achieve this a number of standards should be understood before writing the survey. I will briefly go over standards that help any type of survey to keep an even playing field so all respondents will understand the question at hand in the same way and so the results will be as accurate as possible.

## **Writing a survey**

First, the length of the questionnaire should be as short as possible; the shorter the survey the more likely it is that a respondent will stay on the call. Also, writing shorter surveys allows for more concise questioning. The vocabulary should match the social economical status of the geographical locations polled so the respondents feel comfortable with the question—as though they are talking to a friend who does not use absolute proper grammar. By using appealing questions the survey will have a better chance of having a respondent stay on the line and complete the entire questionnaire. An example of this in my survey is a question about Barack Obama; a question that most, if not everybody, will have an opinion on. The most important part of keeping a survey honest is not to ask leading questions in a standard question. It is only okay to ask leading questions if you're testing campaign language about a particular message, such as “candidate X may say we raised taxes, does this change your mind about candidate Y?” The structure of the question is not in the same category as the type of language but equally important.

The rating scale or response options for questions should be balanced so that the results reflect the extremes of both "strongly support" or "strongly oppose"—this could apply as excellent versus poor on a candidate's favorability. The response choice list gives the respondent options for particularly important issues; such as asking for their number one priority (healthcare, job growth, etc) this list should consist of as few options as possible. If the list of issue priorities is running long, the best way to find accurate responses is to ask a follow up question asking the second or number two priority issues after the respondent gives the number one. With that said, all of the questions must



follow a logical order—question 1 will affect how the respondent feels about question 2 and so on.

I will use a survey done in San Marcos Texas, in the fall of 2009 that I wrote to help re-elect John Thomaides—a two-term City Council member. First, a few things to keep in mind about the general overview of a survey; it is important to know how long you want the survey to be. This is important for sample size, which will be discussed later, and will determine the cost of the survey. These factors will depend on whether the pollster wants to use interactive voice recording methods, “IVR,” or live phone banking. The IVR method has proven somewhat accurate, but since the technology is new IVR lacks the scientific communities confidence: that is to say the verdict is still out on its reliability. The example survey conducted in the thesis is a live phone call survey.

In a survey the goals to achieve for the pollster are as follows: favorability of the government (local and national), name recognition of candidates, issue priority for the future, and testing of campaign language. Once tested, each of these results helps a campaign find a message and prepare for the issue facing the campaign and candidate. In order to keep my thesis on track, I will go over only the broad questions and leave out the detailed questions to give an overview of how to write a survey. I have attached the complete written survey. (Labeled Appendix A.)

To begin any survey the interviewer must introduce himself or herself to the potential respondent. An example of this is language is: *“Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ calling on behalf of Opinion Strategies, a research firm. Your number was selected at random. We are conducting a short opinion poll about politics in San Marcos. I assure you that your opinions are completely confidential and this is not a*

*sales call.*” The respondent must feel that their opinions will not be sold and that the survey is only seeking opinions and not selling anything. Opinion Strategies is my political consulting firm; using a name such as Opinion Strategies helps keep the survey accurate. If AT&T runs a survey and starts the call by saying this is a call on behalf of AT&T, the survey will not be accurate because the respondent will have some sort of bias towards AT&T. Next, the survey must ask a qualifying question to filter non-interested people whose opinions won’t matter.

To find out if the person on the phone is a registered voter and a voter who lives in the district being polled the question should use language such as: “*Are you registered to vote in the city limits of San Marcos?*” If the answer is yes, the survey starts and if the answer is no, the caller will respectfully terminate the call. This is because all respondents must be registered to vote in the city limits of San Marcos for the survey to be accurate. The survey needs to find how likely the interviewee will be to vote in the election in question. The survey should filter out people who are not likely to vote in the election.

It is also important to filter out people who are not likely to vote because likely voters will share a commonality, and in this example the voter turnout was predicted to be historically low, so the survey needed to talk to a core group of likely voters. The question was as follows: “*As you may know, this November an election will be held for two City Council seats in San Marcos. How likely are you to vote in this election – very likely, somewhat likely, or not too likely?*” If the respondent answered "very" or "somewhat likely," the respondent went to the first survey question, but if he or she answered "not too likely," the call was again, respectfully terminated. The way to pick

which numbers are used for a survey will be discussed in detail in the section about sample sizes.

The first question to ask in any survey is a federal or nationwide question. This helps you understand from a very broad standpoint how people view broad issues. I did this through the following question: *“In general, how would you rate the job President Barack Obama is doing?”* By asking a national political question this also helps people to stay on the phone and are more likely to complete the survey because most people have an opinion about the President. Next, I asked a similar, but more of a local question: *“In general, do you think that the City of San Marcos is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?”* This question helps you understand people's desire for a change or for continuation of current city policies. This question is very general; to understand what issues are affecting people, next I asked a more specific question about quality of life issues.

The question of what issues are top priorities is crucial in a survey because it gives a way of choosing what topics to develop in the message. I asked two questions about top priorities; one was top quality of life priority and the next was the top priority for the next City Council. The first was: *“When it comes to preserving or improving San Marcos’s quality of life, which of these should be the TOP priority? – Improving parks and increasing open green space, reducing traffic congestion, fighting crime or improve downtown parking?”* Then I ask a more direct question defining philosophical differences: *Which of the following do you think should be the City Council’s Number One priority? Tax and spend less, promote job growth or slow down development.”* I broke this single question of top priority into two questions for a few reasons. First, if the

survey gives too many options it will dilute the responses and not give a clear indication of the top priority. Second, in the midst of an economic recession we had to separate jobs from quality of life priorities; we knew jobs would be a major concern. Next, I tested language about two types of industries the city could try to attract by using tax incentives that would help define what kind of job promotion the voters favor.

The importance of jobs was apparent from constant news coverage about high unemployment and the economic recession in general. What wasn't clear was the level in which people wanted retail jobs versus high paying new industry jobs. I wrote two questions to first define these two options: *"Next I will read you two questions about tax incentives for two types of possible developments. Each will ask your (the interviewee) level of support or opposition. – Tax incentives for companies creating retail and entertainment? And tax incentives for companies creating biomedical, high-tech or new renewable energy jobs?"* The goal of the question is not only to see which kind of jobs people prefer their City Council to promote with taxpayers' money, but also what kind of jobs people wanted to see in their city in general. Next, we tested the profile of all the candidates and incumbents that were running for office or re-election.

By giving a brief description of candidates we can create a profile of the person that is not just based on name alone. This is important because most people who run for local or state office don't have high name recognition. I used the following language to guide the interviewee into a different type of question: *"Switching subjects, next I'll give you a brief description of the candidates running for Place 5. Tell me if you would definitely consider, probably consider, or not consider voting for that candidate for City Council Place 5."* Following this statement would be all the candidate profiles. One

example of a candidate profile follows: “*Shaune Maycock is a 32-year-old small business owner of Blue Skies Aviation, an airplane repair company. Shaune wants to promote economic development while improving natural resources and public safety.*”—Shaune was running for an open seat in Place 5. Following these candidates' profiles I would ask a closing question, such as, based on what you have heard, which of the following candidates would you consider supporting? This allows us to see a glimpse into a very unknown election with low name identification candidates. I dealt with John Thomaides—incumbent City Council Member—in a much different way because he was a “known” quantity.

Because John has been in office for over six years—two terms—I wanted to test his name recognition and favorability by asking the following question: “*Switching to the incumbent of Place 6, what is your opinion of council member John Thomaides? – Strongly support, some what support, some what oppose or strongly oppose?*” This information would provide known favorability and negatives against the incumbent as well as find his name recognition percentage. After this question I asked candidate profile questions about his two opponents and finally asked, of the three candidates in the race, which would you prefer after hearing their candidate profile information. Next, it was important to test general election language that could be.

