

Gubernatorial candidate visits Washington Township

November 30, 2008 Washington Township

Assemblyman Rick Merkt was literally “running for Governor” in Gloucester County on Sunday. Starting at 9:00 am, and ending at 4:00pm with a reception in Washington Township, the six term Assemblyman from Morris County jogged through almost every town in Gloucester County. Jogging through the daylong rain, Merkt said he wanted to learn about every municipality in the State, and plans to continue his running until he has jogged through each municipality. While learning about the unique qualities of each town, he often stops and hears about the issues on the minds of local residents.

At 4:00, a group of residents from Washington Township and surrounding towns sat down with Merkt for pizza and discussions at Randazzo’s Pizza shop on Egg Harbor Road. The group heard his viewpoints, including his belief in reducing the size of state government and lowering the burdensome taxes on New Jersey residents. During the meal, Merkt answered questions and expounded on some of his ideas, including appointments to the New Jersey Supreme Court. Merkt feels judges should interpret the law and not try to legislate from the bench, with decisions such as COAH and the Abbott school districts.

Merkt was first elected to the District 25 Assembly seat in 1998, and re-elected five times. He is giving up his Assembly seat, which is up again in 2009, and instead will be seeking the nomination for Governor in the June Republican Primary. Merkt sits on the Appropriations and the Higher Education Committee’s, and is Assembly Parliamentarian. Merkt, 59, lives with his family in Mendham Township, Morris County, and is a lawyer in the private sector.

Jeff Morris, Chairman of the Washington Township Republican Executive Committee, said he “was happy to welcome Rick Merkt to Washington Township and give residents a chance to learn of his viewpoints. This was Assemblyman Merkt’s second visit to Gloucester County in the past month. We are glad to see a candidate for statewide office pay attention to the issues and concerns of residents in the southern part of our State.”

Merkt said "It was great to have an opportunity to hear directly from Gloucester County Republicans about what they see as the biggest problems facing their county and the State of New Jersey. It is clear, for example, that unfair COAH affordable housing mandates from Trenton are no more popular in Gloucester County than they are in my home county. I am particularly grateful to Gloucester County Republicans for taking time to come out and meet with me on such a raw and rainy Sunday afternoon."

Merkt continued, "I am really encouraged by the level of interest in next year's race for Governor I already see in Gloucester County, and I expect that this county will play an important role in deciding who is elected as New Jersey's next Governor."