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Mystic developer hopes candidates pay-to-say on his 'Voices' Web site

By [Lee Howard](#) Published on 9/19/2009

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Voice for Votes, a new Web site developed by a Mystic man, is offering statewide and local politicians a chance to get their message onto the Internet in a radio-interview format and, if the idea catches fire, could go national by next year.

Rick Bloeser, owner of Next Level Media Company LLC, said this week that he created his company two years ago with the ambition of putting together syndicated radio programs. He stumbled upon the idea of a nonpartisan forum for political candidates because he saw little else on the Internet like it, he said.

Candidates, who are interviewed by phone, pay the Mystic company to have their audio messages posted on the Web and then can link to www.voiceforvotes.com to spread the word about their candidacy. Voices for Votes gives them a chance to answer five questions that they suggest to Bloeser so they can address some of the major issues in their communities.

"You have to be your own devil's advocate," Bloeser said.

Those browsing the site can find their candidates by state and locality, then choose which of the questions they want to hear answered.

"People are starting to wake up to find out more information on what political candidates are all about," he said.

Candidates, in turn, are starting to acknowledge the power of the Web, Bloeser said. He already has signed up three Norwich mayoral candidates - Robert Zarnetske of the Norwich for Change party, Democrat Mark Bettencourt and Peter Nystrom, the longtime state representative who is running on the Republican ticket - and one of his most high profile mayoral races, in Norwalk, has both Democrat Steven Serasis and Republican Richard A. Moccia facing off by answering questions.

Those whose interviews are currently posted on the site were part of a period of free beta testing. In the future, the postings will cost from \$59 for brief statements by Alderman and City Council candidates to \$199 for a 10-question package offered to candidates for federal office.

Bettencourt, the Norwich mayoral candidate, said he's not sure how he's going to use the site.

"I guess you do get a feel for what might be important to the candidates," he said. "It's an interesting concept ... but it's not going to be at the forefront of my campaign."

Bloeser hopes, during national races next year, to sign up all the Connecticut candidates for U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. As he spreads out from Connecticut to an expected national launching next year, he said he would be looking to work with interns at recording-arts schools.

"I'm working with many blogs," he said. "I'm on Facebook and Twitter. ... By the 2011 local elections, we should be everywhere."

Bloeser said he is making the site interactive, so that members of the community can ask their own questions - and get answers. Bloeser said he doesn't see his site as a replacement for

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newspaper or television coverage of candidates, but rather as a supplement, especially as many news organizations have cut back on following local races.

"It creates awareness for voters," he said, "and it's a service tool for candidates." But the best thing may be "Not one person has talked (badly) about their opponent yet," he added. ■

Publications

- Mystic Country
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READER'S COMMENTS

Posted - 9/20/2009 11:10:57 AM

Mr GenghisConn as you call your self, Allow me to educate you on a few of your negative responses to this article. First of all my company provides a service as a business entity and have worked hard with my own time and money to do so, this is a tool for candidate to utilize just like radio and television ads, road signs, mailers and so on, all of which have to be paid for by the candidates campaign and is free to the voter or would be voter. You seem to think that everything is free as you must be one of those types that stroll around grocery stores looking for the free handouts at the bakery and deli and then leave the store without even buying a thing. Have you ever heard of contributing to your economy like must true Americans do? In regards to your spew on the blogs, we look at those and occasionally contribute for there is a lot of misinformation that needs to be deciphered and dealt with such as the comments you have made here. Mr GenghisConn you seem to be one of those junkies with nothing better to do but to spread your negativity, There are support groups out there for such a condition. Last but not least, Google is also a great tool to find information however not all candidates have web sites and for your information Google does charge for advertising to assure higher ranks in the relevant search results. I do appreciate you taking your free time to make comment to this however in the future you might want to get the facts before you make judgment on others. Good Day Sir.Rick BloeserVoice for Votes

Rick Bloeser
Mystic Connecticut
- 9/21/2009 9:20:58 AM

Posted - 9/19/2009 2:37:46 PM

This is not an effective way for candidates to get their messages out. He claims to be working with blogs but I've never heard of him. The only people that post on blogs are the political junkies who don't have anything better to do with their time.If Joe Voter wants to find out information on the internet about any candidate, all he has to do is use a search engine like google. That will bring the voter directly to the candidate's website where the candidate has complete control over the content and doesn't have to pay someone like Mr. Bloeser a fee. Nice try for the new business idea Mr. Bloeser but this is destined to fail.

GenghisConn
Enfield, CT
- 9/19/2009 4:36:19 PM

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