Last, I tested statements that will help craft political messages with different demographic groups. I stated that a candidate may take one of the following positions during the campaign and, if so, would it make you more likely to support them. The first statement was: “*Establish caps on individual campaign contributions to insure a level playing field and limit undue influence over our City Council.*” This is an example of a

policy position that could be taken, and the results would tell us if we would want to use this type of position. I tested more than two, but I will only give one more example to get to the point: “*Lower property taxes for seniors and the disabled by increasing the homestead exemptions.*” Obviously, this position is directed at a particular age group; that is why we ask questions about their age, gender, ethnicity and political ideology (Republican, Independent, Democratic, other) at the end of survey so we can cross-tabulate each result to find what each age, gender, ethnicity and political ideology thinks about each issue.

## **Confidence level, margin of error and sample size**

The ultimate goal in finding a true accurate method of conducting a survey is to select at random a set of people of a population that will accurately approximate the general population's choices for a given issues. Random selection is a concept whereby everybody has an equal chance of being selected in the polling process. In Chapter 5 of *Survey Research Methods*, Earl Babbie says, “flipping a perfect coin is the most frequently cited example; the 'selection' of a head or a tail is independent of previous selection of heads or tails.”<sup>1</sup> The theory of random sampling is the approach of selecting a group of phone numbers. To find the appropriate sample size the pollster must understand how to choose the confidence levels and margin of error.

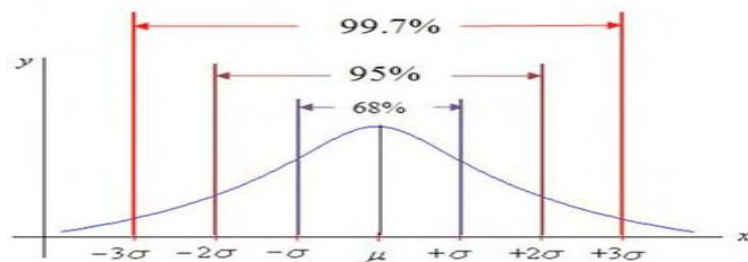
Most polls are published about national subjects, such as, what's the job approval rating of the president. Thus the pollster is using a sample scope of the entire United States, a general population of about 300 million people. Gallup with daily polling data of the entire United States samples about 1,200 respondents with a margin of error of  $\pm 3\%$  and a confidence level of 95%. If a pollster wants to poll a smaller population, he or she will be using a methodology called finite population correction factor, for example, when a pollster is sampling fewer people, such as in a City Council election. The way that pollsters choose voting groups to poll depends upon which state, district, city or school district they are choosing. Most Texas Congressional districts average a little under 650 thousand people; Texas House Representative's Districts average a little over 100 thousand people, and school district and City Council seats vary in size, but can be larger than even Congressional Districts in cities like Austin, Houston, and Dallas.

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<sup>1</sup>Earl Babbie, *Survey Research Methods* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1990), 75.

The pollster in his or her poll must choose the margin of error and confidence level. The industry does have standards or norms when it comes to these two concepts. Most national polls have a margin of error of  $\pm 3\%$  and a confidence level of 95%. This is to say a pollster could change the margin of error to  $\pm 4\%$  and confidence level to 90%—but most pollsters do not. To better understand how a pollster comes up with these numbers and what they mean, it's important to briefly describe the theory behind these ideas and the mathematics behind the statistics.

In running a survey effectively one must decide the appropriate sample size to match the desired margin of error and confidence level. Sample size is directly connected to the choice of margin of error and confidence level. The normal confidence level of 95% is one in which the pollster uses the criteria of two standard deviations (denoted as  $2\sigma$ ) from the mean (denoted below as  $\mu$ ), as shown in the image below.



In order to simplify the survey, mathematically the only two choices are yes or no creating a binomial distribution. Even if we ask for more than one response, such as, are you going to re-elect candidate X, yes, no or undecided. The pollster is only interested in the responses related to the answer yes, they favor an issue or candidate X. Thus most polls are binomial. The mean for such a binomial distribution is  $n$  times  $p$ , or  $np$ , where  $n$  is the sample size and  $p$  is the percentage of people who favor the issue. Thus  $(1-p)$  is the



percentage of the population who disapprove of the issue or candidate. The standard deviation is  $\sqrt{np(1-p)}$ . But in practice the binomial distribution used is the percent of people used in the sample, which is achieved by dividing by  $n$ . Therefore the standard error is computed as the  $\sqrt{\frac{p(1-p)}{n}}$ . The margin of error, denoted by  $ME$ , is two times

the standard deviation for this random variable:  $ME = 2\sqrt{\frac{p(1-p)}{n}}$ . To determine the smallest value of the sample size  $n$  that will give a margin of error of at most 3%, we use

the worst case for which  $p = \frac{1}{2}$ . The equation for  $ME$  becomes

$$ME = 2\sqrt{\frac{.5(1-.5)}{n}} = 2\sqrt{\frac{.25}{n}} = 2\frac{.5}{\sqrt{n}} = \frac{1}{\sqrt{n}}. \text{ Solving for } n, \text{ the equation becomes}$$

$$n = \frac{1}{(ME)^2}. \text{ If the margin of error desired were } \pm 3\%, \text{ then the value of } n \text{ would be}$$

approximately 1111. This is a relatively large number for polls of populations of  $N = 150,000$  or less. The main reason for this is cost.

While polling with a  $\pm 3\%$  margin of error may be a desirable goal, this choice is also very expensive for an average campaign to purchase. Most pollsters use a  $\pm 4\%$  or  $\pm 4.5\%$  margin of error to bring the sample size down and cut the budget in half. Due to budgetary reasons our survey sample size was 208 giving a margin of error  $\pm 6.92\%$ .

## **Analyzing survey results**

Analyzing survey results can be as important as writing the survey. By looking through survey results a pollster can start putting together a foundation for crafting a campaign political message. Through the example survey in Appendix B, I will show how analyzing the poll results led to creating a political message for Councilmember John Thomaides' re-election campaign. When I give four options for a response such as: strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose, it is important to understand how to interpret these results accurately. If a candidate or an issue has high percentages of "somewhat support," this does not necessarily mean the candidate or issue has a strong favorability—these numbers are what the industry calls “soft numbers;” they are very likely to change and don't provide a solid knowledge of support or opposition. The best way to read poll results is to focus on the "strongly support" and "strongly oppose" responses. These categories are the motivators and give the pollster a clearer view of true support and opposition.

I will start with question one, that of asking about the favorability of President Barack Obama. At the time of the survey (September 2009) Obama's overall approval rating was 52% and disapproval rating was 39.9% in the City of San Marcos. His excellent number was 18.3% compared to his poor number of 24%; he has a strong “good” approval rating number of 33.7%. Obama had a 24.4% share of people who viewed him as unfavorable, but indicated they voted for him a year before in the November 2008 general election. This shows his 52% approval rating is soft, and with a 24% strong negative and a weaker 18.3% strong positive, we can deduce that he is more unpopular than popular in the City of San Marcos. This gives us a general understanding

of the problems people feel from a national level—too much government spending, high unemployment rate, and distrust of incumbents—we will have to acknowledge those dissatisfactions with a local electorate in San Marcos. The survey also showed that over half of the San Marcos city limit voters participated in the last Democratic primary election—identifying as Democrats. With a weak number for the Democratic Party’s leader, Barack Obama, it’s safe to say that using Democratic-based language would be ill advised. Next, we must see how these national opinions reflect upon the City of San Marcos’s direction and what people see is the top priority of San Marcos.

The survey results show that the City of San Marcos is heading in the right direction by 59.1% and heading in the wrong direction by 13.9% with a mixed feeling of 20.7% and 6.3% don’t know or refused to answer. This tells us that the general feeling of San Marcos is good and we can include many of the city's achievements in Thomaides’ message.

