



Leslie R. Swan
Supervisor of Elections
Indian River County

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Media Alert

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EVIDENCE OF EXCELLENCE IN ELECTIONS

Indian River County, FL – The Indian River County Supervisor of Elections Office is the recipient of three awards presented by the Florida Public Relations Association’s Treasure Coast Chapter during the Association’s Image Award Reception. The 2015 Image Award, the Judges Award, and the Grand Image Award for Printed Tools of Public Relations, were presented to Supervisor of Elections Leslie Swan, Technical Programs Coordinator Stephanie Nelson and Election Specialist Michelle Fields for their submission featuring an absentee mailer postcard. The postcard was sent to the nearly 13,000 voters who requested absentee ballots for the 2014 General Election.

The idea for the postcard developed as a proactive approach to addressing multiple absentee ballot issues uncovered during the 2014 Primary Election. During the 2014 Primary Election, the preferred method of voting was via absentee ballot. However, of the 12, 331 voters who requested an absentee ballot, only 54% returned their voted ballot. Even worse, 1,048 absentee ballots were returned to the Elections Office as undeliverable. By law absentee ballots cannot be forwarded by the post office, so absentee ballot voters who summer out of town or failed to provide the Elections Office with an updated address, did not receive their absentee ballot.

To address these issues, the Elections Office mailed a postcard to each voter with an absentee request on file for the upcoming General Election. The postcard notified voters that their absentee ballot request had been received and that absentee ballots cannot be forwarded. It also listed the date their ballot would be mailed, directed voters to our website to verify their absentee ballot mailing address and provided them with the Elections office contact information should they need to update their mailing address. The most beneficial element of this technique was that the postcard could be forwarded to out of town residents.

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The results were overwhelming! The undeliverable absentee ballot return rate decreased by 56.5% and the voted absentee ballot rate increased by 51% during the 2014 General Election.

Conducted annually, the Image Awards competition provides public relations practitioners an excellent platform to be recognized in their home markets for their outstanding public relations tools and programs. The Image Awards competition is held on a local level and includes four divisions: Public Relations Programs, Printed Tools of Public Relations, Audio/Visual/Online Tools of Public Relations and Student Projects in Public Relations.

The Image Awards also works to give entrants insights for entering their work, if they choose, into FPRA's statewide competition: the Golden Image Awards. The Golden Image Awards have become a standard of public relations excellence in Florida.

To qualify for judging, an entry must incorporate sound public relations research and planning. Entries also must meet the highest standard of production, execution and evaluation of results and budget. "We are extremely honored to be recognized for our efforts in enhancing the return rate of voted absentee ballots. Our office strives to the highest level to convey to voters the importance of having up to date information on their voter record," said Supervisor of Elections Leslie Swan.

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