



## Signs of the political times

Emma Reilly

September 28, 2010

Yesterday was the first day city bylaws allowed election candidates to post election signs. That means, over the next few weeks, there will be no escaping the splashes of colour on lawns, medians and storefronts.

And the three main mayoral candidates weren't wasting time marking their territory yesterday.

Larry Di Ianni's campaign team hit the streets just after midnight Monday, said Ken Audziss, Di Ianni's campaign manager.

Mayor Fred Eisenberger's team began at 9 a.m. yesterday, said volunteer Mark Ungar, in an e-mail. Signs for Councillor Bob Bratina went up around 1 p.m.

All three candidates say they have had excellent response from residents.

"The only issue is whether we have enough signs, " Bratina said.

Each candidate's sign features their trademark campaign colours. Eisenberger's is purple and orange, red and blue for Di Ianni and green and blue for Bratina. Each sign is simple, including only text and straightforward graphics. None of the three men chose to include their picture.

Though it's easy to dismiss lawn signs as nothing more than visual clutter, studies have shown they translate into votes. Munroe Eagles, a professor of political science and Canadian studies at the University at Buffalo-SUNY, found each lawn sign equalled about 0.7 per cent of the candidate's total vote. Signs also help with name recognition, which is especially important in politics.

Di Ianni's campaign is including QR – or Quick Response – codes in the top right corner of their sign. These small squares include a pixelated design that act like bar codes when scanned with a BlackBerry or iPhone.

The code will direct voters to a mobile election site where residents will be able to read Di Ianni's platform and find event listings geared to their specific area of the city.

Di Ianni's campaign will also be posting a video to YouTube and his campaign website explaining QR codes and how to use them.

Audziss said the first time these codes were used in a political campaign was in 2008 in Germany. They were also used by a candidate in the recent elections in Britain, and an American running for the senate in Georgia is using the codes in a Nov. 2 election. The method has never been used in Canada before, Audziss said.

[ereilly@thespec.com](mailto:ereilly@thespec.com)

905-526-2452

This article is for personal use only courtesy of TheSpec.com - a division of Metroland Media Group Ltd.