



# Innovate to Motivate

*The National Conference for Political Involvement Professionals*

**2011 February 8–11, 2011 San Antonio**

[www.InnovateToMotivate.com](http://www.InnovateToMotivate.com)

## **Winner - Grassroots 2011 Showalter Political Involvement Program Innovation Award**

<b>Nominated Organization:</b>	Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association
<b>Name of Person Submitting the Nomination:</b>	Carole Walker
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<b>Name of Program Manager/Senior Administrator:</b>	Carole Walker
<b>Is the nomination for grassroots, PAC or technology?:</b>	Grassroots

### **What is the innovation?**

"The Colorado Campaign Road Trip 2010." This unique flash animation application takes the traditional grassroots distribution update to an entirely new level, by engaging our insurance industry grassroots network in a fun weekly, interactive campaign road trip to hotly contested legislative races across Colorado. For eight weeks following the primaries and leading up to the November General Election, Vic the Voter traveled in his election roadster to a different legislative district located on a cartoon map of Colorado.

When you move your mouse over Vic you get a synopsis of the district and the candidates. We had the candidates answer four key P & C insurance questions and included the side-by-side answers to the survey questions for whatever district Vic was visiting.

The map includes icons that you would find on a typical road trip that provided new issue/grassroots/campaign information each week.

- The diner featured weekly specials that included political headlines and happenings.
- The gas pump featured a different insurance issue/legislation each week to fuel up on information.
- The ATM gave tips on CO's campaign fundraising laws and news on how candidates were being bankrolled.
- At the scenic overlook you get a grassroots snapshot of how to get involved in political campaigns (featured company employees/agents from the grassroots network to spotlight their activity).

2,745 views during the 8 weeks that the Colorado Campaign Road Trip was active ranked it as the 15th most viewed page on the RMIIA website during 2010. Here are the links to the eight weeks of the Road Trip:

- <http://www.rmiia.org/election/week1.html>
- <http://www.rmiia.org/election/week2.html>
- <http://www.rmiia.org/election/week3.html>
- <http://www.rmiia.org/election/week4.html>
- <http://www.rmiia.org/election/week5.html>
- <http://www.rmiia.org/election/week6.html>
- <http://www.rmiia.org/election/week7.html>
- <http://www.rmiia.org/election/week8.html>



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## **What prompted this innovation?**

We were struggling with ways to get our statewide grassroots network to focus on races in key districts in which candidates were business friendly, anti-insurance, a member of an important committee, or an area highly populated by insurance representatives. We also have diverse political affiliations within our grassroots volunteer ranks, so while we did not want to endorse certain candidates, we did want to provide information on candidates'™ background, voting records and personal/professional experience with insurance (negative attitudes toward insurance often stem from an insurance claim rather than their overarching political views or party).

In addition, we have strict Colorado campaign finance laws, so we ultimately determined that this innovation achieved what our grassroots network needed in this situation—opportunities to make informed decisions about candidates, tips on grassroots involvement, political donations and background on hot industry issues. It also generated enthusiasm and momentum leading up to the General Election. We considered holding candidate fairs, fundraisers, meet and greets, but determined that our real goal was to gin up our voter turnout, inform our statewide network of agents/employees and highlight candidates/issues.

## **How is this innovation likely to change the way political involvement programs are conducted?**

The feedback from our grassroots volunteers was tremendous and the main message was consistent—it provided a fun, easy and powerful way to engage our network during the “off season” of the legislature. It challenged us to make our updates worth the time to open, view and forward to colleagues. Our online image for our grassroots distribution is the same as our in-person events—fun, motivating and meaningful. We need to use technology as a tool in conjunction with our entire grassroots program. In addition, by highlighting grassroots superstars in this highly visible industry forum it motivates others to get involved and management to support them.

The Colorado Campaign Road Trip reinforced that candidates appreciate the opportunity to be showcased in front of a large audience of constituents. Many followed up with a thank you for being included (we even had a legislator in an unopposed race ask why he wasn't highlighted). During the busy campaign season it becomes challenging to get candidates to show up without a fundraiser or if their opponent is present. Balancing the money/time/effort it would have taken to organize forums across the state for limited political return on the investment, the Colorado Campaign Road Trip 2010 was a way to do a “meet and greet” every week with key candidates for our statewide grassroots network. The candidates we highlighted appreciated having their race profiled and their answers to our questions were generally very thoughtful.

## **What can public affairs professionals learn from your innovation?**

Grassroots communications must take many different forms, but using technology to engage, motivate and interact with a large, geographically diverse network of volunteers is essential in today's busy, stressful work world. The bottom line doesn't change—make it fun, interesting, personal and easy. Reaching out to volunteers in different ways and forums has been key to building and growing our grassroots network. RMIIA



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has a staff of two, serving the entire Rocky Mountain Region—yet we continue to find inexpensive, innovative ways to leverage our grassroots programs through ongoing communications, technology and volunteer support.