Next, we ask when it comes to quality of life what is the number one issue facing San Marcos—traffic, public safety, improving parks or improving downtown parking. Traffic is currently the number one quality of life priority at 38.5%, currently second is public safety at 26.4%, and third is improving parks and increasing open green space at 22.1%. By cross tabulation and looking through demographics for support of each of the issues, we found traffic, at over 50%, is the number one issue of concern among self-identifying Republicans and Independents. Democrats’ concerns are much different; their number one issue is improving parks and increasing open green space by 34.9%—yet only 21.7% of Democrats think traffic is the number one issue concerning their quality of life. Traffic is the clear campaign message to deliver to Republicans and

Independents in John Thomaides's re-election campaign. It is also important to look at the public safety number, coming in second. The City of San Marcos has been a relatively safe place to live in for years, and the fact that crime is on the voters' minds gives us a glimpse of how the weak economy is affecting people's priorities. Next, we will discover people's opinion of the number one issue facing the next city council.

The number one issue facing the next City Council is promoting jobs. In every demographic group promoting job growth is the number one issue facing the next city council. Promoting jobs in San Marcos came in a strong first at 57.7%, 16.8% of respondents want to slow down development and 16.3% want less taxes and spending. These results demonstrate that in a struggling economy, if the campaign is not talking about jobs, it is not on message. Now, we will look more closely at what kind of jobs people want the City Government to help promote.

The question the survey asks is about approval for tax incentives for retail and entertainment jobs, and opinions on tax incentives for high-tech, biotech and renewable energy jobs. The results showed 49.1% support of incentives for retail and entertainment companies and 39% opposed to these types of tax incentives. As shown in Obama's approval rating question, it is important to look at the motivators in a four choice response. With that said, 23.1% of residents strongly oppose tax incentives for retail and entertainment while only 18.1% strongly support tax incentives for retail and entertainment. This is compared to 79.8% support for incentives for high-tech, biotech and renewable energy jobs; with only 12.5% opposed to these kinds of tax incentives.

In summary, people are currently split about new tax incentives for retail and entertainment jobs, and more are strongly opposed than strongly supportive of these

incentives. People overwhelmingly support high-tech, biotech and renewable energy jobs. With promoting jobs at 57.7% and tax incentives for high-tech, bio-medical and renewable energy, this gives a clear idea for a political message.

Next, I will show the approval and name recognition of City Council member John Thomaides. Thomaides's name identification was 49.5%—50.5% of respondents did not have an opinion about him, suggesting they did not know who he was. Of those, 49.5% aware of Thomaides, his approval rating is 78.6%, and disapproval rating is 21.3%. Again, by looking at cross tabulation, these numbers change. When looking at a “Very Likely Voter” compared to “Somewhat Likely Voters,” John's name recognition increased to 62.2%. All in all, John needed to address his name recognition. Even with a high approval rating, the majority of voters in San Marcos did not know John and this could have been a problem for an incumbent—the more people who know him, the better his chances for success in the election. As we start crafting Thomaides message, I will show how I used the low name recognition as a positive way to redefine and rebrand his candidacy for a changed voting electorate. By putting Thomaides's two opponents profile in front of the interviewees, we asked whom they would support in the election.

Next, I will show how we used candidate profiles to build an issue profile for candidates that have low name recognition, and the results. In the survey shown in Appendix A and the results in Appendix B, I have shown two City Council races, but I will just analyze John Thomaides'. In the election for place 6, John Thomaides—the incumbent—faced Monica Garcia and Anita Fuller in an at-large City Council seat. John Thomaides was currently in first place at 32.7%. In second place was Thomaides main challenger, Monica Garcia, polled at 11.5%, and Anita Fuller polled third at 6.3%.

Monica Garcia had little to no name identification and after hearing her issues profile, 38.5% of voters would not consider voting for her. Her last name will give her an advantage in the Hispanic area. But she would have to gain the majority among undecided voters and take much of Thomaides's support to win. This will only work if she runs a negative campaign against Thomaides. Anita Fuller has little to no name identification and after hearing her issue profile, 35.1% of voters will not consider voting for her. Her only advantage will be with older voters who self identify with an older candidate. Now I will show the results of testing general language.

I tested four messages but we only chose one to use. The statement we tested was: *lower property taxes for seniors and the disabled by increasing the homestead exemptions.* This idea had an 80.8% support and cross tabulation had this overwhelmingly supported by voters over 55-years-old. Now, I will give a general overview of the survey results that lead to developing a targeted tested campaign message.

After testing Thomaides' approval and disapproval and opponents' issue profile approval and disapproval, I felt positive that we did not need to go negative to win re-election. With a strong positive message about jobs, John could establish a constituency based on promoting new high-tech and renewable energy, and continuing to bring in bio-medical jobs like Grifols—a new bio-medical company the City just helped bring to San Marcos. With both the economy and taxes, a low turnout and older voters disproportionately affecting this election, Thomaides can run on his record of delivering homestead-exemption for seniors living on a fixed incomes while delivering long-term transportation solutions to expand our tax base, with a commitment to keep spending

under control. With a strong neighborhood, environmental and Democratic base, John has room to grow with Republicans and Independents based upon his record of reducing traffic improving their quality of life.

## **Creating a political message**

In any campaign, the strategists have their pick of paid media outlets to use to deliver the message. In John Thomaides' re-election campaign we did not have the money to use television so we used traditional direct mail. In all we sent four-targeted pieces of mail using a message I developed from the survey results. Some of the tactics used have some general campaign tricks of the trade, so I will briefly define why the campaign took steps that were not necessarily defined in the survey. The two major issues Thomaides faced in his re-election campaign were that (1) he had two opponents, making it hard to get a high re-election percentage without the possibility of a runoff, and (2) he had low name recognition.

The first piece of mail (see Appendix C) was sent to likely voters over the age of 55-years-old with a positive message about increasing the homestead exemption for seniors from \$15,000 to \$25,000 to save them money on their property taxes. In the survey we found that even though people who were 55 years old didn't get the exemption, they knew the exemption was coming and felt very positive about it. The mail piece had a headline of "Help Protect Our Seniors," with a picture of an older gentlemen working on what could be his taxes. Other sentences pointed out the current economic situation defining Thomaides as the candidate who had stood up for seniors and would continue to do so. We used a quote from Thomaides saying, "In this uncertain economy the cost of food, fuel, and medicine continues to rise. Many seniors on a fixed income are having a hard time making ends meet. I support a fiscally responsible government to keep spending under control and taxes low." By reading all indicators from the survey, most seniors were very concerned about the economy and increased



government spending. By having Thomaides express similar concerns, we put him “on message” with a record of doing his job as a Council member helping seniors.

In this campaign we had to balance a strong anti-incumbent attitude with a message of results that really mattered to people. In our second piece we target everybody in our voter universe of likely voters. With Thomaides' relatively low name identification, we had to introduce him to the voters even though he had been in office for two terms. We used a picture of a renewable energy engineer working on solar panels with a headline that read, “everyday we hear that we are in the midst of financial crisis. In these troubled times we can rely on John Thomaides’ experience to continue working toward a more secure economic future for San Marcos.” Again, by reiterating the current economic situation and stating that Thomaides is working towards a better economic future, we were able to start making the election about job promotion and we used a quote from Thomaides defining what kind of jobs we need: “The best way to overcome these difficult economic times is to keep our city budget balanced, keep our taxes low and continue the fight to bring renewable energy, high-tech and bio-medical jobs to the city.” By using the survey, we focused on a message of fiscal responsibility, lower taxes, and job promotion in the industries of the future—a message we stuck with throughout the whole campaign.

In our next piece of mail we targeted Republican primary voters and Independents voters of all ages and ethnicities, to talk about traffic concerns. As the survey indicated, Republican and Independents identified traffic as the number one quality of life issue by 50%. With that information we used “traffic” to lead the message we put forth in our two previous pieces about jobs. We used a picture of an older man's hands driving a car in

light rain with heavy but hard to define traffic ahead. We used a quote from Thomaides to explain the growing issue of traffic to show what the city had done and is continuing to do for traffic: “Traffic is increasingly affecting our community and I have and will continue to deliver transportation solutions while balancing our city budget and keeping taxes low. By solving our transportation needs, we can protect our quality of life and make San Marcos more competitive for the kind of jobs we need: bio-medical like Grifols, high-tech and renewable energy.”

