

# McCabe campaign: 56,000 miles and the odometer's still spinning

Posted on Tuesday, Mar 13, 2018

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March 13, 2018 – By February's end, Mike McCabe's Principle Over Party campaign for governor had traveled more than 56,000 miles just since McCabe made his candidacy official on September 12, reaching out to voters in every part of the state.

The campaign made 196 stops, including 135 events open to anyone wishing to attend. In addition, the campaign held 141 neighborhood organizing meetings and volunteer trainings in communities across the state. A corps of 257 volunteers worked to make all these grassroots activities happen.

A volunteer-inspired voter outreach effort that started in La Crosse and quickly spread to Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, Appleton, Green Bay, Milwaukee, Kenosha, Madison and elsewhere that's been dubbed "people-powered billboards" involves volunteers standing for hours at busy intersections and high-traffic areas – often in freezing or even sub-zero temperatures – holding campaign signs, many of them homemade.

Another effort involves passing out brown paper bags containing 10 campaign flyers to people attending events who are willing to commit to talking to 10 other people about McCabe's candidacy. The outside of each bag carries the handwritten message "This election is in the bag." Well over 1,000 of the bags have been distributed to people interested in spreading the campaign's message to others they know.

The Principle Over Party campaign emphasizes volunteer-driven grassroots

campaigning as McCabe is breaking the mold by refusing to take the huge political donations other candidates for governor accept. While state law allows donations as large as \$20,000 from individuals and \$86,000 from political action committees, McCabe's Principle Over Party campaign is not taking any single donation over \$200. Supporters are allowed to give more than once, but no more than a total of \$1,000 for the entire campaign.

"The huge donations most politicians are addicted to amount to legal bribes and they give us a government that works exceptionally well for those at the very top and fails the rest of us," McCabe said. "A tiny segment of society has the habit of writing checks for \$20,000 and handing them to candidates for office. What they want our government to do is vastly different from what regular people want our government to do. And this wealthy, well-connected and privileged few get their wish on every issue people care about."

McCabe is a longtime independent government watchdog and veteran reformer. For 15 years, he led the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, a nonpartisan watchdog group that tracks the money in elections, exposes corruption and works to make people matter more than money in politics. He went on to start up the grassroots group Blue Jean Nation, which works to empower regular people to challenge the political establishment to change its ways.

McCabe wants his campaign for governor to be a 21st Century version of how Bill Proxmire won statewide elections for 30 years in Wisconsin. Proxmire was famous for tireless, face-to-face campaigning and spent next to nothing on campaign advertising.

"If we are going to rid Wisconsin of the cronyism, corruption and legal bribery that has taken root in our state, we are going to have to invent a new politics that depends on a citizen army pounding the pavement to reach out to neighbors, friends, co-workers, family members and complete strangers alike," McCabe said.

Through the end of February, the mileage tally for McCabe's campaign stood at 56,260.