



## **Montgomery AL REALTORS Knock on 24,000 Doors to Help Re-Elect Their Champion for Mayor – October 2015**

The Montgomery Area Association of REALTORS® had nothing against any of the five candidates running in the mayoral election this past summer. But there was only one whom they knew would offer them a seat at the table where pressing budget issues and property rights decisions are concerned. So, using a major grant from the REALTOR® Party, MAAR launched a bold and energetic ground campaign in support of the incumbent, Mayor Todd Strange. With the REALTORS® behind him, Strange defied prevailing expectations and avoided a costly run-off election by securing another term outright.

MAAR Association Executive Brad Owen explains that his 1,000-member board has a real friend and political partner in Mayor Strange, a retired businessman and former Director of the Alabama Development Office. "He appreciates that REALTORS® sell his city as much as he does," says Owen. "When issues related to real estate come up, he or his staff will contact our office or our leadership for their advice and counsel." Not only that, notes Owen, but the local economy is noticeably improving, and with things moving in the right direction under the leadership of current mayor, MAAR didn't want the city to lose momentum by changing horses mid-stream.

It was the Alabama state Government Affairs Director, Jeremy Walker, who proposed seeking a campaign boost for the Mayor from the REALTOR® Party. He knew it would be a tough race, and, in an off-year with no big state elections, he foresaw that voter turn-out would be low. A get-out-the-vote effort would be key to keep the election from going to a run-off. "Jeremy was familiar with the Campaign Services that the National Association offers, from prior experience," says Owen, "I cannot overstate how impressive this team is. We sat down with them to discuss the situation, and they provided tremendous guidance through the application process, which was short and simple, and right on through Election Day.

MAAR's Independent Expenditure Campaign on behalf of Mayor Strange was largely an intensive, month-long door-knocking effort. How intensive? The field teams knocked on nearly 24,000 doors! "The field work arranged by NAR's Campaign Services Division was astonishing," reports Owen. "We knew up-front it would be a ground campaign, but seeing the numbers that these field teams generated, information from folks who were actually going to vote, was really eye-opening."

The door-knocking teams reported their results daily, and the expert analysts and field strategists provided by NAR could adjust the campaign's message if it was not having the desired affect on the race. "It allowed for the campaign to shift on the fly, overnight," explains Owen. "I'll freely admit that I wasn't capable of that kind of vision, and making those kinds of decisions," he adds, noting, "The smartest thing I did was to trust these experts!"

MAAR contributed \$10,000 of its own funds to the effort, and launched an online and mobile campaign targeting its own members. Strange needed to secure 50 percent of



the vote, plus one, in order to avoid a run-off; he won by a whopping 57 percent, "an incredible margin," asserts Owen.

Because, an independent expenditure campaign has to be conducted so the candidate is not aware of the endeavor until it is underway, many MAAR members were surprised by the power that their association was able to wield on behalf of its mayoral candidate. Owen adds, "We owe a lot of people a lot of thanks for what they gave us, and how hard they worked for us. We are so grateful."

*To learn more about how the REALTORS® of Montgomery, Alabama are maintaining their seat at the table when it comes to legislation affecting their city budget and property rights, contact Brad Owen, Association Executive of the Montgomery Area Association of REALTORS®, at [brad.owen@montgomeryareahomes.com](mailto:brad.owen@montgomeryareahomes.com) or 334.396.0256.*

*Two of the Many Online Ads for the Campaign:*

