

# Adopt a new Political Strategy

> **Build unique packages** about the presidential election with deep content on swing states, voter polls and candidate histories.

Marv Clemons, an editor at the Rockford Register Star, wanted to design a political page focusing on the key swing states in this year's presidential race. Two weeks after an AP Exchange training session, he built two saved searches for election polls. "We wanted to use AP as much as possible because the material would be readily available," Clemons said. The searches made the difference.

When executive editor Linda Grist Cunningham caught the full-page, graphical feature in the Sunday paper, "I said, 'Wow!' I sat down and read the whole thing. They turned it into something really amazing." Member Choice helped the Rockford Register Star cover the biggest story in the country the way they wanted to cover it.

> **View latest Member Choice news:**  
[www.ap.org/choice](http://www.ap.org/choice)

## ELECTION 2008

# Battleground states

By **Marvin Clemons**  
ROCKFORD REGISTER STAR

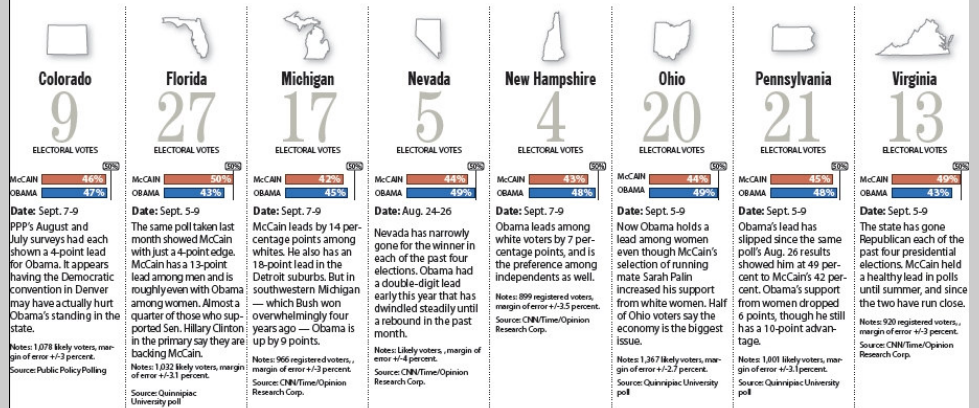
In 51 days it's highly likely that one or two states will decide whether Democratic Sen. Barack Obama becomes the first African-American to occupy the White House or whether war hero Republican Sen. John McCain capitalizes on his maverick image to move into 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. As usual, 270 is the magic number of electoral votes to secure the presidency. National and statewide polls show a shifting-sand scenario among less than 10 states

just seven weeks from Election Day. Two national polls this week showed McCain ahead by 2 to 4 percentage points while a Wall Street Journal-NBC News poll released Wednesday had Obama up by 1 — 46 percent to 45 percent. With about 40 states already locked in to go Republican red or Democratic blue come Nov. 4, the delegate-rich states of Illinois, New York, California and New Jersey are in the Obama fold. McCain appears solid in much of

the West and major parts of the South. The candidates' strategy is as simple as it is complex: Obama must either capture a state President Bush won in 2004, such as Ohio or Florida, or cobble together victories in a couple of others offering lower numbers. McCain, for his part, must triumph in the places where President Bush won in 2004. The unknown factor very well could be the lure of McCain running mate, Alaska

Gov. Sarah Palin, who appears to have energized the conservative GOP base. Between today and Nov. 4, the map of red and blue may take on shades of purple as a tight race turns into a possible nail-biter. Will Ohio decide it, as many feel, or will it come down again to Florida or perhaps another state?

Marvin Clemons is news editor of the Register Star. He can be reached at 815-987-1390 or [mclemons@rrstar.com](mailto:mclemons@rrstar.com). The Associated Press contributed to this report.



Electoral College	LEANING MCCAIN	SWING STATES	LEANING OBAMA	SOLID OBAMA
	67	116	50	172

The Rockford Register Star unveiled this election page Sun., Sept. 14, two weeks after an AP Exchange training session. By using the broad coverage available with Member Choice, the paper will focus on a key state every day until Election Day. [Click here](#) to see the full-page layout.

**"Go ahead and tell everyone that it works."**

Linda Grist Cunningham  
Executive Editor  
Rockford Register Star in Rockford, Ill.

Member Choice text services replace dozens of existing text services to give you more in a simpler product line-up.

- > **AP Breaking News** – the core service – offers comprehensive breaking news coverage and represents about 90 percent of all AP content.
- > **AP Complete** adds deeper content in news, business, sports, entertainment and lifestyles to supplement breaking news coverage with in-depth analysis, trends and features.

The Associated Press is the essential global news network, delivering fast, unbiased news from every corner of the world to all media platforms and formats. Founded in 1846, AP today is the largest and most trusted source of independent news and information. On any given day, more than half the world's population sees news from AP.  
450 West 33rd Street | New York, NY 10001 | [www.ap.org](http://www.ap.org)