

Indie Politics

Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA) Laying the Groundwork to Help Fund New Technology

To: MERA Outreach Subcommittee and Executive Officer Maureen Cassingham
From: Dan Mullen
CC: Terry Price
Date: March 28, 2011
Re: Proposal for Public Affairs and Internal Communications Services

Summary:

San Rafael-based public affairs and political consulting firm Indie Politics is proposing the following communications services for the Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA) and its future technological upgrade efforts:

- A. Communications Planning & Consulting
 - Current Strategic Plan Assessment
 - Enhanced & Expanded Strategic Communications Plan
 - Starting Internal Communications
- B. Recommendations for Next Steps – Marketing Plan & Program to Move Forward

Indie Politics will be using Price Campaign Solutions as a subvendor for this contract period of April 5, 2011 to July 5, 2011.

Communications Planning & Consulting:

The ability to articulate MERA's mission and fiscal challenges is critical to gaining the support necessary to fund any new technology rollout. Starting immediately, we would coordinate with the Outreach Subcommittee, Executive Officer Maureen Cassingham (and other MERA Board members where appropriate) on the development of an action plan to meet MERA's needs.

With a strong track record of communicating complex ideas to voters, we would also provide pre-electoral planning and communication services to prepare MERA for a possible election, if it chooses to pursue one.

➤ **Phase One – Assessment:**

Assess the status of the Authority's communication efforts including:

- Current Strategic Plan as adopted.
- Effectiveness of present MERA publications and other communications and marketing activities.
- Effectiveness of the present MERA internal communications.
- Discussions with stakeholders to assess MERA's image, communication patterns and gaps.

Deliverable for Phase 1: Memo and/or Presentation on current MERA communications.

➤ **Phase Two – Enhance & Expand Strategic Communications Plan:**

After careful consideration of MERA's current Strategic Plan, we'll offer written suggestions to

the Outreach Committee for an enhanced and expanded communications effort. This revised written plan will outline a recommended communications strategy, including specific methods and techniques for local outreach and education.

Deliverable for Phase 2: Action Plan as Addendum to current Strategic Plan.

- **Phase Three – Start Internal Communications:** MERA is a unique member organization, consisting of many stakeholders coming together for Marin’s common safety. Yet, it is one of the least known organizations in the county. One of MERA’s assets is its existing network of stakeholders in each of Marin’s communities. The job of building support for replacement technology should begin with mobilizing the Board and local stakeholders to help spread the word. We would work with the MERA Outreach Subcommittee and Members to build a broad internal consensus to move the technology upgrade plan forward.

Deliverable for Phase 3: To be determined in the Action Plan (Phase 2), but could include presentation outline, Fact Sheet, FAQ’s or other information for Members’ use.

Recommendations for Next Steps:

At the end of the three-month consultation we’ll provide recommendations for MERA’s consideration. This may include placing a funding measure on a countywide ballot plus the next steps needed to do so. Building on the Enhanced Strategic Plan above, Indie Politics would make additional recommendations to help MERA move forward, including next legal, political, and financial steps, possible elections dates, and advice on a possible survey to determine the public’s willingness to support a ballot measure.

Deliverable at completion of work: Marketing Plan & Program to Move Forward

At the end of this consulting period, MERA’s Outreach Subcommittee should have clear options for subsequent months of activity.

Fees:

Hourly Consulting Services – not to exceed \$10,000:

Consulting services would start April 5, 2011, and include approximately 20 hours per month for two consultants’ time, billed at \$175 per hour. Routine office expenses such as phone calls, faxes, supplies, travel expense, etc. are included in consultant services.

Reimbursed Expenses (if any):

Indie Politics shall request MERA’s pre-approval for all expenses that are outside this proposal and might be billed later. MERA would reimburse approved expenses incurred by Indie Politics. Expenses not included with hourly services include items such as stock photography, graphic design, etc.

Team Members – Roles & Qualifications:

Mullen and Price have previously worked together to successfully pass the Twin Cities Police Authority Bond and the Sausalito Police & Fire Bond. The TCPA measure, which passed with 69% of the vote, was years in the making. Similar to MERA, we consulted on internal organization building, public

information, and ultimately a successful bond passage campaign. The Sausalito measure passed with 81% approval, even after a similar measure failed 70%-30% just four years prior.

Consultant - Dan Mullen is with Indie Politics. Since opening his own firm in 2005, Mullen has produced 28 campaign victories. He has consistently delivered superior results by working directly with each of his clients to ensure their interests are served in the most effective and efficient means possible. Enterprising and innovative, he guides them into territory that may be unfamiliar, combining a deep appreciation for managing competing priorities with a meticulous attention to detail. Over the last nine years, Mullen has worked with 80 campaigns in five states. During this time, he has been a leading member of creative teams that won six “Pollies” (the political industry’s equivalent of the ‘Oscar’) from the American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC) for excellence in design.

Consultant - Terry Price of Price Campaign Solutions has over 35 years of experience in public relations, public policy and organizational development. Since 1982 Price has managed more than 70 campaigns, including the Santa Rosa Schools’ successful 1997 and 2002 bond measures and for the successful November 2001 Novato Unified School District bond measure. Price has been conducting and supervising polling for more than 15 years. Price has also served as a District Director and Senior Field Representative to two California Assembly Members and as Chief of Staff for a US Congressman.