FLASHBACK: THE ROAD AHEAD

Last of a four-part series. In this piece I'd laid out what needed to be done in a local organization which was, well, not organized. This is equally applicable for any other political party if any Greens, Pirates, Libertarians, etc. want to make a credible attempt down the road to local party development.

The Angry Left: A Starter Map for the Road Ahead

I've already published a 50,000 foot view, a personal look back, and a personal account of getting to this point in the rather bumpy road.

And now here's a "road map" used along the way, stripped down for use by any local Democratic Party, third party entity or activist organization wanting to start their own journey.

Shortly after I took Howard Dean's recommendation to heart and joined the local Democratic Party in order to change the system, I read the work of another progressive activist in Maine. They were kind enough to share a basic plan they were using to turn around their local party, based on a plan yet another had used in different state. I guess you could say this is a very old meme which I'm willing to spread around.

It was this same plan, customized for our county, which initially was welcomed by the local party, and which they began to push back against as too radical, too aggressive, and a bunch of other not particularly nice adjectives and adverbs to boot depending on which faction one belonged to in the party.

These goals are the kinds of things that every local party organization should consider carefully as a goal, even if not realizable now. One example is a local office: if you live in BumFrick, North Dakota, you may not have the

means to have a permanent office, let alone the traffic to warrant one. Table it for the future in case things change, but it's probably the very last goal your group needs to be concerned with. But if you live in a much more populous area of the country, setting up a permanent office may be one of the key and early objectives to establishing a brand identity in the mind of the voting public in your locale. A permanent office tells voters the organization is serious, not a fly-by-night, it's going to be there to serve voters; it's hard to put a price on that. If you build it, they will come.

Take a look at these and evaluate the circumstances in your county or parish; which ones will work inside the first year? Which ones are most critical? What kinds of numbers in terms of quantity you think belong in such a document for your area?

And how many people can you muster up to do this work, now, and year after year? . . .

TEMPLATE: ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

Communications Groups:

- Fully develop communications groups, both at the city/township and County levels.
- Develop strategies to cover properly the issues, media and frequency needed to be most effective.
- Plan the strategy for the campaign re: supporting specific candidates.
- Contribute articles and support to the [Group Name] newsletter.

Voter Lists:

- Maintain lists for County, and city/towns/townships/villages in adjoining counties (for our dual-county candidates), at the County level with the commitment to provide key data elements to the State Data Base.
- Add voter histories whenever elections occur.
- Completely update voter lists for all County and non-county municipalities by January 1 of the next year.

Absentee (Early) Voting:

- Continue to develop a process that includes City/Township Clerks.
- Insure the presence of sufficient Notaries on Election Day (where applicable).
- Include an "early voting" question in our Voter ID scripts (where applicable).
- Continue to strengthen our process for tracking applications and resulting early votes (where applicable).
- Start our planning earlier to insure a strong early voting program (where applicable).
- Better training for our

Voter ID callers to insure proper emphasis on "early voting" (where applicable).

Candidate Development:

- Strengthen the Candidate Development and Support Subcommittee.
- Survey all 20X0, 20X1 and 20X2 municipal, county and State office openings to determine the offices we need to focus on.
- Define attributes of desirable candidates.
- Develop a list of potential progressive candidates in the County.
- Use all potential contacts to find potential candidates and screen to find most qualified.
- Help potential candidates get exposure and experience.

Candidate Support:

- Develop training session for new candidates.
- Develop candidate orientation and training program.
- Train and mentor all candidates, especially new candidates.
- Provide candidates with advice regarding the recommended campaign

organization and offer help to create the needed organization.

- Increase efforts to communicate County support capabilities to candidates.
- Provide Voter ID calling results as soon as available, especially undecided voters.
- Have town sign captains and a County coordinator to handle candidate sign distribution, maintenance and retrieval.
- Provide volunteers from County list to candidates to support all desired activities — literature distribution, drive candidates around, canvassing on behalf of the candidate, persuasion calling and canvassing, etc.
- Provide "walking around" lists when needed for previous tasks.
- Do preliminary research like a district profile.
- Provide forums, house parties and fundraising events for each candidate.

