



Friday, August 31, 2007

MANAGEMENT

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Weekly Rehash

Presidential Primary — A Little Pressure Pops It Loose

For the most part, the week before a three-day holiday is generally a slow one in Lansing. By and large, this week fit the mold.

Leading up to Thursday, word was that the state's political leaders ... including Gov. Jennifer Granholm, wanted the House to take up and pass Senate legislation that would establish a state-funded, joint Michigan presidential primary on Jan. 15. Recall from last week's GCSIntel report that Democrats were still holding out with Party Chair Mark Brewer, saying he was encouraging Democrats to oppose the Senate bill.

Apparently, after some intense lobbying by the likes of Debbie Dingell (wife of U.S. Rep. John Dingell) and U.S. Sen. Carl Levin pressure was brought to bear on the House to pass the bill and get the job done.

Thursday afternoon the House obliged by passing the measure. The same day, the Senate forwarded the measure on to Gov. Granholm who is expected to sign it into law. It should be noted that Brewer is still signaling the Democratic Party may go its own way with a caucus.

Are The GOP Natives Restless?

News this week out of the Michigan Republican Party is there could be a challenge mounted against long-serving (since 1989) GOP National Committeeman Chuck Yob.

Yob has been a lightning rod for the Party on more than one occasion — recall comments during a March 2002 taping of *Off The Record* where he asserted of the post of Secretary of State and women: "I think that's a real nice place for a woman. They like that kind of work."

Now, apparently, three Republicans could challenge the incumbent. They are: Ingham County Republican Chairman Norm Shinkle, former Oakland County Chairman Paul Welday and former state representative and U.S. Senate candidate Andrew Raczowski.

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On The Budget Front There Is . . .

Absolutely no news.

Well, that probably isn't quite fair, but not far from the truth.

House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford) and Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) met on Monday of this week while up in Traverse City at a conference and met again Wednesday — but both report no deal was ready to be announced.

Bishop is, however, growing concerned that the stress level in the Capitol could boil over and disrupt the process. He notes his staff has been going 24/7 for a month or more.

Dillon and Bishop both reiterated their belief that a budget deal resolving the state's \$1.733 billion budget deficit will be forthcoming before the end of September and the beginning of the state's new fiscal year.

That "R" Word Is Popping Up Again

Former state representative Leon Drolet, now a Macomb County Commissioner and anti-tax crusader, has filed the preliminary paperwork to recall 10 lawmakers this week.

This year as lawmakers worked on resolving twin budget deficits (2007 and 2008 fiscal years) of as much as \$1.733 billion, Drolet has threatened to recall any lawmaker who votes for a tax increase.

The paperwork filed this week is in the districts of: House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford); Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom (R-Muskegon); Rep. Dick Ball (R-Laingsburg); Rep. Ed Gaffney (R-Grosse Park Farms); Sen. Glenn Anderson (D-Westland); Sen. Dennis Olshove (D-Warren), Rep. Mary Valentine (D-Muskegon); Rep. Gino Polidori (D-Dearborn); and Rep. Marc Corriveau (D-Northville).

"This is just our first batch," warned Drolet on Monday. The next day, Gov. Jennifer Granholm said lawmakers should not let the threat of being recalled prevent them from voting for a tax hike.

Michigan Factoid:

The name Michigan is derived from an Algonquian Chippewa Indian word "meicigama" and means "big sea water" referring to the Great Lakes.

Weekly Forecast ...

Looking down the pike is something that has become increasingly difficult the closer lawmakers get to the end of the fiscal year and the "do or die" date of September 30, by which time they must have a budget solution in place.

What can probably safely be predicted are the following:

- Look for pressure on the recall front to continue to mount the closer we get to a vote on a possible tax increase as part of the budget solution

- Don't be surprised if the issue drags right up to the 30th with a possible solution coming as late as Saturday, Sept. 29
- Oh, and expect both Michigan State University and the University of Michigan football teams to win at least one of their early games (how's that for bold predictions?)

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