It is important to give some background about John Thomaides’ candidacy. He is openly a Democrat and has a strong base of support with Democratic clubs in San Marcos. By appealing to Republican and Independents’ biggest quality of life concerns and tying those to the larger issue of promoting the right kind of jobs, we helped redefine Thomaides with this demographic group. Since his name recognition is low, we used this direct mail piece to let the public know that he is a local business owner, is fiscally conservative and wants to promote jobs of the future.

By continuing to balance the anti-incumbent sentiment and define Thomaides as a candidate who had delivered results that really matter to people at this point in time, we used the back of the Republican and Independent mail piece to deliver a message of specifics on transportation and jobs solutions. The piece states a transportation solution: “While on Council and as Chair of the Transportation Advisory Board, John Thomaides successfully helped deliver the Wonder World Drive Extension to relieve traffic congestion within our neighborhoods.” And a job solution: “recently, Councilmember John Thomaides helped bring the new bio-medical company Grifols to San Marcos. This company alone adds over \$76 million to our tax base and brings 190 new jobs paying

average annual salaries in excess of \$38,000.” By using the traffic issue that is one for Republicans and Independents, we made the case that transportation solution can not only lower taxes by increasing the tax base but also make San Marcos more competitive for the jobs of the future. The mail piece had strong message of traffic concerns and traffic solution that lead into a strong message of jobs.

In our final piece of mail we felt his name recognition was high enough and we had created a solid message with seniors and Republicans and Independents, so we sent a broad mail piece similar to the second piece, to the same universe of likely voters. Using a picture of a woman working in a bio-medical lab and a headline reading, “Dedicated to Creating and Protecting Jobs for San Marcos”—we used this piece to further describe the need for jobs and flipped to the message of the third piece, leading this time with jobs and tying jobs to transportation solutions. We used a quote from Thomaides, “I have experience attracting high paying bio-medical jobs like Grifols to San Marcos. I have also worked to deliver long-term transportation solutions such as the Wonder World Drive railroad overpass and extension to Ranch Road 12. By continuing to balance our budget, keep taxes low and deliver transportation solutions, I believe San Marcos can compete for the jobs of the future while protecting our quality of life.” We put all the pieces of the survey to work in this quote and used the bio-medical company Grifols to show that Thomaides has promoted the right kind of jobs and used transportation solutions and the idea of keeping taxes lower to help define a better future that Thomaides wants you to believe in.

The survey helped us wrap up the back of the final mail piece by stating, “We’ve made progress delivering transportation solutions...” further balancing anti-incumbent

sentiment with results that matter from an incumbent, “By continuing down this path...” because the City's direction approval was a healthy 59.1%, we felt we could use language about continuing down this path. We went on to state, “we will compete for the jobs of the future, protect our existing jobs, and preserve our quality of life.” By constantly going back to our core message of jobs, we further emphasized that Thomaides is the candidate of job promotion in the right way. We finished the piece by giving four examples of protecting and promoting jobs, and two examples of transportation solutions.

We knew Thomaides would lose some votes from being in office for so long and in general, if an incumbent has been in office for a while, the undecided voters will break against him or her. My job was to redefine Thomaides to those 50.5% of unaware voters and create a new base, based upon fiscal responsibility and job promotion, while targeting Republicans and Independents to protect their quality of life with traffic solutions. All of these things helped Thomaides' strong victory on election night.

## **Post election analysis**

Thomaides was elected at-large in 2003. In 2006, he drew one opponent and John won by 61.6%. In the 2009, election Thomaides drew two opponents and won without a run-off by 63.36%. As politics shifted in 2009 and the economy weakened, the electorate in 2009 was much different from 2006. The turnout was much smaller (1,938 in 2009 compared to 5,151 in 2006), the youth vote was very low and seniors played a larger roll in the elections turnout—about 40% of the vote. Exit polls around the country said that the economy and jobs were the most important issue pushing people to the polls. Thomaides had two opponents: one a 65-year-old neighborhood activist and the other a 31-year-old small business owner who was endorsed by the public safety unions and the real estate community.

Through direct mail, door-to-door, and phone calls, Thomaides' campaign delivered a strong message of promoting new high-tech and renewable energy jobs and continuing to bring bio-medial jobs like Grifols to San Marcos. Through advocating the homestead-exemption for seniors and delivering long-term transportation solutions to reduce traffic congestion and expand our tax base, Thomaides' campaign established a core constituency base with the older voters, Independents and Republicans. In this election we saw a backlash against the Democrats in Washington and incumbents in general, with the voting electorate expressing concerns over the economy and increased government spending. Even though this was not the best year for incumbents, Thomaides won all but one precinct in San Marcos in a 63.36% landslide. Even though this precinct has the highest percentage of Hispanics, his opponent Monica Garcia won this community by only 4 votes.

Due to the new political climate in the fall of 2009 it was apparent how crucial it was to run a survey for Councilman Thomaides. By running and analyzing surveys, campaigns can develop an understanding of the important issues and judge how to best deliver those through political communications, whether that is through TV advertising, direct mail, websites or media relation. Candidates need to be able to adapt themselves to the voters concerns and a well-delivered message will give a campaign the best chance of success. This thesis doesn't try to cover other important aspects of campaigns that help candidates win, such as the candidates' general appeal, debating skills, fundraising, etc... But rather, this thesis narrowly focuses on the technical methods of crafting a political message from a scientific survey.

## **Bibliography**

Page 12. Babbie, Earl. Survey Research Methods. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1990.

## Appendix A – Questionnaire

San Marcos: City Council/San Marcos (n=208) Confidence level 95% & Margin of error 6.92%

READ: Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ calling on behalf of Opinion Strategies a research firm. Your number was selected at random. We are conducting a short opinion poll about politics in San Marcos. I assure you that your opinions are completely confidential and this is not a sales call.

---

- A. Are you registered to vote in the city limits of San Marcos? Yes: registere\_\_\_\_\_ -1  
(TERMINATE) Not Reg/Don't know/Ref\_\_\_\_\_ -X

*(RESPONDENT MUST BE REGISTERED TO VOTE IN SAN MARCOS CITY LIMITS --  
TERMINATE ALL OTHERS)*

- B. As you may know, this November an election will be held for two City Council seats in San Marcos. How likely are you to vote in this election – very likely, somewhat likely, or not too likely? Very likely\_\_\_\_\_ -1  
Somewhat likely\_\_\_\_\_ -2  
(TERMINATE) Not too likely\_\_\_\_\_ -X  
(TERMINATE) Don't Know/Refused\_\_\_\_\_ -X

*(RESPONDENT MUST BE VERY OR S'WHAT LIKELY TO VOTE IN  
THE NOVEMBER ELECTION -- TERMINATE ALL OTHERS)*



- |   |                         |    |
|---|-------------------------|----|
| 1. In general, how would you rate the job President Barrack Obama is doing? | Excellent_____          | -1 |
|   | Good_____               | -2 |
|   | Not so good_____        | -3 |
|   | Poor_____               | -4 |
|   | Don't Know/Refused_____ | -5 |

[\* -- IF "NOT SO GOOD -OR- POOR" READ 1A.]