Voter ID Calling:

- Using the HQ phone bank and municipality quasi-phone banking, make Voter ID calls

(including all candidates and all parties) during the period from August 1st (or date immediately following primary) to September 15th. Include a volunteer question and an early voting question. An estimated [XX,000] calls will be needed to achieve at least a X0% hit rate on our list of phone numbers in each town.

- Improve phone caller training.
- Provide data to candidates ASAP.

Volunteer (or member) recruiting:

- Recruit XX,000 volunteers over the course of the next two years.
- Recruit and train a volunteer coordinator and volunteer coordinator assistants.
- Develop more "key" volunteers who can run HQ on their own to enhance the effectiveness of current leadership.

Canvassing:

- Develop canvassing teams in each town able to do literature drops, informational canvassing, persuasion canvassing and

candidate support.

- Over the next two years, have these teams visit each voter at least three times and hopefully more, to insure the accuracy of our lists and knowledge about town voters.

Persuasion Calling and Canvassing:

- During the period from September 15th until October 25th pre-election, provide persuasion work for any candidate desiring support.
- Use canvassing teams and phone bank capabilities already developed.
- Do extensive training in persuasion techniques during the next two years.

GOTV:

- Utilize town GOTV captains to coordinate GOTV calling during the week leading up to the election, recruit poll watching teams, recruit poll runners, sign up drivers, and oversee the GOTV activities.
- Develop a list of lawyers who will be available to assist during that period, especially on Election Day.
- Establish the procedures for interface with towns

regarding poll watching and early voting early in the process so there are no misunderstandings.

- Prepare detailed calling sheets including all 1's and 2's (1-Identified as supporter and 2-Identified as a leaning supporter).
- Prepare detailed poll watching sheets for Election Day.

Technology:

- Develop an approach to a County Database.
- Develop the County website and publicize effectively.
- Expand the County and municipality email lists, automate sign-up and sign-off and utilize email and social media communications more fully.

Events Calendar:

- Recruit municipality coordinators who will keep coordinator informed regarding upcoming events in their city/township/town/village.
- Establish a County coordinator who will insure that event information is put on our web site and communicated to all our

candidates.

- Establish and invigorate an Issues Subcommittee.
- Develop a strong message/vision statement.
- Help candidates develop their own message to the voters.
- Call on High Schools to reach future voters.
- Develop special events.
- Develop more media contacts/opportunities.
- Nurture strong town leadership.
- Host forums for candidates.
- Host issue-based house parties/forums.

Municipality (City/Township/Town/Village) Committees:

- Insure that every municipality has a functioning committee with strong leadership.
- Conduct education-training session with each municipality committee individually (e.g., Wellstone) as many times as necessary to support their development.
- Expand the regional municipality committee meetings throughout the

County to insure proper coordination in Headquarters.

- Year-round presence — A headquarters office with volunteer staff open 2-3 days per week for part (ex: 1pm to 6pm) of the day with staff and open other times as needs become clear.
- A campaign office which ideally will be open for 5 months (Mid-June to Mid-November) in campaign years — 7 days per week, 12 hours each day (8:30am to 8:30pm).

Fundraising:

- Raise a total of [$XXX,000] over the two-year cycle, [$XXX,000] to finance the off-year and [$XXX,000] for the election year. Be realistic with this plan. [NOTE: If this is a new organization, be sure to research and establish legal entities according to local, state and federal regulations. All fundraising must be compliant with local/state/federal laws.]

Issues Forums:

- Have an issues forum in each municipality or grouping of municipalities to develop

> "What it means to be a [Group Member]" and the "Three Principles that will be our message for 20XX". Have a County process to create a consensus document.
> - Have regular monthly issues meetings around the County.
> - Have an issues portion of the monthly [Group Name] meeting.

So there you have it, a general template "road map" to building your activist organization should you choose to accept it. There are a few items which aren't included in this list of objectives; they're what we might call "advanced activism" and the kind of thing we'd consider "proprietary knowledge" unique to the locale and to the organization. Once you get a handle on this map and begin to make some traction on the items, you'll soon figure out what the "advanced activism" components are for your area.

Oh, and for those of you hungering and yearning badly for a third party: *Get going*. I can't make it any easier for you short of spoon feeding while holding your hand.

I'm too damned busy to do that for you.
_____
And that's it for this series. I sure hope we continue to have a representative democracy for which this map still works. Best of luck to us all in the days ahead.