

Limestone Quarry

Business Challenge/Environment

Our industry leading client ran into overwhelming local opposition to its limestone rock quarry proposal in a rural county. This was a crucial “must win” project and a key element of the client’s market strategy. The county planning commission had already issued a negative recommendation after intense community opposition at the initial public hearing. Without a radical change in the political situation, this project could never win the required “super-majority” approval from the county commission.

Outcome

More than 200 residents of this small rural county attended the public hearing in support of the project. Over 800 residents signed our petition, and another 110 residents wrote letters of support to their county commissioners. Our client’s application was approved with a super-majority vote of the county commission.

Our Approach

We had to generate a groundswell of targeted constituent political pressure to turn the situation around. The immediate priority was identifying and organizing existing supporters to urge the county commissioners to delay the hearing by 30 days, allowing us time to mount an aggressive countywide campaign. With the extension in hand, we:

- Launched a petition drive in support of the quarry and began to build a comprehensive supporter database.
- Set up meetings for voters with their district county commissioner to demonstrate support for the application and make personal appeals for their votes.
- Organized a letter-writing campaign to the county commissioners from voters in targeted districts demanding that they support the application.
- Created a countywide coalition of business owners advocating economic development and educating local business owners about the full-time jobs the quarry would generate and the beneficial economic ripple effects.
- Identified key speakers for the public hearing and provided each with relevant talking points.
- Held a cookout prior to the public hearing and gathered all of the project supporters to actually march into the public hearing together in a resounding show of local political support.