

December 2009 Column

From the Chair....

Just What The Heck is a PCO?

I blush to admit it but, upon assuming the office of party chairman, I had no idea of what a PCO was, who they were, or what they did. As time passed, I realized that I was not alone in my ignorance and so now, having attained some slight education on the subject, I will pass along my newfound knowledge to anyone who may benefit from it.

The precinct - a specific geographic area within the county - is the basic building block of the Washington State Republican Party. The Precinct Committee Officer (PCO) is elected by voters within a given precinct to represent them at the county level as a member of the County Central Committee.

The Central Committee then elects a county chair, a vice chair, a state committeeman, and a state committeewoman who will lead the county organization and who will represent Clallam County to the Republican State Committee.

Accordingly, the PCO is vitally important to our party in that he/she serves as a communications channel from individual precinct members to the county leadership and thence to the state level and, further, to the national level.

However, the role of a PCO is more complex in that he/she not only communicates a party member's views, preferences, etc, upward to party leadership; he/she also conveys information from party leadership back down to the individual member. And of critical importance, the PCO is essential in organizing his/her precinct to identify Republican voters, build local relationships and, indeed, perform any other activity that will elect and support Republican candidates.

Clallam County has a total of 95 precincts and, therefore, the Central Committee should be comprised of 95 PCOs. Sadly, this is not the case because 29 of these precincts have not elected a PCO and, consequently, the party members residing therein are unrepresented. Furthermore, it means that vast segments of our county's population is unorganized and cannot meaningfully contribute to the election of Republican candidates.

If we learned anything from the recent national elections it should be the fact that effective organization is the key to winning and, obviously, you cannot have an effective organization without organizers.

Our first-level organizers are the PCOs who must reach out to their

neighbors, associates, and colleagues to establish relationships whereby grassroots organizations - used to such effectiveness by Obama - may be formed and strengthened.

To this end, I request that all PCOs establish contact with each member of their precinct either directly or through a telephone tree, email list, etc. For those larger precincts, PCOs may wish to consider enlisting assistants to support these efforts.

Further, I request all party members to contact their PCOs and, those who can, to volunteer for assignments to assist the party. If you reside in an unrepresented precinct and wish to become a PCO, please contact me and perhaps

I can appoint you.

To help you identify your PCO when you already know your precinct name/number, please log onto our website, www.clallamrepublicans.org and select 'party leadership' and scroll down to the PCO listing/contact information. If you don't know your precinct name/number, go to the county auditors page, <http://wei.secstate.wa.gov/clallam/Elections/Pages/PrecinctMaps.aspx>, to obtain a list of precincts from which you may be able to determine your own. If all else fails, please call me at 460-7652 and I will attempt to help you.

Just remember, President Obama is doing a masterful job of uniting Republicans and is personally paving the way to GOP victories in the 2010 elections. But try as he might - and he is trying - he may not be able to do it alone. So let's get it together and help him out!!

Dick Pilling, Chair
Clallam County Republican Party