

## Letter to the editor: Questioning Insight News' endorsement of Ward One candidate

Written by Robert McClain  
Monday, 04 November 2013 16:38

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Ward One, which is believed to be the most significantly diverse and economically challenged ward in St. Paul, has consistently experienced a deficiency in motivation from too many residents not acting on the historical and hard fought right to participate in the electoral process through the casting of individual votes in local elections. Certain voters who share specific racial or economic attributes neglect to maximize their political potential and impact by engaging in the process through increased voter turnout equal to the numbers reflecting those within their ranks qualified to be registered and able to vote.

There are two key races facing voters in the Twin Cities area; the Minneapolis mayoral race and the race for St. Paul, Ward One City Council. There are seven candidates who have come forward and have expressed an interest in representing Ward One on the City Council. They were faced with the challenge of raising adequate finances and preparing an effective campaign for a special election taking place in a condensed time frame. Due to the number of candidates running, not having a primary run-off election, and the shortened campaigning period voters who have not declared their support may have not been able to become as familiar with a particular candidate as they would have liked to. Engaging those who should be engaged and voting is testing enough; an added factor is that voters in the Twin Cities are in the second election where the process of "rank choice voting" is the order of the day. Here lies an opportunity for mainstream media, such as Insight News, could have played an important role and perform a public service through the publication or broadcasting of candidate profiles, or in assisting in the explanation of the rank choice voting process.

Mainstream media outlets, both printed and electronic, are utilized as effective tools in providing candidate information and have frequently serve to motivate voters to come out on election dates. Voters not able to attend debate forums may look to local media as a source to assist in their decision making process. With the introduction of "social media", Facebook, Twitter, texting, email, and the like have proven to broaden the audience, as well as increased a candidate's outreach and message delivery options to voters. In any case, voters expect a level playing field and a sense of fairness from prominent media leading up to Election Day. It is not uncommon for a media entity to endorse an individual or slate of candidates, but such endorsement is usually announced after there has been an open screening process that involved all candidates who desired to participate.

In the case of St. Paul, I am seriously disappointed in Insight News' decision to publish their endorsement of a specific candidate for Ward One City Council, which is their prerogative, without the benefit of providing access to their screening process to all the other candidates. Noel Nix, the "game changer", who was unsuccessful in securing his DFL party's endorsement, has not changed the game of poverty, education, city workforce diversity, housing conditions,

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small business development or anything else in the two plus years he has worked for Ward One. His endorsement by Insight News is disingenuous, non-inclusive, misleading, smells of favoritism and viewed by many as politics as usual.