

Press Advisory: News Release

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Mountain Party's Nominating Convention Will Save Counties Thousands

Shepherdstown – West Virginia's newest political party has figured out a sure-fire way to save the state money in next year's elections. Meeting near Shepherdstown last weekend, its State Executive Committee voted to hold a nominating convention instead of requiring counties to print thousands of ballots for its primary election. "State law gives us the option of holding a convention to select our candidates for the 2004 general election," commented Gary Zuckett – the Committee's Chair. "Saving the counties thousands in printing costs is only one of the benefits. As a growing political party, meeting face-to-face with people from all regions of the state will build a stronger party," Zuckett added.

The Mountain Party qualified for a regular slot on West Virginia ballots in 2000. That year party activists gathered the signatures of over 18,000 WV voters to place their candidate, Denise Giardina, on the ballot for governor. Voters in that election gave Giardina nearly twice the required percentage to certify the new party. The Libertarian Party failed to receive the required votes that same year, thus losing their ballot access. The Mountain Party is now the only independent political party in the state.

"Independents are the fastest growing bloc of voters in this state," commented Frank Young, Mountain Party Treasurer. "Voters seem quite dissatisfied with both major parties, and are looking for candidates with new ideas," he added.

A political columnist for the Charleston Gazette recently cited a report stating a majority of voters in next year's governor's race could be willing to vote for an independent candidate under the right circumstances. "Since Governor Wise has announced that he is not seeking re-election, it's a whole new ball game" added Young.

The Mountain Party is encouraging potential candidates for their governor's race and other seats to begin forming exploratory committees early this fall. "They can begin building momentum going into next April's nominating convention when local delegates from all over the state will meet to nominate the party's November slate", noted Zuckett.

Asked about who was likely to seek the Party's nomination for governor, Zuckett commented, "We'll let each hopeful candidate choose his or her own timing to make that announcement."

END OF RELEASE - 30 #