- |  |                             |    |
|--|-----------------------------|----|
| 1A. Did you vote for Barrack Obama last Presidential Election? | Yes_____                    | -1 |
|  | No_____                     | -2 |
|  | Can't Remember/Refused_____ | -3 |

- |  |                         |    |
|--|-------------------------|----|
| 2. In general, do you think that the City of San Marcos is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction? | Right direction_____    | -1 |
|  | (VOL) Mixed_____        | -2 |
|  | Wrong direction_____    | -3 |
|  | Don't Know/Refused_____ | -4 |

- |   |                         |    |
|---|-------------------------|----|
| 3. How would you rate the job San Marcos Mayor Susan Narvaiz is doing -- excellent, good, not so good, or poor? | Excellent_____          | -1 |
|   | Good_____               | -2 |
|   | Not so good_____        | -3 |
|   | Poor_____               | -4 |
|   | Don't Know/Refused_____ | -5 |

4. All in all, would you prefer to continue with the style and policies of Mayor Susan Narvaiz or would you prefer a change to the way things are done?	Prefer to Continue_____ -1
	Prefer a Change_____ -2
	Don't Know/Refused_____ -3

5. How familiar are you will the new recycling service in San Marcos also know as “single stream recycling”?	Very Familiar_____ -1
	S'What Familiar_____ -2
	S'What Unfamiliar_____ -3
	Don't Know/Not Sure/Refused_____ -4

[\* -- IF “Very Familiar -OR- S'What Familiar” READ 5A.]

5A. What is your opinion of the new recycling service in San Marcos, which is know as “single stream recycling”?	Strongly Support_____ -1
	S'What Support_____ -2
	S'What Opposed_____ -3
	Strongly Opposed_____ -4
	Don't Know/Refused_____ -5

6. When it comes to preserving or improving San Marcos’s quality of life, which of these should be the TOP priority? [READ LIST; PUSH FOR ONE CHOICE]

Improving parks and increasing open green space_____	-1
Reducing traffic congestion._____	-2
Fighting crime._____	-3
--OR--	
Improve downtown parking._____	-4

7. Which of the following do you think should be the City Council’s Number One priority? [READ LIST; PUSH FOR ONE CHOICE]



Hearing this, would you definitely consider, probably consider, or not consider voting for Shaune Maycock for City Council?

Definitely consider\_\_\_\_\_ -1  
Probably consider\_\_\_\_\_ -2  
Not consider\_\_\_\_\_ -3  
Don't Know/Refused\_\_\_\_\_ -4

12. Lisa Marie Coppoletta is a 42-year-old Academic Advisor at Texas State University. Lisa is an animal rights activist running on promoting the film industry as a means for economic development.

Hearing this, would you definitely consider, probably consider, or not consider voting for Lisa Marie Coppoletta for City Council?

Definitely consider\_\_\_\_\_ -1  
Probably consider\_\_\_\_\_ -2  
Not consider\_\_\_\_\_ -3  
Don't Know/Refused\_\_\_\_\_ -4

13. Ryan Thomason is a 31-year-old homebuilder, licensed real-estate broker and sits on the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission. Ryan will focus on consensus building to promote economic development and growth in San Marcos.

Hearing this, would you definitely consider, probably consider, or not consider voting for Ryan Thomason for City Council?

Definitely consider\_\_\_\_\_ -1  
Probably consider\_\_\_\_\_ -2  
Not consider\_\_\_\_\_ -3  
Don't Know/Refused\_\_\_\_\_ -4

14. And which of these three candidates – Shaune Maycock, Lisa Marie Coppoletta or Ryan Thomason– do you prefer most for City Council?	Shaune Maycock_____ -1
	Lisa Mari Coppoletta_____ -2
	Ryan Thomason_____ -3
[Offer to read back the candidate profile if needed]	Undecided_____ -4

15. Switching to the incumbent of Place 6, what is your opinion of council member John Thomaides?	Strongly Support_____ -1
	S'What Support_____ -2
	S'What Oppose_____ -3
	Strongly Oppose_____ -4
	Don't Know/Refused_____ -5

[READ] Next, I'll give you brief descriptions of the candidates running for place 6 excluding the incumbent. Tell me if you would definitely consider, probably consider, or not consider voting for that candidate for City Council Place 6.

17. Monica Garcia is 30-year-old pro-business former marine, active church member and Mary Kay beauty consultant.

Hearing this, would you definitely consider, probably consider, or not consider voting for Monica Garcia for City Council?	Definitely consider_____ -1
	Probably consider_____ -2
	Not consider_____ -3
	Don't Know/Refused_____ -4

18. Anita Fuller is 65-year-old neighbor advocate and is retired from the military.

Hearing this, would you definitely consider, probably consider, or not consider voting for Anita Fuller for City Council?

Definitely consider\_\_\_\_\_ -1  
 Probably consider\_\_\_\_\_ -2  
 Not consider\_\_\_\_\_ -3  
 Don't Know/Refused\_\_\_\_\_ -4

19. With that in mind which of the three candidates – John Thomaides, Monica Garcia or Anita Fuller – do you prefer most for City Council Place 6?  
 [Offer to read back the candidates profile if needed]

John Thomaides\_\_\_\_\_ -1  
 Monica Garcia\_\_\_\_\_ -2  
 Anita Fuller\_\_\_\_\_ -3  
 Undecided\_\_\_\_\_ -4

20. Lastly, I will read you a list of statements that describe a position a candidate for City Council might take. Tell me if you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each. Here's the first one.

STRONG	S'WHAT	S'WHAT	STRONG	DON'T
<u>SUPPORT</u>	<u>SUPPORT</u>	<u>OPPOSE</u>	<u>OPPOSE</u>	<u>KNOW</u>

- a. Establish caps on individual campaign contributions to insure a level playing field and limit undue influence over our City Council.\_\_\_\_\_ -1

2 3 4 5

- |    |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| b. | A strong independent voice on City Council._____   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. | Loosen the grips and lower the development standards to promote new growth and jobs._____    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. | Lower property taxes for seniors and the disabled by increasing the homestead exemptions.___ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

READ: NOW, JUST A FEW QUESTIONS FOR CLASSIFICATION PURPOSES.

- |   |             |    |
|---|-------------|----|
| D1. Gender. ( <i>DON'T ASK; JUST RECORD</i> )   | Male_____   | -1 |
|   | Female_____ | -2 |
|   |             |    |
| D2. Could you please tell me – is your age between 18-39, 40-54, 55-64, or 65 and over? | 18-39_____  | -1 |
|   | 40-54_____  | -2 |
|   | 55-64_____  | -3 |

65-Up\_\_\_\_\_ -4  
 Refused\_\_\_\_\_ -5

D3. Do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or something else?  
 Democrat\_\_\_\_\_ -1  
 Republican\_\_\_\_\_ -2  
 Independent\_\_\_\_\_ -3  
 Other/Don't Know/Refused\_\_\_\_\_ -4

D4. Do you regularly use any Internet site or Blog to get information about what's going on in San Marcos?  
 Yes\_\_\_\_\_ -1  
 No\_\_\_\_\_ -2  
 Don't Know/Refused\_\_\_\_\_ -3

[IF YES IN D4]

What sites do you use?  
 News Streams Dot Com\_\_\_\_\_ -1  
 San Marcos Daily Record Dot Com\_\_\_\_\_ -2  
 [If they use a combination of sites ask which they prefer most?]  
 San Marcos Mercury Dot Com\_\_\_\_\_ -3  
 Austin American Statesman Dot Com\_\_\_\_\_ -4  
 Don't Know/Refused\_\_\_\_\_ -5

D5. Do you consider yourself to be either African American or black?  
 Yes\_\_\_\_\_ -1  
 No\_\_\_\_\_ -2



Don't Know/Refused\_\_\_\_\_ -3

D6. Do you consider yourself to be of  
Hispanic or Latino ancestry or not?

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ -1

No\_\_\_\_\_ -2

Don't Know/Refused\_\_\_\_\_ -3

## Appendix B – Poll Results

### A. Registered to Vote.

Yes	208	100%
-----	-----	------

---

### B. Party ID.

Democrat	83	39.9%
Independent	59	28.5%
Republican	43	20.7%
Other	23	11.1%

---

### C. As you may know, this November an election will be held for two City Council seats in San Marcos. How likely are you to vote in this election? — Very likely, somewhat likely, or Not too likely?

