

2007 Communications Survey

Report to Board of Directors

April 2007

At the end of 2006, LMOA developed its first-ever comprehensive survey to learn how members utilize Association communications media.

Of 4600 surveys sent out with 2007 billing in December 2006, **1658 completed surveys were returned to LMOA**. That's a **36% return**, which, according to marketing expert Pam Fitzgerald, owner of Ivy Group Marketing in Charlottesville, may be construed as giving LMOA a **95 to 99% absolute confidence report** for the mailed survey.

The first question asked the "primary source of information about Lake Monticello." Readers were invited to check as many as apply. Although this gave interesting information, the results do not reveal the entire picture. Responses to this category turned out to be lower than responses to more comprehensive questions specific to the individual media. We believe that both must be reviewed and both considered to get the full picture.

There were no surprises on what medium the responders consider their primary resource. The answers, in order of significance:

- **Friday Flyer -- 76%**
- **Cable channel 10 -- 43%,**
- **Lake Monticello News -- 33%**
- **Cable channel 14 -- 31%**
- **LMOA website -- 22%.**

Friday Flyer: The weekly Friday Flyer has long generated the greatest number of positive comments of all sources of Lake Monticello information. Its timeliness continues to make it a "must-read" each week. With the advent of its availability in recent years on the website and on cable TV channel 14, the Friday Flyer is easily accessible to even more readers.

Although question #1 shows that 76% of responders rely on the Friday Flyer as their "primary source" of information about the Lake, question #2 reveals that **91% of responders read the Friday Flyer**, with **74% of those picking up printed copies**. The most popular pick up spots are the gates:

- **Fairway/Slice Gate -- 32%**
- **Turkeysag/Falcon Hills Gate -- 20%**
- **Riverside Gate -- 17%**
- **Ashlawn/Main Gate -- 15%**

Other gates are the source of less than 10% pick up. **17% of those who read the Friday Flyer read it on the website and 15% watch on channel 14.**

The loss of Tufton/Monish Gate as a distribution center due to safety concerns, has had a negative impact on the number of printed copies picked up in that area. While in use, Tufton Gate was responsible for about 15% of total distribution each week. Now that the distribution point has been moved to the Lafayette Park playground entrance, the survey reports that only 3% of those who pick up printed copies pick up at that location.

The survey shows that **17% of the Friday Flyer readers read it on the LMOA website and 15% read it on cable TV channel 14**, which runs a continuous loop of Friday Flyer content.

Some changes already have been made to the Friday Flyer in response to input from the survey. Readers have already commented positively about the greater depth to some of the information provided on subjects of general interest to the community. We also have added a recurring column called "MORE!" which examines items from the current Board meeting agenda.

We have been aware of distribution challenges for several years and will be addressing them in the coming months.

LMOA Website: In a separate question, **85% of those who returned their surveys report that they have internet access.** This was important to understand the users of the LMOA website.

The website is a treasure trove of information about the Association and the community. The site is very comprehensive, offering an valuable, reliable resource.

The survey shows that the **website is used by 36% of total responders** and 42% of those who say they have internet access.

Of those who said they use the website, the following are the ranking for most useful:

- **Friday Flyer -- 59%**
- **Reports -- 46%**
- **Hot News (home page) -- 38%**
- **Governing Documents -- 31%**
- **Forms -- 28%**

To help us work out some of the site's limitations, we have met with a local website designer who is willing to work with the current site to provide staff with greater flexibility in what we can offer and greater ease of formatting and updating the site. We will keep members abreast of the upgrades as we go through the process.

Lake Monticello News: The News is published four times each year, normally being delivered to members in February, May, August and November. Traditionally, the News has provided the opportunity for greater detail on significant subjects and projects.

Although question #1 of the survey revealed that the Lake Monticello News came in third behind cable channel 10 as the "primary source" of information about the Lake, in questions specifically addressing the effectiveness of the News, **92% of survey responders indicate they read the News.** News readers tend to be quite devoted, with **75% reading every issue.**

A large number of comments indicate that members appreciate the greater detail and depth of News content. While we apparently have a good thing going in the News, we continue to try to make it even more readable and useful so that it maintains its role as a dependable resource.

TV Viewing: To help determine any limitations on the ability of residents to watch LMOA's two cable TV channels, we asked what members use for TV reception. **74% of responders use cable** and 14% use satellite. Rabbit ears and antennae are used by 3% and 2%, respectively. In

consideration of those responses, the number of residents who do not use cable does not seem to have an overwhelming affect. As you will see, the number of responders who use the cable TV channels is greater than anticipated.

Cable channel 10: Cable channel 10 is administered by the Broadcast Group with assistance and counsel of staff. It broadcasts Board of Directors meetings, LMOA member meetings, an annual Board candidate forum and other programming of general interest to the community. When programs are not running, LMOA announcements and information and photographs of the community run on a continuous loop. Also, special and emergency notices may be posted on channel 10.

According to the survey, channel 10 has been gaining acceptance as a viable means of getting information. The last survey on TV viewing habits in November of 1999 generated such a small number of responses and with such dismal results that it wasn't even tabulated. Over recent years, frequent comments from residents reveal that the factor that has had the greatest effect and attracted more viewers to channel 10 was the addition of current photographs of the community taken by residents and staff. Apparently, residents like to see what's going on around their Lake.

The survey showed that **43% of responders rely on channel 10 as their "primary source"** of information about Lake Monticello, second only to the Friday Flyer. Of those who returned their surveys, **69% say they watch channel 10**, with most saying they watch occasionally.

Channel 10 viewers by age group:

- **60+ years -- 48%**
- **41 to 60 years -- 31%**
- **26 to 40 years -- 16%**
- **25 and younger -- 6%**

The Broadcast Committee has already begun to discuss production of programming that will appeal to younger age groups.

Of the surveys returned, the following indicate what channel 10 viewers are watching:

- **Board of Directors meeting -- 7% every meeting, 44% occasionally.**
- **"This Week at the Lake" programming -- 2% never miss it, 42% occasionally.**
- **Ongoing announcements/photos -- 6% daily, 64% occasionally.**
- **24% turn on channel 10 just for the music at least occasionally, and of those who do, 23% enjoy it.**

Cable TV Channel 14: Channel 14 is administered by staff, with technical support from the Broadcast Group. Its main programming is an ongoing loop of the content of the current Friday Flyer, 24 hours a day, seven days a week until updated each Friday. Also, special and emergency notices may be posted as needed.

40% of surveys returned say they watch channel 14. Of those who watch, **83% watch weekly**, apparently associated with the weekly update of the Friday Flyer (84%).

Questions have been raised about the usefulness of channel 14 and whether we should consider discontinuing its use. Although we also have channel 10, the roles of the two channels are entirely different, and they should not be compared in determining effectiveness of either.

Channel 14 takes little more than staff time to keep it operating. There is no production time involved, only the reformatting Friday Flyer content for broadcast.

Conclusion: The 2007 communications survey has revealed a lot of useful data. In addition, we expect that when all comments are compiled, there will be in excess of 100 pages of comments, many with productive suggestions. Although there are some negative comments also, we view those as seriously as the positive ones. We will give serious consideration to all input and make every effort to evolve as needed to remain the fresh and useful sources of information that our members want and need.

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