

Press Release

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McKinney says WVGOP laying groundwork for 2010 victories

Summer state committee meeting affirmed independent primary participation; search for new E.D. underway

CHARLESTON, W. Va. – State GOP Chairman Doug McKinney said today that the search for a new executive director for the West Virginia Republican Party is well underway and will be one of several developments leading to election victories in 2010 and beyond.

"Last weekend's state committee meeting in Martinsburg featured two days of motivational presentations, an enthusiastic outlook, a focus on the next generation of Republican leaders, and an air of excitement and anticipation about the future of the GOP," said McKinney.

State committee members approved, by voice vote, the recommendation of a subcommittee to continue the practice of allowing non-affiliated voters to cast ballots in the Republican primary. Begun in the 1980s, the practice was reexamined by the subcommittee, but most committee members agreed on the need to continue keeping the primary election open to non-affiliated voters.

McKinney said he has already received six applications for the executive director position, and he intends to interview them and others and eventually select an individual with the experience, knowledge and skills to oversee the day to day operation of the party in the crucial months and years to come.

Last weekend's GOP meeting was chockfull of exciting events and presentations, from the Friday night Berkeley County reception featuring Grover Norquist, longtime anti-tax advocate, to former Sen. John Sununu, who addressed Saturday's luncheon event. Among the VIP attendees were Congresswoman Shelley Moore Capito and former Secretary of State Betty Ireland.

On Saturday morning, special guest Jan Larimer, co-chairman of the Republican National Committee, offered a recap of RNC activities and future plans of the national party.

McKinney said the weekend focused on the next generation of Republican leaders, with state Young Republican Chairman Mike Howerton offering a presentation during Saturday morning's county chairs meeting, and Shane Wilson updating committee members on the activities of the five interns currently serving the party through the Cecil H. Underwood Intern Institute.

McKinney said he was also excited about a fundraising drive headed by Delegates Craig Blair and Jonathan Miller. Blair addressed committee members on Saturday, describing plans to increase the party's monthly credit card contribution program and generate more support from elected officials.

McKinney also named South Charleston businessmen John Burdette II and Denver McCallister as finance chairmen for the state party.

"We're bringing new blood into the party to continue building our financial coffers, while setting the stage for a strong, vibrant party organization for years to come," said McKinney.

Also during the weekend, committee members and guests heard presentations from:

- Treasurer Marti Riggall, who reported that the party saw a net gain of \$12,000 from January through May of this year, compared to a net loss of \$200 during the same period last year.
- Summers County Chairman Joe Garcia, who serves as chairman of the county chairs, and who discussed election changes and challenges in the coming months.
- Outgoing executive director Gary Abernathy, who thanked the committee for the privilege of serving the party over the years.

McKinney also expressed his thanks to Berkeley Chairman Mick Staton and his wife, Lynn, for handling onsite arrangements for the state meeting.

"Traveling to the Eastern Panhandle is always a beautiful drive and a great experience," said McKinney. "The Statons made sure we had a great event both Friday and Saturday, and we deeply appreciate their efforts in working to ensure a quality meeting and a motivational gathering of Republicans from around the state."