

Premier Ed Stelmach's Tory campaign manager, Randy Dawson, e-mailed the following fascinating pep talk to all PC Party members after last weekend's PC convention.

According to Dawson, who also ran the 2008 Tory campaign, the party is strong, the premier is strong, the land is strong. etc. No problemo whatever. "We have momentum!" Dawson declares.

The whole thing sounds like a pitch for an election a lot sooner than March 2012, if that's what the premier decides to do. Notice that the e-mail doesn't mention Ed's stated date of March 2012.

The note is supposed to be confidential - heh. These days, nobody can keep something like this secret among thousands of people. It arrives here through a back door that creaked open in Edmonton.

Here's the e-mail, top to bottom:

Friend,

This weekend I hosted the first election readiness session for the upcoming provincial election and I thought it would be helpful to share a few highlights of that discussion with you.

Under the leadership of President Bill Smith and Vice Chairs Joan Hertz and Doug Schweitzer, we have established an election readiness committee of approximately 30 people (expanding more and more every day) to start the planning of the pre-writ period. Our focus will be on establishing (a) the nomination process built upon the new constituencies; (b) platform development that was just initiated by our leader; (c) the infrastructure necessary to run the campaign; and (d) an election plan for each and every constituency across Alberta.

Party members at the convention also heard from Greg Lyle, of Innovative Research, our party's pollster, and Susan Elliott on the subject of recent internal party polling. The slides from their presentation are available [here](#). This is the first time that the party has chosen to share internal party polling with delegates at a convention. Some of the key findings include:

Our party brand remains very strong. People credit us with a record of achievement, competence, having a strong team, and being financially responsible. They also credit Premier Stelmach with being fair to all parts of the province, and being both reliable and caring. This is a very strong foundation to build on.

Premier Stelmach is an asset for our party. On seven of nine key characteristics, he is seen in a significantly better light than our two main competing leaders (Swann and Smith); on one characteristic he is tied with Smith; and on one we need to work a little harder - listening and responding. Of course, as a government leader, he can't say *yes* to everyone like opposition leaders sometimes do, but nonetheless, we need to work harder to show Albertans the many ways in which we listen to their concerns and respond.

Contrary to some assumptions, the people who are expressing support for the Wildrose Alliance are not significantly different on issues or attitudes from those who support the PC Party. Most Albertans are concerned about a pressing social deficit, and think government should decide spending priorities based on need, not affordability. Seventy-five per cent of Albertans oppose government legislating moral values. Those attitudes cross party lines.

Our party brand, Premier Stelmach's brand, and the *snapshot* vote projections have all improved between June and October. We have momentum!

My goal as campaign manager is to run one of the most open and transparent campaigns our party and Alberta has ever seen. Empowering our members and providing you with the best possible information to develop new ideas for the future of our party is a cornerstone of this campaign. Because of you, we will have the best ideas, run the best campaign and win the next election!

Best regards,

Randy

Randy Dawson
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