Gov Snyder vows to ‘stay on the gas’

David Shepardson and Chad Livengood, The Detroit News *8:01 a.m. EST November 5, 2014*



(Photo: David Coates , The Detroit News)

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Detroit — Newly re-elected Gov. Rick Snyder wasted no time in getting to work after winning re-election Tuesday, saying he wants to get a long-delayed $1 billion road improvement bill completed before his first term ends.

Snyder met with reporters just before 7 a.m. at a hotel in the Detroit Renaissance Center — holding a press availability that ended before it was even scheduled to begin. He was also doing a round of radio interviews before meeting with The Detroit News and Free Press editorial boards later this morning — along with an appearance on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe.”

Snyder said he was previously “very close” to reaching a deal to increase road funding, but some legislators had trouble supporting higher taxes and fees before the August primary and Tuesday’s general elections. He hopes the Republican-controlled Legislature will tackle raising more revenue for roads in the lame duck legislative session in late November and early December.

“Does anyone want to keep going through potholes?” Snyder said. “Why spend hundreds of dollars on those repairs when we can have just have better roads?”

Snyder said he was “honored and really pleased” to win a second term. “We’ve been reinventing Michigan and this is the chance to… let’s keep going — and go faster,” Snyder said. “I’m glad you hired me back again…. It’s a chance to help people. When else in life will you get an opportunity to help 10 million (peo ple).”

Snyder’s re-election capped a near sweep of the ballot Tuesday by Republicans. The GOP strengthened its majorities in the state House and Senate and Attorney General Bill Schuette and Secretary of State Ruth Johnson coasted to victory over little-known Democratic opponents.

But Democrat Gary Peters beat Republican Terri Lynn Land by 14 percentage points in a U.S. Senate race that was more competitive earlier in the year.

Snyder sidestepped a question on MSNBC about whether the Republicans could have captured the seat held for 36 years by retiring Democratic Sen. Carl Levin if they had fielded a better candidate than Land.

“I don’t want to speculate on someone else’s race,” Snyder said. “That was a tough Senate race.”

Democrat Mark Schauer called Snyder shortly after 11 p.m. last night to concede the race.

“It was very cordial and short as you’d expect,” Snyder said about the call on “Michigan’s Big Show.”

Asked why his margin of victory was smaller than Schuette and Johnson’s victories, the governor chose to look at the positive — that he had exceeded the margins predicted by some pollsters who thought he might lose to Schauer.

“I’m going to stay on the gas,” Snyder told reporters in Detroit.

Snyder said he wants to do more to boost the city of Detroit, which is nearing the end of a record-setting Chapter 9 bankruptcy.

“I want to continue the path we’ve been on, particularly the neighborhoods,” Snyder said. “Let’s keep working quality of life issues.”

Snyder cited improvements on anti-bullying, human trafficking and improving citizens health among first term accomplishments — beyond the improvements in the state's economy.

He also wants to do more to boost vocational education and other efforts to improve job training to fill thousands of unfilled skilled jobs.

Snyder said Wayne County "has quite a bit of work to do on its financial affairs" but said he wasn't planning to appoint a financial manager.

Asked on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" if he was interested in running for president or vice president in 2016, Snyder didn't directly answer to question.

"Right now, I'm just excited to be re-elected governor," Snyder said, saying governors may be tapped for higher office. "In many cases people will be looking to the governors across the country. We've got a great group of Republican governors who have a track record of showing real results for the people."

The 2016 talk continued on "Michigan's Big Show" when host Michael Patrick Shiels asked: "Can you say unequivocally that you'll serve out the entire second term?"

"I just got elected again yesterday," Snyder responded. "So I mean a lot of people like to speculate on a lot of things. I'm honored and proud to be governor of Michigan and I've got a lot of things I want to do."

Appearing on WJR this morning, Snyder spoke briefly about sticking with his theme of "relentless, positive action." And that extends to his assessment of the negative campaign he survived on Tuesday.

Snyder addressed political ads run by opponent Democrat Mark Schauer that hammered the governor over a perceived $1 billion cut to Michigan's education system in 2011 — a claim that was debunked by The News and other news organizations.

"You repeat something over and over again — it doesn't make it true," he said. "The problem is, too often, people get this information and it's just easy for them to believe when they hear it a hundred times."

Snyder said he didn't plan to take a "real vacation" but planned to take some time off this weekend doing some cooking — a hobby — for his family.

The governor said his family gave him a smoker as a birthday gift in August.

“I haven’t had a chance to use it for several months,” Snyder said on “Michigan’s Big Show.” “It’s been sitting around. So I’m hopefully going to get it cranked up and do some brisket or something exciting this weekend.”

Staff Writer Jim Lynch contributed

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FREEP

Gary Peters wins U.S. Senate race

Senate Majority Leader Randy Richardville, R-Monroe, said Snyder deserved to be re-elected because "his resume is among the best of any governor in any state around the country."

He significantly improved the state's economic ranking and "he took on the biggest bankruptcy in the history of the U.S.," Richardville said.

But Karla Swift, president of the Michigan AFL-CIO, said Snyder fooled voters in 2010 into thinking he was a moderate Republican. She said she was disappointed with Tuesday's outcome.

"People who voted for him didn't expect what they got, which was attacks on working families, attacks on low-income workers, attacks on kids in classrooms by cutting education, attacks on people on fixed incomes by taxing pensions" Swift said.

"He has a record now and we would expect to see more of the same."

Schauer had promised to work to repeal right-to-work and the pension tax, significantly increase funding for K-12 schools while reining in for-profit charter schools, and push through a middle-class tax cut. He was vague on how he would pay for the promises and similarly lacking in details on his plan to fix and maintain the state's roads and bridges.

Snyder, who in 2010 campaigned on a platform that included repealing the Michigan Business Tax in favor of a 6% corporate tax, which he achieved, has not spelled out many new plans for a second four-year term, which would be his last term as governor under constitutional term limits. Mostly he's talked about placing increased emphasis on technical skills training and assuring a better match between graduates' skills and employers' needs.

Both Snyder and Schauer spent the last weekend before the election traveling the state and making last-ditch appeals to voters.

The more than $12 million Snyder was expected to spend on the campaign was roughly double what Schauer raised and spent. But millions more was spent by outside groups that included the Democratic Governors Association, the Republican Governors Association, the two state political parties, the Michigan Chamber of Commerce and the Michigan Education Association teacher union.

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