Tim Skubick: What went right and wrong in Gov. Rick Snyder's re-election campaign



Gov. Rick Snyder won - almost despite his non-confrontational style of campaigning - although he made a point that his victory came because of a positive campaign. *(Mike Mulholland)*

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Chalk one up for Relentless Positive Action.

The non-career politician who refused to get dragged down in the political mud has emerged with four more years even though challenger Mark Schauer tossed everything but the kitchen sink at the incumbent.

Frankly many in this town thought the disciplined Democratic attacks on the governor for his pension tax and "cuts" to education would work. They obviously did not.

The governor, with all due respect, was ripe for plucking. His advertising campaign won't win any awards. He was late coming to the party and gave the D's virtually the entire summer to define the governor in their terms, not his.

And his side missed the same opportunity to define Mark Schauer. And one of the warning signs that the governor might be vulnerable was beneath the radar. Republicans running for office got really antsy about the governor's apparent reluctance to get engaged.

Finally after those fears reached his ears, he engaged his mouth and took on Mr. Schauer for his "hogwash and flat out lies" over the $1 billion cut to education. But he did not continue any other negative attacks, which is the norm in the heat of battle.

But Gov. Snyder is not the norm when it comes to playing politics. When the Democrats tried to take the edge off the governor's claim of 300,000 new jobs, transferring the credit to the president instead, the governor tepidly told reporters, who were hoping for a pithy response got this instead, "That was nice of him to say that." Vintage Richard Dale Snyder.

And then there were the polls which continued to beat the drum that this was too close to call but instead of an elongated journey into the night the Detroit Free Press called the race before the press corps could roll out the cots for a long night that never materialized.

The popular wisdom was Mr. Schauer had a shot at this, but in the end the fact that his plan lacked significant details to show what he would do if he was elected, cost him votes and the fact that he was more about beating up the governor than providing a convincing argument to vote for him cost him votes

too. Boil it all down and the Governor Snyder victory apparently demonstrates that good guys can finish first.