Very Likely	135	64.9%
Somewhat likely	73	35.1%
Not too likely	Terminate Call	X
Don't Know/Refuse	Terminate Call	X

---

### 1. In general, how would you rate the job President Barack Obama is doing?

Excellent	38	18.3%
Good	70	33.7%
Not so good	33	15.9%
Poor	50	24%
DK/Refused	17	8.2%
Total Positive	108	52%
Total Negative	83	39.9%

---

[\* -- IF "NOT SO GOOD -OR- POOR" READ 2.]

2. Did you vote for Barrack Obama last Presidential Election?

Yes	51	24.5%
No	65	31.3%
DK/Can't remember	92	44.2%

---

3. In general, do you think that the City of San Marcos is headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?

Right direction	123	59.1%
Wrong direction	29	13.9%
(VOL) Mixed	43	20.7%
DK/Refused	13	6.3%

---

4. How would you rate the job San Marcos Mayor Susan Narvaiz is doing? – Excellent, Good, Not so good, or Poor?

Excellent	34	16.3%
Good	108	51.9%
Not so good	37	17.8%
Poor	13	6.3%
DK/Refused	16	7.7%
Total Positive	142	68.2%
Total Negative	50	24.1%
Name ID	192	92.3%

---

5. All in all, would you prefer to continue with the style and policies of Mayor Susan Narvaiz or would you prefer a change to the way things are done?

Prefer a change	75	36.1%
Prefer to continue	95	45.7%
DK/Refused	38	18.3%

---

6. How familiar are you with the new recycling service in San Marcos also know as “single stream recycling?”

S’What familiar	42	20.2%
S’What unfamiliar	26	12.5%
Very familiar	113	54.3%

---

[\* -- IF “**Very Familiar -OR- S’What Familiar**” READ 8.]

7. What is your opinion of the new recycling service in San Marcos, which is know as “single stream recycling?”

Strongly support	115	55.3%
S’What support	31	14.9%
S’What opposed	12	5.8%
Strongly Opposed	5	2.4%
Don't Know	45	21.6%
Total Positive	146	70.2%
Total Negative	17	8.2%

---

8. When it comes to preserving or improving San Marcos’s quality of life, which of these should be the TOP priority?

Fighting Crime	55	26.4%
Improving downtown parking	9	4.3%
Improving parks and increasing open green space	46	22.1%
Reducing traffic congestion	80	38.4%
Don't Know	18	8.7%

---

9. Which of the following do you think should be the City Council’s number one priority?

Promote job growth	120	57.7%
Slow down development	35	16.8%
Tax and spend less	34	16.3%
Don't Know	19	9.1%

---

[READ] Next I will read you two questions about tax incentives for two types of possible developments. Each will ask your level of support or opposition.

10. Tax incentives for companies creating retail and entertainment?

Strongly support	38	18.3%
S'What support	64	30.8%
S'What oppose	33	15.9%
Strongly oppose	48	23.1%
Don't Know	25	12%
Total Positives	102	49.1%
Total Negatives	81	39%

---

11. Tax incentives for companies creating biomedical, high-tech or new renewable energy Jobs?

Strongly support	115	55.3%
S'What support	51	24.5%
S'What oppose	6	2.9%
Strongly oppose	20	9.6%
Don't Know	16	7.7%
Total Positives	166	79.8%
Total Negatives	26	12.5%

---

Switching subjects, next I'll give you a brief description of the candidates running for Place 5. Tell me if you would definitely consider, probably consider, or not consider voting for that candidate for City Council Place 5.

12. Shaune Maycock is a 32-year-old small business owner of Blue Skies Aviation an airplane repair company. Shaune wants to promote economic development while improving natural resources and public safety.

Definitely consider	28	13.5%
Probably consider	109	52.4%
Not consider	34	16.3%
Don't Know	37	17.8%

---

13. Lisa Marie Coppoletta is a 42-year-old Academic Advisor at Texas State University. Lisa is an animal rights activist running on promoting the film industry as a means for economic development.

Definitely consider	20	9.6%
Probably consider	76	36.5%
Not consider	81	38.9%
Don't Know	31	14.9%

14. Ryan Thomason is a 31-year-old homebuilder, licensed real-estate broker and sits on the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission. Ryan will focus on consensus building to promote economic development and growth in San Marcos.

Definitely consider	31	14.9%
Probably consider	96	46.2%
No consider	55	26.4%
Don't Know	26	12.6%

15. And which of these three candidates – Shaune Maycock, Lisa Marie Coppoletta or Ryan Thomason– do you prefer most for City Council?

**[Offer to read back the candidates profile if needed]**

Lisa Mari Coppoletta	21	10.1%
Ryan Thomason	42	20.2%
Shaune Maycock	54	26%
Undecided	91	43.8%

16. Switching to the incumbent of Place 6, what is your opinion of council member John Thomaides?

Strongly support	53	25.3%
S'What support	28	13.5%
S'What oppose	10	4.8%
Strongly oppose	12	5.8%
Dk/Rufused	105	50.5%
Total Positives	81	38.8%
Total Negatives	22	10.6%

Name ID	103	49.5%
Name ID Positives	81	78.6%
Name ID Negatives	22	21.3%

---

**[READ]** Next, I'll give you brief descriptions of the candidates running for place 6 excluding the incumbent. Tell me if you would definitely consider, probably consider, or not consider voting for that candidate for City Council Place 6.

---

17. Monica Garcia is 30-year-old pro-business former marine, active church member and Mary Kay beauty consultant.

Definitely consider	9	4.3%
Probably consider	73	34.6%
Not consider	80	38.5%
DK/Refused	47	22.6%

---

18. Anita Fuller is 65-year-old neighbor advocate and is retired from the military.

Definitely consider	10	4.8%
Probably consider	70	33.7%
Not consider	73	35.1%
DK/Refused	55	26.4%

---

19. With that in mind which of the three candidates – John Thomaides, Monica Garcia or Anita Fuller – do you prefer most for City Council Place 6?

**[Offer to read back the candidates profile if needed]**

John Thomaides	68	32.7%
Monica Garcia	24	11.5%
Anita Fuller	13	6.3%
Undecided	103	49.5%

---

Lastly, I will read you a list of statements that describe a position a candidate for City Council might take. Tell me if you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each. Here's the first one.

---

20. Establish caps on individual campaign contributions to insure a level playing field and limit undue influence over our City Council

Strongly support	94	45.2%
S'What support	61	29.3%
S'What oppose	18	8.7%
Strongly oppose	15	7.2%
UK/Refused	20	9.6%
Total Positive	145	74.5%
Total Negative	33	15.9%

---

21. A strong independent voice on City Council

Strongly support	127	61.1%
S'What support	53	25.5%
S'What oppose	2	1%
Strongly oppose	4	1.9%
UK/Refused	22	10.6%
Total Positive	180	86.6%
Total Negative	6	2.9%

---

22. Loosen the grips and lower the development standards to promote new growth and jobs

Strongly support	54	26%
S'What support	27	13%
S'What oppose	37	17.8%
Strongly oppose	72	34.6%
UK/Refused	18	8.7%
Total Positive	81	39%
Total Negative	109	52%

---



23. Lower property taxes for seniors and the disabled by increasing the homestead exemptions.

Strongly support	111	53.4%
S'What support	57	27.4%
S'What oppose	12	5.8%
Strongly oppose	9	4.3%
UK/Refused	19	9.1%
Total Positive	168	80.8%
Total Negative	21	10.1%

---

D1. Gender.

Male	96	46.2%
Female	111	53.4%

---

D2. Age.

18-39	40	19.2%
40-54	56	26.9%
55-64	46	22.1%
65-Up	64	30.8%
Refused	2	1%

---

D3. Do you regularly use any Internet site or Blog to get information about what's going on in San Marcos?

Yes	80	38.5%
No	103	49.5%
DK/Refused	25	12%

---

**[IF YES IN D4]**

D4. What sites do you use?

