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Voters and Educators Embrace Citizen-Created Manitoba Election Website

Winnipeg, Manitoba, September 29, 2011 -- With less than a week to go before the 2011 Manitoba provincial election, the team behind Open Democracy Manitoba is busy putting the finishing touches on their citizen-created election resource. Their ManitobaElection.ca website is already a clearing-house for candidate information, but it is growing into something bigger.

"This all started with our own frustrations about not being able to find unbiased election information online" says Kyle Geske, one of the site's founding members. "Our goal is to build an approachable, well-organized resource for voters. This includes gathering information about the candidates, but it also means educating voters on the election process and on politics in Manitoba" adds co-founder Jody Gillis.

Since the site launched, the members of Open Democracy Manitoba have been fielding questions about elections and the political process from family and friends. To answer those questions they added a voter education section to their site. Written in plain English, the material explains everything from the roles of elected officials to how constituency boundaries are created. This new feature caught the eye of a number of educators and students.

"The feedback we've received inspires us to keep adding to the site" says Ken Harasym, the member of the team responsible for graphic design. "We've received amazing compliments from college students, high school teachers, and university political science professors."

"Our most recent feature is an interactive map that visualizes the Manitoba election results from 1958 to 2007" say Andrew Burton, another team member. "We've added an issue page that links to a comprehensive array of election related organizations, each trying to promote their individual issues. We also just finished posting all the candidate questionnaire responses we received back from candidates."

The website is currently attracting thousands of hits each day from all over Manitoba. The Open Democracy Manitoba team is using this traffic as an opportunity to communicate important notices to voters, such as the change in electoral boundaries since the 2007 election. They want to remind all voters to double-check their constituency since the majority of boundaries have changed since the last election.

ManitobaElection.ca is a citizen-created resource for the 2011 Manitoba general election. Open Democracy Manitoba was founded by Kyle Geske, Jody Gillis, Ken Harasym and Andrew Burton. The community group's mission is to educate voters, empowering them to understand the roles, issues, and visions of our representatives in order to have a more accountable and respectful democracy.

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