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Nanos Research Poll Shows Tight Numbers

Friday, 29 August 2008

Thunder Bay, ON -- As federal election talk continues to occupy the political discussions across Canada, the latest Nanos Research poll shows that the

Liberals and Conservatives are gripped in a deadlock (LP 35%, CP 33%, NDP 17%, BQ 8%, GP 7%). Nanos Research states, "Of note, in the province of Quebec, support for the Bloc has decreased significantly by nine points in the last quarter, with the NDP picking up most of that support. On the best Prime Minister front, Stephen Harper still enjoys a significant advantage over Stephane Dion".

Nik Nanos states, "A potential election poses risks for both the Conservatives and the Liberals. Prime Minister Harper seems ready to risk his mandate while his party is tied with the Liberals. Liberal leader Stephane Dion has not been embraced by Canadians".

In Thunder Bay, the election campaign in Thunder Bay Rainy River seems to have already started. Incumbent Liberal MP Ken Boshcoff had ignored challenges and attacks from his NDP challenger John Rafferty up until the last weeks. Since then, Boshcoff has started fighting back from his MP's office. Richard Neumann, the Conservative candidate has been quieter, but seems to be staking out ground as a candidate not prepared to enter into personal attacks.

The political question in our city may be what Joe Comuzzi decides to do in Thunder Bay Superior North. Comuzzi, after 19 years as the Liberal MP for the riding is now a Conservative. His challengers, Don McArthur for the Liberals and Bruce Hyer for the NDP are, right now, officially at least not sure if Comuzzi is running or not.

Comuzzi, a political veteran appears more content to keep working on key issues. In addition, Comuzzi seems to be enjoying keeping the media guessing about his political future.

The Liberals may face problems in their national campaign stemming from a lack of funds. Liberal fundraising has lagged far behind the Conservatives. The Liberals are in the position of having to borrow money to fund their national campaign.

The wild cards for the Liberals will be first, how Stephane Dion handles a national election campaign. Second will be how candidates running for the Liberals explain national campaign planks to their local constituents.

The Liberal's main campaign plank, what they are calling "The Green Shift" has struggled from confusion in how individual candidates have explained the proposal. Thunder Bay Rainy River MP Ken Boshcoff lit fires of anger across western Canada when he wrote "The Liberal Party's Green Shift announced on June 19th marked the most aggressive anti-poverty program in 40 years. The 'shift' will transfer wealth from rich to poor, from the oil patch to the rest of the country, and from the coffers of big business to the pockets of low-income Canadians".

Boshcoff's comments were the subject of front-page headlines across Canada, if not here in Thunder Bay where most media ignored the massive controversy that his comments generated.

Boshcoff is not the only Liberal MP whose comments on Dion's campaign show-piece carbon tax plan have generated negative media responses. Perhaps however the real issues is not what Liberal MPs have said, but rather that the Liberal leader's office has not done as good a job communicating how the program should be explained to the public.

Communications may serve as the Conservative Party's political ace up their sleeve in what increasingly looks like it will be a fall campaign.

The Conservatives have a well funded political machine operating effectively.

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For the Liberals, over the past week, Dion's team have demanded that the Prime Minister come clean on his stance on abortion. The Liberals are accusing the Conservatives of having a secret plan to sell off Canadian fresh water, and are complaining that Harper's moves to protect Canada's northern region are not as effective as the Liberals.

In addition, the Liberals are angry over what they are stating are Conservative cuts to Canada's arts community. "The cuts to our culture clearly show the Conservative government's complete disrespect toward our country's cultural institutions and a flagrant lack of vision that is hurting our arts community and culture," charges Stephen Dion.

What Dion is not equally willing to disclose is that arts funding under the Conservatives is seeing more money dedicated to the arts than under the former Liberal government.

In staking their campaign on abortion, selling off fresh water, and arts cuts, the Liberal leader is using a combination of the fear-mongering tactics that worked extremely well for Prime Minister Jean Chretien, but failed Prime Minister Paul Martin.

Politically, if that is the angle that the Liberals are taking, it may not work as well as they might hope.

The Conservatives appear to be rolling out a political steam-roller. The question for Stephane Dion will be does he decide to stand in front of it squeaking "Stop! Please!"

That of course, is my opinion, as always, your mileage may vary.

James Murray
News Director

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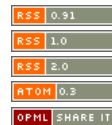
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