**[If they use a combination of sites ask which they prefer most?]**

Austin American Statesman Dot Com	4	1.9%
New Streams Dot Com	24	11.5%
San Marcos Mercury Dot Com	6	2.9%
San Marcos Daily Record Dot Com	34	16.3%
DK/Refused	61	29.3%

---

D5. American/Black.

Yes	10	4.8%
No	191	91.8%
DK/Refused	7	3.4%

---

D6. Latino or Hispanic

Yes	36	17.3%
No	166	79.8%
DK/Refused	6	2.9%

## **Appendix C – Direct Mail**

# RE-ELECT JOHN THOMAIDES

*Your Strong Independent Voice on City Council*

- Championed Expanding Homestead Property Tax Exemption to \$25,000 for Citizens over 65
- Cautious Watchdog on Government Spending and Waste
- Never Voted For a Council Initiated Tax Increase

***VOTE to Re-Elect John Thomaidēs for City Council Place 6.***

In November 2007, Councilman Thomaidēs fought for and won an increase in the Homestead Property Tax Exemption to \$25,000 per household for citizens over 65 years of age. A vigilant opponent of wasteful government spending, he supports prudent spending on streets, investing to improve our deteriorating infrastructure, smart tax incentives to create good jobs and necessary expenditures to both reduce crime and promote public safety. He has a perfect record on opposing ALL Council initiated tax increases which only take more money out of your pocket.

***Vote Early Oct 19 thru 30, 2009 – San Marcos Public Library or  
Hays County Elections Administration Office (401-C Broadway)***

*"In this uncertain economy the cost of food, fuel and medicine continues to rise. Many seniors on a fixed income are having a hard time making ends meet. I support a fiscally responsible government to keep spending under control and taxes low"—John Thomaidēs*



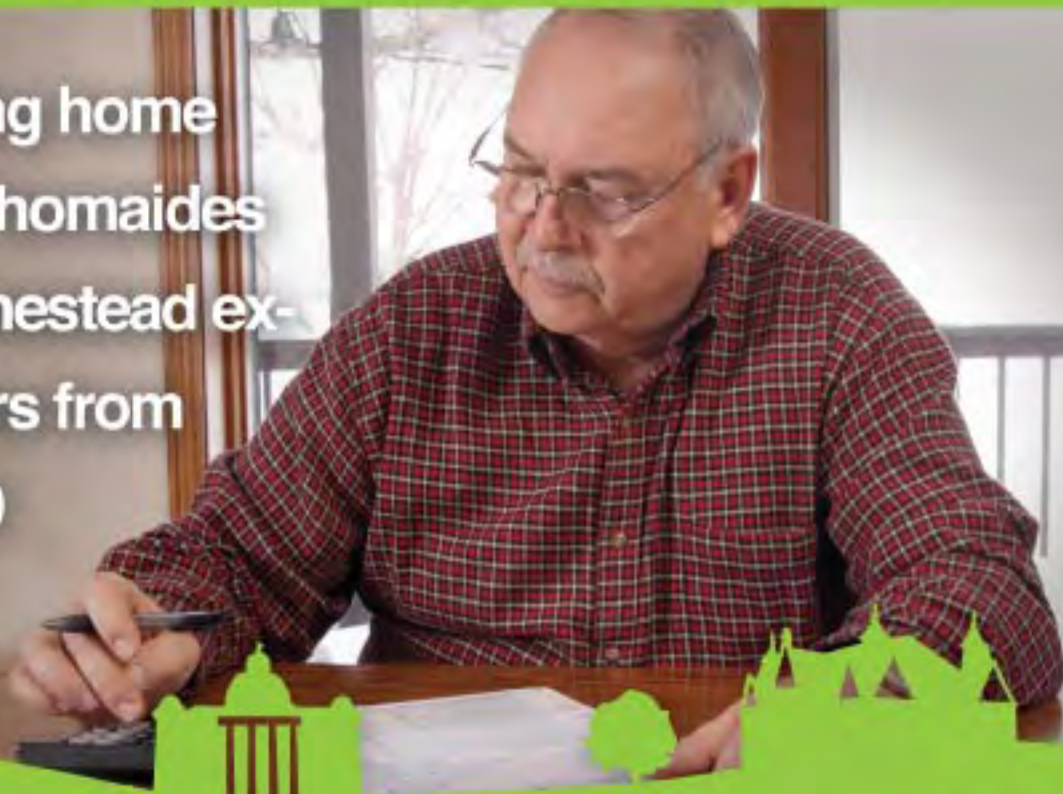
**SAN MARCOS CITY COUNCIL**



# RE-ELECT JOHN THOMAIDES

*Help Protect Our Seniors*

To help offset rising home appraisals John Thomaidēs increased the homestead exemption for seniors from \$15,000 to \$25,000



*Vote Early to Re-Elect John Thomaidēs  
For City Council Place 6*

When: Oct 19th thru Oct 30, 2009

Where: San Marcos Public Library (625 E. Hopkins St) or-  
Hays County Elections Administration Office (401-C Broadway)

Pol. Ad paid for by John Thomaidēs Campaign, Bibb Underwood, Treas. 802 W. Hopkins St. San Marcos, TX 78668

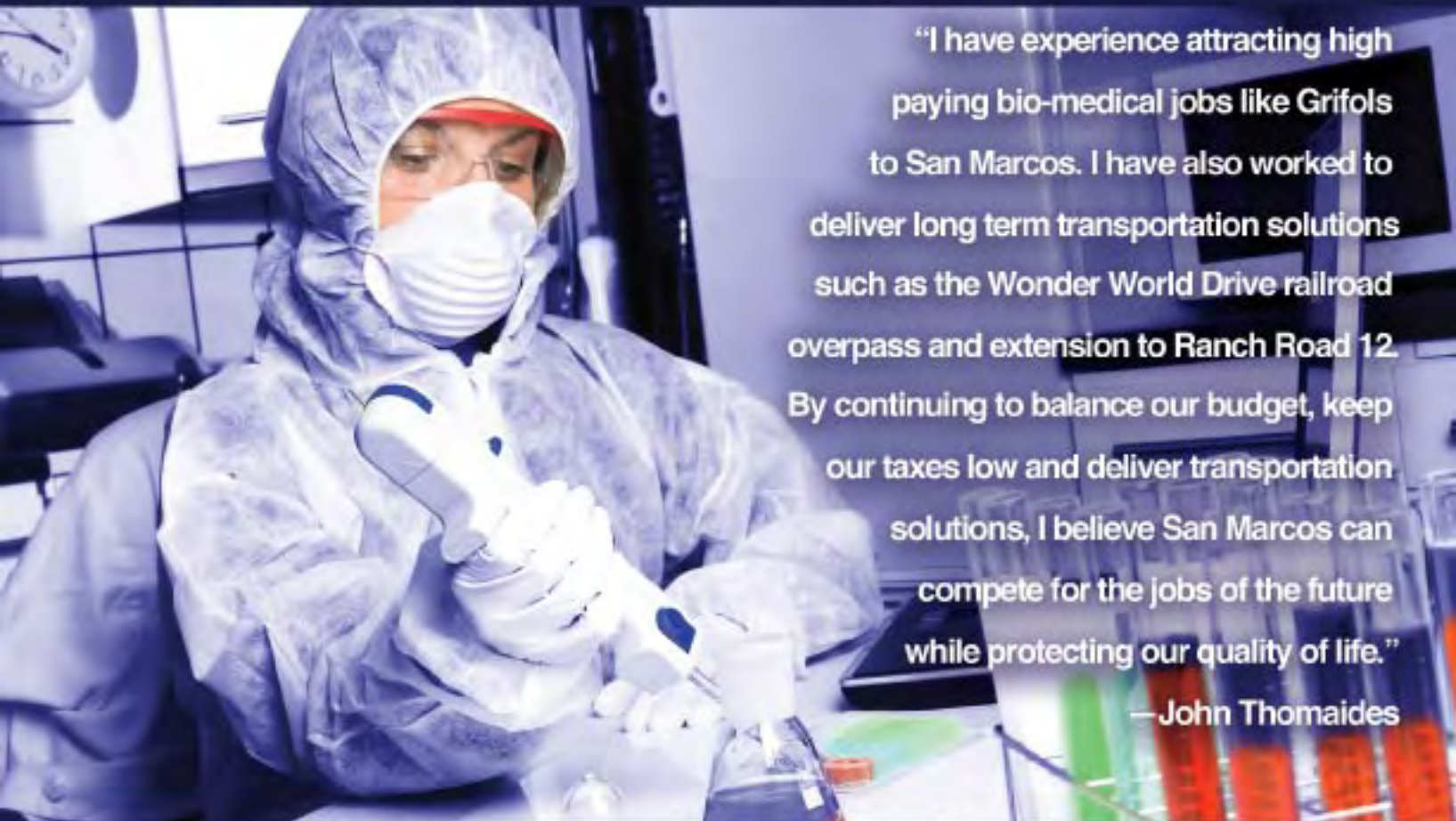
First Class  
PRSRT  
US Postage  
PAID  
Austin, TX  
Permit #882



