

Getting to Know Your Elected Leaders – Part 2

By Alan Smith

In the last edition of Caltactics, we discussed that it was important to get to know your elected leaders, as you will want their support in the June 2006 primary in support of the Library Bond Construction Bond Act that will be on the ballot. While this Act “only” requires a 50% plus one vote majority to pass, passage will require a lot of work on all our parts, especially given the concern in the state over the state’s over all debt load.

It was suggested to attend some of the Mayors’ Conferences in those urban and suburban areas of the state that have them. In this installment, we will focus on the basics; developing relationships of either those in office, or considering a run for a special district, school board, city council or mayor, or at the county level for Board of Supervisors, or other elected office such as tax collector.

To start to identify those who are potential candidates, read the political section and “gossip” columns of your local newspaper and the letters to the editor. Many potential candidates start discussing issues in public forums months before filing dates.

Watch your city council or various commission meetings (e.g. Planning Commission) if televised. Quite often potential candidates are regular speakers on items on the agenda, as well as during public comment time. Also, they are often regular participants in religious activities, the chamber of commerce, and other civic organizations such as service clubs. They are also likely to attend events such as the Mayor’s Breakfast etc. and they try to introduce themselves to as many possible supports and voters as possible.

Potential candidates need to get to know the voters and go out of their way to share their views, as they “press the flesh” as former President LBJ use to say. They may also have web sites as well. Contact them in any way you feel comfortable to discuss how important libraries are to you and get their opinion.

Assuming they generally have values that you share, and they are library supporters, offer to help them. Helping them includes a wide range of activities long before a campaign starts.

As an example. in my county, I circulated a petition for a candidate for County Treasurer and obtained 50 signatures. Over the years, we have often seen each other at various events and he always introduces me to others and includes in his introduction that I’m involved with libraries and that I circulated a petition for his first election and got 50 signatures (and he won).

Candidates remember who help them and are often willing to assist you in turn. Thus, when we had a library measure on the ballot, I called the County Treasurer and offered to take him to lunch (low budget!). He quite willingly signed an endorsement for the measure and wrote a check on the spot. We then walked into the County's Assessor's office, who also signed an endorsement card and contributed to the campaign. Note, one is a Republican, and one is a Democrat, but library support crosses party lines.

In the next edition, we will discuss what else you can do help candidates and to get to know your elected leaders.

See you sooner than you know it on the campaign trail

Filename: CALTACTICS-Alan_Smith-02-
Getting_to_know_your_elected_leaders.doc
Directory: C:\Documents and Settings\jeff.b.trunnelle\Desktop
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\jeff.b.trunnelle\Application
Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot
Title: GETTING TO KNOW YOUR ELECTED LEADERS,
YOUR FRIENDS AND ALLIES, PART 2
Subject:
Author: Systems
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 8/21/2006 9:27 PM
Change Number: 3
Last Saved On: 8/21/2006 9:29 PM
Last Saved By: Wells Fargo User
Total Editing Time: 4 Minutes
Last Printed On: 8/21/2006 9:47 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 2
Number of Words: 472 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 2,693 (approx.)