# RE-ELECT JOHN THOMAIDES

*A Strong Independent Voice on City Council*

**Dedicated to Creating and Protecting Jobs for San Marcos**



"I have experience attracting high paying bio-medical jobs like Grifols to San Marcos. I have also worked to deliver long term transportation solutions such as the Wonder World Drive railroad overpass and extension to Ranch Road 12. By continuing to balance our budget, keep our taxes low and deliver transportation solutions, I believe San Marcos can compete for the jobs of the future while protecting our quality of life."

—John Thomaidēs

*Re-Elect John Thomaidēs For City Council Place 6  
Vote Tuesday, November 3rd- You Vote At:*

Pol. Ad paid for by John Thomaidēs Campaign, Bibb Underwood, Treas. 802 W. Hopkins St. San Marcos, TX 78666

First Class  
PRSRT  
US Postage  
PAID  
Austin, TX  
Permit #882



# **RE-ELECT** **JOHN THOMAIDES**

*Your Strong Independent Voice on City Council*

We've made progress delivering transportation solutions that will help expand our tax base resulting in lower taxes and reduce traffic congestion throughout our city. By continuing down this path we will compete for the jobs of the future, protect our existing jobs, and preserve our quality of life.

## **Creating and Protecting Jobs**

**Grifols breaks ground in San Marcos**

*190 New Jobs, Average Salaries over \$38,000*

*\$76 million investment in San Marcos*

**San Marcos awards incentives for HEB warehouse expansion**

*320 New Jobs, 534 Retained Jobs **ALL** with benefits and a multi-million investment*

**Phillips/Wide-Lite stays and expands in San Marcos**

*260 New Jobs and 150 Retained Jobs plus millions added to our local tax base. A \$23.4 Million investment by the company and tax incentives from the city prevented these jobs from leaving our city and our country.*

**Central Texas Medical Center breaks ground on \$35 million**

*139 Bed Medical Facility, adding 95 highly skilled jobs with broadened health care services in San Marcos*

## **Solving Transportation Needs**

**Work Nearing Completion on Wonder World Drive Extension to Ranch Road 12.**

*Reducing traffic congestion and controlling speeding in our neighborhoods*

**Wonder World Drive Railroad Overpass Connects Our City Safely**

*Safely connecting our community to our only hospital*

***Election Day: November 3rd***

***Early Voting Ends Friday, October 30th***





# RE-ELECT JOHN THOMAIDES

*Your Strong Independent Voice on City Council*

*I was elected to the San Marcos City Council in 2003 for a three-year term in Place 6 and re-elected in 2006. I've lived in San Marcos for 16 years and I am a small business owner*

## My Experience:

- Previous Small Business Person of the Quarter and Small Business Person of the Year by the San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce
- Executive Committee of the Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council
- Chair-Transportation Advisory Board
- Convention and Visitors Bureau Board Member
- Austin-San Antonio Commuter Rail District Board Member
- Economic Development San Marcos Board of Directors
- Corridor Renewable Energy Committee Member
- Champion of Single-Stream Recycling

*Vote Early to Re-Elect John Thomaidēs  
San Marcos City Council Place 6*

*John has a vision for our future jobs and industries that care  
as much about San Marcos as they do their bottom line*

*Vote Oct. 19 thru Oct 30, 2009  
Election Day November 3rd*

*Where: San Marcos Public Library (625 E. Hopkins St.) or  
Hays County Elections Administration Office (401-C Broadway)*




**SAN MARCOS CITY COUNCIL**



# RE-ELECT JOHN THOMAIDES

Everyday we hear that we are in the midst of financial crisis. In these troubled times we can rely on John Thomaidēs' experience to continue working toward a more secure economic future for San Marcos.



"The best way to overcome these difficult economic times is to keep our city budget balanced, keep our taxes low and continue the fight to bring renewable energy, high-tech and bio-medical jobs to this city."

—John Thomaidēs

The only candidate experienced in bringing high paying bio-technical jobs to San Marcos.



*For City Council Place 6*

When: Oct 19th thru Oct 30, 2009- Election Day Nov 3rd

Where: San Marcos Public Library (625 E. Hopkins St) or-  
Hays County Elections Administration Office (401-C Broadway)

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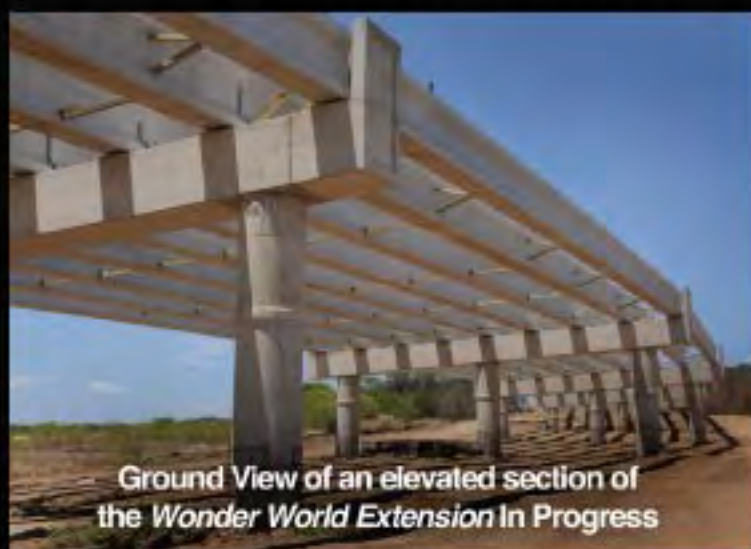
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# RE-ELECT JOHN THOMAIDES

*Your Strong Independent Voice on City Council*

**Transportation Solutions:** While on Council and as Chair of the Transportation Advisory Board, John Thomaidēs successfully helped deliver the **Wonder World Drive Extension** to relieve traffic congestion within our neighborhoods.



Ground View of an elevated section of the Wonder World Extension In Progress

## **Job Solutions:**

Recently, Councilmember John Thomaidēs helped bring the new bio-medical company Grifols to San Marcos. This company alone adds over \$76 million to our tax base and brings 190 new jobs paying average annual salaries in excess of \$38,000.



Aerial View of the Entire Wonder World Extension In Progress

**By delivering transportation solutions we can make San Marcos more competitive resulting in better jobs, an expanding tax base that will lower taxes.**

*Vote Early Oct 19 thru 30, 2009 – San Marcos Public Library or-  
Hays County Elections Administration Office (401-C Broadway)*



# RE-ELECT JOHN THOMAIDES

*For City Council Place 6*

*"Traffic is increasingly affecting our community and I have and will continue to deliver transportation solutions while balancing our city budget and keeping taxes low. By solving our transportation needs, we can protect our quality of life and make San Marcos more competitive for the kind of jobs we need: bio-medical like Grifols, high-tech and renewable energy." —John Thomaides*



*Vote Early to Re-Elect John Thomaides*

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